



SPORTSGROUND MANAGEMENT IN NSW

KEY ISSUES FOR INQUIRY

- *Adequacy of provision of sportsgrounds in key demand areas*

Increasing urban development and changing demographics shift the demand for community based sporting facilities in different regions. The Committee will examine how state and local government planning mechanisms are dealing with these changes. The Committee is interested in what criteria should determine the provision of sports facilities and how the viability of sportsgrounds should be evaluated in terms of broader policy objectives such as health outcomes, open space, and community cohesion.

- *Current requirement for updating and refurbishment of sportsgrounds and supporting infrastructure*

Improvement and maintenance costs of sportsgrounds infrastructure such as lighting, amenities blocks and car parks are increasing and replacement of items can be a large capital cost. Capital improvements are funded by councils and through capital assistance programs from the state government such as the Department of Sport and Recreation. The Committee will examine the provision of funding for facilities in addressing priority community concerns.

- *Appropriateness and fairness of council pricing principles for facilities*

Councils have to balance the recovery of some costs from sporting organisations using sporting facilities against the objective of providing equitable and accessible facilities for the community as a whole, including groups with special needs. In addition, consideration should be given to the efficient allocation of access between groups to preserve time for sportsground rehabilitation and to provide additional capacity for ad hoc requirements. As the policies and administrative practices for usage charging vary between councils, state government and private providers, the Committee will review different access and pricing policies.

- *Environmental issues, including water conservation and grounds maintenance*

A recent concern raised in the media is the progressive deterioration of sportsgrounds caused by lack of water and reduced maintenance and exacerbated by overuse. The Committee will examine how these issues can be addressed through environmental management and engineering strategies such as improved drainage and stormwater systems.

- *Residential amenity, public liability and security issues*

One of the consequences of increased use of sporting facilities is the associated noise, traffic and pedestrian activity generated. The Committee will examine how councils are attempting to balance community concerns about noise and amenity arising from sportsground use. Another concern is the increasing cost of public liability insurance for councils resulting from incidents occurring at sports grounds. There is a tendency to seek formal use agreements with organisations and groups to provide legal protection from claims or, alternatively, prohibit certain activities on council facilities. The Committee will examine these impacts and how they might be better managed in the future.