

## Modernising Club Language: From “Ladies” to “Women”

### Purpose

To ensure our club language reflects our values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, aligns with national sport policy, and signals a welcoming environment for all current and future members.

### Why This Matters

- **Language reflects culture.** “Women” is contemporary, inclusive, and widely accepted across sport and community settings. “Ladies” carries historic baggage (classed, etiquette-based, sometimes condescending) that many women don’t identify with.
- **Reputation & alignment.** Aligns with Golf Australia, the R&A Women in Golf Charter, and other governing bodies that use “Women & Girls.”. Most national/international orgs, funding programs, and media guidelines now use “women/women & girls.” Aligning helps with grants, partnerships, and brand coherence.
- **First impressions count.** Modern language helps new golfers feel they belong, improving participation and member retention. Language is one of the first cues newcomers notice. Using “Women” tells prospective members, parents, schools, and sponsors that your club is current, welcoming, and safe.
- **Compliance & partners.** Aligns with best practice in gender equity, reducing reputational risk and strengthening partnerships.
- **Legal & cultural risk reduction.** The more a club’s language reflects inclusive norms, the lower the risk of complaints, PR issues, or being seen as out of step with anti-discrimination principles.

### Key Benefits

- Strengthens club image and alignment with modern sport.
- Creates an inclusive environment that encourages membership growth.
- Demonstrates leadership in equality and cultural progress.
- Simple, low-cost change with long-term cultural impact.

### Historical Context

The use of “Ladies” dates to traditional club culture where golf was socially segregated. Many members still associate “Ladies Day” or “Ladies Captain” with long-standing tradition. While not inherently offensive, “Ladies” is now seen as dated and can feel exclusive to younger or non-binary participants. Most modern clubs, tournaments, and national programs have transitioned to “Women” terminology as part of broader inclusion strategies.

### Correct Usage (Style Guide)

| Old Term         | Updated Term         |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Ladies Captain   | Women’s Captain      |
| Ladies Committee | Women’s Committee    |
| Ladies Open      | Women’s Open         |
| Ladies Tees      | Forward / Front Tees |

| Old Term           | Updated Term                         |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Ladies Change Room | Women's Change Room or Change Room   |
| Ladies Day         | Women's Social Golf / Women's 9-Hole |

Include **"Women & Girls"** when referring to all female pathways or programs.

Add an inclusion statement where relevant: *"All women and gender-diverse golfers are welcome."*

## Why the change has been hard historically

- **Tradition & habit.** "Ladies Day," "Ladies Tees," and "Ladies Captain" have existed for decades; members are attached to familiar labels.
- **Etiquette-era norms.** "Ladies" was once seen as polite and aspirational; shifting away can feel like losing a piece of club identity.
- **Operational inertia.** Score systems coded as *LAD*, legacy signage, embroidered uniforms, board minute templates—changing these feels fiddly and costly.
- **Fear of backlash.** Leaders worry a few vocal members may read the change as "political" rather than practical.
- **Inconsistent external cues.** Some older trophies, external media, or historic pennant comp names still say "Ladies," creating mixed messages.

## Anticipating questions

- **"Is 'Ladies' offensive?"** Not inherently, but many find it outdated. "Women" is neutral, current, and widely preferred across sport and government guidance.
- **"Are we erasing tradition?"** No—heritage is preserved (photos, honour boards, perpetuals). We're updating labels to reflect today's members and best practice.
- **"What about costs?"** Digital changes are immediate and free; physical updates are phased to coincide with normal replacement cycles.
- **"What about non-binary golfers?"** Keep gender out of tees and most categories; add a simple inclusion statement and offer open/social formats where possible.