

Draft

Sporting Grounds Allocation Policy

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Directorate:	Community Arts & Recreation
Responsible Branch:	Urban Landscapes

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1 OUTCOMES

- 1.1 QPRC owns and maintains some of the best sporting grounds in the region. This policy establishes a transparent, equitable, and sustainable framework for allocating the use of these fields, in particular the elite fields that are increasingly in demand.
- 1.2 The policy should be read in conjunction with QPRC Sporting Grounds Usage Policy

2 POLICY

- 2.1 QPRC is committed to providing a equitable access to sporting grounds to ensure that sports teams and clubs can operate effectively in the region.
- 2.2 The policy balances the use of elite, competition and community venues to ensure that maintenance of fields reflects the needs of those using the fields.

3 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

- 3.1 This policy governs the relationship between the Council and all seasonal and casual Hirers (including sporting clubs, associations, schools, community groups, and event organisers) involved in the process of applying for and being granted field usage rights.
- 3.2 **Inclusion Criteria** - It applies to all sporting grounds and associated assets owned and/or managed by QPRC
- 3.3 **Exclusions** - It does not apply where a formal Lease, Licence, or Deed of Agreement has been granted by Council to an external party, and that agreement explicitly defines the terms of tenure, maintenance, or usage hours. In such cases, the terms of the formal agreement are the guiding policy document.

4 PURPOSE

- 4.1 The policy provides a framework and strategy for managing the high demands from sporting clubs, associations, and the wider community for access to QPRC's sporting fields.
- 4.2 The policy will:
 - Ensure fair and equitable access to sporting fields for all user groups within the community.
 - Optimise the utilisation of sports fields to accommodate increasing demand while ensuring the maximum usability of hours is managed to maintain a sustainable and high standard grass surface.
 - Enhance communication and collaboration between Council and users by providing transparent and consistent rules for the allocation and usage of sporting fields, aligning use with available maintenance capacity.

5 DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 **Hirer:** A club, school, association or group that is approved to book and use a QPRC sports ground/field or facility.
- 5.2 **Allocation:** A formal agreement granted by QPRC allowing a club or group (Hirer) to use a sports field or facility at specified times.
- 5.3 **Seasonal Allocation:** A booking for a club to use a field for their main competition season (Winter or Summer) for games and/or regular training.
- 5.4 **Casual Allocation:** A short-term, one off booking for groups not participating in a seasonal competition.

- 5.5 **Lease:** A long-term legal agreement that grants a group exclusive control over a specific property. QPRC does not typically use Leases for sports fields.
- 5.6 **Licence:** A short-term permit allowing non-exclusive use of a field for a fee. Multiple Licences may be issued for the same field at different times.

6 LEGISLATIVE OBLIGATIONS AND/OR RELEVANT STANDARDS

- 6.1 Regulatory Framework and Standards
- Local Government Act 1993 (NSW): Section 22 (Management Plan requirements for community land).
 - Local Government Act 1993 (NSW): Section 68 (Activity Approvals)
 - Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW): Ensures fields meet a minimum standard for safety for users.
 - NSW Department of Water/Turf Industry: Best-practice guidelines for sporting fields (to benchmark capacity and wear data).
 - QPRC Community Land Plan of Management.
 - QPRC Fees and Charges Policy (for hiring costs).
 - QPRC Code of Conduct.
 - QPRC Events Guide
 - LOCAL Government Filming Protocol 2009
 - QPRC Sports Facilities Strategic Plan 2024
 - QPRC Events Strategy

7 FIELD ALLOCATION & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The Sporting Ground Usage Policy indicates maximum permissible usage of fields for elite, competition and community categories. Allocation will not exceed these limits
- 7.2 **Seasonal Allocation:** Long-term bookings for traditional club competitions and regular training. This is formally categorised as:
- o Winter Season Allocation (e.g., AFL, Soccer, Rugby).
 - o Summer Season Allocation (e.g., Cricket, Athletics, OzTag).
- 7.3 **Pre Season Allocation:** Short term bookings granted to seasonal hirers for training or trials in the weeks immediately leading up to their main season (subject to availability and hours of use).
- 7.4 **Casual Allocation:** Short term, ad hoc, or one off bookings for groups not participating in a seasonal competition, including corporate events, non traditional sports activities, and general public hire (subject to availability and hours of use).
- 7.5 **Educational Allocation:** Bookings dedicated to schools and tertiary institutions for formal curriculum based programs, inter school sport, or physical education classes (subject to availability and hours of use).

