

## Community Facilities Management Policy

File Number:	A37073	Authority:	Council
Directorate:	Community Services	Responsible Officer:	Manager Community Facilities, Sport and Recreation
Policy Type:	Discretionary	Version No:	1
1 <sup>st</sup> Adopted by Council	26 February 2007 Minute No. 480	Last Adopted by Council:	25 March 2013 Minute No. 127
Review Period:	Biennially	Next Review:	2014/15

### 1. Purpose

This Policy provides a clear and consistent management framework for a range of community facilities that are managed by Council in the City of Greater Dandenong.

The Policy provides clarity for consistent operations, fair and equitable access and the setting of fees and charges through a consistent framework aimed at maximising use of community facilities. The expected result will be greater community benefit and effective use of public resources.

### 2. Background

Diverse procedures have been employed in the past for the management of a variety of community facilities resulting in inconsistent fee charging and management practices. An improved management framework is required to provide consistent operational practices, ease of access for the community and appropriate and affordable fees and charges.

The demand for community meeting space is increasing, driven by population growth and the rapidly emerging needs of migrant and refugee communities. Issues and challenges that are addressed by this Policy include community awareness about the range of facilities, access and affordability as well as improved service for the community that results from streamlining operational processes.

This Policy has been prepared in consideration of the Multipurpose Use of Community Facilities Policy 2011 and the Sports Pavilion Management Policy 2012.

This Policy replaces the former Community Facilities Fees and Charges Policy.

This Policy will address matters raised through Council's Audit Committee with regard to Council's fees and charges and will respond to considerations of cost recovery, benchmarking with others and capacity to pay.

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It is understood that community facilities incur operating costs that need to be clearly identified. This Policy recognises the need for financial targets while maximising access for the community.

This Policy presents a consistent management framework for community facilities so that users and potential hirers can experience a simple and fair process and high quality customer service.

## 3. Scope

### 3.1 Inclusions

This Policy applies to the following community sporting and cultural facilities:

- Mills Reserve Community Facility;
- Paddy O'Donoghue Centre;
- Jan Wilson Community Centre;
- The Castle;
- Warner Reserve Community Facility;
- Senior Citizens Centre – Dandenong Central;
- Senior Citizens Centre – Dandenong North / Latham Crescent;
- Senior Citizens Centre – Springvale; and
- In accordance with clause 7.3 of this policy;
  - The Drum;
  - Walker Street Gallery and Dandenong Community Arts Centre; and
  - Heritage Hill Museum and Historic Gardens.

Facilities that are managed on behalf of Council (under contract, lease or licence) and for which Council sets fees and charges through the annual budget process are covered by this Policy in accordance with clause 7.3. These facilities include:

- Springers Leisure Centre Courts and Community Rooms;
- Gloria Pyke Netball Pavilion;
- Dandenong Oasis Function Room and Crèche/Multi-use space;
- Noble Park Aquatic Centre Community Rooms; and
- Dandenong Stadium Courts, Meeting Rooms/ Multi-use spaces and Function Room.

All sports pavilions are available for hire subject to demand and agreement with seasonal tenants (where exclusive tenancies are in place) in accordance with Council's Sports Pavilion Management Policy 2012.

### 3.2 Exclusions

This Policy does not include public halls or Council's meeting rooms that are managed through Civic Attendance or other neighbourhood houses and community facilities managed by Committees of Management through a lease agreement.

## 4. Human Rights and Responsibilities Charter – Compatibility Statement

The Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities has been considered in the preparation of this Policy. This Policy is consistent with the Charter and with the recognition of Council's duty of care to all who seek to make use of Council's facilities.

## 5. References

- Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006.
- Multipurpose Use of Community Facilities Policy 2011.
- Sports Pavilion Management Policy 2012.
- Corporate Pricing Policy — yet to be developed.

## 6. Definitions

The following definitions of terms apply in the reading of this Policy.

### General Terms

**Community Facilities:** Facilities that are managed by Council for a range of specific and general community activities or programs and are available for use by residents and community and commercial users.

**Primary Purpose:** The main activity that a facility provides – could be a purpose built or historic activity. This purpose could change over time.

**Secondary Purpose:** Other uses that are not the 'primary purpose' but which are compatible with the nature of the facility.

### Categories of Hirers and Rates

**Community Group:** Not-for-profit or voluntary groups that receive minimal or no funding to run group activities or programs. Includes groups deemed to be providing services and activities to the local community, such as sporting and hobby clubs, cultural and social clubs.

**Community Agency:** Not-for profit organisations that receive funding to provide services. Includes government departments, agencies, schools, not-for-profit organisations and churches as well as organisations and community groups that are based outside Greater Dandenong.

Also includes residents of Greater Dandenong using facilities for private functions where there are no charges for participants.

Commercial:	For profit organisations. Includes businesses, instructors, corporations, political groups and training organisations. Also includes individuals conducting private functions from outside Greater Dandenong and/or where there are costs for participants.
Council Funded:	Organisations and/or programs that Council supports through (part or whole) subsidy. This support could be in lieu of a Council grant for facility hire, must be a 'core business' of Council and/or must be consistent with an approved plan, strategy or policy.
Internal:	Council staff – use of facilities for meetings, seminars and direct Council activities that have a corporate or City of Greater Dandenong organisation focus.

## 7. Council Policy

### 7.1 Principles

- Achieving high levels of utilisation in all community facilities maximises benefit for the community.
- Providing different types of facilities offers choice to the community for meeting the diverse needs of groups and organisations.
- A high level of customer service maximises utilisation and long term benefits.
- An affordable and simple fees and charges system for community facilities increases access to the community.
- Priority access for groups highlighted in Council endorsed plans and strategies will target subsidy and support where it is most needed.

