



# Equality is the Game

A resource for sporting  
club committees to create  
gender equality and prevent  
violence against women



# Acknowledgements

*Equality is the Game!* was developed as part of 'Our Codes, Our Clubs: Changing the Story to Promote Gender Equality Together'- a research project undertaken in 2017 with nine local sporting clubs within the municipalities of Maroondah, Knox and Yarra Ranges, located in the Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) of Victoria.

The information contained in this resource is a result of interviews conducted with the sporting clubs and a literature review on the prevention of violence against women. All sources of the literature review are referenced in Section 7.

*Equality is the Game!* has built on previous work undertaken through the *YOU&I* initiative, with permission from *YOU&I* lead organisations, Inspiro and Eastern Health. It complements the 'YOU&I Football Clubs Committee Information Kit' and the 'YOU&I Be the Change! Coaching Resource', which were developed for local football clubs to promote positive messages of equality and respect between men and women, girls and boys.

'Our Codes, Our Clubs: Changing the Story to Promote Gender Equality Together', was developed thanks to support from the Victorian Government and assistance from the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), project partners and steering group members:

**Maroondah City Council**  
**Knox City Council**  
**Yarra Ranges Council**  
**Inspiro**  
**Eastern Access Community Health (EACH)**  
**Women's Health East (WHE)**  
**Outer East Children and Youth Area Partnership (OECYP)**  
**Department of Justice and Regulation Victoria**  
**Momentum Studios Australia**

Also a special thank you to the sporting clubs who participated in 'Our Codes, Our Clubs: Changing the Story to Promote Gender Equality Together':

**Croydon Rangers Gridiron Club**  
**Knox Basketball Inc**  
**Launching Place United Cricket Club**  
**Monbulk Rangers Soccer Club**  
**Mt Evelyn Junior Football Club**  
**Ringwood Bowls Club Inc**  
**Ringwood City Soccer Club**  
**Rowville Football Club**  
**Scoresby Wantirna South Tennis Club**

For further information about the project please contact your local Council.



# Contents

Introduction	4
Section 1: Violence Against Women	6
What is violence against women?	6
Did you know that?	6
Section 2: Causes of Violence Against Women	7
Gender inequality	7
Section 3: Sporting Clubs	8
Why should sporting clubs create gender equitable environments?	8
What are the benefits?	8
What can we all do?	9
Section 4: What Is The Role Of A Club Committee?	10
Good governance	10
Building an inclusive club culture	12
Strategies for engaging women and girls	13
Section 5: Support Services	14
Section 6: Further Resources	16
Youth focused websites	16
YouTube clips	16
Section 7: References	17

# All sporting codes can play a role in achieving gender equality

*Equality is the Game!* is a resource for all sporting codes to highlight how they can contribute to the prevention of violence against women, by creating safe, equal and respectful environments for all members, particularly women and girls.

It outlines the practical actions sporting club committees can undertake to promote gender equality, and highlights the benefits for clubs in creating a more inclusive and welcoming environment.

To complement this resource a short film entitled *Equality is the Game!* has been produced, which features five of the nine sporting clubs, from different codes who participated in 'Our Codes, Our Clubs: Changing the Story to Promote Gender Equality Together'.

In the film, club representatives share their experiences of participating in sporting clubs that promote gender equality, highlight what the benefits have been for their clubs and codes, and provide key messages for creating family friendly, inclusive and welcoming environments. The film also provides an insight into how sporting clubs can help to prevent violence against women by challenging the attitudes, beliefs, roles and environments that support gender inequalities.

“There are a variety of ways people of all ages can participate in the club, anyone of any ability can play here, you will get a game here”.

Lisa Doolan, President, Monbulk Rangers Soccer Club



# What do we mean by gender equity and gender equality?

## Equality



## Equity



**GENDER EQUITY** is the process where both men and women receive fair and just access to the same opportunities in life. It recognises that historically women have experienced social disadvantage, and therefore, that women should not only have the same opportunities as men, but that they should be given the means to utilise these opportunities.

**GENDER EQUALITY** refers to men and women having access to equal opportunities, resources and services. Equality is truly achieved through an equity approach which identifies and overcomes disadvantage (Women's Health East 2015). See image (above) for a pictorial view.

# Violence against women

## WHAT IS VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN?

Violence against women refers to gender based violence that causes harm or suffering to women. It is not just physical violence. It can be verbal, emotional/psychological, social, financial, sexual, spiritual or cultural abuse.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT?

