



courageous conversations

Sporting Clubs HANDBOOK



women's health
goulburn north east
challenging inequity, embracing diversity

...Let's talk about respect and equity

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Introduction

Sport has played an integral role in Australian culture, and in particular is an iconic element of rural community life. Sport can act as a 'sociological superglue', bringing people together through a sense of pride, common purpose, and commitment (Putnam, 2000, p. 23).

Sporting clubs can play a key role in shaping positive community attitudes and behaviour. Clubs can create a respectful and inclusive culture, on and off the playing field, and by doing so help increase the participation and satisfaction, of members at their club.

This handbook has been designed to support clubs to promote an equal and respectful culture, and to enable them to take action on disrespectful behaviour that may occur. Whilst this handbook can be applied to and is appropriate for any sporting club, it has been designed with an interest on rural football and netball clubs, due to their popularity and place in rural Victoria community life.

Football Clubs

Football clubs have historically been associated with a 'masculine' culture. The masculine sub-cultures of Rugby and Australian Rules Football in Australia share some features, shown to foster violence against women – including intense male bonding, males held in high status and strong gender role differentiation, high alcohol consumption, celebrating male sexual conquest, and aggression and toughness being highly valued.

Sporting clubs can have a significant influence in promoting respect and equality in their community, by ensuring both men and women can fully participate in all of the club's activities and areas. Such as both participating in the canteen, to equal representation of men and women at the board level, sharing decision making.

By promoting equality and removing gendered practices, clubs can address the underlying causes of violence against women, and challenge the attitudes and cultures that supports violence against women in our society.

Bystander Action

A key aspect of creating a respectful and inclusive club is educating and supporting all members to take action when they see or hear any comments or behaviour that is sexist, discriminatory or excluding. Taking action, can take many forms, and in this handbook is often referred to as "bystander action". This can include, challenging a sexist comment or joke, or identifying and changing club practices that discriminate against men or women (Stepping In, 2014).

Positive Bystander actions can positively influence your club culture by

- Promoting equal and respectful relationships between men and women
- Increase the retention of members
- Improve the contribution and morale of club members

This handbook will support you to take a whole of club approach with members, to build a shared ownership and commitment, and ensure everyone has the same understanding of acceptable behaviour within the club.

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Taking Action and Addressing Disrespectful Behaviour





Taking Action and Responding to Disrespectful Behaviour

Every day we may witness subtle and not so subtle acts of sexism and gender discrimination. When these incidents do not directly involve us we are bystanders to the event. At these times we choose how we respond.

At no times are we neutral – by doing nothing we are effectively supporting the behaviour or comment. Choosing opportunities to be an active bystander when witness to sexism and discrimination encourages people and organisations to contribute to the development of a strong and healthy culture

The idea of taking bystander action could be new to many of your members.

Essentially, bystander action is when an individual steps in when they see or hear a comment/behaviour that doesn't feel right or respectful.

Stepping in can take many forms: it can include speaking up against sexist language or jokes, or identifying and changing club practices and policies that aren't equal to men and women.

Some examples of bystander action in the club are:

- speaking to a team mate or club member about their recent disrespectful behaviour
- 'calling' out disrespectful language or behaviour (e.g. challenging sexist remarks or jokes)
- letting coaches or leaders know when issues relating to policy compliance, codes of conduct or behaviour need addressing
- highlighting club cultures and practices that exclude or make it difficult for women and men to participate equally
- challenging gender stereotypes e.g. women are more nurturing therefore better at looking after children, men are more logical and better at making decisions

How to implement Bystander Action in your club

People are more likely to speak up against sexist language, sexual harassment and disrespectful behaviour if they believe they will be supported.

This can come from club members and teammates who share the aim of building a fair and respectful environment.

To implement bystander action effectively, it is best to have your teams actively involved. Achieving this requires teams to reflect on their own behaviours and beliefs, and on whether they:

- support a fair and respectful club environment
- encourage team members to raise issues and challenge disrespectful comments and behaviour

This reflection can take place in discussions led by coaches/leaders who can guide teams to:

- identify team behaviours and language that will help provide a fair and respectful club
- identify whether the types of behaviours they individually or collectively engage in may be sexist, discriminatory or harassing

- identify and agree on the types of behaviour they want to be present in their team
- identify and agree on strategies to modify or change individual and collective 'unwanted behaviours'
- identify and agree on the 'ground rules' that support team members speaking up and challenging sexist language, discrimination and harassment
- the pros and cons for the team in using bystander action
- what may help or get in the way of taking bystander action
- Identify ways to monitor team behaviours.

EXAMPLE: Ground rules for the use of bystander action in our team

In this team we will:

- speak up and challenge sexist, disrespectful or discriminatory behaviours or practices in our team in a respectful and fair manner
- receive feedback about sexist, disrespectful or discriminatory behaviours and practices with goodwill and agree to make appropriate changes
- report to coach (first) regarding any concerns about the safety or respect of our team members. If the coach is not available, approach a club leader or appointed contact



Checklist for reviewing use of bystander action in our club

- ✓ More agreed bystander actions being used
- ✓ Less sexist language and humour
- ✓ Less sexist behaviours
- ✓ Less reinforcement of gender stereotypes
- ✓ Greater participation of women in the club
- ✓ More talking about team behaviours
- ✓ Improved relationships between male and female club members
- ✓ Improved working together on tasks/projects
- ✓ More people talking about using bystander action

Steps to taking bystander action

Research around bystander action shows that by the time people speak up and challenge sexist language, sex discrimination or sexual harassment in the club, they have gone through some quick thinking and decision-making.

- STEP 1** Decide whether the behaviours or practices you are seeing or hearing are sexist, discriminatory and/or disrespectful. What do your policies and procedures say about them? Are they outside of your agreed or expected team behaviours? If you are not sure, check with your coach or a club leader.
- STEP 2** Decide whether you feel safe to step in. Will you be supported by your coach or a club leader if you do? Would this be something your coach or a club leader would expect you to challenge? Has your team agreed to challenge this kind of behaviour? Is there a risk of aggression or escalation of the situation if you intervene?
- STEP 3** Decide whether taking bystander action will be helpful. If you were on the receiving end, would you want someone to step in for you? Will it result in a positive outcome? Will it make a positive difference to a person's behaviour or to the club culture?
- STEP 4** Weigh up the seriousness of the behaviour or practice to decide how you might step in. If your team has already agreed on how to step in, then act accordingly.

These decisions can be hard to make on your own or in the moment, and it is helpful to talk with your coach and team about why and how best to take bystander action. Putting this on your team agenda will:

- prepare your whole team to take bystander action when it is needed
- help people who are on the receiving end feel they will be supported
- let people who deliberately or inadvertently behave inappropriately know to expect bystander action and how to respond when they do
- promote a club culture that is safe, inclusive and respectful for everyone.

Speaking up and challenging behaviours, attitudes and practices that are sexist, discriminatory or harassing is a key strategy to provide a fair and respectful club environment

Bystander action can be taken:

- in the moment when you see or hear about the event, behaviour or practice
- after the moment when the event, behaviour or practice took place.



What to say in the moment

- Ask questions; 'why do you say that?' 'Is that respectful?'
- I think what you are saying may be sexist/disrespectful
- I don't think that fits in with our club culture here
- Is anyone else uncomfortable with that joke/comment/picture?
- I don't agree with that/I'm sorry I don't find that funny
- That goes against our policy/code of conduct
- Describe how the sexist comment or jokes makes you feel e.g. that makes me feel uncomfortable

What to say after the moment

- I have thought about what happened before and I'm not sure it fits with our agreed behaviours.
- I'd like to follow up what you said before...
- I'm uncomfortable about the joke you told earlier. We have agreed that those types of jokes are not on.
- Can we have a quick conversation about the remark you made earlier?
- That might not have been a big deal to you but I think it was inappropriate/made me uncomfortable

Taking bystander action at any time is important, because doing nothing supports and encourages the behaviours and attitudes.

