

Sportsground Allocation Policy

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1. Scope

- 1.1 This Policy applies to all Sportsgrounds owned or managed by City of Parramatta Council (**Council**).
- 1.2 This Policy applies to all proponents seeking to hire a Council Sportsground for the purpose of ongoing, organised, Grassroots Sport, including, but not limited to Sporting Clubs, Sporting Associations, schools, other community groups, and private and commercial organisations.
- 1.3 This Policy does not apply to special event hire of Council Sportsgrounds, or use of a Council Sportsground for personal and group fitness training, the conditions for which are established by Council's Community Facilities Hiring Policy and applicable Terms & Conditions of Hire.
- 1.4 This Policy does not apply to Sportsgrounds which are the subject of an existing long-term (greater than one season) lease or license, until such time as the existing lease or license expires. Sportsgrounds occupied under a long-term lease or license agreement will be considered in accordance with the principles of this Policy upon re-negotiation of existing agreements, however long-term Sportsground lease or license agreements will be established pursuant to Council's Lease & License Policy.

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2. Purpose

- 2.1 This Policy aims to ensure that Council will allocate the use of its Sportsgrounds in a systematic approach which aligns with Council's broader Sportsground Strategy and values, including to actively contribute to the health, wellbeing, equality, and inclusion of the whole community.
- 2.2 This Policy establishes a framework for Council to manage competing public interest for using its Sportsgrounds. This Policy sets out a consistent and transparent method for informing Council's decision making regarding a range of key Sportsground access and management issues.

3. Policy

- 3.1 The following guiding principles will inform Council decision making regarding allocating public use of its Sportsgrounds:
- 3.1.1 Provide a responsible, consistent, transparent, and equitable process for the use and management of Council Sportsgrounds and associated facilities.
- 3.1.2 Ensure Council's Sportsground facilities are safe, sustainable to operate, and shared by users.
- 3.1.3 Ensure that Sportsgrounds are utilised by well-governed sporting and community organisations with documented policies, and which provide safe, inclusive, and sustainable initiatives to support volunteers, participants, and underrepresented groups.
- 3.1.4 Increase participation and health outcomes across all demographics in the City of Parramatta local government area (**LGA**), by ensuring the behaviour and culture of facility users is aligned with Council's values.
- 3.1.5 Provide diverse opportunities for the community to participate in Grassroots Sport, recreation, and physical activity.
- 3.1.6 Respond to the needs and expectations of both our current and future communities by maximising the practical capacity of Council's Sportsground network.

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3.2 To promote fair and shared access to Council Sportsgrounds for hire, Council will generally arrange Allocations for hire of its Sportsgrounds on a non-exclusive, seasonal basis, for a single, specified period, as follows:

- (a) Winter Season: first weekend of April for a minimum 21 weeks.
- (b) Summer Season: third weekend of September for a minimum 26 weeks (inclusive of Christmas holiday period).
- (c) Winter Pre-Season: First week of March to the start of Winter Season for a maximum of 5 weeks.
- (d) Summer Pre-Season: Third week of August to the start of Summer Season for a maximum of 5 weeks.
- (e) Off-Season: Sporting field bookings may be made for a maximum duration of 6 weeks. For the purposes of this limit, any booking made within a calendar week, regardless of the number of days, will be counted as one full week.

3.2.1 Seasonal dates are subject to the requirement for a minimum two-week rest period between seasons to allow for a change in sporting field configuration.

3.2.2 Pre-Season and Off-Season Allocations are subject to the practical capacity of the Sportsground network and with consideration of Council's maintenance activities, infrastructure requirements, condition of field, and Sportsground availability.

3.2.3 School groups may, by exception, apply for an extended Allocation for Terms 1 to 4

3.2.4 Where availability and practical capacity permits, seasonal Allocations may be issued to more than one user group at a facility. Council will aim to ensure in scheduling any shared facility Allocations, that concurrent use will not disrupt the intended usage of the Hirers.

3.3 Council recognises the impact of bookings on turf Sportsgrounds and the need to maintain playing surfaces. Sportsgrounds will be rested for one (1) full weekday per week.

3.4 Council reserves the right to close any Sportsground or sporting field to protect the playing surface, reduce the risk to users, to undertake capital improvements, impact

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due to weather conditions (including weather and drought) or to allow rehabilitation of the ground after damage.

