

Community Facility Access and Use Policy

Policy Reference No.	POL/302
File No.	HCC21/908
Strategic Objective	3.2 Deliver responsible and transparent governance, services and sustainable assets that respond to community needs.
Adopted by Council	11 July 2022
Re-Adopted	
Date for Review	1 July 2026 <i>It is recognised that over the life of this Policy it may require minor administrative changes. Where an update does not materially alter the intent of the policy (i.e., changed department name of a Council, update to legislation) the change will be made administratively. Any amendment which materially alters this document will be made by resolution of Council.</i>
Responsible Officer	Manager City Life
Department	City Life

COMMUNITY FACILITY ACCESS AND USE POLICY

1 POLICY STATEMENT

Hume City Council is committed to providing welcoming, safe, and accessible community facilities that:

- *meet the needs of residents and community members*
- *support their access to a range of community spaces and services*
- *provide opportunities for community members to participate in a diverse range of activities; and,*
- *contribute to positive health, social, economic, and cultural outcomes.*

2 OBJECTIVES

Council has invested significantly into the establishment, management, operations, and activation of community facilities.

Council encourages use of these facilities by a broad range of groups and organisations, on the basis that they meet a need within the community and / or assist Council to achieve its social justice, community service, community development and capacity building objectives.

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Provide a consistent and transparent approach for access to, and management of, community facilities within Hume.
- Facilitate optimal use of community facilities for health, social, economic, and cultural outcomes.
- Enable the equitable and fair allocation of community facilities by a range of users, including supporting existing organisations and activities to continue, whilst fostering opportunities for new groups / activities to emerge that address community needs.
- Promote, encourage, and facilitate flexible and multi-use of community facilities, where appropriate.

3 PURPOSE

To create an inclusive and thriving community, Council provides a network of community facilities across the municipality that support equitable access to services and activities, are safe, and enable the community to connect and interact.

These facilities include those designed primarily to:

- Support the delivery of community services (i.e., kindergarten, maternal and child health services, libraries, youth services, aged and disability services, men's sheds, youth centre, arts, and cultural facilities etc).
- Support the delivery of sporting or leisure activities (i.e., aquatic facilities, multi-sport court stadiums, sporting pavilions / change rooms etc).
- Provide community access to facilities for social connection, leisure, education, and / or celebration (i.e., halls, meeting rooms, training rooms etc).

Some community facilities in Hume City are single purpose (i.e., stand-alone kindergartens), however many are multi-purpose (i.e., Hume Global Learning Centres, Newbury Child and Community Centre). Both single or multi-purpose community facilities may have a primary purpose of providing community services or sporting / leisure services, whilst also offering spaces for community access and hire.

4 SCOPE

This policy is not intended to change or limit the primary purpose / use of community facilities where they are designed to support the delivery of community services or sporting / leisure activities. The Policy is intended, where possible, to support community access to these facilities at non-peak / vacant times, without limiting their ability to be used for their primary purpose / use.

This Policy applies to:

- Community facilities where either the entire venue, or spaces / rooms within, are available for community hire/use.

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- All hirers of community facilities, including groups, organisations, and individuals.

This Policy does not apply to:

- Council facilities that are exclusively occupied for a Council operated service.
- Seasonal allocations of sporting grounds and/or pavilions.
- Any Council facility that is exclusively occupied via a lease, license, or agreement, including where the group / organisation has full management responsibilities for that facility.

Notwithstanding the scope of this Policy:

- At facilities where there is a primary use identified, use by other parties may be restricted because of operational and / or risk management considerations associated with any primary use of the facility.
- If the Hume City Council Municipal Emergency Management Plan is enacted, Council may temporarily cancel or pause any / all hire agreements for Council's community facilities without prior notice, and for the duration of the emergency.

