

2.4 CREATING INCLUSIVE AND WELCOMING SPORTING FACILITIES: AUDIT FINDINGS

(LF: File No.)

Responsible Director: Julie Salomon

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the findings from the 'Inclusive and Welcoming Sporting Facilities' audit of 53 Council sports pavilions, and outline next steps Council can take to ensure pavilions are in line with community needs and expectations.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS/ISSUES

There are common issues across sporting pavilions that mean they are less inclusive of or welcoming to segments of the Monash community, including women, children and parents, older people, and those with a disability. This includes:

- Safety issues (e.g. poor lighting, overgrown vegetation, confusing signage, privacy screens);
- Lack of key infrastructure (e.g. unisex toilets or change rooms, sanitary bins, baby change facilities); and
- Accessibility issues (e.g. no accessible parking spaces, ramps or railings, paths and approaches not inclusive of different modes of transport).

Pavilions were scored out of 100% with an average score of 71.6%. For those that have been recently built or upgraded scores were 81.6%, demonstrating that facility upgrades do make a difference to how welcoming and inclusive Council's pavilions are. Alongside infrastructure, other changes can make a big difference such as providing sanitary bins and lopping vegetation for safety. In addition Council can support users of pavilions (sports clubs) to make changes to the way they present and use pavilions to make them more welcoming and inclusive for all.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The audit findings will largely be used to strategically inform future project priorities and support business cases for capital upgrades. Policy reform opportunities that have been realised will be delivered within existing operational resources.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

Council can address factors which inhibit our diverse community from accessing our sporting facilities. Council should consider issues of inclusiveness when prioritising future capital and works, and continue its

work with sports clubs through the Active Monash Sports Club Framework to influence behaviour and outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Endorses officers to use the Inclusive and Welcoming Sporting Facilities and Community Safety audit findings to assist in prioritising capital upgrades to sports facilities.*
- 2. Endorses officers to explore external funding opportunities to progressively improve the inclusiveness of sports facilities and notes the immediate provision of sanitary bins being supplied into pavilion changing rooms and the lopping of vegetation canopies to improve personal safety.*
- 3. Endorses the development of an Active Monash Sports Club Framework to influence behaviour and outcomes.*

INTRODUCTION

To achieve an action within the Annual Plan, Council recently undertook an audit of all sporting pavilions to understand how welcoming and inclusive they are. The purpose of the audit was to:

- Strategically inform future project priorities for capital upgrades; and
- Identify opportunities for policy reform to influence behaviour or outcomes.

The audit has now been completed and key findings are presented below.

BACKGROUND

Sporting pavilions play an important role in the community. In addition to their traditional role as places for teams to prepare for training and matches, they also service as important places where meetings and social activities are held, and where the club's achievements are displayed and celebrated. How a sporting pavilion looks can say a lot about the character and values of a club and provide an important first impression to its members.

A welcoming club is one where all members (regardless of their gender, age, racial or religious background, sexuality, or if they have a disability) feel comfortable and safe. It is also a place where equipment and facilities are shared willingly by everyone.

Council has committed to various initiatives to ensuring its sporting facilities are inclusive through both built environment upgrades (such as female

friendly and unisex change rooms) and through building capacity in club culture (through our Community Leaders United By Sport and Changing the Game initiatives). Council, however was lacking a full understanding of the current state of its sporting pavilions. This audit enables Council to prioritise future work as well as assess effectiveness of current strategies, and identify where further opportunities lie.

While a number of different audits exist to assess sporting or community facilities including routine building condition audits, none fully encompass the intersectional approach required to meet the needs and expectations of our community.

A comprehensive auditing tool therefore was developed (see Attachment 1) as part of the Welcoming Sporting Facilities and Community Safety project. The audit tool was developed in consultation with staff from a range of areas across Council including Active Monash, Gender Equity, Metro Access, Community Safety, Social Inclusion, and Multicultural Community Development. The matrix was developed to ensure that it provides a holistic approach to the pavilion and reserve.

The tool was developed and piloted at two sites, and then rolled out across 37 reserves (53 pavilions). In addition, comprehensive Community Safety audits were initiated and a sample completed across 10 sites, with an ongoing schedule planned for the remainder of the sites.

