



Fair Access Policy Roadmap

Supporting gender equitable access to and use of community sports infrastructure in Victoria



Acknowledgements

The Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, Sport and Recreation Victoria, the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) and the State of Victoria respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and play. We pay our respect to their Elders, past and present.

The Fair Access Policy Roadmap has been developed by the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, Sport and Recreation Victoria and VicHealth in collaboration with many organisations. In particular, the contributions of the many local governments, state sporting bodies and other groups which helped shape this project are acknowledged:

AFL Victoria	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	Municipal Association of Victoria
Athletics Victoria	East Gippsland Shire Council	National Rugby League
Ballarat City Council	Fencing Victoria	Netball Victoria
Basketball Victoria	Football Victoria	Parks Victoria
Campaspe Shire Council	Glenelg Shire Council	Regional Sport Victoria
Central Goldfields Shire Council	Hockey Victoria	Southern Grampians Shire Council
City of Casey	Hume City Council	Sunraysia Community Health Services
City of Glen Eira	Indigo Shire Council	Tennis Victoria
City of Greater Dandenong	Lacrosse Victoria	Towong Shire Council
City of Stonnington	Local Government Victoria	Vicsport
Colac Otway Shire	Macedon Ranges Shire Council	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
Commission for Gender Equality in the Public Sector	Maroondah City Council	Victorian Local Governance Association
Cricket Victoria	Melton City Council	Wellington Shire Council
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning	Mildura Rural City Council	Wyndham City Council
Department of Health	Mooney Valley City Council	
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	Moreland City Council	
	Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	

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Welcome messages

A message from the Minister for Community Sport, The Hon Ros Spence MP



Sport is integral in shaping communities and individuals. The Victorian Government is committed to ensuring everyone has the same access and opportunities when it comes to sport and active recreation.

We are excited to launch the Fair Access Policy Roadmap, which will help deliver gender equitable access to, and use of, community sports infrastructure.

While the growth of women's and girls' participation in community sport has been tremendous, it has also highlighted the ongoing challenges many members of our community still face around access and use of facilities and infrastructure.

The Fair Access Policy Roadmap represents the next advance in the momentum that the Victorian Government has already created in levelling the playing field through Australia's first Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, the Change Our Game initiative, and its significant investment in female friendly facilities.

Whether it's undertaking Gender Impact Assessments, or creating locally relevant policies and measures, the Roadmap and associated templates will provide organisations with the education and support to ensure all Victorians can fully participate in and enjoy the benefits of community sport, with fair opportunities.

In partnership with Sport and Recreation Victoria and VicHealth, and informed directly by experts in local government and the sport and active recreation sector, the Roadmap is being delivered through the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation and aligns with Victoria's Gender Equality Act 2020.

I look forward to our continued collaboration as we level the playing field for women and girls in community sport by delivering gender equitable access to publicly owned community sports infrastructure across the state.

A message from the Commissioner for Gender Equality in the Public Sector, Dr Niki Vincent



Community sport has many benefits and, like other programs delivered using public funding, should aim to share these benefits equally. However, women and girls have historically been overlooked when it comes

to sporting activities and infrastructure. In Victoria, we're working to level the playing field.

Under the Gender Equality Act 2020, public sector organisations, local councils and universities are taking positive action towards gender equality. This new law requires these organisations to consider gender equality when developing or reviewing policies, programs and services that have a direct and significant public impact.

Community sport is a strong example of this, including how people of different genders access and use community sports infrastructure. I look forward to this project supporting local councils to take positive action to make community sport accessible and inclusive for more people.

A message from the Minister for Women, The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP



Sport is a core part of our lives in Victoria. We know that in addition to benefitting our physical health, it gives us a deep sense of belonging and improved self-confidence.

Victorian women and girls, deserve to have equal access to all that sport has to offer. We know without proactive consideration, decisions routinely prevent women and girls from participating fully in sporting communities across our state due to gender biases.

Whether it's drawing up fixtures that work for players of all genders, making sure women and girls are fairly represented in leadership and governance, or ensuring car parks and change rooms are safe and welcoming – the Fair Access Roadmap provides practical guidance on creating gender equitable access to Victoria's sporting infrastructure.

We're proud to be working at all levels of society and across government to progress gender equality for all women, in all their diversity of identity and experience, in every aspect of their lives.

