



Quick Reference Guide

Women, Girls and Under-Represented Groups

Creating a welcoming environment and communicating in an effective way is crucial to inclusion of women, girls and under-represented groups.

Inclusion should be looked at as a whole, rather than as silos, because some people may experience compounding and intersecting forms of discrimination or disadvantage.

This Quick Reference Guide breaks down some of the key points for inclusion of women, girls and some under-represented groups:

- Women and girls
- All abilities
- Culturally and linguistically diverse
- First Nations people
- LGBTIQ+

For each group, the follow is provided:

- Barriers – why a person may be unsure about participating
- Enablers – actions to make your organisation or facility more inclusive
- Appropriate language – appropriate terms that show respect and dignity

In general

- Do not categorise people because of aspects of a person's identity
- Be led by how someone talks about themselves, their family and their relationships and only mention or ask about aspects of a person's identity if it is necessary
- Use simple English in written and verbal communication
- Be willing to make it work
- Relax. Anyone can make mistakes. Offer an apology if appropriate and keep going
- Don't pretend to understand what a person is saying if you don't. Ask the person to repeat or rephrase, or ask them questions with 'yes' or 'no' answers
- Offer non-gendered uniforms in different styles and allow for variations to make all participants comfortable



1. Women and girls

Barriers

- Previous bad experience such as derogatory language
- Fear of not being good enough or judgement
- Conscious of body or appearance
- Insufficient or inferior participation opportunities
- Caring responsibilities
- Perceptions of safety and/or previous experiences of violence

Violence against women is much more likely to occur when women and girls are not treated equally, or afforded the same respect as men and boys.

Enablers

- Provide different participation formats, such as:
 - Social, casual or less competitive options
 - More flexible, or activities of shorter duration, to accommodate competing demands like caring responsibilities
 - Smaller team sizes or regular substitutions to allow more flexibility in team size
- Provide a friendly and supportive environment by:
 - Grouping participants of similar abilities
 - Supporting development and encouraging people of all levels
 - Providing women only programs
 - Use of respectful language

- Accommodate children for women with caring responsibilities:
 - Providing childcare
 - Supervising children in a child friendly area
 - Leading children in a different activity
- Breaking down gender stereotypes in the organisation roles historically filled by particular genders
- Encouraging women to fully participate in all aspects of sport and active recreation, including as a player, coach, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator, and including decision making roles

Appropriate language

Terms to avoid	Acceptable alternatives
You just got beaten by a girl	Celebrate the woman or girl playing well rather than putting the boy or man down for not beating her.
You play/throw/run like a girl	Do not use gender as a derogatory term.
Chairman, sportsman etc.	Chairperson, sportsperson
A female player	A player



2. All abilities

Barriers

- Timing and availability of all abilities opportunities can be limited and can conflict with other commitments such as work
- Not knowing how accessible the facility is. Information about how accessible a facility is should be publicly available e.g. on a website, so people can plan ahead if they will need assistance
- Attitudes:
 - Focus on what a person can do, rather than what they can't do
 - Treat the person like anyone else, don't pity, or label the person as 'courageous' or 'inspirational' just because of their disability
 - Be open to making adjustments – work with the person to determine what is needed

Enablers

Everyone with a disability is different. Rather than focusing on the disability, think instead about what adjustments can be made to equipment, technique and coaching, to include people of all abilities in your teams. Your State Sporting Association (SSA) will be able to support this. If adjustments need to be made, ask the person what they need rather than assuming their needs or capacity, or providing unwanted assistance. It is always best to talk to the person in an age-appropriate manner, and to speak to the person rather than their friend, assistant or interpreter.

Appropriate language

Terms to avoid	Acceptable alternatives
Disabled person, handicapped, special, physically/mentally challenged, differently abled (patronising or demeaning)	Person with a disability
Deaf person	Person who is deaf or hard of hearing
Blind person	Person who is blind or vision impaired
Mentally retarded (offensive)	Person with an intellectual disability or person with a learning difficulty
Confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair bound (a wheelchair enables mobility, not restriction)	Person who uses a wheelchair or mobility device
Afflicted with/ suffering from 'condition'	Person with/has 'condition'
Disabled parking/ toilet	Accessible parking/ Accessible toilet

Common adjustments

People who are deaf or hard of hearing

- Provide clear signage
- Minimise background noise e.g. music or provide a quiet zone to aid communication with people that are hard of hearing
- Speak clearly without shouting and with normal inflection
- Look directly at person while speaking so they can read your lips and facial expression
- Consider use of the National Relay Service (NRS) for phone calls with people with hearing or speech problems
- Use visual communication e.g. pictures, symbols, written word and demonstrations to support what you're saying
- If using an Auslan Interpreter, talk to the person not the interpreter

