

EQUITABLE ACCESS AND USAGE POLICY – Draft copy

Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club Incorporated

Purpose

The Policy provides a management framework for Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club to address barriers experienced by women and girls in accessing and using community sport infrastructure. The purpose is to ensure all voices, concerns, and experiences, are an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring of policies and programs.

Statement of Intent

This Statement of Intent establishes 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.

Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club 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.
- 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.

What is Equitable Access?

In accordance with the Australian Rules Football league, equitable access means:

- Equal access to training and game schedules, along with inclusive social and changing room amenities, should be extended to women and girls.
- Everyone has the right to fully participate on and off the field and reach their full potential.
- Without such changes, women and girls in Australian Football will continue to face unfair conditions and encounter additional hurdles compared to men and boys.

Ref: <https://play.afl/fair-access-support>

Background

Sport and active recreation are an important part of our communities. Sport provides the opportunity 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 in our community. Sport reaches across age, gender, cultural background and demographic groups.

Australian Rules Football, at a grassroots or elite level can be a vehicle for community identity and pride and can strengthen social networks and builds a sense of belonging for participants.

The success and growth of the AFL Women's (AFLW) has captured the hearts of the Australian football community. The AFLW has also emphasised the need for an improved experience for our female footballers at a community level.

Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club wants to leverage the momentum of the AFLW and its growth and success for our own growth and provide pathways. Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club wants to increase the opportunities and participation rates for women and girls in Australian Rules Football as part of an overall strategy to grow the game for everyone.

Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club is well positioned to design and implement place-based, actions that progress equitable access and usage to support the growth of female participation in Australian Rules Football.

Principles

This Equitable Access and Use Policy is established around the six principles generated by the Australian Rules Football league which guide and provide clear direction for change.

The six principles of inclusivity, full participation, equal representation, encouraging and supporting user groups, and prioritising user groups committed to equality are below:

1. Community sports infrastructure and environments are genuinely accessible, welcoming, safe, and inclusive.
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.
3. Women and girls will have equitable access to and use of community sport 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 and girls should be equitably represented in leadership and governance roles.
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.
6. Prioritise use and support to all user groups who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to gender equitable access and use of allocated community sport infrastructure.

Ref: <https://play.afl/fair-access-support>

Acknowledgement of Current Situation

Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club acknowledge the following:

- It is important to consider and prioritise all current and future planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to equitable access to community sports infrastructure.
- Women and girls across NSW do not currently have equal access to community sport and recreation.
- it is still common for facilities to be poorly designed to meet the needs of women and girls.
- commonly men and boys are often given the access to fit for purpose facilities, prioritised in the design and development of new facilities
- the current facilities at Dick Burwell Oval do not meet the current needs of female participants.
- men and boys are generally given the most popular training times.
- Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club currently work with all coaches to provide access to playing fields suitable to age that also meet the needs of all teams despite gender.

Aims of the Policy

The Policy aims to ensure Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club complies with all current legislation, government and football related policies and plans, and seeks to strengthen female sports participation, wellbeing and connectivity in Australian Rules Football.

The Policy aims to progressively build capacity and capability at Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club in identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender

inequality in policy, program development and delivery, communication and delivery of football training and competition at all levels.

Key Actions of the Policy

Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club will influence, support, design and deliver in collaboration with partners and stakeholders' gender inclusive and accessible, welcoming, safe and fit-for-purpose community Australian Rules Football facilities.

Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club in conjunction with Port Stephens Council will engage and consult throughout the design phase of any new, upgraded or repurposed football facility, field of play and other relevant community sport infrastructure.

Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club will engage and consult with key stakeholders as a key stage in the development of policy and infrastructure to establish equitable access.

Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club seeks to ensure:

- Sport and active recreation facilities are welcoming, equitably accessible, safe and inclusive for all.
- Barriers are removed to ensure women and girls feel included.
- Positive sport and recreation participation experiences for women and girls.
- Participation for women and girls in football increases.