Some action examples are:

- telling a team mate/club member their behaviour is not appropriate in the club
- stepping in when a team mate/club member is behaving inappropriately to another team mate/club member
- speaking up when someone tells a sexist joke or shows you sexist images
- telling your coach/club leader when you hear of an incident of sexual harassment, disrespectfulness or discrimination
- speaking up if club members or club practices reinforce gender stereotypes e.g. women in the kitchen, men's achievements receiving more accolades and attention
- noting any language or content in your policies or procedures that you think may need to be updated or changed to promote inclusiveness and discussing this with your coach/club leader
- talking to team mates or club leaders about the club culture
- supporting a team mate who is making a complaint about discrimination or sexual harassment
- look for opportunities to be inclusive and actively engage those from non-traditional sporting backgrounds to participate in the club

Stats and Facts





Stats and Facts

The world affects men and women differently, in many different ways. Some of this is due to social expectations, and what is considered appropriate behaviour for men and appropriate behaviour for women. This section will highlight some of the differences men and women at your club may experience, and demonstrate some of the inequalities women may be more likely to face.

Women's Participation in Sport

Sport plays a huge role in Australian culture and in the lives of many individuals. For those in rural communities, sporting clubs, can be the heart and soul of their community and have an integral role in social inclusion.

However not everyone experiences the same access to participating in sport, with women often experiencing greater barriers. A report investigating women's participation in sport and recreation in Australia found "the attitudes and perceptions of male dominated sport culture, perceptions and expectations of women, and work-life issues" as the leading barriers.

The *About Time* Report further found the factors that are directly responsible for the lower participation rates of women and girls in sport, recreation and physical activity included:

- lack of access to appropriate, accessible, affordable and acceptable facilities and services
- lack of culturally appropriate facilities/programs
- female facilities of poor standard
- social and gender stereotyping
- structures and recruitment process are restrictive; boards of management are often drawn from volunteers and the ranks of male dominated senior participants
- lack of role models
- lack of time
- lack of appropriate childcare and lack of awareness of childcare options
- fewer opportunities available for participation
- reduced leisure time owing to family responsibilities
- lack of skills or perceived lack of skills
- lack of financial resources
- harassment
- lack of confidence in approaching activities alone, poor self-image
- cultural and social pressures.

How can we overcome barriers?

- Women being mentored in leadership roles
- Women and men being represented and valued in all aspects of the club

- Ensure there is equal contribution to the running of the club from male and female members e.g. canteen, cleaning, club room maintenance etc
- Provide a Family friendly environment– responsible serving of alcohol, parent rooms, family events
- Offer training – Australian Sports Commission (ASC) offer Sport Leadership Grants and Scholarships for Women- a program which provides women with opportunities to undertake training to reach their leadership potential as coaches, officials and administrators. The Sport Leadership Register is a free service for qualified women looking to gain leadership roles within national sporting organisations.
- Set a target above current levels of women on boards of management and on committees and an achievable timeframe. Let people know you are doing it – advertise, let the other clubs around you know.
- Advertise positions and create role descriptions that will facilitate finding the best person for the role
- Implement policies that promote inclusivity, respectful relationships and equity
- Implement and promote policies to address disrespectful and sexist behaviour
- Ensure female facilities are of adequate standard e.g. changing rooms are private and clean. If possible, ensure they are of the same standard to the male facilities
- Schedule training sessions that are suitable for majority of members and take into consideration caring responsibilities
- Schedule committee and leadership meetings at a time that take into consideration caring responsibilities

(Australian Sports Commission, 2015)

Coverage of Women's Sport

Towards a Level Playing Field: Sport and gender in Australian media report confirms that female sport compared to male sport receive significantly less coverage on Australian television, despite the ongoing successes and high standard of female sport:

- Coverage of women in sport made up 9% of all sports coverage in Australian television news media
- Male sport occupied 81% of television news reporting
- Television news reports on female sport had the lowest average duration of all the types of sport analysed, with reports on male sport having an average duration of 30 seconds longer than reports on female sport.

To put this into context, horseracing received more air time than women's sport

How can we promote Women's Sport

- Ensure your club promotes the female members achievements – ensure this is equal to the promotion the male members receive
- Provide your local media with all results of the women's matches



- Advocate to and encourage your local media to increase the coverage of women's sport e.g. more dedicated print space, more front and back page coverage, coverage that is equal to males
- Advocate to peak media e.g. Herald Sun to increase the coverage of women's sport
- Advocate to peak media bodies e.g. Channel WIN, Channel Prime etc to increase the coverage of women's sport
- Value the contribution made by female members at your club – ensure the males achievements do not overshadow the females e.g. player payments, more emphasis on male team achievements and success
- Ensure there is equal representation of male and female achievements in your club rooms e.g. display of team photos, photos of players who have reached milestone games, premierships trophies and flags
- Equal representation of men and women on your club website

Sexism

Sexism can affect men and women, but particularly affects women and girls. Sexism has been linked to gender stereotypes and gender roles; beliefs about the characteristics and behaviors that are acceptable for men and for women.

Sexism is still prevalent in Australian society and has a vast impact. According to the Australian Institute (2015)

- 87% of Australian women have experienced at least one form of verbal or physical street harassment
- Among those who had experienced street harassment:
 - 56 % of women were alone when they last experienced street harassment;
 - Three in four women (74%) were harassed by a man or a group of men;
 - A majority of women (54%) were younger than 18 when they first experienced street harassment;
- 40% of Australian women do not feel safe when walking alone at night in the area where they currently live, compared to 17% of men;
- 87% of Australian women have taken at least one action to ensure their own personal safety in the last 12 months (e.g. avoiding walking home alone at night).

According to the Australian Human Rights Commission;

- A quarter of women (25%) experienced sexual harassment in the workplace, 90% of whom said they were harassed by a man.
- Women were at least five times more likely than men to have been harassed by a boss or employer.
- Nearly four out of five (79%) harassers were men, a slight decrease from 2008 (81%).

Sexism can take place in many forms. It may be less severe and a low level for of sexism such as a sexist joke or comment, or it may be more severe, such as sexual coercion or unwanted sexual attention.

Women predominately experience the lower levels of sexism more so than the more extreme forms of overt sexism. Sexist jokes and comments made frequently can lead to a normalisation of this behaviour, and fosters a sexist culture in which these behaviours are tolerated (Sojo et al, 2015).

Research demonstrates that women's exposure to a high frequency of low level sexism is significantly more detrimental to a woman's organisational commitment, satisfaction and general health and well-being compared to the more severe cases of sexism that occur on a lower frequency (Sojo et al, 2015). Therefore it is important for clubs and organisations to take action on the low level forms of sexism to ensure women feel valued, heighten commitment to the club and feel safe and respected.

Perpetrators may not believe or accept that they are being sexist, and will often respond when challenged that they are "just joking". Sexism can be particularly damaging for women due to "stereotype threat" which can often leave the victim of the sexist remark/behaviour, questioning her ability and the intentions of the person who made the remark. Stereotype threat is a strong negative predictor for female performance, and highlights how undermining sexism can be (Sojo and Wood, 2012).

Beliefs of male dominance

There have been a number of Australian surveys exploring individual attitudes and views toward gender stereotypes and violence against women in Australian society. Some of the survey outcomes, reveal some concerning statistics in regards to what people think is acceptable in relationships, and what behaviour is acceptable for men and women. The White Ribbon Youth Survey discovered;

- Over one in four young males (28%) believe 'girls like guys in charge of the relationship'
- 19% of young males believe, men are supposed to be head of the household and take control of the relationship

The National Community Attitudes survey found;

- nearly 2 in 5 believe that a lot of times women who say they were raped led the man on and later had regrets
- Up to 1 in 5 believes that there are circumstances in which women bear some responsibility for violence
- Up to 28% of Australians endorse attitudes supportive of male dominance of decision-making in relationships, a dynamic identified as a risk factor for partner violence
- More than a quarter believe that men make better political leaders

Things your club can do to prevent sexism and promote equality between men and women

- Have a zero tolerance culture to sexist jokes and comments
- If sexist jokes/comments are made, ensure they are addressed and dealt with seriously
- Provide all players and club members at the beginning of each season with information on your club policies and who they can go to access these policies or for more information and help
- Clearly explain where the club stands on sexist behaviour or comments, and outline the course of action that will be taken if behaviour/comments breaches club policy/club code of conduct



- All teams have an agreed way of addressing sexist language and disrespectful behaviour, and implementing bystander action
- Ensure there is equal representation of females and males, from all demographics on all committees and boards
- Involve men and women equally in the clubs decision making
- Celebrate and reward the achievements of men and women equally
- Celebrate and acknowledge the contributions made by all members of the club equally
- Promote and share the results and achievements made by all players and members with the club and local media
- Ensure clubrooms display memorabilia and the achievements of men and women equally e.g. players who have reached milestone games, team premierships, best and fairest winners etc
- Offer mentoring for those new in leadership positions
- All club leaders to role model respectful behaviour

References

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Coaches





Coaches

Michael Jordan described his coach Dean Smith as a “second Father”, and long-time coach Phil Jackson as his friend.

