Policy ID no: DSD25-CL

**Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy**

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| **Date Authorised by Chief Executive Officer or Council:** | 10 February 2016 |
| **Commencement Date:** | 10 February 2016 |
| **Review Date (10 years from authorised date):**  | February 2026 |
| **Responsible Department** | Social Development |

This policy has been authorised.

Nerina Di Lorenzo

**Chief Executive Officer**

10 February 2016

INTRODUCTION

To provide a framework for the allocation and use of sporting facilities, grounds, and pavilions to clubs through seasonal and annual tenancy agreements or lease agreements.

The allocation and use of sporting facilities, grounds and pavilions policy seeks to:

* Maximise participation in sport and recreation on sporting facilities, grounds and pavilions;
* Prioritise the allocation and use of sporting grounds and pavilions to clubs which are inclusive of females, actively support juniors, people with disabilities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) to participate in sport and recreation;
* Ensure sporting facilities, grounds and pavilions are allocated to clubs with sound governance structures, open membership, elected committees and a demonstrated commitment to social responsibility;
* Enable Council to address the needs of growth sports; and
* Increase the number of participants, members, coaches, officials, spectators and volunteers by reaching new audiences.

This Policy covers both the lease and allocation of Council Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions.

CONTEXT

Merri-bek City Council has a strong commitment to providing its diverse community with broad range of sporting and recreational opportunities. Council provides a wide range of sporting facilities and opportunities for its residents and visitors to the municipality.

The implementation of this policy is necessary to address inequity, continue to address discrimination, meet legislative requirements, promote community cohesion and encourage the provision of equitable access to services for all sectors of the Merri-bek community. The policy also ensures that both the culture and structure of sports are addressed and challenged to improve accessibility and to provide all individuals with equality of opportunity and choice.

It cannot be assumed that any sport is open and accessible to all members of the community. Merri-bek City Council through previous and ongoing studies recognise four key priority groups within the sporting community who have traditionally participated less either as players, coaches, officials or volunteers:

* Junior/youth sport
* Women's and girls sport
* People with disabilities
* People from CALD backgrounds

It is intended that this policy will have wide implications for local communities, and will impact upon anyone providing sporting opportunities in the City of Merri-bek, including voluntary and commercial organisations and individuals.

Alignment

This policy has been informed and links to:

* Merri-bek Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2014-2018
* Merri-bek Active Women and Girls Strategy 2009
* Merri-bek and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017
* Merri-bek Open Space Strategy 2012-2022
* Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions User Guide
* Access and Inclusion Policy
* Fees and Charges Policy
* Lease Principles Policy
* Property Leasing Policy

Organisational Context

**State Government**

Sport and Recreation Victoria lists community programs that encourage more people to be physically active and that support local government and local sport and recreation clubs to improve access to sporting and recreational facilities as a key priority area.

A recently released Inquiry into *Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation: A Five Year Game Plan for Victoria (2015)* by the State Government lists the following themes and recommendations that support Council’s proactive work in increasing female participation within its sporting clubs:

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| **Commitment to Outcomes** | Mandate Gender Balance and Good Governance Principles |
| **Innovative Ways to Effect Change** | Enhance Participation Choice and Improve How Opportunities are Marketed |
| **Change the Environment** | Deliver Female Friendly Built Environments and Equitable |
| **Showcase Achievement** | Provide Pathways and Opportunities |

**Federal Government**

The Council of Australian Governments’ (COAG) identifies the need for local Councils to:

* Increase people’s awareness of the importance of physical activity and healthy eating.
* Increase the availability of accredited and appropriate physical activity, dietary education and healthy lifestyle programs.
* Increase participation in these community based programs for those who are least likely to participate.
* Utilise resources currently available through local government, the community and the commercial fitness, wellness and weight management sectors to facilitate the expansion of programs.

Research and other drivers

The Active Women and Girls Strategy (2009) identified that a significant barrier to female participation is the lack of ‘pathways’ between the various sporting activities, and places where sport is played.

OBJECTIVES

* To increase participation in sport and physical activity for women and girls, juniors, people with a disability and people from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds.
* Ensure Merri-bek residents are more active more often at all stages of life.
* Provide a diverse range of recreation opportunities that reflect our diverse community.
* Provide supportive environments and facilities which encourage participation.
* Develop and maintain partnerships to enhance participation options.

