

Active Facilities Policy – Outdoor Sports and Recreation

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Community Life

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1. Purpose

The Active Facilities Policy – Outdoor Sports and Recreation (the Policy) provides the strategic and governance framework for the allocation, management and use of Council's outdoor sport and recreation facilities, including sports fields and pavilions. It establishes the principles that guide fair, equitable and sustainable access to these publicly funded community assets, supporting participation, inclusion and community wellbeing.

The Policy aligns with Council's governance responsibilities, the Whitehorse Integrated Council Plan 2025-2029 and relevant legislative obligations. Together with the Active Facilities Procedures – Outdoor Sports and Recreation document (the Procedures), it supports the consistent, transparent and effective management of outdoor sport and recreation facilities to maximise community benefit through equitable access, shared use and sustainable management, while responding to community needs over time.

2. Background

This policy has been developed to replace the Sporting Facilities Guide – Seasonal and Casual Users (2019), reflecting the need for a more contemporary, best-practice approach to managing sports fields and pavilions. It is the fifth significant review of equivalent frameworks since 1996. The review responds to increasing demand, changing participation patterns, and growing expectations for equitable and shared access to community facilities. Given the significant public investment required to provide and maintain these assets, the policy aims to maximise their community benefit.

It is informed by key legislative and policy drivers, including the Local Government Act 2020, Gender Equality Act 2020, Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, and the Victorian Government's Fair Access Policy Roadmap, which require councils to promote safe, inclusive and equitable access to community sport.

The policy responds to Council's strategic priorities, particularly those outlined in the Whitehorse Integrated Council Plan 2025–2029, and broader sector expectations for transparent, efficient and sustainable management of community assets. Together, these drivers support the need for a clear and consistent policy framework to guide decision-making and maximise community benefit.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the Policy are to ensure:

3.1 Strategic Alignment

As publicly funded community assets, outdoor sport and recreation facilities must be planned, managed and allocated in a manner that supports Council's strategic objectives and maximises community benefit.

All actions, decisions, and processes under this Policy align with and support the strategies listed below.

Strategic Link	Description of Link
Community Vision 2040	This Policy supports the long-term aspiration of a healthy, inclusive and connected community by enabling equitable access to sport and recreation, supporting participation, and ensuring facilities are managed sustainably over time.
Integrated Council Plan – Community	Supports an active, inclusive and connected community by ensuring fair and equitable access to sports fields and pavilions, including for under-represented groups, and encouraging participation in sport and recreation.
Integrated Council Plan – Built	Supports safe, accessible and fit-for-purpose facilities by guiding how sports fields and pavilions are planned, designed and managed, including planning for future population growth, participation demand, changing participation patterns, and establishing appropriate design and service standards.
Integrated Council Plan – Economy	Supports local activity by enabling community use of facilities for sport, recreation and events, contributing to activation of community spaces.
Integrated Council Plan – Natural	Supports sustainable management of open space and sports fields by balancing use with environmental outcomes, including biodiversity, shade provision and water-sensitive design.
Integrated Council Plan – Governance	Supports clear, fair and consistent decision-making through transparent processes for facility allocation, bookings and management, strengthening accountability across Council operations.

Health and Wellbeing Plan	Supports improved physical health, wellbeing and social connection by increasing opportunities to access sport and recreation spaces.
Asset Plan and Financial Plan	Supports sustainable asset management by promoting efficient use, shared access and long-term planning for renewal, maintenance and investment in facilities.
Open Space Strategy (2025)	Supports planning, protection and sustainable use of open space by guiding how sports fields are allocated and managed, balancing demand with turf quality and capacity.
Recreation Strategy	Supports increased participation in sport and recreation by improving access to facilities and supporting a range of organised and informal activities.
Local Government Act 2020	Supports fair, transparent and accountable decision-making in line with legislative requirements.

3.2 Consistency and Integration

Implementation of this Policy is consistent across the organisation and integrated with related policies, frameworks, and business plans to avoid duplication, gaps, or conflicting direction.

Corporate Document Link	Description of Link
Community Engagement Policy and Guide	Supports effective engagement with Clubs, User Groups and the community in planning, allocation and management of facilities to ensure decisions reflect community needs.
Floodlighting Policy – Outdoor Sports and Recreation	The policy uses this document as a framework to embed Council's endorsed position on floodlighting into the allocation process to protect residential amenity and support community sporting participation appropriately.
Fair Access Policy (Regional) & Action Plan (Local)	Integrates gender equality into allocations by requiring equitable usage schedules and incentivising inclusive club practices through the Club Partnership Framework.
Pavilion Development Policy	This policy supports the community to use the flexible footprints and standardised components of buildings built by the Pavilion Development Policy to their full potential, with clubs and other users supporting each other's shared use.

Whitehorse Community Local Law 2024	Ensures community organisations operationally comply with the provisions of the Local Law through their practices, with serious breaches subject to formal municipal enforcement
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3.3 Accountable Decision-Making

Roles and responsibilities defined under this Policy support transparent, accountable decision-making that can be clearly traced back to strategic intent.