The partnership of councils and the community sport sector has been vital to these efforts, and I thank you for your continued support.

I look forward to continuing to work together towards a fairer, safer future for every woman and girl.

A message from the Minister for Local Government, The Hon Melissa Horne MP



Sport has a unique ability to bring our community together and unite us all. Participating in sport is an integral part of our state and is essential to the health and wellbeing of Victorians and our communities. The Fair

Access strategy is designed to strengthen community sporting groups and enhance inclusion and equal access. It will help to ensure that all Victorians have the opportunity to participate in community sport activities and enjoy the many benefits that it brings.

By ensuring fairer access to infrastructure and community sporting facilities, the Victorian Government is implementing measures to enhance gender equity principles. The strategy ties together the work of Victoria's Gender Equality Act 2020 and the Local Government Act 2020, ensuring that organisations consider gender equality, diversity and inclusion in their programs and services.

The strategy also closely aligns with the outcomes of the Growing Suburbs Fund, as announced in the 2022-2023 Victorian Budget. This means that there will be more playgrounds, cricket nets and football pitches, and other sporting facilities, helping to strengthen and support our communities as they grow.

I would like to thank the local government sector for their support and engagement throughout the development of this strategy, including the Gender Equality Advisory Committee. It is through these insights and expertise that this strategy will be able to meaningfully contribute to reversing unequal outcomes in sporting facility access across our communities.



Imagine a world where everyone receives equal encouragement, opportunity, access, support and reward.

**Free of bias.
Free of stereotypes.
Free of limitations.
A world where everyone has the chance to realise their sporting dreams.**

**It's time to
Change Our Game.**

Introduction

Sport and active recreation is a fundamental part of the lives of many Victorians, and of many Victorian communities.

Community sport and recreation infrastructure shapes our towns, suburbs and cities, with the energy and excitement of people and teams filling fields, courts, ovals, pitches and so much more all year round, come rain, hail or shine.

But when our entire community does not benefit from this infrastructure in an equitable manner, this important pillar of our health, our culture and our identities as Victorians and Australians is contributing to unequal outcomes in sport and active recreation, and a wider culture of gender inequality in our communities.

Victoria's Gender Equality Act 2020 (the Act) requires the Victorian public sector, local governments and universities to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality.

As Defined Entities under the Act, local governments and other public land management groups are also required to consider and promote gender equality, including undertaking gender impact assessments, on policies, programs and services that have a direct and significant public impact.

Policies, programs and services that relate to community sport and active recreation are an example of where this lens should be applied.

For some local governments and other public land management groups, this work is already well advanced and, in some cases, pre-dates the Act.

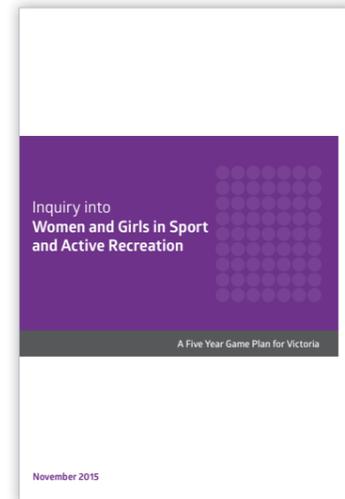
For others, this journey is just beginning – and that is where the Fair Access Policy Roadmap comes in.

The Fair Access Policy Roadmap will advance gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure stretching to every corner of Victoria.

With support from Australia's first Office for Women in Sport and Recreation and other key organisations, the Fair Access Policy Roadmap will provide local governments and other public land management groups with the education and support required to not only fulfil the requirements of the Act as it applies to community sport, but to also create locally relevant policies and measures to advance gender equitable access and use of community sporting facilities.

When brought to life in partnership with Victoria's leading sport and active recreation sector, the Fair Access Policy Roadmap will advance a level playing field that will result in greater health outcomes for all Victorians, a stronger sports sector, and fairer distribution of public asset use.

The Fair Access Policy Roadmap addresses Recommendation 6 from the Victorian Government's Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation. This Inquiry was instrumental in the formation of Australia's first Office for Women in Sport and Recreation and the Change Our Game initiative.



Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation (2015)

"Recommendation 6: Deliver female friendly built environments and equitable facility usage policies

To achieve the equitable provision of, and access to, high quality female friendly sport and active recreation facilities, which will support existing and new participation opportunities, state and local government, as well as the sector must work together ...

...Encourage facility owners and managers to review access and usage policies to ensure females have a fair share of access to the highest quality facilities at the 'best' and most popular times. Usage policies need to consider not just competition time, but training times, and the distribution between traditional competition and other participation opportunities, as well as different sports

...there are already a number of local government authorities (the primary owners of community sport and active recreation facilities) that are already active in developing policies, strategies, and audit tools to address access and use. Facilitating a universal adoption of these practices will drive change further."

Who is this resource for?

The Fair Access Policy Roadmap has been developed in partnership with local governments, the state sport and active recreation sector and other key stakeholders to improve gender equitable access and use of publicly owned community sports infrastructure across Victoria.

The Fair Access Policy Roadmap has primarily been written for:

- sport, recreation, and relevant facility management staff within local and state government
- local government staff responsible for obligations under the Gender Equality Act 2020
- community sport staff within sport and recreation bodies
- regional sport assemblies
- public land management groups overseeing publicly owned community sports infrastructure

Some local governments and other public land management groups are already well advanced when it comes to gender equality policies and practices in sport and active recreation. For others, this is the start of their journey – and it is this group that will benefit most from the Fair Access Policy Roadmap.

Critically, the Fair Access Policy Roadmap is not a 'one size fits all' approach. It is built on an appreciation that each local government, public land management group or sport and recreation organisation is best placed to understand its own opportunities and challenges to improve gender equitable access and use policies and practices.

What will be a critical challenge in one sport, may be irrelevant for the next.

What is the biggest opportunity in one local government area, may be inconsequential for the next.

And that's ok.



For any organisation seeking support to fulfil these requirements, the Fair Access Policy Roadmap outlines the key steps on this journey.

For those seeking support or, potentially, in need of the encouragement to act – the Fair Access Policy Roadmap sets out a three phase, three-year plan based on:



Phase 1: Education



Phase 2: Readiness



Phase 3: Progress

The Fair Access Policy Roadmap will provide local government, public land management groups and sporting organisations with the flexibility to use information, guidance and templates as needed, taking into account any existing policies, strategies and consideration of other local nuances.

For those organisations seeking more in-depth support on the journey ahead, three pieces of the puzzle that may assist with planning and implementation are now available:

- The **Fair Access Principles**: Six principles, developed in consultation with stakeholders, to help guide organisations seeking further support on how to approach developing a gender equitable access and use policy and action plan. These principles will form a consistent theme in the Education Phase of the Fair Access Policy Roadmap;
- The **Fair Access Policy Template**: A gender equitable access and use policy template can be used by any local government organisation or other public land management group; and
- The **Fair Access Action Plan Template**: A tool to assist any local government organisation or other public land management group to record specific, measurable and timely goals in line with each of the Fair Access Principles.



The Fair Access Targets

The following milestones and targets will apply as we collectively work towards creating a foundation of gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure across Victoria.

From
1 July
2024

Victorian Government funding criteria for community sport infrastructure to require gender equitable access and use policies (or equivalent) to be in place.

By
1 October
2024

All local governments in Victoria have gender equitable access and use policies (or equivalent) in place for community sports infrastructure.

By
1 July
2027

More women and girls report equitable access to community sports infrastructure and improved experiences participating in community sport.

The Fair Access Policy Roadmap

To achieve state-wide progress to dismantle the barriers around gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure, a change process is required.

Change takes time.

Change takes knowledge.

Change requires understanding.

Change benefits from accountability.

The Fair Access Policy Roadmap links the requirements of the Gender Equality Act 2020 with steps shaped by extensive consultation to support local governments, other public land management groups and sport and recreation bodies to work together to progress gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure across Victoria through both procedural and cultural levers for change.

