



Policy Owner: Director Community, Planning & Environment

Category: Operational

Direction: 4. Our Social Vitality

1. STATEMENT OF INTENT

1.1 Community Centres in North Sydney local government area (LGA) vary widely in ownership, management, purpose and funding levels and they deliver a mix of community services. It is North Sydney Council's intention to preserve this mix, and where possible enhance it. Community Centres are essentially non-profit or break-even ventures managed or facilitated by Council in the interests of the whole community.

1.2 The objectives of this Policy are to:

- a) provide a network of community spaces/programs throughout the North Sydney LGA, fostering among residents, students, the local workforce and Council, a sense of belonging to the North Sydney community;
- b) provide or facilitate provision of high quality and appropriate services;
- c) strive towards making centre based, and outreach, programs and activities for residents affordable and accessible;
- d) overcome social isolation and encourage social connection;
- e) provide community facilities, which would not otherwise be available to the North Sydney community;
- f) maximise the community's use of Council facilities;
- g) facilitate community involvement in management of centres;
- h) support a mix of management models, each appropriate to the centre concerned, so as to tap the skills and enthusiasm of the widest cross section of the community;
- i) provide for centres which, in total, give an adequate level of support to the following key areas: child care (including vacation care); youth services; aged and disability services; family services; arts and culture; activities and services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities; community health (including mental health); adult education; information dissemination; recreation; library services; and historical services;
- j) develop and maintain strategic alliances with other councils, the State and Federal government departments, and the non-

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- government community services sector, to enrich the range and depth of services available to the North Sydney community;
 - k) facilitate grant applications, relevant to centre programs;
 - l) maintain the centre buildings and grounds to agreed standards;
 - m) upgrade and enhance community centres where appropriate, based on consultation with the centres' users and providers;
 - n) promote the centres as a council/community good;
 - o) monitor, and assist where appropriate, the centres' financial and management performance through a range of strategies;
 - p) facilitate and initiate new uses/services;
 - q) ensure that services provided through the centres are accessible to all members of the public of the North Sydney LGA; and
 - r) ensure that sub-leasing or room hire of centres is prioritised to groups serving the same needs as those identified in i) above.

2. ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1 Community Centres covered by this Policy are listed in the Register of Council Owned/Leased Properties as reported to Council.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 Community centres - are publicly accessible premises owned by Council, or over which Council has care, control and management, whose principal function is the delivery of community services, which support and enhance the quality of life for those living, working and studying in the area, in response to identified need.

4. PROVISIONS

- 4.1 Council funding of community centres includes but is not restricted to:
- a) construction of new centres and upgrades funded through the capital works program (including developer contributions through Section 7.11. levies);
 - b) maintenance of the centres funded through the Engineering and Property Services Division's operating budget annual allocation;
 - c) subsidised property rents (rent payable by centres is nominal);
 - d) supporting markets in public open space run by centres for their own sakes and to subsidise the centre activities, conditional upon the centre adhering to a markets management plan drafted by Council;
 - e) co-ordinating and funding cleaning of multi-use centres;
 - f) supporting community development activities funded through the Community and Library Services Division's annual operating budget

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- annual allocation;
- g) discretionary funding for specific activities and services through the Grants and Subsidies Program (refer to Council's *Community Grants and Subsidies Policy*).
- 42 Sole-use centres meet their own cleaning costs.
- 43 Centres wholly managed by Boards independent of Council can offer room hire and are entitled to retain the income.
- 44 In many cases the programs within centres/facilities are designed to attract 'other levels of government' funding to the North Sydney LGA e.g. to support aged, multicultural or disability services, or alternatively, to attract fully developed and significantly funded services which fulfil an identified local need.
- 45 In other cases, the programs within the centres/facilities are complementary to existing commercial operations. In these circumstances, Council's complementary role is designed to:
- a) Contribute to social equity by providing some measure of affordability in the service e.g. child care; and
- b) Provide a 'whole of community' environment for quality-of-life pursuits
e.g. education, arts and crafts, where the pursuit, while already provided to some degree by either commercial interests or 'other levels of government' is insufficiently accessible and deserves further support.
- 46 Council provides direct service (e.g. Youth Centre, Olympic Pool, Library Services and Museum Services) which may benefit from 'other level of government' grants or regular but minor subsidies, but which are essentially a council/community initiative, funded by the local community, with a history of this support, annually renewed, through the budget process.
- 47 Where community centres are sited on community land, a plan of management will be developed, as required under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

5. RESPONSIBILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY

- 5.1 The elected Council is responsible for the allocation of resources with respect to this Policy, through the annual budget process.

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- 5.2 Council will nominate annually representatives to the Boards/Trusts of community organisations only where the Constitution of the Board in question specifically provides for that. Where no such provision is made, Councillors wishing to serve on these boards would be required to nominate themselves as Board members at the Annual General Meeting of the body concerned.
- 5.3 Council's Community, Planning & Environment Division is responsible for:
- a) management of Stanton Library, Don Bank and Sextons Cottage Museums, Greenwood Child Care Centre, the Vacation Care Program and Planet X Youth;
 - b) policy and program development for community halls not wholly managed by Boards independent of Council;
 - c) evaluation of applications under the *Community Grants and Subsidies Policy* and recommendations to Council;
 - d) information dissemination through community centres;
 - e) development of new centres or new programs;
 - f) specification and special conditions of leases;
 - g) Joint Strategic Plans with centres eligible for grants towards operating expenses; and
 - h) policy on maintenance and upgrading of centres.
- 5.4 Council's Director Community, Planning & Environment is responsible for reporting about proposed activities, including fees and charges for the year ahead; and requiring an annual financial statement and review of the year's activities from each of the centres.
- 5.5 Council's Open Space & Infrastructure Division is responsible for:
- a) leasing agreements - preparation and signing;
 - b) building and grounds maintenance, including where appropriate, cleaning;
 - c) Centre upgrade feasibility studies - recommendations to the Community, Planning & Environment Division and implementations of approved projects;
 - d) developing 10-year Asset Management Plans for each of the centres on community land; and
 - e) management of North Sydney Olympic Pool and the North Sydney Oval complex.
- 5.6 Council's Customer Service & Records Department is responsible for booking the and hiring of Council managed centres.

6. RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS/LEGISLATION

The Policy should be read in conjunction with the following Council policies and documents:

- Asset Management Plans (various)
- Community Grants and Subsidies Policy
- Fees and Charges Schedule
- Join Strategic Plans (various)
- Register of Council Owned/Leased Properties

The Policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents/legislation:

- Local Government Act 1993

Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Resolution No.	Review Date
1	2 August 2004	Council	794	2008/09
2	16 February 2009	Council	61	2012/13
3	18 February 2013	Council	61	2016/17
4	25 June 2018	Council	214	2020/21
5	10 October 2022	Council	324	2024/25