

**ITEM 7 POLICY REVIEW - GLASS FREE RECREATION AREAS COUNCIL POLICY**

The Glass Free Recreation Areas Council Policy has now been reviewed as part of Council's rolling review schedule of its policies. The Policy recognises that Council plays an important role in ensuring the safety of park users and maintenance of Council property by deterring the use of glass bottles and glass containers at recreation areas, sporting and leisure facilities and parks.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Council adopt the revised Glass Free Recreation Areas Council Policy.

**REPORT AUTHORISATIONS**

Report of: Mark Berriman, Manager Sport + Recreation

Authorised by: Kerry Hunt, Director Community Services - Creative and Innovative City

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 1 Glass Free Recreation Areas Council Policy

**BACKGROUND**

The existing Glass Free Areas Policy was last reviewed in April 2016 and designates all beaches, rock pools, public swimming pools and sports grounds within the Wollongong Local Government Area as glass free areas for the interests of public safety.

Safety concerns from use of glass in public places emanates from the elevated risk of injury or harm to persons from interacting with broken or smashed glass.

Section 630 of the NSW Local Government Act provides specifics in relation to the offences and penalties in relation to misuse of glass in a public place in which the policy is consistent and aligned with these objectives. Practice Notes 15 – Water Safety refers to these regulatory responsibilities of Council and ensuring there is adequate safety messaging to reduce the risks of injury from aquatic recreational areas.

Broken or smashed glass in popular recreation areas such as beaches, playgrounds, skate parks and sports fields may not be evident with the naked eye, with risk to young children playing and persons playing sport being higher.

Whilst the issue remains present, the hazard is tempered somewhat by the growth in use of alternative materials such as plastic bottles and aluminum cans. Public awareness of the issue remains high and compliance largely achieved by self-regulating activities i.e. placing of glass in bins and picking up of broken glass from harm's way etc.

The review of this policy has identified that the policy remains valid, and that supporting signage located at Council's patrolled beaches, rock pools and public swimming pools, and sports grounds effectively assists in the policy's implementation.

Minor amendments to the revised draft policy include:

- Incorporation of definitions relating to recreation areas, sports and leisure facilities and events.
- Providing clarity of the type of facilities captured by this policy to align with our network of sport & recreation facilities. The intention is not to create a blanket ban on use of glass in all public places, but rather enable officers to be proactive in discouraging use of glass at our key recreation areas and sports and leisure facilities across the city.
- Incorporation of a condition that restricts the sale of glass containers to patrons for consumption at events held on Council owned or managed land, in line with Council's event approvals.
- General editing of wording to align with new policy template.

## PROPOSAL

That Council adopt the revised Glass Free Recreation Areas Council Policy and revoke the previous 2016 policy.

## CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- Events Team
- Operations Manager Aquatic Services
- Operations Manager Beach Services
- Operations Manager Leisure Centres
- City Cleansing Coordinator
- Property Management Coordinator
- Recreation Services Manager
- Parks and Open Space Manager

## PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2032 Goal 5 'We have a healthy community in a liveable city'. It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan 2032		Delivery Program 2022-2026
Strategy		Service
5.1	Plan and deliver an accessible, safe, clean and inviting public domain	Parks & Sportsgrounds
5.5	Provide safe, well-maintained and accessible beaches and aquatic recreation facilities	Aquatic Services

## SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Glass is an alternative to use of plastics. Glass if placed in the correct waste stream, it can be recycled an infinite number of times. Recycling of old glass uses less emissions than making it from raw materials.

Most glass used at our recreation areas is likely to consist of beverage containers. Council currently does not undertake public place recycling. Glass placed in existing bin receptacles at public places across Wollongong will therefore likely make its way to landfill.

Broken glass can also injure wildlife by ingesting if mistaken for food, or potential injury or entrapment if encountered.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

Safety concerns from use of glass in public places emanates from the elevated risk of injury or harm to persons from interacting with broken or smashed glass. Broken or smashed glass in popular recreation areas such as beaches, playgrounds, skatepark and sports fields may not be evident with the naked eye, with risk to young children playing and persons playing sport being higher.