	 Phase 1. Education August 2022 – 2023	 Phase 2. Readiness 2023 – 30 June 2024	 Phase 3. Progress 1 July 2024 onwards
Local governments and other public land management groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in education and community of practice initiatives Commence review of current sport and recreation strategies and policies in place Undertake Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) on community sports infrastructure access and use policies and/or processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required by the Gender Equality Act 2020, submit first Progress Report by 31 October 2023 that includes any GIAs undertaken on community sports infrastructure access and use policies and/or processes If not already in place, develop and adopt a locally relevant gender equitable access and use policy and action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress locally relevant gender equitable access and use policies and action plans Support a review of the Fair Access Policy Roadmap Accessing Victorian Government community sport infrastructure funding programs will require evidence of gender equitable access and use policies and action plans being in place and advancing from 1 July 2024 As required by the Gender Equality Act 2020, submit second Progress Report that includes GIAs undertaken
Sport and recreation organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in education and community of practice initiatives Raise awareness of the Fair Access Policy Roadmap and its targets with clubs, leagues and associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review processes and/or policies of clubs, associations and leagues that may impact gender equitable access and usage of community sports infrastructure in your sport Commence education of clubs, associations and leagues to advance gender equitable access and usage of community sports infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a review of the Fair Access Policy Roadmap Clubs, leagues and associations seeking to access Victorian Government community sport infrastructure funding programs will be asked to demonstrate how it is supporting the gender equitable access and use policy of the relevant local government authority from 1 October 2024
Office for Women in Sport and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide education seminars, including how to undertake Gender Impact Assessments Facilitate community of practice initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development and implementation of locally relevant gender equitable access and use policies and action plans Continue education seminars and community of practice initiatives Monitor and report on gender equitable access and use status across Victoria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed into the eligibility criteria of Victorian Government community sports infrastructure funding programs the requirement of gender equitable access and use policies Lead the review of the Fair Access Policy Roadmap Lead the ongoing monitoring and reporting of gender equitable access and use outcomes across Victoria

The Fair Access Principles

In developing the Fair Access Policy Roadmap, two themes became clear:

- while some local governments are well advanced on their journey and implementing gender equitable access and use policies and programs, other organisations are at the start of their journey; and
- there are differences in the scale of resources, including people, that are available to bring gender equitable access and use policies and programs to life across different local government organisations, particularly when considering smaller rural and regional councils.

With this front of mind, six Fair Access Principles have been developed to guide local governments and other public land management groups seeking more in-depth support throughout this journey.

These six principles provide clear and defined lanes for any organisation to build a gender equitable access and use policy, that is supported by a Fair Access Policy Template and Fair Access Action Plan Template that are now available.

The principles reflect that there are both cultural and administrative elements that will drive the strongest, most sustained outcomes, as well as the opportunity to magnify and incentivise change by engaging community sporting clubs in your region directly with this process.

These principles are also relevant for sporting organisations seeking support to understand where opportunities and challenges may present themselves.

It is not compulsory for local governments and other public land management groups to adopt the six Fair Access Principles in order to comply with the Act, or to complete the Fair Access Policy Roadmap. Reasons for not adopting the Fair Access Principles may include that your organisation has existing adequate gender equitable access and use policies, or simply that your organisation has identified an alternative path that is a stronger fit for your community.

That's ok.

But for the local governments and other public land management groups who are seeking guidance, the following Fair Access Principles can be adopted to achieve gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure:

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

Case studies: The Fair Access Principles in practice

Lacrosse Victoria implemented a flexible uniform policy, that recognises in circumstances where someone's religious or cultural beliefs, or gender identity conflicts with Lacrosse Victoria's standard dress code, that modifications will be accommodated where possible.

Lacrosse clubs are encouraged to offer flexibility in uniforms to encourage the participation of women, girls, trans and gender diverse people. Players are able to freely choose the most appropriate uniform in line with their affirmed gender and beliefs.

Lacrosse is one of a growing number of sports promoting flexible uniform policies, in line with [Victoria University's Change Our Game-backed research](#) that demonstrated the benefit of flexible sport uniform policies to help retain participants and increase the confidence of girls playing sport.

Principles: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Key Takeaway

Flexible policies and strategies that listen to what women and girls prefer will help break down barriers to participation

Barwon Soccer Club has even more room to grow thanks to the completion of an additional gender-neutral changeroom at their home ground at Grovedale Recreation Reserve.

The City of Greater Geelong was successful in their application for funding from the Victorian Government to invest in two new gender-neutral changerooms, including closed-off and lockable showers and toilets, new access pathways, and new storage areas. The previous facilities had struggled to meet the demand of its growing women and girls' program.

