

## Safety and Participation Policies 2017

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### POLICY AND PROCEDURE CHANGES

From the Australian Rugby Strategic Plan 2016-2020, under the Pillar “Make Rugby a Game for All”, Australian Rugby is committed to ensuring that Rugby is safe, inclusive and fair for all Australians. The key aspects of this direction are underpinned by the Australian Rugby Safety Policy that states:

**The primary consideration in all participation decisions must be the safety of all participants as a requirement that overrides all others.**

The Australian Rugby Participation Policy defines the framework for safe participation to take place stating:

**All endeavours must be made for Rugby participants with broadly compatible physical development in conjunction with ability and/or experience to play with and against each other.**

To further enable safe, inclusive and fair participation, a series of dispensation procedures from participation policy positions that provide step-by-step processes to achieve this policy objective.

### STARTING POLICY POSITIONS

#### Eligible Age Grades

Subject to available dispensations, between the Under 8 and the Under 18 age group, a player may play in the age group he/she is turning in the playing year and in the age group one year above. For example, a player turning 15 in the calendar year (1 January – 31 December) is eligible to play in the Under 15 age group and the Under 16 age group.

#### Senior Rugby

Subject to available dispensations, a player can participate in Senior Rugby when he/she has turned 18 years of age.

### DISPENSATION TO ENABLE SAFE, INCLUSIVE AND FAIR PARTICIPATION

The procedures to be followed to apply for any of the following dispensations will be available online at: [www.aru.com.au/policies](http://www.aru.com.au/policies) from 17 March 2017

#### Age Dispensation

A player's physical development in conjunction with their ability and/or experience may be such that he or she may be allowed to participate in an age grade competition that is one year above or one year below their Eligible Age Grades.

For example, the player turning 15 in the calendar year (1 January – 31 December) who is already eligible to play in the Under 15 age group and the Under 16 age group, may receive dispensation to be able to participate in the Under 14 age group or Under 17 age group.

Players who turn 19 in the relevant calendar year and are therefore considered senior rugby players, may receive dispensation to play in the under 18 age grade.

#### Senior Rugby Dispensation

A player's physical development in conjunction with their ability and/or experience may be such that:

- Players who turns 18 in the relevant calendar year but have not yet turned 18 at the start of or during the competition, may be eligible to participate in Senior Rugby with parental / guardian approval.
- Only in exceptional circumstances, players turning 17 in the relevant calendar year may be eligible to participate in Senior Rugby with parental / guardian approval and coach / competition manager assessment.

#### Mixed Gender Dispensation Procedure

The Mixed Gender Dispensation procedure allows in exceptional circumstances girls over the age of 12 to participate with boys up to and including the year that they turn 15 years of age. This provides more opportunities for girls to continue to participate in Rugby where no other opportunities exist.

#### Disability Dispensation Procedure and Gender Identification Dispensation Procedure

The Disability Dispensation Procedure and the Gender Identification Dispensation Procedure provide further opportunities for inclusion where it is safe to do so. Expert external third party organisations have assisted the ARU to develop these inclusion policies. These Procedures will be available in the coming weeks.