

SCS-063 Surf Coast Shire Fair Access Policy

TRIM Reference:	D24/94854	Due for Review:	July 2025
Responsible Officer:	Coordinator Social Infrastructure and Open Space Planning		

Purpose

The Fair Access Policy (the Policy) outlines Surf Coast Shire Council's (Council) commitment to support gender equitable access to, and use of, community sports infrastructure.

The Policy means that Surf Coast Shire complies with the Gender Equality Act 2020, Local Government Act 2020 and the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008. The policy works towards providing more welcoming, accessible, and inclusive community sports infrastructure for women and girls. With this Policy Council ensures ongoing eligibility for Victorian Government funding programs relating to community sports infrastructure.

Objectives

Council will take the necessary and proportionate steps towards achieving gender equality in the access and usage of community sports infrastructure. This Policy establishes Council's expectation that gender equality is considered and prioritised in Council social infrastructure planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sports infrastructure. The Policy seeks to address known barriers experienced by women and girls in accessing and using community sports infrastructure.

The Policy aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To 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.
- 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.

Scope

The scope of the Policy is to support Council to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and use of community sports infrastructure. This complies with the Gender Equality Act 2020, Local Government Act 2020 and the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 and aligns with Council's Health and Wellbeing Plan and Council strategies.

The Policy applies to:

- Any policies, programs, communications, and services as they relate to community sports infrastructure.
- All community sports infrastructure owned and/or managed by Council.

For the Surf Coast Shire, the Policy applies to the following community sports infrastructure:

Asset Categories
Sports and recreation facilities
Outdoor recreational grounds and reserves (e.g. playing surfaces, ovals, pitches, greens, tracks, wickets)
Indoor sport and recreation stadiums (e.g. courts and multi-purpose indoor areas)
Outdoor and indoor aquatic facilities
Outdoor sport and recreation courts
Practice facilities (e.g. cricket practice nets and training areas)
Equestrian reserves and riding facilities
Golf facilities
Park exercise equipment
Bike parks / tracks
Community Halls

Policy

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

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.

Council will:

- Engage fairly and equitably with 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
- Engage in the process of Gender Equity Impact Assessments (GEIA) to assess the implications for women, men, trans and gender diverse people of any planned action, including policies and communications.

Principles

The following 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 the following six principles:

- **Principle 1:** Community sports infrastructure and environments are genuinely welcoming, safe, and inclusive.
- **Principle 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.
- **Principle 3:** Women and girls will have equitable access to, and use of, infrastructure that supports existing and new participation opportunities, and a variety of sports.
- **Principle 4:** Women and girls should be equitably represented in leadership and governance roles.
- **Principle 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.
- **Principle 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.

These principles provide clear direction and will be applied relative to the Surf Coast Shire context.

Roles and Responsibilities

Council commits to undertake a Gender Equity Impact Assessment (GEIA) on policies, programs, processes, communications, and services and if opportunities are identified, will develop or strengthen gender equitable access and use of community sports facilities, in alignment with the Fair Access Principles.

Council acknowledges that the requirement to have, and demonstrate progress against, a gender equitable access and use 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.

Role	Responsibility
CEO and Executive Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote a gender-aware and gender-responsive culture and community and championing 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.
Coordinators and Senior Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the review of sport and recreation policies and process. • Develop gender equitable access and use policies. • Communicate policy updates to all staff and community. • Monitor compliance and issues as required. • Promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women and girls. • Support the undertaking of Gender Equity Impact Assessments and submission of progress reports as per the Gender Equality Act 2020 obligations.

Role	Responsibility
Gender Equality Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the review of sport and recreation policies and processes. Inform of any legislative and/or policy changes and support the development of new or revised gender equitable policies and practices. Support the organisation and staff to undertake Gender Equity Impact Assessments and submission of progress reports as per the Gender Equality Act 2020 obligations.
Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To communicate and educate sport and recreation infrastructure user groups and users about the Policy. Liaise with the Victorian State Government, neighbouring Local Government Areas, Sporting Associations, clubs and competitions to align policies and objectives where possible.
All staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhere to and communicate the policy when required.

Local Government Act 2020 Principles

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.

