



GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY COUNCIL
**SPORT &
RECREATION
FACILITIES FAIR
ACCESS POLICY**

Effective: 1 July 2024

SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES FAIR ACCESS POLICY

Version:	1
Business Unit:	Infrastructure
Responsible Officer:	Manager Parks, Sport and Recreation
Adopted By:	Council on Day Month Year
Next Review:	Day Month Year

1. Purpose

The Sport and Recreation Facilities Fair Access Policy seeks to address known barriers experienced by women and girls in accessing and using community sports facilities. The Policy aims to progressively build capacity and capabilities of Greater Shepparton City Council in the identification, and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs, communications, and delivery of services in relation to community sports facilities.

The Greater Shepparton City Council will undertake take the necessary and proportionate steps towards the implementation of the Sport and Recreation Facilities Fair Access Policy.

2. Background

Sport is a highly visible and valued feature of Greater Shepparton'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 physical and mental wellbeing and the connectivity of members of our community. Greater Shepparton City Council is well positioned to design and implement place-based, integrated actions plans that progress gender equality in community sport.

This policy represent an opportunity for Council to strengthen overall sport participation in the region through creating opportunities within sports to promote and encourage female participation.

The Victorian State Government has developed a reform agenda to address the traditional structures and way community sport and recreation organisations operate to change the systems that have perpetuated gender inequality. It involves the implementation of all nine recommendations from the 2015 Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation.

The *Gender Equality Act 2020* requires Victorian organisations, including local councils, to take positive action towards achieving gender equality and to consider and promote gender equality in their policies, programs, and services.

Policies, programs and services that relate to community sport and recreation are considered to have a direct and significant impact on the public.

As such, Local Governments are required under the Gender Equality Act 2020 to complete Gender Impact Assessments and to consider and promote gender equality in these community sport policies, programs and services.

The Policy and Action Plan have been established using the six principles outlined in the Fair Access Roadmap that was developed by the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, Sport and Recreation Victoria and the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) and outlines the key steps on this journey and provides guidance to fulfil these requirements.

This policy establishes the requirement that gender equality is considered and prioritised in all current and future planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sports facilities.

3. Statement of Intent *

This Statement of Intent establishes the expectation that gender equality is considered and prioritised in all current and future of Council's planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sports facilities.

- a. **Greater Shepparton City Council** recognises that gender equality is the attainment of equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women, men, and gender diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men, and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on their gender.
- b. **Greater Shepparton City Council** recognises that gender equity is 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.

4. Scope

The scope of the Policy is to support Council to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and usage of community sports facilities. This complies with the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and aligns with Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

The Policy applies to:

- Any Policies, programs, communication and services that relate to community sport facilities.
- All community sport facilities owned or managed by the Greater Shepparton City Council. (*List of Facilities Managed by Council – Appendix 1*)
- All community sports facilities managed by a Committee of Management on behalf of Council.

5. Policy Framework

The Policy is designed to comply with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, and the wider Victorian Government gender equality strategy.

Greater Shepparton City Council acknowledges:

- a. The disadvantaged position some individuals have had in the sport and recreation sector because of their gender; and
- b. That achieving gender equality will require diverse approaches for women, men, and gender diverse people to achieve similar outcomes for people of all genders.

Greater Shepparton City Council will:

- a. Engage fairly and equitably with all staff, governance working groups, state sporting organisations, regional sport assemblies (where applicable) and members of our sport and recreation community, regardless of their gender, in a positive, respectful, and constructive manner; and
- b. Engage in the process of gender impact assessments to assess the implications for women, men, and gender diverse people of any planned action, including policies and communications. This is a strategy for making all voices, concerns and experiences, an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring of policies and programs.

6. Fair Access Principles

The Fair Access Principles have been developed by the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, Sport and Recreation Victoria and VicHealth, in consultation with representatives from local government and the state sport and recreation sector.

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.

1. Community sports facilities and environments are genuinely welcoming, 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 facilities:
 - 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 and girls should be equitably represented in leadership and governance roles.
- 5. Encourage and support all user groups who access and use community sport Facilities to understand, adopt and implement gender equitable access and use practices.
- 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 facilities.