Scope

The scope of the Policy is to support Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club to take positive action towards achieving equitable access and usage of community sports infrastructure used for Australian Rule Football. The Policy applies to the following community sport infrastructure/facilities used by Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club and managed by Port Stephens Council:

	Facility	Location
1.	Nelson Bay Marlins Clubhouse	Tomaree Sports Complex
2.	Dick Burwell Oval	Tomaree Sports Complex
3.	Don Waring Oval	Tomaree Sports Complex
4.	Proposed new modular amenities and changerooms at Dick Burwell Oval	Tomaree Sports Complex

The Policy applies to:

- Any Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club, policies, programs, communications, and services as they relate to equitable access to community facilities used by the Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club.

- Any Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club involvement in the design, construction of new and improved and ongoing maintenance of community sport infrastructure.
- All community sports infrastructure maintained by Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club.

Compliance and Monitoring

Best looks different for everyone. For some it may mean more family friendly or convenient training times, safe and private access to change facilities, cultural change to include women and girls in social events and on club committees scheduling of games at times suitable to allow spectator support.

Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club commits to review current facility and field of play access and use and consider opportunities to strengthen gender equitable access and use of community sports facilities in line with the Principles.

Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club commits to developing an Action Plan to remove barriers and improve gender equitable access and use of community sports facilities in alignment with the Principles.

The Action Plan has clear indicators to ensure identified actions can be measured and monitored. Data and feedback collected will continually be used to inform decision making, assess the Action Plan implementation and analyse the effectiveness of the outcomes. Success of outcomes will be measured individually, as a club and will report on any broader societal and cultural change. The Action Plan monitors metrics as well as qualitative measures of stakeholder or cultural change.

Related Policies and Legislation

Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club Strategic Plan

Nelson Bay Marlins Australian Football Club Participation Plan

[PORT STEPHENS COUNCIL COMMUNITY SPORT EQUITABLE ACCESS AND USAGE POLICY](#)

[OFFICE OF SPORT 2023 LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD PROGRAM](#)

[AFL WORKFORCE GENDER EQUITY ACTION PLAN 2022-2024](#)

[AFL PREFERRED FACILITY GUIDELINES 2019](#)

NELSON BAY EQUITABLE ACCESS AND USAGE - ACTION PLAN 2024-2027

Identification of areas of improvement

Female Profile			
Question		How can we address this	
Does our club provide equal opportunity for females to access the main oval and prime timeslots?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If No	Implement an equal access rotation policy. For example Men's team has main oval Tuesday and Women's team has main oval on Thursday
Do we invite female role models to speak to our teams at our clubs?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		Ensure that female role models are also invited to speak with all teams, regardless of whether those teams are male or female. Invite your Women coaches/leaders to speak with junior teams just the same as you would the men. Kids need both male & female role models.
Do we recognise and celebrate the achievements of males and females equally? Do we share their success on social media/website? Are their photos in the clubhouse? Do we have special awards for females like we do males?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Make sure all the achievements of males and females are recognized equally. If you share a match report of your senior men's team every week, share the women's as well. Make sure team photos and memorable of the women's team is displayed and visible in the clubhouse. Share photos of you men's and women's teams on social media.
Participation			
Do we have targeted strategies to recruit women & girls?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	If No	Use tailored/specific branding and messaging that attracts females, encourage players to bring friends. Make sure females are represented within all of your clubs marketing collateral. If you visit the clubs website, is it obvious the club has female teams? Remember, you can't be what you can't see.

Do we have strategies to accommodate parental caring responsibilities?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Look at flexible times or commitments for training and games
Do we provide introductory or social opportunities for new or returning female participants?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Run low cost, low commitment skill development sessions/programs.
Leadership and Equal Opportunity			
Do we offer leadership development opportunities for females at our club?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	If No	<p>Women may be reluctant to apply for leadership roles in your club due to a lack of confidence. It's important that women know they will be supported. This will help give them the confidence that they can take on the role. Look at providing development opportunities specifically for female leaders at your club. Ensuring they have their necessary accreditations is the first step.</p> <p>Beyond that, tell them how the club will support them. What development opportunities can you give them? Can you provide them with a mentor?</p>
Do we have women in executive committee roles?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<p>The recommended guidelines for committee make-up is at least 40% representation of women. This helps drive diversity of opinions and a representation of the interests of women within the club.</p> <p>If your club is below the recommended 40%, look at identifying Women within your club that could fill these roles and encourage them to apply. If there are not any at the club currently, look at advertising positions externally.</p>



