



WATER POLO AUSTRALIA TRANSGENDER & GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE GUIDELINES – COMMUNITY SPORT

FAQS

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

A: Water Polo Australia, in consultation with experts and relevant stakeholders, has developed an inclusion policy for transgender and gender diverse people in community water polo in line with their fundamental human rights including equality, participation in sport, freedom from discrimination, harassment and privacy.

Q: Why are you launching this 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. Water Polo Australia supports athletes electing to participate in community water polo 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 and inclusive environment.

Q: Our club only offers male and female competitions, so how can we include someone who is non-binary or who doesn't identify as exclusively male or female?

For single sex competitions, people can participate in the competition that best reflects their gender identity. If the participant does not identify with a male or female gender, they are encouraged to participate in the competition/division that they feel most comfortable in doing.

Q: Who do the new Water Polo Australia guidelines apply to?

New guidelines apply to all Water Polo Australia members involved in sanctioned National competitions that are considered community or participation based, including players, coaches and managers, referees, paid/unpaid staff, spectators.

These guidelines are relevant to sanctioned community competitions including Australian Youth Water Polo Championships, National State Championships, WPA Open Championships (Country, Masters and Polo4's Divisions).

(Based on the [National Competitions Framework](#), Australian Waterpolo League (AWL) is a high performance competition so is not considered a part of these guidelines).

Q: Is it compulsory for my Club to implement these guidelines?

While it is not compulsory, WPA encourage all clubs and state associations to support and implement the recommendations where possible. WPA understands that some recommendations, in particular regarding facilities, may not be possible while using public and privately owned venues.



WPA is firstly rolling out the guidelines across national sanctioned events. WPA will continue to work with the State Associations and Clubs to develop guidelines that can be implemented at a grassroots level.

Q: What are the consequences should we not implement these guidelines?

There are no strict consequences, however discrimination on the basis of sex or gender can include both direct and indirect discrimination and may be unlawful under Commonwealth and State Legislation.

Q: How long do we need to implement these guidelines?

We are passionate about helping people lead happy, healthy and active lives.

WPA want to see our sport evolve into a more inclusive environment into the future to celebrate diversity of sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, intersex status, ability, skill, cultural background, ethnicity, location, religious or political beliefs and life stage.

We want to ensure that persons of all types are catered for and feel comfortable and safe when playing water polo

Q: What constitutes a “sanctioned competition”?

Sanctioned competitions ensure that all Water Polo events, tournaments, competitions, matches or activities around the country are conducted in a safe and professional manner, and comply with the respective FINA Water Polo Rules and WPA Policies and Procedures

For the purposes of these guidelines, these competitions include Australian Youth Water Polo Championships, Open Championships (Country, Masters, Polo4's Divisions) and National State Championships

Q: Why do the guidelines only include Water Polo Australia sanctioned competitions?

A: WPA is firstly rolling out the guidelines across national sanctioned events. WPA will continue to work with the State Associations and Clubs to develop guidelines that can be implemented at a grassroots level.

Q: What does this mean for high performance squads?

Transgender and gender diver individuals are welcome and included in Water Polo Australia governed competitions. But those seeking representative selection to compete at internationally governed competitions will be subject to the international federation (FINA) transgender guidelines and [policy](#).

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. For more resources [click here](#).



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: Water Polo Australia is fortunate to have established practices of grading and selection of players within existing competitions to address player mismatch. This is to protect the health and safety of participants and guarantee fair and meaningful competition. Referee adjudication and safety equipment are also features of our game to ensure the safety of all participants.

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. Referees provide the most effective means of ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of players, as well as, addressing the mismatch of players.

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 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. No. 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.

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 Water Polo Australia’s policies. Injury is an inherent risk when playing sport and Water Polo Australia is committed to the safety and enjoyment of all, with recognition that participation in sport is a human right.

The development of these guidelines addresses the need for clear direction on the inclusion of transgender and gender diverse players in our sport, to ensure all players 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 these guidelines.

Q. Why haven’t the gender identity options changed in the online Member Registration Forms?

A. Water Polo Australia is working closely with our current IT membership portal provider, RevSport (as they are proud Tech Partners of Pride in Sport) to update all registration forms to include a number of options to select when nominating their gender identity.