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Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

PARTICIPANT GUIDE



Acknowledgement of Country

We recognise the rich contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people make to Australian sport and celebrate the power of sport to bring people together and to promote reconciliation and equality. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land and waters on which we play. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging and extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who have inspired and continue to inspire us through participation, team work, courage and leadership in sport.



COLLABORATION

This guide is an initiative of the Australian Sports Commission, Touch Football Australia and Pride in Sport. We believe sport is a human right, and that diversity is key to stronger, resilient and capable sporting communities.

Australian Sports Commission

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) is the Australian Government agency responsible for supporting and investing in sport at all levels.

Touch Football Australia

Touch Football Australia (TFA) is the National governing body of the sport of NRL Touch Football in Australia. TFA focuses on enhancing the experiences of everyone involved in Touch Football to grow the sport.

Pride in Sport

Pride in Sport is a national non-for-profit program specifically designed to assist sporting organisations with the inclusion of LGBTQ employees, athletes, coaches, volunteers and spectators. The world-first Pride in Sport Index (PSI) benchmarks and assesses the inclusion of LGBTQ people across all sporting and recreation contexts. To learn more about Pride in Sport and how your sporting organisations can become more inclusive visit www.prideinsport.org.au



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INTRODUCTION



There is a place in our sport for everyone, exactly as you are.

Touch Football Australia supports Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and Non-Binary people and are active supporters of eliminating discrimination against LGBTQ+ people both on and off the field.

While sport hasn't always been the most welcoming environment for the LGBTQ community, we've taken big steps to build an inclusive and welcoming culture.

Touch Football helps people connect and provides a community for people to belong to. That's why it's so important that in delivering our sport we provide an environment that is safe, inclusive and welcoming for everyone.

This guide highlights the way our sport fosters inclusion. It outlines our commitment to athletes, officials and volunteers who have diverse sexualities and genders, and the support available to you.

Touch Football Australia will not tolerate any form of homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, bullying, harassment or vilification. This promise extends from the field of play to our boardroom.

We believe that diverse teams are strong teams, and we celebrate diversity within Touch Football.

Jamie O'Connor
Chief Executive Officer
(He / Him / His)

The acronym LGBTQ is used throughout this guide. It stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (or Questioning), but should be read to apply to all participants who have diverse genders and sexualities.



KEY DOCUMENTS

This guide is supported by a range of strategies, policies and procedures which can be found on the **Policies** page of our website.

It is important that coaches, officials and administrators remain up to date with their understanding of Touch Football Australia policy.

These include:

- Touch Football Australia LGBTQ Inclusion Policy
- **Touch Football Australia Trans and Gender Diverse Guidelines**
- **Touch Football Australia Member Protection Policy**
- **Touch Football Australia Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy**
- **Touch Football Australia Privacy Policy**

Definitions for key terms are included at the end of this guide. While we have done our best to define these words accurately, Touch Football Australia acknowledges that language evolves constantly. We encourage members to stay informed with other language and terminology by visiting the Pride in Sport website - www.prideinsport.com.au/terminology.





ENROLMENT AND REGISTRATION

When registering to become a member, each individual has the option of selecting, Male or Female. At this point in time, an individual can register under the gender which best reflects their gender identity.

For participation programs and community sport, anyone can participate in the competition which best reflects their gender identity. Touch Football will accept a range of documents, including statutory declarations, and will always use the name, gender and pronouns you choose.

Conventional pronouns are 'she/her/hers' and 'he/him/his'. Some people use gender neutral pronouns, such as 'they/them/their'. Touch Football will use the pronouns you decide in our written records and when we speak to you.

If you are a trans athlete and you intend to apply for an elite sporting activity, contact Touch Football Australia (using the details listed in this guide) to discuss the registration process.

Our privacy policy and information management processes will ensure that any personal information you provide will be handled securely.





UNIFORMS AND FACILITIES

Touch Football uniforms, for both players and officials, is available in a range of sizes and styles. We're working to include a wider selection of options in the future.