Coaches have the opportunity to be much more than just an instructor. Coaches are often seen as role models and mentors, and have a powerful opportunity to shape and influence the attitudes of their team members.

At their best, coaches can help their players improve their skills, perform to their best ability, develop strong character, and gain confidence. They may also find themselves in the role of an instructor, teacher, motivator, disciplinarian, substitute parent, social worker, friend, manager, therapist, and encourager

It doesn't matter if you're coaching basketball, hockey or netball; players look to you for guidance, leadership and instruction, coaches have a truly unique platform for delivering a message.

Coaching Boys and Girls;

Boys and young men are constantly exposed to messages that suggest that to be a 'real man' they need to be tough and always in control. Sometimes they get messages that suggest that being a man is to be someone who treats girls and women badly or disrespectfully.

If you coach boys or young men, you have an opportunity to challenge these kinds of attitudes and shape the way boys treat and develop their relationships with girls and women.

Similarly girls, and young women are continuously exposed to messages from the media and society, what it means to be a women, and what is valued in a women. Often these messages can promote physical appearance as the most important element of being a female, and reinforce that men should take control in relationships.

If you coach girls and young women, you have an opportunity to challenge these messages, and support the women to develop healthy, equal and respectful relationships.

Bystander Action

As a coach, you have an important role to play in implementing bystander action in your Club.

Coaches can:

- ensure their team behave in ways that are fair and respectful towards each other, and all members of the club
- create and maintain an environment in which players are encouraged and supported to speak up against sexist language, harassment and disrespectful behaviour.

The first and most critical step in meeting these responsibilities is to behave respectfully and fairly yourself. Research shows the behaviour of a coach has a direct impact on the behaviour of individuals within their teams, as well as on the team culture.

In order to encourage fair and respectful behaviour, you need to be aware of your own attitudes and behaviours, and think about whether you ever operate in ways that could be sexist, disrespectful or discriminatory.

What you can do;

- Read and understand the commitments to your club's Code of Conduct and discuss this with the team.
- Ensure that players are involved in a positive environment where skill learning and development priorities are not overshadowed by a desire to win.
- Respect the rights and worth of every person regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion.
- Help each member of the club/team reach their potential - respect the talent, developmental stage and goals of each person and compliment and encourage with positive and supportive feedback.
- Be reasonable in the demands you make on the time commitments of the players in your care, having, consideration for their health and well-being, and other commitments.
- Place the safety and welfare of the players/members above all else.
- Encourage and support all members of the clubs, for example by going and watching their games.
- Let players know that behaviours like sledging, wolf whistling or harassment, disrespectful comments, or speaking in derogatory ways are just not acceptable.
- Explain that saying they were joking or they didn't mean it, or that no one else had a problem with their behaviour is never an excuse for these types of comments or behaviours.
- Address any disrespectful, sexist, homophobic or racist behaviour as soon as it is brought to your attention
- Acknowledge the importance of social events but talk about responsible consumption of alcohol
- If you are concerned about behaviours or attitudes don't ignore it. Find an appropriate time to talk to the person about the harm or impact his/her behaviour might have on others. Talk about positive and respectful ways of relating to others.
- Harassment can be subtle, for example referring to poor on field performance as 'playing like a girl'. Such statements serve to reinforce negative stereotypes and discourage women and girls to participate in sport.



Scenarios

Below are examples of scenarios that may occur in your club, with a range of potential actions that could be taken to address this behaviour if it does arise. You may choose to talk through these in scenarios in teams and have a group discussion, or read over as individuals

#1 Locker Room Chatter

You're the senior football coach. All the players are in the changeroom after a good win, and discussing a party they're going to that Saturday night. One of the star younger players, Tom, makes some disrespectful comments about a "bird he hooked up with" last weekend, labelling her as 'easy' and making comments about her "tits". Most team mates around him laugh.

Actions you can take

- Pull Tom aside after the comments and let him know you thought the comments were inappropriate, will not be tolerated at the club and he needs to show women more respect
- Address the comment directly for the whole team to hear. Letting players know these sort of comments are not respectful, not tolerated by the club and all players need to show respect
- Draw upon the clubs code of conduct (or other relevant policies) to demonstrate these comments and behaviour are not supported by the club
- At the next team training session, bring all the players together, letting them know you've heard some disrespectful comments being made about women and this is inappropriate and there is no place for those comments at the club. Remind them of the code of conduct and of the expected behaviour

#2 Unequal acknowledgement of team's achievements

You're the junior netball coach. Each week the results and awards for each game are announced to the club following the games. However you've noticed, your team and the netball doesn't receive much attention in comparison to the football teams.

Whilst the netballers contribute the same amount of effort to trainings, game day and the club, they receive significantly less acknowledgement and praise, than the footballers.

Actions you can take

- Advocate to your local paper to report more on the netball, including more pictures, more interviews with players and more reporting on the results
- Discuss with senior leaders around the club, and suggest all teams receive equal level of acknowledgement and praise
- Celebrate the achievements and efforts of all teams/players at the clubs events
- Ensure the club's social media pages and website has equal representation from all aspects of the clubs e.g. there are photos of all teams

#3 Disrespectful Comments during team selection

You're the junior soccer coach. At the beginning of the season you hold try outs for all new and returning players so you can select teams for the year. Sam is new to the club, hoping to play his first season of soccer. Whilst his skills are below that of others, he is very enthusiastic. Other players tease Sam, saying he won't make the team because he 'kick's like a girl'

- Pull the players making the comments aside, and talk them about their behaviour. Let them know comments such as "kick like a girl" are not appropriate to Sam or to girls, and it's important to be respectful of everyone regardless of their ability or gender
- Talk to the parents, let them know these comments aren't appropriate and to be mindful of them
- Speak to Sam and his parents, let them know Sam is very much welcomed at the club, and will be supported to develop to the best of his ability.

#4 Player receives negative comments for resting with injury

A star footy player has a hairline fracture in his little finger on his non-dominant hand. The injury is minor and will only take a few weeks to heal. The player has chosen to take those weeks off to let it completely heal. Other players in the club call him 'soft' and 'precious', and say he should think of the club considering the tough upcoming games



Coach Checklist

- ✓ Can I easily identify sexist, discriminatory and harassing behaviours at the club?
- ✓ Do I know the impact these behaviours could have on my team and our club?
- ✓ Do I know what our policies say about these behaviours and our procedures for dealing with them?
- ✓ Do I arrange regular refresher for my team on the code of conduct and policies?
- ✓ Do I understand bystander action as a strategy to address sexist language, discrimination and disrespectful behaviour?
- ✓ Am I clear about my responsibility to set the standards of behaviour for my team?
- ✓ Do I role model appropriate behaviours all the time at the club?
- ✓ Do I have the skills and knowledge to lead my team in working on these issues?
- ✓ Have I talked with my team about the behaviours expected of them at the club?
- ✓ Do I provide feedback to players and club members about their behaviour?
- ✓ Do I actively monitor my team culture and players behaviours?
- ✓ Do I know what to do when I become aware of sexist, discriminatory or harassing behaviours at the club?
- ✓ Have I discussed bystander action with my team?
- ✓ Do I show my team I support bystander action?

