



Council Policy

12.8 FAIR ACCESS POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Colac Otway Shire Council (Council) policy is to respond to the Victorian Government's Fair Access Policy Roadmap, which seeks to address inequality and known barriers experienced by women and girls in accessing and using community sports infrastructure. This policy aims to take a positive approach and progressively build capacity and capabilities of 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. This is with a view that by 1 July 2027, more women and girls report gender equitable access to community sports infrastructure, and improved experiences when participating in local sport.

Built into this policy is a commitment that Council will undertake the necessary and proportionate steps towards implementation of the State Government's Fair Access Policy.

BACKGROUND

Sport is a visible and valued feature of the Colac Otway Shire Council's culture and identity and plays an important role in supporting social, physical and mental wellbeing of community. As an owner and manager of community sports infrastructure, Council is well positioned to design and implement place-based, integrated action plans that progress gender equality in community sport.

Via the Fair Access Policy Roadmap, the Victorian Government has committed to developing an environment for all Victorians to live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal resources and opportunities, and be 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 that will drive change further"

As a defined entity of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, from 31 March 2021 Council has been required to conduct Gender Impact Assessments (GIA) on all new policies, programs, communications, and services across the organisation, including those up for review, 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.

Uncontrolled when printed

CM reference	D24/39618	Date of adoption	28/2/24
--------------	-----------	------------------	---------



This 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 this policy is to support 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 combined Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans 2021-2025.

This policy aims to build capacity and capabilities of Council in the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in our policies, programs, communications and delivery of services relating to community sport and recreation. It ensures an effective place-based response for gender equitable use and access to local community sports infrastructure.

For the Colac Otway Shire Council, this policy applies to the community sports infrastructure that is *owned or directly managed* by Council. Infrastructure that is not owned or directly managed by Council is outside the scope of this policy, however Council is committed to working with the owners and managers of those facilities (many of which are owned by the State Government via the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action or DEECA/Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority or GORCAPA) to support compliance with the Fair Access Policy Roadmap and a consistent approach between each authority.

Where facilities are identified below, the scope of this policy extends to on-field/court as well as off-field facilities.

Facilities where there is no active club or where facilities are provided for community use only, are outside the scope of this policy.

Table 1: Council owned or managed sport and recreation facilities

COUNCIL OWNED OR MANAGED FACILITY	LOCATION
Alvie Recreation Reserve	1140 Corangamite Lake Road, Alvie
Barongarook Tennis Courts	280 Barongarook Road, Barongarook
Barwon Downs Tennis Courts	1595 Birregurra-Forrest Road, Barwon Downs
Beeac Tennis Courts	15 Buchanan Street, Beeac
Beech Forest Recreation Reserve	1535 Old Beech Forest Road, Beech Forest
** Birregurra Golf Club	1 Hopkins Street, Birregurra
Bluewater Leisure Centre	118-134 Hearn Street, Colac
Carlisle River Recreation Reserve	45 Gellibrand River Road, Carlisle River
Central Reserve	32-40 Gravesend Street, Colac
Colac Central Bowls Club	115-129 Wilson Street, Colac

Uncontrolled when printed

CM reference	D24/39618	Date of adoption	28/2/24
--------------	-----------	------------------	---------



COUNCIL OWNED OR MANAGED FACILITY	LOCATION
Colac Lawn Tennis Club and Colac Mallet Sports Club	48a Church Street, Colac
** Colac Yacht Club	41-45 Moore Street, Colac
Cororooke Tennis Courts	558 Corangamite Lake Road, Cororooke
Eastern Reserve	45 Wilson Street, Colac
Elliminyt Recreation Reserve	235 Main Street & 3 Howarth Street, Elliminyt
Forrest Tennis Courts	1-13 Station Street, Forrest
Irrewillipe Recreation Reserve	2470 Timboon-Colac Road, Irrewillipe
** Lake Bowling Club	35-45 Moore Street, Colac
** Lake Colac Rowing Club	1 Fyans Street, Colac
Lake Oval (Colac Cricket Ground)	1-13 Calvert Street, Colac
Pennyroyal Tennis Courts	285 Pennyroyal Station Road, Pennyroyal
Pirron Yallock Recreation Reserve	370 Swan Marsh Road, Swan Marsh
Swan Marsh Tennis Courts	597 Swan Marsh Road, Swan Marsh
Warncoort Tennis Courts	5 Trasks Road, Warncoort
Warrowie Recreation Reserve * netball courts only (owned by Council, managed by DEECA appointed reserve Committee)	25 McKays Road, Irrewarra (netball courts) 35 McKays Road, Irrewarra (recreation reserve oval and clubrooms/change rooms)
Western Reserve	91a Sinclair Street, Colac

***Denotes: Crown Land where Council manages the lease*

RESPONSIBILITY

Council's General Manager Community and Economy and Manager Connected Communities are responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of Council's Fair Access Policy. As outlined in Table 2 below, other Council personnel, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders, for example State Sporting Associations and Regional Sporting Assemblies, have a shared responsibility to support the policy.

