

FAQs

TRANS & GENDER DIVERSE INCLUSION IN SPORT

Respect all
Fear none

Purpose

This factsheet includes a range of frequently asked questions that relate to trans and gender diverse inclusion in sport, along with suggested responses.

The purpose of this factsheet is to provide sporting organisations with a comprehensive resource that addresses the crucial topic of trans and gender diverse inclusion in sports. It aims to equip organisations with information, guidance, and suggested responses to frequently asked questions (FAQs) related to transgender and gender diverse individuals' participation in sport at different levels.

The landscape of sports has evolved significantly over the years, reflecting a more inclusive and diverse society. As more individuals express their gender identities authentically, it becomes imperative for sporting organisations to foster an environment that embraces and supports trans and gender diverse individuals.

This factsheet serves as a vital tool for sporting organisations seeking to create safe, respectful, and inclusive spaces for all participants.

The suggested responses to frequently asked questions presented in this factsheet are intended to aid organisations in effectively communicating with stakeholders, such as athletes, coaches, parents, and the wider community. By addressing common concerns, dispelling misconceptions, and providing clear, evidence-based explanations, sporting organisations can begin to foster understanding and an environment that upholds the principles of diversity, equality, and respect.

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IMPORTANT: Suggested responses may vary depending on the specific governance within your sport. Please use these as a starting point and work with Pride in Sport team members should you need assistance developing sport specific responses.

High Level Questions

Q: Why implement a policy and guidelines for transgender and gender diverse people?

A: [Organisation Name], in consultation with many expert and relevant stakeholders, has developed governance for the inclusion for transgender and gender diverse people in [elite and/or community] [sporting code] in line with their fundamental human rights including equality, participation in sport, freedom from discrimination, harassment and privacy.

Q: Who have you worked with to develop the policy / guidelines?

A: A broad range of stakeholders have been engaged to develop both the Elite Policy and Community Guidelines. Stakeholders include: [add/delete as required]

- Australian Women's Representative Team;
- Members of the LGBTQ community;
- Australian Human Rights Commission;
- Australian Sports Commission;
- Pride in Sport Australia;
- Players Association;
- Medical and sports science experts;
- State and Territory member associations;
- Community cis-gender athletes involved in female and male competitions;
- Community transgender athletes involved in the female competition;
- [Organisation Name]'s staff; and
- [Organisation Name]'s High Performance staff/officials.

Importantly, members of the transgender and LGBTQ community have been fully engaged to understand and fully comprehend this complex policy landscape.

Q: Why is inclusion important for sport?

A: This new policy and guidelines are fundamental in [Organisation Name]'s vision of providing a safe and inclusive environment for all Australians. We actively encourage all clubs, associations, and teams to embrace diversity in all aspects of their operations. Age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, body, and religion should not be barriers to being included within our sport. With diversity comes fresh thinking, ideas, and enthusiasm that contributes to the growth, health and sustainability of sport as a whole.

Q: Why are you launching this policy / guideline now?

A: Discrimination of any kind has no place in sport, and we are driven to ensure all people experience an inclusive culture and can participate in a harassment-free environment. [Organisation Name] supports athletes to participate in elite and community [sport] in accordance with their gender identity, whether or not this aligns with what was presumed at birth, and are supported to do so in a safe, fair, and inclusive environment.

Elite Sport Questions

FAQs in this section relate to elite, professional, and high performance levels of sport. In most instances, these questions are received after the release of a sport specific elite policy. As such, some responses may not align to the specifics of your policy. As always, use these as a starting point when developing your sport-specific responses.

Q: Why is this policy required?

A: This policy seeks to provide clear direction on the inclusion of transgender and gender diverse athletes in [sporting code] to ensure all players continue to participate in a fair and meaningful way at the elite level. In addition, this policy will assist administrators, coaches, support staff and other volunteers to deliver a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment, free of harassment and discrimination at the elite level.

Q: What are the requirements for a transgender athlete to be eligible to compete?

[This response will differ, depending on your organisation's specific policy. Please refer to your governance. If you wish to seek advice on a specific response that captures your policy, feel free to engage with Pride in Sport for further assistance]

Example Answer supplied by Cricket Australia [Sept 2020]:

Any player wishing to compete in the female game consistent with their gender identity – if not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth – must:

1. Nominate their gender identity by notifying Cricket Australia's Head of Integrity, demonstrating a commitment to their gender identity being consistent with the individual's gender identity in other aspects of everyday life.
2. Establish a concentration of testosterone less than 10 nanomole per litre for a period of no less than 12 months prior to nomination.

