



Moreland City Council

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF COUNCIL'S SPORTS GROUNDS POLICY

Date Resolved By Council:	11 June 2014
Commencement Date:	#
Review Date:	11 June 2017
Revocation Date:	#
Responsible Department:	Social Development

This policy has been authorised and is included on Council's Website.

Peter Brown
Chief Executive Officer

11 June 2014

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF COUNCIL'S SPORTS GROUNDS POLICY

1. PURPOSE

Moreland Sports Grounds Management and Maintenance Policy aims to provide guidance to Council staff, user groups and the community so that sports grounds can be sustainably managed to ensure an appropriate use, quality and service levels as well as equity for the community, considering the resources available to Council.

2. OBJECTIVE

The ability of Council to provide safe playing grounds of a suitable quality for competition levels, and to maintain acceptable quality of playing surfaces is an important factor to consider. The type of use, age of users and intensity of use, level of competition and compatibility between the varieties of users is a major factor in Council being able to provide sport grounds which meet acceptable standards. Council has an allocated annual budget for playing field maintenance works. The following strategies are implemented in an effort to achieve parity between acceptable levels of service (quality), safe playing surfaces and available resources:

- A programmed approach to sports field maintenance based on a 3-tiered hierarchy
- To have a set specification covering sport field maintenance to appropriate quality standards within the budget allocation by Council. This specification will be reviewed prior to each season.
- To have a program of sport field renovations achievable within existing budget allocations.
- Sport grounds are closed for the last 2 weeks of March and 4 weeks in September for seasonal changeover and annual restoration works. No forward bookings for use of the playing surfaces will be taken for these periods.
- Watering systems will be used at all sport grounds and maintained as appropriate considering any water restrictions enforced by Melbourne Water.
- Sub-soil drainage systems are to be used and maintained as appropriate and installed where necessary.
- Cricket covers to be used on turf wickets in winter as well as summer to minimise damage to the turf wicket tables in wet conditions.
- Maintenance needs for sport grounds will be prioritised over requests for access from casual hirers.
- Capital works and ground reconstructions to be undertaken as required and according to available budget.

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3. BACKGROUND

Council has 56 sports grounds available for use in the City of Moreland. These are currently very well utilised by a variety of user groups including sports clubs, Sports Associations, schools, community groups and residence of Moreland. The demand on these facilities is ever increasing. While Council would like to have facilities available to meet all seasonal, annual tenancy and casual bookings requests this is becoming more difficult with the increasing demands on the existing sports grounds and the very limited opportunity for expansion.

In 2013 Council's Open Space Maintenance and Recreation Services Units undertook a significant review of the management and maintenance requirements of sports grounds in Moreland. The review process identified the value in developing a Sports Grounds Maintenance Schedule, which has since been developed to provide a hierarchy of sports grounds to assist in the maintenance and management of Moreland's sports grounds.

Moreland Sports Grounds Management and Maintenance Policy looks to provide guidance to Council staff, user groups and the community so that sports grounds can be sustainably managed to ensure an appropriate use, quality and service levels as well as equity for the community, considering the resources available to Council.

This document has been informed by and links to:

- [Active Moreland Framework](#) 2010-2014 D10/71399
- [Allocation and use of Sports facilities, grounds and pavilions policy](#) 1/11/12 D12/269802
- Draft Moreland Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2014 – 2018 D14/13911
- [Health and Wellbeing Plan](#) 2013-2017 D13/318267
- [Moreland Open Space Strategy](#) 2012-2022 D12/233881
- [Sports Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions User Guide](#)

4. DETAILS

The Moreland Sports Grounds Maintenance Schedule has been developed to assist sports field users and managers to implement sustainable management of sports grounds under the care control and management of Council.

The purpose of the Moreland Sports Grounds Maintenance Schedule is to:

'Provide equitable access and safe playing conditions for users while sustainably managing available Sports Grounds.'

This document applies to all sports clubs, Sports Associations, schools, and community groups wishing to use sport grounds in Moreland on either a seasonal, annual tenancy or casual basis.

The specific objectives of the Sports Grounds Maintenance Schedule are to:

- Ensure the provision of a range of safe and suitably maintained playing surfaces.