...Let's talk about respect and equity

Players and Members





Players and club members

All players and members of the club have a role to play in ensuring they're respectful and welcoming, contributing to a healthy and inclusive culture within the club.

All club members, regardless of their gender, sexuality, age, cultural background or religious beliefs, should feel safe, welcome and able to equally participate to the best of their ability. And all members have a responsibility to ensure this is upheld.

Reflecting on your behaviour, do you;

- Treat all people respectfully – on and off the field
- Refuse to engage in behaviour or make comments that are sexist, racist or homophobic
- Support all members in the club – for example, by watching their games
- Refuse to make comments that reinforce gender stereotypes stereotype, or comments that pigeon-hole individuals
- Address and challenge these comments when you see or hear them
- Be welcoming to new players and members

Taking Action

Bystander action is speaking up against and challenging sexist language, discrimination and disrespectful behaviour in the club. Speaking up against sexist language, discrimination and harassment is everyone's responsibility, and working towards building a respectful and fair club starts with you!

When considering whether to take bystander action or not, you could ask yourself the following questions;

- Is the behaviour sexist, discriminatory and/or sexual harassment?
- What do our policies and procedures say about it?
- Is this outside agreed or expected team behaviours? If you are not sure, check with your coach or a club leader.
- Is it safe to step in?
- Would your coach or club leader act on this?
- Would this be something your coach would expect you to challenge?
- Has your team agreed to challenge this kind of behaviour?
- Would bystander action be helpful?
- If you were on the receiving end, would you want someone to step in for you?
- Will it make a positive difference to a person's behaviour or to your club culture?
- How serious is it and how could you respond proportionately?

Self-Checklist

- ✓ Can I easily identify sexist, discriminatory and harassing behaviours at my club?
- ✓ Do I know the impact these behaviours could have on women?
- ✓ Do I know what our policies and code of conduct say about sexist language, discrimination and harassment?
- ✓ Do I accept it is my responsibility to do something when I hear about or see sexist, discriminatory and harassing behaviours at the club?
- ✓ Do I feel okay about speaking up against or challenging the behaviours and practices of team mates or other club members?
- ✓ Do I know what to do or say, when I witness or hear about sexist language, discrimination or harassment?
- ✓ Am I okay if someone gives me feedback about my behaviour at the club?
- ✓ Do I understand what bystander action is and where my club stands on it?
- ✓ Do I know my teams agreed way of taking bystander action?
- ✓ Am I committed to the use of bystander action at the club?
- ✓ Do I know who I could talk to if I want support to take bystander action?



Team Checklist

- ✓ Do we have an agreement about how we behave as a team?
- ✓ Do we discuss what our policies and code of conduct say about how we should behave at the club?
- ✓ Are we able to identify sexist, disrespectful and harassing behaviours that may be happening in our team?
- ✓ Do we have an agreed process to deal with conflict in our team?
- ✓ Do we have an agreed process to give each other feedback about our behaviours?
- ✓ Do we regularly check in to see how well we are working together as a team?
- ✓ Do we have ground rules to guide team members to take bystander action?
- ✓ Do we actively encourage equal participation from everyone in meetings and at training?
- ✓ Do we take steps to build a welcoming, respectful and inclusive culture in our team and club?
- ✓ Do we take collective responsibility for addressing sexist, disrespectful and harassing behaviours in our team?
- ✓ Have we made a collective agreement to use bystander action in our team?
- ✓ Are we committed to providing a fair and respectful team and club for all members?

Scenarios

#1 An explicit photograph is sent via text message to players in the team

A mate of yours has been hooking up with one of the girls in the club. She has sent a nude picture of herself to him, and he has now sent the picture around to a lot of the players in your team and is joking about it after training one night. The girl does not know the image has been sent to other players in the football team

Actions you can take

- Confront your mate after training and tell him that sort of behaviour is not on, and is illegal
- Speak to the coach about the behaviour, and support the coach when disciplinary action is taken
- Address the behaviour when the team is joking about it after training, let them know you're not comfortable with that behaviour and they should delete the picture
- Speak to other players you think will support you after training and discuss the incident with them. You could decide collectively how to approach the situation. Such as going to the president, or as a group talking with the player who received the photograph
- Talk to the girl who's photograph has been sent to the team, let her know you support her
- Speak to one of the girls friends about the incident
- Talk to the club president about the behaviour

#2 Inappropriate behaviour from a club leader

You're out with some of your friends from your netball team after the game. Your friend tells you, one of the senior football players who is part of the leadership team was making comments about her appearance that made her feel uncomfortable, whilst he was intoxicated at the last club function. Other girls in your team tell her she should be flattered and that 'he's a babe', but you can see she is still uncomfortable and upset

Actions you can take

- Pull her aside, let her know you support her, the comments weren't appropriate and you will stand by her if she wants the behaviour to be addressed
- Challenge the behaviour in the moment; discuss with the girls that you think the behaviour was inappropriate as he was in a position of power, it was intimidating and was not respectful
- Raise the incident with your netball coach
- Raise the incident with the senior football coach
- Raise the incident with others members from the leadership team
- Raise the incident with the club president



#3 Disrespectful comments made about a female umpire

You've just lost a game of football by 2 points. Some of the players in your team are really disappointed with the umpiring, and say some of their decisions cost you the game. In particular, they're disappointed with the female umpire and are making disrespectful comments about her and saying females should not umpire football, they're ruining the game

Actions you can take

- Follow this up with your coach; let them know about the comments and that you didn't think they were fair or appropriate
- Challenge the comments in the moments; talk to your team mates about all umpires making mistakes, let them know you think their comments are unfair and unjustified, her sex has no bearing on her ability to umpire
- Talk to the team captain, again let them know you didn't think the comments were fair or appropriate
- Raise the issue at the next training session, discuss with players the need to show respect for umpires, regardless of their gender

#4 Male club members socialising

A male football player has decided to spend a quiet night with his girlfriend, instead of heading to the pub to watch the footy, and have a few beers with the rest of his team mates. His team mates make comments such as "he's under the thumb", "he's whipped" and a "soft-cock".

Inclusive Culture





Inclusive Culture

Players and volunteers who enjoy what they do and the club atmosphere, are more likely to remain engaged with the club activities and to stay with the club. This results in improved club performance, including increased productivity.

Some actions you can take to promote an inclusive and equal environment include;

Create a welcoming, equal and inclusive culture

- Strive for equal representation of men and women in the club, particularly in leadership and decision making positions
- Review your membership rules and policies - Amend discriminatory clauses or sexist language and protect the rights of members, regardless of gender, race, religion, sexuality or physical ability
- Make sure nomination and voting for committee membership is open to all members.
- Invite local community leaders to be present at a committee meeting to discuss how the club can recruit people from under-represented groups and best involve the local community.
- Have a male and female Welcoming Officer to ensure all new members feel included at the club and assist with the settling in process. The Welcoming Officer may take on roles such as;
 - welcoming new members to the club when they first join and providing them with all club related information
 - inviting new members to club functions and ensuring they feel connected
- Ensure your club is disability and family friendly, providing wheel chair and pram access
- Ensure all club activities are family friendly, allowing children, youth and parents to participate e.g. held at appropriate time and venue, minimise heavy drinking culture, include activities for children

Ask for Club Members feedback

- Conduct a member surveys to find out what is working and what is not working with the existing club culture and policies. Disaggregate responses based on the gender of respondents and their role in the club (e.g. netball player, volunteer)
- Regularly invite the feedback from your club members – have a suggestion box and check it on a frequent basis

Provide a family friendly environment

- Provide a parents room, so both parents/carers have access to change room facilities
- Take action against a heavy drinking culture; promote a healthy and safe consumption of alcohol, particularly at club functions (see Good Sports for more information)
- Provide a playground and toys in the clubroom for children
- Offer attractive family memberships
- Ban all inappropriate activities for fundraising or at club functions; such as a bikini car wash, stripper nights, comedians that may use crude humour