Most cases of violence against women occur in the home. This is why it is often referred to as family or domestic violence. However, women can also experience violence in a range of other settings outside the 'family' such as workplaces, schools, social venues and public places. Most violence against women is carried out by a current or previous male partner.

## THE STATISTICS

**78,628** family violence incidents reported to the police in Victoria in 2015-16.



Of those cases, 74.9% of victims were female.  
*(Crime Statistics Agency 2016)*



1 in 5 women has experienced sexual violence.  
*(VicHealth 2014)*



1 in 4 women has experienced emotional abuse by a current or former partner.  
*(ABS 2013)*



1 in 3 women has experienced physical violence, since the age of 15. *(VicHealth 2014)*

# Causes of violence against women

Local, national and international research shows that violence against women is caused by attitudes, beliefs, roles and environments that support gender inequality.

There are also four key factors that contribute to gender inequality occurring, and hence violence against women. These causes and examples are shown below.



## Gender inequality



Condoning violence against women

E.g. Victim blaming and making excuses for why a woman was abused.

Male control in decision making and limits to women's independence

E.g. A male making all the important decisions in a relationship.

Traditional gender roles and stereotypes

E.g. That women should take care of the children and do the main household tasks, or that men shouldn't show emotions.

Male peer relations that reinforce aggression and disrespect for women.

E.g. Social situations that allow and condone male groups to joke about and disrespect females.

(OurWatch, VicHealth and ANROWS 2015)

### Did you know?



Research identifies a direct link between gender inequalities and violence against women. In countries where there are lower levels of gender equality, there are higher rates of violence against women.

Violence against women is complex, and there are other factors that don't necessarily cause the issue, but can contribute to violent behaviours coming to the surface, and how frequent and severe they can be. This includes, mental health issues, alcohol and drugs, exposure to violence as a child, and being socially and economically disadvantaged (OurWatch, VicHealth and ANROWS 2015).

For more information about the causes of violence against women, refer to the 'Change the Story' framework, available at [www.ourwatch.org.au](http://www.ourwatch.org.au). This *Equality is the Game!* resource has been designed to not only highlight the causes of violence against women, but to explain specific actions sporting clubs can take to address these causes. This information can be found on page 9 onwards of this document.

## SECTION 3:

# Sporting Clubs

### WHY SHOULD SPORTING CLUBS CREATE GENDER EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENTS?

Gender equality and freedom from violence is a human right and everyone is responsible for playing a role in ensuring it is achieved.

Sporting clubs can positively influence the health and social environment of people of all ages, particularly young people, and play a leadership role within their local communities.

They also have the opportunity to challenge the factors that support gender inequality, and promote and role model core values of fairness and respect, between men and women.

### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Females, like males, can contribute to sporting clubs in many ways, as players, supporters, coaches, umpires, committee members and volunteers. However, females remain under-represented in most sports, both on and off the field, in participation, media coverage and leadership positions.

Creating environments where everyone feels equal and respected builds a club culture that is strong, united, inclusive, family friendly, supportive and representative of the local community. This, can lead to benefits for both the club and local community, including:

- An increase in club membership due to the club's ability to attract and cater for a broader cross section of the community, both on and off the field.
- An increase in club revenue due to the club's ability to attract a diverse membership base, and appeal to a broader range of sponsors and grants.
- Access to a larger pool of volunteers due to the club's ability to access a more diverse range of skills and abilities, both on and off the field.
- An increase in community engagement and connectedness due to a more holistic and inclusive club culture that welcomes and celebrates diversity.

Gender  
Equality =

An inclusive  
and respectful  
club culture =

Success

- ✓ Increase in club membership
- ✓ Increase in club revenue
- ✓ Access to a larger pool of volunteers
- ✓ Increase in community engagement and connectedness





# What can we all do?

Everyone can play a role in creating gender equitable environments where everyone feels welcome and respected, to help prevent violence against women. However, before starting on any actions, it's important that sporting clubs undertake the following steps:

## 1. Identify your club's strengths and opportunities to promote gender equality.

Assess different aspects of your environment such as governance and leadership, club culture, membership and, club and community levels of engagement, volunteering, coaching and facilities.

To assist you can access a Gender Equity Audit tool, which was initiated by Yarra Ranges Council and distributed to all sporting clubs as part of 'Our Codes, Our Clubs: Changing the Story to Promote Gender Equality Together'. To access the Gender Equity Audit tool contact Maroondah, Knox or Yarra Ranges Council's.

## 2. Determine your club's willingness and capacity to embrace change.

Does your club committee support change and are they willing to look for new opportunities and try new things? Do you have resources to support change and know where you can obtain support from, for example, local and state government, State Sporting Associations, community groups or local organisations?. There are also a number of resources available such as, the film *Equality is the Game!* and those listed in Section 6 of this resource, which are all a great starting point for initiating discussion within your club.