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- To identify a sports field hierarchy to inform the maintenance regime and appropriate works
- Facilitate a diversity of sport activities for Moreland residents.
- Acknowledge that use and activities throughout the year will impact on the quality of the playing surfaces.
- Allow adequate time for maintenance activities.
- Ensure sport field maintenance works are undertaken at appropriate times during the year to achieve the best results possible which will benefit all users.
- Enable the cost of maintenance to be recognised and partially recouped via appropriate fee structures for hire.
- Identify Capital Improvements for sport grounds, to be included in the development of Plans of Management and capital works budgets.

Increasing demand for limited sport grounds is a key issue in Moreland. Availability of sport grounds affects Council, sports clubs, Sports Associations, schools and the general public, wishing to use sports grounds in Moreland on either a seasonal, annual tenancy or casual basis.

Demand for sports grounds in Moreland has increased significantly in the last 5 years. There can be no argument that increasing participation in sport has a positive effect on the health of the community. However in a municipality with competing demands for sport grounds, this raises issues that need to be managed, particularly how grounds are managed to provide the best facility possible.

In an effort to manage sport grounds equitably across the community a Sports Grounds Maintenance Schedule has been developed. This Schedule is guided by a hierarchy of sports grounds based on the criteria outlined below:

- Level of competition
- Park profile
- Volume of use and any unique user needs
- Asset criticality
- Support facilities provided at the ground.

Understanding these elements informs the level and type of maintenance required at each ground and according to the factors identified above which determine the place of each sports field within the hierarchy.

The Sports Grounds Maintenance Schedule is outlined in **Appendix 1**.

The Sports Grounds Maintenance Schedule does not dictate allocations to sports clubs. Seasonal use can vary and this table will be used to provide guidance to users and staff on the maintenance management of sport grounds in Moreland.

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The sports activities listed are based on the current and regular users of Council managed facilities and are based on 2013 demand and resourcing. This is considered to be the mix of sports activities for the identified sports field which will give the best results to maximise year round use for all users and best allow Council to provide acceptable quality facilities with the existing resources available.

The Sports Grounds Maintenance Schedule gives an order of preference of maintenance works that are necessary to be undertaken hence ensuring that sport grounds are managed throughout the year. It also lists compatible uses between summer and winter seasons which will:

- Reduce incompatible use of sports grounds between summer and winter seasons
- Result in minimal closure of Council sports grounds due to ground deterioration as a result of wet weather
- Increase the ability of Council to provide playing surfaces suitable for the level of competition
- Ensure users become more accountable for the amount of use and understand the effects of overuse on the sports grounds they use.

The sports grounds at the following reserves listed below are covered by this document.

Allard Park	JP Fawkner Reserve
Balfe Park	Martin Reserve
Brearley Reserve	McDonald Reserve
Campbell Reserve	Moomba Park
CB Smith Reserve	Morris Reserve
City Oval	Mutton Reserve
Clifton Park	Oak Park Reserve
Cole Reserve	Parker Reserve
Cook Reserve	Raeburn Reserve
De Chene Reserve	Rayner Reserve
Dunstan Reserve	Reddish Reserve
Fleming Park	Sewell Reserve
Gillon Oval	Shore Reserve
Hallam Reserve	Sumner Park
Holbrook Reserve	Wallace Reserve
Hosken Reserve	Wylie Reserve
Jackson Reserve	

The issued informing facility management addressed in this policy include:

- Demand management and seasonal use compatibility
- Booking guidelines and requirements
- Quality, maintenance and service description
- Sports field upgrades and capital improvements

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Booking guidelines and requirements

Council receives requests for bookings on a seasonal, annual and casual basis. At times there are clashes between various user groups. It is considered important that strategies are established which give clear guidance to potential users on their likelihood of success when making an application for a sports field. The following factors will guide the availability of sports grounds:

