

ITEM 8 POLICY REVIEW: COMMUNITY FACILITIES

This report seeks approval for the adoption of two key policies relating to management of social infrastructure assets. These policies have been revised under Council's rolling review of corporate policies.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1 The following draft policies are adopted:
 - a Management of Community Halls, Community Centres, Senior Citizens' Centres and Neighbourhood Centres
 - b Reduction of Waiver of Hire Fees for Community Halls Under the Direct Control of Council
- 2 The 'Allocation of Community Facilities to Community Groups' policy, whose provisions have now been incorporated into the Management of Community Halls, Community Centres, Senior Citizens' Centres and Neighbourhood Centres policy, is revoked and removed from the Wollongong City Council Policy Register

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Jenny Thompson, Manager Library and Community Services
Authorised by: Kerry Hunt, Director Community Services - Creative and Innovative City

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Management of Community Halls, Community Centres, Senior Citizens Centres and Neighbourhood Centres Policy
- 2 Reduction or Waiver of Hire Fees for Community Halls Under the Direct Control of Council Policy

BACKGROUND

Council provides affordable and accessible social infrastructure assets, where community members and community groups meet, organise, deliver services, recreate and celebrate. The allocation and management of community facilities in a manner that is consistent with Council's Vision, Mission and Values has historically been governed via three key policies, which were most recently revised and endorsed by Council at its meeting of 17 July 2017.

- 1 *Management of Community Halls, Community Centres, Senior Citizens' Centres and Neighbourhood Centres* policy
- 2 *Reduction or Waiver of Hire Fees for Community Rooms and Halls under the Direct Control of Council* policy
- 3 *Allocation of Community Facilities to Community Groups*

These policies aim to provide fair and equitable access for community groups to the hire and/or management under licence, of community facilities.

These policies have been revised under Council's rolling review of corporate policies, to ensure currency and relevance. Consultation during the policy review process indicated the value of bringing together the allocation and management of social infrastructure assets into a single policy (see Table 1 below). The two policies for endorsement now comprise:

- 1 *Management of Community Halls, Community Centres, Senior Citizens' Centres and Neighbourhood Centres*
- 2 *Reduction or Waiver of Hire Fees for Community Rooms and Halls under the Direct Control of Council*

The principal purpose of these policies is as follows:

Management of Community Halls, Community Centres, Senior Citizens’ Centres and Neighbourhood Centres

This policy has been revised to incorporate the *Allocation of Community Facilities to Community Groups* policy.

Council manages and maintains numerous facilities across the Wollongong Local Government Area on behalf of the community. The value of these assets to Council and to the community is maximised when the community is engaged in their operation and activation.

The intent of this policy is to promote a sense of community and connection by providing fair and equitable access for community groups to Council’s core social infrastructure assets. It aims to achieve optimum benefit from these facilities for both the community at large and Council.

Reduction or Waiver of Hire Fees for Community Halls Under the Direct Control of Council

The intent of this policy is to maximise community engagement and benefit through removing financial barriers for community use of Council’s assets by providing for the reduction or waiver of fees in particular circumstances.

Proposed changes to these policies are outlined in the following table.

Table 1: Summary of Proposed Changes to Policies

POLICY	SUMMARY OF CHANGES
Allocation of Community Facilities to Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy content incorporated into Management of Community Halls, Community Centres, Senior Citizens’ Centres and Neighbourhood Centres • Policy to be revoked and removed from Policy Register
Management of Community Halls, Community Centres, Senior Citizens’ Centres and Neighbourhood Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy changed to new template and adapted to suit new headings • Allocation policy included • Purpose now includes a more community focused approach • Statement of Procedures removed – now included in Council Procedure • 2028 Objectives updated to reflect current Community Strategic Plan • Policy now includes the words ‘Council will review, consider alternate use options and dispose’ instead of – ‘Council will dispose’
Reduction or Waiver of Hire Fees for Community Rooms and Halls under the Direct Control of Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy changed to new template and adapted to suit new headings • Purpose now includes a more community focused approach • 2028 Objectives updated to reflect current Community Strategic Plan • Statement of Procedures removed – now included in Council Procedure • Clarification of delegations, responsibilities and accountabilities

PROPOSAL

It is proposed that the revised Council policies as outlined in the table above and detailed at Attachments 1 & 2 are adopted by Council, and that *Allocation of Community Facilities to Community Groups* is revoked and removed from the Policy Register.