As a result, this will:

* Improve personal health and wellbeing;
* Encourage social interaction;
* Contribute to resilient families;
* Bring communities together;
* Develop community pride;
* Generate economic activity;
* Reduce healthcare costs;
* Enhance quality of life; and
* Provide equitable use of Council facilities.

POLICY DETAILS

The following criteria applies to the leasing or allocation of Merri-bek City Council sporting facilities, grounds and pavilions:

State Sporting Association registration

Facilities will only be allocated to clubs that are registered with the appropriate State Sporting Association.

Sound governance structure

Facilities will only be allocated to clubs that have sound governance structures in place and have elected committees.

 Open membership

Facilities will only be allocated to clubs that demonstrate open membership for men, women and juniors, and a demonstrated commitment to social responsibility.

Council’s Club Development Initiatives

Facilities will only be allocated to clubs that participate in all Club Development Initiative programs/workshops offered by Council.

Club name

Facilities will only be allocated to clubs whereby the club’s name is be representative of the Merri-bek geographic area within which the club is located, and shall not make any reference to any ethnic name, slogan, sponsor or business. In addition, the ‘name’ shall not contain initials of any type that can be interpreted as non-representative of the geographic area.

Policy and strategy development

Facilities will only be allocated to clubs that develop and demonstrate policies and strategies to increase the participation, general health and wellbeing of juniors, girls and women.

Program development to increase participation in sport, recreation and physical activity

Facilities will only be allocated to clubs that provide programs that increase the participation, general health and wellbeing of juniors, girls and women by:

* Increasing participation in sport, recreation and physical activity;
* Ensuring that the values, needs and aspirations of women and girls from all backgrounds and circumstances are taken into account;
* Increasing the number of female coaches, instructors, decision makers, officials and administrators at all levels; and
* Giving special attention to the recruitment, development and retention of women and girls in decision making and leadership roles.

From March 2016, leasing and allocation of Council facilities will only be provided to clubs whose membership provides the following in their respective sporting codes:

* Junior teams/sides;
* Female teams/sides;
* registered sport association development programs; and
* Female representation on club committee and/or board.

Priority leasing and allocation of facilities will be given to clubs that:

* Are inclusive of people with disabilities, and actively support juniors, females and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) to participate in recreation;
* Demonstrated participation by Merri-bek residents;
* Comply with all previous occupancy requirements; and
* Complete significant capital works to the satisfaction of Council.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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| **Party/parties** | **Roles and responsibilities** | **Timelines** |
| Recreation Services | Management of seasonal and annual tenancy applications | January August |
| Property Services | Administration and Management of leases and licences  | Ongoing |

# MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

All applications for facility, ground and pavilion allocations and leases will be assessed by Recreation Services Unit and endorsed by Council.

A lease or allocation may be withdrawn by the Director of Social Development, if a club breaches any principle of the Policy.

The Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions User Guide will be reviewed prior to the commencement of each allocation period and updated as required.

Amendments to the Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions User Guide and the Property Leasing Policy may occur throughout the season if:

* Legislative requirements alter;
* Legal Issues highlight a need for change;
* Insurance and risk management issues arise; and
* Merri-bek City Council policy changes in other departments affect sports ground users.

A review of this policy will be undertaken 10 years from its date of authorisation unless otherwise instructed.

DEFINITIONS

| **Term** | **Definition** |
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| **Seasonal and Annual Tenancy Allocations** | A tenancy allocation is an agreement that provides seasonal or annual use of a Council sporting ground, facility or pavilion.* **Annual allocations**1 April to 31 March
* **Seasonal summer allocations**1 October to 29 February
* **Seasonal winter allocations**1 April to 31 August
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| **Lease agreement** | A Lease is an agreement that provides exclusive or long term occupation of a Council sporting ground, facility or pavilion. Council places a greater expectation on clubs in terms of maintenance and management where use is under the terms of a lease. |
| **Physical activity** | Any movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure It includes sport, fitness, play and active transport. Physical activity is also gardening, dancing or throwing a Frisbee in the park. |
| **Sport** | A human activity involving physical exertion and skill as the primary focus of the activity, with elements of competition where rules and patterns of behaviour governing the activity exist formally through organisations and is generally recognised as a sport. |
| **State Sporting Association (SSA)** | A state sporting association (SSA) is the pre-eminent governing body for a sport in Victoria. SSA’s:* Are capable of representing all Victorians’ participating in the sport,
* Are affiliated with the National Sporting Organisation (NSO) for the sport,
* Have sound financial and governance policies and practices,
* Have policies and procedures in place to protect the integrity of the sport and implement Victorian government policy including the Victorian Code of Conduct for Community Sport, and
* Are a legal, not-for-profit entity.
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ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