The safer and more inclusive infrastructure will significantly improve the training and playing experience for women and girls playing soccer not only for the Club, but for other players in the region too.

Principles: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Key Takeaway

Welcoming and inclusive environments include physical spaces – and funding opportunities are available

Frankston City Council is committed to gender equity. As part of this commitment, the Council's Recreation team works closely with community sporting clubs to educate and mentor clubs to become more gender inclusive.

This education has included the Council releasing a [Gender Inclusive Sporting Club: Self-Assessment Tool](#) as part of its Active Leisure Strategy 2021-2029, to support clubs to self-identify their current performance relative to a scoring system, and opportunities for improvement.

Principles: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Key Takeaway

Self-assessment tools and other templates are a great way to support driving change at scale

The Stawell Gift is Australia's oldest and richest professional footrace, having been held in all but four years since 1878 and is the centrepiece of a three-day Easter weekend annual carnival in regional Victoria.

In 1989, a Women's Gift race was introduced, but was delivered with less promotion, prizemoney and status as compared to the (men's) Stawell Gift.

In recent years, the Stawell Athletic Club has made significant progress towards gender equality, including equal prize money for both events and honouring past winners of the Women's Gift with commemorative plaques, like those provided to men, along Stawell's Main Street.

A further important step occurred in 2022 when, for the first time, the finalists in the Women's Gift had their names displayed on the historic Central Park scoreboard in the same manner as the men's finalists – something that had not occurred before, removing a further symbolic inequity by presenting the men and women athletes with equal prominence.

Principles: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Key Takeaway

Consider if your language and symbols may present opportunities to advance gender equality

Hockey Victoria's Gender Equity and Diversity Strategy was designed to create an inclusive and gender equitable hockey community, where all genders are treated with respect and have equal opportunities, decision making power and responsibilities. An important aim of the strategy is the implementation of gender balance in all areas of the sport, and good governance principles.

The strategy outlines not only a requirement for a minimum of 40% women's representation at the Hockey Victoria board and board sub-committee level, but for equal (50%) appointments in coaching and officiating. The profile of men and women as participants of the sport is also promoted equally. All social media content, videos, annual reports are carefully analysed to ensure equal representation.

This includes club governance structures requiring a minimum of two male and two female officer bearers, as well as coaching and umpiring gender measures.

This process has helped Hockey Victoria to collect baseline data on which clubs have 40% or more women directors, allowing the identification of clubs that may require more support to achieve the gender balance standard by 2025.

Hockey Victoria also implemented an equal scheduling policy for community clubs, where men's and women's teams are given equal share of preferred match starting times and training times.

Principles: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Key Takeaway

State sport and recreation bodies can drive rapid and substantial progress in gender equality in community sport

Fairpark Football Club set out to review its match scheduling, and test the assumption that women wanted to play 'under lights' at timeslots that followed on from men's games.

The Club consulted with members to better understand the preferences of women and girls and found that the night scheduling would actually have a negative impact on the women's game, and on volunteers. The late time slot turned many women off playing due to clashes with family and social commitments, and was generally seen as less appealing. The consultation resulted in women's games moving to a Saturday morning timeslot – a time that better suited players, spectators, and officials.

This positive action has enabled women volunteering for the club to play without being forced to forego their other club volunteer roles. The change has increased spectator numbers and has now been recommended by the Club's league as the preferred time for women's matches.

Key Takeaway

Ask women and girls what works best for them – don't assume

Principles: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Greater Shepparton City Council wanted to find a way to provide opportunities for women and girls to keep moving forward at every level in sport without financial barriers.

Following internal conversations and a review of what other organisations were offering, club support officers introduced a new category to its Our Sporting Future Funding Program, which provides funding between \$500 and \$10,000 for women and girls to take part in relevant leadership and development programs.

Successful candidates included three women who have undertaken accreditation training to further their skills as swimming coaches. The Council continues to follow news articles related to gender equity in sport and keeps an eye out for more ways they can help women and girls reach their potential, without worrying about the cost.

Key Takeaway

Adjusting existing programs may be a way to make significant inroads

Principles: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Representation on Boards In a world-first, Victorian state sport and recreation bodies have been required to have at least 40% women board directors to be eligible to receive certain funding from Sport and Recreation Victoria and VicHealth since 1 July 2019.

