



Fair Access Policy

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Purpose.....	2
Scope	2
Definitions	3
Responsibility	4
Policy.....	5
Related Documents.....	7
Review of Policy.....	7

Introduction

Sport is a highly visible and valued feature of Maribyrnong City Council's culture and identity. The sport and active recreation sector provides opportunities for enriching our communities through the promotion of respect and fair mindedness for all people, while also supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of all Victorians.

Maribyrnong City Council is well positioned to design and implement place-based, integrated actions plans that progress gender equality in community sport.

The Victorian Government, through its Change our Game initiatives borne from the *2015 Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation*, is committed to developing an environment for all Victorians to live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources, and opportunities, and to 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 of all nine (9) recommendations from the *2015 Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation*. Recommendation six (6) is particularly pertinent to this policy being:

"...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*, Maribyrnong City Council is required to conduct Gender Impact Assessments (GIA) on all new policies, programs, communications, and services, including those up for review, which directly and significantly impact the public (Gender Equality Act 2020). The access and use of community sports infrastructure is an example of policy that has a direct and significant impact on the public.

Purpose

The Fair Access Policy (the Policy) seeks to address known barriers experienced by women and girls in accessing and using community sports infrastructure.

The Policy aims to progressively build capacity and capabilities of Maribyrnong City 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.

Scope

The 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 the Policy is to support Maribyrnong City 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 Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans or Council Strategies:

Reform Agenda	Objectives
To support Council to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and use of community sports infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To build capacity and capabilities of Maribyrnong City Council in the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs, communications, and delivery of services in relation to community sport and recreation.• To ensure an effective place-based response for the gender equitable use and access of community sports infrastructure.• To promote gender equality in policies, programs, communications, and services as they relate to community sports infrastructure.

The Policy applies to all Maribyrnong City Council community sport and recreation facilities, including:

- Sporting fields and pavilions
- Recreation centres and facilities
- Leased and licensed facilities

Definitions

Term	Definition
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 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	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 <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> 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.
Trans gender, 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.

Responsibility

The Fair Access Policy seeks to address known barriers experienced by women and girls in accessing and using community sports infrastructure.

The Manager Recreation and Open Space is responsible for implementing Maribyrnong City Council's Fair Access Policy. Management personnel, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders (for example State Sporting Associations) at Maribyrnong City Council have a shared responsibility to support the policy, as outlined in the table below.

Role	Responsibility
CEO and Executive Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote a gender-aware and gender-responsive culture and community and champion the Fair Access Policy.• Promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women and girls in sport and active recreation.
Manager, Recreation and Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead the review of sport and recreation policies and processes• Develop and adopt gender 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 equality and improvement in the status of women and girls• Support the undertaking of Gender Impact Assessment and submission of progress reports as per the Gender Equality Act 2020 obligations
Gender Equality and Child Safety Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the review of sport and recreation policies and processes• Support the formal adoption process of a new or revised gender equitable policies• Undertake Gender Impact Assessment and submission of progress reports as per the Gender Equality Act 2020 obligations
Recreation and Open Space Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To communicate and educate sport and recreation infrastructure user groups and users.

All Maribyrnong City Council staff

- To adhere to and communicate the policy when required.
 - To attend training / awareness programs.
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Statement of Intent

This Statement of Intent establishes the expectation that gender equality is considered and prioritised in all current and future planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sports infrastructure.

- a. Maribyrnong City 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. Maribyrnong City 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.

Policy

The Fair Access Policy is underpinned by six (6) principles of inclusivity, full participation, equitable access and use, equal representation, encouraging and supporting user groups, and prioritising user groups committed to equality.

Maribyrnong City Council considers that these principles provide clear direction, while also enabling adaption to the specific environment of Maribyrnong City Council's area.

Maribyrnong City Council will actively work to ensure that:

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; and
 - 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.

Policy Framework

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

Maribyrnong City 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.

Maribyrnong City Council will:

1. Engage fairly and equitably with all staff, governance working groups, state sporting organisations, 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 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, and monitoring of policies and programs.

Compliance and Monitoring

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

Maribyrnong City Council has identified specific actions to progress gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure in its Fair Access Action Plan.

Maribyrnong City Council commits to undertake a GIA on all current 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 six (6) principles outlined above.

Related Documents

- Fair Access Policy: Action Plan
- 2015 Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation
- Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)
- Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Maribyrnong City Council Towards Gender Equity 2030
- Maribyrnong City Council Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025
- Maribyrnong City Council 2021-2025 Council Plan
- Maribyrnong City Council Open Space Strategy 2013 - 2031

Review of Policy

The Fair Access Policy will be reviewed three years from the date of approval, or whenever Council determines that a need has arisen unless there is a requirement for more frequent/longer cycle.