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Owner:	Active and Healthy Communities
Responsible Director:	Health and Wellbeing
Relevant Legislation/Authority:	Gender Equality Act 2020 Local Government Act 2020 Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
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1. PURPOSE

The Fair Access Policy (the Policy) seeks to address known barriers experienced by women, girls and under-represented groups in accessing and using community sports and active recreation infrastructure. This considers the needs of women, girls and gender diverse people, in addition to men and boys, as well as other aspects of a person's identity that may affect a person participating in sports and active recreation, like age, cultural background, ability, religion or sexual orientation.

The Policy aims to progressively build capacity and capabilities of the City of Greater Bendigo (City) in the identification, and elimination of systemic causes of inequality in policy, programs, communications, and delivery of services in relation to community sports and active recreation infrastructure.

2. BACKGROUND

Sport is a highly visible and valued feature of the City's culture and identity. 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 the social, physical and mental wellbeing of all Victorians. The City is well positioned to design and implement place-based, integrated action plans that progress equality in community sport and active recreation.

The Victorian Government have developed a reform agenda to change the systems that have perpetuated gender inequality by designing an enduring structure that requires implementation and tracking of progress over time. This reform agenda includes addressing the traditional structures and way community sport and recreation organisations operate through the implementation of all nine recommendations from the 2015 Victorian Government's Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation. This includes recommendation six:

"...encourage facility owners and managers to review access and usage policies to ensure women and girls have a fair share of access to the highest quality facilities at the best and most popular times"

and

“facilitating a universal adoption of policies, strategies and audit tools will drive change further”

The City recognises that other groups in addition to women and girls are also under-represented or experience inequity in the sport and active recreation setting, and that gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience based on Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, religion, sexual orientation and other attributes. The City is committed to developing an environment for everyone to live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal resources and opportunities, and be treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.

3. SCOPE

The scope of the Policy is to support the City of Greater Bendigo to take positive action towards achieving equity in the access and usage of community sports and active recreation infrastructure.

The Policy considers the needs of women, girls and under-represented groups, in addition to intersectionality, and that gender inequality may be compounded by other forms of disadvantage or discrimination. This complies with the Gender Equality Act 2020 and aligns with the City’s Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

This policy applies to the community sports and active recreation infrastructure that is owned and/or managed by the City. Infrastructure that is not owned or managed by the City is outside the scope of this policy, however the City is committed to working with the owners and managers of those facilities to support compliance with the Victorian Government Fair Access Policy Roadmap.

Where this policy applies to a facility, the scope of this policy extends to on-field/court as well as off-field facilities.

4. DEFINITIONS

Active Recreation – Leisure time, non-competitive, physical activity for exercise or enjoyment.

Aspects of a person’s identity – Factors that shape a person’s identity. This may include (but is not limited to) gender, age, cultural background, ability, religion and sexual orientation.

City – Means the Greater Bendigo City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the Local Government Act 2020.

Community Sports and Active Recreation Infrastructure – Publicly owned local, rural, regional, or state level sport and active recreation infrastructure operated and maintained primarily for the purpose of facilitating community sport or active recreation activities, including grounds, surfaces, facilities, and pavilions.

Disability – Long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, may hinder a person’s full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Equality – Equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Equality does not mean that everyone will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on aspects of a person’s identity.

Equity – The process of being fair to everyone in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities. The concept recognises that people may have different needs and power and these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that fixes imbalances.

Equity Impact Assessment – The process of considering how policies, programs and services affect different genders and diverse groups in different ways and recommend changes that will help create a more fair and inclusive community. This incorporates Gender Impact Assessments as per the Gender Equality Act 2020.

Gender – Part of 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 diverse – An umbrella term for a range of genders expressed in different ways. Gender diverse people use many terms to describe themselves. Language in this area is dynamic, particularly among young people, who are more likely to describe themselves as non-binary.

Intersectionality – understands how a person's identity is shaped by multiple realities (such as gender, race/ethnicity, class, age, sexuality, geographic location, age, disability, religion). The different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation, which impact on people's experiences.

Participation – Includes a range of roles, such as: player, volunteer, committee member, umpire, official, spectator.

Sport – Includes:

- informal sport e.g. playing tennis with a friend, and
- organised sport e.g. playing in a competition

Under-represented groups – people that are participating in lower numbers relative to the population in the broader community, and may be grouped by aspects of a person's identity.

5. PRINCIPLES

The Fair Access Principles have been adapted from those developed by the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, Sport and Recreation Victoria and VicHealth for the Victorian Government Fair Access Policy Roadmap. This Policy and any resultant action plan are based on six (6) principles of inclusivity, full participation, equal representation, encouraging and supporting user groups, and prioritising user groups committed to equality.