3.4 Performance and Continuous Improvement

Activities under this Policy support measurable outcomes and are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain relevant, effective, and aligned with evolving strategic priorities.

4. Scope

4.1 Inclusions

This policy applies to:

- Council-owned / managed outdoor sport and recreation facilities including:
 - Sports fields (including synthetic pitches)
 - Pavilions
 - Cricket nets and batting cages
 - Outdoor courts
 - Associated open space used under seasonal or casual bookings
- All seasonal licence and casual hire arrangements, including:
 - Seasonal allocations (e.g. winter and summer sporting seasons)
 - Casual or short-term bookings
 - Commercial health and fitness permits

Please refer to Procedures: Appendix A – Sports Field Classifications and Appendix B – Pavilion Classifications for a full list of sports fields and pavilions.

4.2 Exclusions

This policy does not apply to:

- Facilities or user arrangements governed by lease or other bespoke licence agreements, including but not limited to:
 - Tennis courts

- Lawn bowls rinks
- Athletics tracks
- Cycling velodromes
- Basketball courts and indoor sports centres
- Scout and guide halls
- Sports field and pavilions managed under alternative lease or licence agreements

These arrangements are managed separately under lease / bespoke licence agreements and are not subject to the terms and conditions outlined in this policy.

Council reserves the right to determine whether a facility or arrangement falls within the scope of this Policy.

5. Guiding Principles and Legislative Framework

5.1 Policy Statement

Council is committed to maximising community benefit from its sport and recreation facilities through fair, equitable and sustainable access, shared use and responsible asset management. Sports fields and pavilions are publicly funded community assets that require significant investment and ongoing subsidy from Council. Accordingly, decisions regarding the allocation, management and use of facilities will be lawful, evidence-based, transparent and responsive to community needs.

5.2 Legislative Compliance

Council will ensure that all facility management, allocation and use complies with relevant legislation. Hirers must comply with all applicable laws and Council policies as a condition of access.

5.3 Core Policy Principles

The following principles, objectives and policy directions guide the implementation of this Policy.

Principle	Objective	Policy Direction
<i>Prioritise the Whitehorse Community</i>	Ensure facilities primarily serve the Whitehorse community and	Prioritise access and use by local residents, clubs and groups, ensuring facilities are planned and allocated to deliver direct and ongoing benefit to

	respond to local needs	the Whitehorse community before broader use is considered
<i>Maximise Community Benefit</i>	Ensure facilities deliver strong social, health and participation outcomes	Prioritise use that increases physical and social participation, supports different levels of activity, and delivers the greatest benefit from the community's investment.
<i>Support Inclusive Access</i>	Provide fair, inclusive and affordable access for all community members.	Improve access across different ages, abilities, cultures and participation levels, and reduce barriers to participation
<i>Promote Gender Equity and Fair Access</i>	Support equitable access and participation for all genders.	Plan and allocate facilities to improve access for women, girls and gender-diverse people, in line with Council's Fair Access commitments.
<i>Uphold Child Safety</i>	Ensure safe environments for children and young people	Require all users to meet child safety standards and support safe, supervised and respectful environments
<i>Protect and Sustain Assets</i>	Maintain the quality and usability of facilities over time.	Manage use and maintenance so facilities remain safe, sustainable and fit for purpose
<i>Promote Shared Use</i>	Maximise use of facilities through shared access.	Encourage flexible and shared use across multiple users and activities, maximising community access to facilities while balancing organised sport, informal recreation, asset sustainability and community benefit.
<i>Maintain Transparency and Accountability</i>	Ensure decisions are clear, consistent and easy to understand.	Use open and consistent processes for allocation, management and fees, so users understand how decisions are made and contribute fairly to facility costs.

5.4 Council and User Group Commitments

Council and User Groups each have commitments that support fair, safe and effective use of facilities. This section sets out what each party can expect from the other.

Council will:

- Provide and maintain sports fields and pavilions as subsidised community assets.
- Apply clear and consistent processes for licences, bookings and conditions.
- Allocate facilities in accordance with relevant standards and suitability for the intended level of activity.
- Support participation and inclusion, responding to growth and changing community needs, including increasing participation by women, girls, gender-diverse people and junior participants.
- Work with User Groups to plan for changing needs and make the best use of facilities.
- Support the ongoing sustainability and development of community sporting and recreation organisations through advice, training, grants and other capacity-building initiatives, subject to Council priorities and available resources.
- Promote shared use and equitable access to facilities to maximise community benefit.

User Groups will:

- Use facilities responsibly and follow all conditions of use.
- Conduct activities safely and use facilities appropriate to their design and intended use.
- Take responsibility for the conduct of members, participants, officials, volunteers and spectators associated with their activities.
- Promote safe, respectful, inclusive and welcoming environments that contribute to stronger, healthier and more connected communities.
- Care for facilities, leave them in a clean and tidy condition after use, and support shared use by ensuring facilities are ready for subsequent users.
- Act as good neighbours by minimising impacts on surrounding residents and community amenity including noise, traffic, parking, and waste.
- Communicate and cooperate with Council and other User Groups to support fair, sustainable and shared use of facilities.

