

City of Greater Bendigo

Fair Access Guide

For organisations that deliver sport and active recreation opportunities

AUGUST 2024



Increasing sport and active recreation opportunities for everyone

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Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Greater Bendigo is on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country. We acknowledge and extend our appreciation to the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Peoples, the Traditional Owners of the land. We pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Peoples. We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual, and cultural costs of that sharing, and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.





Introduction

Sport and active recreation are core parts of our lives, contributing to health and fitness, culture, social connection and sense of belonging. We want sport and active recreation to be available to everyone, so everyone can fully participate and reach their full potential.

It is difficult for some people to participate in sport and active recreation. Fair, inclusive and safe opportunities can mean different things to different people.

The City of Greater Bendigo's *Fair Access Policy* and *Fair Access Action Plan* aim to increase participation in sport and active recreation for everyone, in particular women, girls and under-represented groups. This guide provides a summary of the policy and action plan, as well as practical suggestions to help your organisation provide more inclusive opportunities. In turn, organisations will experience benefits, and also contribute to benefits to individuals and the community.

This guide considers the needs of women, girls and gender diverse people, in addition to men and boys, as well as other factors that may affect a person participating, like age, cultural background, ability, religion or sexual orientation. Multiple factors may affect participation, and consequently some people may experience compounding and intersecting forms of discrimination or disadvantage, this is often referred to as intersectionality.

Organisation benefits

- New ways to attract participants, such as: players, volunteers and officials
- Increased performance, where all members can bring their best selves
- Increased long-term sustainability of organisation
- Stronger, more connected community and organisation
- Increased community support
- Increased sponsorship opportunities
- Increased grant funding opportunities

Individual and community benefits

- Physical health, fitness and wellbeing
- Community culture, values and behaviours
- Social connection and belonging
- Having fun and stress reduction
- Developing skills and learning
- Improving self-worth

Definitions

Active recreation

Leisure time, non-competitive, physical activity for exercise or enjoyment.

Aspects of a person's identity

Factors that shape a person's identity. This may include (but is not limited to) gender, age, cultural background, ability, religion and sexual orientation.

Disability

Long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that, in interaction with various attitudinal and environmental barriers, may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Equality

Equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities. Equality does not mean that everyone will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on aspects of a person's identity.

Equity

The process of being fair to everyone in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities. The concept recognises that people may have different needs and power and these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that fixes imbalances.



Equality



Equity

Equity Impact Assessment

The process of considering how policies, programs and services affect different genders and diverse groups in different ways and recommend changes that will help create a more fair and inclusive community. This incorporates Gender Impact Assessments as per the *Gender Equality Act 2020*.

Gender

Part of 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.

Intersectionality

Understands how a person's identity is shaped by multiple realities (such as gender, race/ethnicity, class, age, sexuality, geographic location, disability, religion). The different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation, which impact on people's experiences.

Participation

Includes a range of roles, such as: player, umpire, volunteer, committee member, official, spectator.

Sport

Includes informal sport e.g. playing tennis with a friend, and organised sport e.g. playing in a competition.

Under-represented groups

People that are participating in lower numbers relative to the population in the broader community, and may be grouped by aspects of a person's identity.



How to use the guide

Engagement with sport and active recreation organisations, as well as the general public, has helped to identify barriers and motivators to participation in sport and active recreation. This has been used to develop the City of Greater Bendigo's *Fair Access Policy* and *Fair Access Action Plan*.

The key elements of the *Fair Access Policy* and *Fair Access Action Plan* have been summarised in this document. Fair access to sport and active recreation is everyone's responsibility.

This guide includes information on the steps sport and active recreation organisations can follow to undertake the actions identified in the *Fair Access Action Plan*.

Organisations will be at different points on the journey. This guide will help all organisations to find ways to better address the motivators and needs of existing participants and potential new participants, in particular women, girls and those from under-represented groups.

Fair Access Policy principles

The principles of the *Fair Access Policy* are listed below. The full *Fair Access Policy* is available on the [City's website](#).

1. Community sports and active recreation infrastructure and environments are genuinely welcoming, safe, and inclusive
2. Women, girls and under-represented groups can fully participate in all aspects of community sport and active recreation, including as a player, coach, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator
3. Women, girls and under-represented groups will have equitable access to and use of community sport and active recreation infrastructure:
 - a) of the highest quality available and most convenient
 - b) at the best and most popular competition and training times and locations
 - c) to support existing and new participation opportunities, and a variety of sports
4. Women, girls and under-represented groups should be equitably represented in leadership and governance roles
5. Encourage and support all user groups who access and use community sport and active recreation infrastructure to understand, adopt and implement equitable access and use practices for women, girls and under-represented groups
6. Prioritise access, use and support to all user groups who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to equitable access and use of allocated community sport and active recreation infrastructure for women, girls and under-represented groups



Fair Access actions

The actions of the *Fair Access Action Plan* are summarised in the table below. The full *Fair Access Action Plan* is available on the [City's website](#).

