

## PURPOSE

This policy recognises that there may be occasions where financial circumstances limit the community's ability to hire Council's Community Facilities and provides guidelines for the application of a fee waiver or reduction for hiring Community Facilities under the direct control of Council (Libraries & Community Facilities Division).

## POLICY INTENT

The main objective of this policy is to:

1. Maximise access to Community Facilities under the direct control of Council (Libraries and Community Facilities Division).
2. Recognise disadvantage and promote equitable access to Council's facilities by removing financial barriers.
3. Provide for a consistent approach which will allow the use of Community Facilities under the direct control of Council (Library and Community Facilities Division) that would be prevented from proceeding if Council's standard fees and charges were applied.

This policy is to be applied via the *Reduction or Waiver of Hire Fees for Community Facilities (Libraries & Community Facilities Division) Procedure*.

## WOLLONGONG 2032 OBJECTIVES

The *Our Wollongong 2032* Community Strategic Plan outlines the community's main priorities for the future and includes strategies for achieving them. This Policy contributes towards the following *Our Wollongong 2032* objectives:

- Goal 3: Wollongong is a creative, vibrant city.
  - 3.4 We work in partnership to reduce inequity and build on opportunities to strengthen vulnerable communities.
  - 3.5 Provide communities with access to quality local spaces and places to meet, share and celebrate.
- Goal 4: We are connected and engaged community.
  - 4.11 Quality services, libraries and facilities are available to communities to access and gather.
- Goal 5: We have a healthy community in a liveable city.
  - 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.

**POLICY**

Council Officers with appropriate delegation are authorised to assess & determine all requests for the reduction or waiver of fees for the hiring of community facilities applying adopted procedures as outlined in *Reduction or Waiver of Hire Fees for Community Facilities (Libraries & Community Facilities Division) Procedure*. The General Manager, Manager Libraries & Community Facilities, and Manager Community Facilities may at their absolute discretion make a determination to approve a fee waiver or reduction.

To be considered for a reduction or waiver the applicant (or group) must reside, or provide services within the Wollongong City Council LGA, and must be able to demonstrate that they meet all the following criteria:

1. The function, meeting, exhibition, or other activity is determined by Council to be of value to the broader community and.
2. The payment of the standard hire fee applicable will prevent the function, meeting, exhibition, or other activity from proceeding and
3. Meet one or more of the following:
  - a. It is a non-profit organisation and/or is registered under the Charitable Fundraising Act No 69 of 1991 and that most of its revenue is received from membership fees, donations, or public subscriptions.  
or
  - b. the activity will support and stimulate the local cultural economy and reflect the community goals of Wollongong City Council Strategic Plan.  
or
  - c. Public appeal (excludes crowdfunding and fundraising platforms such as GoFundMe)  
or
  - d. Wollongong City Council function, meeting or other activity which is determined to be of value to the broader community for which alternate funds/budget is insufficient or unavailable.

Council will not consider applications to reduce or waive fees and charges for bookings and events that meet any of the following criteria:

- An employee, supplier, or contractor engaged by, and conducting works on behalf of, Council.
- Already supported by Council via a financial or in-kind contribution.
- Organisers that receive support by means of grant funding, subsidies, or contributions for events.
- Organisers that do not attempt to become self-supporting where the potential exists through fees or other feasible income-producing activities.
- Any profit-making ventures for commercial entities, and events that are deemed to be a purely profit-making event.
- Any activity, event or program that contravenes Council's existing policies.
- Retrospective applications, including refunds.

The hirer will be required to complete a fee reduction/waiver application for Council's assessment and consideration. The amount of reduction granted, or waiver, will be determined on an individual assessment basis.

Fee reductions/waivers will be for a set duration only. As a base, hirers will need to pay:

1. Bond (refundable subject to standard conditions) be applied in the usual manner.
2. Any additional costs incurred, such as after hour or security call outs, cleaning, attendant duties.

Note: application of these waivers will be documented on a register and subject to independent checks.

## DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy, the following terms are used:

*Community Facilities* are Council buildings intended for wide community use, including multipurpose community meeting spaces, halls and cultural spaces, and are utilised by the community for a variety of activities. *Community Facilities* are either managed and operated directly by Council, or managed on behalf of Council by a community group under a lease or licence agreement.

## REVIEW

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

## REPORTING

Manager Libraries and Community Facilities will monitor the scope and currency of this policy.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

General Manager (or authorised delegate) is responsible for assessing requests for reductions or waivers to determine whether the request meets the criteria of this Policy.

## RELATED STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Reduction or Waiver of Hire Fees for Community Facilities (Libraries & Community Facilities Division) Procedure.

APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
Responsible Division	Libraries and Community Facilities
Date adopted by Council	17 March 2025
Date/s of previous adoptions	12 September 2022, 17 July 2017, 28 October 2013, 2 July 2005, 2 July 1990
Date of next review	17 March 2028