6. Sports Field and Pavilion Infrastructure Management Framework

Council will manage sports facilities to ensure balanced outcomes between participation, asset protection and community amenity.

6.1 Facility Classifications

Council classifies sports fields and pavilions into categories based on their quality, infrastructure, functionality, carrying capacity and intended use. Classifications inform

maintenance standards, user fee contributions and the level of activity each facility can support.

- a) Facility classifications may change over time, especially after upgrades. User Groups will be informed of changes.
- b) Council will not consider reclassification of assets (and associated maintenance resourcing) due to factors out of its control such as participation overuse, prolonged weather events or User Group promotion / relegation.

6.1.1 Sports Field Classifications

Sports Fields are classified as A, B, C or S based on:

- Surface type, underlying profile composition, irrigation and drainage
- Floodlighting (training or competition level)
- Supporting infrastructure such as pavilions, fencing and seating
- The physical dimensions of the field and what sporting participation it can support
- Other uses, such as shared use or dog access

Further detail regarding the Sports Field Classification Framework is outlined in the Procedures: 3.1 - Sports Field Classifications. The classification of individual sports fields is outlined in the Procedures: Appendix A - Sports Field Classifications.

6.1.2 Pavilion Classifications

Pavilions are classified as A, B, or C based on the quality, functionality and flexibility of facilities, including changerooms, amenities, social and community spaces, storage, accessibility and recent upgrades.

Further detail regarding the Pavilion Classification Framework is outlined in the Procedures: 3.2 - Pavilion Classifications. The classification of individual pavilions is outlined in the Procedures: Appendix B - Pavilion Classifications.

6.2 Infrastructure Responsibilities

6.2.1 Planning and Investment

Council will plan, renew and upgrade sports and recreation infrastructure to maximise community benefit and support the sustainable management of community assets. Council recognises that partnerships with government agencies, community organisations, sporting clubs and other stakeholders may assist in

delivering infrastructure improvements that increase community access, participation, inclusion and shared use opportunities.

- a) Council will determine priorities for infrastructure renewal and capital investment having regard to factors including:
 - Asset condition, lifecycle requirements and serviceability
 - Risk, safety and compliance obligations
 - Current and projected participation demand
 - Facility utilisation and carrying capacity
 - Community access, inclusion and shared use outcomes
 - Community benefit
 - Available funding and whole-of-life costs
 - The equitable distribution of resources across the municipality.
- b) Infrastructure priorities will be informed by Council's strategic planning processes, including adopted strategies, master plans, asset management planning and community engagement undertaken in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Policy.
- c) Council will engage with affected User Groups, stakeholders and the broader community, where appropriate, during the planning and delivery of infrastructure projects. Council will consider feedback received, however, retains discretion regarding the scope, design, timing, funding, prioritisation and delivery of infrastructure projects.
- d) Increased participation, competition requirements, club growth or requests from User Groups may be considered as part of Council's assessment process but do not create an entitlement to infrastructure upgrades, additional facilities or capital investment.
- e) Infrastructure planning and delivery will be undertaken in accordance with relevant Council policies, strategies, master plans and adopted standards, including the Pavilion Development Policy.

6.2.2 Sports Field and Associated Infrastructure

Council will provide, maintain and renew sports field infrastructure to support community participation, informal recreation, safe use and the long-term sustainability of Council assets.

Sports fields and associated infrastructure are publicly funded community assets that form part of the broader open space network. Council will manage these facilities to balance organised sport, informal recreation, public access, asset protection, environmental outcomes and the carrying capacity of facilities.

Council seeks to maximise the community benefit of sports fields by supporting equitable access, shared use and opportunities for participation across a range of sports, recreation activities and community uses.

Council and User Groups share responsibility for supporting the sustainable use and care of sports fields and associated infrastructure. Operational responsibilities for sports fields and associated infrastructure are outlined in the Procedures: 3.3 – Sports Field and Associated Infrastructure.

6.2.3 Pavilion Infrastructure

Council will provide, maintain and renew pavilions to support sport, recreation and broader community use.

Pavilions are community assets that should be safe, accessible, functional and capable of supporting shared use where appropriate. Council will seek to maximise community benefit through the efficient and equitable use of pavilion facilities.

Council and User Groups share responsibility for supporting the sustainable use and stewardship of pavilion facilities. Operational responsibilities for pavilions and associated infrastructure are outlined in the Procedures: 3.4 – Pavilion Infrastructure and Appendix D – Facility Infrastructure Responsibilities.

7. User Group Management Framework

Council manages the allocation of sports fields and pavilions to support safe, fair, efficient, and shared community use. Allocations are provided through seasonal licences or casual bookings, depending on the type and duration of use.

7.1 General User Group Conditions

7.1.1 Community Access to Reserves and Facilities

Council's policy regarding access to and use of sporting reserves and facilities is as follows:

- a) Sports fields, pavilions and associated infrastructure remain Council-controlled community assets and are managed to maximise community benefit through equitable access, shared use and sustainable operation.
- b) Seasonal licences, casual bookings and other approvals granted under this Policy provide User Groups with priority access to approved facilities during

their allocated days and times for safety, participation and operational purposes.

