



Summary Report:

2022-23 Sports Club Engagement for the Draft Allocation of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions.

SEPTEMBER 1

Introduction

About the policy review

With the introduction of Sport and Recreation Victoria's Fair Access Policy Roadmap in 2022, Council conducted an initial review of its Allocation and Use of Sporting Facilities, Grounds and Pavilions Policy, which included bench marking against other Council's.

The aim of reviewing the policy in 2022/2023 is to:

- ✓ Ensure there are good governance practices across Merri-bek
- ✓ That inclusiveness is supported
- ✓ Gender equity is championed
- ✓ Promoting of healthy and safe environments

Methodology

Sports club and community engagement initially took place during the months of October 2022 and February 2023, which included:

- Online survey through Conversations Merri-bek
- Sports club specific policy discussion sessions
- State Sporting Association policy discussion sessions

In March 2023, additional engagement was requested by Councillors to ensure all sports clubs were informed and given an opportunity to provide feedback regarding the changes to the proposed policy update. This took place during the months of June and July 2023, which included:

- Online survey through Conversations Merri-bek
- Sports club specific policy discussion sessions, both in-person and online
- Invitations for clubs to provide feedback via email, phone and meeting with Council officer's one-on-one.

Timeline of 2022-2023 Engagement

August 2022

Initial review of the policy and completed benchmarking against other Councils.

September 2022

Policy criteria was revised.

October 2022

A Council Report was presented with summarised recommendations.

November - February 2023

Consultations and engagement with sports clubs and organisations across Merri-bek.

March 2023

A report and a draft policy to the March Council meeting. Additional changes and consultations were required.

April - May 2023

Policy criteria was revised again to reduce any additional workloads for club volunteers.

June – July 2023

All sports clubs (Seasonal and Lease) were contacted with the revised draft policy for additional feedback.

August 2023

Updated draft policy and engagement summary to be presented to Council in the September 2023 meeting.

There are currently 68 active sports clubs within Merri-bek

23 leased clubs (annual use)

45 seasonal clubs (annual, summer and winter use)

Findings

During the June-July engagement period, Council specifically wanted feedback from clubs and the community on the following areas:

The Objective

Increasing participation; fair; equitable; champions of gender equality – all good words! Is this spot on?

Common themes:

- Unclear on why “Faith Communities” are being included as a group for this policy
- Suggestion to include Young people (<18)
- Suggestion to include Older adults (65+)

The 8 Values

We believe these 8 areas provide a good platform for how Clubs, Associations and Council collaborate. Do they hit the mark?

Common themes:

- Equitable – how does this protect the lesser represented/stand alone sports facilities like baseball and croquet, as well as the developing sports who don’t have purpose-built facilities like ultimate frisbee?
- Generally the Values were agreed to be valid and reasonable

Minimum requirements

There are eight requirements (a- h) that your club already provide under the current 2016 policy. In addition, we’d like to push the boundaries of gender equitable and fair access pathways i)and j) are both new. The proposal would be that clubs will be supported to achieve both over a number of years. Is this achievable with a good lead in time and added individual club support? What extra support do you require to hit the target? Should the target year be longer?

Common themes:

- Clubs globally are struggling to recruit and retain volunteers, including Committee members.
- Concerns that forcing women and girls onto Committees may set them up to fail if they don’t have the appropriate support/mentorship.
- Review the concept of supporting women and girls in leadership positions with the end goal of more women and girls on Committees – but work needs to be done before they can succeed on Committees.

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- Define leadership positions – Committee roles, Coordinators, Coaches, Team Managers, Trainers, etc.
 - Clubs support having women and girls in leadership positions but struggling with the how. Suggestion for Council to help support clubs with upskilling women and girls so they are more confident stepping into leadership roles?

Requirements for a subsidy

We've set five areas where clubs can get a subsidy to encourage you to be a thriving and flourishing club community. Do they hit the mark?

Common themes:

- Required clarification about the difference between the types of events for community engagement and programs offered.
- Confusion about the 40-50% female representation on Committees as a subsidy if it was going to be mandatory.
- Requested support for clubs who are struggling to meet the subsidy requirements.

Summary of engagement

All 68 clubs received the following:

- An email detailing the steps Council has taken to revise the draft policy, including a copy of the draft policy documents and the desire for Council to seek further input from sports clubs regarding the changes.
- Invitations via email from Eventbrite to attend one of the three available sessions, two in-person and one online. Follow-up calls were made for those clubs who had not yet registered.
- An email and phone call requesting comments or feedback for the draft policy. Clubs were given the option of doing so by email, through Conversations Merri-bek, over the phone or meeting one-on-one.

Conversations Merri-bek

During the additional engagement period held between June and July 2023, the draft policy documents were available for community input on Conversations Merri-bek. There was a total of five submissions received, two being from Merri-bek Clubs.

Sports Club discussion sessions

Council Officers held two in-person sessions and one online session for sports clubs to attend to discuss the revised draft policy documents. There was a total of 12 club representatives who attended the in-person sessions, and six club representatives who attended the online session.

Club specific meetings (one-on-one)

Clubs were offered the option to meet with a Council Officers one-on-one to discuss the draft policy document. This was requested by seven clubs some of which were as individuals, and others involved multiple committee members.

Phone conversations

Clubs were offered the option to discuss their comments and feedback for the draft policy with Council Officers over the phone. This was conducted by six clubs.

Email response

There were a total of five clubs who responded via email with their comments and feedback for the changes made to the draft policy.

