Organised Sport Seasonal Allocation Policy

September 2024

Responsible Directorate: Community Services
Authorised By: Council
Date of Adoption: 9/9/2024
Review Date: 2025/2026

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Boroondara acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and original custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Organised Sport Seasonal Allocation Policy (the Policy) is to provide a consistent and transparent approach to how sportsgrounds and pavilions are allocated to local/community sports clubs, Boroondara schools and commercial/private operators who facilitate organised sport and recreation on a regular basis over a summer and/or winter season.

The Policy aims to:

- Support organisations who provide health and wellbeing benefits to the Boroondara community
- Maximise local/community club participation through efficient and flexible allocation which prioritises gender equitable access and use of sporting assets and appropriate usage fees
- Protect and manage Council assets
- Encourage equitable access to and use of Council sporting assets for as many members of the Boroondara community as possible to encourage and increase physical activity
- Support all user groups who access and use local sport infrastructure to understand, adopt and implement equitable access and usage practices.

1.2 Scope

This Policy covers seasonal allocations for Council sporting assets that facilitate organised sport on a regular basis via a seasonal allocation licence agreement with Council.

A seasonal allocation is a regular booking of 12 or more sessions across a summer season starting 1 October or winter season starting 1 April, in-line with licence agreements. Use of sporting assets for less than 12 sessions annually constitutes a casual booking and is managed under the casual booking process.

Specialised sporting assets, where Council provides year-round access to sports clubs and user groups via lease and licence agreements, are not dealt with under this Policy. This includes, but is not limited to bowls, croquet, golf, hockey, netball, pétanque and tennis facilities.

Outdoor fitness and active recreation activities, including dog training, held in public open space (and associated fees) are managed outside of this Policy.

The City of Boroondara acknowledges participation in organised sport and recreation occurs across different levels, from local/community level through to elite, as shown in **Figure 1** below. Consistent with the Boroondara Sport and Recreation Strategy, Council's primary commitment is to facilitate local/community level participation (also refer to *Policy Statement* section 4 of this document).

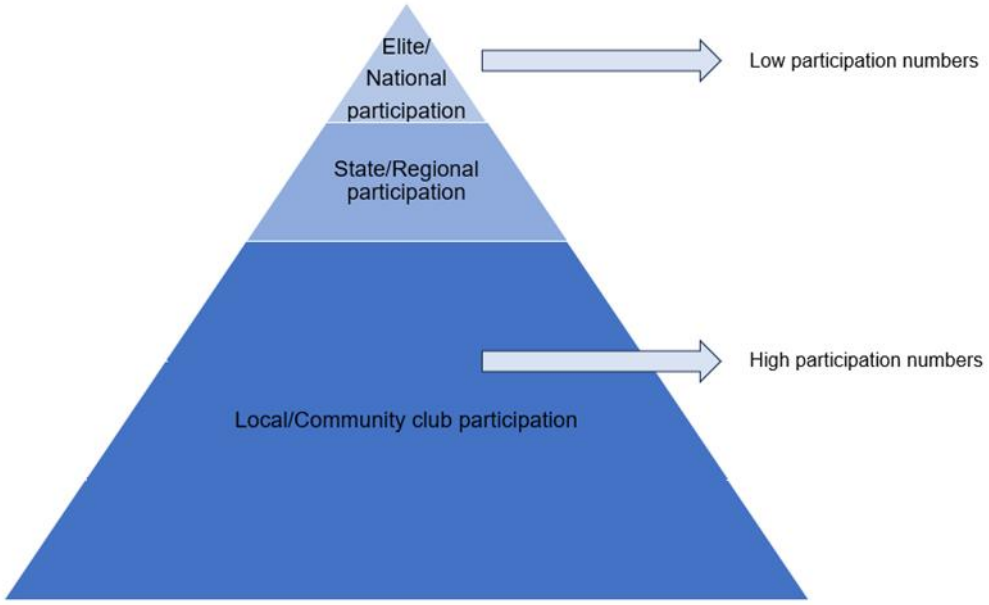

Figure 1. Organised Sport and Recreation Participation Model

The model identified in **Figure 1** depicts high participation occurring at the local/community level through to elite/national participation, which has lower participation numbers overall. It is acknowledged that some clubs may have teams that compete at different levels of competition, ranging from local/community to state/regional.