All nominations will be considered and determined by an expert panel, nominated by CA's Head of Integrity.

Q: How will the expert panel make their decision?

A: An expert panel will be convened by the [Position Title] no more than [number of days] days after a notification from a transgender or gender diverse athlete and adjudicate based on the requirements outlined in the policy.

Q: Why is a referral process required?

[This response will differ, depending on your organisation's specific policy. Please refer to your governance. If you wish to seek advice on a specific response that captures your policy, feel free to engage with Pride in Sport for further assistance]

Q: Does this policy cover intersex athletes?

A: The policy does not apply to individuals who are intersex, who, like all, would be permitted to participate based on their gender identity.

Q: How does this policy align to your sport's international rules?

IN THE CASE OF AN IDENTICAL/SIMILAR POLICY:

A: [Organisation Name]'s policy has been drafted in line with the [International Federation Name] [Title of relevant international policy] as it applies to transgender athletes participating in an international event. A copy of the international policy can be found, here: [enter URL]

IN THE CASE OF A DIFFERENT POLICY:

A: [Organisation Name]'s policy has been drafted with the knowledge of [International Federation Name]'s [Title of relevant international policy]. However, there are some key differences which include [enter key differences]. [Organisation Name] believes that our domestic policy appropriately represents a much more inclusive approach to the inclusion of trans individuals.

We acknowledge that while our policy is more inclusive, this doesn't replace the existing restrictions imposed on transgender participation at an international event, as it would fall under the of [International Federation Name]'s [Title of relevant international policy].

Q: How is this policy relevant to the current international adjudications on gender issues?

A: This Elite Policy has been prepared on the basis of the existing [International Federation Name]'s eligibility requirements. Dependent on any changes to the [International Federation Name]'s policy, we will review its position in line with any international changes. We will continue to review the policy in line with medical, social and scientific developments both domestically and internationally.

Q: Can transgender women apply to play in the men's game?

[This response will differ, depending on your organisations specific policy. Please refer to your governance. If you wish to seek advice on a specific response that captures your policy, feel free to engage with Pride in Sport for further assistance]

Example Answer used by Cricket Australia:

A: In line with the inclusive nature of this and all Cricket Australia policies, there is no limit to the participation of any female (cis or trans) in the male category of elite cricket.

Q: What support is available to transgender athletes who wishes to participate in Elite competitions?

A: To ensure that wellbeing of the individual involved and that we are providing a safe and inclusive environment, [Organisation Name] will provide all necessary support to ensure that this policy respects the individual's wellbeing and right to privacy. Support services will be available to all players whilst any process outlined in this policy is being undertaken, including access to our [add/delete as required] Head of Integrity, Sports Scientist, Chief Medical Officer, Anti-Doping Officer, Member Protection Officer and High Performance Director. We will also encourage the engagement with external support providers, at the individual's request.

Community Sport Questions

Q: Why develop these guidelines?

A: We have developed guidelines for the inclusion of transgender and gender diverse people in community **[sporting code]** to demonstrate the game's commitment to include people with an affirmed gender identity – whether or not this aligns with what was presumed at birth – to the game at the grassroots. In addition, these guidelines assist clubs, players, administrators, coaches, support staff and other volunteers to deliver a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment, free of harassment and discrimination.

Q: How can a club include transgender and gender diverse people?

A: Local clubs around the country are central hubs of their community and are a welcoming environment for all people. Welcoming transgender and gender diverse people is an extension of this, but we acknowledge there may be some additional areas of education and resourcing to support clubs and associations in providing an inclusive and safe space for transgender and gender diverse people, hence the development of these guidelines.

Q: How is a transgender or gender diverse person eligible to play in their affirmed gender identity?

A: Any transgender or gender diverse person is eligible to play at a community level. A player is required to nominate their gender identity at the time of registration, demonstrating a commitment that their gender identity is consistent across other aspects of everyday life. Every step of gender affirmation is different and a personal matter for the individual. For this reason, guidance is provided as to an individual's gender affirmation, it may mean that an individual changes their name, dress or other social changes as part of their process but this may not always be the case.

Q: Are clubs and associations permitted to ask a player for a medical examination to verify gender?

A: No. At no stage are clubs and associations permitted to ask any player to undergo a medical examination for the purposes of gender verification.

Q: How will this policy impact grading and selection?

