

2.5 MONASH CRICKET WICKET POLICY

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1. Notes the consultation findings and submissions received in response to the draft Monash Cricket Wicket Policy.*
- 2. Adopts the final Monash Cricket Wicket Policy (Attachment 2).*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's adoption of the Monash Cricket Wicket Policy (Attachment 2).

BACKGROUND

Council endorsed a draft Monash Cricket Wicket Policy for community consultation at its Ordinary Meeting held on 27 April 2021. The draft policy was developed to address a range of issues in relation to the usage of cricket wickets (synthetic and turf) in Monash.

The draft policy was advertised in the May 2021 Monash Bulletin distributed to every Monash household and exhibited on Council's website from 6 May to 19 June 2021. Throughout this period, all cricket clubs were approached by email and encouraged to make a submission, as well as sharing this feedback opportunity with their members. At the close of consultation, 74 individual submissions were received.

A Community Consultation Report (Attachment 1) presents the community submissions, including responses to questions directly seeking on the Draft Cricket Wicket Policy.

DISCUSSION

There is a diverse range of cricket formats and standards played across Monash, with participation opportunities that cater for junior, senior, veterans, midweek, weekend, short-form, one-day and two-day cricket matches.

In recognition of the many and varied cricket participation opportunities that exist in Monash, this policy seeks to introduce a fair, equitable and transparent system to maintain, plan for and provide fit for purpose and sustainable cricket (centre and practice) wickets in Monash.

Turf wickets (training nets and centre wickets), require additional expenditure to prepare and maintain, and are typically used by a limited number of players across Monash who compete in higher levels of cricket.

This policy recognises both the need for the preparation of high quality and safe turf wickets in Monash and the inequitable subsidy provided to clubs with access to turf wickets, especially those who currently access turf practice wickets at no additional cost. There are seven clubs with access to nine ovals with turf wickets across Monash. Five clubs also have access to turf practice facilities. Turf wicket venues are currently exclusively used by men and junior boys teams.

The policy was developed having regard to the findings of a benchmarking exercise undertaken in 2020 to assess turf wicket usage, preparation methods and fee methodologies used by six other metropolitan Councils in Melbourne. In summary, it was found that:

- Fee methodologies were most commonly applied as a flat fee basis or a cost recovery basis.
- Clubs with access to turf wickets pay higher fees when compared with synthetic clubs.
- Most Councils require clubs to pay for the purchase of turf wicket covers.

This policy has also been developed in accordance with key recommendations from the Victorian Cricket Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2028, which strives to ensure that:

“current and future turf/synthetic pitch playing field provision is strategic, financially sustainable, balances player pathway and development while at the same time increasing grassroots participation opportunities is a key focus area over the next 10 years.”

Consultation

It was noted that the majority of respondents were involved in cricket and that overall, most were generally supportive of introducing such a policy in the interest of consistent management of centre (match day) and practice (nets) across Monash.

It was also noted that the majority of respondents were not supportive of amending Council’s current fees and charges policy, however, this is not unexpected on the basis clubs are generally unlikely to support being charged for something that they are not currently being charged for.

Under the existing arrangement, clubs who use turf practice wickets receive a 100% subsidy for the use of these assets. This policy seeks to address this

anomaly by introducing a 15% user-pays cost recovery from clubs. This approach is consistent with the broader fees and charges policy and seeks to introduce a consistent approach to cost recovery.

Recommended changes to draft policy

All submissions were reviewed and considered in the development of the final draft Monash Cricket Wicket Policy (attachment 2). The following two amendments were made to the draft policy:

- The introduction of a fee model table in item 5.1.1 to clarify proposed fees and charges for use of synthetic and turf wickets.
- In recognition of concerns from respondents about the overs cap being introduced to minimise wear and tear in item 5.3, the table was amended to consider the lighter playing loads on turf wickets by teams that are under 17 years of age or under.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Monash Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025 outlines Council's commitment to improving the health and wellbeing of the Monash community. Key pillars of the Integrated Plan relevant to the Monash Cricket Wicket Policy include Active and Healthy and Engaged, Confident

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Monash Cricket Wicket Policy will support Council's agenda for a healthy and resilient Monash Community, with a particular focus and providing cricket participation opportunities in Monash that are safe and on high-quality cricket wickets.

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.

GENDER EQUITY ASSESSMENT

Gender Equity has been a strong focus throughout the entire cricket planning process, which commenced in 2020. This includes the Monash Cricket Forum and the Cricket In Monash Discussion Paper, which both discussed female cricket participation in Monash and opportunities for cricket to develop amongst women and girls. Throughout the process, Council's Gender Equity officers have provided important recommendations, advice and feedback. This Cricket Wicket Policy has been developed as an outcome of this process.

Whilst it is important to note that the consultation process has received a low response rate from females (~7%), this is reflective of cricket participation in Monash more broadly, which currently sits at under 5% of all Monash cricket participants.

CONSULTATION

A community consultation process has been undertaken, including direct consultation (e.g. Monash Cricket Forum) with Monash cricket clubs and Cricket Victoria.

Consultation findings have been used to refine and update the draft policy to further align it with community and club expectations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Under the currently adopted Fees and Charges Policy for sports clubs, the cricket clubs who use turf practice wickets receive a 100% subsidy for these assets. This policy seeks to address this by introducing a 15% user-pays cost recoup from clubs. This approach is consistent with the broader fees and charges policy and seeks to address the anomaly for turf practice wicket usage, as well as applying a 15% recoup to the recommended costs of turf centre wickets.

Under the new policy, average fees for clubs with turf teams will increase from \$10,072 to \$11,587.

The new fee model will commence at the start of the 2022/23 cricket season.

CONCLUSION

It is recommended that Council adopts the final Monash Cricket Wicket Policy detailed in Attachment 2. This updated version of the policy includes changes made in response to submissions made by clubs and the broader community as part of the community consultation and engagement process.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Community Consultation Report

Attachment 2 – Monash Cricket Wicket Policy