Greater Shepparton City Council considers that these principles provide clear direction, while also enabling adaption to the specific environment of the Greater Shepparton area.

7. Definitions

Committees of Management

For the purposes of this document, refers to committees appointed by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* to manage recreation reserves where community sport training and games are held.

Community Asset Committees

Community Asset Committees, in accordance with Section 65 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, are established for the purpose of managing a community asset in the municipal district. Council's Community Asset Committees oversee a range of facilities on Council's behalf, including public halls, community centres, and recreation reserves.

Community Sports Facilities

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

Gender

Gender is generally understood as a social and cultural construction, referring to the way in which a person identifies or expresses their masculine or feminine characteristics. A person's gender identity or gender expression is not always exclusively male or female and may or may not correspond to their sex.

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.

Gender equality

The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men 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.

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.

Public land management groups

For the purposes of this document, are the Committees of Management appointed under the *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978* and responsible for the management of recreation reserves where community sport training and games are held.

8. Compliance

Greater Shepparton City Council commits to undertake a GIA on all current community sports facilities access and use policies and processes, and to consider opportunities to strengthen gender equitable access and use of community sports facilities in alignment with the Fair Access Principles.

If the process of assessing current policies and processes identifies opportunities to develop or strengthen gender equitable access and use of community sports facilities in alignment with the Fair Access Principles, Council commits to developing and adopting a locally relevant gender equitable access and use policy and action plan by no later than 1 October 2024.

Council acknowledges that the requirement to have a gender equitable access and use policy and action plan (or equivalent) in place, and the ability to demonstrate progress against that policy and action plan (or equivalent), will form part of the eligibility criteria for Victorian Government funding programs relating to community sports facilities from 1 July 2024.

Council has also identified specific actions to progress gender equitable access and use of community sports facilities in its Sport and Recreation Facilities Fair Access Action Plan.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Local Government - CEO and Executive Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote a gender-aware and gender-responsive culture and community and championing the Sport and Recreation Facilities Fair Access Policy. To promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women and girls in sport and active recreation.
Parks Sport and Recreation Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead the review of sport and recreation policies and process Develop and adopt gender equitable access and use policies To communicate policy updates to all staff and members To monitor compliance and issues To promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women and girls
Gender Equity Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the review of sport and recreation policies and processes Support the formal adoption process of a new or revised gender equitable policies
Sporting Clubs Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To communicate and educate sport and recreation facilities user groups and users.
Local Government – all staff, or Land Management Groups – all committee members/volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To adhere to and communicate the policy when required. To attend training / awareness programs. Support the undertaking of Gender Impact Assessment and submission of progress reports as per the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> obligations
External Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women and girls To promote a gender-aware and gender-responsive culture and community and championing the Sport and Recreation Facilities Fair Access Policy. Develop and adopt gender equitable access and use policies 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with Council to promote a gender-aware and gender responsive culture and community and championing the Sport and Recreation Facilities Fair Access Policy. • To promote a gender-aware and gender-responsive culture and community and championing the Sport and Recreation Facilities Fair Access Policy. • Promote and lead new approaches to fixture preparation to ensure fair and equitable access to community sporting facilities and compliance with Council's policy. • Raise awareness of the Fair Access Policy Roadmap and its targets with clubs, leagues and associations. • Commence education of clubs, associations and leagues to advance gender equitable access and usage of community sports facilities.
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10. Related Documents:

- *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)*
- *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- Greater Shepparton City Council – Sport 2050 Strategic Plan

11. Review

The Manager Parks, Sport and Recreation will be responsible for reviewing this Policy every two years, and/ or when required.

Appendix – 1

Table 1.1: Greater Shepparton Sport Facilities - Council

COUNCIL OWNED & MANAGED FACILITIES		
Chas Johnson Reserve	Frank Howley Recreation Reserve	V E Vibert Reserve
Kialla West Recreation Reserve	Kialla Park Reserve	Shepparton Sports Precinct (SSP)
Shepparton Sports Stadium	SSP – Greater Shepparton Athletics Complex	SSP – Greater Shepparton BMX Track
SSP – Greater Shepparton Football Complex	SSP – Greater Shepparton Hockey Complex	SSP – Greater Shepparton Netball Complex
SSP – Greater Shepparton Regional Tennis Complex	SSP – WB Hunter Reserve	SSP - Velodrome

