

Community Sport Fair Access Policy

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Community Sport Fair Access Policy.....	1
1. Statement and Purpose	2
2. Background.....	2
3. Scope.....	3
4. Policy Details	4
5. Fair Access Principles	5
6. Roles and Responsibilities.....	5
7. Relevant Legislation and Policies	6
8. Human Rights Charter	7
9. Definitions	7
10. Results.....	8

1. Statement and Purpose

The Community Sport 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 Towong Shire 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 infrastructure.

Towong Shire Council will undertake take the necessary and proportionate steps towards implementation of the Community Sport Fair Access Policy.

Towong Shire Council has an expectation that gender equality is considered and prioritised in all current and future Council planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sports infrastructure.

2. Background

Sport and active recreation are highly visible and valued features of Towong Shire Council'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 of all Victorians. Towong Shire Council is well positioned to design and implement place-based, integrated actions plans that progress gender equality in community sport.

The Victorian Government is committed to developing an environment for all Victorians to live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources, and opportunities, and are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness. A reform agenda has been developed 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 all nine (9) recommendations from the 2015 Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation. This includes recommendation six (6):

"...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"

As a defined entity of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, Towong Shire Council is required 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 policy that has a direct and significant impact on the public.

From 1 July 2024, all Victorian Local Governments will be required to have a Fair Access Policy and Action Plan (or equivalent) in place and be able to demonstrate progress against that policy and action

plan, in order to be eligible for Victorian State Government funding programs relating to community sports Infrastructure.

3. Scope

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

The scope of the Policy is to support Towong Shire Council to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and usage of community sports infrastructure. This complies with the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and aligns with Council’s Health and Wellbeing Plan and other Council Strategies:

Reform Agenda	Objectives
<p>To support Towong Shire Council to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and use of community sports infrastructure</p>	<p>To build capacity and capabilities of Towong Shire Council in the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs, communications, and delivery of services in relation to community sport and recreation.</p> <p>To ensure an effective place-based response for the gender equitable use and access of community sports infrastructure.</p> <p>To promote gender equality in policies, programs, communications, and services as they relate to community sports infrastructure.</p>

For Towong Shire Council, the Policy applies to the following community sports infrastructure with Council being the land manager and/or operator of the facility. Towong Shire Council has also identified specific actions to progress gender equitable access and use of community sport infrastructure in its Community Sport Fair Access Action Plan.

	Facility	Location
1	Walwa Recreation Reserve	Walwa
2	Dartmouth Oval	Dartmouth
3	Tallangatta Swimming Pool	Tallangatta
4	Tallangatta Bowling Club	Tallangatta
5	Tallangatta Tennis Courts & Clubroom	Tallangatta
6	Corryong Swimming Pool	Corryong
7	Corryong Skate Park	Corryong
8	Cudgewa Tennis Courts	Cudgewa

4. Policy Details

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

Towong Shire Council acknowledges:

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

Towong Shire Council will:

- 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
- engage in the process of gender impact assessments to assess the implications for women, men, trans 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.

5. 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.

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



6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Coordinator of Recreation & Community Development is responsible for implementing Towong Shire Council's Community Sport Fair Access Policy. Management personnel, staff, volunteers, and

stakeholders (for example SSAs, RSAs and CoMs) at Towong Shire Council have a shared responsibility to support the Policy, as outlined in the table below.

Role	Responsibility
Chief Executive Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote a gender-aware and gender-responsive culture and community and championing the 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.
Director Community and Planning	<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 monitor compliance and issues. Support the undertaking of Gender Impact Assessment and submission of progress reports as per the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> obligations.
Director Corporate and Organisational Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the formal adoption process of new or revised gender equitable policies. Undertake Gender Impact Assessment and submission of progress reports as per the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> obligations.
Coordinator of Recreation & Community Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the review of sport and recreation policies and processes. To communicate and educate sport and recreation infrastructure user groups and users.
All Council Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To adhere to and communicate the policy when required. To attend training/awareness programs.

7. Relevant Legislation and Policies

This Policy should be read in conjunction with all other relevant Council policies and procedures, as well as relevant legislative requirements.

Legislation includes:

- *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)*
- *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*

Internal policies and plans:

- Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2022-2025
- Recreation Strategy for Towong Shire 2022-2033

8. Human Rights Charter

This Policy has been assessed as being compatible with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* [Vic].

9. Definitions

Term	Definition
Committees of Management (CoM)	For the purposes of this document, refers to committees appointed by the Department of Land, Water, Environment and Planning under the <i>Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978</i> to manage recreation reserves where community sport training and games are held.
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 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 (GIA)	A requirement under the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> 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.
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 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.
Public Land Management Group	For the purposes of this document, are the Committees of Management appointed under the <i>Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978</i> and responsible for the management of recreation reserves where community sport training and games are held.
Transgender or Trans	Someone whose gender does not only align with the one assigned at birth. Not all trans people will use this term to describe themselves.

10. Results

The deployment of this policy together with the results achieved will be reviewed at least annually.



Authorised by: _____

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