- Provide a physical environment that caters for both men and women including equipment and facilities. For example;
 - Provide separate change rooms for males and females that are clean and meet the needs of both sexes
- Display pictures, images and newspaper articles of both men and women, and all club members in the clubrooms
- Ensure men and women participate equally in all aspects of the running of the club e.g. canteen, cleaning, maintenance of the grounds
- Display help numbers and contacts in both male and female toilets

<i>Female Toilets</i>	<i>Male Toilets</i>
1800 RESPECT (24 hours) Call 1800 737 732 www.1800respect.org.au	1800 RESPECT (24 hours) Call 1800 737 732 www.1800respect.org.au
CASA – Centre Against Sexual Assault (24 hours) 1800 806 292 www.casa.org.au	CASA – Centre Against Sexual Assault (24 hours) 1800 806 292 www.casa.org.au
Men's Referral Service 1300 766 491 www.mrs.org.au	Men's Referral Service 1300 766 491 www.mrs.org.au



Implement Club Policies

- Implement policies that foster an inclusive and respectful club
- Promote and display zero tolerance for sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination.
- Offer mentoring programs
- Use the Courageous Conversations Representation Checklist to review if your committee membership is diverse and inclusive of all members
- Create a process that acts to remove bias in decision making
- Display the Courageous Conversations Charter in the clubrooms

Club Awards

- Ensure awards value the contribution made to the club and uphold the club's values, as opposed to individual success and performance
- Promote internal rewards and recognition programs for all members of the club, e.g. 'club member of the week' recognising the contribution made to club by the member, such as those who
 - Continuously volunteer in the canteen
 - The important work of club trainers
 - Volunteer umpires
 - Organise and clean up after club functions
 - Work to ensure the club's grounds and facilities are kept to a clean and high standard

Inclusive Club Culture Checklist

- ✓ Is there equal display of pictures, trophies and awards of both male and female club members?
- ✓ Is there equal reward and recognition of both male and female players and members?
- ✓ Are those in a wheelchair and using prams able to fully access all the clubs facilities and buildings?
- ✓ Is there a parent's room available to both male and female carer?
- ✓ Is the playground fenced off and safe from traffic? (If applicable)
- ✓ Do males and females have access to a change room?
- ✓ Is there hot showers available to both men and women?
- ✓ Do the change rooms accommodate for privacy?
- ✓ Is there equal representation of both men and women in decision making?
- ✓ Is there equal representation of men and women on club committee's?
- ✓ Do men and women participate equally in the club canteen?
- ✓ Do men and women participate equally in the organising and cleaning up of club functions?
- ✓ Do men and women participate equally in the cleaning and maintenance of the clubrooms and facilities?
- ✓ Are members regularly consulted with and asked for their feedback?
- ✓ Is their feedback taken on board?
- ✓ Are new members welcomed and provided with information about the club when they first join?
- ✓ Are the practices of those from other cultures respected and welcomed in the club?

Promoting Your Club





Promoting your club

The image you present, via local media, the club website and social media images represent the 'face' of the club and send a strong signal about the culture and values the leadership team want to display.

These images also signal whether the leaders are focused on attracting a diverse range of members and the types of roles available to all members. This is particularly important for traditionally male-dominated clubs which have historically focused on advertising to and recruiting men.

Clubs should review all advertising and promotional material (brochures, social media pages, club website, flyers, advertisements and annual reports) to ensure they use inclusive language and feature photos of all members and aspects of the club. To present yourself as a respectful and inclusive club, ensure all members are acknowledged and represented in promotional images and channels, and their contribution is valued

Club Leadership

- Lead from the top with the Club President and senior leaders visibly supporting the clearly articulated vision for equality and respect across the club
- Publically promote the benefits of inclusivity and respect, and aim to be a recognised leader in having a sustainable and inclusive culture.
- Engage senior leaders as role models for modelling respect, team work and inclusivity

Club Promotion

- Display diverse images and use inclusive language in advertisements and marketing materials to attract a diverse range of members
- Ensure both men and women are represented in any club promotional material
- Strive for a diverse representation of the club's members in promotional images e.g. include club volunteers, club leaders, club trainers etc rather than just focusing on successful players



Example: The Image above is a promotional image of the Newlyn Football Netball Club. However, the netball and female club members are not represented at all in this image, and is centrally focused on the football, and male players.



Example: The Image above is a promotional image for the Newborough Football Netball club. The image has representation of both football and netball players, promoting both aspects of the club

Example:



The image above is a promotional image for the Manum Football Netball Club, promoting the club's new Healthy Eating practices. The club has included representation from both the junior and senior football and netball, including all facets of the club to promote their achievements

- Locate advertisements broadly and where it will reach the whole community including in fitness centres, in print media, on internet sites and other online forums such as social media
- Use women's voices for radio, television, video and internet advertising and send a strong signal the organisation wants to attract a diverse membership, promoting yourself as an inclusive and welcoming club
- Publish profiles and case studies of women and men in non-traditional roles to provide role models, others can relate to and be inspired by e.g. female club president or a male netball coach.
- Ensure any scores given to the local media include both the males and females team results
- Advocate to the local media to enhance their coverage of and promote women's sports e.g.
 - greater coverage of match results
 - back page coverage
 - feature stories
 - interviews with coaches and players
 - increased space dedicated to women's sports



Club Website

- Ensure the club's website and social media pages promote and celebrate all aspects of the club
 - both men and women should be equally represented on the page
 - the clubs history should celebrate all achievements equally
 - all club members and all aspects of the club should be acknowledged and valued e.g. those that work in the canteen, club trainers and team managers
 - all club contacts should be made visible, and ensure a male and female contact is available
- The club website should display and promote the club's values
- The club's code of conduct should be visible and available to download via the website
- Display the Courageous Conversations Charter on the website, displaying your commitment to the Charters principles

Clubrooms

- Display the Courageous Conversations Charter within the clubrooms, displaying your commitment to the Charters principles and statement of commitment
- Display the clubs code of conduct visibly as a reminder of the expected behaviour from all members
- Ensure there is equal recognition of the achievements and contribution made by both men and women
- Ensure the awards and achievements of both male and females are visibly displayed e.g.
 - Photos of those that have reached milestone games for the club e.g. 100, 200, 300 games
 - Club life members
 - Premiership winning teams
 - Best and Fairest winners

Code of Conduct





Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct aims to set out the minimum standards for anyone involved in the club. It should apply when playing, training or taking part in club-sanctioned activities.

Every person, whether they are a spectator, player, club member, official, participant, administrator, coach, parent or a member of the community involved with the sport, should work to ensure:

- Respect is shown towards others, the club and the broader community
- Act within the rules and spirit of your sport
- Promote fair play over winning at any cost
- Respect the decisions of officials, coaches and administrators
- Inclusion of every person regardless of their age, gender or sexual orientation
- Inclusion of every person regardless of their race, ability, culture or religion
- All people of all abilities have the opportunity to participate in the sport and all aspects of the club and develop to their full potential
- Display responsible behaviour in relation to alcohol and other drugs
- Act with integrity and accept responsibility for your decisions and actions
- Ensure your decisions and actions contribute to a safe, respectful and inclusive environment
- Violent, abusive, bullying or threatening behaviour is not tolerated
- Engage in bystander action and follow up or report any disrespectful, sexist or harmful behaviour

I, have read and understood the policy and will abide by it as a member of
(INSERT YOUR NAME)

.....
(INSERT YOUR CLUB'S NAME).

Signature:

Date:

If under 18 years of age, parent/guardian-

Signature:

Date:

Club Policies





Policies

Your policies are the ground rules that help club members, volunteers and other stakeholders know what to do about any club issue. Your policies also reflect your clubs values and beliefs, and provide the blueprint for the kind of culture you want to achieve.

Having these policies and procedures in place will help members, volunteers and other stakeholders understand that:

- they share the responsibility for tackling sexist language, discrimination and harassment at the club and are expected to act
- they have club support for taking bystander action
- taking bystander action 'fits in' with your club's commitment to building a safe and inclusive environment for women and men and is a part of your strategy to do so.