8 ALLOCATION PROCESS & DETERMINATION

- 8.1 Council will issue Expressions of Interest and refer clubs to the online Allocation Application Forms for the Summer Season by August and the Winter Season by end of January. While Council advertises this process on its website and contacts local clubs, the Hirer is solely responsible for obtaining and returning the necessary forms by the stipulated deadline. The application form is available at <https://qprc.snapforms.com.au/form/sports-field-hire-application-form>
- 8.2 A date applies to all seasonal applications: September 14th for the Summer Season and February 14th (or 15th in a leap year) for the Winter Season. This date will be

published on the QPRC Website. Late applications will be automatically excluded from the primary allocation process but may be considered only if a facility unexpectedly becomes available and there are no other timely, competing applications.

- 8.3 Council will review allocations using the Sporting Ground Allocation Scoring matrix (see Appendix A).
- 8.4 At the start of each season, the seasonal allocations, including the relevant hirer, will be published on Council's website.
- 8.5 At the start of each season, the seasonal allocations, including the relevant hirer, will be published on Council's website.
- 8.6 Allocations for ground usage are strictly allocated for one single season only unless a lease agreement stipulates otherwise. They also cannot overlap between the Winter and Summer seasons.
- 8.7 It is acknowledged that all sporting is subject to some season overlap. The following exceptions and negotiation protocols apply:
- Winter Season Commencement: Winter sports may commence preseason training or trial games prior to the season, provided the summer sports (e.g. cricket, baseball) using the ground have finished their training or finals games.
 - Negotiation: Any early access during the overlap period must be negotiated directly with the Council and the individual clubs that share the ground.
 - Special Competitions: Access to grounds for special competitions (e.g., Champion of Champions) will be negotiated on an as needed basis.
 - Early Handback: All clubs, regardless of season, are required to advise Council if their allocated ground can be handed back earlier than the official season end date.

9 FORMAL ALLOCATION REVIEW (FINAL APPEAL)

- 9.1 Should an Applicant remain unsatisfied with the final allocation determined during the informal dispute resolution, a single, formal Final Allocation Review may be requested.
- 9.2 Applicants must notify Council in writing of their intent to formally appeal within 48 hours of receiving the final allocation notice
- 9.3 To be eligible for the formal review, the Applicant must have no outstanding debt with Council.

10 THE ALLOCATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

- 10.1 The Allocation Review Committee will have the following members:
- A QPRC Urban Landscapes Sporting Team representative
 - Manager Urban Landscapes
 - Director, Community Arts and Recreation (or equivalent Council senior executive)
 - An external representative from a State Sporting Organisation (SSO), Sports NSW, or equivalent independent body can attend through arrangement of the applicant.

11 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 11.1 Committee will review the Applicant's original Expression of Interest (EOI) and the subsequent appeal.
- 11.2 Their determination will be solely based on ensuring:

- o The Sporting Field Usage Policy was correctly applied.
- o The established allocation process (including all relevant procedures) was followed
- o The outcome of the QPRC Allocation was accurate and objective.

