



Fair Access Policy

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1. Purpose

The Fair Access Policy (the Policy) seeks to address known barriers experienced by women and girls in accessing and using community sports infrastructure. The Policy aims to progressively build capacity and capabilities of East Gippsland Shire Council (Council) in the identification, and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in community sports and active recreation.

The Policy is a key driver for practical and cultural change to ensure everyone can access the full health and wellbeing benefits that sport and active recreation can provide. The Policy supports Council's commitment to think critically about how our future policies, strategies, plans, infrastructure and services meet the diverse needs of women and girls in sport and active recreation.

2. Scope

The scope of the Policy is to support Council to take positive action towards achieving gender equality in the access and usage of community sports infrastructure where Council is the landowner and facility manager. This complies with the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and aligns with the objectives of the East Gippsland Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Where Council does not manage the infrastructure, Council will ensure an effective place-based response for the gender equitable use and access of community sports infrastructure is encouraged and will promote gender equality in policies, programs, communications, and services as they relate to community sports infrastructure.

3. Context

The Victorian Government, led by the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, requires all Victorian Councils to have a Fair Access Policy in place by 1 July 2024. The Policy is designed to align with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, and the wider Victorian Government gender equality strategy.

The sport and active recreation sector provide opportunities for enriching our communities through the promotion of respect and fair mindedness for all people, while also supporting their physical and mental wellbeing.

This Policy supports the principles of inclusivity, full participation, equal representation, encouraging and supporting, and prioritising user groups that are committed to gender equity. The six (6) principles are:

1. Community sports infrastructure and environments are genuinely welcome, safe, and inclusive.
2. Women and girls can fully participate in all aspects of community sport and active recreation, including as a player, coach, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator.
3. Women and girls will have equitable access to and use of community sport infrastructure:
 - a. Of the highest quality available and most convenient.
 - b. At the best and most popular competition and training times and locations
 - c. To support existing and new participation opportunities, at a variety of sports
4. Women and girls should be equitably represented in leadership and governance roles.

5. Encourage and support all user groups who access and use community sport infrastructure to understand, adopt and implement gender equitable access and use policies.
6. Prioritise access, use and support to all user groups who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to gender equitable access and use of allocated community sport infrastructure.

4. Statement

The Policy complies with the requirements set by the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation and adheres to the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

Council acknowledges:

1. The disadvantaged position that some individuals have had in the sport and active recreation sector because of their gender; and
2. That achieving equality will require diverse approaches to achieve the similar outcomes for people of all genders in the community.

Council will:

1. Engage fairly and equitably with all staff, governance working groups, registered sporting organisations and members of our sport and recreation community, regardless of their gender, in a positive, respectful, and constructive manner.

This is Council's commitment to making all voices, concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation and monitoring of community policies and programs.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The following teams or positions have direct and/or supporting responsibilities associated with this Policy:

Party / Parties	Roles and Responsibilities
CEO and Executive Leadership Team	Promote and advocate the awareness of gender equity in the community and champion equitable opportunities for women and girls. Promote, encourage, and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and growth of women and girls in leadership, participation, coaching and volunteering in sport and active recreation.
Manager Community Programs and Engagement	Oversee the Fair Access Policy. Develop and implement equitable processes to facility allocations, grants, fees & charges. Communicate the Policy updates and updated internal processes to all staff and relevant stakeholders. Promote, encourage and support the successes of equity. Support the undertaking of Equity Impact Assessments regarding sport and active recreation facilities.

Community Facilities and Recreation Centre Teams	Provide clear communication and education opportunities to sport and active recreation facility user groups/clubs with regard to the objectives of the Policy. Support sport and active recreation user groups/clubs to increase their capabilities to create welcoming and inclusive environments for women and girls. Encourage Committees of Management to consider this Policy when using facilities, providing access to facilities and maintaining and planning upgrades to infrastructure. Ensure all communication and community engagement is fair, equitable and of high quality when engaging with all user groups and clubs focused on women and girls.
All Staff	Promote, encourage and support the successes of equity. Adhere to and communicate the Policy when required. When provided, attend staff training and awareness programs to ensure the Policy and its objectives are understood and adhered to. Include all relevant staff, user groups and clubs on programs and services for inclusive engagement.
Facility Users and Committees of Management	Promote and advocate the awareness of gender equity in the sport and active recreation community, championing equitable opportunities for women and girls. Develop and implement equitable processes to allocations, training schedules, events, communications, and social media. Consider this Policy when using facilities, providing access to facilities and maintaining and planning upgrades to infrastructure. Communicate Policy updates to users and update internal processes to ensure gender equity. Provide clear communication for committee members or participants around the objectives of the Policy. Support the capabilities to create a fair, welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for women and girls. Advocate for minor works upgrades and maintenance that support fair access and use of facilities.

6. References and Supporting Documents

Applicable Legislation:

Gender Equality Act 2020

Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

Freedom of Information Act 1982

Local Government Act 2020

Equal Opportunity Act 2010

Child and Wellbeing Safety Act 2005

Child Wellbeing and Safety Amendment (Child Safe Standards) Act 2015

Applicable Policy and Procedure:

Council Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025

Fair Access Policy Road Map - Victorian Government

Supporting Documents:

This policy will be supported by the East Gippsland Fair Access Policy Action Plan.

7. Human Rights

Council is committed to upholding the Human Rights principles as outlined in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (the Charter). This Policy has been assessed as compliant with the obligations and objectives of the Charter.

8. Gender Impact Statement

The Fair Access Policy has had a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) completed and is compliant with the obligations and objectives of the Victorian *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

9. Risk Reference

This Policy is implemented as a control to mitigate risks in the following categories:

Risk Category	✓	Risk Category	✓
Environmental		Technology and Information Management	
Health and Safety	✓	Assets, Facilities and Security	✓
Project, Product and Service Delivery	✓	Human Resources	
Financial and Economic		Procurement	
Leadership and Political Awareness		Corporate Governance and Compliance	✓
Reputation and Corporate Image	✓	Legal	

10. Definitions

Term	Meaning
Community	People who live in East Gippsland. People and organisations who are ratepayers in East Gippsland; and People and organisations who conduct activities in East Gippsland.
Community Sport 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.
Committee of Management	Refers to committees appointed by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 and Committees of Management established through East Gippsland Shire to manage recreation facilities where community sport training and games are held.
Council	East Gippsland Shire Council.
Councillor	Person who has been elected to the office of “Councillor” of East Gippsland Shire Council.
Council Officer	A current member of East Gippsland Shire Council staff with the authority to engage in activities on behalf of Council.
Gender Equality	The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men and trans and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men and 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 power related to their gender and these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances
Office for Women in Sport and Recreation	Governing body providing policy, strategy and industry support to increase the number of women and girls participating in sport and active recreation, from grassroots through to senior leadership roles.
Shire	The geographic area of East Gippsland Shire Council.
Staff	All staff engaged by East Gippsland Shire Council, including all full-time, part-time, and casual employees, labour hire agency staff, contractors, and volunteers.
Volunteer	Formally recognised, unpaid member of the public who assists with the provision of Council services e.g. Visitor Information Centre, Library.

11. Revision History and Review

Version Control	Approved Amended Rescinded	Date Effective	Approved By	ECM Document Reference	Summary of Changes
1.0	Approved	06/08/2024	Council	10500130	Policy creation