



DATE ADOPTED: 22 JULY 2014

VERSION: 2.0

POLICY OBJECTIVE

To provide clarification on the responsibilities of Council Officers and User Groups in relation to the closure of Council's sportsgrounds.

POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all land, owned or managed by Council that is primarily utilised as a sportsground.

POLICY STATEMENT

Council manages a diverse array of sportsgrounds with varying playing surfaces, soil types, drainage and irrigation infrastructure which accommodate an assortment of sports with distinct playing requirements. Due to this diversity, the assessment of sporting grounds for their capacity to cater for use is not a one size fits all approach. This 'Closure of Sporting Facilities' policy has been prepared to clarify the responsibilities of Council Officers and User Groups in determining the suitability of a sportsground for use and to provide advice in regards to related matters.

1. BASIS FOR CLOSURE

A decision by Council or User Groups to close the sportsground will be based on:

- Safety and the potential for injury to players
- The sport played and the potential for damage to the playing surface
- The weather, during prolonged and /or extreme weather conditions (i.e. severe drought, wet weather and /or flooding) based on data from the Bureau of Meteorology
- The condition of the ground when inspected

Note: Irrespective of the above, Council may, at any time, withdraw the use of the facility (or part thereof) if it is deemed to be unplayable or not fit for purpose.

2. PROVISIONS

2.1 Closure by Council

- The General Manager or their authorised delegate has the authority to close sportsgrounds at any time should it be deemed necessary. Closure of sportsgrounds is based on the Wet Weather Ground Closure Procedure and can occur at short notice.
- User groups do not have the authority to approve use of sporting grounds when Council has closed the grounds.
- User Groups using closed fields will be charged a penalty fee as per Council's Fees and Charges document.
- Ground closure will be communicated to User Groups as soon as practicable once a decision has been made to close a sportsground.
- To assist the User Groups in communicating the status of the facility to its members (i.e. open or closed), Council will maintain 'Ground Closed' signs at all sporting facilities through the week. User groups will be responsible for the maintaining of the signs over the weekend.
- A notice will be included on Council's web page advising of any sportsground closure implemented by Council.

2.2 Closure by User Group

- All User Groups are required to adhere to Council's decision regarding ground closure.
- Where approval has been given by Council to use a ground, User Groups are required to abide by Council's *Terms and Conditions for Use of Council Sporting Facilities and Parks*, specifically the requirements for Ground Inspection and Ground Closure, as well as the *Wet Weather Ground Closure Policy*.

3. PENALTIES

The following steps will be undertaken by Council where a user group has failed to abide by Council's *Wet Weather Ground Closure Policy*, resulting in damage to the playing surface;

Council will:

- inspect and photograph the damaged grounds;
- establish culpability in consultation with the User Groups and notify the relevant party in writing within 28 days of the damage to the sportsground and Council's completed or intent to undertake rectification works;
- determine the fine based on the fee outlined in Council's Fees and Charges document and the cost of any rectification works;
- issue an invoice for the fine and rectification works in writing to the offending User Group upon completion of the rectification works;
- resume the responsibility of ground closures (including weekends) for the sportsground where the damage has occurred for a period of up to 12 months.

If the fine is not paid the offending user group will not be allocated any future use of Council facilities.



DEFINITIONS

Damage

Physical harm to the turf surface and/or soil profile, above and beyond normal wear and tear that forces a ground to be closed by Council and rectification works to be undertaken.

Playing Surface

The playing surface and soil profile of the sportsground.

Rectification Works

Works undertaken by Council to repair damage to the playing surface of the sportsground outside of the programmed maintenance regime.

Sportsground

Land that is used, or to be used, primarily for active recreation involving sports or the playing of outdoor games. (Local Government (General) Regulation 2005)

User Groups

Any Club, Association, School or Hirer that has formal approval from Council to utilise Council's sportsgrounds.

POLICY ADMINISTRATION

BUSINESS GROUP:	Planning, environment and lifestyle
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Manager Community & Recreation Services
COUNCIL REFERENCE	Ordinary Council Meeting 22 July 2014 – Item 10.5
POLICY REVIEW DATE	Three (3) years from date of adoption
FILE NUMBER	129/2
RELEVANT LEGISLATION	
RELATED POLICIES / PROCEDURES / PROTOCOLS	Ground Closure Procedure

POLICY HISTORY

VERSION	DATE APPROVED	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES
1.0	24 July 2007	New policy adopted
2.0	22 July 2014	Policy reviewed and name change. Previous Closure of Sporting Facilities