ACTION PLAN 2024-2027

Action area to be addressed	How will we make this action happen?	How will we track it?	How will we measure its success?	Timeframe
1. Encourage senior females to register for AFL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring in an AFLW player to provide a motivational speaker and encourage female participants Events coordinator to arrange event in conjunction with help from the Hunter Central Coast AFL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The event is completed prior to the commencement of the 2025 season 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve a senior women's team 	2024-2025
2. Encourage junior female participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted messaging to female players Social media coordinator to develop campaign 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media analytics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased numbers in junior female players 	2025-2026
3. Encourage female coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide specialised training programs Provide mentor to assist with training Club to allocate budget to provide training program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement training program to boost confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in female coaches across teams 	2025-2026
4. Provide female amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make successful grant application to assist in delivery of the plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant application is successful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of major project 	2026-2027



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants coordinator to work with committee to delivery grant material • Project manager to deliver project if successful 			
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NB MARLINS - AFL TRAINING SCHEDULES 2024

Team	Registered Team	Day	Start Time	End Time	Location	Coach	Team Manager
U11 YG	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV						
U13 YG	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV						
U15 YG	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV						
U17 YG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV	Tuesday Thursday	5.30	6.30	Dick Burwell Oval	Pete Feldman Ass. Coach – Jessie Blyth	Jacquie Gainsford
Senior Women	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV						



U9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV	Wednesday	4.00	5.00	Dick Burwell Oval	Mark Saddington	Rick Saville
U11	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV	Wednesday	4.30	6.00	Dick Burwell Oval	Ryan Hodgson	Alana Hodgson
U13	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV	Tuesday & Thursday	4.30	5.30	Dick Burwell Oval	Mick Humphreys	Alicia
U15	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV	Tuesday & Thursday	4.30	6.00	Dick Burwell Oval	Paul Benbow	Rick Saville
U17	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JV	Tuesday & Wednesday	5.00	6.30	Dick Burwell Oval Ferodale Oval	Gavin Dimery Ass. Coach – Shane Roche	Paula Adnam
Senior Men	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV	Tuesday & Thursday	5.30	7.00	Dick Burwell Oval	Sean McGrath	Shane Roche

NB MARLINS - AFL TRAINING SCHEDULES 2025

Team	Registered Team	Day	Start Time (PM)	End Time (PM)	Location	Coach	Team Manager
U11 YG	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV						
U13 YG	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes						



	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV						
U15 YG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JV - Likely	Monday Thursday	5.00	6.00	Dick Burwell Oval	TBC	TBC
U17 YG	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV	Tuesday Friday	5.30	6.30	Dick Burwell Oval	TBC	TBC
Senior Women	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV	Tuesday Thursday	5.30	7.00	Dick Burwell Oval	Shane Roche	TBC
Auskick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Sunday	9am	10am	Dick Burwell Oval	Shane Ridgeway	Kris Flegg
U9	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV	Wednesday	4.00	5.00	Dick Burwell Oval	Mark Saddington	TBC
U11	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV	Wednesday	4.30	6.00	Dick Burwell Oval	TBC	Katrina Walker
U13	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV	Tuesday Thursday	4.30	5.30	Dick Burwell Oval	Ryan Hodgson	Alana Hodgson
U15	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV	Tuesday Friday	4.30	6.00	Dick Burwell Oval	Rick Saville	TBC
U17	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Wednesday Thursday	5.00	6.30	Dick Burwell Oval	TBC	Paula Adnam



	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> JV				Ferodale Oval		
Senior Men	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> JV	Tuesday Thursday	5.30	7.00	Dick Burwell Oval	Sean McGrath	TBC

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