

## Policy

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# Use of Synthetic Surfaces on Council's Active Reserves Policy

<b>Policy Number:</b> 2014/05	<b>Directorate:</b> Connected Communities
<b>Approval by:</b> Council	<b>Responsible Officer:</b> Manager Active and Creative Communities
<b>Approval Date:</b> TBC	<b>Version Number:</b> 3
<b>Review Date:</b> TBC	

## 1. Purpose

Council recognises the increasing technological advances in the production of synthetic surfaces and its increasing functionality on community sports fields. The purpose of this policy is to ensure the appropriate use of synthetic surfaces and to manage the installation of synthetic surfaces 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.

The policy also addresses the process for consideration of large scale synthetic surfaces beyond the prescribed areas outlined in this Policy.

## 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. Due to 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 and goal squares.

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

In some instances, sports request complete playing fields to be constructed with synthetic

surfaces to meet usage and community demands. As these surfaces have significant environmental, social and financial implications they require addressing on a case-by-case basis as per Section 6.3.

This Policy and accompanying Procedure ensures installation of synthetic surfaces is done 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 internally and to all user groups of Council's active reserves which engage contractors to undertake the installation of synthetic surfaces, whether replacing existing synthetic surfaces or installing new synthetic surfaces. The Policy covers the use of synthetic surfaces on Council's active reserves, with a focus on the area surrounding a cricket pitch, goal squares and around the boundary area. It also defines a process for case-by-case consideration of large scale synthetic surface developments, such as soccer and football playing fields.

Surfaces that traditionally are no longer predominantly turf based, such as cricket net wickets, tennis, hockey, athletics and outdoor netball are acknowledged in this policy (refer section 6.3).

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

### **4. References**

- 4.1 Knox Community & Council Plan 2021-2025  
Neighbourhoods, Housing & Infrastructure  
Strategy 2.2 - Create, enhance and maintain places and spaces for people to live, work, play and connect.  
Natural Environment & Sustainability  
Strategy 3.1 - Preserve our biodiversity and waterways, and enhance our urban landscape.  
Connection, Resilience & Wellbeing  
Strategy 4.1 - Support our community to improve their physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.
- 4.2 Relevant Legislation
  - Local Government Act 2020 – 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 and Procedures

- 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; and
- Untied Funding Policy.

#### 4.5 Related Council Procedures

- Nil

## 5. Definitions

<b>Active Reserve</b>	Reserves where activities of a sporting nature primarily take place.
<b>Boundary Area / Run Off Area</b>	The area between the boundary line and fence line, or 3m from the boundary line on an active reserve.
<b>Coaches Box</b>	The structure whereby coaches and players stand/sit when not in the field of play.
<b>Council</b>	Knox City Council, whether constituted before or after the commencement of this Policy.
<b>Council Officer</b>	Any staff member of Knox City Council.
<b>Cricket Pitch Surrounds</b>	The area directly surrounding a cricket pitch on an active reserve
<b>Full Synthetic Pitch</b>	Synthetic surface to an entire playing surface of an active reserve.
<b>Interchange Gate</b>	The area where players enter an exit the field of play.
<b>Large Scale</b>	Areas larger than those prescribed in this Policy.
<b>Pile Height</b>	The height of the blades in synthetic surface.
<b>Reserve Access Gate</b>	The gate which is used to gain access by foot to an active reserve.
<b>Shock Pad</b>	A shock absorbing layer which is placed over the base, directly under the synthetic carpet to reduce peak forces for head impacts.

<b>Sport's Governing Body</b>	The peak body for a sporting code.
<b>Synthetic Winter Wicket Cover</b>	A synthetic surface cover used over the winter season to cover the cricket pitch, protecting it from damage and removing risk for users.
<b>User Group</b>	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 surfaces on the following areas of Council's active reserves:

- Cricket pitch surrounds;
- Cricket pitch winter wicket covers;
- Boundary areas / run off areas; and
- Football/Soccer Goal Squares (Hybrid synthetic).

Synthetic surfaces must not be installed on any other area of an active reserve without prior approval from the Manager Active and Creative Communities.

### 6.1 Authority for Approval

Approval must be received from the Manager Active and Creative Communities (or delegate) prior to any new or increased installation of synthetic surfaces on Council's active reserves. Under no circumstances are works permitted to commence prior to receiving this written approval. Maintenance and replacement of like for like does not require written approval.

### 6.2 Specifications

It is acknowledged that respective sport's governing bodies may adopt varying standards for synthetic surfaces 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 surfaces.

The installing user group must ensure that the most up to date specifications set out by their sports' governing body for the installation of synthetic surfaces 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 surfaces 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 surfaces.

All additional requirements are outlined in the Procedure.

### **6.3 Full Synthetic Pitches**

Applications or proposals for full synthetic surface installations will be considered on a case by case basis requiring development of a report to Council for endorsement, that is based on addressing the Synthetic Surface Development - Decision Making Framework and integrating into Council's annual capital works planning process.

Surfaces that traditionally are no longer predominantly turf based, such as cricket practice nets, tennis, hockey, athletics and outdoor netball will continue to be considered for synthetic or other surfaces due to industry and governing body standards, and responding to high wear and tear, utilisation requirements and maintenance.

These surfaces should also be assessed for their environmental impact and end of life recycling options.

## **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.