

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: 12 SEPTEMBER 2022

PURPOSE

This policy seeks to maximise community engagement and benefit by removing financial barriers to community use of Council's Community Facilities. It recognises that there may be occasions where financial circumstances limit the access of individuals, groups or organisations to Council's social infrastructure assets.

POLICY INTENT

The main objective of this policy is to:

1. Maximise access to Community Rooms and Halls under the direct control of Council.
2. Recognise disadvantage and promote equitable access to Council's facilities by removing financial barriers.
3. Provide for a consistent approach which will allow the use of Community Rooms and Halls under the direct control of Council that would be prevented from proceeding if Council's standard fees and charges were applied.

This policy is to be applied via the *Reduction or Waiver of Hire Fees for Community Rooms and Halls Under the Direct Control of Council Procedure*.

WOLLONGONG 2028 OBJECTIVES

The *Our Wollongong 2028* Community Strategic Plan outlines the community's main priorities for the future and includes strategies for achieving them. This Policy contributes towards the following *Our Wollongong 2028* objectives:

- Goal 3: Wollongong is a creative, vibrant city.
 - 3.3 Strong diverse local cultures are supported.
- Goal 4: We are connected and engaged community.
 - 4.2 Our residents have an increased sense of community.
- Goal 5: We have a healthy community in a liveable city.
 - 5.1 There is an increase in the health and wellbeing of our community.

POLICY

The General Manager or delegate be authorised to determine all requests for the reduction or waiver of fees for the hiring of community rooms and halls under the direct control of Council.

In order to be considered for a reduction or waiver the group or organisation must be able to demonstrate that they meet **all** of the following criteria:

1. The community facility is the most suitable or only available venue for the planned activity **and**;
2. The function, meeting, exhibition or other activity is determined to be of value to the broader community **and**;

3. The payment of the standard hire fee applicable will prevent the function, meeting, exhibition or other activity from proceeding **and**;
 - a. It is a non-profit organisation and/or is registered under the Charitable Fundraising Act No 69 of 1991 and demonstrates benefit to the community and that the majority of its revenue is received from membership fees, donations or public subscriptions.
or
 - b. It is an organisation which supports and stimulates the local cultural economy and reflects the community goals of Wollongong City Council Strategic Plan.
or
 - c. Public appeal.
or
 - d. Wollongong City Council function, meeting or other activity which is determined to be of value to the broader community for which alternate funds/budget is insufficient or unavailable.

The General Manager or Manager Library & Community Services may at their absolute discretion make a determination to approve a fee waiver or reduction where the above criteria are not met.

The amount of reduction granted (or complete waiver) be determined on an individual request basis subject to the following conditions:

- a. where cleaning will need to take place outside of the standard hours allocated, a charge equivalent to the labour costs for cleaning will be applied, and
- b. bond (refundable subject to standard conditions) be applied in the usual manner.

Note:

1. Evidence of an organisation's non-profit/charitable status may be requested and/or current audited financial statements along with a full budget for the function, meeting or other activity for which a reduction or waiver of hire fees is being requested.
2. Organisations or groups that are already recipients of grant funding, sponsorship or any other type of financial/in kind support from Wollongong Council will not be eligible for a fee waiver under this policy.
3. Application of these waivers will be documented on a register and subject to independent checks.

REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed every two years from the date of each adoption of the policy, or more frequently as required.

REPORTING

Library and Community Services Manager will monitor the scope and currency of this policy.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

General Manager (or authorised delegate) is responsible for:

- Assessing requests for reductions or waivers to determine whether the request meets the criteria of this Policy.

RELATED PROCEDURES

Reduction or Waiver of Hire Fees for Community Rooms and Halls Under the Direct Control of Council procedure.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW		
Responsible Division	Library and Community Services	
Date/s adopted	<i>EMC</i> 21 July 2022	<i>Council</i> 12 September 2022
Date/s of previous adoptions	17 July 2017, 28 October 2013, 2 July 2005, 2 July 1990	
Date of next review	September 2024	