5 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Guiding Principles

Guided by the Social Justice Charter, Council aims to improve standards of access and inclusion at community facilities and deliver services that support equity and fairness across the city. In prioritising access and use of community facilities, Council will have regard to the following principles:

5.1.1 Appropriate

- Council community facilities will enable the delivery of an appropriate mix of Council and community programs, activities, and services in response to local need, and will provide social, health and wellbeing outcomes to the Hume City community.
- Assessment of applications for hire / use will include consideration of the suitability of the community facility, the needs of the surrounding community and compatibility with other users in the facility.
- Council may refuse or limit access to a community facility if the intended use does not support the strategic direction of the Council Plan, this Policy, or the overall best interests of the Hume City community.

5.1.2 Equitable and Fair

- Council is committed to providing facilities for hire / use where community members can access services and information, have something to do, feel connected to their community, be free of discrimination, and be considerate of need.
- The allocation of community facilities for hire / use will be reasonable with respect to the range of users. Council may limit the use of space (amount of time allocated) to some groups / organisations to ensure that facilities are not dominated by one type of user group, or program type, and ensure spaces are able to meet the diverse needs of the community.
- Council aims to ensure that community facility fees and charges do not create barriers to use by groups / organisations / individuals.

5.1.3 Local Priority

- Groups, organisations, and individuals that live, work, or have a connection with Hume City residents, and those that service the local community surrounding the community facility, will have priority over groups and organisations that provide services for people outside of the municipality.
- Where requested and in accordance with the Privacy Act, Council will share information it holds regarding community needs / priorities with groups and organisations to assist them in designing, delivering, and establishing programs and services in facilities that respond to local needs.

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5.1.4 Maximising Use

- Recognising the significant investment in and benefit of community facilities, Council is committed to ensuring facilities are utilised to their full capacity and potential.
- Council will support and encourage on-demand use of unoccupied / vacant community facilities or spaces and will accommodate reasonable adjustments to the configuration / equipment within to support a variety of uses.
- Council may also consider full or partial fee waivers to promote the use and / or activation of community facilities where these are underutilised. Council will broadly promote available community facilities across the community and maintain an up-to-date, centralised register of facility bookings and vacancies.

5.2 Fees and Charges

5.2.1 Council aims to establish fees, charges and bonds which are affordable, transparent, and equitable, having regard to the type, use, function, and purpose of the facility.

5.2.2 The fees and charges which may be imposed by Council include:

- Fees for hire of the facility.
- Security bonds (Council may retain the bond for breach of the 'conditions of hire' including any costs associated with cleaning, breaches of security, damage to Council property or loss of keys or security passes. The bond is refundable after the hire, less any charges for cleaning or damage).
- Insurance (Council requires hirers to keep in force, during the term of the agreement, a Public Liability Insurance Policy with a Limit of Indemnity of not less than \$20,000,000).
- Charges for hire of facility equipment (e.g. audio / visual equipment).
- Miscellaneous Charges (e.g. venue / attendance staff).

5.2.3 Fees and charges for use of Council community facilities are approved within Council's annual budget process taking into consideration factors including the maintenance costs and outgoings for each building type.

5.2.4 Fees and charges 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.

5.2.5 All user groups are to pay the appropriate fees, unless granted Special Consideration (refer 5.3 Special Consideration).

5.2.6 Fees and charges may be reviewed and / or changed by Council within the financial year by resolution of Council.

5.2.7 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Fees and Charges Policy (POL/208).

5.3 Special Consideration

Council seeks to encourage and maximise participation at community facilities. In doing so, Council recognises that the economic, social and demographic profile of the community and infrastructure users must be considered, with respect to 'capacity to pay.'

5.3.1 Hirers may apply for discounted / waived hire fees, criteria will include evidence that:

- They are a community hirer / community group that:
 - Does not operate for profit or personal gain of an individual / group of people
 - Have limited resources or capacity to generate income.
 - Are based locally within the City of Hume and have a substantial proportion of their membership base living in the City of Hume.
- And that their intended hire / use:
 - Meets a broader community need.
 - Encourages local community participation.