Table 1.2: Greater Shepparton Sport Facilities - Council owned – Volunteer Committee of Management

COUNCIL OWNED FACILITIES – VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT		
Arcadia Recreation Reserve	Bunbartha Recreation Reserve	Central Park Recreation Reserve
Congupna Recreation Reserve	Dhurringile Recreation Reserve	Dookie Recreation Reserve (includes the Showgrounds)
Karramomus Recreation Reserve	Katandra West Recreation Reserve	Lemnos Recreation Reserve
Tallygaroopna Recreation Reserve	Toolamba Recreation Reserve	

Table 1.3: Greater Shepparton Sport Facilities – Crown Land

CROWN LAND - COUNCIL OR COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT		
Cosgrove Golf Course and Clay Target Shooting Range	Deakin Reserve	Harston Tennis Courts
Kialla Raceway (Greyhounds and Harness Racing Track)	Victoria Park Lake (including Aquamoves Aquatic Centre)	Mooroopna Recreation Reserve
Pine Lodge Recreation Reserve	Princess Park	Shepparton Showgrounds
Shepparton Lawn Tennis Club	Shepparton North Reserve – Tennis Courts	Tatura Multi-Sports Complex
Tatura Showgrounds and Recreation Reserve	Frank Howley Reserve (partly owned by Council and DEECA)	Victory Park

Table 1.4: Greater Shepparton Sport Facilities – Crown Land – Volunteer Committee of Management

CROWN LAND – MANAGED BY A VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT		
Ardmona Recreation Reserve	Byrneside Tennis Courts	Caniambo Recreation Reserve
Cooma Recreation Reserve	Dargalong Racecourse & Recreation Reserve (Murchison East Golf Course)	Merrigum Park Recreation Reserve
Murchison Recreation Reserve	Tatura Public Gardens & Recreation Reserve	Tatura Racecourse & Recreation Reserve
Undera Recreation Reserve	Lions Park Tennis Courts (Murchison)	

It is noted that there are numerous other facilities throughout the municipality that provide sport capacity that are not listed in the above tables, but have nonetheless been taken into consideration as part of the overall Policy.

DOCUMENT REVISIONS

Version #	Date Adopted	Date Effective



GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY COUNCIL
SPORT & RECREATION
FACILITIES FAIR
ACCESS POLICY -
ACTION PLAN

Effective: 1 July 2024

Background:

Council has developed a Sport & Recreation Facility Fair Access Policy to address known barriers experienced by women and girls in accessing and using community sports infrastructure, whilst also supporting inclusive opportunities for the sports and active recreation community.

The Victorian Government, led by the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, requires all LGA's to have a Fair Access Policy and Action Plan to help ensure a future where there is a level playing field for women and girls in sport and active recreation.

From 1 July 2024, all Victorian Councils will have a gender equitable aligned Policy in place to adhere to State legislation.

Sport and active recreation is a highly visible and valued feature of The Greater Shepparton City Council's culture and identity.

The sport and active recreation sector provides opportunities for enriching our communities through the promotion of respect and fair mindedness for all people, while also supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of all Victorians. Council is well positioned to implement plans that progress gender equality in community sport.

The obligations the Council need to meet under the Gender Equality Act 2020 will aim to work alongside community sport and active recreation clubs, governing bodies, sports leagues and associations, community participants and recreation patrons for enhancing gender equity and sport and recreation community inclusion.



Purpose:

The Council will need to continue taking steps to ensure a future where there is a level playing field for women and girls in sport and active recreation, so they can fully participate in and enjoy all the benefits of community sport right through to senior leadership roles. The primary focus of Sport & Recreation Facility Fair Access Policy will be to promote women and girls opportunities in the sports and active recreation community.

Greater Shepparton City Council is already advocating, supporting and providing opportunities for women and girls in a number of ways, such as female friendly pavilions and other infrastructure including sportsground lighting that provide enhanced utilisation and safer inclusive spaces. Council will continue to support women and girls in sport; however, the Policy extends the lens on our community recreational infrastructure, support full participation opportunities (player, coaching, administrator, volunteer, spectator), equal representation (leadership and governance), and prioritise facility access that advocates for women and girls.

