

## Diversity and inclusion policy

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### 1 Acknowledgement of traditional owners

Melbourne Rubber acknowledges the traditional owners and ongoing custodians of Country across Australia and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging and to the ongoing living culture of Aboriginal people. Melbourne Rubber acknowledges that sovereignty was never ceded.

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### 2 Who is Melbourne Rubber?

Melbourne Rubber is a not-for-profit social group for rubber enthusiasts and people who wish to learn. Melbourne Rubber welcomes, affirms and celebrates diversity in all its forms.

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### 3 Melbourne Rubber is sex positive and restricted to adults only

Melbourne Rubber acknowledges that all people have a right to enjoy happiness as sexual beings and that consensual sexual activity is not shameful or wrong. Participation in Melbourne Rubber events will expose participants to positive sexual imagery and sexually explicit ideas. Because of the sexually explicit nature of this content, Melbourne Rubber is an adults only group. Online content and social events are restricted to people over the age of 18 years of age.

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### 4 Melbourne Rubber supports fetish and fashion

Melbourne Rubber acknowledges that rubber, regardless of the form that rubber takes, is appreciated by enthusiasts for a range of reasons. Whether fetish, fashion, sensuality or aesthetic, if rubber matters to you, you are welcome in Melbourne Rubber.

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### 5 Scope

This policy applies to:

- Melbourne Rubber committee members
  - all participants in Melbourne Rubber events
  - how Melbourne Rubber organises events and how it interacts with other members of the public
  - wherever and whenever people may be as a result of their involvement with Melbourne Rubber
  - participant treatment of other participants, and of other members of the public encountered in the course of their involvement with Melbourne Rubber
  - venues and businesses engaged by Melbourne Rubber, who will undertake best efforts to negotiate equitable accommodations, including accessible facilities and all-gender restrooms.
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### 6 Aims of this policy

Melbourne Rubber is committed to providing a safe, accommodating, respectful and fun environment for participants free from all forms of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment.

All people involved with Melbourne Rubber are required to treat others with dignity, courtesy and respect.

Intersectionality refers to the ways in which different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation.

Melbourne Rubber strongly supports, affirms and celebrates people's right to identify with multiple communities and we recognise and understand that people's intersectional experiences can place them at a higher risk of discrimination and victimisation, with resulting negative effects on health and wellbeing.

This policy aims to enforce protections against unacceptable behaviour and embed proactive positive behaviours that support the principles of **Melbourne Rubber**.

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## 7 Member and participant rights and responsibilities

All members of **Melbourne Rubber** and anyone who participates in **Melbourne Rubber** events are entitled to:

- participation free from discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment
- the right to raise issues or to make an enquiry or complaint in a reasonable and respectful manner, discretely and without being exposed to harm
- reasonable accommodations in how they participate in activities, especially where needed to accommodate their culture, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religious beliefs or family responsibilities.

All members and participants must:

- follow the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy
- offer support to people who experience discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment, including providing information about how to make a complaint
- respect the confidentiality of complaint resolution procedures and the identities of those involved
- treat everyone with dignity, courtesy and respect.

### **Additional responsibilities of committee members, event organisers and title holders**

Committee members, event organisers and title holders must also:

- model appropriate standards of behaviour
- take steps to educate and make others aware of their obligations under this policy and the law
- intervene quickly, discretely and appropriately when they become aware of inappropriate behaviour
- act fairly to resolve issues and enforce behavioural standards, making sure relevant parties are heard
- help people resolve complaints informally and discretely
- refer formal complaints about breaches of this policy to the appropriate complaint handling person for investigation
- ensure people who raise an issue or make a complaint are not exposed to harm
- ensure that decisions are based on truth and fairness and that no discriminatory or harmful requests for information are made
- consider and act in the best interests of the **Melbourne Rubber** community
- provide a safe and welcoming space for everyone who engages with **Melbourne Rubber**.

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## 8 Active consent

**Melbourne Rubber** promotes and enforces an active consent policy at all events.

Active consent means you need to ask verbally for consent before touching someone.

Consent must be given verbally, or in some circumstances by a deliberate gesture. For instance, if you are on a dance floor and you ask if you can touch someone, they may nod agreement. In some play scenes, a person may not be able to give a verbal response because of a gag or they cannot nod because of a restraint. In those cases, consent can be given through a thumbs-up or similar affirmative gesture.

A person who is incapacitated cannot give consent.

Consent that has been given may be revoked at any time.

Just because you have consented at the beginning, does not mean that you can't revoke consent or change your mind while you're in the middle of something. In play, on a dance floor or in a dark room, there are many ways you can revoke consent in the moment, including:

- verbally - 'no thank you'
- non-verbally - a common non-verbal refusal is to tap the person on the hand or push their hand away to say 'no more thank you'
- walk away.

