



## **MT ALEXANDER WOMEN'S SPORTS CLUB**

# **First Nations Inclusion Policy**

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

#### **Always Was, Always Will Be**

Mt Alexander Women's Sports Club (MAWSC) plays on the unceded lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung (Djaara).

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land as the oldest living culture in the world which has been kept alive by a rich and continuing history of storytelling, music, dance, sport, art and language.

We pay our respects to Djaara and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present, who maintain an enduring spiritual and cultural connection to the land.

Dja Dja Wurrung Country (Djandak) extends north from the Great Dividing Range including *Lalgambook* Mount Franklin and the towns of Creswick and Daylesford in the southeast, to Castlemaine, Maldon and Bendigo, Boort and Donald in the northwest, Rochester to the north east, and to Navarre Hill and Mount Avoca in the south west. It covers the catchments of Avoca, Loddon and Coliban Rivers.

We also recognise that there are many other First Peoples with links to different language and community groups across Australia who live in Mount Alexander.

*We recognise the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation as the representative body for Djaara. In 2013, the Dja Dja Wurrung Corporation signed the historic Recognition and Settlement*

*Agreement with the State of Victoria. This recognises what has always been true: that Djaara are the custodians of Djandak. The Dja Dja Wurrung Corporation recognises that it is founded on the strength, resilience, and determination of Djaara.*

### **Introduction:**

Mt Alexander Women's Sports Club (the Club) aims to empower anyone to realise their right to feel included within the Club. The Club and its representatives believe that equitable access to football is a fundamental human right and vital to an inclusive and accessible society for all.

The Club is committed to providing a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for First Nations staff, players, coaches, officials, spectators and members of the public associated with the Club. The club believes that everyone has the right to participate in a safe, respectful and welcoming environment.

### **Policy statement:**

The right to maintain one's own culture and language is a basic human right that is protected under Article 27 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Operating with a culturally safe set of standards at the Club ensures that all individuals – players, coaches, committee members, visitors and community members – are treated with respect and that their individual cultural needs and practices are valued.

MAWSC aims to improve the representation, visibility and cultural safety of First Nations communities. The Club seeks to increase the diversity of the team and across all levels of the organisation so that it reflects the community in which we live and play. MAWSC will strive to create a safe cultural environment for the team and wider community through the implementation of best practice policy, representation and training.

Further, the Club makes a commitment to participate in ongoing reflection and actions towards justice for First Nations. This includes contributing towards growing understandings of the ongoing impacts of colonialism on Country and First Nations peoples, and allowing First Nations communities time, space and resources to heal. The Club undertakes to contribute to this process by addressing and acknowledging our true history and seeking to right enduring wrongs of colonialism. It is not one act but a journey and process that requires individual and collective commitments from non-Aboriginal Australians to take ownership and responsibility for their own learning. The Club, as a group of players, coaches, officials, volunteers, and supporters, living and playing on Aboriginal Land, which remains unceded, seeks to play a proactive role in this process.

The Club is bound by the Club Code of Conduct, and legislation including the Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic); the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth) and the Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic). The Club also recognizes the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

The MAWSC recognize the following principals:

- All people are entitled to mutual respect and understanding regardless of their cultural, religious, racial and linguistic backgrounds.
- All people (regardless of background) are equally entitled to access opportunities and participate in and contribute to the Club.

### **Responsibility:**

It is the responsibility of the Club's committee to ensure that policies and procedures are put in place to ensure that all members of the club (including players, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents and supporters) are operating within an environment of cultural safety and mutual respect.

This policy applies to MAWSC board members and company directors, all MAWSC staff and all non-employed MAWSC members associated with community and social MAWSC, including: players, coaches, referees, club administrators, volunteers and spectators.

This policy is to be applied in all aspects of the Club's activities and in accordance with guidelines outlined in the Club's Code of Conduct.

As MAWSC we will endeavour to make our club more accessible and inclusive for First Nations players.

**First Nations inclusion practices:**

All members of the Club (including players, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents and supporters) are required to comply with the following:

- MAWSC will acknowledge, respect and celebrate First Nations peoples within our club and in the wider community. MAWSC will demonstrate acknowledgement, respect and celebration through completing actions outlined in the ***Inclusion Action Plan*** attached to this policy.
- Members of the Club will identify and support opportunities to celebrate First Nations people, including participation in cultural activities such as Reconciliation and NAIDOC week events.
- MAWSC will consult with First Nations people and representatives from the Dja Dja Wurrung Community, including the Dja Dja Wurrung Corporation, to determine appropriate ways in which the Club can celebrate and include First Nations people in all operations, and in specific First Nations events.
- MAWSC will not tolerate any form of discrimination against a person or group of persons on the ground of their race.
- No person that is a member, coach, volunteer, official or spectator of MAWSC shall engage in conduct that offends, humiliates, intimidates, ridicules, incites, threatens, disparages, or insults another person on the basis of that person's race, religion, nationality, ethnicity or descent.
- Members of the Club will not engage in stereotyping, discriminating, behaving or speaking in a racist manner or communicating in any way that can be hurtful, harmful, disrespectful or derogatory.
- Members of the Club will actively respond to behaviours or practices that go against our policy and speak with a member of the committee.

**Reporting guidelines:**

Club members are encouraged to report conduct which does not align with these principles to any of the following people at the Club:

- Player Leaders or Coaches
- Members of the Committee
- If you wish to make an anonymous report, a submission can be made via the club website or via e-mail to [football@mtalexanderfalcons.com.au](mailto:football@mtalexanderfalcons.com.au)

**Sanctions:**

The MAWSC Committee may apply the following sanctions to any member, player, parent, coach, club official or supporter found to be in breach of the Cultural Safety and Inclusion Policy based on the seriousness and frequency of their behaviour:

1. Caution
2. Direction to leave the club event
3. Attendance at a meeting with members of the Committee to discuss the breach and appropriate sanction/s
4. Additional club duties
5. Participation in personal development
6. Suspension from club activities (including games)
7. Expulsion from the MAWSC.

In the event that the breach requires attendance at a meeting with the Committee, the Committee will be comprised of, at minimum, the Club President, Club Vice President and Club Secretary.

Any club person who is alleged to have breached the Code of Conduct will always be given a “right of reply”. They will also be offered the opportunity to bring a support person to any official discussions regarding the alleged breach. In the case of a dispute with the Committee, an independent mediator may be retained to mediate the dispute.

The MAWSC will at all times ensure that any person undergoing any of the above procedures will be dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner, irrespective of the alleged breach of the Rule or Code of Conduct.

MAWSC will maintain a record of issues and outcomes arising from the implementation of this policy.

**Review:**

*This policy will be reviewed bi-annually or sooner if required.*

Policy review and version tracking			
Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Next Review Due
1	July 2023	Mt Alexander Women’s Sports Club Committee	July 2025
2			

**Consultation –**

This First Nations Inclusion Policy and the First Nations Inclusion Action Plan which is related to this policy has been in consultation with Rebecca Phillips.

Rebecca Phillips is a proud Djaara and Bpangerang woman of Central and Northeast Victoria. Known as Bec, she is very passionate about her Culture and Country.

**For further information –**

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