Together the Inclusive and Welcoming Sports Facilities (IWSF) audits and Community Safety audits present Council with a detailed picture of the state of our sports pavilions, and identify opportunities for Council to proactively increase the appeal and safety of these facilities for our community.

While Council has a large role to play in improving the welcoming and inclusive nature of its pavilions, the occupants of the buildings also contribute to the overall impression of a space. Council therefore can also support clubs to understand how they can improve elements within their control, such as the type of imagery they use, how they stock their toilets and bathrooms with soap and toilet paper, and the way they lay out their social rooms.

This aligns well with Council's proposed Active Monash Club Framework which encourages clubs to consider diversity and respect, community engagement, and health as part of their role in the community. The Framework is intended to be introduced over time and will align with Council's club development work to ensure all clubs have the opportunity to succeed.

DISCUSSION

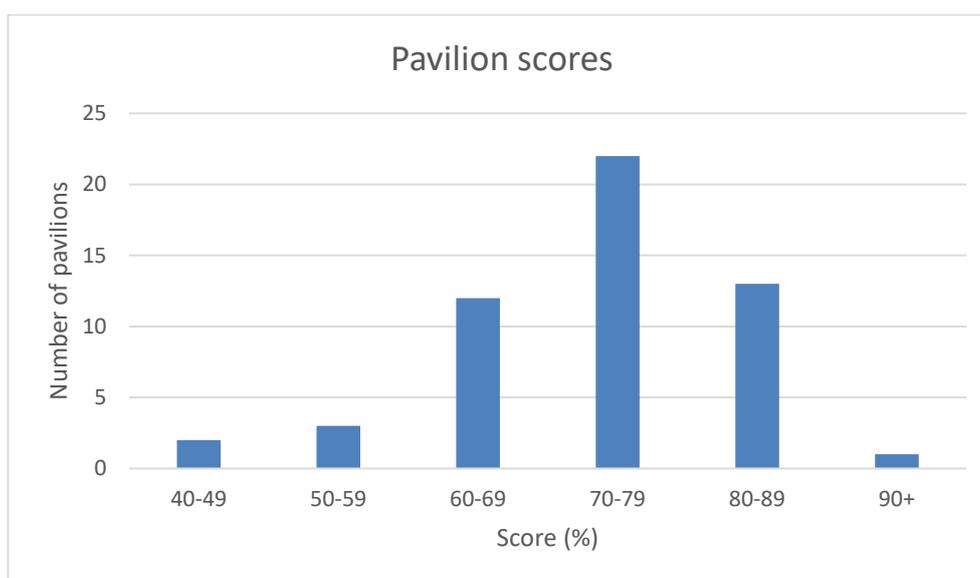
Findings

Inclusive and Welcoming Sports Facilities audits

1. The IWSF audit focused on four areas within the sports facilities: environment, access and approach;
2. Building exterior;
3. Building interior (change rooms); and
4. Building interior (club rooms).

All these elements combined to give each pavilion an overall percentage score, with 100% being a perfect score, and each 'failed' criterion leading to lower scores.

The average score across all pavilions was 71.6%. The graph below illustrates that there were five pavilions that had particularly low scores, and only one that scored above 90%. The majority of pavilions had scores in the 60-89% range.



An overall summary of findings against each criterion can be found in Attachment 2 to this report, but some key points are noted below:

1. Environment, access and approach

Positives:

- Nearly all (92%) of pavilions had good (within 5 minute walk) or fair (within 10 minute walk) proximity to public transport.
- Nearly all (90%) of pavilions have a carpark that is open to the public.
- Nearly all (94%) of reserves had a nearby social family recreation area such as a playground or barbecue.

Key issues:

- Only about half (55%) of the reserves had dedicated accessible parking spaces.
- In about half of cases (49%), there were issues relating to inclusiveness of paths and approaches e.g. steep gradient or narrow pathways, uneven ground, no ramp access, etc.
- Public toilets at reserves are largely locked outside of game days, with only 9.5% of pavilions having access to open toilets at the time of the audit.