- Facilities are available for 22 weeks in the summer season from the first weekend in October to the second weekend in March.
- Facilities are available for 22 weeks for the winter season from the first weekend in April to the last weekend in August.
- Sports grounds are closed at the end of March for 2 weeks and in September for 4 weeks for season change over and annual oval renovation works.
- There is a 2 week break in the summer season over the Christmas/New Year period.
- Seasonal and annual allocations have priority use over casual users
- Priority is to be given to schools and Sports clubs based within the City of Moreland.
- Consideration will be given to future bookings and the impact that additional or casual bookings may have on the quality of facilities for regular users
- Clubs are required to submit seasonal competition fixtures to Council once confirmed by Sports Associations to allow for possible bookings by other user groups if a sports field is not required (i.e. away games)
- Council will seek to maximise the use of any given sports field, keeping in mind the maximum hours of play possible without risking ground deterioration

Finals are not included in the seasonal allocations, however, the sports field and pavilion used by the seasonal user for training requirements will be provisionally reserved in the name of the seasonal user for the finals. Recreation Services must receive application for finals booking from the relevant Sports Association. If applications are not received, sports field renovation works for the following season will commence at the conclusion of the allocated period.

Potential usage levels

Sports field usage capacity is defined as the number of hours of use that a surface can sustain before it deteriorates to a point where short term recovery is not achievable. Sports grounds have been classified into three broad categories with each type having an estimated usage capacity.

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Sports Field Construction Type	Usage Capacity
Full drainage system over entire field Automatic irrigation system Domed or two-way fall Couch over-sown with ryegrass Warm season - Full conversion	High 21 to 25 hours per week
Some strategic drainage where required Automatic irrigation system Use of existing topsoil Two-way or one-way fall Couch or kikuyu over-sown with ryegrass	Moderate 11 to 20 hours per week
Some strategic drainage where required No irrigation Use of existing topsoil One-way fall Single Cool Season Grass Varieties	Low <10 hours per week

The quoted usage capacities are the potential maximum hours of use which includes match play, training and casual use and will be modified by weather conditions, type of sport played, time of year, surface conditions (cover, turf-type, compaction etc.) and the level of maintenance.

In practice the actual usage of many sports grounds often exceeds the recommended usage capacity due to the ever-increasing demand for sports facilities. However the surface quality of these sports grounds will continuously be monitored and cannot be guaranteed should recommended usage hours be exceeded.

Pre season and out of season bookings requests

Council receives many requests from sports clubs for pre season and out of season bookings for training and trial matches.

Within this policy there is a maintenance requirement in relation to annual sports field closures at the changeover of seasons. These closure periods are necessary to undertake annual maintenance and restoration works. These works are done at the most appropriate time of year to make the most of the summer growing season. This delivers the best results for annual sports field renovation works and, in turn, a positive impact on the quality of the playing surface for all users throughout the year. Booking of sports grounds for preseason training and trial matches may be accepted if:

- Ground conditions are acceptable
- The 'in season' sport does not require the use of the sports field
- Maintenance activities are not programmed
- The intensity of use will not impact on the recently completed works

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Requests will be considered on a case by case and season by season basis. It needs to be noted that in many instances it will not be known if a sports field will be available for pre season trial matches until two weeks before the end of the relevant season. This is because the 'in season' sports may be involved in finals matches and the amount of end of season maintenance required will not be known until towards the end of the current season.

Quality, safety and service description

The ability of Council to provide safe playing grounds of a suitable quality for competition levels, and to maintain acceptable quality of playing surfaces is an important factor to consider. The type of use, age of users and intensity of use, level of competition and compatibility between the varieties of users is a major factor in Council being able to provide sports grounds which meet acceptable standards. Council has an allocated annual budget for playing field maintenance works. The following strategies are implemented in an effort to achieve parity between acceptable levels of service (quality), safe playing surfaces and available resources:

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Capital improvements and upgrades

The strategies identified above are intended to optimise the use of the existing facilities. Capital improvements to Council's sports grounds may permit extended and additional use. Permitted developments and capital improvements are identified in plans of management for public reserve areas which include Council sports grounds.

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Capital upgrades are subject to funding and resource availability. In the past various sports clubs and Sports Associations have provided additional support to Council to assist with the development and completion of capital upgrade projects. Council will continue to consider sources of external funding including offers of support for suitable projects from user groups and through various grant opportunities.

5. APPENDIX

Draft - Moreland Sports Grounds Maintenance Schedule D14/24678