



Council Policy

Fair Access Policy

Department/Unit	Community Strengthening	First Implemented	March 2024	Review Date	March 2028
Origin	Community Networks and Wellbeing Officer	Reviewed	-	Version	1
Authorising Officer	Endorsement by Council	Effective From	19 March 2024	TRIM Reference	E1533

Purpose/Objective

The Fair Access Policy (the Policy) seeks to address barriers experienced by women and girls in accessing and using community sports infrastructure. The Policy aims to progressively build the capacity and capabilities of Mansfield Shire Council and community sporting organisations 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.

Council recognises the value of working collaboratively with community sporting organisations to achieve this purpose and will undertake necessary and proportionate steps towards implementation of the Policy.

Policy Statement

Community sport and active recreation provides opportunities for the promotion of respect and fair-mindedness for all people, while also supporting physical and mental wellbeing. Mansfield Shire Council is committed to designing and implementing place-based, integrated action plans that progress gender equality in community sport.

This Policy establishes the expectation that gender equality is considered and prioritised in current and future planning, policy, service delivery and practice as related to community sports infrastructure, in collaboration with community sporting organisations.

- Council recognises that gender equality is the attainment of equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of all people, regardless of gender. 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.

- ▶ 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.

Scope

This policy applies to all Council owned and/or managed community sporting facilities and to all Mansfield Shire Councillors, employees, volunteers and contracted employees.

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 infrastructure. It complies with the Gender Equality Act 2020 and aligns with Council's Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

In committing to Fair Access, Council will determine the actions required and develop a Fair Access Action Plan. In developing the plan, Council will engage:

- ▶ Fairly and equitably with all staff, governance working groups, state sporting organisations, regional sport assemblies (where applicable) and community sporting groups, regardless of their gender, in a positive, respectful, and constructive manner; and
- ▶ 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.

Fair Access Principles

The Fair Access Principles below 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 the following 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 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.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Committees of Management (DEECA)	For the purposes of this document, refers to committees appointed by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (formerly 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	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 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.

Compliance and Monitoring

Mansfield Shire Council commits to undertake a GIA on all current and future community sports infrastructure 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.

Mansfield Shire Council will continue to identify actions to progress gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure in its Fair Access Action Plan.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for the application of this Policy is held by the Chief Executive Officer. All members of the Executive Management Team are responsible for promoting and championing Mansfield Shire Council's Fair Access Policy.

Managers are responsible for ensuring their staff comply with the principles, practices, and any associated procedures of this Policy. Management, employees, contracted staff, and volunteers are to be familiar with, and implement this Policy, within their areas of responsibility.

The Community Health and Wellbeing Directorate is the owner of this policy. Any reviews of this Policy must be made in consultation with the Community Networks and Wellbeing Officer.

References / Related Policies

- ▶ Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic).
- ▶ Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006)
- ▶ Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)
- ▶ Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- ▶ Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 and other legislative frameworks.
- ▶ Gender Equality Policy

Gender Impact Assessment

The Fair Access Policy has had a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) completed and is compliant with the obligations and objectives of the Victorian Gender Equality Act 2020.

Implementation

This Policy is effective from 19 March 2024.

Review Date

This Policy is to be reviewed by March 2028.

Authorisation to Implement Policy

Signed: _____
Councillor

Witnessed: _____
Chief Executive Officer

Approval dated: 19 March 2024

Mansfield Shire Council reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this Policy at any time.