

# **Ipswich Softball Diversity and Inclusion Plan**

***The Ipswich Softball Association acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Land on which ISA conducts their games and Business. The Association understands the meaning of Cultural Connection and tolerance of diversity.***

As the Ipswich Softball Association (ISA) strives to develop and grow, it is important that current members understand the history and individual contributions made to make the ISA what it is today. It is also important to celebrate the successes of the ISA at a local, State and National level.

The ISA has a long and successful history that members should be proud of. To be proud of our achievements, however, they have to be known, and not just by a few interested individuals.

The Ipswich Women's Softball Association was originally established in the 1950s; the men played under a separate banner (IDUSL) and joined the Association in the early 1990's under the Ipswich Softball Association Inc.

There are currently 10 affiliate member clubs with approximately 749 registered participants in 68 teams playing in 8 different grades.

Softball in Ipswich needs the new impetus and direction occasioned by this planning document. Ipswich's elite softballers are few and far between. Attention now needs to be turned to the product development and service being provided, to the grassroots level of the sport to bring the organisation in sync with today's society.

*ISA attempts to maintain sound working relationships with our state body, Softball Queensland, to continue to receive support and assistance and to enhance the development and growth of Softball in Ipswich.*

**The sporting landscape has changed enormously in recent years. Government and community expectations for good governance, integrity, equality, member protection and child safeguarding mean that providing safe, fair, and inclusive sporting environments is no longer an aspiration, but an imperative. Ipswich Softball Association "the Association" has recognised the need to be at the forefront of this change. The Association, in conjunction with Softball Qld and stakeholders within the community have taken the initiative to develop this plan Diversity and Inclusion policy.**

## **What is Diversity?**

Diversity is the mix of peoples' different attributes and backgrounds (i.e., race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion). An effective way to think about diversity is to think about your local community. Does your club reflect the diversity of your local community? Diversity is the mix of people; inclusion is trying to get this mix to all work together in harmony.

## **What is Inclusion?**

Inclusion is pro-active behaviours, options, and actions to make people from all backgrounds, ages and abilities feel welcome, respected and that they belong within the Association. Being inclusive is about following best practice for what Softball should be so that everyone can get the most out of it.

Everyone should have the opportunity to be actively involved in Softball, in whatever capacity they choose. The Association is committed to being inclusive and open to all members of the Australian community regardless of age, gender, disability, cultural or religious background or sexual orientation, or other attributes that may lead to any person feeling excluded or isolated.

The Association encourages people who want to play Softball to not feel excluded and to become involved.

### ***Culturally and linguistically diverse populations***

A love of sport can be found in people of different races, backgrounds, and cultures. Yet this shared interest can raise several complex issues that involve balancing a person's cultural traditions with their compliance with social norms and club rules and procedures.

### ***Gender inclusion***

Although people like to think of sport as being fair and open to all, sometimes individuals or groups are excluded or prevented from participating equally. If the unfair treatment is based on gender, then it could be sex discrimination.

### ***Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples***

Softball can provide a vital pathway to improving the social and economic wellbeing of Indigenous people and their communities, however many Indigenous sportspeople have had to overcome racial prejudices, stereotypes, biases, and a lack of cultural awareness in order to excel.

### ***Homophobia and sexuality***

Unfair treatment based on someone's sexuality – or assumptions about their sexuality – is unfair discrimination and has no place in Softball.

### ***People with disability***

Participation rates for people with disability are significantly lower than the general population. While attitudes and practices are changing there is still work to do. There are many practical ideas, tools, and strategies you can use to ensure people with disability have every opportunity to participate in activities of their choice.

### ***Race based inclusion***

Racism can have a profound impact on people's involvement in any sport and the Association has recognised this issue. It can affect motivation, enjoyment, and levels of participation and, if unchecked, may result in inappropriate, potentially dangerous, and violent behaviour. Racial harassment, discrimination and vilification have no place in Softball.

### ***Religious vilification***

The issue of religious vilification is on many sports' radars with a growing number producing codes to stamp out racial and religious vilification. Yet it is only one aspect that needs to be addressed in improving the sporting environment for players with different religious belief.