Uncontrolled when printed

CM reference	D24/39618	Date of adoption	28/2/24
--------------	-----------	------------------	---------



Table 2

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote a gender-aware and gender-responsive culture and community and champion 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. To adopt a Fair Access Policy to govern Council’s response to the Roadmap before 1 July 2024.
Local Government leadership (CEO, General Managers), Council staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote a gender-aware and gender-responsive culture and community and champion 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. To support the adoption a Fair Access Policy to govern Council’s response to the Roadmap before 1 July 2024 and its subsequent implementation.
Local Government sports and recreation staff	<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. Support delivery of actions/an action plan relating to the policy To communicate policy updates to staff, local clubs and infrastructure user groups, and community members. To monitor and report on compliance and issues. Work with local clubs and infrastructure user groups to support their compliance with the policy. Gather information or data to support the undertaking of Gender Impact Assessment and submission of progress reports as per the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> obligations. Support the periodic review of this policy. Participate in training relevant to gender equity and gender equitable access and use of sporting facilities.
Community Asset Committees, local club executives, club members and sporting participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote, encourage and facilitate progress towards gender equality and improvement in the status of women and girls. Upon request, provide Council with information or data to support the undertaking of Gender Impact Assessments and submission of progress reports as per the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> obligations.
State Sporting Associations and Regional Sporting Assemblies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote a gender-aware and gender-responsive culture and community and championing the Fair Access Policy. Promote and lead new approaches to fixture preparation to ensure fair and equitable access to community sporting infrastructure and compliance with Council’s policy as it pertains to Council-owned-and-managed facilities in the Colac Otway Shire is achieved. 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 infrastructure.

Uncontrolled when printed

CM reference	D24/39618	Date of adoption	28/2/24
--------------	-----------	------------------	---------



ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Other owners/managers of community sports infrastructure in the shire (e.g. DEECA, Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority, other Committees of Management)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Work in partnership with Council to promote a gender-aware and gender-responsive culture and community and championing the Fair Access Policy.

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 Sports Infrastructure

For the purposes of this document, Council owned-or-managed 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 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 (1)

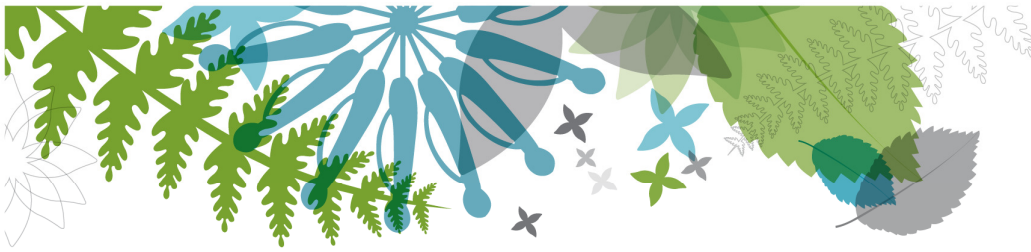
The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men and trans and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men and trans and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on their gender.

Gender equity (2)

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.

Uncontrolled when printed

CM reference	D24/39618	Date of adoption	28/2/24
--------------	-----------	------------------	---------



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.

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.

REFERENCES

Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978

Gender Equality Act 2020

Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)

Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)

STATEMENT OF POLICY

This policy establishes the expectation that gender equality will be considered and prioritised in all of Council's future planning, policy, service delivery and practice as this relates to community sports infrastructure provision. As part of this commitment, a schedule will be established for the review and update of relevant existing sports and recreation policies, processes and programs with reference to the Fair Access Policy. In adopting this policy:

- a. Council recognises that gender equality is the attainment of equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of 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.
- b. 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.

Uncontrolled when printed

CM reference	D24/39618	Date of adoption	28/2/24
--------------	-----------	------------------	---------



POLICY FRAMEWORK

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

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, trans and gender diverse people to achieve similar outcomes for people of all genders.

Council will:

1. 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
2. engage in the process of Gender Impact Assessments (or GIAs) to assess the implications for women, men, trans and gender diverse people of 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 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 will be based on six (6) principles of inclusivity, full participation, equal representation, encouraging and supporting user groups, and prioritising user groups committed to equality.

Council considers that these principles provide clear direction, while also enabling adaption to the specific environment of the Colac Otway Shire area. Council has a separate action plan to guide its progress towards gender equitable access and use of local sporting facilities, which has links to the principles as outlined below.

Uncontrolled when printed

CM reference	D24/39618	Date of adoption	28/2/24
--------------	-----------	------------------	---------



#	Principle
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: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> of the highest quality available and most convenient at the best and most popular competition and training times and locations 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.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Colac Otway Shire Council Statement of Commitment to Gender Equality

Colac Otway Shire Council Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP)

Colac Otway Shire Council Plan and Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25

Colac Otway Shire Council Asset Management Policy

Colac Otway Shire Council Asset Management Plan 2022-23 to 2031-32

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Policy owner	Manager Connected Communities	Division	Community and Economy
Adopted by Council	28/2/24	Policy Number	12.8
File Number	D23/1080261	Review date	28/2/28

Uncontrolled when printed

CM reference	D24/39618	Date of adoption	28/2/24
--------------	-----------	------------------	---------