To implement bystander action, you will need policies that let members, volunteers and other stakeholders know where they stand and what they should do in relation to:

- tackling sexist language, discrimination and disrespectful behaviour
- maintaining appropriate club behaviour
- Sorting out grievances and complaints of discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

This information does not have to be contained in a stand-alone bystander action policy, but can be included in other policies aimed at building a safe and respectful club, for example:

- Equal opportunity policy (see appendix for template)
- Anti-discrimination and harassment policy
- Code of conduct (refer to page 51 of the handbook)
- Anti-Sexual harassment policy (see appendix for template)
- Anti- Bullying
- Grievance and complaints resolutions (See appendix for template)

To be effective in supporting the use of bystander action, your policies should be communicated and promoted to members, volunteers and other stakeholders.

It is good practice to:

- include policies and code of conduct in your members handbook
- discuss policies and code of conduct at team meetings
- talk about policies and the code of conduct when new players join the club, and at the beginning of every season
- promote the code of conduct via email, the club website or social media
- regularly review the code of conduct, club policies and your members' compliance with them.

Courageous Conversations Charter

The Courageous Conversations Charter supports organisations to provide a safe and inclusive environment and a respectful culture. It also provides a set of core values to live by and practice. By implementing the Charter's statements of commitment, this allows individuals and organisations to address; the reinforcement of gender stereotypes, as well as challenging sexist comments, discrimination and disrespectful behaviour. Through these discussions, clubs can

- Attract a broader and more diverse group of membership and talent pool
- Increase satisfaction and morale
- Increase productivity
- Decrease absenteeism
- Reduce membership/staff turnover
- Promote themselves as a family friendly club/organisation

courageous conversations
Charter

The Courageous Conversations Charter provides a framework organisations and individuals can adopt, to take action in the prevention of violence against women and children, by promoting gender equality and respect in their environment and their communities.

Statement of Commitment

We commit to action that promotes gender equity & respectful relationships.

- We will model respectful relationships between peers and all members of the community
- We will speak out about sexism, gender inequity and gender stereotypes
- We will provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment
- We will provide a structural and cultural environment that promotes gender equity

Principles

- Living in safety is a basic human right
- All forms of violence are unacceptable
- Violence against women and children harms the entire community
- All relationships are based on respect and equality
- Power imbalances between men and women are a product of rigid gender norms and stereotypes
- Men and women have equal opportunities to participate in community life and have equal decision making powers, in both public and private domains
- Men play a significant role in taking a stand against violence against women and modelling respectful behaviours and relationships

www.courageousconversations.org.au

This project has been funded under the Reducing Violence against Women and their Children grants program, part of the Victorian Government's Community Crime Prevention Program – local solutions for local crime prevention issues.

...Let's talk about respect and equity

The Courageous Conversations Charter is a further resource to help support and promote a healthy and respectful culture in your club.

The Charter can serve as a guiding policy, with the statement of commitment providing your club and the club members, actions to adhere to and promote. Displaying the Charter within the clubrooms can function as a reminder to members of accepted behaviours, and the environment the club is striving to achieve.

Breaching the statement of commitment can provide an opportunity to action on the behaviour, and be used to reinforce what behaviour will and will not be tolerated within the club

The Charter is a tool to enable your club to create a respectful and inclusive environment, and to be the best it can be



Scenarios

Racial Vilification

An Aboriginal player in the football team approaches his coach after training, notifying him of racially motivated 'jokes' some of the other player have made to him. Whilst he believes they were said in jest, he finds them offensive.

Actions the club can take

- Club president and/or coach to speak to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander player who has received the comments and ask what support they need. Let him know this behaviour will be addressed
- The coach can remind all players in the team of the code of conduct and the Anti-Discrimination policy (if applicable) at a team meeting or after training, discussing the importance of respectful behaviour and supporting your team mates
- The coach to speak either individually or to the group of players who have been making the comments, again remind them of the policies and code of conduct, and that this behaviour is not tolerated or welcomed at the club
- Give those making the comments a warning, if the comments continue they will be asked to leave the club
- The coach to discuss the incident with the leadership team and the club president
- The club president to address all players and club members, again reminding them of the club policies and code of conduct, and that racial vilification is not accepted within the club
- Club president to raise the issue with league officials

Sexist comments and behaviour

A woman has received negative comments and jokes after applying for the position of Club President. Some members of the club make jokes and say it is a man's role.

Actions the club can take

- Current club president to remind everyone of the Equal Opportunity policy (if applicable) and the code of conduct, discussing the values of the club and promote the type of behaviour that is acceptable e.g. this is a club that does not allow sexist behaviour and we encourage and support all our members
- President to address all those making comments (either individually or as a group). Let them know these comments are not accepted at the club, and are untrue – these comments are highly sexist and the club should be supporting her endeavours
- President to give those making the comments a warning, informing them if these comments and beliefs continue they will be asked to leave the club
- Other club members to challenge these comments when they see or hear them

Grievance and Complaints Resolution

Conflict is natural in any organisation and club. Disagreements can relate to substantive issues such as the allocation of resources, or can arise at an individual level in the form of disputes or complaints. The handling and recording of the issues and resolution steps is very important. Regardless of the nature or the magnitude of the conflict, it is better to address it as soon as possible before it escalates.

A complaints process provides the framework for effectively resolving complaints of discrimination, harassment and other unlawful behaviours. It gives guidance to members about how they can make a complaint and spells out how you will deal with it.

Having a complaints process in place can support the use of bystander action in the club by clearly reinforcing that discrimination, harassment and other unlawful behaviours will not be tolerated, and that complaints around these behaviours will be taken seriously.

This is very important, as research shows many women who experience these behaviours remain silent or leave the club, rather than make a complaint.

A fundamental principle of a complaints process is that people can speak up against discrimination and harassment, or support someone who is making a complaint about these behaviours, without fear of victimisation. If enacted effectively in a club, it provides a 'safety net' for people to take action and ensures that unlawful or inappropriate conduct is dealt with appropriately.

A complaints process needs to be transparent and make it clear that complaints will be dealt with efficiently, with all parties treated fairly throughout and able to have their say (in line with the principles of natural justice).

A complaints procedure should detail:

- the responsibilities of coaches and team leaders in responding to complaints
- informal and formal complaints resolution options
- investigation processes and possible outcomes
- external complaint resolution agencies (such as AFL Victoria, Netball Victoria)
- internal and external support options
- the importance of confidentiality and preventing gossip

A complaints process should also detail the role of your contact officer to help club members who wish to make a complaint. It may also reference the role the contact officer could play in supporting members wanting to take bystander action.

Sample Policies





Sample Sexual Harassment Policy

Statement of Policy

Sexual harassment is unlawful. [INSERT CLUB NAME] does not tolerate sexual harassment in any form.

Every volunteer, club member and committee member has a responsibility to ensure that sexual harassment does not occur. Anyone found to have sexually harassed another person will be subject to disciplinary action that may include an apology, counseling, or dismissal from the club.

Reports of sexual harassment will be treated promptly, seriously and confidentially. Complainants have the right to determine how a complaint will be treated. They also have the right to have a supporter or representative chosen by them involved in the process and the option to stop the process at any time.

The alleged harasser also has the right to have a supporter or representative chosen by them present when he/she responds to the allegations made.

No volunteer or club member will be treated unfairly as a result of making a complaint of sexual harassment. Immediate disciplinary action will be taken against anyone who victimises or retaliates against someone who has made a complaint of sexual harassment.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Board/committee members
- all club members and volunteers, including
 - how [INSERT CLUB NAME] interacts with other members of the public, other clubs and the media
 - all aspects of recruitment and selection; club promotion; task allocation; training, game day, club functions, and transport
 - whenever members are wearing the [INSERT CLUB NAME] uniform in public

Policy Aims

1. [INSERT CLUB NAME] is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for members and volunteers free from all forms of sexual harassment.
2. All [INSERT CLUB NAME] members and volunteers are required to treat others with dignity, courtesy and respect.

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that could be reasonably expected to make someone feel offended, humiliated, intimidated or unsafe. Sexual harassment can be physical, spoken or written.

