



9.2 COMMUNITY FACILITY ACCESS AND ALLOCATION POLICY UPDATE

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present the results of the internal review of the Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy 2014 and present the revised Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy for approval.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Council managed community facilities provide a space for involving, enabling and engaging community in a holistic model of wellbeing.
- 2.2 They support various social, recreational, cultural, leisure and lifelong learning activities and services that benefit and strengthen the local community leading to increased community connection, participation, health and wellbeing.
- 2.3 The City of Port Phillip currently manages approximately 24 bookable venues supplying 44 bookable spaces across sports, arts, playgrounds and community centres.
- 2.4 The *Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy 2014* (the Policy) provides guiding principles that oversee the equitable and transparent allocation of space within community centres which equates to 11 of these venues.
- 2.5 While the Policy was developed in 2014 through extensive community consultation, it was not truly tested until 2020 when Government regulations restricted the available space within the portfolio to help support COVID safety measures.
- 2.6 The sudden restriction of space brought on by these government regulations led to Council having a disproportionate number of applications to available space. This led to a stronger reliance on the principles of allocation held under the Policy to ensure equitable allocation of space.
- 2.7 The principles were found to be effective with all but two groups being allocated space despite over 60% of the portfolio being unavailable during this period.
- 2.8 At this time there were concerns raised regarding the fees and charges associated with allocation however Council alleviated these concerns with the introduction of a fee waiver within the Fees and Charges Schedule for particular not-for-profit groups.
- 2.9 As the principles held within the Policy were recently tested and found to be relevant today, Officers undertook an internal review of the Policy to identify any amendments required given the age of the document.
- 2.10 This internal review identified that the Policy would benefit from amendments to support transparency and consistency within the allocation processes as well as changes to formatting to bring the document up to date. Key changes are summarised in section 4.11 of this report.



- 2.11 In addition, a similar internal review of the Town Hall Hire Policy 2004 has identified that it contains similar goals to those included in the Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy 2014.
- 2.12 Due to the similar intent within both policies, it is recommended that the Town Hall Hire Policy 2004 be consolidated within the Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy going forward.
- 2.13 It is expected that the consolidation of the two policies will promote ongoing consistency in Council's approach to venue management across the portfolio.
- 2.14 The recommended amendments are not expected to impact the intent of the Policy however Officers recommended that the Policy be reviewed with the community within five years to ensure the needs of the community continue to be met.
- 2.15 Officers are now seeking approval from Council for the adoption and implementation of the revised Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Approves the adoption of the revised Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy 2023.
- 3.2 Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer to make amendments to the Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy 2023 to correct any minor changes that do not materially alter its intent.

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

Background

- 4.1 Council managed community facilities provide a space for involving, enabling and engaging community in a holistic model of wellbeing.
- 4.2 They support various social, recreational, cultural, leisure and lifelong learning activities and services that benefit and strengthen the local community leading to increased community connection, participation, health and wellbeing.
- 4.3 The City of Port Phillip currently manages approximately 24 bookable venues supplying 44 bookable spaces across sports, arts, playgrounds and community centres.
- 4.4 The *Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy 2014* (the Policy) provides guiding principles that oversee the equitable and transparent allocation of space within community centres which equates to 11 of these venues.
- 4.5 The Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy enables Council to:
 - Provide a responsible, consistent, transparent and equitable process for access to and use of Council's community centres.
 - Determine allocation of bookable spaces within community centres, including any support or subsidy for the many community groups that use them.
 - Ensure appropriate and accessible use of space that is fit for purpose.
 - Ensure centre user activities/programs meet with Council's goals for social inclusion, cohesion and respect for all.



- 4.6 While the Policy was developed in 2014 through extensive community consultation, it was not truly tested until 2020 when Government regulations restricted the available space within the portfolio to help support COVID safety measures.
- 4.7 The sudden restriction of space brought on by these government regulations led to Council having a disproportionate number of applications to available space. This led to a stronger reliance on the principles of allocation held under the Policy to ensure equitable allocation of space.
- 4.8 The principles were found to be effective with all but two groups being allocated space despite over 60% of the portfolio being unavailable during this period.
- 4.9 At this time there were concerns raised regarding the fees and charges associated with allocation however Council alleviated these concerns with the introduction of a fee waiver within the Fees and Charges Schedule for particular not-for-profit groups.

Policy review

- 4.10 As the principles held within the Policy were recently tested and found to be relevant today, Officers undertook an internal review of the Policy to identify any amendments required given the age of the document.
- 4.11 This internal review identified that the Policy would benefit from the following amendments to support transparency and consistency within allocation processes as well as changes to formatting to bring the document up to date:
- **Formatting** - Update the Policy template to align with Council's standard policy template including adding in expected policy outcomes, key definitions and clear roles and responsibilities.
 - **Hire Fee Classification Table** – The current policy includes a Hire Fee Classification Table within the key definition section. This table is designed to provide definitions of the different hirer categories as well as the priority of allocation. To make this information clearer for hirers, Officers recommend moving the Priority of Access information into its own section within the Policy.
 - **HACC Eligible Users** – The current Policy offers support for HACC eligible users referring to older citizen groups that would have been supported by the Home and Community Care (HACC) program. The HACC program was amended in 2016 and has since been assessed as no longer relevant for this Policy. As Council now offers a fee waiver through the Fees and Charges Schedule for senior not-for-profit community groups hiring this facility, it is recommended that all references to HACC are removed from the Policy.
 - **Political Parties** – The current Terms and Conditions of Hire require all bookings of a political nature to be charged at commercial or private hire rates. To ensure clarity within the Policy, Officers recommend updating the hire definitions accordingly.
 - **Leasing and Licencing** – The current Policy refers to the leasing and licencing of community centres. It is recommended that this section be removed as this information has since been superseded by Council's Property Policy.
 - **Community Facility Use** - Much of the information contained within the Community Facility Use section for the Policy is included within the specific Terms and Conditions of Hire of each venue. As the Terms and Conditions of Hire can



