



Council Policy Manual

WEST WIMMERA SHIRE COUNCIL

COUNCIL POLICY		
FAIR ACCESS POLICY	Policy No:	
	Adopted by Council:	21 February 2024
	Next review date:	February 2028
Director:	Director Corporate & Community Services	
Responsible Officer:	Manager Community Development	
Functional Area:	Sport and Recreation	
Purpose	<p>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 West Wimmera 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.</p> <p>West Wimmera Shire Council will take the necessary and proportionate steps towards implementation of the Fair Access Policy.</p>	
Background	<p>Sport and recreation are a highly visible and valued feature of West Wimmera Shire Council'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 and mental wellbeing of all Victorians. West Wimmera Shire Council is well positioned to design and implement place-based, integrated action plans that progress gender equality in community sport.</p> <p>The Victorian Government is committed to developing an environment for all Victorians to live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal resources and opportunities, and are 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.</p> <p>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</p>	



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	<p>in Sport and Active Recreation. This includes recommendation six (6):</p> <p>“...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”</p> <p>and</p> <p>“Facilitating a universal adoption of the West Wimmera Shire Council Fair Access Policy will drive change further”</p> <p>As a defined entity of the Gender Equality Act 2020, West Wimmera Shire Council will be required from 31 March 2021 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.</p>
Statement of Intent	<p>This Statement of Intent establishes the expectation that gender equality is considered and prioritised in all current and future West Wimmera Shire Council’s planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sports infrastructure.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. West Wimmera Shire Council recognises that gender equality is the attainment of equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men. 2. West Wimmera Shire 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 diverse needs and power related to their gender and these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.
Scope	<p>The Policy enables effective and efficient integration of the requirements of the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i>, the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> and the <i>Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008</i> and other legislative frameworks.</p> <p>The scope of the Policy is to support West Wimmera Shire Council to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and usage of community sports infrastructure. This complies with the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> and aligns with Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans or Council Strategies:</p>



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	Reform Agenda	Objectives
	<p>To support West Wimmera Shire Council to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and use of community sports infrastructure</p>	<p>To build capacity and capabilities of West Wimmera 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 sport and recreation.</p> <p>To ensure an effective place-based response for the gender equitable use and access of community sports infrastructure.</p> <p>To promote gender equality in policies, programs, communications, and services as they relate to community sports infrastructure.</p>
	<p>For West Wimmera Shire Council, the Policy applies to the following community sports infrastructure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kaniva Sports Precinct 2. Kowree Sports Centre 3. Kaniva Swimming complex 4. Goroke Swimming complex 5. Edenhope swimming complex 	
<p>Response to the Overarching Governance Principles of the Local Government Act 2020</p>	<p>Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2020 states that a Council must in the performance of its role give effect to the overarching governance principles.</p> <p>This policy is in response to the following overarching governance principle/s of the Local Government Act 2020:</p> <p>(a) the community engagement principles (section 56).</p> <p>(b) the public transparency principles (section 58).</p> <p>(c) the strategic planning principles (section 89).</p> <p>(e) the service performance principles (section 106).</p>	



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Policy Framework	
	<p>The Policy is designed to comply with the Gender Equality Act 2020.</p>
	<p>West Wimmera Shire Council acknowledges:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. the disadvantaged position women and girls have had in the sport and recreation sector because of their gender; and2. that achieving gender equality will require diverse approaches for women and men. <p>West Wimmera Shire Council will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">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; and2. engage in the process of gender impact assessments to assess the implications for women and men 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.
	<p>Project/Activity/Report questions</p>
	<p>The following must be discussed and recorded prior to any Community Project/Activity being commenced and/or submitted:</p> <p>WWSC (West Wimmera Shire Council) Policy Reviews</p> <p>Project Status/Due</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. CONSULTATION: Have both men and women been consulted during the planning process?2. DATA: Is data collected and broken down by gender, to identify gaps/differences and inform planning?3. BUDGET: Have you conducted a gendered assessment of the funding proposal/program budget to ensure funds will benefit both men and women equitably?4. SAFETY: Have the safety needs of women and men been incorporated into the planning process? (Examples - Car parking, Lighting, Time of day of services and activities)5. ACCESS: Have barriers to participation for women been considered and procedures put in place to enable women to participate? (Examples: Childcare available to all people regardless of gender, Time of day)6. MESSAGING: Are 'gender equity' and 'prevention of violence against women' messages promoted where appropriate?7. GENDER BALANCE: Is there fair access to women and girls, and balance among program managers/participants/reference group?



