

Community Centres Council Policy

Policy Statement

Northern Beaches Council Community Centres are safe, welcoming, inclusive, accessible and affordable public spaces for the whole community. They are vibrant modern facilities that support and enable programs that provide diverse opportunities for a rich social and cultural life, encouraging good health, social interaction, creativity and learning.

Council will manage and maintain community facilities that are responsive to community priorities and support community organisations through the provision of facilities at a subsidised rate, if and when available.

As public trustee and guardian of public and community assets Council will provide access for all members of the community. Council will actively pursue innovative ways to maximise the use of public and community assets. (*Community Development & Services Policy, adopted 25 May 2019*)

Council will provide an equitable and transparent framework for the management of Council's network of community centres. The operational management model will be flexible and adaptable to the changing needs of the community.

Principles

Northern Beaches Council provides community centres that are:

- Multi-purpose, flexible in form, function and management the centres are available for a range of social, recreation, community and cultural services, activities and programs
- Centrally located within strategic centres in visually prominent and accessible locations that are close to public transport
- Co-located and integrated with other community uses and facilities
- Designed to be welcoming and safe environments that are vibrant, inspiring, sustainable and flexible in nature
- Accessible and inclusive places that have universal access and cater for multiple users and people of all ages, cultures and abilities
- Managed and planned through collaboration and shared use arrangements between Council, government agencies, community groups and other stakeholders
- Supported by good governance and centre management practices that are financially sustainable and at quality and cost standards that are acceptable to the community
- Marketed to improve community awareness and access to information about community centres – locations, availability and programs
- Designed in collaboration with the community and consider the needs of all the community in the development of new facilities or upgrades
- Planned for the future in response to changing demographics and future demand
- Fulfil the requirements of the State Government and Council policies in relation to the provision of facilities and assets on community land and Crown Land, and in compliance with legislation.

Scope and application:

Northern Beaches Community Centres are multi-purpose venues for hire. They range from local small halls to larger district centres with multiple rooms and facilities. The centres are to be used for a variety of purposes and are not necessarily purpose built for specific activities.

Council provides community centres to enable organisations and individuals to offer opportunities for the public to experience a wide variety of activities. This includes community support meetings, social and recreational activities, health and well-being classes and indoor sport (where suitable), education, arts and cultural activities for all ages.

The Community Centre Policy provides a clear framework for Council and the local community to maximise the quality and effectiveness of the provision of multi-purpose community centres, contributing to the vision of the Community Strategic Plan (Shape 2028):

'A safe, inclusive and connected community that lives in balance with our extraordinary coastal and bushland environment.'

The implementation of this Policy will be in accordance with the following:

- Council's community centres provide spaces for Northern Beaches residents to hire for a variety of activities and purposes that enhance community life. Centres will be vibrant, accessible and equitably support active and passive recreation.
- All community centres will be accessible - financially, socially, and physically accessible to the whole community, irrespective of age, gender and identity, to participate in social, recreation, cultural, civic, and educational community activities.
- The centres are affordable venues for hire, with a range of fees that support the most vulnerable in the community.
- Priority of allocation is for community groups and activities, not-for-profit groups and organisations.

Community Centres Management Model

The centres will be managed to maximise their current and future usage by a broad range of members of the Northern Beaches community.

Council will review regular hire arrangements on a yearly basis, to allow new and existing hirers to have equitable access to Community Centres. The annual hire process will be managed in accordance with the following:

- Previous and existing hire agreements are not guaranteed to be approved in future years, although historical use will be taken into consideration.
- When multiple requests for a centre and/or timeslot are made, the following factors will be considered and given priority when Council assesses all applications:
 - Long term historical use balanced with new requests due to demographic and other impacts
 - Priority is given to not-for-profit group or activity
 - Capacity to pay for alternative venues
 - Wide community benefit of the activity
 - Alternate space available that may be more suitable for the requested use
 - Nature/suitability of the activity for the space that is being requested

- Fees and charges are reviewed annually as part of the annual budget process. They will be affordable, equitable and consistent across the community centre portfolio.
- All hire fees are determined by the definition of the group/activity set out in the Terms and Conditions. Hire fees contribute to maintenance, cleaning, utilities, furniture and all operational costs involved.
- Concession and discount rates for not-for-profit organisations are available to groups and organisations, where applicable. Financial documentation will be requested to support applications for discounted rates of hire.
- Exclusive use of space within community centres is not generally supported. Due to historical use and nature of the activity there are currently some exceptions.
- Hirers are responsible for set up/pack down and delivery of their programs.

References and related documents

Refer to LEPs, planning documents, zoning regulations per centre

Northern Beaches Community Centres Terms & Conditions of Hire:

<https://eservices.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/ePlanning/live/Common/Output/LoadGenWebDoc.aspx?id=J83rvL3Vht4%3d>

[Northern Beaches Community Strategic Plan – Shape 2028](#)

[Northern Beaches Community Development and Services Policy, 25 June 2019.](#)

[Northern Beaches Arts & Creativity Strategy 2019](#)

[Northern Beaches Council Delivery Program 2019 -2023, Operational Plan and Budget 2020/21](#)

[Northern Beaches Council Local Strategic Planning Statement, Towards 2040](#)

[Northern Beaches Council Social Infrastructure Study \(under development\)](#)

Definitions

community centres are Council owned and managed indoor spaces hired to the community for regular or one-off events and activities. These spaces are multi-use, multi-purpose and accessible to the public. They provide spaces for social, creative, educational and recreational activities and health and/or support services for the community.

Responsible Officer

Executive Manager Community, Arts & Culture

Review Date

March 2025 (every 4 years or as required)

Revision History

Revision	Date	Status	TRIM Ref
1	27/08/2019	First draft Community Centre Policy	2018/176443
2	23/03/2021	Policy adopted by Council incorporating further community feedback following exhibition.	2018/176443