This level of representation is based on the leading '40/40/20' model of representation, which means that a board or committee has at least 40% representation of men and women, with the remaining up to 20% flexible to accommodate both the management of resignations and appointments as well as the inclusion of gender diverse people.

The introduction of this quota, supported by education seminars over an extended period leading up to the effective date, resulted in significant change, with the number of organisations with at least 40% women directors more than doubling between 2017 and 2019, demonstrating that many highly qualified women are interested in sport leadership roles when historic cultural and procedural barriers are overcome.

Key Takeaway

Linking targets to funding is an effective way to drive change for women's representation in leadership – with the 40/40/20 model a leading example

Principles: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Brimbank City Council's Sports Club User Guide outlines lease and license discount assistance for junior and female participation to incentivise greater focus on increasing participation of women and girls in community sport.

The Council currently offers the following discount opportunities for community clubs:

- Clubs with a junior team or female team in the previous season receive a 10% lease and/or license discount
- Clubs with one junior and one female team in the previous season receive a 20% lease and/or license discount
- Clubs with two or more junior teams and two or more female teams in the previous season receive a 30% lease and/or license discount.

Key Takeaway

Incentives can be an appealing way to inspire action

Principles: 1 2 3 4 5 6

In 2021, **Bass Coast Shire** became the first council in Victoria to require professional sporting bodies holding events in Council owned or managed land and facilities to award equal prize money to men and women.

The first event under this new requirement was the AMX Motocross Open held in Wonthaggi in 2021, with its \$20,000 prize money – one of the largest purses in motocross in Australia – split equally between the winners of the men's and women's competitions.

It was the first time that equal prize money had been awarded in motocross in Australia – and believed to be a first globally as well.

Key Takeaway

Local governments have many levers to influence and accelerate change towards gender equality in sport – including in pay equality

Principles: 1 2 3 4 5 6

Moreland City Council's Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy was amended in 2009 to state that:

"Council facilities will only be given to clubs with junior sides and that have girls or women participating in either competitive and/or non-competitive physical activities."

The policy was amended further in 2016 to require clubs to register at least one full female team/side in a registered competition, with this requirement to be met no later than three seasons from that point.

Key Takeaway

Access to public owned community sports facilities should benefit the whole community

Principles: 1 2 3 4 5 6



Frequently asked questions

What's going on?

The Victorian Government is 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 the benefits of community sport right through to senior leadership roles.

Home of Australia's first Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, the Fair Access Policy Roadmap will support a foundation of gender equitable access and use policies and action plans for publicly owned community sports infrastructure.

The Fair Access Policy Roadmap will be relevant to local governments in Victoria, as well as other public land management groups, including, Alpine Resort Boards and Committees of Management.

The Fair Access Policy Roadmap is also relevant for sport and recreation organisations in Victoria.

What is the connection between the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and the *Fair Access Policy Roadmap*?

The Gender Equality Act 2020 requires the Victorian public sector, local councils, and universities to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality. It also requires these organisations to consider and promote gender equality in their policies, programs, and services, and to conduct Gender Impact Assessments on policies, programs and services that have a direct and significant impact on the public.

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 Act to complete Gender Impact Assessments and to consider and promote gender equality in these community sport policies, programs and services.

This is where the Fair Access Policy Roadmap comes in.

For any organisation seeking support to fulfil these requirements, the Fair Access Policy Roadmap outlines the key steps on this journey and the guidance that will be provided by the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation.

Why do we need to undertake gender impact assessments?

A requirement of the Act is to undertake gender impact assessments on all policies, programs, and services, including those up for review which directly and significantly impact the public.

Policies, programs and services that relate to the access and usage of community sports infrastructure is an example of this. This means local councils are required, under the Act, to complete Gender Impact Assessments on any policies currently in place.

Why do we need a gender equitable access and use policy?

Equality is not negotiable in Victoria. Sport and active recreation provide fundamental opportunities for enriching our communities, and these opportunities must be available on an equal basis to all members of our community.

Unfortunately, at the moment that is not always the case. And that needs to change.