You choose the gender and style of uniform you wear, based on what feels comfortable for you.

You have access to the bathrooms and changeroom facilities which reflect your gender identity.

While Touch Football Australia does not own or manage all facilities where Touch Football takes place, we are advocating for more inclusive practices in sporting venues including the creation of some all-gendered spaces, encouraging modifications to create more private spaces (including higher doors, room dividers and shower curtains) and recommending the inclusion of sanitary bins in all toilet facilities.





LGBTQ NETWORKS AND TEAMS IN TOUCH FOOTBALL

While we want all spaces and teams to be inclusive and welcoming, we know some people prefer to connect and train with other LGBTQ athletes.

Below is a list of LGBTQ Touch Football teams that compete in social competitions around Australia.

New South Wales

Touch Football Australia has recently started an LGBTQ Touch Football team based in Sydney, The Sydney Lambs. The Lambs play in a local competition out of Queens Park in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs.

Western Australia

The Perth Rams are a LGBTQ social Touch Football team that compete in the Southern Stars Touch competition held at George Burnett Park, Karawara Western Australia.

South Australia

In South Australia, the Adelaide University Sharks compete in a LGBTQ friendly social Touch competition held at Park 17 (Tuthangga) Eastwood.

If you are interested in joining a team, please contact Touch Football Australia (using the details listed in this guide).



Everyone deserves the opportunity to feel a sense of belonging and Touch Football provides this and allows you to be yourself

Catherine Sargent
Elite Touch Football Player
(She / Her / Hers)

If you are interested in working with Touch Football Australia to support inclusion, please contact our inclusion team at inclusion@touchfootball.com.au.



MAKING A COMPLAINT

If you do experience bullying or harassment, or need to report an incident, please contact:

Luke Heckendorf (He / Him / His) – National Inclusion Manager (SYD) Luke.heckendorf@touchfootball.com.au

Or

James Sharp (He / Him / His) - National Education and Policy Manager (QLD) James.sharp@touchfootball.com.au

All complaints will be taken seriously, managed confidentially, and dealt with in accordance with the Touch Football Australia Complaints, Disputes and Discipline Policy.

The Australian Human Rights Commission or State or Territory Human Rights Commission may also help you in relation to any complaints of discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation under Federal or State and Territory laws.





WORKING TOGETHER AS ALLIES

We know how powerful it can be to have an ally. As LGBTQ sportspeople, we have a role to play as allies for each other.

Here are some simple steps we can all take to support each other.

- We each control our own disclosure. Respect the confidentiality of LGBTQ peers.
- The behaviour we accept is the behaviour we approve. If teammates, coaches, volunteers, fans or administrators aren't living up to these inclusive standards – call it out.
- Celebrate each other's visibility. We can amplify our efforts if we join together.
- Model inclusive language and pronoun use for your peers and allies.
- Keep learning about our community and how we can support each other.
- Share this guide (or the accompanying guides) with anyone you think may find it useful or interesting.





SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

If you have a question or concern, you can contact Touch Football Australia:

Inclusion@touchfootball.com.au

For external support, Touch Football Australia recommends connecting with the following LGBTQ+ specific providers:

ACON provides counselling as well as social work support to help people resolve complex or ongoing violence and harassment matters.

Freecall: 1800 063 060

Web: www.acon.org.au/mental-health/#lgbti-counselling

QLife provides anonymous and free LGBTI peer support and referral for people wanting to talk about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships.

Freecall: 1800 184 527

Web: www.qlife.org.au/get-help

Lifeline provides 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services to all Australians experiencing a personal crisis.

Phone: 13 11 14

Web: www.lifeline.org.au/gethelp

To find out more about LGBTQ inclusion in sport, visit:

[Pride in Sport Australia](#)

Pride in Sport is a national sporting inclusion program specifically designed to assist sporting organisations at all levels with the inclusion of LGBTQ employees, athletes, coaches, volunteers and spectators.

