

Sportsgrounds Management Policy

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1. Purpose

To provide policy guidance for the management of Council's sporting facilities at sportsgrounds, showgrounds, and destination parks.

2. Statement

In the context of this policy a sporting facility or sportsground is public open space which Council maintains for active recreational use by organised sporting groups. A sportsground is not a natural area, park, beach, streetscape etc.

Council's sportsgrounds are managed by the Shoalhaven Swim Sport Fitness Department in three geographical areas in the Shoalhaven: Northern, Central and Southern. The Precinct manager in each area is responsible for the financial and operational management of all Swim Sport Fitness facilities in that area, and reports to the Manager, Shoalhaven Swim Sport Fitness.

3. Provisions

3.1. Communications

- a. Council will consider sports planning, policy and funding recommendations from the Shoalhaven Sports Board.
- b. The Shoalhaven Sports Board *Terms of Reference* define the Board's operational parameters. The *Shoalhaven Sports Board Mission, Values and Aims* document (adopted 24/07/2018) outlines the Board's actions. The Board receives status updates from staff regarding operational matters at quarterly meetings. The Board is invited to attend annual sporting user group workshops.
- c. Council will receive planning, policy and funding recommendations from the relevant Sporting Association/Peak Body based in the Shoalhaven. Sports clubs are required to forward planning, policy and funding requests to their Sporting Association/Peak Body. Where a Shoalhaven sports club has no Sporting Association/Peak Body based in the Shoalhaven, the Board will consider recommendations from the appropriate representative body for that sport.
- d. Sporting individuals are required to seek support for planning, policy and funding requests from their sports club in the first instance and, via the club, from the Sporting Association/State Sporting Organisation (SSO)/Peak Body.
- e. Sporting Associations/SSOs/Peak Bodies are required to assess planning, policy and funding requests prior to forwarding their recommendation to Council. These Associations/SSOs/Peak Bodies are encouraged to formally meet at least once a year with relevant Council Officers to discuss current issues and development of their sport. Depending on the outcome of this meeting, Sporting Associations/Peak Bodies may be invited to present a report to the Shoalhaven Sports Board.
- f. Risk management issues associated with any Council managed facility should be communicated immediately to Council.
- g. All Council infrastructure (e.g. buildings, fixtures, irrigation, fire exits and fire-fighting equipment) is managed by Council in compliance with legislation. Please advise Council of any issues.
- h. Sporting Clubs are required to make seasonal applications for ground allocations to Council, and to have received Council's confirmation of the bookings prior to use of a ground.

- i. General planning, policy, legislative, funding and Shoalhaven-based sporting information will be communicated to Associations/SSOs/Peak Bodies, sports clubs and sporting individuals via Council's sporting precincts' staff, the Shoalhaven Sports Board and/or at annual sporting user group workshops.

3.2. User Group Responsibilities

- a. Peak Bodies and user groups are required to refer to Council's Community Infrastructure Guidelines before making submissions for proposed works to Council. No works are to proceed without Council's written approval (excluding pre-approved routine maintenance).
- b. Sportsground charges are applied in accordance with Council's adopted Fees and Charges. Local sporting and school groups are not charged for use of Shoalhaven sportsgrounds, canteens and floodlighting.
- c. User groups shall meet the cost of line marking (including the line marker/materials). Non-toxic line marking chalk/paint is to be used. Herbicides are prohibited in line marking solution/preparation.
- d. Pegs used on sportsgrounds (e.g. for securing covers/nets) are either to be painted a bright fluoro colour, or be plastic, coloured pegs, or have a cap placed on them.
 - i. All pegs are to be removed from the field when covers/nets are removed.
 - ii. Due to the disadvantage caused to all clubs when mowers are damaged and put out of service by pegs left on sportsgrounds, any costs associated with damage caused to the mowers will be charged to the responsible clubs. Should the incident be repeated by a club, the following will take effect:
 - A. the club will be invoiced for all costs associated with the damage;
 - B. cylinder mower will not be used on club's fields for a period of 12 months.
- e. Irrigation systems on sportsgrounds are routinely monitored and maintained according to monthly maintenance schedules. Council staff program the irrigation systems according to site conditions and facility usage. User groups are not to adjust irrigation programs. Any request for changes to irrigation programming are to be made to the relevant Precinct Coordinator. Council may cease irrigation where programs conflict with other scheduled maintenance.
- f. All topdressing materials and other proposed works are to be approved by Council prior to works commencing.
- g. User groups who use goal posts shall be responsible for the supply and maintenance of goal posts (including fixed posts) and seasonal removal and replacement. At shared facilities, where posts are required to be removed or replaced mid-season (for example for an event), the event organiser will be responsible for the costs of removing and replacing the posts. Works are to be approved by the sporting group who own the posts. All posts must conform to Council requirements and meet appropriate guidelines and standards for each sporting code.
- h. User groups shall be responsible for the maintenance and preparation of turf wickets, however Council may assume these responsibilities by mutual agreement with user groups. Synthetic wickets and nets are maintained by Council.
- i. Council maintains Council-managed fields according to a monthly maintenance schedule. In the event of overuse of an area, user groups are responsible for repair to degraded areas, e.g. returfing goalmouth areas. No works are to proceed without Council's written approval.