1.3 Corporate framework

This policy supports Council's Mission and Vision by addressing the following objectives in the Council Plan 2021-2031.

Theme 1: Community services and facilities are high quality, sustainable, inclusive and strengthen resilience.

- Strategy 1.1 Neighbourhoods and community spaces facilitate social connections and belonging by providing, maintaining and activating places for people to meet, organise activities and celebrate events.
- Strategy 1.2 Health and wellbeing is improved through delivering, facilitating and advocating for services and programs that are accessible and affordable.
- Strategy 1.4 Facilities and sports precincts encourage equal access through social planning, delivery, asset maintenance and renewal activities.

Theme 2: Green and open spaces are provided, well-utilised and enhanced.

- Strategy 2.1 Parks and green spaces enable sport and recreation opportunities by maintaining and improving recreation spaces and equipment.

2 Background

The City of Boroondara is one of the most physically active municipalities in the state with residents participating in sport and recreation at higher rates than the Victorian and Australian averages[1]. In 2019, 93.8% of City of Boroondara residents participated in sport and recreation. This is higher than Victorian (88.4%) and National (87.8%) participation rates.

Council provides an extensive range of sporting assets the community can access to be physically active. This includes 42 sports precincts/reserves that contain a total of 54 sportsgrounds and 39 sports pavilions. These sportsgrounds (and associated pavilions) primarily support field-based sports, including athletics, Australian rules football, baseball, cricket, lacrosse, rugby, football/soccer, and ultimate frisbee. Outside of organised sport use, sportsgrounds are also highly utilised by the community for informal recreational activities, such as running, walking and dog walking.

Sports clubs and user groups are provided with allocations to use sporting assets via a seasonal licence, which enables organised sport to occur on a regular basis. Seasonal licence holders incur a seasonal fee for use.

2.1 Policy environment

The Boroondara Sport and Recreation Strategy (BSRS) 2016 has a direct action to develop a sportsground allocation policy to facilitate appropriate ground usage by sports clubs, schools and other stakeholders (action 3.10).

The BSRS also identifies principles and priority areas for sport and recreation in Boroondara. Those that are directly relevant to seasonal allocations of sporting assets include:

- **Principle 4 - Sustainable Provision:** Ensuring viable and sustainable sport and recreation through effective governance and sustainable financial management.
- **Principle 6 - Community Access:** Council will prioritise access for the Boroondara community to community owned infrastructure. This will be a primary consideration when allocating facilities and resources.

[1] Sport and Recreation Strategy, City of Boroondara, 2016

- **Principle 9 - Amenity:** Council will support sport and recreational clubs, community groups and their neighbours to achieve a balance between sport and recreational participation requirements of the community, while minimising the impact on open space and public amenity.
- **Principle 10 - Responsible Resource Management:** Council encourages facility sharing and encourages community partnership initiatives that maximise funding contributions and multi-functional use.
- **Principle 12 - Emerging and Minority Sports:** Council will balance the needs and sustainability of new and emerging sport and recreation activities and the benefits they provide to the Boroondara community.
- **Principle 13 - Community Sport and Recreation:** Resources for sport and recreation will be directed towards community level participation rather than for activities that are exclusively focussed on elite participation.
- **Priority Area 2 - Diversity and Inclusion:** Incorporating a focus on people and groups of people who are traditionally less likely to fully participate in sport and recreational activities due to ethnicity, age, gender, socioeconomic status or geographical location.
- **Priority Area 3 - Participation:** Incorporating a focus on getting more people active more often and achieving a balance in the use of open space, sportsgrounds and facilities for structured and unstructured recreation.
- **Priority Area 5 - Sustainability:** Incorporating a focus on environmental sustainability of sporting fields and open space, on supporting sporting clubs and volunteers, and on financial sustainability through responsible and fair allocation of resources.