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- Increases community access to activities and services, particularly access by disadvantaged and socially isolated groups as identified in the Social Justice Charter / Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- Is of benefit to the residents of Hume.
- Supports access / reduces barriers to participation (i.e. does not have an entry fee or fee for participation).

5.3.2 Organisations that are determined by Council to have reasonable access to funds (e.g. substantial funds in bank account or access to funds through annual income streams) will not be eligible for a discount / waiver. Council officers reserve the right to determine this at their discretion.

5.3.3 The Manager City Life is authorised to approve discount requests.

5.3.4 The Director City Services and Living is authorised to approve waiver requests.

5.4 Restrictions on Hire

5.4.1 The allocation of spaces for hire / use will be reasonable with respect to the range of users.

5.4.2 Council may limit the use of space (amount of time allocated) to some groups / organisations to ensure that facilities are not dominated by one type of user group, or program type, and ensure spaces are able to meet the diverse needs of the Hume community.

5.4.3 To support equity of access to community facilities, Council has a maximum limit on the amount available to any one group, booking or community of interest for recurring bookings:

- Not-for-profit community groups, Hume Multiversity partners and community service organisations can make application for no more than 96 hours of room hire per month at any one facility.
- Commercial/private individuals and government organisations can make application for no more than 64 hours of room hire per month at any one facility.

5.4.4 Council reserves the right to review each application individually and adjust hiring limits to greater or lesser than these thresholds if there is expressed need.

5.4.5 These restrictions do not apply to Primary Users and organisations under contract to provide specific services on Council's behalf.

5.4.6 Council reserves the right to limit or prohibit alcohol consumption at any of its facilities.

5.5 Refusal to Hire

5.5.1 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.

5.5.2 Council 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.

6 DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Commercial/private hirer:	Business orientated organisations, entities or individuals who provide services or sell products with the intention of making a profit. Private also includes individual non-Hume resident hirers who are using a facility for a private function, event, meeting or gathering.
Community hirer:	A hirer who uses spaces to provide opportunities to members of the public to engage in social, recreational, cultural, community, learning, leisure and/or health and wellbeing services, programs and activities to the benefit of the residents and; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do not derive a profit • are locally based within the City of Hume • have limited resources or capacity to generate income

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> individual community members using facilities for private functions and activities e.g. private birthdays and functions.
Community groups:	Any community-based group or organisation whose primary objective is to provide and engage in accessible services and activities that benefit the local and broader Hume City community. This includes sporting and hobby clubs, cultural, seniors and social clubs.
Community facilities:	Community facility means a building or place owned or controlled by the Council (or a body of persons) which may provide for the physical, social, cultural or intellectual development or welfare of the local community. Examples within Hume City Council include Global Learning Centres, libraries, community centres and hubs, halls, leisure centres and multi-court sport stadiums.
Community service organisations:	Not for profit groups and agencies that respond to specific community issues through the delivery of services.
Government	All levels of government, related organisations and government funded groups (e.g. Victorian health organisations, registered training organisations and schools).
Hume Multiversity	A partnership with leading training institutions and industry bodies who offer a range of programs and services to Hume residents to help develop the skills needed for the jobs of the future.
Member-based organisations:	Any community-based group or organisation whose primary objective is to provide services and activities to the benefit of their membership.
Primary user:	Council services and programs providing a direct service to the community e.g. Preschool, Maternal and Child Health (MCH), Youth Services, Social Support / Planned Activity Group (PAG) programs, playgroups, activities, and events provided by Community Centre officers.
Private hirer:	Invitation only activities that are not available to the public or for community benefit.

7 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Council Plan (2021-2025)
- Risk Management Framework
- Fees and Charges Policy (POL/208)
- Records and Information Management Policy
- Social Justice Charter
- Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy
- Community Infrastructure Planning Framework

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