

USE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Why does it matter?

Using inclusive language is a simple yet powerful way to ensure that everyone, regardless of background, gender, sexuality, ability or age, feels valued and respected. Inclusive language fosters a sense of belonging, reflects and respects the diversity of our Australian population and makes us better communicators. It helps to minimise misunderstanding and build positive relationships where everyone can enjoy their love of swimming without discrimination or exclusion.

How can I use inclusive language?

Some examples include:

- **Learn and use preferred pronouns.** Start by learning and respecting individuals' preferences (e.g., he, she, them). Never assume someone's gender identity. Share your own with others, freely.
- **Avoid gendered terms.** Replace words like "guys" or "ladies" with gender-neutral alternatives like "everyone" or "folks".
- **Acknowledge abilities.** Focus on individuals' ability rather than their disability. Emphasise their achievements and potential, and put the person before the disability (e.g., 'person with disability', rather than 'disabled').
- **Be culturally sensitive.** Avoid highlighting someone's ethnicity as a way of singling them out or marking them as different. Avoid stereotypes or discriminatory language related to race, ethnicity, or nationality.
- **Be mindful of age.** Address people of all ages with respect. Avoid derogatory terms or age-related stereotypes.
- **Acknowledge country.** At swim meets, meetings and other significant events, ensure you acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which you meet.



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Step 3:

- **Educate and encourage.** Promote the use of inclusive language within your swimming community. Educate others about its importance and encourage open discussions.
- **Apologise and learn.** We all make mistakes. If someone calls out your use of language, use it as an opportunity for growth.

How can I learn more?

Levelling the Deck has a detailed Inclusive Language Guide. Reach out to us to get your copy!

[Reach Out](#)



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