

**ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
28 JULY 2008**

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**

**A8**

**USE OF COMMERCIAL RESERVES BY  
COMMERCIAL HEALTH AND FITNESS  
GROUPS AND PERSONAL TRAINERS**

**LOCATION/ADDRESS:**

**RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:**

**GEOFF OULTON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND  
PLANNING**

**AUTHOR:**

**FIONA BLAIR, YOUTH AND RECREATION  
COORDINATOR**

**FILE NO.:**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**NIL.**

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**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. This report is being presented for information.
- 1.2. Feedback has been received in relation to implementing guidelines for the use of council reserves by commercial health and fitness operators.
- 1.3. This report is being provided to communicate this feedback to Council.

**2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

- 2.1. A pro forma letter has been received from 7 people and a separate letter from another resident.
- 2.2. The feedback provided in the letters is summarised as follows;
  - 2.2.1. Concerns that charging commercial operators is an exercise in revenue raising.
  - 2.2.2. Concern that charging fees will have an impact on people's participation in physical activity contributing to obesity, and that charging fees for people to exercise is contradictory to combating the obesity issue.
  - 2.2.3. Lack of consultation.
- 2.3. The following information addresses the feedback received.
  - 2.3.1. Fees  
Council recognises the benefits of providing sport, leisure and recreation opportunities and acknowledges that health and fitness activities are a normal part of foreshore and open space use.

In recent years, there has been an increase nationally in the presence of commercial health and fitness training groups using public open space, particularly along foreshore areas.

The increased use of public reserves by commercial fitness trainers has highlighted a number of emerging issues including; equitable access to limited public open space; managing the impact generated by organised fitness training groups on public open space, park assets and other park users; and effective OH&S management of personal trainers.

Any fee structure implemented will be developed to ensure that it does not prohibit participation in healthy activities and will be consistent with fees that are currently charged by other municipalities who issue permits for this activity. No fees are being charged in the trial period.

#### 2.3.2. People's participation

These new guidelines will support healthy and active lifestyles whilst ensuring preservation and protection of the social and physical environment of public open space. Having an agreed set of principles and procedures better enables councils to manage the conduct of the commercial health and fitness groups in a manner that reflects community and environmental values.

#### 2.3.3. Lack of consultation

Council has received feedback from both residents and commercial trainers in relation to the need to implement a process that provides effective management of these activities.

The Cities of Port Phillip, Bayside, Frankston, Kingston and Mornington Peninsula formed a working partnership to provide a regional response to managing these activities on council managed land.

Significant benchmarking and discussion with other council's both in Victoria and nationally that identified that whilst there was not a consistency in management processes, one of the areas that was common was the issue of growing "non compliance" of fitness trainers and the need to manage these activities

The two key peak fitness bodies Kinect and Fitness Victoria were consulted and supported the regional approach agreeing to collaborate in promoting and endorsing the proposed general principles and "code of conduct" through their networks.

**3. RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1. That the Council receive and note this report regarding the feedback received and consider this in the context of the information provided to the strategy and policy review committee on the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2008.