

Central Coast Council

Sportsground Allocation Procedure



Date Adopted: 27/05/2025
Revision: 1



Table of Contents

1. Procedure Purpose.....	3
2. Procedure Scope	3
3. Background.....	4
4. Procedure.....	4
5. Procedure Selection Criteria.....	6
6. Allocation process and determination	12
7. Responsibilities.....	15
8. Definitions.....	16
9. Procedure Administration.....	19
10. Procedure Authorisations	20
11. Procedure History	20

1. Procedure Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of the procedures are as follows: Provide a transparent, equitable and consistent process for the seasonal allocation of sporting grounds and facilities to sporting associations, clubs and providers including - schools, tertiary education providers and commercial operators within the Central Coast Council area.
 - 1.1.1. Balance increasing and competing demands for access to sporting grounds, underpinned by optimal utilisation and the sustainable management of Council maintained sporting surfaces.
 - 1.1.2. Foster a vibrant sporting culture, promote active lifestyles, and enhance community well-being while effectively managing the increasing and competing demands on council sporting grounds.
- 1.2. The objectives of the procedure are as follows: Assist Council in managing increasing and competing demands from sporting user groups and the wider community to access Council sporting grounds and facilities. Establish a selection criterion for the seasonal allocation of sportsgrounds.
 - 1.2.3. Ensure Council managed sporting grounds and facilities are occupied by viable, sustainable, and inclusive sporting associations, clubs, and providers.
 - 1.2.4. Ensure a diverse range of opportunities for participation in sport, recreation, and physical activity are available for Central Coast residents.
 - 1.2.5. Ensure participation opportunities are available for a broad mix of population groups - including underrepresented groups which includes, but is not limited to, females, seniors, people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, people with disabilities.
 - 1.2.6. Ensure access to sporting grounds by all users has regard to the sustainability and maintenance requirements associated with good sporting ground management.
 - 1.2.7. Assist Council in the allocation of Sportsgrounds when competing requests are submitted.

2. Procedure Scope

- 2.1. This Procedure will apply to all Council owned sporting grounds within the Central Coast:

1.2.8. all sporting clubs, state sporting associations, schools, tertiary education providers and other organisations seeking an allocation to utilise Council sporting grounds and facilities

2.2. This Procedure does not apply to: Central Coast Regional Sport and Recreation Complex or Central Coast Stadium, or special events to be held on sportsgrounds. Special event organisers must complete a Special Event Application Form and comply with all requirements of that form.

2.3. New Leases, Licences and Deeds of Agreement

Should Council enter a new lease, licence or Deed of Agreement with a club or state sporting association, the Procedure would no longer apply to the relevant sporting ground. This may not be applicable to the facilities located or near to the relative sportsground.

3. Background

3.1. As community demand for sport and recreation activities continue to grow, Councils faces challenges and expectations to accommodate the diverse offerings and needs of sporting groups and the wider community.

3.2. The limited availability of sporting grounds, coupled with high demand and the preservation of playing fields underscores a critical need for a comprehensive Procedure framework to efficiently manage the increased demand.

3.3. Central Coast Council recognises that creating a liveable community involves the activation of sports facilities by user groups who provide and sustain a diverse range of sport and recreational participation opportunities that promote healthy living, provide social connection, and enhance our quality of life.

4. Procedure

4.1. Procedure principles

The Sportsground Allocation Procedure has been developed in accordance with the following principles to be:

4.1.1. Transparent

4.1.2. Equitable

4.1.3. Consistent

4.2. These principles were discussed with Central Coast sporting associations

and representative body for sport (Sport Central Coast) in the development of this Procedure.

4.3. Hierarchy of use

4.3.1. Council will determine the hierarchy of use on an individual basis with consideration given to many factors including, but not limited to, seasonal.

or casual bookings, viability and sustainability of provider, economic value, value to community, mass participation event, seasonal overlap, demand for activity or offering.

