

**MAKE  
YOUR  
MOVE**

# **Gender Equity Guide** – Sport and Recreation



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# Introduction

The City of Greater Dandenong has prioritised health and wellbeing as a focus area for the community in its *Imagine 2030* community plan.



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To support the execution and implementation of *Imagine 2030*, the Make Your Move Greater Dandenong Physical Activity Strategy 2020-2030 has been developed to address the low levels of physical activity amongst residents and to guide the provision of facilities, services and programs to increase participation in physical activity.

In the City of Greater Dandenong 79,537 residents identify as female (48.6%) out of a total 163,514 residents. Statistically, the City of Greater Dandenong has significantly lower rates of female participation in all forms of physical activity compared to the Victorian average, with women representing little more than a third of participants at Victorian sports clubs, according to the 2018/19 AusPlay Survey. Further to this, junior participation has seen significant reductions as of 2020 most notably in the age group of 4 to 9 years of age with winter sports such as AFL and Soccer most impacted.

From 2011 to 2021, the City of Greater Dandenong statistics reveal a 47% increase in family violence incidents according to Victoria Police. Over 50% of Australian women who experience family violence are caring for children during this time. To prevent violence against women, we need to promote gender equality and respect toward women so that both women and men have equal value, treatment and opportunities in society.

Strengthening participation and pathways in social and traditional sport for women and girls has been identified as an important step in improving the health and wellbeing of the municipality. Social sport places emphasis on the relationships between participants, and although can have an element of competition present is not usually aligned to a State Sporting Association (SSA). Traditional sport has greater emphasis on performance results and competition; it's governed by state and national sporting associations. Both social and traditional sport is a pivotal and influential mechanism to meaningfully address gender inequality, promote respectful relationships and prevent violence against women.

The Office for Women in Sport and Sport and Recreation recommend that sporting clubs work to eliminate barriers to participation and adopt an equitable approach to the inclusion of women and girls at their club/organisation.

## Why has council developed the Make Your Move Gender Equity Guide?

Sport, active recreation and active living has been identified by the community as an important setting to address gender inequality and family violence.

“Survey research published by VicHealth in 2020 highlighted that most Victorians (98%) expect their local community sporting clubs to provide an environment that is welcoming and inclusive to girls and women, and 89% expect such clubs to educate males about appropriate behaviour towards women. Moreover, 86% believe that local sporting clubs should play a community leadership role by encouraging respectful relationships between men and women.”

In August 2022, the Fair Access Policy Roadmap was released by Sport and Recreation Victoria in partnership with VicHealth aiming to develop a state-wide foundation to improve the access to, and use of, community sports infrastructure for women and girls.

From July 2024 and in line with the Gender Equality Act 2020, all Victorian Councils will need to ensure fair access to sporting facilities for people of all genders to be considered eligible to receive state government infrastructure funding.

In addition to the above, though some activities within the sport/leisure sector like walking are experiencing an increase in participation, it is evident that women still experience cultures and practices that limit their involvement, influence and empowerment. Some examples that limit female participation and decision-making in sport include:

- Entrenched stereotypes that depict sport as an activity for men.
- Gender bias in the selection process for sporting roles (i.e. coaching, administration).
- A lack of visible female role models (both as athletes and in leadership).
- Structural barriers in leisure and recreational centres (i.e. lack of separate showers, limited scheduling that isn't conducive to childcare).
- A shortage of accessible, inclusive and affordable opportunities to participate in sport.
- Lack of understanding for female participation and inclusion in sport and recreation.<sup>1, 2</sup>

In order to improve the mental, social and physical health outcomes identified in the respective *Imagine 2030* and *Make Your Move Physical Activity* strategies, sporting clubs, state sporting and national sporting associations, local leagues, and Council need to work together to champion female participation and implement equitable initiatives/programs for women and girls in sport (social and organised).



1. A level playing field, Victoria University. [A level playing field: the case for investing in women's sport \(vu.edu.au\)](https://www.vu.edu.au)

2. Active Victoria - A strategic framework for sport and recreation in Victoria 2017–2021

## Who is this guide for?

The Make Your Move – Gender Equity Guide is for volunteers and officials affiliated with a City of Greater Dandenong sporting club, who requires assistance and support to strengthen participation and pathways in social and traditional sport for women and girls.

Specifically, this guide is written to support sporting clubs, committees, coaching and playing groups in the municipality that:

- Have a predominantly male participation base and lack active female participation in and around the game.
- Struggle to engage women in administration, coaching and leadership positions at the club/organisation.
- Have an inclusive culture but are looking to implement policies, procedures and actions to further enhance their club/organisation.