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

These policies have been reviewed by Council’s Community Facilities Team and the Manager Library and Community Services, in consultation with Council’s Property team.

The revisions to their design were consulted with relevant staff from the Governance team.

The draft policies were endorsed by the Executive Management Committee on 21 July 2022, for submission to Council for consideration and adoption.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2032 Goal 4 – We are a connected and engaged community and Goal 5 – We have a healthy community in a liveable city. It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan 2032	Delivery Program 2022-2026
Strategy	Service
4.11 Quality services, libraries and facilities are available to communities to access and gather.	Libraries / Community Facilities
5.4 Provide a variety of quality and accessible public places and opportunities for sport, play, leisure, recreation, learning and cultural activities in the community.	Libraries / Community Facilities

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

1. Management of Community Halls, Community Centres, Senior Citizens’ Centres and Neighbourhood Centres
 - All Licenses/Leases issued by Community Facilities include clauses to ensure licensees manage these assets in an environmentally sustainable way
 - Council manages and maintains numerous facilities across the Wollongong Local Government Area on behalf of the community. The value of these assets to Council and to the community is maximised when the community is engaged in their operation and activation
2. Reduction or Waiver of Hire Fees for Community Halls Under the Direct Control of Council
 - This policy contributes to the financial sustainability of community groups, by providing affordable spaces for their activities

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Management of Community Halls, Community Centres, Senior Citizens’ Centres and Neighbourhood Centres
 - The net cost to Council of management of these assets is reduced by their allocation to and management by community groups.
2. Reduction or Waiver of Hire Fees for Community Halls Under the Direct Control of Council
 - There is an overarching expectation that the hire of community facilities will generate an income stream, which is shown within the relevant revenue budget and which offsets the cost to Council of operating and maintaining these assets. The outcomes of this policy are factored into revenue planning and will be delivered within the existing expenditure budget.

CONCLUSION

Policies within the remit of Library and Community Services Division due for revision under Council’s three-year policy review program, have been reviewed and updated. These policies are recommended to Council for endorsement.



MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY HALLS, COMMUNITY CENTRES, SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES COUNCIL POLICY

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: : [TO BE COMPLETED BY GOVERNANCE]

PURPOSE

Council manages and maintains numerous Community Facilities across the Wollongong Local Government Area, acting as the custodian of these assets on behalf of the community. The value of these assets to Council and to the community is maximised when the community is engaged in their operation and activation.

POLICY INTENT

The main objectives of this policy are to:

1. Maximise the community benefit and use of Community Facilities.
2. Reduce the net cost to Council associated with the maintenance and operation of the Community Facilities.

WOLLONGONG 2028 OBJECTIVES

Our Wollongong 2028 outlines the community's main priorities for the future and includes strategies for achieving them. This Policy contributes toward 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.

POLICY

1. Where appropriate, Council will transfer, by way of allocation, the day-to-day management of community halls, community centres, senior citizens centres and neighbourhood centres to community organisations for the purposes of conducting their activities. The occupant community organisation is to make the premises available for use/hire by other groups, organisations and the general public when not being used for its' core business.
2. Allocation of Community Facilities (under control of the Library and Community Services Division) to community groups will be based on a process of consultation with community groups interested in the occupation of the facilities and a transparent decision-making process in relation to the awarding of leases and licences.
3. This policy applies to the leasing or licensing of Community Facilities where:
 - a. the existing occupancy arrangement or agreement is due to expire; OR
 - b. a building becomes available for community use through:
 - i. vacation by the existing occupant;
 - ii. acquisition by Council; or
 - iii. new construction;
 - c. and it is determined to allocate occupancy to a community group.

MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY HALLS, COMMUNITY CENTRES, SENIOR CITIZENS CENTRES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES

COUNCIL POLICY

4. Council will work with the community organisations that manage community facilities on our behalf to support their capacity to effectively meet their responsibilities and accountabilities under licence or occupancy agreements, and in compliance with all relevant Legislative requirements.
5. Council will review, consider alternative use options, and dispose of community facilities that are no longer required for general community use.
6. Council will undertake the day-to-day management of community halls, community centres, senior citizens centres and neighbourhood centres that are not allocated to community organisations.
7. This policy is not applicable to facilities:
 - a. controlled by a Committee of Council;
 - b. by Council directly; or
 - c. earmarked for either 7 (a) or 7 (b) above;
 - d. childcare centres; or,
 - e. community facilities where the licence has expired and the existing licensee:
 - i. has advised Council that the group wants to continue to be the licensee; and,
 - ii. is able to demonstrate that the organisation has the capacity to continue to meet the criteria for effective governance and management, that is required of all licensees at community facilities; and,

is in receipt of grant funding when the licence expires, and the grant funding is being used for the employment of staff to provide community services and those staff have their primary office at the facility, and,
 - iii. has consistently demonstrated adherence to previous licensing requirements.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following terms are used:

Community Facilities are Community Halls, Community Centres, Senior Citizens Centres and Neighbourhood Centres.

A *community group* is any organisation, that is legally constituted, engaged in charitable or other community-based activity operating under Australian law and not established for the purpose of making a profit.

An *occupant organisation* is the body that enters into a lease or licence agreement at a community facility and in doing so takes on the responsibility for the day-to-day management of that facility.

A *tenant organisation* is a body that has an agreement with the occupant organisation to be housed and to operate from the facility on a long-term basis.

RELATED LEGISLATION

This policy complies with the following, but is not limited to:

- Crown Land Management Act (2018)
- Local Government Act
- Child Protection (working With Children) Amendment (Statutory Review) Bill 2018
- Child Protect (Working with Children) Act 2012
- Children and Young Person (Care and Protection) Act 1998

MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY HALLS, COMMUNITY CENTRES, SENIOR CITIZENS CENTRES AND NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES	COUNCIL POLICY
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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

Divisional Manager is responsible and accountable to ensure that this procedure is implemented in their areas of responsibility.

Middle Management/Coordinators/Supervisors will ensure that this procedure is implemented and communicated to staff responsible for conducting the allocation process as per Allocation of Community Facilities to Community Groups Procedures.

RELATED PROCEDURES & POLICIES

- Allocation of Community Facilities to Community Groups Procedure.
- Child Safety – Working with Children Management Policy

APPROVAL AND REVIEW		
Responsible Division	Library and Community Services	
Date/s adopted	<i>EMC</i> [updated by policy owner]	<i>Council</i> [To be inserted by Governance]
Date/s of previous adoptions	17 July 2017, 14 October 2013, 22 July 1986	
Date of next review		



REDUCTION OR WAIVER OF HIRE FEES FOR COMMUNITY ROOMS AND HALLS UNDER THE DIRECT CONTROL OF COUNCIL COUNCIL POLICY

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: : [TO BE COMPLETED BY GOVERNANCE]

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**;

REDUCTION OR WAIVER OF HIRE FEES FOR COMMUNITY ROOMS AND HALLS UNDER THE DIRECT CONTROL OF COUNCIL

COUNCIL POLICY

- 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

COUNCIL POLICY

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> [updated by policy owner]	<i>Council</i> [To be inserted by Governance]
Date/s of previous adoptions	17 July 2017, 28 October 2013, 2 July 2005, 2 July 1990	
Date of next review		