4.4. Allocation Types: Council offers the following types of allocations (subject to availability) for the use of sporting grounds and their associated facilities:

4.4.1. Winter season allocation

4.4.2. Summer season allocation

4.4.3. Preseason allocation

4.4.4. Casual allocation

4.4.5. School allocation

4.4.6. Out of season – may only occur where no impact on existing users

4.4.7. Event bookings

4.5. Applicant Eligibility Criteria: To be eligible to apply for use of a sporting ground and associated facilities, applicants must satisfy the following criteria:

4.5.1. Submit a completed and accurate Allocation Application Form/s by advertised closing date. (Found on Council's website)

4.5.2. Have no outstanding debt with Council. Previously agreed to payment plans may be accepted.

4.5.3. Provide a Certificate of Currency for public liability insurance of a minimum of \$20 million. The Procedure must indicate that Central Coast Council is noted as an Interested Party (Principal Indemnity Endorsement), and that the Business Activity shown on the Certificate of Currency must be appropriate and include functions such as organising and running a sporting event or sporting club or state sporting association; and

4.5.4. Council may request items such as historical evidence of participation numbers, annual reports, strategic plans, or seasonal draws if required.

5. Procedure Selection Criteria

5.1. The applicant must satisfy the Eligibility Criteria outlined in 4.5 Applicant Eligibility Criteria. Once this is satisfied, Council will review allocation requests for sporting grounds sequentially as follows:

5.1.1. Where only one applicant is requesting access to a suitable sporting ground, in general this will be made available to them at Councils discretion. Pending, but not limited to, availability, ground condition, suitability, number of participants and season.

5.1.2. Council accepts that hirers require reasonable assurance that they will continue to be allocated seasonal use of sporting grounds to plan and manage their strategic plans effectively. Where a hirer continues to demonstrate reasonable membership numbers suitable to the sportsground and facilities they are applying for, Council will not unreasonably refuse to provide an allocation, consistent with the previous season's allocations. If membership numbers are not considered reasonable in comparison to other hirers, or there are more efficient allocations for sportsgrounds required, an alternate ground may be issued.

5.1.3. Hirers may request additional allocations. Council will consider all applications on merit. If there is merit, Council will assess this against the weighted criteria outlined below. The purpose of this condition is to ensure Council managed sporting grounds and facilities are occupied by viable, sustainable, and inclusive sporting associations, clubs and providers and ensure a diverse range of opportunities for participation in sport, recreation and physical activity are available for Central Coast residents.

5.1.4. Any increase in an applicant's participation numbers may not be matched by increased allocations. Council expects hirers to maximise the use of the allocations they receive to best manage their player and team numbers.

5.1.5. Applicants cannot book grounds to reduce access to other hirers, nor can they underutilise their allocation. Where it is alleged, a seasonal hirer has booked a ground and is not utilising their weekly allocation, in part or full, staff will investigate. At its absolute discretion, Council staff may cancel or reduce the hirer's allocations for the season. Further, Council may consider excluding an applicant from future season allocations.

5.1.6. Council encourages applicants to collaborate with each other. Should

two or more applicants put forward a proposed sharing arrangement of a sporting ground, Council will give this favourable consideration.

5.1.7. Council staff will firstly attempt to resolve conflicting requests or potential alternate ground allocations through mutual agreement between applicants, users, and Council.

5.1.8. Where Council cannot resolve a conflicting request or alternate ground allocation through mutual agreement, allocations will be assessed against the weighted criteria outlined below. At this stage, applicants will be requested to submit information which demonstrates their capacity to address the weighted criteria with the allocation given to the applicant with the highest weighted criteria score.

5.1.9. For associations booking grounds on behalf of their respective clubs, the information submitted to address the weighted criteria should relate to the club who will be utilising the respective sportsground and not the association as a whole. The process for assessment and appeal is detailed in Section 6.

5.2. Weighted Criteria: Where Council cannot resolve a conflicting request or alternate ground allocation through mutual agreement, applicants will be asked to submit information which demonstrates their capacity to address the weighted criteria below. Please refer to item 5.1.8 and 5.1.9 for more information.

	Criteria	Principles	Scoring	Assessment Guide
A	Historical Use of Facilities	Council will recognise applicants with strong history at certain facilities. Council recognizes that active sporting grounds are in high demand and priority access will be given to Central Coast residents.	10	Historical home ground of Central Coast sporting club (i.e., No other club has been based there)
			5	Central Coast home-based sporting club for less than ten years.
			0	Applicant with no previous home within the Central Coast.

