



Fair Access Grant Program Guidelines 2026-2027

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Whittlesea recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.



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Introduction to Fair Access

Sport and active recreation are the heartbeat of our communities. They bring people together, build friendships, develop skills and create a sense of belonging that extends well beyond the field, court, or clubhouse. Every week - rain, hail or shine - our community facilities come alive with people who care deeply about their club, their code and their teammates.

For too long, not everyone has had an equal opportunity to be part of that experience. Women and girls have often been given less access to quality facilities, fewer prime time slots, and, sometimes, the sense that they don't fully belong. These aren't small oversights; they're systemic barriers that send an unintended message about who is valued and who isn't.

That's where Fair Access comes in.

Council's Fair Access Policy (2024) is designed to make fair and equitable access to community sport the standard - not the exception. It's about ensuring that our shared spaces, programs, and opportunities reflect the diversity of our communities and that everyone feels safe, welcome, and valued.

At its core, Fair Access is about fairness, respect, and opportunity. When sport is inclusive, everyone wins. Clubs grow stronger, communities become more connected, and future generations grow up knowing they belong - on and off the field.

Objectives of the Grant Program

The City of Whittlesea's adopted Fair Access Policy establishes Council's commitment to gender equality needs to be considered across future Council planning, service delivery, facility allocations and practice as they relate to community sports infrastructure.

The Fair Access Grants program aims to assist sports clubs within the City of Whittlesea to design and deliver projects in line with the Fair Access Policy. The Fair Access Grant Program is funded by the City of Whittlesea, with available funding of up to **\$3,000 per club submission**. The program aims to financially support projects that address gaps, create opportunities, review and redesign existing structure, educate and build capacity or address inequity in order to create safe, welcoming and inclusive spaces within sport for women, girls and gender diverse individuals.

Objectives of the Fair Access Grant Program are to provide equitable access for women, girls and gender diverse individuals. This can include, but is not limited to;

- Provide participation opportunities in sport and/or physical activity, on and off the playing field / court
- Provide opportunities to build skills, knowledge or confidence required to participate in sport
- Provide opportunities to increase the number of women involved at a decision-making level in sport
- Build the capability of club members through education, training and/or awareness campaigns that aim to create safe, inclusive and welcoming environments
- Provide opportunities that aim to increase the number of women coaching and officiating

- Create environments where women, girls and gender diverse individuals feel safe, valued and respected
- Create a club culture where the capabilities of women and girls in sport are not limited by gendered stereo types
- Build in sustainability to existing programs to provide meaningful long-term opportunities for women and girls in sport
- Raise awareness and education on gender equity and its impacts

The Fair Access Grant Program aligns with Council's Fair Access Policy and Active Whittlesea Strategy.

Key Dates

Summer Open Date	4 August 2026
Summer Close Date	6 September 2026
<i>Notification Date</i>	15 October 2026
<i>Acquittal due dates</i>	16 October 2027
<i>Notice of acquittal outcome</i>	27 November 2027
<i>Program delivery period</i>	1 year from approval

Who is eligible to apply

- Sporting clubs and associations located in the City of Whittlesea

Eligibility criteria

You must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Must agree to align with Council's Fair Access Policy
- Be a registered not-for-profit sports club located within the City of Whittlesea
- Be registered or supported by their relevant State Sporting Body/Association
- Have **successfully** acquitted all previous grants with the City of Whittlesea
- Be incorporated or partnered with (auspiced by) an incorporated organisation. The incorporated organisation will manage the funds and be responsible for the delivery and acquittal of the project.
- Have an Australian Business Number (ABN) or qualify to submit a Statement by Supplier
- Have Public and/or Product Liability Insurance with a minimum of \$20 million covering the delivery period of this program.
- Not have any debts owing to Council

Who is not eligible for this grant program

The following groups are ineligible for this Council grant:

- Schools, religious organisations, community support groups
- Health services or for-profit operations (e.g. businesses)
- Professional sporting bodies and elite sport teams
- Clubs who are not compliant with Fair Access at time of the submission
- Clubs who have not complied with acquittal conditions from previous Council funding
- Clubs who have an outstanding debt with Council
- Individuals
- Councillors and members of their household, immediate family or close friend
- Businesses owned or operated by Council staff or Councillors
- Political Organisations or groups
- Groups, projects or events and organisations applying with discriminatory views against a person or group's Protected Characteristics as identified in the Victorian Government *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* including but not limited to the following;
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Race, including colour, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status,
 - Sex, pregnancy, marital or relationship status, family responsibilities or breast feeding,
 - Sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex status
 - Religious beliefs
 - Groups who not complied with acquittal conditions from previous Council grants.