8. **GENDER STEREOTYPES:** Have program staff challenged assumptions and gender stereotypes associated with the program area? (E.g. – who is bringing in catering/cleaning up/taking notes)
9. **LANGUAGE:** Our programs will emphasise that no sexism, discrimination or harassment will be tolerated (in line with Councils Code of Conduct)
10. If needed, does the program include clear agreements about language and behaviour that is considered unacceptable? (Examples - sexism, discrimination, or harassment)
11. **MARKETING:** Do communications and marketing materials about the program depict diversity in terms of gender, cultural background, and ability? (Example: Are a diverse range of people represented in materials?)
12. **MONITORING:** Are there mechanisms in place to monitor gender balance and opportunities available to rectify this where needed?

WWSC Major Projects

1. **DATA COLLECTION:** Is evaluation data collected in a way that enables it to be separated by sex, cultural background, age, and ability?
2. **ANALYSIS:** Is data analysed as a total, as well as by sex, to highlight any differences that might be linked to gender? Where there are differences, is analysis undertaken to explore potential causes – cultural norms, physical barriers, unconscious expectations etc.; so, these can be addressed?
3. **REPORTING:** Are participation rates always separated by sex? Does the report demonstrate a commitment to achieving gender balance and equality, highlighting key findings from the gendered analysis?
4. **RECOMMENDATIONS:** Are recommendations/learnings included to ensure future projects/programs improve the way they achieve gender balance, equity, and diversity?
5. **REVIEW:** Is there a review period built in post the commencement of the project or activity?



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 are based on six (6) principles of inclusivity, full participation, equal representation, encouraging and supporting user groups, and prioritising user groups committed to equality.

West Wimmera Shire Council considers that these principles provide clear direction, while also enabling adaptation to the specific environment of West Wimmera Shire Council's area.





4. Compliance and Monitoring

a. Actions

West Wimmera Shire Council commits to undertake a GIA on all current Council owned 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.

If the process of assessing current policies and processes identifies opportunities to develop or strengthen gender equitable access and use of community sports facilities in alignment with the Fair Access Principles, West Wimmera Shire Council commits to developing and adopting a locally relevant gender equitable access and use policy and action plan no later than 1 July 2024.

West Wimmera Shire 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.

West Wimmera Shire Council has also identified specific actions to progress gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure in its Fair Access Action Plan.

b. Responsibility

The West Wimmera Shire Council Chief Executive Officer is responsible for implementing West Wimmera Shire Council's Fair Access Policy. Management personnel, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders at West Wimmera Shire Council have a shared responsibility to support the policy, as outlined in the table below.

Role	Responsibility
Local Government - CEO (Chief Executive Officer) and Executive)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote gender equality and champion fair access for women and girls (in line with Councils 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.
Local Government - Sport and Recreation Managers or similar,	<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 • To communicate policy updates to all staff and members



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor compliance and issues • To 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 <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> obligations
Local Government – accountable Officer for the Gender Equality Act or similar	<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 <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> obligations
Local Government - Sport and Recreation Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To communicate and educate sport and recreation infrastructure user groups and users.
Local Government – all staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To adhere to and communicate the policy when required.
5.	<p>Definitions</p> <p>Community Sports Infrastructure</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>For the purpose of this policy gender is deemed to be either male or female.</p> <p>Gender equality</p> <p>The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men</p> <p>Gender equity</p> <p>The provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities based on gender. The concept recognises that people may have diverse needs and</p>



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	<p>power related to their gender and these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.</p> <p>Gender Impact Assessment, or GIA</p> <p>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.</p>
6.	<p>For further information related to this Policy see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)</i> • <i>Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)</i> • <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)</i> • <i>WWSC Local Government Local Government Gender Analysis Toolkit</i> • <i>WWSC Fair Access; Action Plan</i>

Policy Adopted:	New Policy	Approved by Council	21/02/2024
Policy Reviewed:			
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