	Criteria	Principles	Scoring	Assessment Guide
B	Community Based	Sporting grounds are a limited resource and must be utilised to provide maximum overall benefit to the community. Council recognises that sporting clubs provide community building benefits.	5	Not-for-profit sporting clubs with demonstrated strong ties to the local community (e.g., sponsors, community, or school programs).
			3	Commercial or casual provider that has demonstrated strong ties to local community
			1	Not-for-profit sporting clubs, commercial or casual providers with no demonstrated links to the local community.
			0	No information provided.
C	Players / Team Numbers	Sporting clubs and associations are instrumental in increasing positive social, cultural, and economic benefits and developing community connection. Participation levels are therefore a factor in the level of benefit to the community. If an applicant has declining membership/ teams,	10	Applicant membership numbers/ teams are steady or increasing and suitable for the requested venue.
			6	Applicant membership numbers/ teams have declined in the last year and remain suitable for the requested venue.
		their hours of access may be decreased, they may be relocated to an alternative venue more suited to the applicant's level of usage or a secondary allocation may be given to another applicant.		
			3	Applicant membership numbers/ teams have declined over the last year and is not suitable for the requested venue.
			0	No information provided.
D	Compliance Record	Council recognises the social and cultural importance of an applicant having a good relationship with Council, other users, and the local community. A history of compliance with all	5	Good records of stewardship of sporting grounds. No impact on neighbouring residents. No breaches of sports information booklet criteria in the previous five years.

	Criteria	Principles	Scoring	Assessment Guide
		terms and conditions of hire is essential. Consideration will be given to factors such as only utilising the grounds during allocated hours, maintaining allocated sporting grounds and facilities in a clean and tidy manner, and no substantiated complaints from nearby residents.	3	Fair record of stewardship. No impact on neighbouring residents within the previous two years. No breaches of sports information booklet in the previous two years.
			0	Breach in previous one or two years.
E	Planning for Underrepresented Groups.	Ensuring the opportunity for participation of a range of groups. Council will allocate grounds to support sporting applicants which have strategies in programs to increase participation of underrepresented groups.	3	Three or more programs or plan for people from an underrepresented group or demonstrated increase in applicant membership numbers from an underrepresented group.
			1	One program or plan for people from an underrepresented group.
			0	No programs or plan for people from an underrepresented group.
			0	No information provided.
F	Performance in providing opportunities for underrepresented groups.	Demonstrated long term support by applicants for underrepresented groups. Monitoring the outcomes of their strategies and programs in reducing barriers and increasing participation.	3	Demonstrated increase in participation numbers from an underrepresented group.
			1	Steady participation numbers from an underrepresented group.
			0	Declining participation numbers from an underrepresented group.
			0	No information provided
G	Diversity of Sports	Council will allocate grounds to encourage a diversity of sporting codes. Where a new and emerging sport can demonstrate that they have a plan for the ongoing success of the applicant for a number of years, Council	3	New or emerging sport, where the applicant can demonstrate a plan for ongoing success.

	Criteria	Principles	Scoring	Assessment Guide
		will endeavour to accommodate their needs. For emerging applicants, the allocation of sporting grounds will not be based solely on applicant membership members.	1	New or emerging sport, where the applicant cannot demonstrate a plan for ongoing success.
			0	No information provided.
H	Traditional Seasonal Allocations	Sporting grounds are a limited resource. Preference will be given to traditional seasonal allocations. In the absence of an application from an in-season sport, Council may consider an 'out of season' application where there is significant capacity and there are no field maintenance rest periods required.	5	Request for a traditional summer season allocation by a traditional summer sport OR request for a traditional winter season allocation by a traditional winter sport.
			3	Request for a non-traditional summer season allocation by a winter sport OR request for a non-winter season allocation by a summer sport with no in-season user group application contesting the allocation.
			0	Out of season application against an existing in-season booking.
I	History of Financial Responsibility	Sporting grounds are a limited resource, with costs subsidised by Council. Priority will be given to fiscally responsible applicants.	5	No outstanding debt with Council.
			3	Outstanding debt with Council with an accepted payment plan.
			0	Current outstanding debt with Council
J	Applicant Club or Association Development	Council supports applicants that maintain good governance and create an inclusive, viable and sustainable organisation. This includes sound financial management, policies and practices in place that cover risk management, complaints handling, participant safety and address discrimination, violence,	5	Applicants with documented policies and initiatives to support volunteers.
			3	Applicants with policies in development.
			0	No documented policies or plans in place.