### ***What the law says***

Policies and codes ensure that everyone in Softball is aware of their legal and ethical rights and responsibilities, and provide the procedures to eliminate discrimination, harassment, child protection issues and other forms of inappropriate behaviour. These policies are backed up by federal and state/territory anti-discrimination laws that make discrimination and harassment unlawful in relation to a person's gender, sexuality, disability, race, colour, national and ethnic origin, descent, ethnic or ethno-religious background in all areas of life, including sport. If you would like more information around legal and ethical rights and responsibilities, you can download a copy of the quick reference guide.

### ***The benefits of a diversity and inclusion for the Association will be the following:***

- Enhance the brand and reputation of the game of Softball in the Ipswich area
- Ensure the Association is 'walking the talk' to meet its strategic objectives.
- It will Allow the Association to meet Softball's regulatory obligations.
- Increase governance, risk management, and decrease potential legal risks.
- Increase membership of the Association.
- Increase pathway and participation opportunities within the Association.
- Increase sponsorship opportunities for the benefit of the Association.
- Increase public support and volunteer base for the Association.
- Ensure greater publicity and positive public image for the benefits of the Association
- Provide a better connected and diverse Softball community.
- Break down barriers and promote social inclusion.

## **MEMBERS AND SPECTATORS OF IPSWICH SOFTBALL**

### ***Ipswich Softball Association commitment:***

Our Association is committed to providing a safe environment for participation.

Aggressive, threatening, or other inappropriate behaviour by members, their families, their friends, and other sporting personnel while attending a game or event will not be tolerated.

These behaviours are outlined in our Code of Behaviour and specifically include:

- using bad language
- harassing or ridiculing players, coaches, officials, or other spectators
- making racist, religious, sexist, or other inappropriate comments to players, coaches, officials, or other spectators
- any threatening behaviour or physical altercation between spectators and players, coaches, officials, or other spectators
- putting undue pressure on children, berating them, or putting down their performance
- drinking at a game or training or being intoxicated at a club event.

### ***What we will do:***

Provide members, their parents and other sporting personnel with our Code of Behaviour and make clear what is expected and the consequences of non-compliance.

Where possible, bind non-members by prominently displaying conditions of entry to grounds and facilities and by requiring parents to abide by club rules (e.g., by making parents associate members, signing our Code of Behaviour).

Reinforce messages of fair and respectful behaviour by displaying signs and posters around our facilities and providing information on our website, in our newsletter and through other club communication.

Encourage our coaches and officials to complete training to develop their skills and confidence.

Ban bringing alcohol to training, a game or no-alcohol club event.

Consult with our local police and seek their support and advice on how to handle issues involving inappropriate behaviour by spectators prior to, at or after a game.

Encourage the reporting of incidents and investigate inappropriate behaviours as outlined in this policy and take disciplinary or whatever other actions as are deemed necessary (e.g., appoint a ground official to monitor behaviour).

Encourage our players, coaches, officials, and spectators to call the police if they are concerned about escalating behaviour and their safety or the safety of others.

### ***What we ask you to do:***

Help create a positive atmosphere for players, officials, and other spectators by showing respect for players, officials, and other spectators.

Abide by our club's Code of Behaviour and refrain from using bad language, harassing, or ridiculing others or behaving in a threatening or violent manner.

If you are aware of inappropriate spectator behaviour and you feel confident to do so, speak with the person and ask them to stop. If there is a ground official or committee member present, ask for their assistance.

Report any inappropriate spectator behaviour to the club president or someone in a position of authority.

Call the police or a club official if you are concerned for your safety or the safety of others.

### ***Non-Compliance:***

Players, Parents, or others found to have behaved inappropriately, and who are members, associate members or who have agreed to abide by our club's Code of Behavior and therefore, this policy, may face disciplinary action as outlined in our Member Protection Policy.

