

## NEW CODE OF CONDUCT ESTABLISHED FOR COMMUNITY SPORT

From the Minister for Sport & Recreation

**Monday, 01 March 2010**

Grassroots sporting associations will be required to take a zero tolerance approach to bad behaviour and crackdown on violence and ugly parent syndrome, by signing up to a new Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport or risk losing millions of dollars in funding.

Sports Minister James Merlino said Victoria's 16,000 community sporting clubs would need to comply with the accord, which sets strong standards for players, spectators and officials.

"Victorians love their sport and our grassroots sporting clubs and associations play an integral role in ensuring communities are strong, happy, healthy and active," Mr Merlino said.

"The Victorian Government is a proud supporter of grassroots sport and in the past decade we have provided more than \$210 million to the local clubs that are vital to our communities.

"But there is a small minority who overstep the mark and do the wrong thing.

"The Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport sends a loud and clear message – that bad behaviour, violence and intimidation has no place in community sport in our state.

"This behaviour will not be tolerated and we will come down hard on those who fail to enforce the Code by stopping their funding."

Mr Merlino said the new Code was developed in consultation with Victoria's peak sporting bodies including AFL Victoria, Football Federation Victoria and Basketball Victoria.

He said breaches to the Code included:

- Violent or abusive behaviour;
- Vilification of any kind towards another person;
- Discrimination based on age, gender, sexual orientation, race, culture or religion;
- Sexual harassment or intimidation; and
- Failure to maintain a safe environment.


Mr Merlino said Victoria's 84 sporting associations must sign up to the new Code of Conduct by 1 July, 2010 or they will not receive funding from Sport and Recreation Victoria.

"Our sporting bodies have played an integral role in the development of our new Code, setting clear standards of behaviour for everyone involved in community sport," Mr Merlino said.

"The Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport will work to ensure fair inclusion of everyone, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, race, culture or religion, providing opportunities for people of all abilities to participate in a safe environment."

Mr Merlino said the Victorian Government had also worked closely with VicSport, VicHealth and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission to develop the new Code.

He said a confronting promotional campaign will be rolled out shortly to reinforce the message that anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated in community sport. For more information on the Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport go to [www.sport.vic.gov.au](http://www.sport.vic.gov.au).

 [Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport 325.14 Kb](#)

## **Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport**

### **Introduction**

Every person in Victoria has the right to participate in community sport which is safe, welcoming and inclusive. Equally everyone plays a part in ensuring their actions and behaviours are supportive of these values.

The Victorian Government's Respect Agenda is about ensuring that respect for ourselves, others and the community, is at the centre of what it means to be Victorian. As part of this Agenda, the Government is committed to enabling every person, in any capacity, to have the opportunity to participate in community sport without fear of abuse, intimidation and harassment.

State Sporting Associations and clubs also have a responsibility to ensure participation in any community sport event is free of any anti-social behaviour both on and off the field which prevents others from taking part and getting active.

The Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport outlines behaviours which are expected to be followed by every person involved in community sport, as well as identifying the behaviours which must not be tolerated.

The Code supports *A Right to Respect: Victoria's Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women* by taking a zero tolerance stance towards violence against women. The Code also aims to encourage cultural and behavioural change to prevent it happening in the first place.

Acts of violence, discrimination and vilification are illegal acts within Victoria. It is a club's responsibility to not only report these to the appropriate legal authorities but to ensure these acts are not tolerated by the sport or club.

State Sporting Associations and clubs will have the responsibility of adhering to and enforcing the code through sport specific penalties. State Sporting Associations and clubs who don't adhere to and enforce the Code will not be eligible for funding from Sport and Recreation Victoria, and any existing funding will cease.

The Code provides the opportunity to make a positive impact on community participation in sport and recreation by encouraging appropriate behaviour at all times. Implementation of the Code will ensure that community sport remains safe and inclusive for all.



## **Code of Conduct**

Every person: spectator, player, club member, official, participant, administrator, coach, parent or member of the community involved with the sport, should work to ensure:

- inclusion of every person regardless of their age, gender or sexual orientation
- inclusion of every person regardless of their race, culture or religion
- opportunities for people of all abilities to participate in the sport and develop to their full potential
- respect is shown towards others, the club and the broader community
- a safe and inclusive environment for all
- elimination of violent and abusive behaviour
- protection from sexual harassment or intimidation.

This Code applies to community sport, training and club sanctioned activities.

## **Breaches of the Code**

Penalties will be issued once the breach has been confirmed through an appropriate assessment process by the relevant State Sporting Association or club. The following behaviours are considered breaches of the Code:

- Violent or abusive behaviour towards another person.
- Vilification of any kind towards another person.
- Discrimination against another person based on their age, gender or sexual orientation.
- Discrimination against another person based on their race, culture, religion or any other irrelevant personal characteristic.
- Sexual harassment or intimidation of another person.
- Victimisation of another person for exercising their rights through the Code of Conduct.
- Failure to maintain a safe environment.

## **State Sporting Association responsibility**

The responsibility of a State Sporting Association through the Code of Conduct is to:

- promote the Code of Conduct to all persons involved in the sport or club
- ensure reporting and assessment processes are in place to identify and penalise breaches of the Code

- report on the implementation of the Code to the State Government on an annual basis
- ensure that every person involved in the sport is able to exercise their rights without fear of victimisation.

### **Implementation of the Code**

In 2010 all State Sporting Associations (SSAs) will be required to sign onto the Code and pledge their support by confirming the following actions:

- Ensure all components of the Code are included in an existing SSA code or through the creation of a new code for the SSA.
- Develop appropriate reporting and assessment processes for issuing penalties for breaches of the Code.
- Identify what penalties they will put in place for any breaches of the Code.
- Inform all affiliated clubs of their obligations under the Code, their expectations for reporting, assessing and acting upon breaches.

Any SSA or club applying for funding through Sport and Recreation Victoria (SRV) from 2010/11 will need to demonstrate their adherence and enforcement of the Code in order to be eligible for funding.

SSAs and clubs who don't adhere to and enforce the Code will not be eligible for funding through any SRV grants programs.

Councils applying for funding from SRV, must ensure that sporting associations and clubs who are tenants at the site of the project are enforcing the code.

Sports Associations and clubs not aligned to an SSA will still be required to adhere to and enforce the Code in order to be eligible for funding from Sport and Recreation Victoria, if not any existing funding will cease.

### **Definitions**

**Person:** spectator, player, official, club member, participant, administrator, coach, parent or member of the community involved with the sport.

**State Sporting Association:** the peak body for a particular sport in the state and affiliated with its National Sporting Organisation. The SSA is responsible for the development of the sport and the management and communication of the sport's rules and regulations to its affiliated clubs and members.