2.2 Policy context

This Policy has also been informed by the following policies and strategies:

Boroondara Open Space Strategy (BOSS) 2013:
The BOSS principle of 'Recreational' states that open space should encourage the community to be outside, play sport, exercise and/or keep fit to improve their health and wellbeing. This strategy also highlights the importance of providing for different types of sport and recreational use in open space, to increase the opportunities for a range of structured and unstructured recreational uses to occur.

The BOSS also outlines open space character classifications, which indicate the intent of use for different types of open space. The majority of Boroondara's sporting reserves/precincts have the primary character classification of 'Sporting', which states that the space is to be primarily used for organised club-based sport, with the facilities made available for general public use when no organised sport is in progress.

Council Assets - Leasing and Licencing Policy 2017:
Detail on the types of Council agreements and the requirements for each agreement from the Council Assets - Leasing and Licencing Policy informed the development of this Policy.

One of the objectives of the Leasing and Licencing Policy is to optimise use by the Boroondara community of Council assets, encouraging multi use to maximise capacity of existing facilities before constructing new facilities (page 5).

Sport and Recreation Fair Access Policy 2024
The objectives and principles outlined in the Fair Access Policy 2024 have been considered in the development of this Policy to ensure gender equitable access to and use of community sports infrastructure. This includes:

- Support all user groups who access community sport and active recreation infrastructure to understand, adopt and implement gender equitable access and use practices.
- Reward, celebrate and prioritise access, use and support all user groups who demonstrate ongoing commitment to gender equitable access and use of allocated infrastructure.

3 Methodology

Allocation policies and processes from other municipalities were collected and analysed to understand how other councils manage the allocation of sporting assets. Stakeholder interviews were also conducted with five nearby councils to identify policy gaps and concerns and key learnings experienced with current sporting asset allocation and fees policies. Information was also collected and analysed from multiple sources to inform this Policy, including:

- Boroondara sport participation, usage and allocation data
- Forums held with state and local associations/leagues and clubs as part of the Sportsground Provision Project
- Two sports club forums and survey on key Policy elements and
- Community consultation survey and written submissions

3.1 Consultation

The opportunity to participate in community consultation was facilitated via a variety of accessible communication methods, including:

- direct email to current seasonal tenants
- article in Club Update and Connect e-newsletters
- social media posts (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn)

- A3 corflute poster(s) erected at each sportsground
- presentation to Council's Youth Voice (reference group)
- direct email to all 'Your Say Boroondara' subscribers whose interests matched this consultation

Feedback received during community consultation has informed the development of this Policy.

4 Policy statement

4.1 Policy principles

Community Access:
Council prioritises local/community organised sport participation in the provision and allocation of sporting assets however, not to the exclusion of talent pathways (state/regional and elite/national participation).

Fairness and Consistency:
The allocation approach is applied consistently for all seasonal tenants.

Sustainable Participation:
Participation is optimised through efficient and flexible allocation of assets, while considering ground carrying capacity and maintenance requirements.

Fit for Purpose:
Council aims to provide and maintain high quality sporting assets that are designed to cater for local/community club level participation. Sporting assets are allocated based on the purpose and intent of the asset and the appropriateness of the proposed activities at that location. The primary purpose of sportsgrounds is for community based organised sport and grounds are allocated accordingly, while considering secondary uses and residential amenity.

Equity:
Equitable access and opportunities for underrepresented groups, emerging, diverse and minority sports are provided. This includes both access to and use of facilities in line with the Sport and Recreation Fair Access Policy 2024.

Clarity and Simplicity:
The allocation process is simple to administer and easy for the customer to understand.

