

CITY OF BALLARAT FAIR ACCESS POLICY

1.0 Purpose

Sport is a highly visible and valued feature of City of Ballarat'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, social and mental wellbeing of all Victorians. The City of Ballarat is well positioned to design and implement place-based, integrated actions that progress gender and intersectional equality in community sport.

Victoria's *Gender Equality Act 2020* (the Act) requires local governments to take positive action towards achieving workplace gender equality. As a defined entity under the Act, local governments are 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 these lenses should be applied.

The Fair Access Policy (the Policy) seeks to address known barriers experienced by women and girls in accessing and using community sports infrastructure and to extend this to consider other intersectional impacts. In this Policy, when 'women and girls' is referenced, it includes transgender women and girls. By recognising intersectional gender inequality, the policy aims to further address discrimination, disadvantage, and inequity. The policy aims to progressively build capacity and capabilities of the City of Ballarat 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 provision, usage and access.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all Council-owned and managed community sports infrastructure, and it is envisaged that over time, and with support from Council, the objectives of this policy will be embedded across all sport and recreation facilities within the City of Ballarat, not just City of Ballarat owned infrastructure.

The policy applies to all business units of the City of Ballarat who contribute to planning and delivering community sports infrastructure, those who support community sports associations and clubs, and all responsible for assessing and progressing gender and intersectional equity. It provides a framework for Councillors, Council Officers, and tenants of City of Ballarat owned community infrastructure and consultants/agencies acting on behalf of Council.

As a defined entity of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, the City of Ballarat is required to conduct Gender Impact Assessments (GIA) on all policies, programs, communications, and services, both new and those being reviewed, which directly and significantly impact the public. The access and use of community sports infrastructure is an example of policy that has a direct and significant impact on the public.

As local government has key responsibilities in the development and use of community sports infrastructure, they are best placed to increase equitable access through policy and strategy. The policy will support the City of Ballarat to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and usage of community sports infrastructure. The policy enables effective and efficient integration of the requirements of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, the *Local Government Act 2020*, the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*, and other legislative frameworks.

At a local level, City of Ballarat is committed to Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE), an alliance of businesses, organisations, sporting clubs and groups who share a vision for safe, equal and respectful communities in the Grampians region, where women and children live free from the threat of violence. The policy will support City of Ballarat's commitment as a CoRE member, to preventing gender-based violence through the promotion of gender equality.

3.0 Policy Statement

This policy establishes the expectation that gender and intersectional equality is considered, prioritised, and action is taken in all current and future Council planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sports infrastructure. The City of Ballarat recognises that:

- a) Gender equality is the attainment of equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for women, men, trans, and gender diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men, trans, and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on their gender. Transgender women can also experience unique barriers to the attainment of gender equality that should be considered.
- b) 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 also other attributes, and these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies related imbalances.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Build capacity and capabilities of the City of Ballarat in the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender and intersectional inequality in policy, programs, communications, and delivery of services in relation to community sport and recreation.
- Ensure an effective place-based response for the gender and intersectional equitable use of and access to community sports infrastructure.
- Promote gender and intersectional equality in policies, programs, communications, and services as they relate to community sports infrastructure.

The implementation of this policy is underpinned by six principles reflecting City of Ballarat's commitment to inclusivity, full participation, equitable access, equal representation in leadership, equitable practice by user groups, and prioritising user groups committed to equality. The City of Ballarat considers that these principles provide clear direction while also enabling adaption to the specific environment of Ballarat's unique area. These principles are:

1. Community sports infrastructure and environments are genuinely welcoming, safe and inclusive environments.
2. Community members of all genders and intersections can fully participate in all aspects of community sport and active recreation, including as a player, coach, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator.
3. Community members of all genders and intersections 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; and
 - c. To support existing and new participation opportunities and a variety of sports.
4. Community members of all genders 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 intersectional gender equitable access and use practices.
6. Prioritise access, use and support to all user groups who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to intersectional and gender equitable access and use of allocated community sport infrastructure.

Implementation of the policy will involve incorporating the Fair Access principles and related actions within the Active Ballarat Strategy. Actions will include:

- Reviewing and updating the Active Ballarat Strategy and Active Women and Girls’ Strategy to deliver on Fair Access Policy requirements.
- Undertaking baseline data collection of existing practices including usage of Council owned facilities, the participation of people of different genders, ages, abilities and cultures, leadership representation, and adding gender-based reporting into booking systems.
- Exploring opportunities to leverage and incentivise early uptake of actions that lead to progress towards gender and intersectional equitable outcomes in sport and recreation usage and access.
- Commitment to undertaking Gender Impact Assessment reviews on relevant policy, processes, and strategies, ensuring alignment with Fair Access principles.
- Ensuring that the Recreation Infrastructure Plan includes principles and actions which makes sure that all new and upgraded sport and recreation infrastructure supports inclusion.
- Partnering with other organisations, including Women’s Health Grampians through the CoRE Alliance, to support sports and recreation associations and leagues to embed Fair Access Policy principles within their operations, promote gender equality, create safe and welcoming environments for all, and deliver more training, resources and participation opportunities for women, girls and gender diverse people.
- Highlighting good practice examples and impacts within the community and encouraging more equitable representation and celebration of achievements of women, girls and gender diverse people in communications and media.
- Advocating for state and local associations to review uniform policies with a view to making them more inclusive.
- Reviewing City of Ballarat grant guidelines and internal processes to identify any additional opportunities to support clubs and groups who are supporting Fair Access principles.