People who are blind or visually impaired

- Address the person by name and introduce yourself by name
- Use specific language when giving directions
- Clear signage that is uncluttered and incorporates large print and universal symbols
- Handrails and luminance and colour contrast for key areas e.g. edges on steps and ramps
- Good lighting throughout facility
- Clear overhanging obstructions from pathways e.g. plants
- Offer written information in an accessible format e.g. available in large print on request, and flyers in Word format are better for screen reader software

People with an intellectual disability

- Use visual communication e.g. pictures, symbols, written word and demonstrations to support what you're saying
- Provide simple, direct instructions, broken down into clear steps
- Allow time for the person to process what you are saying, and to respond before moving to the next instruction
- Provide opportunity to practice a skill before moving onto a new one
- Give immediate feedback and encouragement
- Encourage people to ask questions
- Use positive statements e.g. "walk inside" rather than "don't run"



People who use a wheelchair or mobility device or have limited mobility

- Clear obstructions from ramps, doorways and accessible toilets
- Ensure the main entrance is accessible for everyone
- Have doors that can be easily opened
- Provide portable ramp for accessing e.g. playing surface
- Provide handrails on uneven surfaces e.g. ramps and stairs
- Have accessible parking close to the main entrance
- Offer a gentle or more accessible version (e.g. walking version), for anyone with limited mobility
- Wedge a door open to create independent access if able to
- Communicate the nearest accessible toilet to your facility – even if it is not on site, communicate this so that the person can plan ahead



3. Culturally and linguistically diverse

Multicultural communities in Greater Bendigo are diverse within themselves, coming from a range of cultural and religious backgrounds including diverse visa pathways, such as skilled migration, refugees entering on Humanitarian Visas, family reunions and international students.

It is important to remember that a person who is culturally or linguistically diverse may be used to different social norms e.g. amount of eye contact or personal space, how respect is shown, responding to authority, perceptions of safety, concept of time, physical activity for transport rather than recreation. Time and support should be provided to allow these people to adjust.

According to the 2021 Census, 9.7% of people in the City of Greater Bendigo were born overseas. The largest cohorts of refugees in Greater Bendigo are the Karen ethnicity from Myanmar and the Hazara ethnicity from Afghanistan. The largest migrant population in Greater Bendigo is from India.

Barriers

- Unsure if they're welcome
- Fear of not being good enough, judgement, disappointing, authority
- Being a beginner when similar ages are more advanced
- Not knowing the rules or how to register or participate at the organisation
- Not speaking English well
- Cost of participation
- People from different backgrounds may not be used to paying for sport or active recreation, or sport or active recreation may have been a luxury
- Not being familiar with competition and only participating in sport or active recreation informally
- Not being familiar with volunteering or assuming that volunteer positions are paid
- Transportation

Enablers

- Make facility look culturally safe e.g. a sign with 'hello' or 'welcome' in different languages, where possible use the languages of communities living around your facility
- Simplify the registration process or provide support
- Sponsor memberships e.g. provide three memberships a year for refugees
- Provide in language resources about the sport or activity and organisation, including videos of how to participate in different languages
- Provide trainee committee member positions for those that may want to build capacity in things such as governance processes
- Consider providing for religious practices e.g. prayer rooms with privacy during use
- Provide support with the structure of how to participate
- Be respectful of cultural differences e.g. not standing as close to you or not making eye contact
- Simple spoken English, at a slow pace, explaining jargon and technical terms – do not assume knowledge. Explain procedures step-by-step
- Take the time to learn correct pronunciation of names. Only use a nickname or shorter version of the name if the person suggests it or gives you permission. Do not create your own nickname or shorter version of the name because changing the name can change its meaning

- If you're not sure, ask questions e.g. cultural or religious dietary restrictions for catering
- The concept of time can be different. Someone arriving late may not be a sign of disrespect or disinterest, but rather a cultural norm. If this becomes a problem, calmly and politely explain why it is important to be on time
- To be accessible to children, it may be necessary to increase understanding with parents
- Sharing international sports and games as well as those traditionally played in Victoria will help to enable sharing and learning between cultures, and will help people find common ground

Appropriate language

Terms to avoid	Acceptable alternatives
They are a refugee (once a person is accepted into Australia, they are no longer a refugee)	They are of a refugee background
Where are you from/ originally from? (can make a person feel like they don't belong here)	If you don't need this information, don't ask. If you get to know someone well, you could ask what their ethnic background is.
You speak such good English	Don't comment on this