If someone says 'no' to you (or non-verbally indicates to you that their consent is removed) you must stop immediately.

Do not make the assumption that a person's sexual orientation aligns with yours. Always seek active consent.

Just because someone is dressed up in their outfit, that doesn't mean they consent to doing anything with you. For example, just because you may like to be touched when you are wearing your rubber, you cannot assume that someone else wants to be touched or that they want to touch you.

At **Melbourne Rubber** events you must treat everyone with respect, and communicate just as you would want to be treated yourself.

While implied consent is practiced in some events run by other organisations or businesses, **Melbourne Rubber** insists on active consent at all events.

Why is this important?

- **Melbourne Rubber** events may include all genders and all sexualities
- all sexualities and genders should be able to enjoy the spaces at events to the extent that they are comfortable
- with a diverse range of attendees, you cannot make assumptions about another attendees' gender identity or sexuality
- consent is sexy.

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## 9 Unacceptable conduct

Harassment, discrimination and bullying are unacceptable at **Melbourne Rubber** and are unlawful under the following legislation:

- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
- *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (Cth)
- *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth).

Persons found to have engaged in such conduct might be counselled, warned, disciplined or disallowed from participation in the activities of **Melbourne Rubber**. They may also be expelled (without a refund in case of paid events) at the discretion of the organisers.

### 9.1 Harassment

**Melbourne Rubber** is dedicated to providing a harassment-free experience for all, regardless of age, race, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, personal beliefs, fetish interests, neurodiversity, employment (including sex work) or religion. **Melbourne Rubber** has a zero-tolerance policy toward harassment of participants in any form. Harassment of any kind is considered a serious breach of this policy.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- discrimination or unfair treatment towards anyone based on age, race, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, personal beliefs, fetish interest, neurodiversity, employment (including sex work) or religion, either physically or verbally
- unwanted physical contact of any kind
- unwelcome sexual attention
- harassing photography or video recording
- deliberate intimidation, threats, stalking or following
- sustained disruption of events
- advocating for, or encouraging, any of the above behaviour.

Participants asked to stop harassing behaviour are expected to comply immediately. 'No' means 'No' – if you are asked by another individual to leave them alone then you must respect their wishes.

All incidents of harassment – no matter how large or small or who is involved – require event organisers and committee members to respond quickly and appropriately – and discretely where required to preserve confidentiality.

**Melbourne Rubber** recognises that comments and behaviour that do not offend one person can offend another. This policy requires all members and participants to respect other people's limits.

A single incident is enough to constitute harassment – it doesn't have to be repeated.

At **Melbourne Rubber** events, there will always be a 'Safety Coordinator' or committee member clearly identified by an armband or some other visual means who you can speak to about any concerns at the event.

Individuals experiencing harassment or having a conflict with another participant should cease further interaction and contact the Safety Coordinator or any **Melbourne Rubber** committee member, who will handle all reports discretely.

## 9.2 Discrimination

**Melbourne Rubber** is committed to diversity and inclusion. This policy is aimed at actively addressing stigma and discrimination in all its forms including homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, ageism, and ableism.

Discrimination is treating, or proposing to treat, someone unfavourably based on a personal characteristic protected by the law, such as sex, age, race or disability.

Discrimination can occur:

**Directly**, when a person or group is treated less favourably than another person or group in a similar situation because of a personal characteristic protected by law (see list below).

*For example, a person at an event is harassed and humiliated because of their race  
or  
A person is denied entry because they are too fat.*

**Indirectly**, when an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice is imposed that has, or is likely to have, the effect of disadvantaging people with a personal characteristic protected by law (see list below).

*For example, admission to an event requires participants to purchase an alcoholic drink, thereby excluding people who do not drink alcohol for religious reasons.*

**Protected personal characteristics under Federal discrimination law include:**

- a disability, disease or injury, including work-related injury
- parental status or status as a carer, for example, because they are responsible for caring for children or other family members
- race, colour, descent, national origin, or ethnic background
- age, whether young or old, or because of age in general
- sex
- industrial activity, including being a member of an industrial organisation like a trade union or taking part in industrial activity, or deciding not to join a union
- religion
- pregnancy and breastfeeding
- sexual orientation, intersex status or gender identity, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, queer and heterosexual

- marital status, whether married, divorced, unmarried or in a de facto relationship or same sex relationship
- political opinion
- social origin
- medical record
- an association with someone who has, or is assumed to have, one of these characteristics, such as being the parent of a child with a disability.

It is also against the law to treat someone unfavourably because you assume they have a personal characteristic or may have it at some time in the future.

### 9.3 Bullying

If someone is being bullied because of a personal characteristic protected by equal opportunity law, it is a form of discrimination.