[TransHub](#)

This platform is an initiative from ACON Health, Australia's largest LGBTQ health organisation specialising in community health, inclusion and HIV responses for people of diverse sexualities and genders.

[Pride Cup](#)

By connecting with community clubs of all codes to help them run their own Pride Cup matches and attend facilitated education sessions, Pride Cup empowers sportspeople to become leaders for inclusivity and diversity in their communities.

[Proud2Play](#)

Proud 2 Play focuses on increasing LGBTIQ+ engagement in sport, exercise and active recreation. To do this, P2P work with all levels of the sporting community, from individual participants and grassroots communities, to state and national sporting organisations.

[Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

The Australian Human Rights Commission is an independent statutory organisation, established by an act of Federal Parliament. We protect and promote human rights in Australia and internationally.



KEY WORDS AND PHRASES

Brotherboy is a term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to describe gender diverse people who have a male spirit and take on male roles within the community. Brotherboys have a strong sense of their cultural identity.

Gender diverse is an umbrella term that includes all the different ways gender can be experienced and perceived. It can include people questioning their gender, those who identify as trans/transgender, genderqueer, non-binary, gender non-conforming and many more.

Gender dysphoria is the discomfort a person feels with how their body is perceived and allocated a gender by other people. The experience may occur when a person feels their biological or physical sex doesn't match their sense of their own gender (gender incongruence). This feeling, that there is a mismatch, can trigger a range of responses. Some people experience serious distress, anxiety and emotional pain, which can affect their mental health. Others experience only low-level distress – or none at all. For this reason, gender dysphoria is no longer considered a mental illness. Gender Incongruence is included by the WHO in their Manual of International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-11) as a condition related to sexual health. This is a significant step toward recognising Transgender experience as a natural state, rather than a disorder. (Not to be confused with 'Body Dysmorphia')

Gender identity is defined in the Act as 'the gender-related identity, appearance or mannerisms or other gender-related characteristics of a person (whether by way of medical intervention or not), with or without regard to the person's designated sex at birth'. For example, a person's birth certificate may include a marker which indicates that the person's designated sex is female when that person identifies as a man (in other words, their gender identity is that of a man).

Cisgender / cis is a term used to describe people who identify their gender as the same as what was assigned to them at birth

(male or female). 'Cis' is a Latin term meaning 'on the same side as'.

Deadname is a term used by some trans people to describe the name they were given and known by prior to affirming their gender and/or coming out.

Intersex (Intersex status) is a protected attribute under the Act. Under the Act 'intersex status' means the status of having physical, hormonal or genetic features that are:

- i. neither wholly female nor wholly male
- ii. a combination of female and male, or
- iii. neither female nor male.

The term 'intersex' does not describe a person's gender identity (man, woman, neither or both). A person with an intersex variation may identify as a man, woman, neither or both.

LGBTQ (or variations of it) is an acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning. It is used to refer collectively to these communities. The 'LGB' refers to sexuality/sexual identity; the 'T' refers to gender identity; and the 'Q' can refer to either gender identity or sexuality.

Non-Binary is a term used to describe a person who does not identify exclusively as either a man or a woman. Genders that sit outside of the female and male binary are often called non-binary. A person might identify solely as non-binary, or relate to non-binary as an umbrella term and consider themselves genderfluid, genderqueer, trans masculine, trans feminine, agender, bigender, or something else.

Pronouns are a grammatical means of referring to a person or persons. Conventional pronouns are 'she/her/hers' and 'he/him/his'. Some people use gender neutral pronouns, such as 'they/them/their'. The pronoun a person uses to describe themselves generally reflects their gender identity.

Sex refers to a person's biological sex or sex characteristics. These may be genetic, hormonal, or anatomical. Unlike 'gender identity', 'sex' is not defined in the Act.

Sistergirl is a term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to describe gender diverse people that have a female spirit and take on female roles within the community. Including looking after children and family. Many Sistergirls live a traditional lifestyle and have strong cultural backgrounds.