Assessment Criteria Overview

If your club and project meet eligibility criteria, your project will be considered according to how well it meets each of the assessment criteria. The percentages are provided as a guide to the importance of each question in the assessment process.

The overall assessment criteria and weighting are as follows;

Alignment to Fair Access Policy	30%
Project Delivery	25%
Community Involvement	20%
Sustainability	15%
Budget	10%

Assessment Criteria Explained

Clubs will be assessed against the following:

Alignment to Fair Access Policy (30%)

Clubs will be asked to confirm alignment to the Fair Access Policy.

1. **Fair Access Education Modules Completed:**
2. **Gender Equity Audit Completed:**
3. **Does this project align to your Fair Access Action Plan:**

Applications will be rated 1– 5 in meeting this criteria with the score rating below.

5	Clubs who have completed their Gender Equity Action Plans
4	Clubs who have completed their Fair Access Education Modules
3	Clubs who have commenced their Fair Access Education Modules
2	Clubs who are actively engaging in Fair Access and have a Fair access Lead(s) registered
1	Those who have not engaged in Fair Access, need not apply for they are ineligible

The following assessment criteria will each be rated 1-5 as follows;

5	Application meets criterion at a high level. There is clear understanding of how the applicant will meet the criterion
4	Application meets criterion well but lacks clear or specific details.
3	Application meets criterion, however there are still questions regarding the answer to the criterion.
2	Application largely fails to meet the criterion.
1	Application completely fails to meet the criterion.

Project Delivery (25%)

Clubs will be required to demonstrate;

1. Why there is a need for this project,
2. How your project responds to the identified need,
3. What your project aims to achieve and the expected outcomes for women, girls, or gender-diverse participants

Applicants will be able to upload a Project Plan & Timeline which may include key activities and milestones. This may be in the form of a Gantt chart or schedule, whichever is preferred.

Community Involvement (20%)

Clubs will be asked to identify marginalised population groups their project would directly engage and provide an explanation of how they plan to consult and work with marginalised groups.

For this grant program, marginalised groups are, persons with a disability, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), First Nations, LGBTIQ*, and Older Adults.

Sustainability (15%)

Clubs must demonstrate how the club will support this project beyond the grant period.

Budget (10%)

Clubs must clearly align their budget requested to their Project Delivery.

What can be funded

Clubs that have completed their Fair Access Action Plan can identify which actions they wish to progress using available funding. This approach is highly favourable, as it demonstrates that your progress through Fair Access has helped identify key priorities with a clear need and a strong likelihood of success.

For clubs who have not yet finalised a Fair Access Action Plan, the following pages provide a list of project ideas that can be implemented to support women and girl's inclusion in your sports club.

The project ideas have been divided into 5 key areas of focus that align with Fair Access Gender Equity Audits and Action Plans

1. Facilities
2. Welcoming Club Culture
3. Leadership & Governance
4. Participation
5. Promotion and Recruitment

Clubs can choose to undertake multiple projects from one or more of the key areas listed above. If selecting more than one project, clubs must be confident that they have the capacity and resources to deliver all selected activities.

How your club will deliver this project (project plan) and where money will be spent (budget) will need to be addressed in the application. Clubs will be required to provide quotes, for items costing \$500 or more (ex GST), as part of the application process

Applicants must provide quotes for items over \$500. If quotes are not provided, priority will be given to applications where all information is submitted at the time of application.