	Criteria	Principles	Scoring	Assessment Guide
		and racism to ensure a safe environment for all participants. Also well regarded is approach to facility management, succession planning and having a Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO).	0	No information provided.
K	Child Safe Clubs	The NSW Office of the Childrens Guardian (OCG) and SSO's provide Procedure, framework, and resources to create and maintain clubs that safeguard children and young people. Council expects that applicants are aware, have adopted and maintain and are compliant with Child Safe Standards. Child Safety also applies to senior clubs who have minors play in their teams and competitions.	10	Can demonstrate full compliance with OCG or SSO Child Safe Standards.
			5	Can demonstrate they are currently working toward full compliance with Child Safe practices based on OCG or SSO Child Safe Standards
			0	No information provided
L	Financial contribution to venue by club or association	Council will consider additional points for providers who can demonstrate that they have contributed funding, excluding government grant funding, for improvements on a particular venue.	6	Greater than \$100k in contribution.
			3	From \$20-100k in contribution.
			0	Less than \$20k contribution.

6. Allocation process and determination

6.1. The allocation process is undertaken as follows:

- 5.1.10. Booking requests for the summer season open on the first day of July and close on the last day of July. Booking requests for the winter season open on the first day of November and close on the last day of November. Seasonal requests received outside of these times will be considered after received allocations have been processed, grounds will be subject to availability. Notwithstanding this, in all cases, it is the responsibility of the hirer to ensure that application forms are requested and received.
- 5.1.11. Council staff will assess applications and identify competing requests and solutions proposed in accordance with 4.3 Hierarchy of Use, Item 4.5, Applicant Eligibility Criteria and Item 5, Procedure Selection Criteria.
- 5.1.12. Applicants who are identified as a competing request will be contacted to discuss solutions proposed. Council staff will firstly attempt to resolve conflicting requests or potential alternate ground allocations through mutual agreement between applicants, users, and Council.
- 5.1.13. Where Council cannot resolve a conflicting request or alternate ground allocation through mutual agreement, allocations will be assessed against Item 4, Selection Criteria. At this stage, applicants will be requested to submit information which demonstrates their capacity to address the weighted criteria with preference given to the applicant with the highest weighted criteria score. For associations booking grounds on behalf of their respective clubs, the information submitted to address the weighted criteria should relate to the club who will be utilising the respective sportsground and not the association as a whole.
- 5.1.14. Final allocation determinations will be made by Council staff as resolved by Council.
- 5.1.15. Council staff will provide allocations to the respective hirers. Hirers have four weeks from the commencement of their season to request any changes or submit an Appeals Application Form which is available upon request from the Open Space and Recreation Unit bookings staff.
- 5.1.16. Council staff will distribute the final allocations. Council staff will advise hirers of any shut down or maintenance periods during the

seasonal allocation (e.g., Easter) at the start of the season where possible.

5.1.17. Any further requested changes to the allocation (e.g., because of increased/decreased registrations) will be accommodated where possible, subject to availability and consistency with the principles contained in this Procedure.

5.1.18. Council will commence issuing invoices for seasonal allocations after the commencement of the respective sporting season. Council will not deduct for wet weather.

Use outside of regular season – including finals

6.2. Applicants are allocated grounds for the fixed summer or winter season only. Final's locations needed to be provided to Council by the second week of August for Winter allocations and the second week of February for Summer allocations. Subject to maintenance requirements, Council may allow hirers to utilise the sporting grounds for pre-season use if requested and if there are grounds available.

Sporting ground rest periods

6.3. Sporting grounds will be managed to maximise long term usage and minimise over-use. Council will restrict sporting ground use to maintain safe playing surface conditions. All sporting grounds will be rested (not utilised) for a minimum of two weeks between seasons. Generally, this will be in March and September. This may change annually if longer rest periods are required. Council will advise the hirers prior to the commencement of the season, the week(s) that the sporting grounds will not be available.