Transgender (commonly abbreviated to 'trans') is a general term used to describe a person whose gender identity is different to the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender is about how an individual describes their own gender, not necessarily about their biological characteristics. Trans people may position 'being trans' as a history or experience, rather than an identity, and consider their gender identity as simply being female, male or a non-binary identity. Some trans people connect strongly with their trans experience, whereas others do not. Processes of gender affirmation may or may not be part of a trans or gender diverse person's life.

Transition / Gender Affirmation means the personal process or processes a trans or gender diverse person determines is right for them in order to live as their defined gender and so that society recognises this. Transition may involve social, medical/ surgical and/or legal steps that affirm a person's gender. Affirming gender doesn't mean changing gender, 'having a sex change' or 'becoming a man or a woman', and transition isn't the same as being trans. A trans or gender diverse person who hasn't medically or legally affirmed their gender is no less the man, woman or non-binary person they've always been.

- iv. Social transition is the process by which a person changes their gender expression to better match their gender identity. This may include changing their name, pronouns, and appearance.
- v. Medical transition is the process by which a person changes their physical sex characteristics to align with their gender identity. This may include hormone therapy, surgery or both.
- vi. Legal transition is the process by which a person changes their identity documents, name, or both, to reflect their gender identity. This may include changing their gender marker on a passport or birth certificate or changing their name on a driver's licence or bank card.

Societal attitudes/issues

An **ally**, straight ally, or heterosexual ally is typically a heterosexual and cisgender person who supports equal civil rights, gender equality, LGBTQ+ social movements, and challenges homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. Not everyone who meets this definition identifies as an "ally". An ally acknowledges that LGBTQ+ people face discrimination and thus are socially disadvantaged. They aim to use their position as heterosexual and cisgender individuals in a society focused

on heteronormativity to counter discrimination against LGBTQ+ people. An ally can also be someone who identifies within the LGBTQ+ community and supports an aspect of that community in which they don't identify with (e.g. a Cisgendered gay man may identify as an ally to transgender individuals).

Biphobia is abuse towards someone who is attracted to more than one gender, and even includes when that person's identity is erased. This can be in the form of telling someone that their sexuality is "just a phase", or even telling them to "pick a side."

Cissexism is where something is based on a discriminatory social or structural view that positions (either intentionally or otherwise) the trans experience as either not existing or as something to be pathologised. Cissexism believes that gender identity is determined at birth and is a fixed and innate identity that is based on sex characteristics (or 'biology') and that only binary (male or female) identities are valid and real.

Heteronormativity (also known as cisnormativity) the view that heterosexual relationships are the only natural, normal and legitimate expressions of sexuality and relationships, and that other sexualities or gender identities are unnatural and a threat to society (GLHV, 2016).

Homophobia refers to negative beliefs, prejudices and stereotypes that exist about people who are not heterosexual. Verbal homophobia is the most common form. Things like name-calling, rumours and abusive words ('f*g' or 'd*ke'). Phrases like "that's so gay" which compare sexuality to words like 'crap' can have a negative impact. Homophobia also include abusive threats or actual physical violence, sexual harassment and deliberately excluding someone because of their sexuality.

Misgendering is an occurrence where a person is described or addressed using language that does not match their gender identity. This can include the incorrect use of pronouns (she/ he/they), familial titles (father, sister, uncle) and, at times, other words that traditionally have gendered applications (pretty, handsome, etc.). It is best to ask a person, at a relevant moment, what words they like to use.

Transphobia refers to negative beliefs, prejudices and stereotypes that exist about transgender/trans and gender diverse people. You may have heard transphobic language like 'tr*nny', or seen restrictions on the way that people are allowed to express their gender. Things like which uniform you're allowed to wear or toilets you can use. Transphobia can also include abusive threats or actual physical violence, sexual harassment and deliberately excluding someone because of their gender.

