



Community Facilities Access Policy

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Responsible officer	Manager Community Planning
Policy owner	Coordinator Community Activation and Learning

1. Purpose

Council is responsible for the management of a diverse range of facilities available for use by residents, businesses, community service organisations, community sporting groups and visitors to the City. The purpose of this policy is to define Council’s position in relation to the objectives and use of community facilities, which provides the basis for a consistent approach in their management and use.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all groups, entities and individuals (Users) wishing to access a Council owned or operated community facility. The following table provides an overview of the range and type of facilities that apply to this policy:

Type of Facility	Description
Community Sports Pavilions	These facilities are normally located adjacent to Sports Reserves and Parks with playing surfaces used for sport. These facilities generally have a club or clubs that have approved access to the facility for a fixed period of time, which is often a seasonal or annual allocation. They are also available for use for other compatible activities. Examples: tennis pavilions and football pavilions.
Sports Reserves and Parks	These are sports fields, hard courts and parks that can provide for a range of recreational activities. These areas may have clubs that have approved access for a fixed period of time. (E.g. football clubs during their season) but are also available for use for compatible activities and general public non-structured use. Examples: football / cricket grounds, local parks.
Community Centres	These include community halls, Neighbourhood Houses, Youth Centres, Seniors Centres and community centres that have spaces including meeting rooms, consulting rooms, kindergartens, maternal and child health spaces, designated and available for community and/or commercial use. The type and size of spaces available varies dependant on the facility. Some centres also have office space or work stations for hire. Examples: function halls, children’s and community centres.
Leisure Centres/Indoor Stadiums (excluding Aquatic Centres)	These are facilities specifically designed to cater for indoor sports such as basketball, netball, badminton, volleyball and indoor soccer.
Libraries	The two municipal libraries in which there are designated community spaces for hire.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Casual Hire Agreement/ Casual Use Terms and Conditions	An agreement between Council and a User for use of a facility on a casual or occasional basis for a prescribed fee, including Multipurpose Facility Conditions of Use and Casual Hire of Sporting Grounds and Reserves – Terms and Conditions of Use.
Community Service Organisations (CSOs)	Funded organisations that aim to support families to fulfil their caring roles, provide care when families are unable to do so and provide interventions when a person's needs are not able to be met within the community without special intervention. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Services. • Disability Services.
Community Space	A space designated for hire for a range of user groups.
Individuals	Individual community members using facilities for private functions and activities.
Non-Insured Activities	Activities that are not covered under Council's corporate public liability insurance for facility hire. Such activities include sporting activities, festivals or events, commercial activities or activities involving attendance of greater than 1000 people.
Not-For-Profit Community Groups	A registered not-for-profit incorporated group or association that is accessible and accountable to members of the community. A community group that provides the community and/or its members with opportunities to engage in local community, cultural, leisure, and/or educational activities. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sporting clubs and associations. • Arts, cultural, religious and special interest groups.
Office Space	An enclosed office space where business can be conducted with a degree of privacy.
Licenced Area	A licenced indoor space purpose built and designed for children's activities and programs. Not a hireable space. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinder Rooms • Early Years and children's activity spaces
Primary User	Groups or organisations who are priority users of a particular facility due to the designated purpose of that facility (i.e. sports club at sport pavilion) or a contractual arrangement between Council and the primary user to provide a service for Council (e.g. Kindergarten providers).
Commercial / Private User	Commercial/ Private organisations or entities that are not registered as not-for-profit incorporated group, are not funded Community Service organisations, which may operate or offer a service for financial gain. Example includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dance schools, Health and wellbeing organisations • Private social or cultural functions

Special Consideration	Special circumstances arising which make payment of set fees difficult. Applications for Special Consideration may be made to Council under circumstances outlined in Section 4.7.
User/s	Hirer/s of Council facilities. A User may be a casual hirer or regular hirer of any of the facilities within the scope of the Community Facilities Access Policy.
Work Station	A work space in a shared office environment.

4. Policy

4.1 Objectives

Council aims to create a vibrant, safe and liveable City accessible to all with equitable access to a diverse range of supportive community infrastructure.

Council makes a significant contribution to the management of community facilities and encourages use of facilities by a broad range of groups and organisations on the basis that they provide for a need within the community provide required services and aid in building a strong and connected community.