Action		Responsibility
Provide information, education and resources to support organisations involved in sport and active recreation to implement fair access.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Greater Bendigo State Sporting Associations
Assess opportunities and identify actions for implementing fair access.	Action 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clubs Associations Leagues Facility Managers
Provide information about activities and inclusion on CONNECT Greater Bendigo website.	Action 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Greater Bendigo Clubs
Promote benefits of sport and active recreation for all.	Action 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All
Celebrate those that are leading the way in gender equality and inclusion.	Action 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All
Review City of Greater Bendigo agreements and processes to support those that practice fair access.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Greater Bendigo
Consider fair access in the development or renewal of sport and active recreation infrastructure.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Greater Bendigo
Seek relevant funding and grants to support implementation of fair access for infrastructure improvements.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Greater Bendigo
Promote grant opportunities that could be used to support implementation of fair access.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Greater Bendigo State Sporting Associations
Support and share information about informal and free participation opportunities.	Action 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clubs City of Greater Bendigo



Role of sport and active recreation organisations

The *Fair Access Action Plan* identified several actions that clubs, associations, leagues and facility managers can undertake to increase participation opportunities. These actions have been broken down with suggested steps to achieve the desired outcomes.

Action 1 is the key organisation action from the City's Action Plan and a great first step.



Action 1

Assess opportunities and identify actions for implementing fair access



Action 2

Provide information about activities and inclusion on CONNECT Greater Bendigo



Action 3

Promote benefits of sport and active recreation for all



Action 4

Celebrate those that are leading the way in gender equality and inclusion



Action 5

Support and share information about informal and free participation opportunities



Action 1

Assess opportunities and identify actions for implementing fair access

Why this is important

The intent of the Self-Assessment Tool is to help you find ways to reach more people by making more people feel welcome and safe to participate. Everyone's experiences are different, and this tool will help you identify what your organisation is doing well, where you can be more inclusive and get ideas of actions you can try.

This will allow the organisation to:

- Develop a shared vision and agree on goals
- Identify inclusion and gender equality as a priority
- Consider what groups are underrepresented and why
- Achieve genuine understanding and effort towards meaningful change in inclusion and gender equality
- Support inclusion as a whole to take into account how multi-faceted people's identities can be (e.g. gender, ability, cultural background and age) when working to increase participation by women, girls and under-represented groups
- Engage with and build relationships in the community, so that the community can help develop the actions

Indicators of success

Completion of the City's *Fair Access Self-Assessment Tool* and identification of actions to improve inclusion and gender equality in:

- Governance and culture
- Leaders, volunteers and paid positions
- Participation
- Promotion and recruitment
- Facilities and resources

Suggested steps

The Self-Assessment Tool should be completed at regular intervals, with every two years considered good practice.

If your organisation can, it is beneficial to also:

- Survey your members prior to completing the Self-Assessment Tool to have a better understanding of what members value
- Prepare an Action Plan after to make your organisation's direction clear to everyone

BENEFICIAL STEPS	
Survey	Step 1 Survey community or members
ESSENTIAL STEPS	
Assess	Step 2 Complete the Fair Access Self-Assessment Tool
Communicate Actions	Step 3 Fill out the Fair Access Action Plan Template
	Step 4 Seek endorsement of the Action Plan through your organisation's committee/board
	Step 5 Share your organisation's Fair Access Action Plan publicly

It is best to undertake this process with a sub-committee. The sub-committee should include a few committee members as well as some people from the broader organisation to capture diverse experiences and opinions (e.g. people of different genders, ages, cultural backgrounds, abilities, religions and sexual orientations). To reduce burden on existing volunteers, try promoting this process to all members and asking for expressions of interest to lead or be on the sub-committee, emphasising the need for diverse experiences and opinions.

Visit the [City's website](#) for further information, templates and the Self-Assessment Tool.



Step 1 – Survey community or members

Use or adapt the Community Survey Template on the [City's website](#) to shape the questions you ask. This will help you understand what your members and community value, and the experiences they have had with your organisation.

Step 2 – Complete the *Fair Access Self-Assessment Tool*

With your sub-committee (a group of people with diverse experiences and opinions), meet to work through the *Fair Access Self-Assessment Tool* on the [City's website](#) to identify opportunities for improvement. The meeting may take around two hours if members of the group have read through the Self-Assessment Tool before the meeting.