What cannot be funded

- New building projects, capital works, maintenance or renovation projects
- Core operational or day-to-day running costs
- Catering costs where provision of food is not considered integral
- Non-portable equipment (e.g., fixed goal posts)
- Gift vouchers, gifts, prizes, trophies, scholarships, donations, sponsorship, other grant programs, air travel or accommodation
- Activities, events or projects that are started or completed before funding is granted
- Activities, events or projects that do not take place within the City of Whittlesea
- Activities, events or projects that do not comply with relevant Federal, State and Local government legislation
- Gambling or alcohol - In line with Council's Gambling Strategy and Action Plan, grant applications for projects or events held in venues that have both an electronic gaming machine license and liquor license will not be funded
- Projects or activities that are the responsibility of the State or Federal Government Applicants can include State or Federal government funding as co-contribution in their application. For example, if your sports club receive state government funding, you must make transparent aspects of the project covered by the state and through your club's own contributions
- Political activities. Council Grants cannot be used by or for political party activities or initiatives.
- Modifications to buildings or fixtures are not eligible under this program. If you are considering any modification works on Council owned facilities, please refer to the Sports Club Contribution Policy.

Key Contacts

If you have any questions regarding these Guidelines or to discuss your potential ideas for this grant, please contact Megan Harper at Fair.Access@whittlesea.vic.gov.au or on 9217 2170.

Alternatively, please contact our Grants Team via email at Community.Grants@whittlesea.vic.gov.au or by calling 9217 2170.

Mandatory Conditions

The following conditions are standard requirements included in all grants offered by Council.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

To ensure fairness and transparency a Declaration of a Conflict of Interest must be completed by all applicants who are affiliated with Council with any of the following roles:

- a. Councillors
- b. Council Staff
- c. volunteer
- d. appointed to committee or working group
- e. contractor or consultant.

Failure to disclose your affiliations and subsequent completion of the Conflict of Interest section in your application, will result in your application being deemed **'Unsuccessful'** due to not disclosing your Conflict of Interest.

Acknowledge Council support

All grant recipients are required to acknowledge Council for their support. Acknowledgement requirements will be set out in the 'Conditions of Grant' once a grant is approved and offered.

Grant acquittals summary

Grant acquittals are the last step of the grant process where you have completed your project or event, and you provide a report on how the grant money was spent and how successful your activity was. This is also a great opportunity to showcase your activity through photos, videos and other media. Acquittals must be completed to:

- capture the great initiatives delivered across City of Whittlesea through grants
- be sure successful grant recipients use the grants for the intended purpose applied for
- show the impact of your project or event to the community through stories, photos, media and other means (eg web links, Youtube links, posts etc).
- Confirm how you used the grant money, provide receipts and return any unspent funds.

Consent

Through the application process, Council will seek consent to contact third parties noted in your application in order to verify details where required.

To facilitate delivering Council grants that are open and competitive, if consent is not provided at the application stage and we cannot verify information on your application, priority will be given to applicants who have provided all information and consent to liaise with third parties.

Contact with third parties noted in your application will be to verify only details specific to your application for the grant, where required.

How to Apply

All applications for our grants will be on-line through SmartyGrants. You will require an email address to apply for the grants. This email address will be the main form of communication for any details regarding your application, conditions of grant, grant variations and acquittal.

How to complete the application form

On every screen (page of the form) you will find a Form Navigation contents box, this links directly to every page of the application. Click the link to jump directly to the page you want.

You can also click 'next page' or 'previous page' on the top or bottom of each page to move forward or backward through the application.

Saving your draft application

If you want to save an application and return to it later, press 'save and close' and log out. When you log back in and click on the 'My Submissions' link at the top of the screen, you will find a list of any applications you have started or submitted. You can reopen your draft application and start where you left off.

You can also download any application, whether draft or completed, as a PDF. Click on the 'Download PDF' button located at the bottom of the last page of the application form.

Submitting your application

You will find a Review and submit button at the bottom of the Navigation Panel. You need to review your application before you can submit it.

Once you have reviewed your application you can submit it by clicking on 'Submit' at the top or bottom of the screen or on the navigation panel.

You will not be able to submit your application until all the compulsory questions are completed and there are no validation errors.

Once you have submitted your application, no further editing or uploading of support materials is possible.

When you submit your application, you will receive a confirmation email with a copy of your submitted application attached. This will be sent to the email you used to register.

Attachments and support documents

You may need to upload/submit attachments to support your application. This requires you to have the documents saved on your computer, or on a storage device.

You need to allow enough time for each file to upload before trying to attach another file. Files can be up to 25MB each; however, we do recommend trying to keep files to a maximum of 5MB – the larger the file, the longer the upload time.

Completing an application in a group/team

A number of people can work on an application using the same log in details as long as only one person is working at a time. Please ensure you save as you go.

Confirmation of Submission

You should receive an email confirming your grant application was submitted.

