



Facility Management

Managing a sport and recreation facility can be a difficult and time consuming task. This information sheet provides advice and information to assist sport and recreation clubs and organisations to better manage their facilities. It covers planning and operational principles that encourage increased use of facilities.

The degree to which organisations will be able to adopt these principles will depend on many factors, including who owns the facility, and whether it is a multi-use facility. Organisations that are aware of the most efficient and equitable ways to manage sport and recreation facilities have a greater ability to control the use of their facility, or to influence the people who control the facilities they use.

What is meant by a facility?

Facilities include areas that are constructed or maintained to allow people to participate in sport and recreation activities, such as a pool, gym or oval, as well as any structures that support people involved in sport and recreation, such as a change room, canteen, grandstand or scoreboard.

A facility can be a large multi-use centre with playing surfaces catering for different activities, or it may be a small hall or room catering for one specific activity.

Most sport and recreation facilities have the same general goals of maximising use and operating in an efficient, safe and fair manner.

Principles of facility management

Most sport and recreation facilities, whether community based or commercially focused, have the same general management goals: maximising the use of their facility and operating in an efficient, safe and fair manner. To achieve these goals numerous factors need to be considered, including:

- access and opportunities
- quality, safety and sustainability
- multiple-use or sharing.

Access and opportunities

Location and transport

If a facility is to receive maximum use it should be located in an easily accessible location. An organisation may need to consider ways of making a facility more accessible. For example, improving car and pedestrian access, car parking and public transport for participants.

Keys and booking system

If different groups use the facility it is important to consider whether each group should have their own keys to access the facility, or whether there should be central control via a booking system.

Security

Access is as much about safety and security as it is about location and ease of transport. A well-designed, well-lit and highly visible facility will make users feel safe using the facility.

Fees and pricing

It is important from a community point of view to have an appropriate range of fees with concessions or discounts provided to low income earners. Groups that contribute in-kind support to the construction, maintenance and upkeep of the facility should also be rewarded with lower fees.

Hours of operation

It is important that facility managers consider the range of people who may wish to use their facility. Some may prefer to use a facility during the day while others prefer nights or weekends. A wide range of operating hours will ensure certain groups are not excluded.

Programming

A facility should aim to provide programs that cater for a diverse range of ages, physical capabilities and both sexes. Specific programs, classes or activities that are tailored to meet the needs of specific groups such as parents with young children, young people, older adults, women and people with a disability, could increase the use of a facility.

Quality, safety and sustainability

Asset maintenance plan

It is important to plan for a facility's long-term viability and an asset maintenance plan is an important part of this process. Facility managers should plan and budget for regular audits, inspections, repairs, and replacement of materials or infrastructure to ensure the facility is maintained.

Safety and standards

Legislation requires sport and recreation organisations to maintain their facilities to high standards. Public liability concerns and requirements for Place of Assembly Licences require facility managers to maintain facilities to certain levels in terms of safety and access.

Multiple-use of facilities

Sharing

There is an increasing recognition of the need to provide facilities that cater for multiple-use and encourage sharing by different user groups. The basis of shared use is to broaden access, maximise usage and rationalise costs in order to get the best possible value from the facilities. Shared multi-use facilities provide an activity hub and create a greater sense of community ownership of these facilities.

Facilities can be shared between clubs, commercial organisations, state sporting organisations and schools. Sharing provides the potential for another source of funding and partnerships and cooperative arrangements are regarded highly by funding bodies.

Management agreements

In a shared facility, there is a need for management agreements. These should be comprehensive and clearly cover the arrangements for funding, cost sharing, legal responsibilities, maintenance, use, supervision, staff, and access. Rights and responsibilities should be clearly established.

A management plan

With the principles and considerations outlined above, facility managers will be in a better position to make decisions about the future direction and operation of their facility.

These decisions will be more effective, efficient and sustainable if they are incorporated into some form of management plan. A management plan outlines strategies to increase use of the facility and ensure efficient use of resources. A plan should typically cover areas such as:

- services and programs
- fees and pricing schedules
- marketing and promotion
- organisational structure (including management and administration systems)
- asset management and maintenance
- operational budget
- policy on use of surplus or financing of operational deficit
- future planned developments and their projected impact.

Where can I get more information?

The Australian Sports Commission, through the Club Development Network, provides information on facility management. To join the Club Development Network, please visit www.ausport.gov.au/supporting/clubs

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