The Self-Assessment Tool includes a range of opportunities to address common participation problems, along with examples of actions you could try to increase inclusion and equity. These examples are the ideas that sport and active recreation organisations and community members suggested during engagement for the development of the Fair Access Policy and Action Plan.

Step 3 – Fill out the *Fair Access Action Plan Template*

Copy the actions identified in the *Fair Access Self-Assessment Tool* across to the *Fair Access Action Plan Template* on the [City's website](#), adding who will lead the action and expected completion date. It is also useful to include an organisation vision and/or guiding principles to form an agreed position on what is important to the organisation.

Step 4 – Seek endorsement of the Action Plan through your organisation's committee/board

Share the findings of your sub-committee with your organisation's committee/board, and seek endorsement for your plan to be adopted for the organisation.

Step 5 – Share your organisation's Fair Access Action Plan publicly

Sharing your organisation's Action Plan publicly will very clearly set the intent and values of the organisation for all members. This should be in simple English and easily accessible on your website or notice boards.



Action 2

Provide information about activities and inclusion on CONNECT Greater Bendigo

Why this is important

CONNECT Greater Bendigo is a free, local directory for community to find, join and connect. Local sport and active recreation organisations can list their profile/information, volunteer opportunities and events. Having information about all sport and active recreation organisations and events on CONNECT Greater Bendigo will help members of the community connect with organisations that are offering what they are looking for.

Providing information about the organisation and processes including how it is inclusive and accessible will help people understand what is required of them when they go to the organisation and how they may need to prepare.

Indicators of success

Clubs to provide information about their activities and inclusion on the CONNECT Greater Bendigo website.

Suggested steps

The following is suggested information to support participation by women, girls and under-represented groups. You can also provide the information suggested for CONNECT Greater Bendigo on your own organisation's website and include relevant information in any events you promote.

Step 1 – Go to CONNECT Greater Bendigo website, and register or log in

- To register go to www.connectgreaterbendigo.com.au and click on 'register' to create an account
- Complete the initial registration form. You will receive a confirmation email and temporary password to log in
- You can then go to your dashboard to start adding information, just select 'Add Group/Club' or 'Add event'



Step 2 – Fill out your organisation's profile

Use simple English and include:

Contact us

- The facility address
- An email or phone number someone can contact to book a time to meet or ask questions

About us

- General information, such as:
 - Who your organisation is and history
 - What you offer/description of activities
- Access
 - Describe the available parking and drop-off areas on site or near by
 - Identify which bus route passes your location
 - Describe access to the buildings and which entrances are accessible. Explain how a person with limited mobility is to access and navigate the site, so a person can determine if they will need assistance. E.g. access through the north gate on "x" road, use the ramp up to automatic door / sliding door / hinged door requiring assistance to open / hinged door left open
- Facilities
 - Describe how accessible club is
 - List the types of toilets you have available – General / Ambulant / Accessible / All Gender
 - Share your closet changing place / accessible toilet locations if you do not have on site
- Club culture
 - List and describe the sights, smells, sounds and feel of your club to give a quick snapshot to prospective members
 - Describe club values and how the club is inclusive
 - Express openness to women, girls and under-represented groups joining
- Newcomers
 - Instructions on what a person should do to attend an activity or join your club, e.g. where to go, who to talk to, what a person should do on their first time participating, where they leave their belonging, any etiquette
 - If there is a common club member who greets new people – it is a good idea to have a picture of them or even note people wearing 'x' will be able to help you
- Activities
 - Describe the regular activities you offer (add these also as events on CONNECT Greater Bendigo)



Tags

Tags help people find the organisations that match their needs and values. You need to make sure that the tags you use are genuinely appropriate for your organisation and facility, and you may choose to provide further information in the About section to back up any tags you use. Examples of tags you could use are: Community, Fun, Fitness, Exercise, Social, Sport, Inclusive, Woman, LGBTIQA+, Gender Diverse, Multicultural.

Photos

- Provide photos of your facility so that a person can see what to expect from the street, and of different parts of the facility and buildings
- Use a map to show where parking, drop-off areas and where the nearest bus stop is
- Provide a floor plan to:
 - show your building/grounds
 - highlight which building entrances are accessible and how a person with limited mobility would gain access to that entrance
 - where toilets are
- Club colours/outfit pictures are a great way to showcase what participants and members look like at your club

Step 3- Create recurring and one-off events in the events section

- List key information on where, when and why. If any details are different or can be made more specific to the information provided on the organisation's CONNECT Greater Bendigo page, make sure you say it here, otherwise, link back to your organisation's CONNECT Greater Bendigo page for more information
- Make it clear who you want to attend the event, or who is welcome
- Each event will also be published on the CONNECT Greater Bendigo Facebook page. If an event is listed as recurring, additional posts will be made throughout the year



Action 3

Promote benefits of sport and active recreation for all

Why this is important

Sport and active recreation are core parts of our lives and contribute to a range of health, wellbeing and social benefits. People are attracted to sport and active recreation for different reasons, so by considering these different motivators when setting up activities or promoting your organisation, you can broaden the appeal by offering what your community value. Embedding these benefits in your organisation is a powerful, cost effective and efficient way to contribute to a healthier, happier community.

