



Central Coast Council Open Space and Recreation Policy 2006

Date Adopted:	Review Date:
Approved by:	Signature:

Central Coast Council

Draft Open Space and Recreation Policy

2006

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clearly articulate the Council's commitment to the development of Central Coast's open space network and recreation opportunities and to provide direction to guide its strategies and actions to deliver the best possible recreation outcomes.

The Policy is also a transparent means of conveying the Council's policy position and direction to internal and external stakeholders.

2. Corporate Perspective

Recreation and open space has been identified as a key area within the Central Coast Strategic Plan 2004–2009:

Future Direction - Leisure and Recreation

Facilitate equitable access to a range of cultural, leisure and recreational opportunities.

Major objectives

- Support an accessible, diverse and rich range of community arts and cultural activities;
- Promote events and major festivals that build our cultural identity;
- Coordinate management of reserves and tracks from Coast to Cradle;
- Foster partnerships to improve shared use of reserves and tracks; and
- Provide effective management of recreation facilities and open space.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions are used:

- **Leisure time** – *free time available to an individual;*
- **Recreation** – *discretionary activity that people choose to do in their leisure time (this can include sport; active and passive recreation pursuits; and community, cultural and art related activities); and*
- **Open space** – *public space provided for the use by the general community (Includes natural and built environment).*

3. Vision/Mission

- **Vision**
 - *Our natural and built open space and recreation infrastructure to be the core appeal for Central Coast as a place to live and a place to visit, now and into the future; and*
 - *Enjoyable, safe and lifelong participation in recreation opportunities of choice by the Central Coast community.*
- **Mission**
 - *The effective planning for the sustainable provision and management of the open space network and associated spectrum of recreation opportunities that enhance Central Coast as a safe, cohesive, healthy and happy community.*

4. Key Outcomes

- **Community pride** – A local community that is proud of the Central Coast as a place to live and visit;
- **Liveable community** – The extent to which open space and recreation planning is integrated into town planning and community development policy;
- **Equitable access to opportunity** – Improved equity of access to the open space network and associated recreation infrastructure and associated recreation opportunities;
- **Engaged community** – Improved community health and well-being from volunteering and participating in a variety of recreation and community organizations and activities;
- **Sustainable environment** – Enhanced and protected built and natural environment;
- **Visual amenity** – Maintain and enhance the natural visual character of the open space network;
- **Legacy for future generations** – The open space network, including the natural systems, preserved and enhanced for the benefit of future generations;
- **Realistic, achievable and sustainable open space and recreation provision** – Current needs and the needs of future generations planned and delivered within the capabilities of the Council and the community;
- **Education** – Improved awareness and understanding of environmental and heritage values of the open space network; and
- **Regional approach to open space and recreation service provision** – improved cooperation between neighbouring Councils and related key service providers in the planning and provision of open space and recreation infrastructure, and associated services.

Outcome performance measures will include:

- Level of local community pride regarding the municipal area;
- Visitor satisfaction with local open space and recreation facilities and opportunities;
- Community satisfaction with local open space and recreation facilities and opportunities;
- Community perceptions of safety within the open space network;
- Participation rates in recreation activity;
- State of the environment reporting; and
- Efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of local open space and recreation facilities and related services.

5. Related Policies

- Communication Policy;
- Public Events Policy; and
- Central Coast Local Visitor Policy.

6. Guiding Principles¹

Shared Responsibility – Whilst the Council plays a major role in the provision of public recreation infrastructure, the community also has a responsibility, where

appropriate, to pursue a cooperative approach in the development, management, and provision of recreation opportunities of choice.

Realistic, Achievable and Sustainable – Open space and recreation provision shall be delivered to meet the specific needs of the local community and be within the capabilities of the Council and the community to sustainably manage and maintain. Recreation provision must be delivered within Council and community means.

Access and Equity – Work with the community to minimize barriers to participation in recreation opportunities of choice. Recreation access should be for all and for life. There shall be choice, fairness, equality and balance in the provision of recreation facilities and opportunities.

