

1. PURPOSE

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

The Policy aims to progressively build capacity and capabilities of Horsham Rural 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 infrastructure and public spaces.

2. INTRODUCTION

Sport and recreation is a highly visible and valued feature of Horsham Rural 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. Horsham Rural City Council is well positioned to design and implement place-based, integrated action plans that progress gender equality in community sport and activities.

The Victorian Government 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 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.

This reform agenda includes addressing the traditional structures and way community sport and recreation organisations operate through the implementation of all 9 recommendations from the 2015 Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation. This includes recommendation 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] will drive change further”

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

3. SCOPE

The scope of the Policy is to support Horsham Rural City Council to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and usage of community infrastructure. This complies with the Gender Equality Act 2020 and aligns with HRCC's Council Plan and Council Strategies.

Reform Agenda	Objectives
To support Horsham Rural City Council to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and use of community sports infrastructure	<p>Build capacity and capabilities of Horsham Rural 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.</p> <p>Ensure an effective place-based response for the gender equitable use and access of community sports infrastructure.</p> <p>Promote gender equality in policies, programs, communications, and services as they relate to community sports infrastructure.</p>

This Policy applies to all Horsham Rural City Council owned and/or managed community facilities and recreation reserves.

4. PRINCIPLES

The Policy and 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.

i. Horsham Rural 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.

ii. Horsham Rural 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.

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.

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

This Policy establishes the expectation that gender equality is considered and prioritised in all current and future Horsham Rural City Council's planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community infrastructure.



Actions

Horsham Rural City Council commits to undertake a GIA on all current community infrastructure access and use policies and processes, and to consider opportunities to strengthen gender equitable access and use of community 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 facilities in alignment with the Fair Access Principles, Horsham Rural City Council commits to developing and adopting a locally relevant gender equitable access and use policy and action plan no later than 1 October 2024.

Horsham Rural 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 infrastructure from 1 July 2024.

Horsham Rural City Council has also identified specific actions to progress gender equitable access and use of community infrastructure in its Fair Access Action Plan. (Refer Appendix A)

Responsibility

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

Role	Responsibility
Local Government - Executive Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote a gender-aware and gender-responsive culture and community 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.
Local Government - Coordinator Recreation & Open Space	<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• 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 Assessments and submission of progress reports as per the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> obligations
Local Government – accountable Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the review of sport and recreation policies and processes

for the Gender Equality Act or similar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 - Recreation & Open Space Planning Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate to and educate sport and recreation infrastructure user groups and users.
Local Government – all staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to and communicate the policy when required. • Attend training / awareness programs. • Undertake Gender Impact Assessments where required

5. COMMUNICATION

Policy to be shared on the Council website and intranet and at relevant staff and team meetings.

Policy to be distributed to community groups and sporting clubs accessing HRCC owned and/or managed facilities.

6. RESPONSIBILITY

Policy Owner Coordinator Recreation & Open Space

This Policy will be reviewed every 5 years or earlier as required by changed circumstances including changes to legislation and plans, strategies or policies of HRCC.

The Action Plan will be reviewed annually.

7. DEFINITIONS

Term	Meaning
Community Infrastructure	Publicly owned local, rural, municipal, regional, or state level infrastructure operated and maintained primarily for the purpose of facilitating community 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 (GIA)	A requirement under the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> to be carried out on policies, programs and services that 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 <i>Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978</i> 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 a birth. Not all trans people will use this term to describe themselves.

8. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Document	Location
Gender Impact Assessment template	Intranet
Fair Access Action Plan	Intranet
Equal opportunity discrimination and harassment policy	Intranet
Act@Work Action Plan	Intranet

9. DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version Number	Approval Date	Approval By	Amendment	Review Date
01	27 Nov 2023	Council	• New Policy	27 Nov 2028

It is recognised that from time-to-time circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to Council and Administrative Policies. Where an update does not materially alter a Policy, such a change may be made administratively, without the need for formal adoption by EMT or Council. Examples include a change to the name of a Council Department/Position Title, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government Department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, all changes will be noted in the document control section and version number updated.