

PURPOSE

These case studies have been prepared to support Affiliate's in adopting and implementing Netball Queensland's [Policy for the Inclusion of Transgender and Gender Diverse People in Community Netball](#).

CASE STUDY 1

Adopting NQ's Policy for the Inclusion of Transgender & Gender Diverse People in Community Netball

Lacey is the President of a QLD Netball Association affiliated with Netball Queensland (NQ). In January 2024 she was approached by a club that imposes gender regulations disallowing male players aged 14 and over. The club was asking for advice relating to a non-binary/gender-fluid player who recently turned 14 and was keen to continue playing in the Junior Competition.

In the first instance, Lacey reached out to her NQ Regional Manager for advice. The Regional Manager put her in touch with Autumn Pierce, NQ's Head of Inclusion, who pointed Lacey to NQ's newly released Policy for the Inclusion of Transgender & Gender Diverse People in Community Netball.

The policy applies to all NQ Affiliates and Members playing and participating in NQ-run community competitions, and all NQ Members playing and participating in NQ Affiliate competitions, where the Affiliate has adopted the policy. The policy states that players who do not identify as male or female, including players who identify as non-binary and players who are gender diverse, are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the gender category in which they feel most comfortable.

Lacey found this policy to be a good starting point but she and the Board were keen to talk more about the practical application of the policy for the specific scenario. Lacey invited Autumn to an upcoming Board meeting, to continue the conversation.

At the meeting, Board members raised concerns about resistance from their members, and discussed legal and other implications of adopting the policy vs not adopting the policy. Before making their decision the Board asked Autumn to confirm whether or not the Netball Connect registration system automatically genders people for the purposes of competition registrations, to which Autumn assured them it does not. Where a player selects non-binary as their gender category upon registration that person is able to register in competitions with gender regulations.

After much robust discussion, and having done their due diligence, the Board unanimously decided to adopt NQ's Policy for the Inclusion of Transgender & Gender Diverse People in Community Netball. After the decision, Lacey told Autumn:

'We want all players to play the game they love. In this instance, we were aware the player regarded netball as their 'safe place' and we did not want to take that away from them, or anyone else who might not play netball because they don't feel like there's a place for them in the sport. We pride ourselves on approaching decisions with curiosity, open-mindedness, and a focus on future-proofing our sport, and this process has made us feel more equipped to appropriately deal with any related matters that arise'.

With access, safety and inclusion in the forefront, and in tapping into support from NQ, the Board feels fully prepared to share their decision with their members later in the year, at an in-person forum.

CASE STUDY 2

Including non-binary people in mixed netball

Riley's colleague has been encouraging them to join the local club's mixed netball competition, as several people at their work play on Monday nights. Riley didn't play sport growing up, but they're keen to get more exercise and to get to know their workmates on a social level.

Riley is non-binary and does not identify as a man or a woman. Because the rules of mixed netball can be very gendered, Riley has declined previous offers to join the team to avoid conversations about their gender identity. They are worried the conversations will be awkward and their workmates will think they're being difficult or even worse, woke.

After much consideration, Riley decides to give it a shot. In speaking to the colleague encouraging them to play, they learn the Association coordinating the competition has adopted NQ's Policy for the Inclusion of Transgender & Gender Diverse People in Community Netball, which supports non-binary people to play in the gender category in which they feel most comfortable. When registering in Netball Connect Riley selects 'Non-Binary/Gender Fluid' when prompted to provide gender and alerts the team captain that they feel most comfortable playing in the female gender category. The team captain notifies the Association to clarify the registration for the purposes of mixed netball, who in turn alerts the officials of the competition.

On game day Riley is nervous. While they nominated to play in the female gender category they are aware that people often misgender them because of perceived masculine characteristics. Riley is flooded with relief when they arrive for warm up to learn the umpires have approached the captains of Riley's team as well as the opposing team to distribute arm bands for all players that denote the gender category each athlete will be counted as. This will help the umpires make quick calls without getting distracted by optics that challenge traditional understandings of gender.

Riley appreciates the preparedness of the umpires and an approach that doesn't single them out. Even though their team didn't win the game, Riley is hooked, and the mixed netball game becomes the highlight of their week. Bolstered by the acceptance shown by their netball teammates and the competition officials and organisers, Riley has developed the confidence to more actively participate in workplace culture building activities, even putting their hand up for Chair of the office social committee!

CASE STUDY 3

Changing the NQ Social Competition Mixed Netball rules at Nissan Arena to promote inclusion

Tyler (they/them) loved playing netball growing up but stopped when they were a teenager due to competing priorities, like school and working their first job on weekends. Now that they've finished school and have a new job that gives them a more regular schedule, they're hoping to get back into netball as a social way to move their body.

Tyler knows netball is traditionally a gendered sport. As a non-binary person, they're anxious to rejoin a sport that might not recognise or include their gender identity. They reach out to their friend, Harry (he/him), who they know is currently playing netball, for some advice.

Harry is stoked to hear Tyler is looking to get back into netball. He tells them about the mixed social netball competition he plays in at Nissan Arena and invites Tyler to join his team. Tyler is hesitant at first, because they know that mixed netball in particular has rules about how many athletes of certain genders can be on court at once, however Harry explains that the mixed competition at Nissan Arena has actually adapted the competition rules to remove any mention of gender. To remove barriers to participation and to promote a fun community environment, all seven players on court from one team can be any gender.

Tyler is excited to learn about a mixed netball competition where their gender identity will not be questioned or even be relevant to their registration, so they agree to join Harry's team.

MORE CASE STUDIES AND INFORMATION

Netball Victoria has also developed related case studies, which can be found [here](#). Netball ACT's case studies can be found within their Transgender and Gender Diverse Inclusion Policy [here](#). Many of these case studies were adapted from Sport Australia's case studies, which describe real-life examples to help shed light on the issues faced by transgender and gender diverse people in sport, and can be found [here](#).

For more information about LGBTQ+ inclusive netball in Queensland and for more resources, visit our website: <https://qld.netball.com.au/pride-sport>.

CONTACT

If you are an Association thinking about adopting NQ's Policy for the Inclusion of Transgender and Gender Diverse People in Community Netball, or have any questions about the practical implementation of the policy at your Association, or if you are a transgender or gender diverse person seeking support and advice, please contact NQ's Head of Inclusion Autumn Pierce for a confidential conversation on 0466 038 056 or autumn.pierce@netballq.org.au.