Gender equitable access and use policies and processes will be a key driver for procedural and cultural change to ensure the full benefits of sport and recreation are available to all. In fact, removing key barriers to the participation of women and girls in sport and active recreation is arguably the single biggest growth opportunity for this sector.

In addition, with sport and active recreation being one of our most visible sectors, advancing gender equality here is a key lever to driving gender equality more broadly in our society.

What if my organisation already has a gender equity policy?

That's fantastic news!

Many local councils have organisational gender equity or equality policies. These often relate to internal processes and practices. If your current gender equity policy does not directly or indirectly factor in gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure, it sounds like the Fair Access Policy Roadmap may support you to fulfil your requirements under the Gender Equality Act 2020.

The Fair Access Policy Roadmap aims to build capacity and capability in local government and other public land management groups regarding the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs, communications, and delivery of services in relation to community sports infrastructure.

If your current policy does consider community sports infrastructure, we encourage you to simply review the Fair Access Policy to consider any opportunities to strengthen your current approach. Participation in the education seminars as part of the Fair Access Policy Roadmap may also support you to complete gender impact assessments on your community sport policies, programs and services, which will be required under the Act.

Does my organisation need to have a standalone gender equitable access and use policy?

Not necessarily.

In consultation with local governments, it became clear that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to how councils structure their policies and strategies. For your organisation, it may make more sense for your approach to advancing gender equitable access and use of publicly owned community sports infrastructure in your region to live within other policies or strategy, such as your Sport and Recreation Strategy or your Council's Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.

And that's ok.

How long is the Fair Access Policy Roadmap?

Commencing in August 2022, the Fair Access Policy Roadmap is a three-year phased approach to support 100% of local governments in Victoria to have gender equitable access and use policies (or equivalent) in place for community sports infrastructure by October 2024.

Importantly, from 1 July 2024, the eligibility criteria of Victorian Government programs supporting the funding of community sports infrastructure will require gender equitable access and use policies to be in place.

Will support be available?

Yes.

The Fair Access Policy Roadmap has been developed in consultation with many local government, sport and recreation and other stakeholders. Throughout the consultation, there has been a clear theme that organisations early in their journey as well as those with fewer resources will need greater support.

The Office for Women in Sport and Recreation will lead the education and other support that will be provided throughout the Fair Access Policy Roadmap, in partnership with Sport and Recreation Victoria, VicHealth and other select organisations.

In addition, three key resources are now available:

- **The Fair Access Principles:** Six principles, developed in consultation with local government and the sport and active recreation sector, on which any organisation seeking additional guidance can form a foundation of a gender equitable access and use policy and action plan. These principles will form a consistent theme in the education phase of the Fair Access Policy Roadmap;
- **The Fair Access Policy Template:** A gender equitable access and use policy template able to be used by any local government organisation; and
- **The Fair Access Action Plan Template:** A tool to assist any local government and to identify and articulate specific, measurable and timely goals, in line with each of the principles.

Who can I contact for more information?

The Office for Women in Sport and Recreation is here to support you and your organisation to progress gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure in your area. For more information, please contact FairAccess@sport.vic.gov.au



Key terms

Committees of Management for the purpose of this document, refers to committees appointed by the Department of Land, Water, Environment and Planning under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 to manage recreation reserves where community sport training and games are held.

Community Sports Infrastructure refers to 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 refers to 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 focuses on the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, trans and gender diverse people. Equality does not mean that everyone will become the same, but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on their gender.

Gender Equity is the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities on the basis of gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs and power related to their gender and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.

Gender Impact Assessment, or **GIA**, is 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 purpose 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.

Helpful links

- [About the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, the *Change Our Game initiative* and the *Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation \(2015\)*](#)
- [About the Gender Equality Act 2020](#)
- [Fair Play Code](#)
- [Guidelines for Preventing Violence Against Women, including a Gender Audit Tool Template \(p. 61\) \(Sport and Recreation Victoria\)](#)
- [Quick Wins for Sporting Clubs Template \(VicHealth\)](#)
- [13 Steps to Tackle Gender Resistance \(VicHealth\)](#)
- [Effects of Sport Uniform Policy Changes to Girls and Women \(Victoria University\)](#)
- [Key terms and Definitions from Pride in our Future - Victoria's LGBTIQ+ 2022-32 Strategy](#)



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GAME**