## What is the benefit to your sporting club or organisation?

Strengthening participation and pathways in social and organised sport for women and girls provides several benefits to your sporting club. These include:

- Opportunity to increase membership
- Ability to attract and retain more volunteers and supporters
- Being able to promote your club as a family friendly environment
- Potential growth in revenue and income streams, including possible funding opportunities
- Strengthens your club/organisations viability
- Injects new ways of thinking and doing at all levels of the club/organisation
- An increase in community engagement and connectedness
- help drive positive social change in relation to attitudes towards women and girls

In addition to the above, sporting clubs can receive a discount on the use of Council facilities for offering participation opportunities for women and girls and will enhance opportunities for success in grant applications to Council.

## What is the role of your league, state and national sporting associations?

Council is committed to working with you, your local league, as well as your aligned state and national sporting associations, to champion female participation and inclusion in social and traditional sport. Whilst Council will work with you to assess your club's strengths, opportunities and priorities, as well as help you to build your gender equity plan, it is the role of your league, state and/or national sporting association to support the implementation of your chosen initiatives. By all working together, it is hoped that sporting clubs will successfully implement equitable initiatives/programs for women and girls in sport.

# Club Assessment Tool

## (Gender Impact Assessment)

The Club Assessment Tool is a practical resource to enable your sporting club to identify your strengths, opportunities and priorities moving forward to promote gender equality. This tool aims to assist your club in analysing the different areas in your environment to work on and provide a starting point for your Gender Equity Plan.

Club details				
Club Name				
Facility Name/address				
Phone number				
Number of Members completing survey				
Club President				
	Male	Female	Transgender and/or Gender Diverse	Intersex
Number of Committee Members				
Number of Coaches				
Number of Trainers				
Number of Team Managers				
Number of Playing Members u/18				
Number of Playing Members o/18				
Total number of Playing Members				

Club culture	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
Does your organisation have a balance of male and female participants across the club?				
Does the signage around your club (including your website) show diverse images e.g. men, women, young people				
Do you have a Club Welcoming Officer?				
Does your Club support responsible alcohol management e.g. Healthy Sports Club?				
Do your social functions cater for families, all members, i.e. can parents bring their children?				
Is your social calendar developed with the input of different groups for a balance?				
Do you encourage men/women to take on ‘non-traditional’ gender roles, e.g. men in the canteen, women in coaching roles?				
Do you actively promote and support campaigns that demonstrate your club’s commitment to gender equity e.g. Walk Against Violence?				
Club facility	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
Do you have player and umpire change rooms that are suitable for both genders? Are they unisex or female only?				
Club facility – feeling safe	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
Does the club have a policy/procedure for ensuring all members leave the facility safely after late training/ meetings?				
<b>Comment</b>				
Are there any areas around the club that would be unsafe during the daytime or evening?				

Scheduling	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
Do you seek to find out the best times for committee meetings from women in the club?				
Do you actively consider different / non-traditional scheduling options to maximise participation of diverse members?				
Do you consider varied formats of the game / season to include your non-traditional targets?				
Uniforms	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
Do all sections of the club wear the same colours?				
Do you provide female fit uniforms and apparel for women and girls players and volunteers?				
Female participation			Yes	No
Do you have a balance in gender for participation across all levels of the club?  <i>Please provide numbers for each area in the next column e.g. [6M], [2F], [1 T/GD]</i>	Coaches:			
	Players:			
	Committee:			
	Volunteers:			
Do all players have equal access to club facilities?	Gym:			
	Training:			
	Change Rooms:			
	Match Day Facilities:			
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
Do you actively train and expose women and girls to non-traditional roles?				
Do you monitor and encourage gender balance in participation on committees/in decision making?				
Do you provide development opportunities for all genders to build their leadership skills?				



Recruiting / promotion		Comments			
Do you actively recruit for women and girls in these areas? If so how?	Players:				
	Committee:				
	Coaches:				
	Volunteers:				
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A	
Does your club facility, website, social media and promotional materials include images of both men and women in varying roles throughout the club?					

Female opportunities	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	N/A
Are you familiar with the elite pathways available for women and girls as well as men?				
Do you communicate these opportunities in a timely manner to your players?				
Do you actively seek development opportunities for all players and administrators equally?				

# Action Plan

Once your sporting club has completed the club self-assessment tool, you'll have a better understanding of your strengths, opportunities and priorities moving forward.

**Examples of priorities include (but are not limited to):**

- Increase female volunteer recruitment and leaderships roles.
- Capitalise and leverage off existing sports development programs for women and girls.
- Improve coaching pathways for women and girls.
- Improve club culture towards the inclusion of women and girls.
- Increase participation opportunities in competition.
- Help to combat female drop out of sport/improve female retention in the sport.