The policy review finds that it is not feasible to ban use of glass from all public spaces. Council can however continue to take a leadership approach by limiting and discouraging its use at Council's recreation, and sports facilities and Leisure Centres, and parks. This is best achieved by signage, incorporation of conditions via licensing, and raising awareness of issue.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is anticipated that the proposed amendments to this policy may require Council to review and amend existing signage at its sport & recreation facilities. This would primarily involve the placement of ordinance symbol stickers on existing park identification signage subject to need and available resourcing.

Where an issue has been identified at a specific location requiring a greater degree of attention by Council, additional signage may be considered for installation in a prominent location(s). Any costs associated with these measures will be provided through existing operational budgets.

## CONCLUSION

The amended Glass Free Recreation Areas Council Policy assists Council in managing public places in a manner that protects the public and ensures that the community's enjoyment of Council's sport and recreation assets & parks is not negatively impeded upon.



## GLASS FREE RECREATION AREAS COUNCIL POLICY

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: [TO BE COMPLETED BY GOVERNANCE]

### PURPOSE

This Policy recognises that Council plays an important role in ensuring the safety of park users and maintenance of Council property by deterring the use of glass bottles and glass containers at recreation areas, sporting & leisure facilities and parks.

### POLICY INTENT

To reduce or eliminate the risk of harm from broken glass to park users and maintenance of Council property.

The main objectives of this policy are to:

1. Maximise public safety at Council's Recreation areas, sports & leisure facilities, and parks and reserves
2. Provide community leadership in taking measures to protect the health and social wellbeing of the community.
3. Improve the public amenity and maintenance of Council property.

### WOLLONGONG 2032 OBJECTIVES

This Policy contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong Our Future 2032 Community Strategic Plan Goal 5 *"We have a healthy community in a liveable city"*.

It specifically contributes to the delivery of Objectives 5.4 *"Provide a variety of quality and accessible public places and opportunities for sport, play, leisure, recreation, learning and cultural activities in the community"* and 5.5 *"Provide safe, well maintained and accessible beaches and aquatic recreation facilities"*.

### DEFINITIONS

Recreation area	The term 'recreation area' where stated in this policy, refers to Council owned or managed parks, playgrounds, skate parks, outdoor fitness equipment, public swimming pools, rock pools, patrolled beaches, leisure centres, and outdoor sporting facilities.
Sports & Leisure facilities	The term 'sports & leisure facilities' stated in this policy, refers to Council owned or managed (including leased and licensed) sports fields and sports facilities and associated infrastructure including amenities buildings and grandstands, and indoor leisure facilities (excluding cafeteria areas).
Events	The term 'events' refers to short term activations held on council owned or managed land.

## GLASS FREE RECREATION AREAS

## COUNCIL POLICY

### POLICY

#### *Signage*

Install signage at prominent locations at Council's recreation areas, sports & leisure facilities, and parks and reserves to advise the prohibition of the use of glass bottles and glass containers.

#### *Licences*

Ensure conditions are included in Council lease & licences restricting or minimising sale or use of glass containers at Council's recreation areas.

#### *Events*

Ensure conditions are included in event approvals restricting sale of glass containers for consumption within approved event areas.

### LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

This policy complies with and supports implementation and compliance with the following policies and instruments:

- *Local Government Act 1993*

### REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed a minimum of once every term of Council, or more frequently as required.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Sport + Recreation is the Division responsible for the administration and review of this Policy.
- Property Services is the Division responsible for preparing lease & licenses.
- Regulation & Enforcement is the Division responsible for any compliance action if required.
- Events Unit is the team responsible for approving events.

### RELATED STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Wollongong City Council's Compliance and Enforcement Policy will guide the enforcement of this Policy, with the view that this Policy will be supported by persuasion and self-policing in the first instance, and then punitive enforcement as required subject to resourcing.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
Responsible Division	Sport + Recreation
Date adopted by Council	[To be inserted by Corporate Governance]
Date/s of previous adoptions	30 May 2016, 8 April 2013, 6 July 2007
Date of next review	July 2027