



Healthy Ageing

Neighbourhood Centres Community Hire Policy

Policy Owner	Centre Coordinator
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Introduction

This policy has been developed to ensure consistent, transparent and equitable processes for community use, allocation, and management of City of Melbourne's neighbourhood centres by ensuring:

- Activities and programs align with the priority areas in the Healthy Ageing Strategic Service Review 2024.
- Eligibility and priority criteria are clearly defined for fair access and allocation of space.

Scope

This policy applies to all bookable meeting rooms and spaces at:

- Jean McKendry Neighbourhood Centre, 91 - 111 Melrose Street, North Melbourne.
- Kensington Neighbourhood Centre, 18 Anthony Street, Kensington.
- South Yarra Senior Citizens Centre, 65 Toorak Road West, South Yarra.

Strategic framework

The Healthy Ageing Strategic Service Review 2024 identified five priority areas:

- 1. Support older people to find services and support:** help older people find and access aged care services and local opportunities, including City of Melbourne programs, community groups and local organisations.
- 2. Support the development of a local service system:** work with local services to respond to communities' needs and priorities by planning and delivering improved services and programs, measuring their impact, and supporting groups and organisations that help older people. This support may also include taking action and speaking up for the needs of older people.
- 3. Increase use of City of Melbourne's neighbourhood centres for older people:** increase access to and use of the centres by community where older people can get information, advice, and support. This may include information and advice on connecting with local services and activities, and advice and support during extreme weather events. These centres can also be hired by community groups and organisations to run programs.
- 4. Expand the reach of programs and activities:** increase access to and participation by older people in City of Melbourne and local organisation's services, programs and facilities.
- 5. Increase involvement of older people in City of Melbourne's decision-making:** include older people's perspectives in the planning and delivery of programs and activities as part of the healthy ageing service model and in planning of future initiatives.

Aim

City of Melbourne provides low-cost, safe and inclusive spaces for older people to participate in a diverse range of social, cultural, economic, educational, lifelong learning, recreational and community activities.

To achieve this aim, City of Melbourne will:

- Maximise occupancy at the centres.
- Enable equitable use of the centres, ensuring they are available for shared use and will not be monopolised by any one hirer.
- Actively balance City of Melbourne programming with community use.

Hours of operation

The centres can be booked during business hours, Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm.

Eligibility

The following eligibility criteria must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of City of Melbourne at the time of application:

- Community group or not-for-profit community organisation in the City of Melbourne.
- Government-funded agency, City of Melbourne service, program or contractor.

Exclusions

The following are not eligible for access under this policy:

- Businesses or individuals operating for the purpose of generating income (e.g. private exercise instructors or commercial programs).
- Personal, family or private events (e.g. birthday parties, reunions, weddings or similar social gatherings).
- Political activities that promote a specific belief, candidate or party.

Priority

Priority will be given to:

- Community groups and not-for-profit community organisations providing service and programs for **older people** in the City of Melbourne.
- Community groups and not-for-profit community organisations with most of their membership base over the age of 55.
- Community groups and not-for-profit community organisations with most of their membership base living in the City of Melbourne municipality.
- Community groups and not-for-profit community organisations with limited capacity to generate income through funding and fees.
- Recurring bookings that are a minimum of three hours.

Application process

Applications for regular hire agreements open annually, with hire periods typically running for up to 12 months. Some hire periods may extend beyond this timeframe based on operational requirements. Hire periods generally follow an annual January to December cycle.

The City of Melbourne will consider new applications, including one-off and casual hire requests, outside the standard application period; however, availability cannot be guaranteed. Regular hirers are required to reapply each year through the same application and assessment process.

All applicants must complete and submit an application form at least five business days prior to the proposed commencement of use.

Application assessment

City of Melbourne will assess applications in accordance with the eligibility and priority criteria and the following considerations:

- Availability of space and community demand.
- Services and programs are inclusive, value-diverse, connect the community and provide a respectful and non-discriminating environment.
- Services and programs reflect the diverse needs of our community.
- Existing history of use and any prior breaches of hire terms and conditions.

City of Melbourne will assess applications in accordance with the criteria contained in this policy, notwithstanding any hirer's canvassing or lobbying of the Lord Mayor, City of Melbourne councillors or employees of the City of Melbourne.

City of Melbourne has absolute discretion to accept or reject applications. City of Melbourne will inform applicants of the assessment outcome in writing.

Hire agreement

City of Melbourne will issue successful applicants with a hire agreement and the *Conditions of Use* which must be adhered to by all hirers at all times.

Monitoring and review process

City of Melbourne regularly monitors and reviews the use of its neighbourhood centres. Reviews are based on the following criteria:

- The activities and outcomes align with those outlined in the Hirer's application.
- Compliance with the conditions of use and other relevant policies and laws.

The City of Melbourne reserves the right to modify, suspend, or terminate a hire agreement at its absolute discretion.

Complaint resolution procedure

Any issues relating to the centres can be raised with centre staff who will help resolve the issue.

If an issue cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the hirers, hirers can lodge a formal complaint by visiting www.melbourne.vic.gov.au or contacting City of Melbourne on 9658 9658.