A Safe Environment – Work together with the community to ensure that recreation opportunities are provided in an environment that is consistent with contemporary standards and practices for health, risk management and public safety.

Quality - Service Delivery Approach – Ensure that recreation opportunities are provided based on demand and meet acceptable levels of community satisfaction and are enjoyable. Improve the quality and variety of recreation opportunities and the efficiency and effectiveness with which related facilities and services are provided.

Environmentally Sustainable Development – Environmental impacts shall be carefully considered and managed with respect to protecting and conserving the built and natural environment.

Community Capacity and Social Capital – Recognize and value the contribution of community groups and volunteers in improving general health and well-being. Continue to support initiatives that contribute to the strength of the community and generate social capital.

Optimizing Land Use – Use a values/benefits based approach to determining optimal use of public open space. Where practical, adopt a multi-use/shared approach to the use of public recreation facilities. Be flexible in providing opportunities that respond to changing needs and demands.

A Sense of Place – Plan and shape the local built environment to stimulate an increase in healthy recreation participation and social interaction. Ensure the recreation and open space network contributes to Central Coast as a better place to live and to visit.

Benefits Approach – Preference should be given to supporting those facilities, programs and services which deliver the widest range of beneficial outcomes to the widest cross-section of the community.

Integrated Local Area Planning – Liaise with neighboring Councils and other key stakeholders in the development of and management of facilities that serve a user catchment that exceeds municipal boundaries.

Transparency and Inclusiveness – Involve the community where practical in decision making. Generate transparent, accountable processes.

Marketability – Recreation infrastructure should be well promoted with adequate way-finding signage. Outdoor recreation infrastructure is part of Central Coast core appeal. Service levels at targeted open space and recreation infrastructure should be such that it can be promoted as a significant local attraction to visitors.

7. Policy Statements¹

The following Policy Statements reflect the present direction of the Council with respect to the provision of open space and recreation in Central Coast:

1. Major open space and recreation developments initiated or supported by the Council will only proceed where they are the outcome of a 'whole-of-Council' process of planning, review and approval;
2. The Council will endeavour to facilitate the provision of recreation programs/projects for the community where there is an identified 'gap' in provision;
3. The Council will consider the provision of recreational programs and services where they are essential for the viability of a major Council recreation facility;
4. The Council will only provide or support new facilities, programs and services which reflect researched community needs, help achieve optimal use, offer a diversity of measurable beneficial outcomes and maintain or broaden the base for participation in recreation activities;
5. Unless a strong case to the contrary can be demonstrated, open space and built facilities will only be developed where this supports multiple uses and users;
6. The Council will encourage a transition to a shared or multiple occupation of existing grounds, facilities, clubroom and social facilities;
7. The Council will endeavour to refurbish, redevelop and/or rationalise recreation assets or restructure their management and use to ensure current and emergent needs are satisfied and that duplication or over-provision does not occur;
8. The Council will endeavour to provide and maintain recreation facilities, programs and services in a condition which is appropriate to the standard and level of use. Maintenance schedules will comply with contemporary standards for competition, safety and risk management;
9. The Council will strive to facilitate, support and/or develop and maintain recreation facilities, programs and services at a hierarchy of standards in order to ensure a sustainable array of opportunities for participation at all appropriate skill levels;
10. The Council will review its approach to leasing, licensing and hiring of facilities to ensure it is fair and equitable and consistent with a contemporary approach to community facility management;
11. The Council will perform a leadership role in delivering open space and recreation outcomes to improve the Central Coast as a place to live and visit; and
12. The Council will actively support local community industry sectors that can generate sustainable, measurable open space and recreation outcomes.

8. Implementing the Policy

This Policy replaces the Central Coast Sport and Recreation Policy 2000–2003.

The implementation of this Policy will be via the Central Coast Council Open Space and Recreation Policy and Planning Framework. The Policy and Framework will be reviewed within three years of the adoption date.

Notes:

¹ The 'Launceston City Council Recreation Planning Guide, 2005' and the Burnie City Council's 'Draft Recreation Plan and Aquatic Facility Study, 2003 – Part 3 The Recreation Policy' were used to inform the development of this policy.