

THE CITY OF
GREATER GEELONG

FAIR ACCESS POLICY

VERSION: 1.0

Approval Date: June 2024

Approved by: Council

Review Date: June 2028

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Authorising Officer: Executive Director, City Life

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Introduction

PURPOSE

The City of Greater Geelong Fair Access Policy (Policy) addresses known barriers experienced by women and girls in accessing and using community sports infrastructure.

The Policy aims to progressively build the capacity and capabilities of the City of Greater Geelong and associated stakeholders in identifying and eliminating systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs, communications, and delivery and allocation of community sports and recreation infrastructure.

SCOPE

The scope of the Policy is to support the City of Greater Geelong to take positive action towards achieving gender equality in the access and usage of community sports and recreation infrastructure. The City of Greater Geelong will take the necessary and proportionate steps towards implementing the Policy.

The Policy enables effective and efficient integration of the requirements of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, the *Local Government Act 2020* and *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* and other legislative frameworks.

The Policy complies with the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and aligns with Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans and Council Strategies:

Reform Agenda	Objectives
To support the City of Greater Geelong to take positive action towards achieving gender equality in the access and use of community sports and recreation infrastructure	To build capacity and capabilities in the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs, communications, and delivery and allocation of community sport and recreation. To ensure an effective place-based response for the gender-equitable use and access of community sports and recreation infrastructure. To promote and implement gender equality in policies, programs, communications, and services as they relate to community sport and recreation infrastructure.

This Policy applies to:

- Any policies, programs, communications, and services relating to community sports infrastructure.
- All community sports infrastructure managed by Council.

The Evaluation Framework defines the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders, including:

- City of Greater Geelong
- State Sporting Associations
- Local Sports Associations and Leagues
- Local Sport and Active Recreation Clubs.

BACKGROUND

This Policy has been developed in response to the Victorian Government's Fair Access Policy Roadmap.

As a defined outcome of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, all Councils are required from 31 March 2021 to conduct Gender Impact Assessments (GIA) on all new policies, programs, communications, and services, including those up for review, which directly and significantly impact the public (*Gender Equality Act 2020*). The access and use of community sports infrastructure is an example of a policy that has a direct and significant impact on the public.

From 1 July 2024, all Victorian Councils will need to have gender equitable access and use policies in place to be considered eligible for receive infrastructure funding.

City of Greater Geelong Council has previously identified a need to improve participation for all genders and abilities, in its Fair Play Strategy.

A Fair Access Policy is now required focusing on infrastructure, programs and governance.

Sport is a highly visible and valued feature of Greater Geelong's culture and identity.

Whilst participation trends show an increase in women and girls', trans and gender diverse people participating across sport and recreation activities, including improved development pathways and competition structures, research shows a substantial gap in both the participation of women and girls, transgender and gender diverse people in sport and recreation and an identified gender imbalance in leadership positions across all levels of the Victorian sporting and recreation industry:

- Sports participation rates across all ages are higher for men and boys (17%) than women and girls (9%). (Ausplay, 2021)
- Only 21% of girls aged 0-14 years participate in organised sport and active recreation outside of school hours three times a week. (Ausplay, 2021)
- There has been a decline of 22,000 women and girls' participation after the global coronavirus pandemic where men and boys' participation rose by over 20,500 participants in 2021 compared to 2019. (VicHealth Sports Participation in Victoria 2015-2021)
- 29% of executive positions and 33% of board positions are held by women in State Sporting Associations (Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation, 2015)
- 28% of women have considered leaving their club due to inequitable treatment. (Change Our Game State of Play Survey, 2022-23)
- Women are 2.5 times more likely to report feeling unwelcome at their sporting club compared to men. (Change Our Game State of Play Survey, 2022-23)
- Of people who played community sport, women were less likely than men to agree that club facilities were shared equally. (Change Our Game State of Play Survey, 2022-23)
- Women working or volunteering in sport were 13% less likely than men to feel comfortable voicing their opinion, and 8% less likely to feel that their opinions were valued. (Change Our Game State of Play Survey, 2022-23)
- Many Victorian women and girls don't have access to the best courts or grounds, have facilities of lesser standard, or are relegated to less convenient competition and training times. (Change Our Game, 2023)

Whilst key findings from the Greater Geelong Sport and Recreation Census (2023) show encouraging trends across:

- 95% of all sports facilities are used for training, events or games for all genders.
- 91% of clubs have women coaches, managers and administrators.
- 84% of clubs report women and girls' results and achievements.

Other indicators from the Census support the research more support is needed to reverse the lower levels of participation and barriers experienced by women and girls, trans and gender diverse people:

- Sports participation rates among girls (22%) are lower than boys (37%).
- Sports participation rates among women (16%) are lower than men (24%).
- 30% of change rooms are gender neutral.

The Fair Access policy, together with the Fair Access Action Plan aim to facilitate greater equitable access and allocation of community sport and recreation infrastructure in Greater Geelong.

Definitions

POLICY DEFINITIONS

This section defines the key terms used in this policy.

City

The City of Greater Geelong organisation, led by the CEO.

Council

The City of Greater Geelong Council comprises elected councillors and is led by the Mayor.