Bullying can take many forms, including jokes, teasing, nicknames, emails, pictures, text messages, social isolation, or unfair work practices.

Under Federal law, this behaviour does not have to be repeated to be discrimination – it may be a one-off event.

Behaviours that may constitute bullying include:

- sarcasm and other forms of demeaning language
- threats, abuse or shouting
- coercion
- isolation
- inappropriate blaming
- ganging up
- constant unconstructive criticism
- deliberately withholding information or equipment that a person needs.

Bullying is unacceptable in **Melbourne Rubber**.

### 9.4 Non-consensual offence

In the context of private play or a private scene, individuals negotiate and agree to their own limits and to what behaviour is acceptable and what is not acceptable. Because play between participants, or individual behaviour, at **Melbourne Rubber** events may be observed by others who have not consented to observe that play or behaviour, **Melbourne Rubber** has a policy of minimising possible offence to others through disallowing certain overtly offensive behaviour. The following is **prohibited** at **Melbourne Rubber** events:

- wearing makeup to simulate 'blackface', 'yellowface', 'brownface', or other offensive caricaturing
- Nazi uniforms, swastikas, white supremacist or associated symbols
- realistic police uniforms

- functioning or realistic firearms
- projectile devices or props, which may cause annoyance to others.

## 9.5 Reporting unacceptable conduct

Participants at **Melbourne Rubber** events can make a report either personally or anonymously. You can make an anonymous report using [this link](#). We can't follow up anonymous reports with you directly, but we will investigate and take whatever action is necessary to prevent a recurrence.

Participants can make a personal report by contacting the Safety Coordinator or committee member clearly identified by an armband or some other visual means. When taking a personal report, the Safety Coordinator or committee member will ensure you are safe and cannot be overheard. They may involve other personnel to ensure your report is managed properly. Once safe, we'll ask you to tell us about what happened. This can be upsetting, but we'll handle it as respectfully as possible, and you can bring someone to support you. You won't be asked to confront anyone and we won't tell who you are.

The Safety Coordinator or committee member will be happy to help you contact hotel/venue security, local law enforcement (with discretion), local support services, provide escorts, or otherwise assist you to feel safe for the duration of the activity. We value your attendance.

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## 10 Promoting positive behaviour and inclusivity

**Melbourne Rubber** is proud to welcome all rubber enthusiasts and those who wish to learn more about the rubber community, and we acknowledge we have a responsibility to ensure the safety of participants at our events. To that end, **Melbourne Rubber** takes active steps to make participants feel welcome, to run inclusive events and to build a diversity-friendly community.

### 10.1 Orientation for new members

**Melbourne Rubber** will hold orientation events for new members on occasion. These may be both online events and face to face events where people new to the wonderful world of rubber can learn about latex and how to be involved.

Where practicable, face to face events will include an orientation session prior to the event so that newcomers can familiarise themselves with the venue and discuss expectations for the event.

Orientation sessions also provide an opportunity to get to know other people who are new to the scene as well as the names of someone more experienced who they can go to if they have questions or would like support.

**Melbourne Rubber** will hold events where only simple or minimal items of rubber may be worn, to allow participants who have few latex items to feel more comfortable to attend.

### 10.2 Promotion

**Melbourne Rubber** will actively seek to portray diverse members of our rubber community online and in promotional material so that people from diverse backgrounds can envisage themselves participating in our events.



This does not mean that every piece of promotional material will display all possible people. Rather, it means that, over time and on balance, the impression created through **Melbourne Rubber** promotional material is that there are all sorts of people involved in **Melbourne Rubber** and that everyone who has an interest in latex is welcome.

### 10.3 Accessibility

Wherever practicable, **Melbourne Rubber** will hold events at venues that are wheelchair accessible. Venue accessibility will be noted in promotional material.

**Melbourne Rubber** promotional material will encourage people to advise event organisers of special needs or requirements that are required to enable participation, such as Auslan interpreter, guide dog access or wheelchair access. **Melbourne Rubber** will do its best to accommodate needs with adequate notice.

**Melbourne Rubber** will endeavour to provide spaces at events with low sensory stimulation, or 'chill-out spaces', where it is comfortable for people to talk quietly away from loud music and party lighting.

In order to minimise the risk of falls for participants at **Melbourne Rubber** events, latex shining stations will be restricted to designated areas so that latex polish is not inadvertently spilled on hard floors creating a slip hazard.

Where event participants have particular needs or feel uncomfortable attending events, wherever practicable, **Melbourne Rubber** will provide priority access for those participants.

**Melbourne Rubber** acknowledges that, in spite of best endeavours, it may not always be possible to meet a person's particular needs for participation.