The objectives of this policy are to manage Council's suite of facilities consistently in order to ensure:

1. Diversity of activities, services, programs and Users that deliver the broadest community benefit to promote an empowered, connected and engaged community.
2. Equity of access to our facilities by a range of Users.
3. Support to existing organisations and activities and the emergence of new ones that address community needs.

4.2 Multipurpose facilities

In order to manage demand and provide for a range of activities, facilities will be available for shared use by a number of Users and will not be used exclusively by any one group. Where a User cannot be granted access at their preferred facility, Council will support the User to find an alternative community facility deemed suitable for their needs.

Council will design and manage facilities so they have the flexibility to accommodate a broad range of activities and users.

4.3 Priority Access

Community facilities are primarily provided to support not-for-profit community groups and the delivery of Council programs. Council's Economic Development and Tourism Plan outlines a commitment to economic development within the municipality and commercial entities will be provided opportunities to use Council's community facilities where significant community benefit and demand is evident.

Council facilities are not intended to replace commercial property options for Commercial Users or Not-For-Profit Community Groups that require the use of entire facilities or significant hours of hire.

Accordingly, the following groups or organisations will generally be given priority access to community facilities:

- Council-run and prioritised programs.
- Primary users.
- Groups that meet an identified need of the community and align with the objectives outlined in The Melton City Council and Wellbeing Plan. Users that align with the core or primary designed use of a community facility. Facilities where there is a core use identified include

Recreation and Sporting Facilities, Libraries, Youth Centres, Neighbourhood Houses, Childrens and Community Centres, Seniors Centres and Melton Community Hall

- Not-for-profit community organisations or Community Service Organisations delivering activities and/or services of benefit to the community.
- Groups that can show that at least 75% of its membership live, work, play or study in the City of Melton.

4.4 Restrictions on hire

Council will ensure facilities remain accessible for use by not-for-profit community organisations and Community Service Organisations that assist Council to achieve its Council Plan and this policy's objectives, and to ensure facilities are not dominated by one type of user group. To achieve this, the following restrictions apply:

- Not-for-profit community groups and community service organisations can make application for no more than 100 hours of room hire per month at any one facility.
- Commercial organisations can make application for no more than 36 hours of room hire per month at any one facility.

Council reserves the right to review each application individually and limit hiring to less than these thresholds if there is expressed need from other user groups for use of that facility or demand for the service provided is not evident. Users may apply for Special Consideration to hire in excess of these restrictions where the facility identified is under-utilised or greater use is supported by Council.

These restrictions do not apply to Primary Users, organisations under contract to provide specific services on Council's behalf or to training providers at libraries. At facilities where there is a primary user or a core use identified, use by other parties may be restricted because of operational and / or risk management considerations associated with any primary or core use of the facility. Council reserves the right to limit or prohibit alcohol consumption at any of its facilities.

4.5 Support for new groups, activities and services

Council supports not-for-profit community groups and community service organisations by significantly subsidising hire fees. To further support the development of new groups, activities and services, new not-for-profit community groups yet to be incorporated may apply for Special Consideration to be covered by Council's public liability insurance to enable facility hire and to receive support from Council to become incorporated and independent.

Community Service Organisations may apply for Special Consideration where there is an unmet need for their service in the community. Refer to Section 4.7.

4.6 Fees

All fees and charges for use of Council facilities are approved within Council's annual budget process and are subsidised on a sliding scale with the lowest fees charged to not-for-profit community organisations and the highest fees charged to commercial entities. All user groups are to pay the appropriate fees, unless granted Special Consideration.

Applications for Special Consideration must be approved by the General Manager Community Services. Refer to Section 4.7.

4.7 Special Consideration

The following circumstances are eligible to be considered for Special Consideration:

- 4.7.1** New not-for-profit community groups: New groups who have yet to be incorporated and do not hold their own public liability insurance may apply to be covered by Council's corporate public liability insurance for a period of 6 months, up to a maximum of 26 bookings. To be

eligible for this support, the group must register to work with Council staff to gain assistance in becoming incorporated. Council's corporate insurance cannot be used for Non-Insured Activities (refer to Application for Special Consideration for Facility Use procedure).