A: **[Organisation Name]** is fortunate to have well enshrined and established practices of grading and selection of players within existing competitions to address player mismatch. This is to protect the health and safety of all participants and guarantee fair and meaningful competition. Umpire/Referee/Judge adjudication and safety equipment are also features of our game to ensure the safety of all participants. **[you may also wish to reference a dedicated selection policy]**

Q: What if players within a club have legitimate safety concerns about gender diverse players playing at the club?

A: All clubs and associations have established practices of grading and the selection of players within competitions to address the mismatch of players, protect the health and safety of participants and guarantee fair and meaningful competition. Umpires provide the most effective means of ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of players, as well as, addressing the mismatch of players.

Scenario Specific – Toilets / Changerooms / Facilities

Q: What if my club or association doesn't have adequate facilities to accommodate these guidelines?

A: We recognise there may be difficulties faced by clubs and associations to provide adequate changeroom and shower facilities for transgender and gender diverse people. While many transgender and gender diverse people prefer to use bathrooms, showers and changerooms that align with their affirmed gender, there is also a strong preference for privacy. People who identify as non-binary may prefer to use unisex, all-gender or gender-neutral facilities. When clubs and associations are building new or upgrading existing facilities, considerations to creating inclusive gender-neutral spaces should be made where possible.

Q. Won't these guidelines allow free access to women's bathrooms?

A: No. Transgender and gender diverse people use bathrooms, showers and changerooms that align with their affirmed gender. They are there for the same reason other people are – to use the facilities.

Q. If we have gender-neutral bathrooms, will women be less safe?

A. Of course not. A sign on the door that labels a bathroom "male" or "female" does not actually provide any type of physical barrier or protection for the people using the facilities. A sign cannot make a difference to safety.

Scenario Specific – Women's Sport

Q: Will this new governance compromise the physical safety of other players on the field, as would be the case in women's competition?

A: The safety of all athletes is essential for all sporting governance, and this is reflected across [Organisation Name] policies. Injury is an inherent risk when playing sport and [Organisation Name] is committed to the safety and enjoyment of all, with recognition that participation in sport is a human right.

The development of this policy addresses the need for clear direction on the inclusion of transgender and gender diverse athletes in our sport, to ensure all athletes participate in fair, meaningful and safe competitions. As strength, stamina and physique are all relevant factors in sport, transgender and gender diverse players will be supported to participate in accordance with their gender identity, subject to certain criteria, through the implementation of this policy.

Q: Only cisgender (non-trans) women should be able to play in female competitions, so why don't you just erase women's sport?

A: Women's sport, and increasing the participation of all women in sport, is essential and important. The inclusion of transgender women in women's sport doesn't challenge this.

Our sport is for everyone. It is important anyone wishing to participate in our sport consistent with their gender identity are able to do so, free from harassment and vilification. This policy provides clear guidance on ensuring all players continue to participate in fair and meaningful competition.

Q: Why should a trans woman be allowed to play in a women's competition when their muscle mass, hormones and physique are so different?

A: Transgender women are as diverse as every group of women can be. This policy/guideline provides clear direction on the inclusion of transgender and gender diverse players in our game to ensure all players continue to participate in fair and meaningful competition. As strength, stamina and physique are all relevant factors when competing in competitive sport, transgender and gender diverse players will be supported to participate in accordance with their gender identity, subject to certain criteria, through the implementation of this policy.

Q: Men who transition genders get a competitive advantage. Why can't they just play in the men's competition? They are biological men after all.

This policy has been developed to ensure everyone is afforded their fundamental right to participate in sport. Any person wishing to participate in our sport consistent with their gender identity should be able to do so. As such, this policy provides clear direction and guidelines on the inclusion of transgender and gender diverse players to ensure all players participate in fair and meaningful competitions. As strength, stamina and physique are all relevant factors when competing in competitive sport, transgender and gender diverse player will be supported to participate in accordance with their gender identity, subject to certain criteria, through the implementation of this policy.

Education Questions

Q: How do we get more education about trans and gender diverse people?

A: It's important to remain informed about issues relating to transgender and gender diverse people. A great way to strengthen your understanding of transgender and gender diverse people, populations, and needs, is to engage with evidence-informed, inclusive, and community-led initiatives, including Pride in Sport (www.prideinsport.com.au), or through free digital information and resource platforms such as TransHub (www.transhub.org.au).

Gotcha Questions - General

Q: Isn't this new governance 'heavy handed'?