Women and Girls

For the context of this policy, women and girls refer to females and describe the various stages of life and development within the context of age.

Community Sports Infrastructure

Publicly owned local, rural, regional, or state-level sport and recreation infrastructure operated and maintained primarily for the purpose of facilitating community sport activities, including sporting grounds, surfaces, facilities, and pavilions.

Gender

How you understand who you are and how you interact with other people. Many people understand their gender as being a man or woman. Some people understand their gender as a mix of these or neither. A person's gender and their expression of their gender can be shown in different ways, such as through behaviour or physical appearance.

Gender Equality

The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and girls, men and boys, trans and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women and girls, men and boys, trans and gender-diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on their gender.

Gender Equity

The provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities based on gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs and powers related to their gender, and these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender-related imbalances.

Gender Impact Assessment, or GIA

A requirement under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* to be carried out on policies, programs and services which have a direct and significant impact on the public. The assessment must evaluate the effects that a policy, program or service may have on people of different genders.

Policy

The City of Greater Geelong acknowledge:

- The disadvantaged position some individuals have had in the sport and recreation sector because of their gender and gender identity.
- Achieving gender equality will require diverse approaches for women and girls to achieve similar outcomes for people of all genders.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

This Statement of Intent establishes the expectation that gender equality is considered and prioritised in all current and future Council planning, policy, service delivery and practice related to community sports infrastructure.

- The City of Greater Geelong recognise that gender equality is attaining equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for all people. Equality does not mean that women and girls will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on their gender.
- The City of Greater Geelong recognise that gender equality is the provision of fairness and justice in distributing benefits and responsibilities based on gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs and powers related to their gender, and these differences should be identified and addressed to rectify gender-related imbalances.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

The policy framework aligns with the State Government's six guiding principles and commitments under the Fair Access Policy Roadmap. These are:

Principle 1 – Infrastructure

Commitment – Community sports and active recreation infrastructure are genuinely welcoming, safe and inclusive.

Principle 2 – Roles in Sport

Commitment – Women and girls will be encouraged to participate in all aspects of community sport and active recreation including as a player, coach, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator.

Principle 3 – Allocation and Scheduling

Commitment – Women and girls will have fair access to and use of community sport and recreation infrastructure which is of the highest quality, at the most convenient location and times and includes new opportunities and sports.

Principle 4 – Leadership

Commitment – Women and girls should be equitably represented in leadership and governance roles.

Principle 5 – Culture and Environment

Commitment – Encourage and support all user groups who access community sport and active recreation infrastructure to understand, adopt and implement gender equitable access and use practices that are genuinely welcoming, safe and inclusive.

Principle 6 – Reward, Celebrate and Prioritise.

Commitment – Prioritise access, use and support to all user groups who demonstrate ongoing commitment to gender equitable access and use of allocated infrastructure.

Each principle includes a set of actions to deliver on the commitment. These are listed in the action plan within the Fair Access Policy – Evaluation Framework.

Implementation of this Policy

MONITORING AND REPORTING

The City of Greater Geelong commits to continue to undertake Gender Impact Assessments of new and reviewed policies, programs and services that directly and significantly impact the community, in line with the Gender Equality Act 2020.

The City of Greater Geelong commits to consider identified opportunities to develop or strengthen gender-equitable access and use of community sports facilities in alignment with the Policy principles.

The City of Greater Geelong acknowledges the requirement to have an endorsed Fair Access Policy and Action Plan (or equivalent), and the ability to demonstrate progress against them, in place by 01 July 2024 to remain eligible for Victorian Government funding opportunities.

The Fair Access Policy will be reviewed every four years.

Each principle and action will be reviewed annually.

ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

The Responsible Officer for this policy manages the provision of advice to the organisation regarding this policy.

A person who is uncertain how to comply with this policy should seek advice from this person or from their Manager.

RECORDS

The City must retain records associated with this policy and its implementation for at least the period shown below.

Record	Retention / Disposal Authority	Retention Period	Location
Fair Access Policy	Executive Director City Life	4 years	ReX TBC
Fair Access Policy Background Report	Executive Director City Life	4 years	ReX TBC
Fair Access Evaluation Framework	Executive Director City Life	4 years	ReX TBC
Gender Impact Assessment	Executive Director City Life	4 years	ReX TBC

REVIEW

The City should review and, if necessary, amend this policy within four years of the approval date.

References

For further information and support resources related to this Policy, see:

- Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth)
- Guidelines for the Inclusion of Transgender and Gender Diverse People in Sport, 2019
- Guidelines for Trans and Gender Diverse Inclusion in Sport – Complying with the Equal Opportunity Act 2010, 2017
- Sport Australia Girls and Women Strategies and Policies
- State Sporting Association Girls and Women Strategies and Policies
- Sport and Recreation Victoria Female Friendly Design Guidelines
- Make Space for Girls Design Resources
- Safe Spaces by Monash Uni
- XYX Lab
- Women's Health East 'Creating Safe and Inclusive Spaces for Women'
- Gender Equality Self-Assessment Tool
- Greater Geelong GIA+ Tool
- Greater Geelong Safety Audit Tool.