This may include (but is not restricted to):

- an unwelcome sexual advance
- a request for sexual favours
- unwelcome comments about someone's sex life or physical appearance
- leering and ogling
- sexually offensive comments, stories or jokes
- displaying sexually offensive photos, pinups or calendars, reading matter or objects
- sexual propositions or continued requests for dates
- physical contact such as touching or fondling, or unnecessary brushing up against someone
- indecent assault or rape (these are criminal offences).

Club Members Right and Responsibilities

1. Just because someone does not object to inappropriate behaviour at the time, it does not mean that they are consenting to the behaviour.
2. Sexual harassment is covered and will be addressed in the [INSERT CLUB NAME] when it happens at club facilities, at club-related events, between people participating at [INSERT CLUB NAME], or between club members outside of the club.
3. All members and volunteers have the same rights and responsibilities in relation to sexual harassment.
4. A single incident is enough to constitute sexual harassment – it doesn't have to be repeated.
5. All incidents of sexual harassment – no matter how large or small or who is involved – require coaches and leaders to respond quickly and appropriately.
6. [INSERT CLUB NAME] recognises that comments and behaviour that do not offend one person can offend another. This policy requires all members and volunteers to respect other people's limits.
7. A complaint of sexual harassment can be made using *[INSERT CLUB NAME] Complaint resolution policy and procedure*



Resolving Issues

[INSERT CLUB NAME] strongly encourages any member or volunteer who believes they have been discriminated against, bullied or harassed, sexually harassed, vilified or victimised to take appropriate action (see Complaint resolution procedure) Please do not suffer in silence.

Members and volunteers who do not feel safe or confident to take such action may seek assistance from the contacts below, or other club leaders for advice and support or action on their behalf. [INSERT CLUB CONTACTS]

Internal complaint

A volunteer or member who believes they have been harassed (the complainant) should:

- if comfortable to do so, inform the alleged harasser the behaviour is offensive, unwelcome, against the clubs policy and should stop
- make a note of the date, time and location of the incident/s
- if not comfortable to confront the alleged harasser or if unwelcome behavior continues, report to the nominated club contact
- if this is inappropriate, speak to another senior member of the club, such as a coach/member of the leadership team/committee member

The club contact or notified leader will follow the procedures set out below. At any time the complainant has the right to discontinue this process.

Complaints process

When a complaint is received, the club contact or notified leader will:

- obtain and record a full, step-by-step account of the incident/s
- ensure the clubs process for handling the complaint is understood
- ascertain the complainant's preferred outcome, e.g. an apology, the behaviour to cease, a change in club/team arrangements
- agree on the next step: informal resolution or formal investigation
- keep a confidential record of all details of this discussion and subsequent steps in the process.

Informal resolution

Where a complainant has chosen informal resolution, following an informal process the *sexual harassment contact* will:

- inform the alleged harasser of the complaint and provide an opportunity to respond
- ensure both parties understand their rights and responsibilities under the club's policy
- if possible, mediate an outcome that is satisfactory for the complainant
- ensure that confidentiality is maintained
- follow up to ensure the behaviour does not re-occur.

Formal investigation

If a formal investigation is requested by the complainant, or if an informal resolution fails, *the sexual harassment contact* will escalate the matter to a senior member of the club.

That person will:

- afford natural justice to all involved
- interview all directly concerned, separately
- interview witnesses, separately
- keep records of the interviews and investigation
- ensure confidentiality and minimise disclosure
- make a determination as to whether there is sufficient evidence that a reasonable person could conclude, on the balance of probabilities (i.e. it's more likely than not), that an incident/incidents of sexual harassment as defined by the policy has occurred
- in such a case, determine appropriate action, which may include a change of duties for the harasser, change to club participation or, where the incidents were frequent and/or severe, dismissal
- where it cannot be determined, that an incident/incidents of sexual harassment as defined by the policy has occurred, take action to ensure the proper functioning of the club and safety of club members; but these actions should not prejudice any party. They will also continue to closely monitor the situation and provide retraining where required
- check to ensure the action meets the needs of the complainant and club
- severe and serious cases should be referred to and handled by Victoria Police



Sample Equal Opportunities Policy

Statement of Policy

[INSERT CLUB NAME] aims to achieve an inclusive and respectful environment and recognises the right of all people who interact with and participate in the club and interact with [INSERT CLUB NAME] to be treated with dignity and respect.

The purposes of this policy is to encourage a positive and inclusive club culture and to prevent unacceptable conduct. This policy sets out the processes and options available to all volunteers and members who encounter unacceptable conduct.

[INSERT CLUB NAME] will:

- promote appropriate standards of conduct in accordance with the Code of Conduct at all times
- take appropriate action against any club member who breaches this policy
- implement strategies to ensure that all members and volunteers know their rights and responsibilities and are protected in relation to those rights.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Board/committee members
- all club members and volunteers
- how [INSERT CLUB NAME] interacts with other members of the public, other clubs and the media
- all aspects of recruitment and selection; club promotion; task allocation; training, game day, club functions, and transport
- whenever members are wearing the [INSERT CLUB NAME] uniform in public

Aims

{This section could directly quote from relevant parts of your club's vision, mission or values}

[INSERT CLUB NAME] is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment for volunteers and members free from all forms of discrimination, bullying, sexual harassment, and racial and religious vilification.

All [INSERT CLUB NAME] volunteers and members are required to treat others with dignity, courtesy and respect.

By effectively implementing our *Equal opportunity policy* we will attract and retain players, committed club members and volunteers and create a positive environment.

Unacceptable Club conduct

The following behaviours are unacceptable in [INSERT CLUB NAME] and may be against the law. Volunteers and members (including committee members and leaders) found to have engaged in such conduct might be warned, disciplined or dismissed. Severe or repeated breaches can lead to formal discipline, including dismissal.

Discrimination, bullying, sexual harassment, and racial and religious vilification are unacceptable at [INSERT CLUB NAME] and are covered by federal and state legislation:

- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic)*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)*
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth).*

Discrimination

Discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by the law, such as sex, age, race or disability.

Discrimination can occur:

Directly, when a person or group is treated unfavourably because of a personal characteristic protected by law (see list below).

For example, a player is harassed and humiliated because of their race

Indirectly, when an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice is imposed that has, or is likely to have, the effect of disadvantaging people with a personal characteristic protected by law (see list below).

For example, player excluded from club activities as it clashes with their cultural practices



Protected personal characteristics in Victoria include:

- a disability, disease or injury, including work-related injury
- parental status or status as a carer, for example because they are responsible for caring for children or other family members
- race, colour, descent, nationality, ancestry or ethnic background
- age, whether young or old, or because of age in general
- sex
- physical features, such as height, weight, size, hair or birthmarks
- religious belief or taking part in religious activity, or not holding a religious belief
- pregnancy and breastfeeding
- lawful sexual activity
- sexual orientation or gender identity, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, queer and heterosexual
- marital status, whether married, divorced, unmarried or in a de facto relationship
- political belief or political activity
- an association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these characteristics, such as being the parent of a child with a disability.

Bullying

Bullying can take many forms, including jokes, teasing, nicknames, emails, pictures, text messages, social isolation or ignoring people, or unfair practices.

Under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*, this behaviour does not have to be repeated to be discrimination – it may be a one-off event.

Behaviours that may constitute bullying include:

- sarcasm and other forms of demeaning language
- threats, abuse or shouting
- coercion
- isolation
- inappropriate blaming
- ganging up
- constant unconstructive criticism
- deliberately withholding information or equipment that a person needs to do their role or access their entitlements
- unreasonable refusal of requests for leave, training or other club activities.

Racial and religious vilification

Vilification is behaviour that encourages others to hate, disrespect, or abuse a person or group of people because of their race or religion.

This includes spoken, written or physical behaviour towards a particular race or religious group that encourages others to ridicule them, be hateful or violent towards them, damage their property, or make false claims against them.

It is also against the law to give permission or help someone to vilify others, for example by publishing or distributing information about them.

Gossip

Gossip about issues or complaints is unacceptable in [INSERT CLUB NAME]

It is not appropriate for members or volunteers to talk with other members or volunteers about a complaint, whether it is theirs or anyone else's.