- c) An allocation, booking or licence does not grant exclusive possession or control of a reserve, sports field, pavilion or associated infrastructure unless expressly approved by Council.
- d) Council may allocate facilities to multiple User Groups, allocate different parts of a reserve or pavilion to different users, and make areas available for public use where compatible with safety, operational requirements and approved allocations.
- e) Council seeks to maximise the availability of sports fields, pavilions and associated infrastructure for shared community use when they are not required for approved allocations, maintenance activities, capital works or operational purposes.
- f) User Groups and members of the public are expected to use reserves respectfully and in accordance with applicable Council Local Laws, designated dog access arrangements and approved facility allocations. Council recognises that some sporting reserves support both organised sporting activities and designated dog exercise areas, and expects all users to share these spaces responsibly.
- g) Regardless of a User Group's priority access to an allocated area, and irrespective of any admission charge or donation sought by the User Group, general park users must be provided with pedestrian and vehicle access to a Council reserve free of charge. All pedestrian access points are to remain open during match days unless otherwise approved by Council.
- h) Council will only support the installation, renewal or upgrade of reserve fencing where it delivers a demonstrated benefit in relation to safety, asset protection, risk management or broader community outcomes. Fencing intended primarily to facilitate admission charges, entry donations, gate-taking arrangements or restrict public access to Council land is not supported.
- i) Designated public toilets at sporting reserves are community facilities intended for shared use by User Groups and the broader community. User Groups must ensure public toilets remain accessible during approved periods of use in accordance with Council requirements.

7.1.2 Community Consultation

Council seeks to balance community access to sporting facilities with the amenity of nearby residents. Council will consult with User Groups, stakeholders and the community on projects, proposals or changes that may affect them, in accordance with its Community Engagement Policy.

Operational requirements relating to community consultation are outlined in the Procedures: 4.1 – Community Consultation.

7.1.3 Liability, Safety and Risk Management

User Groups are responsible for the safe conduct of their activities and for the actions of their participants, volunteers, officials and spectators when using Council facilities.

Council manages risks associated with the ownership, allocation, maintenance and oversight of community sporting and recreation facilities through asset inspections, maintenance programs, facility allocation processes, incident management, compliance monitoring and operational reviews. Council may investigate incidents, hazards, complaints and other risk-related matters and, where appropriate, require corrective actions or apply conditions to support public safety, community wellbeing and the protection of Council assets.

Council's allocation or approval of a facility does not constitute approval, supervision or endorsement of a User Group's activities, event management practices, coaching methods, risk management processes or compliance obligations. User Groups remain responsible for planning, supervising and conducting activities safely and in accordance with relevant legislation, standards and governing body requirements.

User Groups must:

- a) comply with all relevant legislation, regulations and applicable sporting or industry standards;
- b) take reasonable steps to identify, manage and minimise risks associated with their activities and use of Council facilities;
- c) ensure that activities are conducted in a manner that protects the safety and wellbeing of participants, officials, volunteers and the broader community;
- d) promptly notify Council of significant hazards, incidents, injuries, damage or other safety concerns associated with Council facilities;
- e) maintain any insurance required by Council as a condition of use;
- f) accept responsibility for liabilities arising from their activities and use of Council facilities, including indemnifying Council where required; and
- g) ensure facilities, sports fields and equipment are used safely and in accordance with Council requirements and relevant governing body standards.

Operational requirements relating to liability, safety and risk management are outlined in the Procedures: 4.2 – Liability, Safety and Risk Management.

7.2 Regulated Activities and Community Health

Council is committed to providing safe, healthy, inclusive and family-friendly sporting and recreation environments that support community wellbeing and minimise harm.

User Groups are expected to comply with all applicable laws, regulations, licences and approvals relating to their activities. Council may regulate, restrict or impose conditions on activities conducted at Council facilities, including the service and consumption of alcohol, gambling activities, smoking and vaping, and other regulated activities, where necessary to support community safety, child safety, public health, community wellbeing and local amenity.

Operational requirements relating to regulated activities and community health are outlined in the Procedures: 4.3 – Regulated Activities and Community Health.

7.3 Child Safety

Council is committed to providing safe, inclusive and supportive environments for children and young people and has zero tolerance for child abuse, neglect, grooming or any behaviour that places a child or young person at risk. See the Procedures: 4.4 – Child Safety.

7.4 Gender Equity and Fair Access

Council supports the principle that women, girls and gender-diverse participants should have equitable access to community sport and recreation infrastructure.

This includes equitable access to:

- facilities and infrastructure of comparable quality;
- preferred training and competition times;
- changeroom, pavilion and supporting amenities;
- leadership, officiating and volunteer opportunities; and
- pathways that support the growth and sustainability of participation.

Council may consider these outcomes when making decisions relating to facility allocation, infrastructure investment, facility design, Club Partnership Levels and other facility management matters. See the Procedures: 4.5 – Gender Equity and Fair Access.

7.5 Community Amenity and Operating Hours

Council seeks to balance opportunities for community participation with the protection of residential amenity and the responsible use of community facilities. See the Procedures: 4.6 – Community Amenity and Operating Hours.