Council strongly encourages club use these findings to design a plan to make positive steps towards creating a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for women and girls that strengthens pathways and participation in and around the game. Depending on your findings, and your club's willingness and capacity to embrace change, these actions may be on a larger or smaller scale.



Sporting clubs should adopt a whole-of-sport approach to gender equity. A whole-of-sport approach is one where sporting clubs work to enact multiple strategies to change structures, norms, practices, attitudes and behaviours both internally (including players, coaches, staff, board/committee members, and senior leaders) and in the broader sporting community (supporters, volunteers and external stakeholders), to address gender inequality.

Below is an easy to use template for a Gender Equity Action Plan. You can leverage this template to create your own, with the support of your sporting club, committee etc. The purpose of the Plan is to drive meaningful change within your club. As such, you can have as many or as little actions as possible, if they are within your club’s capacity to deliver and are S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely).

**Some clubs also choose to write their Gender Equity Plan with the priorities underneath these sections:**

- Leadership
- Club Culture
- Membership and Engagement
- Volunteers and Employees
- Facilities

Gender equity action plan				
	Action	Deliverable	Deadline	Responsibility
<b>Priority 1: Increase participation opportunities in competition</b>	<u>Example:</u> Increase female participation in our game	<u>Example:</u> Have at least one (1) female team for the 2022 season	<u>Example:</u> March 30, 2022 (in time for season’s start in April 2022)	<u>Example:</u> Membership and Participation Manager
<b>Priority 2: Improve club culture towards women and girls</b>	<u>Example:</u> Breakdown gender stereotypes. Encourage both men and women to take on roles outside of those traditionally associated with their gender	<u>Example:</u> Have a 50/50 split of men and women who run the canteen at game-days	<u>Example:</u> March 30, 2022 (in time for season’s start in April 2022)	<u>Example:</u> Club Secretary and/or Volunteer Manager

# Tips towards change

Sometimes it can be hard to start a Gender Equity Plan.

Where do you begin? Who should you speak to? What should you action?

Below are some tips to make the process easier.

- Align inclusion to one of your club’s values and make it part of your core business (who you are).
- Invite representatives from all levels of your club (coaches, players, volunteers etc.) to be a part of a working group to start the process.
- Identify your club’s strengths, opportunities and priorities before building a Gender Equality Action Plan. You can do this by using the *Club Assessment Tool* provided.
- Determine your club’s willingness and capacity to create change.
- Build your Action Plan around the identified priorities with deadlines, indicators of success and person/s responsible for each priority.
- Get committee agreement and buy-in to carry out actions in suggested timeframes, before commencing the Plan’s implementation.
- Set times to review actions within the Plan and record progress bi-annually.
- Promote your progress to the broader community. This could involve seeking local media attention or leveraging your own digital channels (social media and website).
- Consider building your Action Plan in collaboration with Council and/or WHISE (Women’s Health in the South-East).



# Resources

The information you have read can make a significant difference strengthening participation and pathways in social and traditional sport for women and girls. Check out some of the other resources supporting equitable inclusion in sport.

## Fair Access Policy Framework

In partnership with Sport and Recreation Victoria and VicHealth, the Framework and roadmap is being delivered through the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation and aligns with Victoria's *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

➤ [Fair access for women and girls in sport – Sport and Recreation Victoria](#)

## Be the Change!

A resource for sporting club coaches on the role they can play to promote equality and respect.

➤ [inspiro.org.au/our-services/healthy-communities](https://inspiro.org.au/our-services/healthy-communities)

## Change our Game

Demonstrates and informs best-practise and promotion of female sport and recreation in Victoria.

➤ [Change Our Game | It's Time for Fair Access](#)

## Clearinghouse for Sport – Women's Sport

Provides an extensive range of links, research and articles related to women in sport.

➤ [clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/knowledge\\_base/organised\\_sport/sport\\_and\\_government\\_policy\\_objectives/womens\\_sport](https://clearinghouseforsport.gov.au/knowledge_base/organised_sport/sport_and_government_policy_objectives/womens_sport)

## Everyone wins

A toolkit that aims to assist clubs to build healthy and inclusive sporting environments.

➤ [vicsport.com.au/welcoming-sport](https://vicsport.com.au/welcoming-sport)

## This Girl Can – Helping women and girls get active

A guide informing how to support women in pursuing active lives.

➤ [vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/helping-women-and-girls-get-active](https://vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/helping-women-and-girls-get-active)

➤ [thisgirlcan.com.au/](https://thisgirlcan.com.au/)

## Next steps


Do you need support strengthening pathways and participation for women and girls in social and traditional sport? For assistance, please email: [Recreation@cgd.vic.gov.au](mailto:Recreation@cgd.vic.gov.au).

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