State Sporting Association Strategies

* Athletics Victoria - [Strategic Plan 2014–2017](http://athsvic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/AV_Strategy2015_4ppA3_04_EMAIL.pdf)
* AFL Vic - [Growing the Heartland, Football Facilities Development Strategy 2014-2020](http://www.aflvic.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/AFL-Infrastructure-Booklet-FINAL.pdf)
* Badminton Victoria – [Victorian Commonwealth Games Association Strategic Plan 2011-2015](http://www.vcga.com.au/media/StratPlan/StratPlanV1.pdf)
* Baseball Victoria - [Strategy for Baseball in Victoria: 2012-2015](http://www.baseballvictoria.com.au/Portals/34/BV_Strategic_Plan_2012-15_FINAL_web.pdf)
* Bowls Victoria - [Strategic Plan Summary 2013-2017](http://www.bowlsvic.org.au/Portals/7/Documents/strategic%20plan%20summary%202013-17.pdf)
* Cricket Victoria - [Strategy for Victorian Cricket 2015-2017](http://www.cricketvictoria.com.au/files/pages/strategic-plan/CV_Strategic_Plan_2015-17.pdf)
* Cycling Victoria – [Strategic Plan 2013–2016](http://vic.cycling.org.au/Portals/17/Policies/Cycling%20Victoria%20Strategic%20Plan%20V2.pdf)
* Football Federation Victoria – [Football in Victoria, FFV Strategic Plan 2012-2015](http://www.footballfedvic.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/FFV_Strategic_Plan_-_FINAL_March_2012.pdf)
* Frisbee – [Ultimate Victoria Strategic Plan 2012-2015](https://ultimatevictoria.com.au/images/docs/uv_strategic_plan_2012-2015.pdf)
* Hockey Victoria – [Growing our game, Hockey Victoria Strategic Plan 2013-2016](http://www.hockeyvictoria.org.au/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=0GtNV4zNUPA%3d&portalid=15)
* Lacrosse Victoria - [Strategic Plan 2013-2017](http://lacrossevictoria.com.au/media/127893/Lacrosse-Victoria-Strategic-Plan-2013-2017.pdf)
* Mallet Sports - [Croquet Victoria Strategic Plan 2013-2017](http://www.croquetvic.asn.au/documents/VCA%20Strategic%20Plan%202013%20-%202017%20.pdf)
* Netball Victoria - [Our Strategic Plan for Success 2014-2018](http://vic.netball.com.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2013/09/NV_StrategicPlan_Digital_FA2.pdf)
* Softball Victoria – [Strategic Plan 2014-2018](http://assets.softball.org.au/dl/vic/Policy/Strategic%20Plan%202014-2018%20Final.pdf)
* Table Tennis Victoria - [Table Tennis Australia Participation Plan 2011-2015](http://tabletennis.org.au/Portals/16/TTA%20Participation%20Operational%20Plan%20-%202011_2015.pdf)
* Tennis Victoria - [Tennis Victoria Strategic Plan to 2016](http://www.tennis.com.au/vic/files/2015/08/TV_StratPlan_Nov13.pdf)
* Volleyball Victoria - [Strategic Plan 2015-2017](http://www.volleyballvictoria.com.au/fileadmin/user_upload/2014/_12-Dec/2015-17_VV_Strategic_Plan.pdf)

REFERENCES

Department of Health 2011, *Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2011–2015*, State of Victoria, Prevention and Population Health Branch, Department of Health, Melbourne, viewed 10 December 2015

Victorian State Government 2015, *Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation: A Five Year Game Plan for Victoria,* State of Victoria, Melbourne, viewed 14 January 2015,

<<http://www.sport.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/inquiry_into_women_and_girls_in_sport.pdf>>