7.6 Special Conditions

In limited circumstances, Council may impose additional or special conditions on the use of facilities where necessary to protect community safety, manage risk, support community amenity, protect assets, meet legislative requirements or address site-specific circumstances. See the Procedures: 4.7 – Special Conditions.

7.7 Events and Activities Requiring Additional Approval

Council recognises that User Groups may occasionally conduct events, activities or functions that differ from their normal seasonal operations.

Activities that are substantially different in scale, attendance, infrastructure requirements or operational impact from ordinary club activities may require additional assessment, approval or conditions from Council.

Council may require separate approval processes, Event Permits, management plans, community consultation, additional insurances or other supporting documentation where necessary to protect public safety, community amenity, Council assets or the broader interests of the community.

The operational requirements relating to events and activities outside normal seasonal use are outlined in the Procedures: 4.8 - Events and Activities Requiring Additional Approval.

7.8 Compliance Monitoring and Verification

Council may monitor compliance with this Policy, Seasonal Licence Agreements, booking conditions and associated procedures through inspections, audits, information requests and other review processes. See the Procedures: 4.9 – Compliance Monitoring and Verification.

7.9 Emergency Closures and Temporary Restrictions

Council may temporarily close, restrict, suspend, relocate or cancel access to any facility where reasonably necessary to:

- protect public safety;
- respond to emergencies or extreme weather events;
- protect facility condition or asset sustainability;
- undertake maintenance, renewal or capital works;
- comply with legislative or regulatory requirements; or
- respond to other unforeseen operational circumstances.

Where practicable, Council will provide advance notice to affected User Groups. Council will determine any alternative arrangements, credits, refunds or relocation options having regard to the circumstances of the closure and the principles of this Policy.

7.10 Review of Decisions

Council may review an operational decision made under this Policy where:

- relevant information was not available at the time the decision was made;
- additional supporting evidence becomes available;
- a material factual error is identified; or
- the applicant believes the Policy has not been correctly applied.

A review will consider the application of this Policy to the specific circumstances of the matter. A review does not permit reconsideration of Council-adopted policy positions, allocation priorities, pricing principles, facility classifications, strategic directions or other matters expressly endorsed by Council through this Policy.

The outcome of a review is final. See the Procedures: 4.10 – Review of Decisions.

7.11 Allocation Priorities

Council manages access to sports fields and pavilions in a fair, transparent and consistent manner. Where demand exceeds available capacity, access may be prioritised having regard to community benefit, facility capacity, asset sustainability, equitable access and the objectives of this Policy.

Council applies a hierarchy of User Groups when allocating sports fields and pavilions. This hierarchy has regard to:

- the extent to which a User Group relies on Council facilities to operate;
- the availability of suitable alternative facilities; and
- Council's role in supporting community sport, recreation and broader community outcomes.

Operational processes, application requirements and administrative arrangements relating to allocations are detailed in the Procedures: 4.11 - Allocation Priorities.

7.12 User Group Contributions (Fees and Charges)

Council sets fees and charges for the use of sports fields, pavilions and associated infrastructure in a fair, transparent and consistent manner that supports community participation, equitable access, community wellbeing and the sustainable management of Council assets.

Council recognises that community sport and recreation delivers significant social, health and community benefits. Accordingly, Council provides substantial subsidy through investment in the provision, maintenance, renewal and improvement of outdoor sport and recreation facilities.

Council recognises that different User Groups deliver varying levels of community benefit and may derive differing levels of private or commercial benefit from the use of Council facilities. Accordingly, fees may vary between user categories, with greater levels of subsidy generally applied to community-based participation and lower levels of subsidy applied where private or commercial benefit is derived.

Fees and charges are guided by the following pricing principles:

Principle	Description
Equity	Similar users pay similar fees, with fees reflecting the nature of the user and the benefits derived from facility use.
Fair Use Pricing	Fees are charged based on actual use of facilities.
Affordability	Supports participation by maintaining appropriate subsidies for community-based use.
Transparency	Fees are clear, understandable and applied consistently.
Cost Recovery	Fees contribute towards Council's costs of providing, maintaining and renewing facilities.
Sustainability	Supports the long-term management, renewal and financial sustainability of Council assets.
Community Benefit	Fee levels may reflect the broader community benefit generated through facility use.
Community Wellbeing	Recognises and supports activities that contribute to active, healthy and connected communities.
Inclusion	Reduces unreasonable barriers to participation and access.

Fees may vary according to:

- facility classification;
- user category;
- extent of facility use;
- level of community benefit delivered; and
- the degree of private or commercial benefit derived from facility use.

Operational requirements relating to fees and charges are outlined in the Procedures: 4.12 – User Group Contributions (Fees and Charges).

7.13 Sustainable Use of Facilities

Council and users share responsibility for protecting community assets by ensuring sports facilities remain safe and well-maintained. Council will monitor field conditions and may restrict access at any time, particularly during adverse weather or scheduled works, to prevent damage. Decisions made will support year-round use and maximise overall participation.

Council may determine and apply carrying capacity limits to sports fields, pavilions and associated infrastructure to ensure facilities remain safe, sustainable and fit for purpose.