12 ALLOCATION OF NEW AND UPGRADED SPORTING GROUNDS

- 12.1 QPRC may acquire new fields or substantially upgrade existing grounds (e.g., via new lighting or a new field) resulting in a significant increase in available usage capacity. The historical usage rights of existing hirers do not extend to this additional capacity. The allocation for all new or upgraded capacity will be managed via a transparent Expression of Interest (EOI) process, which will be formally advertised across all Council communication channels, with the assessment criteria reflecting the asset's new classification and maximum sustainable usage

13 DAMAGES AND BREACH OF CONDITIONS

- 13.1 Where a club does not comply with the conditions of field allocation outlined in this policy and usage thresholds in the Sporting Usage Policy, Council may:
- o Reduce or cancel current allocated usage hours.
 - o Exclude future seasonal allocations.

14 BREACH NOTIFICATION PROCESS

- 14.1 Where a Hirer is alleged to be in breach of the Conditions of Hire, the following procedure will be undertaken:
- **First Instance** – Council staff will investigate the allegation. If the breach is substantiated, the Hirer will receive a formal written warning detailing the nature of the breach and the steps required to remedy it.
 - **Second or Major Instance** - Following a second substantiated breach, or for a single instance of severe non compliance, the Hirer will be issued a formal notice that will detail the application of any cost recovery, and the immediate impact on current and future allocations.

15 FINANCIAL RECOVERY FOR DAMAGE

- 15.1 Hirers are fully responsible for the condition of the fields and facilities during their allocated time.
- 15.2 **Reporting Damage** - All damage to Council property, whether deliberate or accidental, must be reported to Council staff immediately, outlining the full details of the incident.
- 15.3 **Post Season Standard:** - Excluding usual seasonal wear and tear, the sporting ground and facilities must be returned in the same condition as they were prior to the start of the seasonal allocation.
- 15.4 **Cost Recovery** - If the facility is not returned to the required standard, Council will conduct all necessary cleaning and repair work, and may on charge the Hirer 100% of the cost recovery incurred.
- 15.5 This recovery may include, but is not limited to:
- The cost of Council staff monitoring activities for compliance as per 18.15 of this policy.
 - The cost of cleaning up excessive waste and litter.
 - The cost to repair unreasonable damage beyond standard wear and tear

- Any afterhours callout fees required to resolve access issues or security concerns caused by the Hirer (including a minimum staff overtime charge).

16 CRITERIA FOR FUTURE EXCLUSION

- 16.1 To protect Council assets and ensure fairness for compliant clubs, an applicant may be excluded from future allocation consideration for a period determined by Council at its absolute discretion, if any of the following apply:
- The applicant has an outstanding debt with Council.
 - The damage caused by the applicant impacts the scheduled commencement of the subsequent sporting season for another Hirer.
 - The applicant has been issued a penalty for breaches of this policy
 - Council may also consider exclusion if the applicant has been issued a formal written warning during the preceding season.

17 DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND APPEALS PROCESS

- 17.1 This informal resolution process applies immediately following the issuance of draft allocations where an Applicant's requested booking or changes cannot be fully accommodated due to competing requests.
- 17.2 **Notification** - Applicants will be notified in writing and given seven (7) days from the receipt of the draft allocation to formally dispute the decision.
- 17.3 **Initial Review** - Council staff will reassess the submission against the QPRC SG-ASM. Preference will be given to the applicant whose submission received the higher weighted score in the original assessment process.

