



INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

ANU Women's Football Club Inclusive Communications Guide

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Purpose

ANU Women's Football Club is committed to creating a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for women (cis and trans) and non-binary people.

The way we communicate is an important part of creating that environment.

This guide sets out practical principles for inclusive communication across ANUWFC, including social media, emails, website content, player communications, events, recruitment, sponsorship, media and internal club communications.

It applies to committee members, coaches, team managers, volunteers and anyone communicating on behalf of ANUWFC.

Our aim is simple: people should be able to see themselves in our club, understand our communications and feel respected by the language and images we use.

Use inclusive language

Where possible, use language that includes the full ANUWFC community rather than assuming everyone identifies in the same way.

Preferred language

Use:

- players
- members
- participants
- team
- everyone
- people
- women (cis and trans) and non-binary people, where it is important to describe ANUWFC's eligibility or community specifically
- women and gender-diverse people, where appropriate in broader communications and where the meaning is clear.

Avoid unnecessarily gendering groups where a neutral term works just as well.

For example:

- Instead of: *Ladies, please make sure you register by Friday.*
- Use: *Players, please make sure you register by Friday.*

Be clear about who ANUWFC is for

ANUWFC proudly provides football opportunities for women (cis and trans) and non-binary people.

When describing club eligibility, inclusion or identity, communications should be clear rather than relying on assumptions about what “women’s football” means.

Where appropriate, use wording such as:

ANUWFC welcomes women (cis and trans) and non-binary people who are eligible to participate in our competitions.

This is particularly important in:

- registration information
- recruitment materials
- trials information
- website content
- public FAQs
- media enquiries
- inclusion-related communications.

We should not make individual members feel required to disclose or explain their gender identity.

Respect names and pronouns

Use the name and pronouns a person asks you to use.

If you are unsure of someone's pronouns, use their name or neutral language until you know.

Do not:

- deliberately use a previous name
- intentionally use incorrect pronouns
- ask invasive questions about someone's gender identity
- disclose someone's trans or non-binary identity without their consent
- assume someone's pronouns based on appearance.

If you make a mistake, correct it briefly and move on.

Avoid assumptions

Inclusive communication means recognising that members have different identities, relationships, families, cultures, abilities and circumstances.

Avoid assuming:

- someone's partner is a man or woman
- everyone is heterosexual
- everyone identifies as a woman
- everyone drinks alcohol
- everyone has the same financial capacity
- everyone has the same physical ability

- everyone is an ANU student
- everyone is comfortable being photographed
- everyone celebrates the same holiday
- everyone has the same football experience.

Where possible, choose language that works for a range of people.

For example:

- Instead of: *Bring your boyfriend or husband to the event.*
- Use: *Partners and friends are welcome.*

Use respectful language about gender and sexuality

Use terminology that reflects how people describe themselves.

Generally:

- trans is an adjective: “trans woman”, not “a trans”
- cisgender or cis refers to someone whose gender aligns with the sex assigned to them at birth
- non-binary describes people whose gender is not exclusively woman or man
- LGBTQIA+ may be used where relevant to broader communities
- avoid outdated, derogatory or unnecessarily clinical terminology.

Do not describe someone's gender identity or sexuality unless it is relevant to the communication and appropriate to share.

Communicate inclusively about ability and disability

Avoid language that defines people solely by disability or portrays disabled people as inspirational simply for participating.

Where possible:

- use the terminology preferred by the individual or community
- focus on accessibility rather than perceived limitations
- provide practical accessibility information for events and activities
- avoid making assumptions about what someone can or cannot do.

For example:

Instead of: *Unfortunately the venue isn't suitable for disabled people.*

Use: *The venue is accessed via stairs and does not currently have step-free access. Please contact us if you would like to discuss accessibility requirements.*

Be mindful of financial inclusion

Football can be expensive, and financial circumstances should never be treated as a source of embarrassment.

When communicating about fees, events or merchandise:

- clearly explain costs

- provide information about payment plans or financial assistance where available
- avoid language that shames people who cannot participate in paid activities
- wherever practical, provide free or low-cost opportunities alongside paid activities.

Use neutral language such as:

If registration costs are a barrier, confidential payment-plan and financial-support options are available.

Represent our community visually

Inclusive communication is not only about words. Photos, graphics and videos should reflect the diversity of the ANUWFC community across:

- playing levels
- age
- body type
- gender expression
- cultural background
- experience
- teams
- club roles.

Avoid repeatedly featuring only the highest division, the same small group of players or people who fit a narrow image of what a footballer “looks like”.

Our communications should help members across the club see that they belong here too.