Allocation, booking and facility management decisions may be modified where actual or projected use exceeds the sustainable capacity of a facility, having regard to factors such as asset condition, safety, maintenance requirements, environmental conditions and community access. See Procedures: 4.13 – Sustainable Use of Facilities.

7.14 Seasonal Allocations

Council allocates sports fields, pavilions and associated infrastructure through Seasonal Licence Agreements to support organised sport and recreation activities.

Seasonal allocations are managed to balance community participation, equitable access, shared use, facility capacity, asset sustainability and community benefit. Council recognises that demand for facilities may exceed available capacity and will make allocation decisions in accordance with the principles and objectives of this Policy.

Operational requirements relating to seasonal allocations are outlined in the Procedures: 4.14 – Seasonal Allocations.

7.14.1 Seasonal Licence Agreements

Council manages recurring seasonal access to sports fields, pavilions and associated infrastructure through Seasonal Licence Agreements.

Seasonal Licence Agreements provide approved User Groups with priority access to facilities during approved days and times but do not provide exclusive possession unless expressly approved by Council.

Council may impose conditions on Seasonal Licence Agreements to support shared use, asset sustainability, community access, safety and compliance with this Policy. Seasonal allocations may be administered on a shared-use basis where this supports community access, efficient utilisation of facilities and broader community benefit.

Further requirements are outlined in the Procedures: 4.14.1 - Seasonal Licence Agreements.

7.14.2 Times of Seasonal Facility Use

Council sets and manages permitted hours of use for sports fields and pavilions to support community participation while balancing the needs of nearby residents and minimising impacts on local amenity. Refer to the Procedures: 4.14.2 - Times of Seasonal Facility Use.

7.14.3 Club Partnership Framework

The Club Partnership Framework is designed to encourage and recognise continuous improvement in governance, participation, inclusion and club operations. While Partnership Levels may be considered by Council in allocation and facility-related decisions, they do not create an entitlement to facility access, funding, infrastructure investment or any particular allocation outcome. Refer to the Procedures: 4.14.3 - Club Partnership Framework.

7.14.4 Assessment of Allocation Requests for Sporting Clubs

Council allocates sports fields and pavilions through a structured and transparent assessment process that considers fair access, demonstrated need, governance and community benefit. Refer to the Procedures: 4.14.4 - Assessment of Allocation Requests for Sporting Clubs.

7.14.5 Finals

Finals are an important component of community sport and may occur during periods of seasonal changeover when sports fields are being prepared for the following season. Council will support finals use where it can be accommodated safely and sustainably, having regard to sports field condition, maintenance requirements and broader community impacts. Refer to the Procedures: 4.14.5 – Finals.

7.14.6 Pre-season Training and Practice Matches

Pre-season training and practice matches are not guaranteed every season, as use of sports fields depends on maintenance schedules and ground conditions. However, Council recognises that pre-season activity is an important part of a club's annual program and manages access to balance preparation needs with turf protection and equitable use. Refer to the Procedures: 4.14.6 – Pre-season Training and Practice Matches.

7.14.7 Fees for Seasonal Use

Seasonal Club fees are based on partial recovery of maintenance costs only, with Council providing a significant subsidy for facility use. Fees are structured to reflect facility classifications, maintenance requirements, efficient and shared use of community assets, and participation outcomes (including priority groups), and are applied consistently regardless of sporting season, usage type, or competition arrangements. Refer to the Procedures: 4.14.7 – Fees for Seasonal Use.

7.14.8 Hiring and Subletting

Council manages the booking and allocation of sports fields and pavilions to ensure fair, safe and consistent access for all users. Refer to the Procedures: 4.14.8 – Hiring and Subletting.

7.14.9 Facility Management

Council expects a high standard of care for its facilities. User Groups are responsible for supporting the safe, secure and appropriate use of sports fields, pavilions and associated infrastructure.

User Groups must take reasonable steps to protect Council assets, support authorised access arrangements, maintain the security of facilities under their control and leave facilities in a condition suitable for subsequent users.

Council may inspect facilities and impose reasonable requirements relating to access, security, care, presentation, handover and asset protection.

Further requirements are outlined in the Procedures: 4.14.9 - Facility Management.

7.14.10 Utilities

Council and Tenant Clubs share responsibility for the sustainable and equitable management of utility services associated with sports and recreation facilities. Refer to the Procedures: 4.14.10 – Utilities.

7.14.11 Waste Management

Council and Tenant Clubs share responsibility for maintaining clean, safe and environmentally responsible facilities for the benefit of all users. Refer to the Procedures: 4.14.11 – Waste Management.

7.14.12 Advertising / Signage

Any permanent signage or advertising at Council sporting reserves requires Council approval and must comply with the Whitehorse Planning Scheme and any other applicable legislative requirements.

All signage and advertising must be maintained in good condition, be safe, appropriate for a community sporting and recreation environment, and not detrimentally affect the visual amenity of the local area. Council may refuse, modify, withdraw approval for, or require the removal of any signage that does not meet these requirements. Refer to the Procedures: 4.14.12 – Advertising / Signage.