18 GENERAL CONDITIONS OF SEASONAL ALLOCATION & ASSET PROTECTION

- 18.1 **Written Authority** - Hirers may use the grounds only on receipt of written approval and a signed Booking Confirmation from QPRC. Unauthorised use outside the allocated booking times is strictly prohibited to ensure asset rest periods and long term maintenance.
- 18.2 **Prohibition on Subletting** - Hirers are not permitted to sublet, transfer, or reallocate grounds or facilities to any other user. All ground usage must be directly approved by QPRC to manage risk and maintain public safety.
- 18.3 **Seasonal Changeover** - Hirers must notify QPRC's Urban Landscape Sports Team two weeks prior to the season completion if the sporting ground will not be required for post season fixtures (e.g. finals).
- 18.4 **Standard Hours (Natural Turf)** - General operating hours for natural turf are 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM (Monday to Sunday) The maximum weekly usage allocated must be as per the Sporting Field Tiers Guide
- 18.5 **Synthetic Operating Hours** – All weather synthetic surfaces are 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM (Monday to Sunday) and have no weekly usage allocation.
- 18.6 **Training & Match Play** - Games played on the home ground must adhere to the formal home and away fixture schedule set by the relevant Sporting Association. Any schedule changes during the season must be approved in advance by QPRC Urban Landscapes Sports Team.
- 18.7 **Use Outside Allocation** - Sports fields and facilities are not available outside the approved allocation times unless prior arrangements are confirmed with QPRC. Casual hire charges will apply to any approved extended usage as QPRC'S Fees and Charges.
- 18.8 **Floodlighting Use** - Training must cease by 9:00 PM, with floodlights automatically turning off by 10:00 PM, Games may run to 10:00pm but cease thereafter.

- 18.9 **Right to Close** - QPRC reserves the absolute right to close any sporting ground or facility due to weather, maintenance, safety concerns, or risk mitigation. This decision is final and non negotiable. QPRC will notify users via the Council Social Media, website, and via email to QPRC Sports Council Representatives.
- 18.10 **Inclement Weather** - QPRC will prioritise closing grounds on weekdays to prevent playing surface deterioration, in preference to match play on weekends. No refunds are provided for closures associated with inclement weather.
- 18.11 **Damage Mitigation** - Hirers are strongly encouraged to rotate training/drill areas (e.g., training outside goal mounts) during practice to minimise concentrated ground damage and risk of injury.
- 18.12 **Ground Markings** - QPRC is responsible for all linemarking. Hirers are prohibited from undertaking any linemarking on the grounds, unless approved in written by QPRC.
- 18.13 **Post-Activity Condition** - Excluding usual seasonal wear and tear, the facilities must be returned in the same condition as they were prior to the season.
- 18.15 **Cost Recovery** - If the facilities are not returned to the required standard, QPRC will conduct all necessary cleaning and repair work and on charge the Hirer 100% of the incurred costs and administration fee of 10%. This includes but is not limited to the cost of cleaning up waste and litter (Hirers must not store waste next to bins, the cost to repair unreasonable damage, the cost of monitoring activities for compliance.
- 18.16 **Unauthorised Items** - Goals must only use the manufacturer's instructions or approved fixings (e.g., Velcro) for attaching nets. Clubs will be charged a fee for the removal of permanently affixed tape (e.g., electrical tape or other fastening equipment) that leaves a residue or damage.
- 18.6 **Storage** - Hirers are not entitled to storage space unless written approval is received from QPRC. If storage is provided by Council, it is temporary, seasonal, and provided at Council's sole discretion. New shipping containers for storage are prohibited.
- 18.7 **Emergency Access** - Keys will be issued to seasonal Hirers. The Hirer, if onsite, is responsible for allowing immediate access to emergency vehicles.
- 18.8 **Member Behaviour** - The Hirer must ensure that smoking and vaping are prohibited on all sporting grounds, including spectator areas and within 10 meters of canteens or play equipment.
- 18.9 **Vehicles** - Vehicles are prohibited on parks or sporting grounds without explicit Council approval. Parking must be restricted to designated car parks only, and the Hirer is responsible for monitoring and controlling visitor parking.
- 18.10 **Prohibited Activities** - The following are strictly prohibited: Tree pruning, trench digging, affixing signs to trees, archery, golf, go-karting, paintball/laser tag, riding horses, use of glass receptacles, camping overnight, and use of firearms or coal BBQs
- 18.11 **Selling of Goods** - Hirers may sell food, non alcoholic drinks, and raffle tickets. Applications for a liquor license at appropriate venues must receive prior Council approval.
- 18.12 **Advertising** - Permanent advertising is prohibited, unless written approval is received from QPRC. Seasonal Hirers may display temporary banner signage only during their allocated hours. Advertising must not promote alcohol, firearms, pornography, or tobacco, or the QPRC logo.