## 3. Identify your champions of change.

Who is willing to work hard and commit the time and effort that's required to drive change? Your champion might not be in a leadership role at the club. They could be your parents, coaches, committee members, players or community members. Take the time to know your members, their skills and strengths, seek out people who may be willing to help and provide them with plenty of support.



“One or two people can be the catalyst for change, which benefits the whole club and creates the potential for more members”.

Toni Rennie, Community and Business Development Manager, Knox Basketball Inc

## SECTION 4:

# What is the role of a club committee?

Sporting club committees are responsible for defining a club's vision and values and can influence a club's culture, securing a strong foundation for the club's future.

Good governance and strong leadership are crucial to creating gender equality in sport, where women and girls have equal opportunities to males and boys, to participate in all sporting codes, both on and off the field.

There are many practical actions sporting club committees can undertake to build a club that promotes gender equality, and an inclusive club culture where everyone feels welcome and respected.

“Every decision made is for everyone”.

Kate Foley, President Ringwood City Soccer Club

## Good Governance

Examples of good governance that promotes gender equality are:

- A club vision that aims to increase the female/male gender balance in all aspects of the club.
- A good mix of club representatives on your committee including women and young people, as everyone is important. Schedule committee meetings at times that suit all members, so that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate.
- Having policies that support gender equality, for example a Code of Conduct or Social Media Policy. Be prepared to act should anyone breach a policy by behaving inappropriately such as using sexist language, derogatory comments or unfair treatment related to gender.

- Having a transparent complaints process, and ensuring club leaders role model equitable and respectful behaviours, particularly between women and men.
- Ensuring the club operates within the rules and spirit of the game and teaches players to do the same.
- Encouraging the use of gender neutral language, for example referring to members as players.
- Actively encouraging women and girls to be involved in all club activities whether as players, coaches, umpires, spectators, members or on the committee. Ensure that volunteer positions don't reinforce gender stereotypes, for example only having women in the canteen.
- Providing equal sponsorship opportunities for all teams, women and men.

- Encouraging all club members to participate in training and development opportunities, particularly females. For example, providing mentoring and free coaching courses.
- Ensuring there is equitable sharing of resources on and off the field. For example, access to the field/court, equipment, kits and coaching.
- Ensuring scheduling of play is shared between teams.
- Providing facilities which are safe, accessible and clean and where possible, having dedicated female friendly change rooms with toilet and shower facilities for players, umpires and coaches.
- Encouraging the general public to support the male and female teams equally.

**CASE STUDY:**

## Ringwood City Soccer Club, President Kate Foley

The most significant change at Ringwood City Soccer Club came when the Board, who at the time were predominately males, adopted a new club motto “one club, one future”. This marked the beginning of a significant change in the culture at the club, with all players benefiting, particularly females.

The club’s key focus is equality. It drives the club, it’s not in the club’s subconscious to not be equitable, and it will continue to be equitable, as long as the club and the board provide the required tools, resources and support for females to be equal to males.

The board currently includes four females, who are all in executive positions (i.e. President, Secretary, Treasurer and Registrar), which was not intentional, they are simply the best people for the job at the moment.



# Building an inclusive club culture

Sporting club committees play a key role in building a strong club culture, where the environment is family friendly and everyone feels welcome and supported.

There are a number of actions sporting clubs can take to enable this to occur:

- Actively engage the local community by promoting your club as welcoming and inclusive for all members, regardless of people's gender, age, culture or ability.
- Avoid serving alcohol at any junior or under 18's games, as it helps to protect the club brand.
- Provide opportunities for all club members, including women and children and the local community, to participate in social activities. For example, combined jumper presentations and awards nights, shopping tours and trivia nights.
- Host an event to raise funds for a cause where everyone is involved to help raise your club profile within the local community, for example Pink Stumps Day.
- Engage with the local community and draw upon them for support, for example Police, CFA, local churches and community organisations.
- Provide pre-season access to sporting grounds where possible, for players to practice and socialise, and maintain contact with the club outside the regular season.

## CASE STUDY:

### Mt Evelyn Junior Football Club, President Mal Darke



The culture at Mt Evelyn Junior Football Club has evolved and improved dramatically over the last 2-3 years. This was achieved with the support of the 2016 Seniors Captain, who wanted to change club culture by introducing a Code of Conduct, which was developed with the support of the players and the club's committee. The adoption of the Code of Conduct by both

the senior and junior clubs resulted in the club moving forward in leaps and bounds around positive culture, respect and behaviour.

