

Circular No. M11-01
Date 21 September 2011
Doc ID. A257833

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EQUITABLE AND AFFORDABLE ACCESS TO COUNCILS' SPORTING AND RECREATIONAL FIELDS

The purpose of this circular is to remind councils of their role in promoting and supporting physical activity in their communities.

It has become practice for some local councils to impose a fee or charge for the use of sporting fields, ovals, reserves and facilities where sport is played and/or utilised to support sporting activities.

The NSW Government is committed to increasing participation in physical activity because it contributes significantly to our health as summarised in the NSW Premier's Council for Active Living (PCAL) *Why Active Living Statement*. Local councils are responsible for contributing to the health and well-being of their communities through the provision of services and facilities at the local level.

It is vital that the resources required to maintain council facilities are balanced against the importance of providing affordable and equitable access to sporting fields for the community, in particular, young people. Young people from certain lower socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to participate in physical activity than other young people. This is contributing to increased NSW population levels of childhood overweight and obesity and the associated health problems we are currently experiencing.

As such, councils are encouraged to provide affordable and equitable access to sporting and recreational fields for their communities, particularly young people.

As part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) planning process, councils are also strongly encouraged to review the *Addressing active living through council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework* resource prepared for PCAL and the Division of Local Government. Active living refers to opportunities for incorporating physical activity into routines of daily life, as well as for sport and recreation.

The resource provides guidance to councils (and other interested parties) on how to address active living principles and practices as councils implement the IP&R framework. The resource is available on the PCAL website at: www.pcal.nsw.gov.au/local_government.

The PCAL website also contains a wealth of resources and case studies available to assist councils in active living design considerations.

We would like to once again take this opportunity to remind councils of their important role in promoting and supporting physical activity and the need to provide affordable and equitable access to recreation and sporting fields for their communities, particularly for young people.



**The Hon Don Page MP
Minister for Local Government**



**The Hon Graham Annesley MP
Minister for Sport and Recreation**

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