



Community Sports Facility Booking Policy

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Department	Council-wide
Date of Council Endorsement	
Date for Review	
Responsible Officer	Manager Community Services
Authorising Officer	Director Community and Infrastructure
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1. Statement and Purpose

This policy describes the considerations and principles for allocation of sporting fields and associated facilities for hire. The aim of the policy is to provide equitable, access and safe playing conditions for users while sustainably managing available sports facilities.

The objectives of the Sports Facility Booking Policy are:

- To provide a responsible, consistent, transparent and equitable process for the use of Council sports fields and associated facilities
- To provide agreed principles to prioritise use and management of sports fields and associated facilities managed and/or owned by Council
- To assist Council in the allocation of sports fields and facilities when competing requests are received
- To provide clear direction which is consistent with other Council policies, local laws and relevant legislation, affecting the use of sports fields and facilities, including the Rural City of Wangaratta Community Sport Fair Access Policy.

- To ensure provision of adequate and timely maintenance activities to sustain quality sporting facilities for use by the community
- To provide guidance on establishing fees and charges for use and contributions for development
- To establish the expectations of respectful and positive interactions between users and Council as a condition of use

2. Scope

This policy applies to sports grounds and associated facilities located within the Rural City of Wangaratta municipality which are owned and/or directly managed by Council, and does not include Community Asset Committees (formerly S.86 Committees of Management).

3. Policy

3.1 Sustainability

- If, during the season, the condition of the field deteriorates, Council may, at its discretion, reduce the hours or cancel the access for a user group to use a field.

3.2 Facility Allocation

- Council will consider the following hierarchy for prioritising facility allocation:
 - Major Events - Council endorsed major events
 - Equity of access – Council will prioritise clubs and organisations who demonstrate a commitment to equitable access to facilities, by committing to implementation of the Rural City of Wangaratta Community Sport Fair Access Action Plan.
 - User groups with long term agreements with Council - established usage patterns will be considered in allocating access
 - Associations, schools and community groups
- All bookings are to go through Council's Community and Recreation Team and final approval will be made by the Manager Community Services.
- User groups who have been found to not meet the requirements of previous seasonal or casual booking agreements may have their booking requests declined

3.3 Eligibility to Hire Fields

- To be eligible to hire sports fields and associated facilities, user groups must provide proof of a current public liability policy with a minimum of \$20 million coverage.
- User groups must be able to show evidence of meeting legal requirements, including but not limited to:
 - Child Safe
 - Fair Play Code
 - Fair Access (demonstrated by commitment to implementation of the Rural City of Wangaratta Community Sport Fair Access Action Plan)
 - Consumer Affairs Registration

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- Public Health (COVID-19)

3.4 Seasonal Requests

- Seasonal user groups are required to submit a new application for each season, using the Rural City of Wangaratta Booking Portal
- While previous booking patterns will be taken into consideration, user groups are not guaranteed confirmation of a booking based purely on historical use

3.5 Temporary Ground Closure

- Whilst decisions to close grounds are not taken lightly, Council reserves the right to close any sports field and/or facility, where required, to protect the playing surface, reduce risk to competitors and the public, to complete capital or maintenance works, in poor weather conditions or to allow rehabilitation of the ground after damage.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Council Officers will

- Advertise ground bookings on Council website and through email
- Advise clubs of any clashes as soon as possible
- Work with clubs to reach the best possible arrangements
- Facilitate shared user group meetings where applicable
- Provide signed user agreements in a timely manner
- Keep internal bookings systems updated
- Send regular communications to seasonal user groups regarding future bookings
- Inform of ground closures as soon as the decision is made

4.1 Community Sporting Clubs will

- Complete seasonal applications within the advised timeline
- Submit casual bookings at least two weeks prior to requested date (exceptions apply for finals season and rescheduled events)
- Inform Council of any changes to regular bookings
- Work with shared users in a positive and supportive manner

5. Breaches

User groups found in breach of the policy may have their bookings cancelled

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6. Human Rights

This policy has considered and complies with the Human Rights and Responsibilities contained in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

7. Gender Impact Assessment

This policy has considered and applied Council's Gender Impact Assessment Template and satisfies the provisions established in the *Gender Equality Act 2020* (Vic).

8. Monitoring and evaluation

Appropriate provision of ground allocations will be monitored in an ongoing manner. The input of user groups and bookings staff will be used as an evaluation tool.

9. Definitions

Community Sports Infrastructure

Publicly owned local, rural, regional, or state level sport and recreation infrastructure operated and maintained primarily for the purpose of facilitating community sport activities, including sporting grounds, surfaces, facilities, and pavilions.

Community Sporting Clubs

Local, not-for-profit community organisations established for the primary purpose of participation in sport and recreation activities.

Seasonal Agreements

Periodic agreements entered into by community sporting organisations and Council, to establish consistent training and match day access to community sport infrastructure

10. References and Related Policies

Legislation

- *Local Government Act 2020* (Vic)
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*

Internal Policies

- *Fair Access Policy (2024)*

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11.Review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years, or sooner if required under Government Legislation. The review will be led by Manager Community Services.

Version History		
Version Number	Date of change	Reasons for change
1.02	12/12/2023	Rewording of 3.3 point 1 (public liability)
1.03	15/01/2023	Changed after feedback from Office for Women in Sport and Recreation Definitions added

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