The club has a very family friendly environment, and all the players, their families and friends participate in the clubs social activities and events, for example last year the juniors had their jumper presentation with many of the senior players attending and presenting jumpers.

After the girls under 12's and 18's won the premiership, everyone celebrated together at the club rooms, with the under 12s and 18's girls leading everyone in singing the club song. There were players, parents and supporters at the club from the juniors, seniors and veterans. It was an electric and emotional atmosphere, and very symbolic of the close bonds between the junior and senior clubs.



“A club is a family, and some clubs make the mistake of making the women’s team a daughter, not a sister team to the men’s senior teams”.

Cat Bouwhuis, Vice President and player, Croydon Rangers Gridiron Club.

## Strategies for engaging women and girls

Sporting club committees can implement strategies to encourage women and girls to become more involved in sport. These include:

- Embrace a range of marketing and promotional opportunities. For example, create a web and Facebook page, promote your success and go out into the community and talk to schools and community groups about what you have to offer women and girls.
- Run programs that are specifically for girls to develop their skills and confidence in a friendly, fun and non competitive environment.
- Provide opportunities to participate in social and competitive competitions.
- Engage female role models, such as high profile players or coaches that can engage and inspire the younger girls. For example, Knox Basketballs Bec’s Boomers program or inviting someone who is high profile to present the girls teams with their jumpers at the season launch.
- Engage female mentors who can support female volunteers within the club.

- Provide training and development opportunities for females. For example, Knox Basketball Inc engages Carrie Graf, an Australian Basketball Coach to run coaching sessions with their female coaches.
- Provide activities aimed at strengthening the local community, particularly for girls in their teens, to try and keep them engaged in sport. For example, Knox Basketball Inc’s Community Rounds Program.
- Promote to women and girls that you don’t have to be an elite player to be involved in sport, and that there are many career pathways in sport such as coaching, refereeing, administration and management.

“We are our members, the more we do for our members the stronger our clubs gets”.

Toni Rennie, Community and Business Development Manager, Knox Basketball Inc

# Support Services

**IF A PERSON IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, DIAL TRIPLE ZERO (000)**

## **24/7 FAMILY VIOLENCE RESPONDER**

Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre

Offers women and their children (family and friends) living with family violence access to professional support to enable them to become free from violence.

*Phone: 1800 015 188*

*Website: [www.safesteps.org.au](http://www.safesteps.org.au)*

## **24/7 PHONE LINES AND ONLINE COUNSELLING**

### **1800RESPECT**

National 24/7 sexual assault, domestic family violence counselling helpline, information and support service.

*Phone: 1800 737 732*

*Website: [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)*

### **LIFELINE**

Provides 24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services, through phone and online chat support (website chat not 24/7).

*Phone: 13 11 14*

*Website: [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)*

### **MensLine AUSTRALIA**

A 24/7 phone and online support, counselling and information service for Australian men with family and relationship concerns.

*Phone: 1300 789 978*

*Website: [www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)*

### **MEN'S REFERRAL SERVICE**

A family violence telephone counselling, information and referral service provided by men for men.

*Phone: 1300 766 491*

### **WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES VICTORIA**

Women with Disabilities Victoria (WDV) is an organisation of women with disabilities for women with disabilities. WDV focus on areas where gender inequity and/or disability have the biggest impact on the capacity of women with disabilities to be respected and to fully experience life.

*Phone: 9286 7800*

*Monday - Thursday 10:00am to 4:00pm*

### **VINCENT CARE VICTORIA**

Housing and homelessness support line.

*Phone: 1800 825 955 (toll free)*

## SERVICES FOR THE EASTERN METROPOLITAN REGION OF MELBOURNE

### Outer East Family Violence Counsellors

Inspiro – 9738 8801, Monday – Friday 8:30am until 5pm

Eastern Health's Yarra Valley Health - 1300 130 381, Monday – Friday 8:30am until 5pm

EACH- 1300 003 224, Monday – Friday 9am until 5pm

### EDVOS - Eastern Domestic Violence Service

Provides a range of services for women and children responding to and experiencing family violence. They also support with referrals to counselling and other services.

Phone: 9259 4200

Monday – Friday 9am until 8pm. Saturday – 9am until 5pm

Website: [www.edvos.org.au](http://www.edvos.org.au)

### ECASA - Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault

Counselling and advocacy services to women, men, children and young people who are victims/survivors of recent or past sexual assault.