4.2 Eligible groups

Under this Policy, seasonal allocations for sportsgrounds and pavilions are provided to local/community sports clubs, Boroondara schools and commercial/private operators that

facilitate organised sport and recreation on a regular basis over a summer and/or winter season.

4.3 Allocation approach

Seasonal allocations to Council's sporting assets are determined with the aim of achieving the best overall outcome for the community, not one specific sport or club and in line with sportsground carrying capacity. Seasonal allocation bookings will be issued on an hourly basis.

Allocations will be provided using the following priority order:

1. Local/community sports clubs, including not for profit groups
2. Boroondara public schools
3. Boroondara private schools and commercial/private operators.

When allocating to schools, consideration will be given to any reciprocal access offered to Council, with increased access viewed favourably.

4.4 Allocation process

All applicants, including new applications, returning local/community sports clubs, schools and commercial/private operators are required to meet **essential assessment criteria** (See Appendix 1) to receive a seasonal allocation. Council reserves the right to amend the essential assessment criteria when required, including but not limited to, incorporating new legislative requirements.

4.4.1 Returning local/community sports clubs

Applications from returning local/community sports clubs, for existing times and locations, will be assessed first, in accordance with the allocations priority order outlined in section 4.3, subject to meeting the essential assessment criteria (See Appendix 1) and with consideration of the Organised Sport and Recreation Participation Model priorities **(Figure 1)**.

4.4.2 Schools, commercial/private operators and new applications from community sports clubs

Schools, commercial/private operators and new applications will be considered in-line with the allocation priority order outlined in section 4.3 and Organised Sport and Recreation Participation Model priorities (**Figure 1**). This includes applications from returning local/community sports clubs for new times and locations, or applications for a new sporting asset.

New applications must meet essential criteria (outlined in **Appendix 1**) and additional considerations will include, but not be limited to the following:

a. Level of sport proposed (i.e., local/community to national/elite)
b. Equitable participation opportunities for people who are traditionally less likely to participate in sport and recreation, including playing, coaching, umpiring and administration
c. History of using Council facilities within Boroondara including length of tenure and history of complying with Council's requirements
d. Providing benefit to the broader community, including clubs who hold come and try sessions, awareness/development workshops, have a demonstrated need (number of teams to correlating fixture) and a higher percentage of Boroondara residents
e. Evidence of business plan
f. Contribution to a diverse offering of sports across the municipality
g. Participation in Council's Sports Club Accreditation Program
h. Shared use agreement in place with Council (reciprocal access arrangement)
i. Suitability of the activity for the requested asset/s.

New allocation opportunities may become available for reasons including, but not limited to:

a. Vacancy of an asset by the existing tenant
b. Acquisition (or new access to) an asset by Council
c. Capital works to increase capacity at the site (e.g., new pavilion, sportsground renewal or addition of sportsground lighting).

4.4.3 Seasonal allocation application process

a. Local/community sports clubs and user groups submit a seasonal allocation application which outlines hourly bookings and required documentation through Council's online booking system
b. Council assesses all applications as per the allocation approach outlined in section 4.3 and 4.4
c. In addition to 4.3 and 4.4, Council will review allocation requests to determine appropriate allocation by:
    i. Comparing estimated participant numbers with the previous season (for clubs or groups with a previous allocation)
    ii. Liaising with the relevant leagues/associations and state sporting associations to cross check team/participant numbers
    iii. Reviewing the total amount of time sportsgrounds have been requested to be used to ensure they are not allocated beyond their optimal carrying capacity
d. Council issues seasonal licences and confirmation of allocation hours to successful applicants
e. Allocation holders reconfirm allocation requirements and club participation data to Council prior to invoices being generated to ensure it reflects accurate usage and incorporates any changes that have occurred since clubs submitted their initial application (summer clubs reconfirm in November and winter clubs reconfirm in May).
f. Allocation holders are invoiced seasonal fees as per Council's fees and charges schedule.