### 10.4 Safe sex

**Melbourne Rubber** promotes safe sex and encourages all members and event participants to get regular sexual health check-ups.

Whilst some sexually transmitted infections (STIs) can be vaccinated against, such as Hepatitis A and B or the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), others can be difficult to avoid. Over time there has been a significant increase in the amount of STIs being diagnosed. The best way to prevent contracting an STI is to use condoms and water based lube when having sex, and to get a regular sexual health check-up. This may not prevent everything, but at least you will know and you can get treated easily.

At **Melbourne Rubber** events where participants may engage in sexual activity, condoms, dams and water based lubricant will be provided.

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## 11 Enforcement of this policy

**Melbourne Rubber** strongly encourages anyone who believes they have been discriminated against, bullied, harassed or victimised to take appropriate action by contacting a member of the committee or the Safety Coordinator at events.

Participants who observe behaviour at a **Melbourne Rubber** event that appears contrary to this policy are welcome to discuss their concerns with a member of the committee or the Safety Coordinator.

Failure to abide by this policy may result in the following:

- warning
- removal from the event
- referral to venue security
- being banned from attendance at future **Melbourne Rubber** events
- referral to public safety or law enforcement.

The Safety Coordinator at events is primarily responsible for participant safety and enforcing this policy. Questions regarding safety or application of the policy should be directed to the Safety Coordinator or to members of the **Melbourne Rubber** committee.

The enforcement policy for report handling during an event is as follows:

- **Warnings.** The Safety Coordinator or committee member can issue a verbal warning to a participant that their behaviour violates Melbourne Rubber's policy on unacceptable conduct. Warnings should be reported to the committee as soon as practical. The report to the committee should include:
  - identifying information (name) of the participant
  - the time you issued the warning
  - the behaviour that was in violation
  - the approximate time of the behaviour (if different than the time of warning)
  - the circumstances surrounding the incident
  - your identity
  - other people involved in the event.
- **Taking reports.** When taking a report from someone experiencing unacceptable conduct you should record what they say and reassure them they are being taken seriously, but avoid making specific promises about what actions the organisers will take. Ask for any other information if the reporter has not volunteered it (such as time, place) but do not pressure them to provide it if they are reluctant. Even if the report lacks important details such as the identity of the person taking the harassing actions, it should still be recorded and passed along to the organisation. If the reporter desires it, arrange for an escort by a committee member, contact a friend, and/or contact local law enforcement (with discretion). Do not pressure the reporter to take any action if they do not want to do it. Respect the reporter's privacy by not sharing unnecessary details with others, especially individuals who were not involved with the situation or other participants. Reports should contain the above listed information.
- **Expulsion.** A participant may be expelled by the decision of the Safety Coordinator or committee member for whatever reasons they deem sufficient. However, here are some general guidelines for when a participant should be expelled:
  - a second or third consecutive offense resulting in a warning from the Safety Coordinator
  - continuing to harass after any 'No' or 'Stop' instruction
  - a pattern of harassing behaviour, with or without warnings
  - a single serious offense (e.g. punching or groping someone without active consent)

- a single obviously intentional offense (e.g. taking up-skirt photos).
- **Public statements.** As a general rule, the Safety Coordinator or committee member should not make any public statements about the behaviour of individual people during or after the activity. In general, consult with other staff members when possible but act when necessary.

As noted above, reports may also be made at any time to the committee. Reports made directly to the committee will be referred to the Melbourne Rubber Disputes Subcommittee for response. That subcommittee will be formed following the annual general meeting of **Melbourne Rubber** and include four people. On receipt of a report, the Chairperson will select a number of those people to respond to the report. The Chairperson will select members to respond according to the nature of the report, giving consideration to the person making the report, the subject of the report and the nature of the report.

Any person who is deemed by a meeting of the Melbourne Rubber Disputes Subcommittee to have egregiously violated this policy may have their participation in all **Melbourne Rubber** events revoked and barred from participation in future **Melbourne Rubber** events.

Any person whose participation is revoked is automatically prohibited from seeking to attend or participating in any subsequent **Melbourne Rubber** events until such time as their attendance is approved by a meeting of the Melbourne Rubber Disputes Subcommittee.

The Melbourne Rubber Disputes Subcommittee is the final arbiter of behaviour under this policy.

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## 12 Feedback

Melbourne Rubber welcomes constructive criticism and comments on how to make our group more inclusive and diversity friendly. If you have any feedback or a query about this policy or need more information, please contact any member of the **Melbourne Rubber** committee or a title holder.

You can always email the committee at [melbournrubber@gmail.com](mailto:melbournrubber@gmail.com)

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## 13 Review details

This policy was adopted by **Melbourne Rubber** on 5 August 2021.

This policy was last updated on 5 August 2021.