2. Building exterior

Positives:

- Nearly all (94%) of pavilions had an undercover spectator area.
- Only rarely (less than 2% of cases) were there advertisements promoting gambling or alcohol.

Key issues:

- In only 73% of cases was the building entrance clearly visible or obvious.
- Very rarely (10%) did pavilions have signage to indicate what time the building is open.
- 37% of pavilions had no or insufficient ramp access to the building.

3. Building interior (change rooms)

Positives:

- Every pavilion (100%) had (at least one) individual and lockable toilet cubicle/s.
- A majority of pavilions (82%) had clean and tidy change rooms.

Key issues:

- Only about a third (38%) of pavilions had any sanitary bins in change room toilets.
- Less than half (42%) of pavilions had change rooms with accessible or ambulant shower and toilet cubicles.
- Less than a third of pavilions (30%) had privacy screens to their change rooms.
- 32% of change rooms had no soap dispensers, and 8% had no toilet paper.

4. Building interior (club rooms)

Positives:

- None of the club rooms contained insensitive posters on the walls.
- A majority (86%) had views from the social room to the playing field.

Key issues:

- Only a quarter (25%) of the pavilions contained a space, such as an office, where someone could comfortably and privately breastfeed.
- Less than a third (29%) of pavilions had baby change facilities that both men and women could access.

Community Safety audits

The Community Safety audits highlighted that the main issues common across our sporting facilities and reserves include:

- Poor lighting (of carparks and pathways);
- Overgrown vegetation (contributing to poor sight lines and hiding spots); and
- Confusing or insufficient signage.

The Community Safety audits prioritised low-medium-high works, and these will inform future planning.

Opportunities created

Strategically inform future project priorities

The average score for IWSF audits across all reserves was 71.6%. Encouragingly, for those pavilions that have recently been updated or newly constructed, average scores were much higher at 81.6%. It is clear that facility upgrades are making a difference to how welcoming and inclusive Council's pavilions are, and therefore it is recommended that Council endorse the use of these audits to inform and prioritise future capital works. It is also recommended Council endorse officers to explore external funding opportunities to continue this work where available.

While large scale upgrades are critical, particularly in terms of change rooms, accessibility, and lighting, there are a range of smaller scale changes that will also contribute to good outcomes. For example, the audits have already led to a number of low cost initiatives including the provision of sanitary bins being supplied into pavilion changing rooms and the lopping of vegetation canopies to improve personal safety.

Identify opportunities for policy reform to influence behaviour or outcomes

While Council is responsible for many of the changes required to ensure our pavilions are welcoming and inclusive, some of the issues can also be dealt with by occupiers of the buildings (sports clubs). There is opportunity for Council, through its proposed Active Monash Club Framework, to work with clubs to provide more information on how to be inclusive and welcoming, and improve personal safety.

As a result it is recommended that Council continue to actively engage and work with sports clubs to influence behaviour and outcomes through the implementation of the proposed Active Sports Club Framework.

The audits may also help to inform future Council policy such as public toilet strategies or signage strategies, as these clearly impact the perception of our community sports facilities.

Next steps

Council will continue to prioritise the upgrading of pavilions, and working with clubs on social and cultural change through the Active Monash Club Framework.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report is in line with Monash 2021, a Healthy and Resilient Monash 2017-2021, and the Gender Equity Strategy 2015-2020.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

By progressively seeking to improve the inclusive and welcoming nature of our sporting facilities, Council will improve the sense of community and community health and well-being through recognising and catering for the diversity of our stakeholders.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

This report is in line with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The IWSF and Community safety audit findings will largely be used to strategically inform future project priorities and support business cases for capital upgrades. Where the audit has showed clear immediate priorities, such as the installation of sanitary bins and trimming of vegetation, separate budget bids have been prepared for the next financial year.

The policy reform opportunities that have been realised will be delivered within existing operational resources.

CONCLUSION

Through the recommendations in this report Council seeks to address factors which inhibit our diverse community from accessing our sporting facilities. The proposed recommendations will assist Council to consider issues of inclusiveness when prioritising future works and will also provide for Council to continue its work supporting sports clubs in inclusion and diversity.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Inclusive and Welcoming Sporting Facilities Audit template

Attachment 2: Summary of Audit findings