Respect privacy and photo consent

Not everyone wants to appear publicly in photographs or videos. ANUWFC should:

- follow its established photography and consent processes
- make members aware when photos or filming are occurring
- provide reasonable ways for members to opt out
- avoid identifying sensitive personal information
- take particular care when sharing information relating to health, welfare or gender identity
- remove or amend content where a legitimate privacy concern is raised.

A person's attendance at a club activity does not automatically mean they are comfortable being featured publicly.

Make communications accessible

Club information should be as easy as possible to understand and access. Where practical:

- use plain English
- keep sentences and paragraphs relatively short
- use descriptive headings
- explain acronyms the first time they are used
- provide important information in text rather than relying only on graphics
- add captions or subtitles to video content
- use alt text or image descriptions where platforms allow

- ensure graphics have readable text and sufficient contrast
- avoid excessive use of decorative fonts
- avoid using emojis as substitutes for essential information
- make links descriptive where possible.

Important operational information, such as registration deadlines, venue changes or safety information, should never be communicated only through an image.

Make events and social communications inclusive

ANUWFC social activities should help build community without implying there is only one way to participate socially. When promoting events:

- provide clear information about venue, cost and accessibility
- communicate whether alcohol will be present
- avoid framing alcohol consumption as an expectation
- ensure people who do not drink feel equally welcome
- consider timing, transport and accessibility where practical
- avoid activities that rely on stereotypes or exclusionary humour
- make clear when partners, friends or supporters are welcome.

Use humour carefully

ANUWFC can absolutely be fun, informal and playful. Humour is part of building club personality, but it should not come at the expense of someone's identity, ability, appearance or dignity.

Avoid jokes based on:

- gender identity
- sexuality
- race or culture
- disability
- religion
- body size or appearance
- mental health
- socioeconomic status
- personal circumstances.

A useful test is: Are we laughing with our community, or at someone within it?

Communicate respectfully during disagreement

Inclusive communication does not mean avoiding disagreement. People can disagree about football, selection, policy or club decisions while still communicating respectfully. When handling difficult conversations:

- focus on the issue rather than attacking the person
- avoid hostile or inflammatory language
- do not share private disputes publicly
- allow people to raise concerns without ridicule
- avoid defensive responses when someone raises an inclusion concern
- seek clarification before assuming intent

- use established club welfare, complaints and governance processes where appropriate.

Intent matters, but impact matters too.

If someone tells us that communication has caused harm or made them feel excluded, we should listen and consider whether we can communicate better.

Be careful when communicating about welfare and mental health

Club volunteers are not expected to diagnose or treat health or mental health concerns.

When communicating about wellbeing:

- use supportive, non-stigmatising language
- avoid describing people as “crazy”, “psycho”, “weak” or similar
- do not speculate publicly about someone’s health
- respect confidentiality
- encourage appropriate professional support where required
- follow ANUWFC welfare and safeguarding procedures.

Inclusive recruitment and opportunities

When promoting coaching, volunteering, committee, mentoring or other opportunities:

- describe the skills required rather than an assumed “type” of person
- encourage people with transferable skills to apply
- avoid unnecessarily gendered descriptions
- make application processes clear
- provide a contact person for questions
- encourage participation from people who may traditionally be underrepresented in football leadership.

Where possible, avoid language such as: *We need someone confident and outgoing.*

Instead use specific requirements: *The role involves communicating with players, coaches and external stakeholders.*

Responding when we get it wrong

Inclusive communication is an ongoing practice. Language changes, communities evolve and sometimes we will make mistakes. When this happens, ANUWFC should:

1. listen to the concern
2. acknowledge the issue
3. correct inaccurate or inappropriate communication where possible
4. apologise when appropriate
5. learn from the experience
6. update guidance or practice if needed.

We do not need to be perfect. We do need to be willing to listen and improve.

Quick inclusive communications checklist

Before publishing or sending a communication on behalf of ANUWFC, ask:

- Is the language respectful and inclusive?
- Have we avoided unnecessary assumptions about identity or circumstances?
- Is it clear who the information applies to?
- Could someone unfamiliar with the club understand it?
- Is the information accessible?
- Have we protected people's privacy?
- Do the images represent our broader club community?
- Could the humour or wording reasonably make someone feel excluded?
- Does this communication reflect ANUWFC's values?
- Would we be comfortable explaining this wording to a member who felt affected by it?

If the answer to any of these is no, pause and consider whether the communication can be improved.

Our commitment

Inclusive communication is not about finding the 'perfect' words. It is about showing respect, being thoughtful about how our communication may affect others and being willing to learn.

Every email, social post, team message, photograph and conversation contributes to ANUWFC's culture.

Through clear, respectful and inclusive communication, we can help ensure that everyone who interacts with ANUWFC understands what we stand for: a football club where women (cis and trans) and non-binary people can feel safe, welcome, valued and proud to belong.

Version control

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