



GENDER PARTICIPATION & INCLUSION POLICY

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1. Purpose

This policy outlines eligibility for participation in events containing gender-based competition categories delivered by Australian Oztag and its members. It aims to balance inclusion, fairness, safety, and legal compliance while ensuring all participants are treated with dignity and respect.

This policy should be read alongside the organisation's Member Protection Policy, Code of Conduct, and relevant safeguarding policies.

2. Legal & Governance Framework

This policy is developed with regard to:

- The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth), which protects individuals from discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, and intersex status
- Applicable State or Territory anti-discrimination legislation
- Section 42 of the Sex Discrimination Act, which permits sex-based participation rules in competitive sporting activities where strength, stamina or physique are relevant to competition

Oztag is a running-based, evasive team sport where speed, agility, and physical capacity can influence performance outcomes. This policy seeks to apply eligibility rules in a manner that is lawful, proportionate, and respectful.

3. Guiding Principles

Australian Oztag is committed to:

- Providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for all participants
- Ensuring fair and meaningful competition
- Respecting the rights, dignity and privacy of all individuals
- Preventing bullying, harassment, discrimination, and vilification

Nothing in this policy permits disrespectful behaviour or exclusion from the sport community.

4. Participation Eligibility - Under 14 Years

Participants under the age of 14 may compete in the gender category that aligns with their **affirmed gender identity**.

Rationale: At junior ages, participation, social development, confidence and enjoyment of sport are prioritised. Differences in strength, stamina and physique are generally less pronounced prior to and during early puberty.

Accordingly:

- No medical, legal or hormonal evidence is required

- A child's affirmed gender identity will be respected for team placement
- Any concerns regarding safety or wellbeing will be managed sensitively and individually in consultation with parents/guardians where appropriate

5. Participation Eligibility - 14 Years & Over

For participants aged 14 years and over, eligibility for sex-segregated competitions (e.g., male and female divisions) will be determined based on sex recorded at birth.

Rationale: From adolescence onward, physical differences relevant to strength, stamina and physique may emerge and can affect speed, power, and endurance in sport. In line with Section 42 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth), sex-based eligibility rules are applied in Oztag competitions to support fairness and safety in competitive play.

Participants who do not wish to compete in the category aligned with their sex recorded at birth may:

- Participate in mixed or open divisions where offered
- Participate in social, non-competitive, or modified formats where available
- Engage in non-playing roles (e.g., coaching, officiating, volunteering)

6. Respect, Inclusion & Behaviour

Regardless of eligibility category:

- All participants have the right to be treated with dignity and respect
- A person's gender identity, name and pronouns must be respected in all interactions
- Bullying, harassment, discrimination or vilification on the basis of sex, gender identity or intersex status will not be tolerated

Breaches will be managed under the organisation's disciplinary and Member Protection processes.

7. Privacy & Confidentiality

Information relating to a participant's sex recorded at birth or gender identity is sensitive personal information.

Such information must:

- Be collected only where necessary for eligibility purposes
- Be handled confidentially
- Be accessed only by authorised officials with a legitimate need to know

Unauthorised disclosure may result in disciplinary action.

8. Complaints & Disputes

Any concerns regarding eligibility, discrimination, or conduct under this policy should be addressed through the organisation's complaints or Member Protection procedures.

Matters will be handled respectfully, confidentially, and in accordance with natural justice.

9. Definitions

- **Sex:** A person's sex as recorded at birth.
- **Gender Identity:** The gender-related identity, appearance, or mannerisms of a person, whether or not that gender is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth, as recognised under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth).
- **Intersex Status:** The status of having physical, hormonal or genetic features that are neither wholly female nor wholly male, or a combination of female and male, as recognised under Australian law.
- **Affirmed Gender:** The gender with which a person identifies.
- **Mixed or Open Division:** A competition format where participation is not restricted by sex.
- **Sensitive Information:** Personal information or health-related information that is afforded a higher level of privacy protection under Australian privacy law.

10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure it reflects best practice and community expectations.