Gossip is likely to reinforce a problem, create new problems (for example, victimisation) and make it harder to solve the original issue

Rights and responsibilities

All members and volunteers are entitled to:

- recruitment and selection decisions based on merit and not affected by irrelevant personal characteristics
- club participation free from discrimination, bullying, sexual harassment, and racial and religious vilification
- the right to raise issues or to make an enquiry or complaint in a reasonable and respectful manner without being victimised
- reasonable flexibility in club commitments, especially where needed to accommodate their family and carer responsibilities, disability, religion and culture

All members must:

- follow the code of conduct
- take bystander action to challenge discrimination, sexual harassment or vilification and offer support to people who experience this behaviour
- avoid gossip and respect the confidentiality of complaint resolution procedures
- treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect



Club leaders and coaches must also:

- model appropriate standards of behaviour
- take steps to educate and make players/members aware of their obligations under this policy and the law
- intervene quickly and appropriately when they become aware of inappropriate behaviour
- act fairly to resolve issues and enforce club behavioural standards, making sure relevant parties are heard
- help players/members resolve complaints informally
- refer formal complaints about breaches of this policy to the appropriate club complaint handling officer for investigation, or referred to appropriate services such as Victoria Police
- ensure players/members who raise an issue or make a complaint are not victimised
- ensure that team selection and recruitment decisions are based on merit and that no discriminatory requests for information are made

Complaints Process

The [INSERT CLUB NAME] strongly encourages any club member who believes they have been discriminated against, bullied or harassed, sexually harassed, vilified or victimised to take appropriate action. Please do not suffer in silence.

Club members who do not feel safe or confident to take such action may seek assistance from key leaders and appropriate contacts for advice and support or action their behalf.

Insert club contacts here

All complaints will be taken seriously, treated confidentially, fairly and consistently, and resolved as speedily as possible. Refer to Club Grievance and Complaints Resolution Policy for further details

Grievance and Complaints Resolution Sample Policy

Policy Statement

[INSERT CLUB NAME] is committed to maintaining a culture that encourages collaboration, cooperation and communication. It is recognised, however, that on occasions inappropriate behaviours or matters may occur and that a complaints and grievance process may be required in order to resolve complaints or concerns about these matters.

This policy aims to ensure that complaints and grievances are handled and resolved in an appropriate, fair, transparent and timely manner, and in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

Scope

This policy applies to all members of the [INSERT CLUB NAME] –both members and volunteers.

This policy applies to problems and complaints regarding:

- discrimination
- bullying and harassment
- sexual harassment
- racial and religious vilification
- victimisation

What to do if treated unfairly

If you believe that you have been discriminated against, bullied or harassed, sexually harassed, vilified or victimised, [INSERT CLUB NAME] strongly encourages you to not ignore it. Ignoring it might be interpreted by the other person as consent or acceptance. Please do not suffer in silence.

Do not respond to unacceptable behaviour with more unacceptable behaviour.



Options for resolving an issue

The following four options may be useful to consider in trying to resolve the issue:

- Self-management – Take Bystander action to discuss and challenge the behaviour. Make a calm, polite but firm request for the change you need. Indicate the effect of the behaviour or decision on you and ask for an agreement about how things need to be different in the future. Sometimes it is helpful to record this agreement in writing.
- Informal complaint – raise your concerns with your coach, any other trusted club leader (insert to club contacts)
- Formal complaint – lodge a formal written complaint with your coach or other club leader/official (insert to club contacts)
- External – Serious matters should be referred to Victoria Police (Insert local contacts). Other matters may be referred to external sporting bodies (Insert relevant sporting body e.g. AFL NE Border, Netball Victoria, and local sporting assembly e.g. Valley Sports).

Possible outcomes

No matter which option you choose to try to resolve your complaint, there are a range of outcomes. For example, taking action can lead to:

- a review of a decision
- an apology for the harm or offence caused
- an agreement that bad behaviour will stop or change
- education or training for a person or group
- an informal warning or ‘quiet one-to-one chat’ with someone by a leader
- changed practices or procedures
- new policies or a change in policies
- reinstating a benefit (for example, period of absence or training) that was denied
- some other form of compensation for harm or costs caused
- a formal warning or other formal discipline, such as demotion for the person who had behaved inappropriately.

If you have been treated unfairly, it will be helpful for you to consider which of these you believe will be the best solution to your problem

Procedure

In most situations, the steps below should be followed in sequential order.

At any point in time, if a resolution is achieved then no further steps will be required.

1. Address the issue directly yourself

If the complainant feels comfortable doing so, she / he should attempt to resolve the issue by discussing it confidentially with the other person (the respondent) as soon as practicable after it arises. If assistance is required, contact your coach or another club leader/official for support.

2. Refer the issue to your Coach/Appointed Club contact

The complainant should refer the complaint, either verbally or in writing, to the coach/club leader/appointed club contact if the complainant:

- does not feel comfortable discussing the matter with the other person directly
- has unsuccessfully attempted to resolve the problem is experiencing a club related issue that does not involve another person

The club leader or coach will follow appropriate procedure and address the issue

3. Refer the issue to a senior Club committee member/Club president

The complainant should refer the matter to Club Committee member or club president, if the complainant:

- is with a club member and the complainant doesn't feel comfortable to address issue
- has tried addressing the problem but is dissatisfied with the result
- is experiencing a club-related issue that does not involve another person, and/or
- has already raised the complaint with a coach/club contact but the complaint remains unresolved

4. Investigation

The investigation process is two tiered; Informal and Formal

Informal

Where a complainant has chosen informal resolution, following an informal process the sexual harassment contact will:

- inform the alleged harasser of the complaint and provide an opportunity to respond
- ensure both parties understand their rights and responsibilities under the club's policy
- if possible, mediate an outcome that is satisfactory for the complainant
- ensure that confidentiality is maintained
- follow up to ensure the behaviour does not re-occur.



Formal

All incidents and issues that break the law and are of a serious nature will be referred to Victoria Police immediately. If a formal investigation is requested by the complainant, or if an informal resolution fails, the matter will escalate the matter to a senior member of the club.

That person will:

- afford natural justice to all involved
- interview all directly concerned, separately
- interview witnesses, separately
- keep records of the interviews and investigation
- ensure confidentiality and minimise disclosure
- make a determination as to whether there is sufficient evidence that a reasonable person could conclude, on the balance of probabilities (i.e. it's more likely than not), that an incident/incidents of harassment has occurred
- in such a case, determine appropriate action, which may include a change of duties for the harasser, change to club participation or, where the incidents were frequent and/or severe, dismissal
- where it cannot be determined by the required test, that an incident/incidents of harassment has occurred, take action to ensure the proper functioning of the club and safety of club members; but these actions should not prejudice any party. They will also continue to closely monitor the situation and provide retraining where required
- check to ensure the action meets the needs of the complainant and club

It may be necessary to bring in outside parties to assist with the investigation and to determine appropriate courses of action. If it is necessary to do so, contact

INSERT STATE SPORTING BODY CONTACT DETAILS e.g. AFL NE Border

INSERT LOCAL SPORTING ASSEMBLY CONTACT DETAILS E.g. Valley Sports

Resolution

After the investigation is complete, details of the findings and resolution will be recorded in writing and a copy provided to the complainant and the respondent.

Some of the possible options for resolution, may include one or more of the following:

- counselling or training/education, which may be provided by the coach, club leader or another appropriate person or organisation
- a formal apology
- mediation between the complainant and respondent, facilitated by an independent person, where both parties agree to participate in the mediation process
- formal disciplinary action
- ongoing monitoring of the situation by a coach/club leader

Confidentiality

The complainant, respondent, witnesses and any other interviewee must keep all aspects of their participation in the investigation confidential.

No victimisation / detrimental action

A complainant, witness, individual providing information, or support person will not be disadvantaged in their participation in the club for making a complaint or being involved in an investigation.



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Women's Health Goulburn North East
Phone: (03) 5722 3009
Email: whealth@whealth.com.au
www.whealth.com.au

