

SPORT AND RECREATION IN THE ACT



COVID-19 (Coronavirus) – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Community Sport

1. Can community sport and physical activity continue at this time?

Sport and physical activity conveys enormous benefits for our community, including health, mental wellbeing and our social connectivity.

However, practising physical distancing and good hygiene are the best ways to stay healthy and reduce the spread of viruses. This may result in some activities, including team trainings and competitions not being possible, while still allowing other forms of sport, recreation or physical activity to continue, albeit maybe with some modifications.

Regardless of its location, where any activity cannot mitigate risks, including maintenance of the minimum physical distance (1.5m) and restrictions to non-essential gatherings, these activities should not occur.

2. What can my sport or community club do?

Sports have been challenged – activities cancelled or postponed, with no clear idea as to when things will return to normal. The impact of COVID-19 is having significant immediate and longer-term financial and participation impacts on the sport and recreation sector and our community.

Some activity providers, including in the commercial sector, are actively exploring ways in which their communities can remain digitally connected, and even “remote participation” opportunities activated. This might be easier for some sports and groups than others, but at a difficult time it might support people to stay engaged with something they so clearly value, while also helping clubs and organisations to return to normal business when the time comes.

3. Am I insured to continue activities?

Any provider should seek to understand the limitations of its insurance in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, including as this related to participants, directors and any employees, and in the context of any directive or advice provided by Government or a national body.

4. Can indoor sport facilities continue to operate?

Indoor sporting venues, gyms and pools were required to close from midday 23 March 2020. Ancillary facilities such as cafés and gymnasiums are also impacted.

ACT Government pools, including any co-located fitness facilities, are closed.

5. Should my organisation be closing offices and having employees work from home?

Employers have an obligation under work health and safety legislation to provide a safe workplace for their staff and for others who interact with that business or workplace.

Employers should inform themselves of the current health situation through the ACT Health website, and based on this information together with the specific activities of their business, conduct a risk assessment of their activities and modify their business practices based on their risk assessment outcomes.

6. Will ACT Government operational funding be locked in for 2021?

All organisations receiving Triennial Assistance from the ACT Government have been provided with their Funding Deed – prompt return of these Deeds and the associated invoice will support quick payment of these funds.

Excluding any bonus payment made in 2020 (2019-20 financial year), organisations offered Triennial Assistance this year will receive the same amount next year.

The ACT Government has also announced an economic survival package as the first phase in our plan to protect as many jobs as possible and support Canberra households and businesses. More information about this package is available at www.act.gov.au/economicsurvivalpackage.

7. COVID-19 may not allow me to deliver some of our funded outcomes for 2020. How may that be viewed?

It is recognised that a range of normal operations, programs and capital works will be impacted by COVID-19. While it may still take many months to realise the full impacts, Sport and Recreation will work with all organisations on a case by case basis to understand what can be delivered during this difficult time.

8. Is the ACT Government considering a stimulus package or funding support for businesses and not for profits?

The ACT Government has announced an economic survival package as the first phase in our plan to protect as many jobs as possible and support Canberra households and businesses.

In the first phase of our response, the ACT Government will implement a range of measures to reduce cashflow pressures in the short term for low income households and local small and medium businesses in the industry sectors that are most impacted.

More information about this package is available at www.act.gov.au/economicsurvivalpackage.

The Australian Government has also announced Cash Flow Assistance for businesses and other support mechanisms that might be relevant to some organisations:

https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-03/Fact_sheet-Assistance_for_businesses.pdf

<https://treasury.gov.au/coronavirus/businesses>

9. Is the ACT Government considering a support package specific to the sport and recreation sector?

The priority at this time is the completion of the peak body survey, seeking information on current and estimated financial and participation impacts, which will inform any options for the ACT Government to consider.

We must save as many local jobs as possible as our economy adjusts to the difficult decisions being made at the National level to flatten the rate of transmission and support our healthcare system.

We will announce further packages as we move through the different phases of this crisis.

10. Does the ACT Government have any reasonable indications when the COVID-19 crisis will peak and “normal business” resume?

The economic impacts of the virus will be felt for years. It will require a phased response both before, during and after the anticipated peak in COVID-19 cases across Australia.

11. What support can sporting organisations get if their nominated sporting venue closes for an extended period of time?

Organisations that are impacted by venue closures for an extended period of time will be considered on a case by case basis.

ACT Sportsgrounds

1. Can sports get an extension on the normal renovation period of ACT Government sportsgrounds (end of September) seeing there will be little to no activity on grounds in autumn?

This is not a commitment that can be made at this time, with the extent of sporting activity over autumn, if any, not known.

Sportsground and Recreation Facilities (Transport Canberra and City Services) are happy to work with the sporting codes to find the best solution, noting that a shutdown period of some sort will still be required to transition from winter to summer sports.

With reduced formal hire it is expected there could be minimal work to do coming into the summer changeover of sport, noting however that there will still be community usage of these facilities, even if only for individual training activity.

2. Will there be any flexibility to length of seasons, end dates of seasons etc?

It is difficult to assess at this time. Noting that the current impacts will be profound for winter sporting codes, discussion regarding potential changes to the “traditional” seasonal windows could be discussed with stakeholder sporting groups (peak bodies) when it becomes clearer as to when “normal” sporting activity might resume.

3. What is the position on current ACT Government sportsgrounds access and training allowances?

Following completion of the current shutdown period (ends 31 March 2020), at this time it is expected that ACT Government sportsgrounds will remain open for community recreation and sporting use.

Where applicable, any broader community and sport-specific advice regarding COVID-19 needs to be adhered to, including physical distancing, hygiene and the structure of any activities.

Subject to supply, Sport and Recreation Facilities are currently working to install soap dispensers into all the toilets, change rooms and canteens at sportsgrounds. The provision of sanitiser remains a responsibility for the hirer.

4. Will there be discounted ground hire charges, if/when a season commences?

At this time current charges will continue to apply when sporting activity resumes.

Our priority in this first phase of economic support is to help the community through this incredibly difficult immediate period.

The ACT Government will announce further packages as we transition through the different phases of this crisis.

5. Requirements for clubs to cancel existing bookings? Do we need to provide a date for this?

Sport and Recreation Facilities have been notified by peak bodies of any suspension from training and match play. It is preferred that peak bodies remain the key conduit for further changes to bookings (eg elongated periods of suspension or any re-commencement).

Sport and Recreation Facilities will suspend bookings on behalf of sports (and their affiliate clubs) – suspension of a booking does not remove this, negating the need for booking to be re-entered in the system at that point at which normal activities resume.

Any bookings in the system suspended from 16 March 2020 onwards will not incur a fee or charge - all previous bookings will still incur their charges (this affects summer sport period).

Any outstanding invoices will remain active and should be paid in accordance with the sporting charter.