### 7.2 Operational Policies

#### Fees and Charges:

- Council recognises the important role that community facilities provide to community groups in encouraging social and civic participation and supporting the wellbeing of residents.
- It is fair that a group that derives a benefit from using a community facility pays a fee to use that facility.
- Council's fees and charges are determined through the annual budget process with an understanding of the importance of subsidising community groups who provide community benefit and have a limited capacity to pay.
- When applying annual / CPI increases to fees and charges, Council will maintain a simple fee structure for community facilities by rounding all fees to the nearest dollar.

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- Fees and charges are set according to the types of users, levels of services and types of facilities.
- Fees and charges will be consistent, transparent and affordable to encourage and retain use for the benefit of the community.
- Fees and charges that are set for commercial hirers assist with subsidising community users and the associated benefits that the facilities provide.

## **Community Access and Benefit:**

- Maximum utilisation of all facilities is promoted with consideration given to community demand and capacity of facilities to cater for use.
- 'Community Group' use of community facilities is given priority over other uses particularly where:
  - Local community groups do not have ready access to any other types of community facilities in which to conduct their activities;
  - A strategic objective/s is achieved by supporting such use; or
  - There is a clear social benefit to be achieved by the use/activity, including access for multi-cultural groups, aged people, family groups and other population groups.
- 'Community Agency' priority use is granted to organisations and groups who can demonstrate:
  - Strategic objective/s are met in Greater Dandenong by such use; or
  - A clear social benefit for the communities of Greater Dandenong and in particular demographic groups identified as being in need.
- 'Commercial' use is encouraged to help increase utilisation of a facility and particularly where:
  - There is a demonstrated benefit to the Greater Dandenong community from the commercial activity that is being conducted;
  - The use complements other uses of a facility at a time when the facility would otherwise be vacant; or
  - Building business sector partnerships has a benefit to the facility in potential sponsorship and increased revenue.
- Facilities are promoted to optimise utilisation. Marketing and promotion targets primary purposes of facilities as a priority and also secondary purposes to:
  - Create complementary utilisation;
  - Increase viability; and
  - Enhance community benefit.

## **Council Funded Use of Community Facilities:**

- This Policy recognises the legitimacy of charging fees for use of community facilities. Any discretion to reduce fees or provide additional subsidy due to hardship is subject to Council consideration of financial support. These users fall within this category.
- 'Council funded' use will be given priority where:

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- Community groups are supported to use facilities with financial assistance from Council;
- Funding has been secured to conduct a program that requires a facility;
- Strategic objective/s are met in Greater Dandenong by such use; or
- A clear social benefit for the communities of Greater Dandenong and in particular demographic groups identified as being in need.

## **Internal Use of Community Facilities:**

- All 'internal' use of community facilities involves use by Council staff and must have a corporate purpose or a link to an adopted plan/strategy.

## **User Agreements:**

- Through the use of user agreements Council will:
  - Facilitate universal access without discrimination;
  - Facilitate safe and permitted use of all facilities;
  - Outline rights and responsibilities of all parties; and
  - Ensure public safety at all times.
- Simple and user friendly information provides clear guidance about permitted uses and conditions of hire.

## **7.3 Special Circumstances**

### **The Drum:**

- It is recognised that the primary purpose of The Drum Theatre is providing arts and cultural programs and activities for the community.
- However, facilities in The Drum can also be used by the community for a range of secondary purposes that are complementary with The Drum's primary purpose. This Policy applies for such uses.

### **Walker Street Gallery and Dandenong Community Arts Centre:**

- It is recognised that the primary purpose of the Walker Street Gallery is to provide exhibition space for the benefit of local and professional artists and the primary purpose of the Community Arts Centre Theatre is to provide 'black box' facilities for minor productions and performances.
- However, the facilities within this Centre can also be used by the community for a range of secondary purposes that are complementary and increase its utilisation. This policy applies to such uses.

### **Heritage Hill Museum and Historic Gardens:**

- It is recognised that the primary purpose of the Heritage Hill complex is to provide exhibition space for the benefit of local artists and a historic display of life in early Dandenong.

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- However, the facilities within this centre can also be used by the community for a range of secondary purposes that are complementary and increase its utilisation. This policy applies to such uses.

## **Sports Pavilions:**

- It is recognised that the primary purpose of sports pavilions on recreation reserves is to provide change, club and social facilities for sports participants. Council is now seeking to create multi-use facilities within these pavilions when new facilities and redevelopment works are planned. As such user (tenancy) agreements for sporting clubs will recognise the core hours of their use, allowing community access at all other times. For this community access to these facilities, this Policy applies.

## **Contracted and Leased/Licensed Facilities:**

- A number of facilities are managed by not-for-profit organisations, private businesses, associations and/or clubs under various types of agreements, including aquatic and leisure facilities and stadiums. For these facilities Council determines fees and charges through the annual budget process and outlines roles and responsibilities for maximising community benefit in the contractual agreements. This Policy applies to the community hire and Council use of specific parts of these facilities in accordance with the terms of contracts and agreements. Owing to the contracted responsibilities the implementation of this policy will occur over an extended period.
- There is also a range of community facilities that are managed by incorporated groups for which Council does not determine fees and charges. For such facilities, organisations will be encouraged to be guided by this Policy in determining operational practices and fees and charges.

## **8. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Council**

- Responsible for annual fees and charges through the budget process.
- Overall responsibility for review of the Policy.

### **Operational Management**

- Marketing and promotion of facilities;
- Simple and comparable information for all facilities;
- Consistent booking and hiring procedures;
- Customer service;
- Single booking software and reporting system;
- Online and manual booking options; and
- Utilisation and financial reporting.