

FAIR ACCESS POLICY

Policy Number:	5.1.7
Approved by:	Council
Date Approved:	December 2025
Date of Next Review:	December 2027
Applicable to:	Whole Organisation
Responsible Officer:	Manager Culture and Leisure Manager Facilities and Emergencies
Related Policies:	Committees Policy Community Assistance Grants Policy Council Provision of Recreation / Community Facilities Policy
Related Documents:	Wellington Shire Council Gender Equality Action Plan Fair Access Action Plan
Statutory Reference:	<i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i>

OVERVIEW

To establish policy for the Fair Access to Community Sporting & Recreation Facilities across Wellington Shire.

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

THE POLICY

The Policy is designed to comply with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, and the wider Victorian Government gender equality strategy and the Wellington Shire Council Gender Equality Action Plan (GEAP).

DEFINITIONS

Committees of Management

For the purposes of this document, refers to committees appointed by the Wellington Shire Council or 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

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 behavior 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

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

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.

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.

Guiding 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 principles of inclusivity, full participation, equal representation, encouraging and supporting user groups, and prioritising user groups committed to equality.

Wellington 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.

Wellington Shire Council will:

- engage fairly and equitably with all staff, governance working groups, state sporting organisations, GippSport 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.

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

Specific steps include:

- Council Project Reference Groups should include diverse representation including women and should be chaired by Council to ensure that their voices are heard at the project meetings.
- Informal, social and emerging physical activity opportunities should be encouraged and supported with Community Assistance Grants and discounted fees where the Council is responsible for setting fees.
- Ensure adequate provision of lighting and cleaning of Council managed public facilities to ensure that open space areas and supporting infrastructure are welcoming, safe and inclusive.
- The responsible service of alcohol is an important part of providing a safe and welcoming environment for the whole community and required through license and hire agreements.
- Council aims to collect and analyse data annually to ensure diverse representation on Committee's as part of this policy.
- Council will monitor annual sport participation data where it is available to track progress over time.
- Provide industry training to committees of management and sporting clubs in partnership with key stakeholder including Change Our Game, GippSport and Gippsland Women's Health to inform them of Council's Fair Access Policy.
- Prioritise smaller infrastructure funding to address immediate/ significant barriers to access while waiting for larger projects to be funded. Examples could include baby change facilities, changeroom cubicles, improved signage.
- All projects that are seeking future Sport & Recreation Victoria grant support or benefiting from an application will require a SRV Participation Plan that should also include a Gender Equity Audit and development into an action plan. This should be embedded into facility management plan once facilities are constructed.
- Council will inspect all future facilities that are constructed with support from Sport & Recreation Victoria grant funding on an annual basis to ensure fair access is provided as identified from the facility designs and funding outcomes.
- Continue to financially support women/ teams to celebrate sport pathway representation through the Community Assistance Grants.
- Advocate for sporting events that hire or apply for event permits that access Council directly managed facilities to have inclusive practices/ prizemoney and trophies.

Compliance and Monitoring

a. Actions

Wellington Shire Council acknowledges that the requirement to have a gender equitable access and use policy and action plan in place. The ability to demonstrate progress against that policy and action plan will form part of the eligibility criteria for Victorian Government funding programs relating to community sports infrastructure from 1 July 2024.

This policy will be reviewed in two years.

b. Responsibility

Manager Communities, Facilities & Emergencies and Manager Leisure Services is responsible for implementing the Fair Access Policy. This will be formally reviewed on a biennial basis.

Management personnel, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders Wellington Shire Council at have a shared responsibility to support the policy.

REVISION HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
1.0	December 2023	New Policy.
1.1	December 2025	Date of Next Review updated to December 2027. Removed years for GEAP to keep current when new plan implemented. Added Wellington Shire Council to the Committee of Management Definition.