Principles	Applicable to the Policy	If yes, provide details
Governance Principles (Consideration of the Governance Principles under s.9 of LGA 2020)	Yes	The Policy supports the objective that all genders should be equitably represented in leadership and governance roles.
Community Engagement (Consideration of Community Engagement Principles under s.56 LGA 2020)	Yes	<p>The Policy engages user groups and relevant stakeholders who access and use community sport infrastructure to understand and implement gender equitable access and use practices.</p> <p>The Policy encourages and supports the inclusion of diverse perspectives, including children and young people, older people, people of all genders, people with disabilities and carers, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and people who identify as LGBTQIA+.</p>

Principles	Applicable to the Policy	If yes, provide details
		<p>The Policy prioritises respect, inclusivity and safety for all community members participating in, or affected by, engagement processes.</p> <p>The Policy has followed the appropriate level of engagement according to the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) Framework.</p>
<p>Public Transparency (Consideration of Public Transparency Principles under s.58 of LGA 2020)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Policy and the associated action plan are visible to the community to clearly outline the objectives, roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders to be able to work towards Fair Access outcomes.</p>
<p>Strategies and Plans (Consideration of Strategic Planning Principles under s.89 of LGA 2020)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Policy aligns with the Surf Coast Shire Council Plan incorporating the Health and Wellbeing Plan (2021 - 2025), regarding a focus area of preventing family violence and promoting gender equity, also in relation to the following strategies:</p> <p>Strategy 3: Facilitate the provision of social infrastructure and open space to enable healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>Strategy 4: Improve access to local services and programs that support people to be healthy and well.</p> <p>Strategy 6: Enable Communities to strengthen their social connections and participate in community life.</p> <p>Under Council's Purpose and Commitments, Council will operate according to a commitment to Equity; where we commit to ensuring all community members are treated fairly and equitably.</p>
<p>Financial Management (Consideration of Financial Management Principles under s.101 of LGA 2020)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Policy ensures Surf Coast Shire's ongoing eligibility for Victorian Government funding programs relating to community sports infrastructure.</p>

Principles	Applicable to the Policy	If yes, provide details
<p>Service Performance (Consideration of Service Performance Principles under s.106 of LGA 2020)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The Policy supports Council and community sporting environments to be welcoming, accessible, and inclusive for all community and to deliver on the following service performance objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) services provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community; (b) services to be accessible to the members of the municipal community for whom the services are intended; (c) quality and costs standards for services set by the Council should provide good value to the community; (d) seek to continuously improve service delivery to the municipal community in response to performance monitoring; (e) service delivery must include a fair and effective process for considering and responding to complaints about service provision.

Definitions

Gender Equity Impact Assessments (GEIA)

As a defined entity of the Gender Equality Act 2020, Council will be required from 31 March 2021 to conduct Gender Impact Assessments (GEIA) 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 assessment must evaluate the effects that a policy, program or service may have on people of different genders.

Committees of Management

For the purposes of this document, refers to committees appointed by the State Government under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 to manage recreation reserves where community sport training and games are held.

Community Asset Committees

Community Asset Committees (CACs) are made up of volunteers who directly manage daily operational activities at nominated halls and recreation reserves on behalf of Surf Coast Shire Council. The Committees create greater local connection and bring local knowledge that results in more effective use of the facilities.

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, halls and pavilions.

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 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.

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.

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.

Related Procedure

Gender Equality Action Plan - Our Gender Equality Action Plan is internally focused yet builds on the commitment made to our community through Council's Access & Inclusion Plan 2014-24 to build healthy, well-connected communities where everyone can participate. It recognises our existing programs, initiatives, achievements and documents and identifies new initiatives that will be implemented over a four-year period to meet our gender equality and diversity objectives.

Fair Access Action Plan - The Fair Access Action Plan is both internally and externally facing and focuses on improving the access to, and use of, community sports infrastructure for women and girls. From 1 July 2024, all Victorian councils will have gender equitable access and use policies in place. The action plan will ensure that women and girls can fully participate in and enjoy the benefits of community sport, with fair opportunity and access to their local sport and recreation facilities.

It builds on existing initiatives across the following focus areas:

- Active Places and Spaces (Sporting Infrastructure and Environment)
- Active Options and Programming (Usage and Allocations)
- Active and Healthy People (Active Participation)
- Active Governance (Governance and Management)
- Active Fair Access Culture (Education and Awareness)

References

Guidelines, Plans, Strategies and Policies

- 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)
- Gender Equality & Diversity Action Plan - 2021 – 2025
- Surf Coast Shire Council Gender Equity Action Plan - 2017
- Surf Coast Shire Council Plan (Incl. Health and Wellbeing) - 2021–2025
- Surf Coast Shire Council Financial Plan – 2021 - 2031
- Surf Coast Shire Council Reconciliation Action Plan - 2022

Acknowledgements

- The Wadawurrung People, and the Gulidjan and Gadubanud Peoples of the Maar nation as the Traditional Owners of the lands known as the Surf Coast Shire.
- The Fair Access Policy roadmap developed by the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, Sport and Recreation Victoria and VicHealth.

Assessment

- Gender Equity Impact Assessment (GEIA) – Fair Access Policy (13 February 2024)

Document History

Version	Document History	Approved by – Date
1	Draft Fair Access Policy for public exhibition	KD - 22 February 2024
2	Draft Fair Access Policy – Council endorsed for public exhibition	BB – 27 March 2024
3	Fair Access Policy – Final – Seeking OFWIS SCS Council endorsement	BB- 24 May 2024