## **IPSWICH SOFTBALL INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY**

### ***Ipswich Softball Association commitment:***

Our Association welcomes all members of the community, regardless of their abilities. We will include people with disability in our Association in both playing and non-playing roles to the greatest extent that we can.

We will endeavor to make our Association as accessible as possible, based on our state sports policy on inclusion, the ability of individuals involved in our Association, the type and level of competition (e.g., junior versus senior competition and social versus pennant) they want to join and our capacity to make modifications that promote inclusion.

### ***What we will do:***

- Put people first, focus on what they can do and find out how they want to participate.
- Ask each individual – and their parents if the participant is a child – for their advice about what modifications would help them to participate.
- Where possible, make adjustments to our coaching, equipment, rules or playing environment and modifications to club premises (e.g., putting in a ramp).
- Be honest and explain if certain modifications or adjustments are not currently possible.
- Communicate with people and share Association information in appropriate ways and formats.
- Expect all members of our Association to accept and welcome people with disability.
- Make sure people of all abilities are included in our Association's social activities and are recognised for their contribution and achievement.
- Have strong policies to ensure that people can play sport and participate in our Association without discrimination, harassment, or bullying.

- Provide information about other options for participation outside our Association; for example, letting people know about sports that are primarily or only for people with disability, or clubs where major modifications have been made to increase opportunities for participation.

### ***What we ask you to do:***

If you have a disability:

- tell us what we can do to help include you in our Association
- understand that we will do our best to make any necessary adjustments or modifications
- talk to us if you have any concerns or ideas to help us make our Association more inclusive.

## **REFERENCES**

Play by the Rules – Making Sport Inclusive & Fair for All

Play by the Rules – Building Community Partnerships

Play by the Rules – Including People with Disability

Australian Sports Commission

The Victorian Government's Active Victoria – Understanding the Difference

Victorian Government – Inclusion and Diversity

Reporting Racism – All together Now

Diversity in Australia -m

NRL's Social Impact Report

Inclusive Sport Design – acknowledging Gundungurra & Tharawal People

Inclusive Sport Design – 7 Pillars of Inclusion

Activity Alliance – Communication Guide – Engaging & Supporting Disabled Athletes and Runners

Activity Alliance – Creating an Inclusive Club

Rugby League Inclusion Plan

## **IPSWICH SOFTBALL DIVERSITY & INCLUSION PLAN CRITERIA AND PENALTIES**

It is important that everyone takes responsibility and ownership for making the Association a safe and inclusive place. Everyone has a role in championing inclusion within or Association and calling it out when behaviours don't match the Associations values.

An Inclusion section will be set up on the Association's website, so it is easily discoverable.

Duty Officers will be appointed and trained from each Club along with Management members and rostered to ensure that fair play is in place in our Association.

**NOTE: *Clubs are responsible for the conduct of their players, parents/carers of players, coaches, officials, and spectators***

No person(s) attending a game, function, or Association related event or activity shall:

- Use offensive or obscene language to any participant or any other person
- Excessively dispute the umpires call or decisions either during or after a game
- Assault or act with violence to any person/s
- Behave in a way contrary to the Codes of Conduct
- Behave in a way which disturbs the enjoyment of a game, function or activity or event by any person/s, or brings discredit to the ISA, and ISA Club or the game
- Act in a such a way as to exhibit intolerance of, racism, gender equity or disability by language or other conduct to any person/s
- Refuse to accept the reasonable direction of an Association Official, Duty Official on roster, or Team Official of the Club which that person is supporting.
- No person/s may make comment or take actions that bring discredit to any person, Club, or team through any social media outlet.

#### **Breaches:**

- For a Grade one (1) offence - Suspension for one (1) week from participating in all grades and undertake to attend an education session with the Diversion & Inclusion Committee. Failure to attend such session will result in such suspension remaining in place until this session is completed.
- For a Grade two (2) offence - Suspension for six (6) weeks from participating in all grades and undertake to attend an education session with the Diversion & Inclusion Committee. Failure to attend such session will result in such suspension remaining in place until this session is completed
- Further offences could result in a total exclusion from Ipswich Softball depending on the severity of the offences.