The City considers that these principles provide clear direction, while also enabling adaption to the specific environment of the City of Greater Bendigo's area. The principles are:

1. Community sports and active recreation infrastructure and environments are genuinely welcoming, safe, and inclusive
2. Women, girls and under-represented groups can fully participate in all aspects of community sport and active recreation, including as a player, coach, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator
3. Women, girls and under-represented groups will have equitable access to and use of community sport and active recreation 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, and a variety of sports
4. Women, girls and under-represented groups should be equitably represented in leadership and governance roles
5. Encourage and support all user groups who access and use community sport and active recreation infrastructure to understand, adopt and implement equitable access and use practices for women, girls and under-represented groups
6. Prioritise access, use and support to all user groups who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to equitable access and use of allocated community sport and active recreation infrastructure for women, girls and under-represented groups

6. POLICY

This policy establishes the expectation that equality is considered and prioritised in all of the City's future planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sports and active recreation infrastructure.

- a. *The City of Greater Bendigo* recognises that equality is the attainment of equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities. Equality does not mean that everyone will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on aspects of a person's identity.
- b. *The City of Greater Bendigo* recognises that equity is the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities. The concept recognises that people may have different needs and power and these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that fixes imbalances.

The City of Greater Bendigo acknowledges:

- a. the barriers some individuals and groups may have experienced in sport and active recreation due to their gender or other aspects of their identity; and
- b. that achieving equality will require tailored and diverse approaches for women, girls and under-represented groups to achieve similar outcomes for all people.

The City of Greater Bendigo will:

1. engage fairly and equitably with all staff, governance working groups, state sporting organisations, regional sport assemblies (where applicable) and members of our sport and active recreation community, regardless of gender or other aspects of a person's identity, in a positive, respectful, and constructive manner; and
2. engage in the process of Equity Impact Assessments to assess the implications for all people, including women, girls and under-represented groups, of any planned action, including policies and communications. This is a strategy for making all voices, concerns and experiences, an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies, programs and services.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The City's Active and Healthy Communities unit are responsible for implementing the City's Fair Access Policy. As outlined in table below. Other Council personnel, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders (for example State Sporting Associations and Regional Sporting Assemblies), have a shared responsibility to support the policy.

Role	Responsibility
Councillors and Local Government – leadership (CEO and Executive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote an inclusive and gender equitable culture and community and champion the Fair Access Policy. • To promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of inclusion and gender equality in sport and active recreation.
Local Government – Active and Healthy Communities staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the review of sport and active recreation policies and process • Develop and adopt equitable access and use policies including inclusion and gender equality. • Support delivery of actions/an action plan relating to the policy. • Communicate policy updates to all staff and community members. • Monitor and report on compliance and issues. • Promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of equality in sport and active recreation including inclusion and gender equality. • Undertake Equity Impact Assessments as per the Gender Equality Act 2020 obligations. • Communicate and educate sport and active recreation infrastructure user groups and users.
Local Government – accountable Officer for the Gender Equality Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the review of sport and active recreation policies and processes including inclusion and gender equality. • Support staff to undertake Equity Impact Assessments as per the Gender Equality Act 2020 obligations, and report on progress.
Local Government – all staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to and communicate the policy when required. • Attend training / awareness programs. • Undertake Equity Impact Assessment where required.
Community Asset Committees, local club executives, club members and sporting participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of equality in sport and active recreation including inclusion and gender equality.
State Sporting Associations and Regional Sporting Assemblies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote an inclusive and gender equitable culture and community and champion the Fair Access Policy. • Promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of equality in sport and active recreation including inclusion and gender equality. • Raise awareness of the Fair Access Policy Roadmap and its targets with clubs, leagues and associations.

Other owners / managers of community sports infrastructure in the municipality

- Be aware of the Fair Access Policy Roadmap and its applicability to non-Local Government owners and managers of community sports infrastructure.
- Comply with the Roadmap to the extent that the legislation applies to said Authority.
- Work in partnership with the City to promote an inclusive culture and community, and champion the Fair Access Policy.

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Readers are encouraged to access relevant documents and/or resources which are available as per the below.

These include:

City of Greater Bendigo documents

- Council Plan 2021 – 2025: Mir wimbul
- Healthy Greater Bendigo 2021 – 2025
- Walk, Cycle Greater Bendigo Strategy 2019
- Social Justice Framework 2022-2032
- Greater Bendigo Coalition Gender Equity Strategy 2020 – 2025
- Cultural Diversity & Inclusion Plan 2021 – 2025
- Equity for All: Gender Equity Action Plan 2021-2025
- City of Greater Bendigo Positive Ageing Action Plan 2023-2025
- Youth Action Plan 2023-2024
- LGBTIQ+ Inclusion Action Plan - City of Greater Bendigo
- City of Greater Bendigo Reconciliation Plan 2022-2025
- Active and Healthy Greater Bendigo Framework
- City of Greater Bendigo Community Asset Policy (under development)

Other documents

- Victorian Government's Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation
- Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008
- Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

Further information or advice on this policy should be directed to Active and Healthy Lifestyles

9. HUMAN RIGHTS COMPATIBILITY

The implications of this policy have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

10. ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a City unit, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be made through consultation with the

staff Consultative Committee and with the approval of EMT or where required, resolution of Council.

11. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Date Approved	Responsible Officer	Unit	Change Type	Version	Next Review Date
<i>Aug, 2024</i>	<i>MK</i>	<i>Active and Healthy Lifestyles</i>	<i>New Policy</i>	<i>1.0</i>	<i>Aug, 2026</i>