Sports clubs and user groups will be required to follow any allocation guidelines as stipulated by Council, when submitting an allocation application.

4.5 Use of allocated assets

Seasonal tenants can only use allocated sporting assets during the authorised allocated times and for the purposes set out in their seasonal licence agreement, and assets may be made available to other groups and for general community use at all other times.

Specific requirements and restrictions of use are detailed in the seasonal licence issued to sports clubs and user groups with a seasonal allocation to Council's sporting assets. This includes closure of sportsgrounds if ground condition deteriorates.

Council reserves the right to close grounds at short notice should playing surface conditions deteriorate to a point where use may have a detrimental impact on the ground condition. Where this is required, Council will prioritise matches ahead of training and casual bookings. Where possible, alternative training or match venues will be sought, but this may not be achievable. Council may also restrict access to grounds for the general community in exceptional circumstances.

If a sportsground is closed by Council for a prolonged period of time, Council may consider providing a discount to affected seasonal tenants, under exceptional circumstances only.

4.5.1 Hours of use

Sportsgrounds and associated pavilions may be allocated for sporting activities during the times outlined below, inclusive of setup and pack up:

Table 1: Sportsground hours of use*

Monday to Saturday	7:30am - 9:30pm
Sunday	7:30am - 9:00pm

*Note: Sportsground hours of use are subject to ground carrying capacity and availability of lights.

Table 2: Pavilion hours of use

Sunday to Thursday	7:00am - 10:00pm
Friday and Saturday	7:00am - 11:00pm

Sportsground lighting may be used when natural light is not sufficient for safe conduct of sporting activities, in line with Australian Standards and State Sporting Association recommendations relevant to each sport, between the times noted in **Table 1** above.

Seasonal tenants must comply with noise requirements, including but not limited to, the Environment Protection Act 2017, Noise Control Guidelines EPA Publication 1254.2 and any Local Law regarding the use of amplified sound equipment, mechanical noise, PA systems and mobile vendors.

4.5.2 Night matches

Night matches are permitted on select sportsgrounds that are deemed suitable by Council officers. A list of these sportsgrounds is available on Council's website. Clubs allocated at suitable night match locations are responsible for obtaining night match approval from the relevant sporting association/league. Night matches must be conducted during the hours of use outlined in section 4.5.1, **Table 1** of this Policy.

Suitability of night match locations is determined by factors such as site infrastructure, lighting quality, ground condition, ground carrying capacity and resident impacts. Sportsgrounds will be assessed annually to ensure locations remain suitable for night matches and the list of suitable locations will be updated on Council's website following the annual review.

4.5.3 Pre-season training and practice matches

Access to sportsgrounds for pre-season training is not guaranteed, however Council will consider access for pre-season training up to four months before the start of each season as defined by Council (summer season commences 1st October and winter commences 1st April annually). If ground condition and availability allow, pre-season training outside of this time may also be considered on request. Approval for all pre-season requests will be subject to ground availability, ground condition and any restoration or preparation works that are required at grounds between seasons.

During the winter pre-season period, winter clubs are not permitted to train on turf centre wicket areas.

If pre-season training is approved, seasonal tenants must ensure players wear runners. No studded or moulded footwear is permitted to be worn during pre-season training allocations.

Council's Sport and Recreation team will notify clubs when applications open for pre-season training.

Access to sportsgrounds for practice matches is not guaranteed and is granted at Council's absolute discretion. If a practice match is approved by Council, studs and moulded footwear are permitted to be worn.

If a club's request for pre-season training and or practice matches is granted, fees will apply.

4.5.4 Relocation

Where Council proposes to redevelop or carry out significant alterations or additions to an asset during the term of a club's seasonal licence, Council may terminate the seasonal licence, with due notice and where possible, make available to the tenant a suitable alternative premises.

Council officers will assist in facilitating the relocation for community groups as outlined in Council's Leasing and Licencing Policy (2017).

