



**AUSTRALIAN
ATHLETICS**

Introduction and Support Services

**Inclusion of Transgender and Gender Diverse People
in Athletics**



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Introduction

From physical to mental, social and beyond, sport provides a plethora of positive benefits for individuals and communities. Australian Athletics and its State and Territory Member Associations are committed to providing a safe, fun and inclusive environment for all people, including those of diverse genders. As the national governing body for athletics in Australia, being inclusive within our sport, services, competitions and operations not only reflects our core values, but also the diversity of our sport's members, staff, volunteers and community.

Recent studies around the inclusion of people with diverse genders in Australian sport reported that:

- Sport is considered hostile and unwelcoming to young people with diverse genders.¹
- Change rooms were common sites of stress, harassment and bullying for young people with diverse genders.²

Following the release of various World Athletics policies (Difference of Sexual Development [DSD] and Transgender policies), along with feedback from Australian Athletics' Member Associations and clubs seeking guidance in managing trans and gender diverse inclusion at the grassroots level of the sport, Australian Athletics proceeded to develop a policy and accompanying community participation guidelines to provide clarity and assistance to the Australian athletics community in navigating the inclusion of transgender and gender diverse people in athletics.

Australian Athletics has produced two documents pertaining to trans and gender diverse participation in Australian Athletics. These are:

1. Inclusion of Transgender and Gender Diverse People in Athletics Competition Policy
2. Guidelines for the Inclusion of Transgender and Gender Diverse People in Community Athletics

In developing these documents, Australian Athletics has engaged with a range of organisations and stakeholders, including:

¹ Torr, R., Robinson, K., Davies, C., Nicholas, L., Collison, A. (2020). Game to Play? Exploring the experiences and attitudes towards sport, exercise and physical activity amongst same sex attracted and gender diverse young people. Western Sydney University

² Drummond, Murray & Elliott, Samuel & Drummond, Claire & Lewis, Lucy & Prichard, Ivanka & Bevan, Nadia & Pennesi, Jamie-Lee. (2019). Inclusive Sport Practices: A report for Inclusive Sport SA.



- Pride in Sport
- Proud 2 Play
- The Australian Sports Commission
- Australian Human Rights Commission
- Australian Human Rights Commission (via Pride in Sport)
- Cis-female athletes
- Transgender female athletes
- Parent of a gender diverse young person
- Medical professionals
- Legal experts
- Australian Athletics Member Associations
- World Athletics

As part of this process, we also developed and engaged a reference group to provide advice, feedback, and review throughout the process.

Australian Athletics recognises that the inclusion of trans and gender diverse people within sport is a complex and emotive issue, particularly in individual sports like athletics, and where historical gender categories of male and female are entrenched in the operation of competitions. We acknowledge that these categorisations are unlikely to change and that therefore, our policy regarding trans and gender diverse inclusion needs to operate within that framework at the competitive levels of the sport.

Furthermore, Australian Athletics is a Member Federation of World Athletics.

Accordingly, in many competitions conducted in Australia, Australian Athletics and its State and Territory Member Associations must comply with the policies and regulations of the world governing body.

A key challenge in developing a national policy is the complex, overlapping legislative framework applicable to this area. Every State and Territory in Australia has its own anti-discrimination and equal opportunity framework and then there is also Commonwealth legislation dealing with these issues. Each different jurisdiction protects different attributes, has different definitions applying to gender and has different exceptions. This array of legislation has, therefore, also influenced the development of the policy and guidelines.

Australian Athletics and its Member Associations are committed to gender equity. In particular, we are fully committed to advancing the participation of women and girls in athletics. Our work in ensuring the inclusion of transgender and gender diverse people in athletics is aimed to complement our existing gender equity initiatives.



All people within the Australian Athletics community have a role to play in ensuring we foster an inclusive environment. Within our policy and guidelines, we use the acronym LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/gender diverse and queer). We recognise that language is constantly evolving, and that one label or description may not be able to capture the breadth of the LGBTQ+ community. Our intention is to be as succinct as possible, but inclusive of everyone and apologise for any unintended offence.

Australian Athletics recognises that both intentional and unintentional phobic behaviours exist within sport, as well as society more broadly, which can create adverse and potentially significant consequences for some individuals and our communities. Australian Athletics will take steps to actively promote respectful, inclusive, and collaborative behaviours within our sport at all times. Finally, we recognise that trans and gender diverse participation in sport is a rapidly evolving area and as such, Australian Athletics will periodically review and update our policies and guidelines to reflect new information and changes to associated policies.

Support Services

For external support, Australian Athletics recommends using 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/what-we-are-here-for/mental-health/#lgbti-counselling

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

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



Additional Resources and Support

Australian Human Rights Commission (www.humanrights.gov.au) The Australian Human Rights Commission is an independent statutory organisation, established by an act of Federal Parliament. The Commission protects and promotes human rights in Australia and internationally.

Parents of Gender Diverse Children (www.pgdc.org.au) Parents of Gender Diverse Children supports parents and those parenting transgender and gender diverse children.

Pride in Sport Australia (www.prideinsport.com.au) Pride in Sport is the only sporting inclusion program specifically designed to assist sporting organisations at all levels with the inclusion of LGBTQ+ employees, players, coaches, volunteers and spectators.

Proud 2 Play (www.proud2play.org.au) Proud 2 Play is a peak body for LGBTQ+ inclusion in sport. Proud 2 Play work at all levels of the sporting community providing education, policy advice, running inclusive events, conducting research, and forming partnerships.

QLife ([www.qlife.org.au](http://www qlife.org.au)) QLife provides anonymous and free LGBTQ+ peer support and referral for people in Australia wanting to talk about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships.

Transcend Australia (www.transcendaus.org) Transcend provides support for parents and carers of gender diverse children through information, advocacy, community connection, and fundraising

TransHub (www.transhub.org.au) 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.

Trans Pride Australia (www.transprideaustralia.org.au) Trans Pride Australia Inc is a social and support group for trans and gender diverse people and their loved ones in Australia.