

2.2 MONASH SPORTS FLOODLIGHTING POLICY (BG)

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Notes the key consultation findings and submissions received in response to the public exhibition of the draft Monash Sports Floodlighting Policy in Attachment B.*
- 2). Adopts the Monash Sports Floodlighting Policy (Attachment A).*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Report is to seek Council's consideration of the final draft Monash Sports Floodlighting Policy (Attachment A), following Council endorsement of the draft policy in 2020 and consultation with the community.

BACKGROUND

Council endorsed a draft Monash Sports Floodlighting Policy at its Ordinary Meeting held 28 July 2020.

Prior to the preparation of the draft policy, there was no specific Sports Floodlighting Policy in Monash to guide the installation, use and maintenance of sports ground floodlighting in Monash.

Following Council endorsement of the draft policy, a period of community consultation occurred from 19 August to 23 September 2020. A total of twenty-eight (28) unique submissions were received in response to the draft policy. A summary of the results, written submissions and each response is provided in Attachment B.

DISCUSSION

The Monash Sports Floodlighting Policy has been prepared to improve the quality of sports infrastructure across Monash to increase community benefit and facilitate greater participation, reduce the exposure of risk and to give clarity and certainty to clubs which occupy Council sporting facilities.

The policy has been prepared having regard to:

- The evidence of performance as demonstrated through the audit of all sports floodlighting infrastructure in Monash.

- The financial capacity of clubs and Council to pay for the installation and maintenance of sport floodlighting.
- The inherent risks associated with the reliance on licensed clubs to undertake maintenance on lighting infrastructure.
- Addressing issues associated with usage, such as duration and frequency.
- Recognising the difference that exists between 'licensed' clubs (non-exclusive use, such as cricket and Australian Rules) and 'leased' clubs (exclusive use, such as tennis and bowls) and their ability to generate income and contribute to the cost of maintenance and installation.

As a result of the consultation and in response to several of the submissions, the following change was made to the draft policy:

Section 5.2.1: The "exemption period" for the proposed maintenance levy to be imposed on all licenced clubs in lieu of Council assuming responsibility for all maintenance will be extended from five (5) to ten (10) years where a club has previously contributed 20% to the provision of training standard lighting within the past 10 years.

This change recognises the significant financial contribution made by some licensed clubs in recent years.

Annual Levy

In accordance with the draft policy and in lieu of discharging licensed clubs of their responsibility for maintenance, a new levy will be introduced as part of the 21/22 fees and charges process.

The development of this maintenance levy has been done so in accordance with *The Victorian Auditor General Office (VAGO) Fees and Charges-Cost Recovery by Local Government Report*, released in 2010. This ensures that the principles of cost recovery by way of introducing this levy are based on actual costs and supported by sound rationale. This levy will be reviewed and potentially adjusted each year as part of the annual fees and charges review completed by Council.

In the event that a licensed club cannot meet this levy cost, options include:

- co-location to another venue with capacity to maximise resources; or
- ground sharing with another club seeking opportunities to train to share the cost of the annual levy cost.

Other Benefits

The introduction of the Monash Sports Floodlighting Policy will also result in a number of other benefits to Council including the introduction of:

- a consistent approach to address the use of floodlighting for night competition,
- standard hours of use of floodlighting across reserves,
- the ability to allocate reserves between clubs more freely to maximise resources; and,
- community use of sportsgrounds at non-training times to enable the activation of casual and informal community recreation, especially throughout winter months.

This may be organised on a case-by-case basis, with a focus on providing evening access to floodlit sites in built up areas with little open space and is expected to generate social gatherings and interest from dog walkers.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Monash Sports Floodlighting Policy will supersede relevant sections from the Active Reserves Facility Hierarchy.

The Monash Sports Floodlighting Policy is aligned to key Council policies including A Healthy and Resilient Monash: Integrated Plan 2017-2021, and the Monash Council Plan 2017-2020.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

This policy will support Council's agenda for a healthy and resilient Monash community.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

This report is in line with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities ACT 2006 and does not raise any specific considerations.

CONSULTATION

The Monash Sports Floodlighting Policy that is presented as Attachment A to this report, has been updated in response to submissions made by clubs during the consultation period for the draft policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**Installation Costs**

Under the new policy, licensed clubs will no longer be required to contribute up to 20% of the total cost to install floodlighting to meet minimum lighting standards, nor will they be required to fund Council's supervision and project management fees.

This equates to a cost to Council of approximately \$60,000 per annum on the basis of one new lighting project being completed annually. It also recognises the difficulties associated with securing a financial commitment from clubs for each project in the past.

Clubs will however be encouraged to contribute to the cost of floodlighting installations and to meet the costs associated with exceeding minimum lighting standards.

Floodlighting projects for leased clubs will continue to be assessed and delivered in response to club requests and only in the event that the leased club will contribute a minimum of 50% of the total cost including Council supervision and project management costs. Leased club sports floodlighting installations vary greatly in scope and cost due to the diversity of leased club facilities, which include bowling greens, tennis courts, hockey fields and netball courts.

All sports lighting installations or upgrades are subject to Council's annual budget process and will continue to be prioritised in accordance with the Active Monash Capital Works Priorities Framework. This framework ranks projects in accordance with several criteria, such as current condition, community benefit, diversity of use and environmental impact. The framework also allows for projects to be elevated if clubs can attract grants or contribute financially to a project.

Maintenance Costs

Maintenance costs to Council are expected to be approximately \$60,000 per annum and will be fully or partially offset by the application of the levy on licensed clubs that use sportsground floodlighting.

Prior to the policy and introduction of a levy, Council funding for maintenance has generally been provided only in response to situations that require urgent action due to failure.

Despite the introduction of the levy, the cost to each club is expected to be less than what they would expect to incur if all maintenance was being undertaken as required under the current arrangement.

In the years succeeding the introduction of this levy, there will be opportunities to review and/or adjust the levy based on actual average spend which is expected to plateau or decrease relative to the number of installations on the basis of steady improvement being made to the quality of infrastructure.

The table below summarises the proposed levy on licensed clubs to be introduced as part of the policy. The levy amount would be set annually through the fees and charges set by Council as part of the annual budget process.

The draft levy is set out below and is designed to meet the cost of the service and levied according to the lighting standards being provided at each reserve.

Table 1 – The proposed levy based on the current standard of lighting

Lux Levels	Annual Maintenance Levy	Quantity of sites at this lighting standard in 2020
0-50 lux	\$500	18
>50 lux	\$1,000	11
>100lux	\$1,500	8
>150 lux	\$2,000	5

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that Council adopt the Monash Sports Floodlighting Policy. This updated version of the policy includes a change made to the policy in response to submissions made by clubs as part of the consultation process for the draft policy.

Attachment A - Monash Sports Floodlighting Policy

Attachment B – Summary and Report of Consultation