4.6 Seasonal fees

Fees are applicable for seasonal use of sportsgrounds and pavilions and will be applied as per Council's fees and charges schedule.

Clubs will be invoiced one month after the start of each season (summer clubs in November and winter clubs in May) to ensure any allocation amendments are captured.

4.6.1 Security deposit, damage and key replacement

Seasonal tenants are required to pay a security deposit and may incur costs for damage and key/swipe card replacements. Information pertaining to security deposit, damage and key replacement processes and fees is detailed in the seasonal licence issued to all seasonal tenants.

4.7 Other uses and associated fees

Sportsground use is prioritised for groups that require regular use to facilitate organised sport during a summer or winter season as per this Policy. All other use of Council sportsgrounds is considered after seasonal allocations are determined (as per 4.3 Allocation approach) pending carrying capacity, remaining ground availability and ground condition. The fees that apply to each group or booking type are summarised in Council's fees and charges schedule.

4.7.1 School use of sportsgrounds

Schools within Boroondara may apply for:

- Seasonal licence to facilitate regular organised sport during a summer or winter season.
- Casual bookings inside or outside of school times.

Schools are charged as per Council's fees and charges schedule.

4.7.2 Casual bookings of sportsgrounds and pavilions

Casual bookings are provided for use of sporting assets for events, ad-hoc sessions or recurring bookings of less than 12 sessions annually.

Casual bookings can be requested by any group through the casual booking process and will incur a casual booking fee as per Council's fees and charges schedule.

4.7.3 Seasonal tenant use outside of seasonal allocations

Use of sporting assets by seasonal tenants, outside of what is stipulated in their seasonal allocation, will require a casual booking and will incur a casual booking fee as per Council's fees and charges schedule.

4.8 Responsible behaviour

All seasonal tenants must abide by their Seasonal Licence Agreement and wilful or repeated breaches may, at the discretion of Council, result in the use of a facility being withdrawn or restrictions placed on seasonal tenant use.

Seasonal tenants are to demonstrate respectful behaviour to surrounding residents and park users. This may include educating their members about the importance of limiting the impact of noise and parking associated with the activities of the club.

5 Implementation and monitoring

5.1 Evaluation

As part of a staged approach, it is proposed the Organised Sport Seasonal Allocation Policy be reviewed in 2025/26. This review will explore potential changes to fees and will be subject to a separate community consultation and associated Council briefings and decision-making. Following this, it is proposed the Policy be reviewed five years after adoption.

5.2 Accountabilities

For all queries or feedback regarding this policy, please use the contact details for the responsible department below.

Position title	Contact number	Contact department email
Sport and Recreation Team	(03) 9278 4444	sport@boroondara.vic.gov.au

6 References

6.1 Related documents

Documents referenced in the development of this Policy include:

- *Boroondara Community Plan (BCP) 2021-2031*
- *Boroondara Sport and Recreation Strategy (BSRS) 2016*
- *Boroondara Open Space Strategy (BOSS) 2013*
- *Council Assets - Leasing and Licensing Policy 2017*
- *Development and Funding of Community Pavilions - Sport and Recreation 2019*
- *Sport and Recreation Fair Access Policy 2024*

6.2 Definitions

Term	Definition
Casual booking	Agreement with Council that permits use of sporting assets for events, ad-hoc sessions or recurring bookings of less than 12 sessions annually.
Commercial/private operators	Any individual or group of people who provide a service for the purpose of making a profit.
Council/City	Refer to the City of Boroondara.
Elite/national participation	National and elite competitions, year-round competition and/or training.
Field sport	Outdoor sport that is typically played on a large area of open space.
Ground availability	Whether or not a sportsground is able to be used at any point in time. This is primarily determined by the ground being in a state fit for use and the presence of supporting infrastructure that facilitates use, such as sportsground lighting, goal posts.
Lease agreement	Agreement where Council grants exclusive occupancy of a defined area as set out in the Lease, which includes the whole or part of a sporting asset.
Licence agreement	Agreement where Council grants non-exclusive right to occupy a defined area as set out in the Licence, which includes the whole or part of a sports asset at specified times.