- j. In general, user groups shall meet the costs of alterations/maintenance required for the purpose of their sport. For example: 1. for off-season play at cricket fields, off-season clubs are responsible for the costs of laying and spreading dirt/sand composite over synthetic cricket wickets before and after the season (Council will lay mats over the pitch prior to laying of the dirt to ensure protection of the wicket). 2. Baseball facilities, including diamonds and mounds. 3. Cleaning/maintenance of playing surfaces/courts beyond scheduled maintenance as per item 3.2.i.
- k. User groups are responsible for cleaning canteen and amenity facilities (i.e. change rooms, changeroom toilets and showers, and canteen) after each use. Public toilets should be left in a tidy state and any issues reported to Council staff.
- l. Where a sportsground has a clubroom, the user group(s) is responsible for the cost associated with the maintenance of the interior of the building (i.e. cleaning, routine maintenance, utility accounts, general building improvements).

Where the clubroom is hired out to casual users by Council, Council will contribute to the costs associated with maintenance, by agreement with the Precinct manager.
- m. Pest control in clubrooms and amenity buildings is the responsibility of user groups.
- n. Where a sportsground has a canteen, user groups are responsible to ensure their use of the canteen complies with legislated Environmental Health standards. Council is responsible to ensure the building's fixtures and fittings are maintained to legislated Environmental Health standards.
- o. Council's insurance does not provide cover for items that are left on the premises by user groups. User groups are recommended to obtain insurance for any possessions stored in buildings or on public land.
- p. All use of Council-managed land/buildings must comply with Council's *Terms and Conditions of Hire/Use – Public Halls/Community Centres, Meeting Rooms, Reserves, Sportsgrounds, Courts, Camping & Showgrounds*.

3.3. Glass Bottle Free Sportsgrounds

Council prohibits the supply, sale and consumption of drinks in glass bottles or glass containers on Council managed sportsgrounds.

3.4. Sportsground Closures

- a. At all times a club/user group which has been given a seasonal ground allocation is responsible for determining the suitability of a sportsground for play/training and to advise its members/participants of a sportsground closure.
- b. Council or a Management Committee, in consultation with Council, may determine the suitability of the ground for play and override a club/user group's determination.
- c. Council or a Management Committee, in consultation with Council, may determine whether a sportsground should be declared closed for a casual booking.
- d. Where a club/user group has determined a ground to be usable and excessive damage is caused, the club/user group will be responsible for repairs, to be undertaken in accordance with Council's policies and procedures. Precinct managers will determine if the damage is excessive, in liaison with the club/user group.
- e. Council reserves the right to cancel any booking or close any ground without notice.

3.5. Sportsground Perimeter Fencing

- a. One fenced “Feature” sportsground will be provided by Council in each of the Northern, Central and Southern areas, where an entry fee can be collected. “Feature” grounds must be made accessible to all legitimate hirers, in an equitable manner.
- b. Perimeter fencing of other sportsgrounds may be permitted in consultation with Council and where public access to the facility is not significantly affected. The fencing is to be provided by the Club.
- c. Showgrounds are excluded from this policy as perimeter fencing is needed to facilitate event usage.
- d. Some sportsgrounds may be protected by way of locked fencing, for example synthetic surfaces; however, these facilities should still be available to the community by way of casual hire.