4. First Nations people

Barriers

- Time spent in sport and active recreation may be considered selfish by taking a person away from family and community responsibilities
- Racism, discrimination, and vilification
- Limited role models
- Cost of e.g. transportation, fees, uniforms and equipment
- Physical skills for the activity and confidence
- Feelings about colonisation and not wanting to participate in 'westernised' activities
- Exclusiveness of the structure of some sports and activities
- Lack of information and knowledge about the game
- 'Shame' which has many layers and can be unpacked in cultural awareness training
- Cultural Load in additional work or expectations on First Nations People e.g. providing First Nations experiences, being on committees or being a mentor
- Invite family of players to attend training or a match to encourage support from family and friends
- Invite past Indigenous players to organisation activities to provide role models
- Establish and maintain good relationships with relevant Bendigo & District Aboriginal Co-operative staff members and other key First Nations community members and stakeholders, including continuous consultation on what is happening in the community and how to engage First Nations People

Appropriate language

Terms to avoid	Acceptable alternatives
Half-Aboriginal, Quarter, X% Aboriginal	Are Aboriginal, Identify as Aboriginal
Where are you from?	Who's your mob?

Enablers

- Group, community, or family activities may be preferred
- Identifying with and/or connecting to First Nations cultures
- Making the activity fun and not feel like a chore
- Provide members with cultural awareness training to increase feelings of safety, comfort, and belonging
- Promoting health, social, and community benefits

A Welcome to Country is undertaken by a local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person of significance, a Traditional Owner of the country that the Welcome to Country is being conducted on. The City of Greater Bendigo is on Dja Dja Wurrung or Taungurung Country. An Acknowledgement of Country can be undertaken by an Indigenous or non-Indigenous person.



5. LGBTIQ+

There are many acronyms used within LGBTIQ+ communities and the acronym itself has limitations. LGBTIQ+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual+, Trans and Gender-Diverse, Intersex, Queer and Questioning and Asexual and Aromantic. The + represents and acknowledges the limits of the acronym and the evolving nature of language that is used to describe and celebrate people's diverse experiences of gender, sexual orientation and sex characteristics.

Pronouns

A pronoun is a word we use to refer to a person when we aren't using their name. Asking and correctly using someone's pronouns is a way to show respect for their gender identity. Common pronouns include:

- He/him - often used by male identifying people
- She/her - often used by female identifying people
- They/them - common gender neutral pronoun, often used by gender diverse people

Barriers

- Previous bad experience such as derogatory language, invasive or inappropriate questioning
- Fear of not being good enough or judgement
- Conscious of body or appearance
- Insufficient or inferior participation opportunities
- Perceptions of safety and/or previous experiences of violence

Enablers

- Recognise and respect all sexualities, gender identities and sexes. Be led by how someone talks about themselves, their family and their relationships. A person may not be comfortable sharing this information with everyone. Only mention or ask about aspects of a person's identity if it is necessary.

- Provide participation opportunities and pathways for all genders:
 - Provide mixed or gender-neutral options where possible
 - Where only gendered options are offered, support players to participate in accordance with their gender identity, and non-binary players to play in a team that they feel most comfortable in
- Provide facilities for all genders:
 - Change signage on facilities to offer a unisex or gender-neutral facility
 - Improve change room facilities with private changing and bathroom spaces
 - Include sanitary bins in all facilities
- Respectful and private information collection:
 - Only collecting personal information if it is absolutely necessary
 - On registration forms, allow participants to select from numerous gender options, provide a preferred name and nominate the pronouns that they use
 - Securely store all personal information

Appropriate language

Terms to avoid	Acceptable alternatives
Ladies, guys, girls, boys	Everyone, players, 'club' members
Wife, husband	Partner
Mum, dad	Parents
What pronoun do you prefer? (Pronouns are not a preference)	What pronouns do you use?



References

The quick reference guide has been developed from information from the community in addition to the following sources, which can be accessed for further information.

Disability Sport & Recreation

Seeing capability before disability resource guide.

www.dsr.org.au

Reclink Australia

Resources to provide access for all abilities.

www.aaaplay.org.au

Proud2Play

Sports Club Hub for sports clubs looking to create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for the LGBTIQ+ community.

www.proud2play.org.au

Deaf Sports Australia

Resources to strengthen participation by people that are deaf or hard of hearing.

www.deafsports.org.au

Australian Sports Commission

Resources and links to inclusion of diverse audiences.

www.ausport.gov.au

Clearing House for Sport

To share news, evidence and insights about sport, human performance, and physical activity from Australia's leading sport and active recreation agencies.

www.clearinghouseforsport.gov.au