Term	Definition
Local/community participation	Seasonal home and away competition, community level junior and senior participation, co-shared assets, modified sport programs/activities.
Local/community sports club	A sports club that is set up as a legal entity that is located within the City of Boroondara and enables non-exclusive participation from the community.
Organised sport	The degree of organisational structure that surrounds and influences the sport helps to distinguish whether an activity is classified as 'organised sport'.
Seasonal allocation	A recurring schedule of days and times totalling 12 or more sessions (for a summer or winter sports season) where a sports club or group is permitted to use specified sporting assets under seasonal licence agreement with Council.
'Seasonal licence agreement' or 'seasonal licence'	Agreement where Council grants the non-exclusive right to occupy a defined area as set out in the Seasonal Licence, which includes the whole or part of a sporting asset, for either the summer season (October through March) or winter season (April through September).
'Seasonal tenant' or 'seasonal allocation holder'	Refer to a sports club or user group, who Council has granted a seasonal licence (and associated seasonal allocation) to a specified sporting asset.
Sport	A human activity involving physical exertion and skill as the primary focus of the activity, with elements of competition or social participation where rules and patterns of behaviour governing the activity exist formally through organisations and is generally recognised as a sport.
State/Regional participation	Talent pathway, regional level junior and senior participation, home and away competition either seasonal or year-round.
Sporting activities	Any organised physical activity associated with participating in a sport, including training and competition.
Sporting asset	A Council managed asset that is primarily used to facilitate sporting activities, including sportsgrounds

Term	Definition
	(and assets within sportsgrounds such as cricket nets, player benches, AFL/soccer goals) and associated pavilions. For the purposes of this Policy, it does not include specialised sporting assets that are provided to clubs on long term lease or licence agreements.
'Sportsground carrying capacity' or 'carrying capacity'	The amount of use a sportsground can withstand without significant degradation of the surface, typically expressed as hours per week.

Appendix 1: Essential assessment criteria

Essential Criteria all applicants must meet

1. Public liability insurance for a minimum of 20 million dollars.

2. Registered as a legal entity (such as an Incorporated Association).

3. Provide Council with the user group's Child Safe Policy/Child Protection Policy, which incorporates a 'Statement of commitment to child safety'.

4. Provide evidence of the following equitable access and use practices:

   a) Provide a genuinely welcoming, safe and inclusive environment.
   b) Opportunities are provided for individuals from underrepresented groups, in particular women, girls and gender diverse people to participate in all aspects of your club, including as a player, coach, committee member, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator.
   c) Women and girls, men and boys and gender diverse people to have fair access to and use of community sport and recreation infrastructure of the highest quality available to each club through a lease or licence, at the most convenient and popular location and times.
   d) Celebrate gender equitable access and use.

5. Accept terms and conditions of allocation as stated in seasonal licence agreement (including submitting all relevant documentation). Returning tenants must have history of compliance with these terms and conditions.

6. No outstanding debts owing to Boroondara City Council (or successfully adhering to an approved payment plan).

7. Affiliated with a State Sporting Association (SSA) or other relevant peak sporting body/association.

8. Provide participant numbers, including breakdown of age, gender and post code as part of seasonal allocation application.

   a) Re-confirm participant details with Council after the start of each season (summer clubs to re-confirm in November and winter clubs to re-confirm in May).

9. Provide a detailed schedule of proposed use for the requested allocation (including which team/s are scheduled for each session) which ensures gender equitable access to and use of community sports infrastructure, as per the Sport and Recreation Fair Access Policy 2024.

   a) Provide Council with updated schedule once teams, training times and fixtures have been finalised - after the start of each season (summer clubs to provide updated schedules in November and winter clubs to provide updated schedules in May).