

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MAITLAND – POLICY STATEMENT

POLICY GROUP NAME: SPORT & RECREATION	
Policy Name:	Closure of Sporting Facilities
File Number:	129/2
Date Approved:	24 July 2007
Policy Review Date:	24 July 2007
Business Group:	Service, Planning & Regulation
Responsible Officer:	Manager Community & Recreation Services
Further Information:	Recreation Development Officer
Objective:	Sporting Facility Closure Procedure

1. Purpose:

To define the process for a Council sportsground closure.

2. Statement:

Council manages a diverse array of sportsgrounds which accommodate a variety of sports with varying soil types and playing requirements. Due to the diversity, a 'Sportsground Closure' policy is required to determine who is responsible for determining the suitability of a sportsground for play/training.

3. Basis for Closure:

A decision by Council, Recreation Board, Clubs and or Associations to close the sportsground should be based on:

- Safety and the potential for injury to players
- The sport played and the potential for damage to the playing surface
- The weather, during prolonged and /or extreme weather conditions (i.e. severe drought, wet weather and /or flooding)
- The condition of the ground when inspected

Note: Irrespective of the above Council may, at any time, withdraw the use of the facility (or part thereof) if it is deemed to be unplayable.

4. Provisions:

i. Closure by Council:

Neither the Recreation Board nor sporting clubs/associations have the authority to approve use of sporting grounds when Council has closed the grounds.

Recreation Boards/Clubs/Associations or Schools using closed fields will be liable for the full cost of repairs and may lose their hire agreement.

Ground closure by Council can occur at short notice and will be communicated to individual Recreation Boards. The Recreation Board will be charged with the responsibility for the closure of a sporting facility as directed by Council during periods of prolonged wet weather and or drought.

To assist the Recreation Board in communicating the status of the facility to its user groups (i.e. open or closed), Council has installed 'Ground Closed' signs at all sporting facilities. In accordance with this Policy, the Recreation Board is responsible for locking the sign in the appropriate position so that all coaches and players associated with the user group will know whether the facility is 'open' or 'closed'.

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A notice will be lodged on Council's web page advising of any sportsground closure (i.e. those closed by Council).

ii. Closure by Recreation Board

Each Recreation Board has care, control and management of one or more of Council's sporting facilities.

Where delegated the Recreation Board Executive may close a facility (or part thereof) if they deem the playing surface and surrounds to be unfit for use in any way.

The following procedure is to be adopted:

Closure:

- The Recreation Board Executive will meet with the affected user group at an agreed time on site.
- The Recreation Board Executive will then make a decision and communicate its decision to the affected user group.
- The Recreation Board Executive (or nominated person) closing the facility must lock the ground closed sign in the appropriate position and notify the secretary of the Recreation Board, Council and any other affected user group(s).

Opening:

- The Recreation Board Executive responsible for the closure of the ground must approve the re-opening of the facility at an on-site meeting between the Recreation Board Executive and the affected user group(s). A member of each user group is entitled to be present at this meeting.

Note Reference to Recreation Board Executive above includes (Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer or alternatively a Ground Closure Sub Committee as nominated by the Recreation Board).

If a user group fails to abide by the ground closed ruling and the ground is damaged then the user group will be charged the cost of rectifying the damage.

iii. Closure by Club Association or User Group

A Club / Association/ School or User Group is required to adhere to Council's or Recreation Boards decision regarding ground closure.

Where approval has been given by both Council and or the Recreation Board to use a ground, Clubs /Associations and Schools are required to abide by Councils 'Terms and Conditions for Use of Council Grounds',- specifically the requirements for 'Ground Inspection' and 'Ground Closure'.

5. Penalty- Failure to Abide by Ground Closure Ruling

The procedure for fining a user group shall be as follows:

Council will:

- inspect and photograph the damaged grounds;
- establish culpability in consultation with the Recreation Board
- determine the fine based on the cost to restore the ground;
- issue the fine in writing to the offending ground hirer through the Recreation Board.

If the fine is not paid the offending user group will not be allocated any future use of Council facilities.

Note: *In some instances where damage to the ground is excessive Council may close the ground to enable necessary remediation works to be undertaken.*

6. Dispute Resolution:

If there is dispute with regard to the closure of a facility, the Recreation Board and/or user group will refer the dispute to Council in writing to determine. Council's decision shall be final.