A: Every person has a fundamental right to participate in sport, free from harassment and discrimination. With clear direction and guidelines, this new governance will strengthen our sport and ensures transgender and gender diverse athletes have the same opportunities to participate in sport as everyone else in Australia.

Q: Why are you getting involved in this? Sports should stay out of politics!

A: This is not politics; this is a human rights issue.

Gotcha Questions – Elite Sport

Q: We have men's sport and women's sport. So why shouldn't women's sport be just for women?

Q: Trans inclusion essentially spells the end of women's sport. What is your response to that?

Women's sport, and increasing the participation of all women in sport, is essential and important. The inclusion of trans women in women's sport doesn't challenge this.

In elite settings, trans people need to meet particular criteria such as achieving certain hormone profiles to be able to compete.

These policies do exactly that – they now provide a clear direction on the inclusion of trans and gender diverse players in our game to ensure all players continue to participate in fair, safe and meaningful competition.

Q: Can't trans people just play in a third category? Isn't that what open competitions are for?

Open competitions and leagues already exist and people are welcome to participate in those competitions if they so wish. Creating a 'trans competition category' goes against the very spirit of social inclusion and forgets that trans women, trans men and non-binary people are a very diverse population of people. This approach also limits opportunities for trans athletes if there are not enough to fill a category or team, given trans people make up less than 5% of the population this is very likely. Every person has a fundamental right to participate in sport.

Q: Why should a trans woman be allowed to play in a women's competition when their muscle mass, hormones, physique are so different?

Q: Why should trans women be allowed to play in a women's sport when their use of testosterone gives them a competitive advantage?

Trans women are as diverse and like any group of women, come in all shapes and sizes. It is impossible to know who is trans or not, just by their appearance.

Success in sport is multifaceted and does not solely rely on a person's physicality or hormone profile. There is no consistent research demonstrating trans women, who experienced testosterone during puberty, have a competitive advantage in sport. Additional peer reviewed research - with sound methodology - is encouraged.

Participation in sport makes a positive difference to those who play and compete, and contributes to increased self-esteem, resilience and good health.

Q: Trans athletes must be banned from women's sport until a new wave of scientific studies have been completed. We must suspend the rules now and wait for that data in the next few years and decide.

The research currently available makes clear that success in sport is multifaceted, is not always contingent on a player's physicality or hormone profile and can look different for many people.

There is no consistent research demonstrating trans women, by virtue of testosterone exposure alone, have a competitive advantage in sport. Hence, additional peer reviewed research with sound methodology, is encouraged.

Research also demonstrates that participating in sport makes a profound and positive difference to those who play and compete – and contributes to increased self-esteem and resilience.

Gotcha Questions – Community Sport

Q: Community sports already deal with transgender participation at their own level / in their own terms. Why this sledgehammer approach?

Before the release of these guidelines, clubs across Australia were already including trans and gender diverse people. These guidelines now provide a proper framework for clubs so that they can ensure they are truly inclusive and welcoming of all people, including those who are trans and gender diverse.

Q: Women have built their discipline from scratch over many decades and it's now being undermined by people that don't essentially do not have female bodies.

Trans women are not competing in women's sport to undermine it. They simply want to have a go. Every person has a fundamental right to participate in sport. What this policy does is provide a clear direction on the inclusion of trans and gender diverse people in our sport, to ensure all players participate in fair, meaningful and safe competitions.

Q: There are men who don't excel in their competitions and, when they transition into women, nab first prize or gold. Aren't they just using their biological advantage?

Trans women affirm their gender because they are women and want to reveal this to improve their lives, not because they want to win a sporting competition.

The mere fact of winning doesn't prove an unfair advantage. We know from Olympics data that trans women as a whole don't have an unfair advantage because none have ever won a gold medal, despite trans people competing in the games.

The notion that trans women will take over women's sport is nonsense. Contrary to fears expressed by some, there has been no large-scale dominance of trans athletes in women's sports.

Q: Female sport is there to showcase exceptional women. It's not a playground for mediocre males.

Trans women do not affirm their gender because they are 'mediocre males'. Trans women are women. They simply want to have a go at sport. Every person has a fundamental right to participate in sport. What these guidelines do is provide a clear direction on the inclusion of trans and gender diverse people in our sport, to ensure all players participate in fair and meaningful competitions.

Learn more about LGBTQ terminology

For definitions of key terms, please visit www.prideinsport.com.au/terminology

If you would like further guidance or support, please email Pride in Sport – info@prideinsport.com.au