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The successful implementation of the Fair Access Policy will rely upon engagement and collaboration from key stakeholder groups and sound internal processes to achieve identified objectives. These include strong policy governance, managing risk, engaging stakeholders, implementation planning, staff resourcing and monitoring, review and evaluation of the policy. Key roles and responsibilities have been outlined below.

Role	Responsibility
Councillor and Executive Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a gender and intersectional aware and responsive culture and community and champion the policy. • Promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender and intersectional equality and improvement in the status of women, girls and gender diverse people in sport and active recreation.
Recreation Services Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the review of sport and recreation policies and processes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and adopt gender and intersectional equitable access and use policies. • Communicate policy updates to all staff and members. • Monitor compliance and issues. • Promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender and intersectional equality and improvement in the status of gender equitable access. • Undertake Gender Impact Assessments and submission of progress reports as per the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> obligations. • Communicate with and educate sport and recreation infrastructure user groups and users. • Lead the monitoring and review of the policy with a focus on continuous improvement
Other Council Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the delivery of actions which support the policy principles and provide advice and recommendations for implementation as required. • Support the review of sport and recreation policies and processes. • Support the formal adoption process of new or revised gender and intersectional equitable policies. • Support Gender Impact Assessment and submission of progress reports as per the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> obligations. • Adhere to and communicate the policy when required. • Attend training / awareness programs as required.
Regional Sports Assembly/State Sporting Associations/Women's Health Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with and educate sport and recreation infrastructure user groups and users.
Sports Associations and Leagues, Community Sports Infrastructure Clubs and User groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the implementation of the policy throughout its governance and operational procedures. • Share knowledge, values and expertise with other groups and interested parties.
Committees of Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate support of the policy for community sport facilities on Crown Land.

5.0 Supporting documents and references

5.1 Legislation

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*

5.2 Associated Documents

- Active Ballarat Strategy
- Active Women and Girls Strategy 2018
- City of Ballarat Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2031
- Inclusive Ballarat Framework 2022-2026

- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2022-2026
- Intercultural Plan 2022-2026
- Leasing and Licencing Policy
- Open Space Strategy
- Community Infrastructure Planning Policy
- LGBTIQA+ Inclusion Plan 2022-2026
- Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan 2019-21
- Ageing Well in Ballarat Strategy 2022-2026
- Ballarat Aquatic Strategy 2014
- Partnerships and Grants Policy
- Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) 2021-2025 Strategy
- Taking action to end violence against women: A guide for member of the CoRE Alliance
- City of Ballarat Prevention of Violence and Gender Equity Leadership Statement
- City of Ballarat Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025

5.3 Definitions

Council	The Councillors who are democratically elected to represent the Ballarat municipality in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> .
City of Ballarat	The body corporate constituted in accordance with the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>
Committees of Management	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.
Community	A group of people, the members of which reside in the same geographical area or have a shared background, interest, affiliation, or membership.
Gender and intersectional equality	Equal outcomes are attained for people of all genders, including for people of other identities that might otherwise be at risk of experiencing disadvantage or discrimination.
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 and evolves over time. While ‘non binary’ and ‘transgender’ are often the most frequently used, there are a wide number of other genders that fit into the gender diverse label.
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 <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> for an assessment to be carried out on policies, programs and services that 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.
Intersections/ Intersectionality	When aspects or attributes of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation.
Intersectional gender inequality	Unequal outcomes are experienced as a result of the combination of gender and one or more other forms of identity e.g. based on gender and Aboriginality, age, disability, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation or other attributes.
Place based approach	Collaborative, long-term approaches to build thriving communities delivered in a defined geographic location.
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.
Transgender	Someone whose gender does not align with the one assigned to them at birth. However, it is important to note that not all gender diverse people use this term to describe themselves.

6.0 Administrative Updates

From time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this policy. Where an update does not materially alter this policy, such a change may be made administratively. Examples of minor administrative changes include changes to names of Council departments or positions, change to names of Federal or State Government departments or a minor amendment to legislation that does not have material impact. Where any change or update may materially change the intent of this policy, it must be considered by Council.

7.0 Policy owner

Executive Manager Recreation Services

8.0 Authorisation

Adopted by Ballarat City Council on 26/06/2024. R93/24