If you do not receive a confirmation email, check your spam or junk email folder.

If you can't find the email, your application is not submitted, double check in Smarty Grants.

Project ideas

Please note the 'project idea' your club will undertake. The project idea will need to be selected within the application form.

Modifications to buildings or fixtures are not eligible under this program. If you are considering any modification works on Council owned facilities, please refer to the Sports Club Contribution Policy

Project idea	Description
FACILITIES	
Aesthetic improvements	Create a more welcoming space for women. This may include providing free pads and tampons in toilets, adding images of women and girls to the displays, adding display holders to toilet doors for posters / messages of encouragement, or awareness of available supports.
Child friendly spaces	Creating child friendly spaces where smaller children can play to bring more mothers and families into the space. This could be a rug, toys, books, play pen etc
Specialised spaces	Warming spaces for prayer, breastfeeding, or specialised areas that support women to participate or access clubs' spaces and feel welcome and valued.
WELCOMING CLUB CULTURE	
Social aspect	Provide a social aspect to participation, that encourages connection between potential and current members and provides a supportive environment. * This must be directly linked to participation and does not include celebratory events, and themed morning teas for campaigns such as breast cancer awareness etc
Training and Education	Providing education and training to committee, coaches, volunteers, players or officials that support women, girls and gender diverse individuals to access and/or participate in sport.
Club based workshops	Offer sessions for players and members on any of the following; • Gender equity • Engaging women and girls in sport • Inclusive club culture • Bystander workshops

A place for all

- Sexism and discrimination
- Prevention of violence against women
- Healthy masculinities
- Respectful relationships

Prevention of Violence against women Support of initiatives that raise awareness, provide information and knowledge, provide support for those impacted and/or create a call to action to prevent violence against women. This may be a guest speaker, program, fundraiser, awareness round, promotional player uniforms.

LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

Review governance Review and update constitution, code of conduct, policies etc to remove gender-based language and make them more inclusive.

Showcase Showcase the involvement of women and girls in your club including volunteers, coaches, players, officials and committee members.
(photographer/videographer etc)

Diversify options Diversify your offerings (PT classes/Walking group)

Consultation Consult existing and/or potential club members about:

- The club's culture
- Increasing women and girl's involvement in the club

Role modelling Provide opportunities for women in your club to speak at committee meetings, speak with junior players, speak at events, run training sessions.

Men's coaching development Coaching development for men who coach women and girls

Women's coaching development Development opportunities for women and girls who coach

A place for all

Committee development Capacity building for women who are, or could be, a part of the club's committee (current or potential committee members)

PARTICIPATION

Team establishment Establishment of programs and/or teams for women and girls

Come & Try Hold an event which is open to the wider community (e.g., come and try day, bring a friend day, bring your sister day)

Player development Invest in player development (leadership, skills etc) for women and girls

Teen program Provide programs specifically for teen aged girls

Social sport Establishment of social sports programs for women and girls (e.g., SoccerMums, Rock up Netball, Social Sixes)

Skills program Free skills program/development sessions/skills sessions for women and girls

Reduced cost Reduced memberships/uniform/fees/sign on costs

Club kits Club kits available exclusively for use by women and/or girls

Participation pathways Provide a seamless pathway for participation of women and girls in sport.
(i.e., juniors to seniors)

Diversify options Diversify your offerings, introduce a PT classes/Walking group or new activity for women, girls and gender diverse individuals

PROMOTION AND RECRUITMENT (and retention)

Showcase Showcase the involvement of women and girls in your club including volunteers, coaches, players, officials and committee members.
(photographer/videographer etc)

Gala Days Providing opportunities for women and girls to showcase their skills, socialise, mentor, network with other women and girls. Opportunity to showcase and celebrate women and girls sport.

A place for all

Social aspect	Provide a social aspect to participation, that encourages connection between potential and current members and provides a supportive environment. * This must be directly linked to participation and does not include celebratory events, and themed morning teas for campaigns etc
Information sessions	Information sessions for Woman and Girls that supports playing such as; specialist sports bra fittings, impacts of menstruation on participation etc
Club workshop	Have club members attend workshops that address: • Gender equity • Engaging women and girls in sport • Inclusive club culture • Bystander workshops • Sexism • Prevention of violence against women • Healthy masculinities • Respectful relationships

A place for all