19 REVIEW

- 19.1 This policy will be reviewed every four years or earlier as necessary if:
- legislation requires it, or
 - Council's functions, structure or activities change

APPENDIX A:

SPORTING GROUND ALLOCATION SCORING MATRIX

The Sporting Ground Allocation Scoring Matrix is used to provide a transparent and objective method for assessing and prioritising applications for seasonal use of QPRC sporting fields and facilities, ensuring equitable access and sustainable asset management. Assessment principles include:

- To prioritise hirers that provide the greatest social health benefits to the QPRC community through high participation rates and inclusive practices.
- To allocate resources sustainably and equitably by ensuring Elite, Competition and Community fields users are matched to the appropriate level of usage and competition matches.
- To favour organisations with strong governance, sustainability and alignment with Council's long term community goals
- To ensure clubs are reliable users who demonstrate a true need for the requested time slots

The matrix is shown on the following pages

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Appendix A



Sporting Ground Allocation Scoring Matrix

Customer Information:

Organisation/Club: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Section A: Assessment Summary

The Sporting Ground Allocation Scoring Matrix (SG-ASM) is utilised to provide a transparent and objective method for assessing and prioritising applications for seasonal use of QPRC sporting fields and facilities, ensuring equitable access and sustainable asset management.

Criteria	Max Weight %	Score (0-10)	Weighted Score Max
Community Benefit & Participation	40%		
Efficient Asset Management	30%		
Strategic Alignment & Governance	20%		
Compliance & Demonstrated Need	10%		
Total Score			

CRITERIA	SCORE	SCORE KEY
Local residency Score 0-3 Active registered members reside in the LGA		3 = Over 75% 2 = 50-74% 1 = Less than 50%
Participation rate and growth Score 0-3 over the last two years		3 = Documented 10%+ 2 = Stable or moderate growth 1 = Declining participation or small base
Inclusivity and Access Score 0-4 breadth of programs for a variety of players (e.g. women only, para sports, cultural groups)		3 = Dedicated programs for under- served groups 2 = Junior & senior's pathways for both genders 1 = Limited pathways or single gender/ age focus
TOTAL for Community Benefit		
Strategic Tier alignment Score 0-5 Status Elite/Competition/Community and requested hours		5 = club status & requested hours align with field's designated tier 3 = club status reasonably aligns with tier – requested hours marginally outside recommended 5% over maximum capacity 0 = Request is for a tier significantly higher than status (e.g. community club requesting elite field OR requested hours significantly exceed maximum capacity.
Flexibility/ Alternative Use Score 0-5 Willingness to use non-prime time slots e.g. daytime, school use, pre 4pm weekdays) or use lower tier fields for training		5 = Demonstrated willingness 3 = Willing to take only small reduction in prime-time hours 0 = Requires exclusive, non-negotiable use of high demand slots
TOTAL for Efficient Asset Management		
Alignment with Strategic Plan Score 0-5 Supports QPRC goals – youth sport, health, female participation, high quality fields		5 = Actively and directly supports QPRC goals 3 = Actively provides general sport/ recreation benefits 0 = Minimal or no identifiable alignment
Organisational Strength & Stability Score 0-5		5 = Affiliated with State Sporting Association, uses audited financial statements & has robust volunteer/ governance structure 3 = Incorporated club with a working committee 0 = Minimal or no identifiable alignment
TOTAL for Strategic Alliance & Governance		
Past compliance record Score 0-5 Breaches could include non-permitted use, outstanding debt, damage to asset		5 = No breaches in previous season 3 = Minor non-compliance issues that were resolved quickly. 0 = Evidence of major or persistent breaches
Demonstrated need Score 0-5 Usage data (not simply booked hours)		5 = Actual, verifiable usage data demonstrating that all allocated hours are used 3 = Request is reasonable, but insufficient data is provided. 0 = No data provided or evidence of non and/or overuse in previous season