The Policy supports the foundation for change and action for publicly owned community sports infrastructure. The Policy will be a key driver for practical and cultural change to ensure everyone has access to the full benefits that sport and active recreation. The Policy is designed to help Council and stakeholders think critically about how their policies, strategies, plans, sports infrastructure, programs and services meet the diverse needs of women and girls in the sport and active recreation community.

Action:

To support the Policy, Council has also developed an Action Plan to outline what steps and strategies Council will take to support the inclusion of women, girls and diverse groups in accessing and using community sports infrastructure.



This action plan is based on six (6) principles of inclusivity, full participation, equal representation, encouraging and supporting user groups, and prioritising user groups committed to equality.

1. Community sports infrastructure and environments are genuinely welcoming, 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, and 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 practices.
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.

Greater Shepparton City Council considers that these principles provide clear direction, while also enabling adaption to the specific environment of Shepparton's area.

#	Actions	Principle	Time frame	Indicator /Outcomes	Responsibility
1	Conduct an audit of existing sports and recreation facilities that identifies and prioritises design improvements that support fair access. Improvements could include accessible and all gender change facilities, toilet amenities, quiet and reflection spaces, family rooms, multi-use spaces and access requirements	1	2024 - 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A facility audit is conducted. 	Council
2	Identify and promote training opportunities to community sport and recreation users and facilitators on how to create an inclusive and welcoming environment that is culturally and psychologically safe.	1,5,6	2024- Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programs and workshops delivered 	Council User groups Sporting Organisations
3	Support, partner and promote sports and active recreation groups or initiatives that are endeavouring to support women and girls' participation.	3	2024- Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council share, promote and support participation opportunities for women and girls across the community 	Council User groups Sporting Organisations
4	Promote social sporting opportunities within the LGA – expo, newsletter advertising, grant funding.	3	2024- Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in social sport opportunities increases for women and girls. An increase in alternative activities offered by sporting clubs, commercial operators and other providers. 	Council User groups Sporting Organisations
5	Identify and promote training and support for women and girls to become coaches and officials	2	2024- Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include identified opportunities in newsletters and Council's website and social media 	Council User groups Sporting Organisations

#	Actions	Principle	Time frame	Indicator /Outcomes	Responsibility
6	Council in collaboration with Regional Sport Assemblies, state sporting associations, peak bodies and clubs provide training and education to encourage and upskill women and girls to fulfil administration, management and leadership roles in sport and recreation clubs and facilities.	4	2024- Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data obtained to identify the percentage of women in governance and leadership roles The Women and girls see people like them in leadership and facilitation roles. 	Council User groups Sporting Organisations
7	Council Support Community Asset Committees to adopt Council's Sport and Recreation Facilities Fair Access Policy, or develop their own	5	2024-2028	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Asset committees have adopted Council's Fair Access Policy, or developed their own 	Council User groups Sporting Organisations
8	Identify workshops for clubs and user groups to understand the best practices	2,5	2024-2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops delivered in partnership with sporting bodies Better understanding on the policy and its positive effect on clubs development 	Council User groups Sporting Organisations
9	Review lease and ground hire costs for clubs who provide opportunities for women and girls to participate in their sport – including demonstrated commitment to implementing the actions within this plan	1,6	2024- Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fees structure reviewed. Expectations are articulated in agreements which are signed off from clubs. 	Council
10	Council will update the application and allocations process for sport and active recreation groups to ensure safe and welcoming environments.	6	2024- Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair Allocation of facilities aligning with the Council's Facility User Guide 	Council
11	Review Council Community grants to support initiatives that empower and upskill women and girls.	6	2024- Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants reviewed Funding stream identified Criteria established. A weighting (5-10%) to clubs that apply and demonstrate commitment to gender equity. 	Council

#	Actions	Principle	Time frame	Indicator /Outcomes	Responsibility
12	Review Council's sport and recreation policies	1,6	2024- Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policies and procedures reviewed	Council

This is an active document and will be reviewed periodically in accordance with the Fair Access Policy Roadmap and progress. This ensures ongoing alignment with our commitment to equitable access to sport and recreation facilities as outlined in the policy.