3.6. Signage

- a. Sponsorship Signage
Signage must clearly identify the said company as sponsors of that club and must contain the sporting clubs name and logo. Signage must be inward facing to the sportsground and not visible from the road. At multi-use facilities these signs may be displayed at the sporting field or clubhouse over the current sporting season only.
- b. Game Day Signage
Signage displaying a private company’s details with no reference to sports club or association can only be put out on game day and must be removed at the end of that day.
- c. Other Signage
All other signage must have Council approval and follow all legislative requirements as advised by Development Planners.

3.7. Smoke Free Act

All sportsgrounds are non-smoking venues as outlined in the Smoke Free Environment Act 2000.

3.8 Filming / Drone Use

These are to be conducted in accordance with Council’s Film and Video Production in Public Reserves and Public Places Policy.

3.9 Helicopters

Helicopter pilots land at their own discretion and are responsible for managing the operational and public risk of this activity, in accordance with the requirements of the relevant authority. Booking of the field is required, unless in an emergency.

3.10 Priority of Use

- a. During season, turf cricket pitches will not be available for hire by user groups other than the seasonally allocated club, except in consultation with that club.
- b. In the first instance Council promotes the use of showgrounds for one-off events – the Crown Land Management Act 2016 identifies the purpose of showgrounds on Crown Land to be “Public Recreation” or “Showground”. “Sportsground” (which is another possible purpose) is not identified by the Act for showgrounds. It is for this reason that

non-sporting or one-off large sporting events take precedence over regular sporting use at Shoalhaven showgrounds.

- c. There is no limit to the frequency with which regular sporting use can be displaced from showgrounds. Where practically possible, advance notice (60 days) will be provided to sports clubs, and Council Officers/Management Committees will endeavour to assist in identifying alternate grounds for the use of displaced sporting user groups.
- d. Large events at Sportsgrounds – Large events and festivals (attracting, in total, more than 500 people in attendance throughout the event) which are inclusive and open to the broader community have a positive impact in bringing the community together, and are often used to raise funds for charities, community groups and community projects. They are integral to the visitor economy and provide significant tourism, trade and investment opportunities for the region.
Large events will also have priority over regular events at sportsgrounds, if it is not possible or is inappropriate to conduct the event at a showground. If there are regular bookings for a sporting user group that conflict with a large event with significant community benefit, the sporting group will relocate to another ground, to free up the venue (Sports Board recommendation January 2009).
- e. Management Committees will refer all events that would displace a sporting or other user group, or that are over 200 people per day, to Council for approval prior to acceptance of the booking.
- f. Council or Management Committees will determine appropriate bond amounts, based on Council's Fees and Charges, to carry out repairs to grounds/facility post-events, where deemed necessary. Council will close grounds indefinitely where required, to ensure adequate playing surface recovery.

3.11 Maximising Facility Usage

- a. Many of Council's sporting facilities are used predominantly on weekends or in the evenings and most are currently sole purpose. Where sporting facilities experience down-time, it may be due to recovery time for fields to regenerate between use, turnover of seasons, or renovations. Overuse of sportsgrounds may lead to significant repair costs if not managed correctly. Sporting fields during down time also provide an aesthetic outlook for the public or for schools, and for the public to use when required.
- b. In line with Council's Community Infrastructure Strategic Plan 2017-2036, Council will focus on assisting clubs in upgrading facilities that provide for multiple sporting and recreation codes, shared social facilities and co-location of multi-purpose venues, with a focus on increasing facility usage.

3.12 Shipping Containers

Council's Temporary Storage (shipping) Container on Public Land policy outlines the conditions for placement of shipping containers on sportsgrounds. The policy is available on Council's website.

4. Implementation

The City Lifestyles Directorate will administer this policy.

5. Review

To be reviewed within one year of the election of a new Council.