Fees and charges

6.4. The seasonal allocation of sporting grounds to hirers is subject to the payment of the relevant fees and charges. These fees and charges are updated annually and are advertised on Council's website.

Future Allocations

6.5. Council may exclude an applicant from future allocations for the following:

6.5.1. If the applicant has an outstanding debt with Council,

6.5.2. If the damage caused by the applicant impacts on the start of the season for the subsequent sporting ground hirer,

6.5.3. If the applicant was issued a fine for breaches to the conditions of hire

6.5.4. If the applicant has been issued a written warning or received a fine in the preceding season.

6.5.5. At its absolute discretion, Council can determine how long the exclusion will apply.

Appeals Process

- 6.6.** To be eligible to appeal applicants must have no outstanding debt with council. Previously approved payment plans may be accepted.
- 6.7.** The appeal process applies after draft allocations have been issued and an applicant's requested changes cannot be accommodated due to competing requests.
- 6.8.** Traditional winter sporting groups wishing to utilise sporting grounds in the summer sporting season (and vice versa) are not permitted to appeal.
- 6.9.** The process requires that:
 - 6.9.1. Applicants will be notified in writing and advised they can submit an appeal using the Appeals Application Form.
 - 6.9.2. Applicants must notify Council in writing within 48 hours of receiving their draft allocations that they wish to appeal after the draft allocations are received.
 - 6.9.3. The appeal will be conducted by an Allocations Review Committee.
 - 6.9.4. There will be three members of the Allocations Review Committee:
 - a) Manager Open Space and Recreation
 - b) Section Manager Sporting Facilities
 - c) Sport Central Coast Representative
 - 6.9.5. The Allocations Review Committee will receive the applicants original EOI Application Form, weighted criteria assessment, and Appeals Application Form.
- 6.10.** The Committee will determine or assess:
 - 6.10.1. if the Sporting Ground Allocation Procedure was applied
 - 6.10.2. If the allocation process was followed
 - 6.10.3. the results of the weighted criteria assessment
 - 6.10.4. the final seasonal allocations
- 6.11.** The Allocations Review Committee will respond to the applicant/s with the following:
 - 6.11.1. the outcome of the appeal and any action taken
 - 6.11.2. the reason/s for the decision.
- 6.12.** Elected Councillors will play no part in the allocations or appeal process.

7. Responsibilities

Compliance, monitoring and review

- 7.1. Open Space and Recreation staff, within the Community and Recreation Services Directorate, are responsible for administering, assessing, and determining the allocations in accordance with the process, criteria and methodology outlined in this Procedure.
- 7.2. The Unit Manager of Open Space and Recreation is responsible for overseeing the appeals process in accordance with the above methodology.
- 7.3. The Allocations Review Committee is responsible for determining the outcome of an appeal.

Reporting

- 7.4. No additional reporting is required.

Records management

- 7.5. The Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this guideline in accordance with Council's [Information and Records Management Policy](#).
-

8. Definitions

Act	means the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (NSW)
Allocation	means an allocation is an agreement between Council and a hirer to utilise a Council sporting ground and/or facility. It is a short-term licence (less than a year). An allocation allows a hirer non-exclusive use of a sports ground and/or facility at specific agreed times. Allocations can be annual, seasonal, or casual in nature.
Applicant	means an applicant includes any sporting club, state sporting association, community group, school, tertiary organisation or any other group or organisation that make an application for a seasonal hire allocation.
Casual allocation	means an allocation to a club, association, community group, school, or commercial sporting provider to utilise a sporting ground or facility on a single occasion for a pre- determined fee as per Councils fees and charges. Seasonal allocation requirements are prioritised over casual allocations and are also subject to ground availability and condition.
Council	means Central Coast Council
Facilities	means the buildings adjacent to sporting grounds, including, but not limited to - toilets, canteens, storerooms and change rooms.
Fees and charges	means the Hirer agrees to pay the fees and charges for the use of the Council sporting grounds in accordance with the schedule of Councils fees and charges current at the time of booking.
Hirer	means a hirer includes any sporting club, state sporting association, community group, school, tertiary organisation or any other group or organisation that hires a sporting ground.
In season allocation	means during the summer or Winter Season as defined.