7.14.13 Facility Improvements / Works

Council supports the ongoing improvement of outdoor sport and recreation facilities to maximise community benefit, support participation and ensure the long-term sustainability of Council assets.

- a) Council will plan and deliver facility improvement, renewal and redevelopment projects in accordance with Council priorities, available resources and strategic planning objectives.
- b) Where facility improvement works affect existing users, Council will seek to minimise disruption and consider alternative arrangements where reasonably practicable.

- c) Council may consider proposals from User Groups to improve Council-owned facilities where the proposal aligns with Council objectives, asset management requirements and broader community benefit.
- d) User Groups must obtain Council approval before undertaking works, improvements or modifications to Council-owned facilities.
- e) User Groups must obtain Council's approval before seeking external funding for works on Council-owned land.
- f) Council supports storage, maintenance and operational requirements being incorporated within approved permanent facility infrastructure in preference to standalone ancillary structures, having regard to community amenity, asset sustainability and long-term planning outcomes.

Further requirements are outlined in Procedures: 4.14.13 - Facility Improvements / Works.

7.14.14 Standards of Behaviour and Council Sanctions

Council recognises that sporting and recreation organisations play an important role in building strong, inclusive and connected communities. All people have the right to participate in safe, welcoming and inclusive environments. Council also recognises the reasonable expectation of surrounding residents and businesses to enjoy their property and local neighbourhood without unreasonable interference from activities conducted at Council facilities.

User Groups are expected to create safe, respectful, welcoming and accessible environments that recognise and value diversity within the community. User Groups should take reasonable steps to identify and remove barriers to participation and foster a culture of respect, belonging and equal opportunity for all participants, volunteers, officials, spectators and visitors. Refer to the Procedures: 4.14.14 – Standards of Behaviour and Council Sanctions.

7.15 Non-seasonal (Casual) allocations

Casual hirers include schools, community groups, personal trainers, fitness instructors, private operators, and other organisations seeking short-term or occasional access to sports fields and pavilions.

Casual use provides opportunities for approved users to access sports fields, pavilions and associated facilities outside of allocated seasonal use periods. Casual bookings are managed in accordance with the allocation principles, priorities and facility management provisions of this Policy and support equitable access and efficient utilisation of community facilities.

The principles for allocating and managing casual use are set out in the Procedures:
4.15 Non-seasonal (Casual) Allocations.

8. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Council	Adopt and periodically review this Policy.
Chief Executive Officer	Ensure implementation of the Policy across the organisation.
Director Community Life	Strategic oversight of Active Facilities services and implementation of the Policy.
Manager Active Whitehorse	Accountable for the implementation, administration and oversight of the Policy and associated procedures.
Team Leader Participation	Policy Owner, responsible for coordinating the development, implementation, maintenance and review of the Policy and associated procedures, and overseeing their consistent application across Council's outdoor sport and recreation facilities.

9. Definitions

Term	Definition
Allocation	Approval granted by Council to use a facility under specified conditions.
Casual Use	One-off, occasional, short-term or irregular use of a Council facility approved by Council through a casual booking arrangement.
Club Partnership Framework	Council's assessment framework used to evaluate Seasonal Hirers against prescribed governance, compliance, participation, inclusion and operational criteria.
Club Partnership Level	The level achieved by a Seasonal Tenant Club under the Club Partnership Framework, reflecting the organisation's governance, compliance, facility stewardship, participation, inclusion and community contribution.
Commercial Organisation	An organisation or trading entity engaged in commercial, industrial, professional or business activities, including entities that provide services, programs or activities for a fee or commercial benefit. This may include personal trainers, fitness instructors, coaching academies, holiday program providers and private sport or recreation businesses.

Community Amenity	The reasonable enjoyment, comfort and wellbeing of residents, visitors and users of an area, including impacts relating to noise, lighting, traffic, parking, safety and other environmental factors.
Community Asset	Land, buildings, infrastructure and facilities owned, managed or controlled by Council for the benefit of current and future generations of the community.
Community Benefit	The positive social, health, wellbeing, participation, inclusion, environmental, cultural or economic outcomes generated for the Whitehorse community through the provision, management and use of Council facilities.
Community Group	An incorporated association, registered charity, not-for-profit organisation or other organisation operating primarily for community, cultural, recreational, educational or social purposes. For the purposes of this Policy, tertiary institutions (e.g. universities and TAFEs) may be classified as Community Groups where determined by Council.
Council	Whitehorse City Council.
Event	An approved activity, function, gathering or occasion conducted at a Council facility that is outside the ordinary scope of a User Group's approved use, allocation, booking, permit or licence arrangement and may require additional planning, approvals, risk management or operational controls.
Event Permit	Council approval required to conduct an Event where the scale, attendance, infrastructure, operational impacts or risk profile exceeds that typically associated with the User Group's approved use, allocation, booking, permit or licence arrangement.
Fair Access	The equitable allocation and use of sporting and recreation facilities that supports participation opportunities for all members of the community, including women, girls and gender-diverse people, consistent with applicable legislation and Council policy.
Facility Capacity	The level of activity, use or occupancy that a facility can reasonably and sustainably accommodate having regard to safety, asset condition, carrying capacity, maintenance requirements, infrastructure limitations and community access
Facility/ies	Sports fields, pavilions and associated infrastructure within the scope of this Policy.
Home Ground	The primary sports field or facility from which a Club or organisation conducts the majority of its competition matches, training activities and administrative operations.

