

Use of Synthetic Turf on Council's Active Reserves Policy

Policy Number:	2014/05	Directorate:	Community Services
Approval by:	Council	Responsible Officer:	Co-Managers Youth Leisure & Cultural Services
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1. Purpose

Council recognises the increasing technological advances in the production of synthetic turf and its increasing use on community sports fields. The purpose of this policy is to administer the installation of synthetic turf on Council's active reserves as well as providing a consistent and transparent approach to these installations. The Policy is consistent with industry practice and standards published by relevant sporting governing bodies.

2. Context

Community usage of Council's active reserves continues to increase at significant rates, largely being influenced by the growth of female and junior sport. As a result of this increasing demand by user groups, Council's active reserves often develop areas of wear and tear due to high traffic loads, with these areas typically including entry points, cricket run ups etc.

To combat this issue and remove safety risks for participants, synthetic turf can be used as an alternative to natural turf.

This Policy and accompanying Procedure ensures installation of synthetic turf is done so in a correct manner and in a way which will not compromise the safety of user groups and community members whilst ensuring the amenity of an active reserve remains.

3. Scope

The Policy applies to all user groups of Council's active reserves which engage contractors to undertake the installation of synthetic turf, whether replacing existing synthetic turf or installing new synthetic turf. The Policy covers the use of synthetic turf on Council's active reserves, with a focus on the area surrounding a cricket pitch and around the boundary area.

Council remains in favor of natural turf options and will consider natural turf options and procedures (ie. oversowing) prior to considering the installation of synthetic turf.

4. References

4.1 Community & Council Plan 2017-2021

- **Goal 1: We value our natural and Built Environment**
Strategy 1.1 - Protect and enhance our natural environment
Strategy 1.3 - Ensure the Knox local character is protected and enhanced through the design and location of urban development and infrastructure
- **Goal 4 - We are safe and secure**
Strategy 4.1 - Encourage and support the community to take responsibility for their own safety, and the safety of others
Strategy 4.3 - Maintain and manage the safety of the natural and built environment
- **Goal 6 - We are healthy, happy and well**
Strategy 6.1 - Mitigate lifestyle risks such as smoking, risky alcohol consumption and drug use, obesity, lack of physical activity and poor nutrition
Strategy 6.2 - Support the community to enable positive physical and mental health
- **Goal 8 - We have confidence in decision making**
Strategy 8.1 - Build, strengthen and promote good governance practices across government and community organisations

4.2 Relevant Legislation

- Local Government Act 1989 – Conflict and Interest Provisions

4.3 Charter of Human Rights

- This policy has been assessed against and complies with the charter of Human Rights.

4.4 Related Council Policies

- Council's Occupational Health and Safety Policies and Procedures;
- Leisure Minor Capital Works Grant Scheme Policy;
- Seasonal Tenancy Agreement ;
- Sporting Club Financial Contributions Towards Reserve Developments Policy;
- Sporting Reserve and Facility Development Guidelines Policy;
- Sporting Reserve Facility Usage Policy;
- Untied Funding Policy; and
- Use of Synthetic Turf on Council's Active Reserves Procedure.

4.5 Related Council Procedures

- Nil

4.6 Relevant Publications

- Artificial Grass for Sport Guide (undated);
- Victorian Department of Planning and Community Development Artificial Grass For Sports (2011);

- Development of Standards for the Use of Artificial Turf for Australian Football and Cricket (2011);
- FIFA Quality Concept for Football Turf (undated);
- Guide to Installing Hockey Pitches and Associated Facilities (2007);
- Handbook of Performance, Durability and Construction Requirements for Synthetic Turf Hockey Pitches (2013); and
- Artificial Rugby Turf Performance Specification - Technical Document (2012).

5. Definitions

Active Reserve	Reserves where activities of a sporting nature primarily take place.
Boundary Area / Run Off Area	The area between the boundary line and fence line, or 3m from the boundary line on an active reserve.
Coaches Box	The structure whereby coaches and players stand/sit when not in the field of play.
Council	Knox City Council, whether constituted before or after the commencement of this Policy.
Council Officer	Any staff member of Knox City Council.
Cricket Pitch Surrounds	The area directly surrounding a cricket pitch on an active reserve.
Full Synthetic Pitch	Synthetic turf to an entire playing surface of an active reserve.
Interchange Gate	The area where players enter and exit the field of play.
Pile Height	The height of the blades in synthetic turf.
Reserve Access Gate	The gate which is used to gain access by foot to an active reserve.
Shock Pad	A shock absorbing layer which is placed over the base, directly under the synthetic carpet to reduce peak forces for head impacts.
Sport's Governing Body	The peak body for a sporting code.
Synthetic Winter Wicket Cover	A synthetic turf cover used over the winter season to cover the cricket pitch, protecting it from damage and removing risk for users.
User Group	A legal entity that provides services, support or activities to the Knox community. This includes both winter and summer tenants.

6. Council Policy

This Policy relates to the installation of synthetic turf on the following areas of Council's active reserves:

- Cricket pitch surrounds;
- Cricket pitch winter wicket covers; and
- Boundary areas / run off areas.

Synthetic turf must not be installed on any other area of an active reserve such as football goal squares.

6.1 Authority for Approval

Approval must be received from the Manager Youth, Leisure and Cultural Services (or delegate) prior to any installation of synthetic turf on Council's active reserves. Under no circumstances are works permitted to commence prior to receiving this written approval.

6.2 Specifications

It is acknowledged that respective sport's governing bodies may adopt varying standards for synthetic turf to meet that sport's specific needs. Standards may differ in the requirement for the pile height, the use of shock pads, infill material and level/amount of infill. It is also noted that sports governing bodies may change specifications from time to time to reflect technological advances in synthetic turf.

The installing user group must ensure that the specifications set out by their sports' governing body for the installation of synthetic turf are followed at all times.

Should multiple sports be played on the one active reserve, the standards adopted by the respective sports' governing bodies may conflict with one another. If this is the case, approval will not be given by Council for the installation unless prior written approval is received from all respective sports' governing bodies (representing those sports currently tenanted at the active reserve on an annual basis) stating that the proposed synthetic turf is safe and meets their specifications. It is the user group's responsibility to ensure this approval is obtained from the relevant sports' governing bodies.

Sprinkler heads and valve boxes located on an active reserve must not be obstructed by the installation of synthetic turf.

All additional requirements are outlined in Council's Use of Synthetic Turf on Council's Active Reserves Procedure.

6.3 Full Synthetic Pitches

This Policy does not apply to the installation of synthetic turf to an entire playing surface of an active reserve. Applications for full surface synthetic installations will be considered by Council on a case by case basis as part of Council's annual capital works planning process.

7. Administrative Updates

From time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this policy. Where an update does not materially alter this policy, such a change may be made administratively. Examples of minor administrative changes include changes to names of Council departments or positions, change to names of Federal or State Government departments or a minor amendment to legislation that does not have material impact. Where any change or update may materially change the intent of this policy, it must be considered by Council.