



Policy Title	Sports Field and Facilities Policy
Policy Category	Operational
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Policy Owner	Asset, Planning and Design
Approval by	Chief Executive Officer
Effective date	
Date for review	September 2020

1 STRATEGIC PURPOSE

Snowy Valleys Council (Council) recognises that there is a need to provide well maintained safe, vibrant and accessible community spaces and facilities to the community for the purpose of sport and other social community events.

2 POLICY STATEMENT

The provision of Council owned and managed sportsgrounds, open space and public facilities enables community sports clubs, schools and other organisations with contemporary and fit for purpose sporting facilities.

The application of this policy will

- Provide agreed principles to prioritise use and management
- Protect the safety of all users
- Preserve the features of the natural and built environment
- Regulate activities to ensure appropriate standards of conduct

3 DEFINITIONS

Sporting Ground - Open space that can provide sports use function, and will include one or more playing fields, often with associated facilities.

Facility – building amenity infrastructure owned by the Council for hire or use by an organisation /group/person

Seasonal - to the 'summer season' being from 1 October to 31 March and 'winter season' being from 1 April to 30 September.

Allocation - to occupy a specified area within specified times and dates and in accordance with specific conditions.

4 CONTENT

To protect community access and sustain the life of its assets, Council must regulate the type and frequency of use at sportsgrounds, open space and public facilities. The use of sportsgrounds, open space and public facilities may be removed or restricted for either: risk management reasons; works and maintenance; managing the sustainable use of the sportsground/s; environmental factors; or other reasons as Council may determine. Where a sportsground is unavailable, Council will endeavour to relocate the allocated user/s to another sportsground/s, which may require modification of allocated use for both the displaced user/s and the incumbent sportsground user/s.

4.1 Facility Allocation

Sportsgrounds, open space and public facilities allocation is the process which Council undertakes to hire out its facilities to a variety of community and commercial user groups. Council has identified the following principles to guide them in the allocation and provision of the facilities:

- Seasonal bookings have priority over casual bookings
- All requests for bookings must be made on Sports Field, Park, Venue Hire Forms
- Casual bookings and bookings made by organisations from out of the area will only be considered where there is no existing booking request.
- Casual bookings will not be confirmed until payment is received
- Season draws must be provided to Council once confirmed by the sporting associations to allow Council hire out unused facilities. "Blanket" bookings are not permitted and associations must ensure every effort is made to notify Council of any unused dates in advance.

4.2 Applications

All organisations/entities/persons must acknowledge and accept Council's *Conditions of Hire and Declaration* and have received Council's written approval prior to undertaking formal or organised use on Council owned or managed sportsgrounds, open space and public facilities.

Applicants must provide all relevant information to Council as outlined in this Policy and Council's *Conditions of Hire and Declaration*.

The Responsible Manager or delegated officer will be authorised to approve sportsgrounds, open space and public facilities allocations.

The Responsible Manager will be authorised to modify or revoke sportsgrounds, open space and public facilities allocations.

In the event of a dispute or difference arising in the interpretation of this Policy or Council's *Conditions of Hire and Declaration*, the organisation can appeal in writing to the CEO within five days of the organisation receiving notification of its allocation/non allocation. The CEO will have final determination on the matter.

4.3 Conditions of occupancy

Allocated users must have insurance cover as stipulated in Council's *Conditions of Hire and Declaration*

Allocated users will abide with the applicable terms and conditions of occupancy including complying with all legislative requirements, Council policies, agreements and Local Law.

Severe breaches of the conditions of occupancy may be subject to penalties imposed by Council, and/or modification or termination of the occupancy agreement.

4.4 Fees and charges

Fees and charges for the use of sportsgrounds, openspace and public facilities will be in accordance with Council's Fees and Charges Schedule as determined through Council's annual budget process.

Fees and charges aim to balance the community health and wellbeing benefits for the equitable use of the sportsgrounds and associated facilities with the recovery of costs to Council for the provision of the sportsgrounds and associated facilities.

4.5 Sporting Field Closure

Responsibility for determining ground closures including the areas and period remain the responsibility of Council and this decision will be made, where possible, no less than 24 hours prior to the activity to provide sufficient time to sporting organisations to make the necessary arrangements to minimise inconvenience to players and others involved. Council encourages and supports a proactive approach by sporting organisations that cancel and/or reschedule events during inclement weather to minimise damage to fields and protect players.

In determining sporting field closure, Council has a responsibility to ensure all sporting fields are maintained to a standard that will hold up to expected use during the course of the playing season. At times, during inclement weather Council may have to close the fields to ensure they are in the best playing conditions not only for the remainder of the season but also for all other users. The decision to close a field is not taken lightly and involves consultation with numerous Council Officers. A number of factors are taken into consideration when making such a decision and include:

- the amount of rainfall
- predicted rainfall/weather
- drainage and potential for drying of fields
- soil structure
- potential damage to the field and subsequent required remedial works
- legal obligations to provide safe sporting facilities as well as the health and wellbeing of players including potential for injury to users

Following the decision to close grounds the Bookings Officer will contact nominated sport and user representatives to discuss availability of grounds. Relevant media will also be notified where required.