Lease	means During the summer or Winter Season as defined.
Pre-season allocation	means a restricted allocation (subject to availability) to a hirer to utilise a Council sporting ground and/or facility at agreed times prior to the commencement of the competitive scheduled Summer or Winter sporting season for the purpose of sports training and physical preparation for the Summer or Winter season.
Seasonal allocation	means an allocation to a hirer to utilise a Council sporting ground and/or facility at agreed times throughout the summer or winter season.
Season overlap	means Council recommends the avoidance (where possible) of seasonal overlap of the above season allocation dates. Winter sports may commence limited pre -season training in March. Council may be able to offer alternate grounds to associations to share that are not being utilised for seasonal use or where mutual agreement has been achieved between user groups. Similarly, access to grounds for special competitions will be negotiated on a need's basis. All clubs are asked to advise Council if a ground can be handed back earlier for the seasonal sporting ground changeover (e.g.) goal posts out and cricket wicket preparation.
School Allocation	means an allocation to a school to utilise a Council sporting ground and/or facility during the day (between 9am – 3pm during school terms) at agreed times throughout the school year.
Sporting grounds and facilities	means Council owned sporting infrastructure available for sporting use for training and game days.
Sporting providers	means inclusive team encompassing sporting clubs, associations, schools, tertiary education providers and commercial operators within the Central Coast Council area.
State Sporting Association	means a pre-eminent governing body for a sport in NSW.

<p>Summer season allocation</p>	<p>means an allocation to a hirer to utilise a Council sporting ground and/or facility at agreed times between the period of the first full weekend in October to the third weekend in March (subject to maintenance needs).</p>
<p>Summer sports (Traditional)</p>	<p>means the following are examples of traditional summer sports: athletics, baseball, cricket, oz tag, touch football, and softball.</p>
<p>Winter season allocation</p>	<p>means an allocation to a hirer to utilise a Council sporting ground and/or facility at agreed times between the period of the first full weekend in April to the third weekend in September (subject to maintenance needs). Training may only continue past August for teams who have made their relevant sport association finals or at the discretion of Council.</p>
<p>Winter Sports (Traditional)</p>	<p>means the following are examples of traditional winter sports: football (soccer), netball, rugby league, rugby union, and Australian Rules football.</p>
<p>Underrepresented groups</p>	<p>means groups of people or communities who face barriers to participation in Sport or Active Recreation. This includes, but is not limited to, females, people with disabilities, seniors, LGBTIQ+ community, First Nations peoples, people with social disadvantage and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The communities of underrepresented will vary from sport to sport and club to club. Reducing barriers to participation aims to increase accessibility and inclusiveness of organisations.</p>



9. Procedure Administration

Business Group	Community and Recreation Services
Responsible Officer	Unit Manager, Open Space and Recreation
Associated Procedure (if any, reference document(s) number(s))	Sportsground Allocation Policy
Procedure Review Date	Four years from date of adoption unless legislated otherwise
File Number / Document Number	D16618918
Relevant Legislation (reference specific sections)	
Relevant desired outcome or objectives as per Council's Delivery Program	Theme 1: Belonging Goal L: Healthy lifestyle for a growing community Choose Objective
Related Policies / Protocols / Procedures / Documents (reference document numbers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information and Records Management Policy (D14025241) ▪ Council's Code of Conduct ▪ Delegations Register ▪ D16618508 - Draft Sportsground Allocation Policy
Related Policies / Protocols / Procedures / Documents (reference document numbers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information and Records Management Policy (D14025241) ▪ Council's Code of Conduct ▪ Delegations Register

10. Procedure Authorisations

No.	Authorised Function	Authorised Business Unit / Role(s)
N/A	Nil	Nil

11. Procedure History

Revision	Date Approved / Authority	Description Of Changes
1	Ordinary Council meeting 27 May 2025 Min No. 688/25	This Procedure was provided as a supporting attachment to the <i>Sportsground Allocation Policy</i> as adopted by Council