Inclusive Participation	Participation opportunities that are accessible, welcoming and free from unreasonable barriers, discrimination or exclusion.
Non-Whitehorse School	A school with a campus physically located outside the municipal boundaries of the City of Whitehorse.
Ordinary Seasonal Activities	Activities typically associated with a Seasonal Licence Agreement, including training sessions, competition matches, club meetings, presentations and social functions of a scale ordinarily associated with the User Group's regular operations.
Partnered Clubs	Two or more separately constituted sporting clubs of the same sporting code that operate from the same Council-approved home venue and have a recognised historical, operational or developmental relationship. This may include senior, junior, women's, veterans' or other affiliated clubs. Council will determine whether clubs qualify as Partnered Clubs for the purposes of this Policy.
Pavilion	A Council-owned or managed community building used to support sport, recreation and broader community activities.
Priority Access	The right of an approved User Group to use an allocated facility during approved days and times, subject to the conditions of their allocation, booking, licence agreement and this Policy.
Recreation	Activities that are generally less structured and place less emphasis on competition than sport.
Reserve	The area of land that may include sports fields, pavilions, community infrastructure, parking areas, open space and associated facilities.
Seasonal Hirer	A User Group that has been granted recurring access to Council facilities under a Seasonal Licence Agreement during a defined sporting season
Seasonal Licence Agreement	Written documentation confirming seasonal use of Council facilities, including approved dates, times, facilities and applicable terms and conditions.
Seasonal Tenant Club	A Seasonal Hirer recognised by Council as having a home venue relationship with a sports field, pavilion or reserve, used multiple days per week. A Seasonal Tenant Club typically receives priority access to facilities, participates in Council allocation and club assessment processes, and may have stewardship, operational or compliance responsibilities associated with the facility.

Seasonal Use	Regular and ongoing use of a Council facility during a defined sporting season under a Seasonal Licence Agreement.
Shared Facility	A facility allocated or made available for use by two or more User Groups, either simultaneously or at different times.
Shared Use	The use of a facility by multiple User Groups, either concurrently or at different times, to maximise community benefit, improve utilisation and support equitable access to Council facilities.
Sport	An organised, competitive activity that promotes physical activity and wellbeing.
Sporting Season	The period recognised by Council for the conduct of organised sporting competitions and associated activities, including summer and winter seasons.
Sports Field	Open space primarily used for formal sport, training, competition or informal recreation activities.
Support Infrastructure	Infrastructure that supports participation, training or competition, including practice facilities, floodlighting, coaches' boxes, dugouts, scoreboards, fencing and similar infrastructure.
User Group	Any club, organisation, association, school, community group, commercial organisation or other approved entity authorised by Council to use a facility under a seasonal allocation, casual booking, permit or other approval.
Whitehorse Club	A not-for-profit sporting or community organisation that has a substantial connection to the City of Whitehorse through its membership, operations, historical association or use of Council facilities. Council may determine whether an organisation qualifies as a Whitehorse Club having regard to these factors.
Whitehorse School	A school with a campus physically located within the municipal boundaries of the City of Whitehorse.

10. Reference and Legislative Parameters

Name	Description
Relevant Legislation	Local Government Act 2020
	Gender Equality Act 2020
	Equal Opportunity Act 2010
	Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005
	Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
	Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
	Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014

	Liquor Control Reform Act 1998 Tobacco Act 1987 Working with Children Act 2005 Any other relevant legislation as amended from time to time.
Victorian Human Rights	This policy has been reviewed for Human Rights Charter compliance with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 and social impacts have been considered as part of the development and updating.
Gender Equality	This policy has been reviewed in line with Council's Gender Equality responsibilities and a Gender Impact Assessment has been undertaken during its development.
Child Safety	This Policy has been reviewed in accordance with Council's Child Safety obligations. Consideration has been given to the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, the Victorian Child Safe Standards and Council's Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy to ensure child safety risks have been appropriately identified and addressed.
Related Records	

11. Version Control

Version	Author	Description of Changes	Release date
1.1	Active Whitehorse	Policy endorsement	Xx/xx/2026

12. Administrative Amendments

Minor administrative updates that do not change the intent or application of this Policy may be approved by the Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) and noted in the Document History.

Any amendment that would alter the intent, scope, principles or application of this Policy must be subject to the formal approval process.

13. Related Documents

Active Facilities Procedures – Outdoor Sports and Recreation

Detailed operational requirements for the allocation, management and use of outdoor sport and recreation facilities. Available via Council's website - [LINK](#)

Pavilion Development Policy

Detailed requirements for the planning, design and development of pavilions.
Available via Council's website – [LINK](#)

Floodlighting Policy – Outdoor Sports and Recreation

Detailed requirements for floodlighting provision, use and management. Available
via Council's website - [LINK](#)