change depending on the event or venue, it is recommended that these sections are linked back to the Terms and Conditions of Hire held within the booking application. It is also recommended that the format of the remaining information in this section be updated to ensure key points are listed under easily identifiable headings.

- **Applications for Hire** – Officers recommend making a few amendments to the applications section within the Policy to support transparency over the legal requirements when entering a hire agreement including ensuring the correct forms are used and are provided by parties over 18 years of age.
- **Child Safe Standards** – As a child safe organisation, Officers recommend including a section on child safe standards given its importance within the venue hire context.
- **Customer Charter** – As this is a customer facing service, it is recommended that the customer charter and complaints handling process be recognised within this Policy.

4.12 In addition to the above, a recent internal review of the Town Hall Hire Policy 2004 has identified that it contains similar goals to those included in the Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy 2014.

4.13 Due to the similar intent within both policies, it is recommended that the Town Hall Hire Policy 2004 be consolidated within the Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy going forward.

4.14 This consolidation will see the following key elements amended within the Policy to support the broader scope:

- **Scope** – The current scope of the Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy is very limited. In order to support the consolidation of town hall hire into this Policy, it is recommended that the scope be amended to support a broader range of venues. The broader approach will also allow for increased flexibility within the venue portfolio should more spaces become available over time.
- **Definitions** – It is recommended the key definitions within the Policy be amended to ensure clarity over specific requirements held in relation to hire of town halls and other venues.
- **Compliance with Legislation** – The Town Hall Hire Policy 2004 highlights the need for all hire to comply with associated legislation. As it is prudent for this section to remain, Officers recommend that this section be transferred into the Policy.
- **Priority of Access** – As the Town Hall Hire Policy 2004 and the Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy 2014 prioritise access in a similar way, Officers recommend only minor amendments to this section to provide clarity over Commercial Hire within the town hall venues.

4.15 It is expected that the consolidation of the two policies will promote ongoing consistency in Council's approach to venue management across the portfolio.

4.16 The recommended amendments are not expected to impact the intent of the Policy.

4.17 All amendments to the Policy have been marked up in red in the draft document attached to this report.



4.18 Officers recommended that the Policy be reviewed with the community in 5 years to ensure the needs of the community continue to be met.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

5.1 The development of the *Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy 2014* included a comprehensive community engagement process with community feedback integrated into the final draft endorsed by Council.

5.2 The recent internal review was informed by ongoing feedback from hirers and internal teams within Council.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 In accordance with the Local Government Act, it is the responsibility of the City of Port Phillip to provide the community with equitable access to services and facilities that encourage active participation and improve the overall quality of life of people in the local community.

6.2 The current Policy is outdated and does not necessarily align with current requirements.

6.3 While the recommended updates are expected to bring policies up to date, it is not expected to impact current procedures or intent of the current policies.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

7.1 The proposed minor changes to the Policy will not have any financial implications.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

8.1 The Policy continues to be aligned to the Act and Adapt, Sustainable Environment Strategy.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

9.1 The Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy provides guiding principles to ensure fair, appropriate and equitable allocation of Council owned or managed community centres for activities of community benefit.

9.2 Activities and services of the highest benefit to the Port Phillip community in accordance with Council social, health, recreational, cultural, lifelong learning and participation objectives are given priority under the Policy.

9.3 The minor amendments proposed to the Policy will provide further transparency over the key elements of community facility hire.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

10.1 Liveable Port Phillip: Port Phillip is a great place to live, where our community has access to high quality public spaces, development and growth are well managed, and it is safer and easy to connect and travel within.

10.2 Well Governed Port Phillip: Port Phillip is a leading local government authority, where our community and our organisation are in a better place as a result of our collective efforts.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE



11.1.1 Following adoption, the revised Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy will be updated on both the intranet and internet.

11.2 COMMUNICATION

Key Messages are as follows:

11.2.1 The Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy provides guiding principles to ensure fair, appropriate and equitable allocation of Council owned or managed community centres for activities of community benefit.

11.2.2 A recent internal review of the Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy 2014 was undertaken, informed by the outcomes of the regular hire process conducted in 2020 and feedback from internal teams charged with managing venues on behalf of Council.

11.2.3 As the intent of both the Town Hall Hire Policy 2004 and the Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy 2014, it is recommended that they be consolidated into the one policy to support consistency.

11.2.4 Minor amendments have been made to the Policy to further enhance transparency within the decision-making process and promote ongoing consistency in Council's approach to venue management across the portfolio.

12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any material or general interest in the matter.

ATTACHMENTS

1. **Community Facility Access and Allocation Policy 2022**
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