- 3.5 Where a facility upgrade to a synthetic or alternative surface allows for extended usage hours, additional hire hours will not be automatically allocated to the existing hirer. Additional available hours will be allocated through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process.
- 3.6 Season Draws must be provided to Council once confirmed, to allow for Council to re-allocate any unused Sportsgrounds. Blanket bookings are not permitted, and Hirers must ensure every effort is made to notify Council of any unused dates in advance.
- 3.7 Allocations will generally include non-exclusive access to available Assets Within Sportsgrounds. From time to time, and subject to confirmation by Council, access to these Assets Within Sportsgrounds may be provided beyond the approved Allocation, such as to allow for use of a storage room between seasons. Where a Hirer's Allocation does not continue into the subsequent season, the Hirer will no longer have access to those Assets Within Sportsgrounds.
 - 3.7.1 Where Assets Within Sportsgrounds are added or upgraded, Hirer access as part of an Allocation will not be automatic, and will be considered in accordance with the principles of this Policy, and other applicable Policies or Council requirements for facility hire.
 - 3.7.2 Requests for exclusive hire of Assets Within Sportsgrounds are subject to Council's Lease & License Policy.
- 3.8 To be eligible to be considered for an Allocation, applicants must:
 - (a) maintain current public liability insurance, with a minimum amount of \$20,000,000 payable for any individual claim that may be made against that policy;
 - (b) be registered as a legal entity (e.g. as an Incorporated Association);
 - (c) not have any outstanding debts to Council; and
 - (d) accept Council's Terms & Conditions of Hire.
 - 3.8.1 Hirers that do not comply with this Policy or Council's Terms & Conditions of Hire during the term of their Allocation may not be considered for future Allocations.

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- 3.8.2 To be assigned an Allocation, Professional or Representative Sporting use applicants must demonstrate that the existing Council facility meets the sport's requirements, and is not dependent on the pursuit of upgrades or embellishments.
- 3.9 Casual or temporary hire of Council Sportsgrounds may be granted to individuals and groups for an agreed period of time, during daylight hours outside the times assigned to users with an Allocation, in accordance with Council's Community Facilities Hiring Policy.
- 3.9.1 To ensure fair shared use of Council's facilities, three casual bookings per season are permitted outside of the season of hire for groups with an Allocation, and ten bookings per calendar year for casual Hirers without an Allocation.
- 3.9.2 Re-occurring weekly casual hire of Sportsgrounds is not available for weekends.
- 3.10 The Hirer agrees to pay the fees and charges for the use of Council's sporting grounds in accordance with the schedule of Council's fees and charges current at the time of booking, including:
- a) Seasonal fees and charges for pre-season, winter season or summer season periods
 - b) Casual fees and charges for off-season periods or casual bookings
 - c) Sporting field floodlighting usage
 - d) Relevant fines or bonds
- 3.11 To ensure fair and shared access of Sportsgrounds, Council will generally facilitate Sportsground hire on a Seasonal Allocation or casual basis, where available. Council may however, consider long-term lease and license arrangements for exclusive use of a Sportsground where:
- (a) a commitment to significant financial investment in the facility can be demonstrated by the applicant to align with Council's strategic direction; and
 - (b) it can be demonstrated that this arrangement provides a greater benefit to the community, in line with the guiding principles of this policy, outlined in Section 3.1.

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3.11.1 Requests for a multiple-season hire, or long-term lease or license agreement, for use of Sportsground, as an exception to this Policy, must be submitted to Executive Director Community and Culture for consideration, before applying for the lease or license agreement.

3.11.2 Lease or license arrangements for Sportsgrounds are subject to Council's Lease & License Policy.

Prioritisation for Assigning Allocations

3.12 Council will utilise a prioritisation system to ensure that the hire of Sportsgrounds is equitable and aligned with Council's broader Sportsground Strategy and Action Plan and values, including to actively contribute to the health, wellbeing, equality, and inclusion of the whole community. Prioritisation for Allocations may apply to both the Sportsground and season assigned to the application for hire.

3.13 To prioritise Allocation requests, Council will assign a priority tier to all applications, based on the type of hire group, as follows:

Priority Tier	Type of Hirer groups
Primary Priority	- Community-led, participative Sporting Clubs and organisations - Community-led, participative Sporting Clubs and organisations (non-affiliated) - Government School groups located within the LGA
Secondary Priority	- Not-for-profit and community-based organisations and Programs - Commercial organisations that provide community-based Programs - Independent School groups located within the LGA - Government School groups located outside of the LGA
Tertiary Priority	- Independent School groups located outside the LGA - Professional or Representative Sporting use - Commercial and other hirers

3.13.1 All eligible Primary Priority Hirers will be allocated a principal facility (i.e. a home ground) as a priority before Primary Priority Hirers are allocated a second facility.

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3.13.2 Where it is necessary for Council to determine contested Allocation requests, it will prioritise the applicant(s) which will best deliver programming to meet the community's needs and Council's values, with consideration given to the following criteria:

- (a) proportion of participant membership residing within the LGA;
- (b) provides ongoing Programs or initiatives that cater for Grassroots Sports;
- (c) provides ongoing Programs or initiatives that consider Gender Equality;
- (d) provides ongoing Programs or initiatives that cater for underrepresented groups;
- (e) membership is open to all and reflective of junior teams/sides; female teams/sides; registered development Programs; and female representation on club committee;
- (f) membership and Programs are inclusive of all participants regardless of skill;
- (g) strong affiliation or history with the facility;
- (h) provides initiatives that promote healthy lifestyles;
- (i) ability to optimise usage of facilities, while keeping the facilities to a good standard;
- (j) demonstrated strong ties to the local community;
- (k) new or emerging sport, where the applicant can demonstrate a plan for ongoing success
- (l) for school groups, availability of Sportsgrounds within the school; and
- (m) for school groups, prioritised use for competitive sporting activities and programs over general recreation (e.g. physical education lessons, recess sessions).