- 4.7.2** Financial hardship: Individuals or Users who can prove that they are unable to pay their hire fees or that payment of their hire fees would lead to financial hardship may be granted a discount or fee waiver in line with Council's Financial Assistance (Rates & Charges) Policy.
- 4.7.3** Fundraising activities: Users may apply for a fee waiver for one-off fundraising activities.
- 4.7.4** Community Service Organisations: Community Service Organisations may apply for Special Consideration if they can provide evidence of an unmet need and demand for their service within the City of Melton and that payment of hire fees would make the provision of the service untenable. Community Service Organisations may apply for a fee waiver or discount.
- 4.7.5** Public service of broad community benefit: Users may apply for a fee waiver or discount for one-off public service events with broad community benefit. Examples include community safety forums and town meetings for issues of importance for the wider community.
- 4.7.6** Discounted hire fees: Commercial entities may apply for discounted hire fees where they can provide evidence of community demand, their activity aligns with the Council Plan or Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and they can provide evidence that they are not collecting sufficient customer fees to cover the commercial hire fees.
- 4.7.7** Hire in excess of restrictions: Users may apply for room hire in excess of restrictions outlined in Section 4.4 where the facility is under-utilised or where use is supported by Council's Community Service Organisation Capacity and Attraction Framework.
- 4.7.8** In the instance unforeseen circumstances render the facility unusable for hire, Council Officers will make the appropriate effort to source an alternate facility where practicable to support the User.

Council will assess applications based on the criteria outlined in section 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5

4.8 Refusal to hire

Council reserves the right to refuse hire where the user group has not adhered to hiring terms and conditions in the past or has failed to adhere to relevant Council policy, procedures or processes in making bookings. Refer to Non-compliance with Facility Licence Agreement or Conditions of Use Procedure for further detail.

Council also reserves the right to refuse to hire to groups or entities whose core objectives, principles or policies conflict with Council's own adopted plans, strategies and positions.

4.9 Office space and workstations for use by external parties

Many of Council's facilities offer office spaces or work stations for hire. Maximum hours of hire restrictions outlined in Section 4.4 do not apply to office space and workstations.

If an office or workstation is used less than 5 full days per week, Users must leave the space in a state whereby it can be hired to other Users on the vacant days. Where vacant Maternal and Child Health offices are hired, Council reserves the right to reclaim use of the space at the end of the Licence Agreement term to provide Council services.

4.10 Facility Allocation

Council manages and maintains access to community facilities via a formal agreement between Council and the approved group or individual who has applied for use of facilities.

Within this policy, there are two types of agreements. The type of agreement applicable will depend on the type of use and the length of use approved.

1. Licence Agreements are developed for regular users of Council facilities (using the facility a minimum of 6 times in a calendar year). A Licence Agreement gives the User approved hours of access to designated part of a facility for a prescribed fee. The Agreement has conditions and responsibilities that apply for the term of the Agreement. Licence Agreements are generally for a 6 month or 1 year period and will specify bookings of the licensee over the year. Some Users will be subject to longer Agreement terms. Council makes no guarantee that the same facility or hours of use will be available in subsequent years.
2. A Casual Hire Agreement is used for the hire of a facility on a casual or occasional basis for a prescribed fee. Conditions of hire are specified on this document.

Council will assess applications based on the criteria outlined in section 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5

Lease agreements are excluded from this policy and are subject to Council's Legal Team.

4.11 Internal Council bookings

Council-run and programs and activities are prioritised for facility bookings, alongside other priority Users as outlined in section 4.3. Internal Council bookings for Council-run programs and activities are at no charge.

Council may make an internal booking for an event or activity for which they are partnering with external groups or agencies. It is expected that Council plays a significant role in the planning and delivery of any event or activity for which such an internal booking is made. A Council Officer must be present for the duration of an internal booking.

5. Responsibility /Accountability

5.1	<p>All Council Officers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for ensuring that this Policy is followed regarding the hire of any of Council's facilities included in the scope of this Policy.
5.2	<p>Coordinator Community Activation and Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible for developing and reviewing this policy and related procedures.

6. References and links to legislation and other documents

Name	Location
Melton City Council and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025	
Melton City 2041- The City We Create	
Licence Agreement	
Casual Hire of Sporting Grounds and Reserves – Terms and Conditions of Use	
Application for Special Consideration for Facility Use Procedure	
Lease and Licence Policy	
Alcohol Management Framework	
Economic Development and Tourism Plan 2014-2030	
Asset Plan 2021-2031	
Gambling Harm Prevention and	

Reduction Policy	
Creative Melton 2030	
Financial Assistance (Rates & Charges) Policy	