Indicators of success

Promotion of individual benefits of sport and active recreation including:

- Physical health, fitness and wellbeing
- Culture, values and behaviours
- Social connection and belonging
- Having fun and stress reduction
- Developing skills/ learning
- Improving self-worth

Suggested steps

- Mention benefits on your organisation's: website, social media, newsletter, promotions
- Explain the benefits to your members
- Value the different benefits and embed these benefits in all aspects of the organisation

Benefits of sport and active recreation

Health, fitness and wellbeing

The health benefits of regular physical activity include improved physical health, reduced risk of developing major chronic diseases, managing body weight, and helping prevent and manage mental health problems and improved wellbeing. Overall 57.3 per cent of Greater Bendigo residents meet physical activity guidelines. For both men and women, rates of physical activity drop as people age. Over half of Greater Bendigo residents want to do more physical activity.

Culture, values and behaviours

Sport and active recreation have a role in teaching values such as respect, responsibility, commitment and teamwork. They present a unique opportunity to influence intergenerational cultural, attitudinal and behavioural change and address harmful attitudes, behaviours, and stereotypes. It can help to create more connected communities by addressing the underlying causes of social issues including discrimination, inequality, racism, family violence and violence against women. Violence against women is more likely when the treatment, value and respect of women is less than that of men.

Social connection and belonging

Sport and active recreation can increase social connectedness by bringing people together, expanding social networks, creating friends and fostering a sense of trust among participants.

Fun and stress reduction

Sport and active recreation provide positivity, calmness and fun through connection with others, positive culture, satisfaction in achieving goals and a sense of belonging. It is a natural way to loosen up and let go of stress.

Developing skills/learning

Sport and active recreation provide practice in critical life skills: attention, thinking, language, learning, and retaining information. They develop pro-social behaviours, critical thinking, problem-solving, decision making, and moral reasoning, and build resilience and confidence.

Self-worth

Sport and active recreation allow people to be involved, giving them a positive sense of self-worth. Participating in sport and active recreation makes us feel good through fun and giving purpose and structure to a person's life and increasing self-esteem through skills development.



Action 4

Celebrate those that are leading the way in gender equality and inclusion

Why this is important

Celebrating those that are leading the way will support organisations and members to learn from each other. Giving attention to practices that are inclusive can help to change social norms and expectations, and help people see the inclusive practice as the standard behaviour. Case studies from an organisation or member's point of view are more relatable than generic examples.

Indicators of success

- Showcasing local organisations and role models that are doing inclusion well
- Promote successes
- Share case studies from the organisation's or member's point of view including video case studies

Suggested steps

- Share articles in your newsletter or on social media about an inclusive practice or role model
- Have an award/ acknowledgement system
- Congratulate those that are doing the right thing or exhibiting the desired values





Action 5

Support and share information about informal and free participation opportunities



Why this is important

Informal sport and active recreation opportunities can encourage participation by reducing the impact of barriers:

- Cost
- Time restrictions
- Fear of not being good enough
- Different skill levels

Indicators of success

- Clubs to display match and training schedules so the community know when a facility is not in use
- Activation/come and try opportunities for facilities and/or how to use outdoor equipment

Suggested steps

Displaying training schedule

- Displaying the times a facility is available for community use is a way that clubs can enable the community to use the facility informally, for independent training or for recreation. This information should be provided in an easy to access location for the local community e.g. on a facility notice board, in a building window or on a website
- Clubs can also encourage community use of a facility, publicly welcoming everyone to use the facility outside of scheduled activities

Come and try events

A good approach to come and try events is:

- Approach an organisation that is trusted by or that supports the group you are trying to attract
- Build understanding in your organisation of how to ensure a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for target group. Refer to *Quick Reference Guide for Women, Girls and Under-Represented Groups* on the [City's website](#) for some basics
- Co-design come and try sessions with the organisation trusted by your target group – minimum 4 sessions to build skills. Consider the need for an interpreter if appropriate
- Promotion of sessions should be through the organisation trusted by your target group, identify which group the sessions are targeting, in language if target group is culturally and linguistically diverse
- Provide food for social opportunity after come and try sessions. Offer food options that reflect the cultural diversity of community
- Offer membership, sponsorship or cost-effective pathway for participants to continue developing skills. Consider also cost of equipment and providing assistance with any registration paperwork
- Offer mentoring for committee positions or other club roles