4. Delegation

- 4.1 There are Administrative and/or Legislative Delegations applicable to this Policy, which are provided for in Council's Delegations Manual.

5. Procedure

- 5.1 This Policy must be read in conjunction with Council's Community Facilities Hiring Policy and accepted Terms & Conditions of Hire, which set out the applicable obligations for facility use which Hirers with an approved Allocation must follow.

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5.2 Allocations will be made by Council through the following process:

- 5.2.1 Council will call for applications for Allocations approximately two months prior to season commencement (e.g. February for the Winter Season, and July for the Summer Season).
- 5.2.2 Applications for Allocations are due six (6) weeks prior to the official season commencement date, which will be advised by Council. Late applications will not be considered.
- 5.2.3 Council will assess all received applications in accordance with this Policy, and liaise with applicants as required.
- 5.2.4 Council staff will notify applicants regarding assigned Allocations, and issue invoices for hire fees in accordance with Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.
- 5.2.5 Any changes to the Allocation requested by the applicant (e.g. as a result of increased or decreased registrations) may be accommodated by Council subject to availability, and will be considered in accordance with this Policy.
- 5.2.6 Where facilities may become available outside of the standard Allocation assignment cycle, such as through a vacancy, upgrade, or new development, Council will advertise for interested parties to submit an EOI application. Applications will be assessed by Council in accordance with this Policy. The successful EOI applicant(s) will be invited to complete an application for a seasonal hire Allocation.

5.3 Council may request for Hirers and applicants to provide Council with supporting documentation of operational information, which Council may seek to verify, including, but not limited to:

- (a) an official membership list, confirming members' residential suburb;
- (b) the number of teams and participants in each team;
- (c) a detailed schedule for use of the requested facility;
- (d) information regarding the organisation's governance structure; and
- (e) a copy of the organisation's annual report, including financial report;
- (f) previous tenure at other sporting facilities; and

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- (g) evidence of registration under the *Associations Incorporation Act 2009* (NSW), or other similar related registration that may apply to a sporting organisation.

5.4 If an applicant wishes to appeal the Allocation decision, they may appeal in writing to the Executive Director Community and Culture. The Executive Director Community and Culture or their delegate, will consider the appeal and notify all relevant applicants of the outcome.

6. Definitions

Allocation	A confirmed seasonal hire agreement for a Council Sportsground and/or sporting facility.
Assets Within Sportsgrounds	Council managed assets that facilitate the activity and support the use of the sporting field and may include items like cricket nets, floodlights, and pavilions.
Gender Equality	Refers to the attainment of equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for women, men, trans, and gender diverse people.
Grassroots Sport	Refers to organised sport practiced by amateur sportspeople, in the lowest available level of local competition.
Hirer	An organisation (e.g. Sporting Club, Sporting Association, state sporting organisation, community-based group, school, or tertiary organisation) whose application for hired use of a Council Sportsground has been approved, and who has accepted the Terms & Conditions of Hire.
Not-for-Profit	An organisation that provides services to the community and does not operate to make a profit for its members or shareholders. All profits must go back into the services the organisation provides and must not be distributed to members.
Off-Season	A period outside of a main sporting season, which may be used by a sporting group for an out of season competition, Program, or grading.
Pre-Season	A period prior to the commencement of a main sporting season, which may be used by a sporting group for training, coaching activities, trials, and gradings.
Program	Refers to activities which aim to promote and increase community participation in sport or recreation.

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Professional or Representative Sporting	Organised sport participated in at a higher level of competition than is readily available at the Grassroots Sport level.
Season Draws	Official competition draws provided by the relevant governing Sporting Association for that particular sport
Sporting Association	An umbrella organisation bringing together the affiliated Sporting Clubs and licensed players, with the aim of organising a sport, primarily through competition-based participation.
Sporting Club	A registered organisation that exists to promote and develop participation in a particular sport or physical activity.
Sportsground	Refers to land or a facility that is used primarily for formal sporting activities, involving organised sports or the playing of outdoor games.

REFERENCES	<i>Associations Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW)</i>
ASSOCIATED POLICIES and STRATEGIES	Community Facilities Hiring Policy Complaints Handling Policy Lease & License Policy Sportsground Strategy and Action Plan Terms & Conditions of Hire
ATTACHMENTS	Nil

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