For counselling phone: 9870 7330

Monday – Friday 9am until 5pm

For after-hours 24 hour support phone: 1800 806 292

Website: [www.easternhealth.org.au/services/item/174-eastern-centre-against-sexual-assault-ecasa](http://www.easternhealth.org.au/services/item/174-eastern-centre-against-sexual-assault-ecasa)

### Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria

Provides assistance (legal services or counselling) to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander victims/survivors of family violence and sexual assault.

Phone: 1800 105 303 or 9244 3333

(Melbourne Metro phone lines)

Website: [www.fvpls.org](http://www.fvpls.org)

### Boorndawan Willam Aboriginal Healing Service

Assists Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from the Eastern Metropolitan Region in their healing journey to address the impacts of family violence.

Phone: 1300 003 224

Monday – Friday 9am until 5pm

Website: [www.each.com.au/service/boorndawan-willam-aboriginal-healing-service/](http://www.each.com.au/service/boorndawan-willam-aboriginal-healing-service/)

### Eastern Community Legal Centre

Healesville Phone: 5962 1665

Boronia Phone: 9762 6235

---

## SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

### KIDS HELPLINE

Free 24/7 confidential phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 – 25 years.

Phone: 1800 55 1800

Website: [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

### HEADSPACE KNOX

Provides young people aged 12-25 with confidential and free mental health advice, support and information.

Phone: 9801 6088

Open Monday - Wednesday 9am until 6pm

Thursday- 9am until 8pm

Friday- 9am until 5pm

Website: [www.headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/knox](http://www.headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/knox)

## SECTION 6:

# Further Resources

### STEPPING IN'

Developed by VicHealth

A bystander action toolkit, for State Sporting Associations to become workplace leaders in promoting gender equity and respect for women.

Search 'Stepping In' on VicHealth's Website:

[www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)

### BE THE CHANGE!

Developed by the YOU&I initiative

Provides information for coaches on developing respectful relationships and the role a coach can play in preventing violence against women.

Website: [www.youandirespect.com.au/resources](http://www.youandirespect.com.au/resources)

---

## YOUTH FOCUSED WEBSITES

### THE LINE

The Line is a primary prevention behaviour change campaign for young people aged 12 to 20 years. The Line encourages healthy and respectful relationships by challenging, and changing attitudes and behaviours that support violence.

[www.theline.org.au](http://www.theline.org.au)

### REACHOUT

ReachOut.com provides practical information, tools and support to young people for everyday troubles to really tough times.

[www.reachout.com](http://www.reachout.com)

---

## YOUTUBE CLIPS

### GENDER BALANCE AND STEREOTYPES

**Violence against women is preventable and link with gender equality**

(Knox, Maroondah & Yarra Ranges)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FbLNWcolGo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FbLNWcolGo)

### Redraw the balance UK

Gender stereotypes are defined between the ages of 5 and 7

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=qv8VZVP5csA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qv8VZVP5csA)

### Run Like a Girl

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs)

### This Girl Can

Phenomenal Women UK Campaign

[youtu.be/BZoXylxqFRc](http://youtu.be/BZoXylxqFRc)

### GENDER PAY GAP

#### Pay Gap

New Zealand children

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=e\\_1gdx4DKbk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_1gdx4DKbk)



# References

- ANROWS 2016, A preventable burden: Measuring and addressing the prevalence and health impacts of intimate partner violence in Australian women: key findings and future directions, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women, retrieved 22 April 2017, <<https://anrows.org.au/publications/compass-0/preventable-burden-measuring-and-addressing-the-prevalence-and-health-impacts>>.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013, Personal Safety, Australia, 2012, cat. No. 4906.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, Australia.
- Crime Statistics Agency Victoria, Family Incidents, Crime Statistics Agency, retrieved 22 April 2017, <<https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/crime-statistics/latest-crime-data/family-incidents-2>>.
- OurWatch, VicHealth and ANROWS 2015, Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia, OurWatch, Melbourne.
- PricewaterhouseCooper 2015, A high price to pay: The economic case for preventing violence against women, PricewaterhouseCooper, retrieved 29 May 2017, <<http://www.pwc.com.au/publications/economic-case-preventing-violence-against-women.html>>.
- VicHealth 2014, Australians' attitudes to violence against women. Findings from the 2013 National Community Attitudes towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS), VicHealth, Victoria, Australia.
- Women's Health East 2015, Together for Equality and Respect Gender Audit Tool and Guidelines, Women's Health East, Melbourne, Vic.

 To access Equality is the Game! short film search **Equality is the Game! Victoria** on YouTube.

