

Sharing Sport and Recreation Facilities

Facts for sporting clubs and associations

Sport and recreation can bring people from a range of user groups together to unite in a common interest. In many instances there are opportunities for sport and recreation organisations to develop shared facility partnerships in order to broaden access, maximise usage and to share operating costs. This provides the opportunity for organisations to develop strong, mutually beneficial partnerships that combine resources.

For shared facilities to be successful all user groups need to identify their own specific need for use and access, as well as identify if compatibility exists or can be fostered.

What does shared facility use mean?

Shared facility use refers to multiple user groups sharing and utilising a sport and recreation facility.

The potential benefits of shared facilities

- Less duplication of facilities and increased use.

- Increased viability of clubs and facilities.
- The creation of community/activity hubs that promote social inclusion as well as participation opportunities.
- Shared capital costs, resources and expertise, leading to more efficient use of resources, environmental benefits and reduced operating costs.
- Improved relationships that will lead to increased networking between user groups.
- Access to a broader range of programs.
- Greater potential to attract sponsorship and grant funding due to an increased participation base.
- Sustainable funding and improved management of maintenance arrangements that can ensure financial viability and increase community support for the facility and its programs.

Things to consider before entering a shared facility partnership

- Whether compatibility exists between user groups.
- Whether there are defined organisational relationships and responsibilities through a documented management structure.
- Whether there is a mutual benefit for all user groups.
- Risk management issues including:
 - financial management; and
 - agreed policies and legislative compliance.

Current as at August 2019



Managing partnerships

The relationship between user groups needs to be well managed in order for the partnership to be successful. Each user group will have varying expectations as well as different resources, skills and organisational requirements but the key elements to a successful partnership are flexibility, trust, open communication and co-operation.

As part of the partnership, a clearly defined written agreement setting out the roles, responsibilities and commitments of each user group, such as Terms of Reference or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should be developed. A clear management structure for the facility should also be established. All user groups need to contribute and be considered when a management structure is developed. Input from all user groups should ensure the overall management model complements the governance of each individual user group.

A successful partnership should

- Involve compatible services and arrangements that are mutually beneficial.
- Be based on a shared vision, aligned objectives and good governance.
- Include clearly specified and measurable performance indicators.
- Feature strong cooperative relationships between clubs based on a clear understanding of how the facility will be managed.
- Include and consider all user groups and ensure they have an understanding of the financial and legal aspects of the partnership.
- Feature flexibility, trust, open communication, co-operation and strong community engagement.

Impediments to shared facilities

- Incompatible partnerships between user groups due to unclear or unaligned objectives and lack of a shared vision.
- Opposition or resistance from members of clubs based on differing expectations, misconceptions and reluctance to share.
- Potential for an imbalance of representation from user groups on management committees.
- Programming issues.
- Security and access concerns with the facility.
- Potential for a complex management structure with multiple user groups as opposed to a single user group.
- The partnership between user groups may not be mutually beneficial and may in some cases be detrimental to a user group.

Community use of school facilities

There are many high-quality sport and recreation facilities within school sites. These school facilities are often an ideal venue for facility sharing, which can provide benefits both to the school and community user groups. Generally, schools prefer user groups to utilise the facility outside school hours, which will suit most sport and recreation groups that generally want to use the facility during the evenings and weekends.

It is up to clubs to contact local schools directly to enquire about the availability and suitability of the facility, the booking process, fees and other relevant information.



Facility Sharing Checklist

The more of these points your organisation is able to tick off the more likely it is to experience a successful facility sharing arrangement.

Governance

- Is there compatibility between the user groups? For example, a shared vision and aligned objectives.
- Is there a clearly defined written agreement setting out the roles, responsibilities and commitments of each user group, such as Terms of Reference or a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)?
- Can the user groups meet the usage requirements set by the overall management committee? For example, is the club constituted, incorporated and covered for public liability?
- Is there a written vision and documented objectives for the shared facility?
- Has a management structure for the facility been agreed on?

Operational

- Has a clearly defined operational management and reporting structure and plan been agreed to and documented?
- Are there agreements, position descriptions or delegation statements in place for all operational roles and responsibilities?
- Has the program of activities been agreed upon and documented?
- Is there adequate signage that provides details on who to contact in case of an emergency, and the facility's opening hours?
- Has the schedule of fees for user groups been determined and agreed on?
- Have membership fees for all user groups been established and agreed on?
- Has a fee schedule for non-aligned users been established and agreed on?
- Are there resolutions for grievance processes in place?
- Is there a facility maintenance agreement and/or a facility management system in place that documents who is responsible?
- Is there an up to date key register that determines who has keys and access to the facility?



Case Study

Circular Head Community Recreation Centre

Background – planning and development

In 1999, the Circular Head Council adopted the Circular Head Recreation Facilities Plan that reviewed the provision and condition of various recreation facilities within the Circular Head municipality. It highlighted that there were inadequate and redundant sport and recreation facilities in the municipality and that some of the ageing facilities would require considerable expenditure to bring them up to an appropriate standard.

The Plan identified that the Smithton Football Clubrooms and Scotchtown Football Clubrooms both required major upgrades and maintenance and that the Smithton grandstand was derelict and condemned. It recommended that a feasibility study into the development of a centralised multi-use sporting facility be undertaken.

Both football clubs operated individually and the initial suggestion of a shared facility was not totally supported but other user groups expressed an interest in the multi-use proposal and it was agreed to explore the potential benefits of a community centre/venue.

Beginning partnerships

The Circular Head Community Recreation Centre (CHCRC) steering committee was formed to consider the proposal and ascertain the feasibility of a shared facility at the Smithton Recreation Ground. Representatives on the CHCRC steering committee included members from the community, sport and recreation organisations and council.

The CHCRC steering committee liaised regularly with community user groups, council representatives, Communities, Sport and Recreation and the various tiers of government. It looked at community needs, undertook analysis of economic and demographic characteristics, participation trends, considered the location issues, and management and operational issues. These planning documents informed the decision to progress the project.

Maintaining partnerships

The CHCRC steering committee met on a regular basis to develop the feasibility, project management and business plan and develop a set fee structure for the complex. It also coordinated media releases and community information sessions.

Once facility construction commenced, an incorporated board, the Circular Head Community and Recreation Centre Board (CHCRCB), was established with representatives from all user groups and interested community members and a management plan was developed.

The CHCRCB meet on a monthly basis to plan day-to-day operations of the centre and currently holds the liquor licence as well as paying all the expenses for the facility.