

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 not being possible, while still allowing other forms of sport, recreation or physical activity to continue, albeit maybe with some modifications.

The following restrictions enforcing closure are in place:

- gyms and indoor sporting venues
- amusement parks, arcades and play centres (indoor and outdoor)
- health clubs, fitness centres, yoga, barre and spin facilities, saunas, bathhouses and wellness centres and swimming pools
- community facilities such as community halls, libraries and youth centres, RSL and PCYC
- One-on-one personal training (i.e. trainer and client) can be conducted outdoors while observing physical distancing. Boot camps can no longer proceed.

In addition to the above, temporary closures apply to several public spaces that would normally support physical activity – these include playgrounds, outdoor fitness stations, skate parks and dog parks.

Some sporting activities like golf, rowing (single scull) and tennis, alongside a range of other physical activities, are being allowed to continue in the ACT. Within the context of each activity and complying with limitations on physical density (one person per 4m²), physical distancing (1.5m), adherence to the maximum gathering size (2 persons) and hygiene measures to lower the risk of virus transmission, these activities may proceed.

Where an activity or sport can proceed, it is at the discretion of individual clubs or organisations, based on their own circumstances, as to whether they do continue some modified functions at this time. Clubs must ensure that they adhere to the maximum gathering size (2), comply with social distancing requirements and practice good hygiene.

Clubs and organisations are advised to be aware and consider advice of relevant peak state and national bodies in applying discretion to continue modified functions.

Where any activities continue, advice remains that participants who are aged over 70, aged over 65 with pre-existing condition or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged over 50 with pre-existing conditions are advised to stay home wherever possible for their own protection.

The situation is evolving rapidly. These restrictions may change. Stay up to date with the latest information at www.covid19.act.gov.au

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.

There are lots of great examples of “social network participation” circulating – Sport and Recreation would love you to share your ideas with us, in the interests of keeping our community active and helping promote your sport or activity - link us in on Facebook (Sport and Recreation Canberra) or Twitter @SportandRecCBR).

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 relates 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, yoga, barre, dance studios and pools were required to close from 23 March 2020. Ancillary facilities such as cafés, saunas, wellness centres 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?

Canberrans can still go to work if essential. Any business that can transition to work from home arrangements should start that process as soon as possible.

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.

Information for employers is available at www.covid19.act.gov.au/economic-support/workplace-health-and-safety

Based on this information, together with the specific activities of your business, you should conduct a risk assessment of your activities and modify your business practices based on your risk assessment outcomes.

Where office-based activities continue, physical distancing measures and frequent hand washing are strongly encouraged across all workplaces.

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

For those peak bodies funded triennially, yes.

All organisations receiving Triennial Assistance from the ACT Government have been provided with their 2020 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. **Upon receipt of an invoice, 2021 (2020/21 Financial Year) Triennial Assistance will be payable from 1 July 2020.**

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.covid19.act.gov.au/economic-support/economic-survival-package.

7. COVID-19 may not allow me to deliver some of our grant 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. What if I can't hold my Annual General Meeting and meet my reporting requirements?

Access Canberra has provided greater flexibility for organisations challenged in meeting requirements to hold their AGM. An *automatic* three-month extension has been provided through until 30 June 2020 – Access Canberra will further extend this period where the COVID-19 situation continues.

9. Is the ACT Government considering a stimulus package or funding support for sport and recreation?

On 17 April 2020 the ACT Government announced an immediate sector support package for the community sport and recreation sector. This package includes:

- Immediate access to a total of \$701,750 to support peak sporting bodies, allocated on the basis of the most recent funding allocation;
- Access for Triennially funded organisations to their allocated 2021 funding allocation from 1 July 2020 (on receipt of an invoice as per current Funding Deed); and
- Bringing forward the 2021 Sport and Recreation Grants Program to receive applications/make funding recommendations early in the 2020-21 financial year.
- Waiver of ACT Government sportsground hire fees from the Transport Canberra and City Services Directorate (TCCS) for the 2020 winter season, starting mid-March to end of September, with all existing booking/s reserved.
- Waiver of all booking fees for use of Stromlo Forest Park by community and not for profit groups until at least 1 September 2020.
- Suspension of all outstanding invoice payments due for ACT Government sportsground hire fees from TCCS for an initial period through to 1 July 2020.

In addition to these mechanisms the following will apply:

- Waiver of facility hire fees from the ACT Education Directorate for a six month period effective from 1 April, with all existing booking/s reserved.
- Rental relief for community organisations using ACT Government properties, including those with lease rental arrangements such as community tennis clubs. From 1 April 2020 there will be a six-month waiver of rent and hire fees for community groups using ACT Government properties.

These announced measures are in addition to the broader economic survival package relevant to many sporting organisations, community clubs and commercial operators, announced by the ACT Government as the first phase in a plan to protect as many jobs as possible and support Canberra households and businesses.

For some organisations within the sport and recreation sector, relevant components of this package include:

- Small business with electricity usage below 100 megawatts per year will see rebates of \$750 automatically applied to their next electricity bill in around June or July 2020;
- Hospitality (cafes, pubs, hotels, clubs and restaurants), creative arts and entertainment industries will receive a six-month waiver of payroll tax from March to August 2020;
- Commercial property owners with an Average Unimproved Value of \$2 million or less on their property are eligible for a rebate on their commercial rates fixed charge. Commercial rate payers will automatically receive a credit of \$2,622 (equivalent to the annual fixed charge) to their 2019-20 general rates, in quarter four; and
- Licenced venues will receive a 12-month waiver of their food business registration and on-licence liquor licencing fees from 1 April 2020 and outdoor dining fees for 2020-2021 will be waived.

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

The Australian Government is supporting businesses to manage cash flow challenges and retain employees. Assistance includes cash flow support to businesses and temporary measures to provide relief for financially distressed businesses. Announced initiatives that may be particularly relevant to the sector:

- JobKeeper payment supporting impacted eligible businesses to access a wages subsidy (\$1,500 per employee per fortnight) for six months, helping staff to be retained and business to re-start when the COVID-19 crisis ends.
- Boosting Cash for Employers will provide up to \$100,000 to eligible small and medium-sized business *and* not-for-profits that employ people, with a minimum payment of \$20,000, so that they can keep operating, pay bills and retain staff.
- Temporary relief for financially distressed business, including increasing the threshold at which creditors can issue a statutory demand and temporary relief for Directors from personal liability while trading insolvent.

Details on Commonwealth assistance mechanisms, including relevant Fact Sheets are at <https://treasury.gov.au/coronavirus>

10. If my state sporting organisation has received additional financial support to assist at this time, what can I use these funds for?

Peak bodies that are receiving an immediate injection of funds as part of the Government's additional \$701,750 investment (detailed in question 9) are able to use these funds to support normal operational activities *in the ACT*. This might include such things as staffing costs, venue operations, utilities, capacity building projects, affiliate club support or to meet pre-existing financial commitments – funds are to be used in the current calendar year and acquitted as part of Triennial or Annual funding provided within the 2020 Sport and Recreation Grants Program (by 31 March 2021).

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

There is no simple fix. We know that any measures that are put in place will have to stay in place for the immediate future. The ACT Government has established a central online portal for all information and resources regarding the coronavirus - www.covid19.act.gov.au/

Based on the staged way in which restrictions were implemented, it is possible that restrictions may be lifted in a similar manner – subject to individual characteristics (eg indoor/outdoor, team/individual), some sporting activities may resume sooner than others. Sports should be considering various scenarios and structures that can be “implementation ready” when restrictions permit.

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

Sporting organisations and clubs that hire training or competition facilities from the ACT Education Directorate will have all hire fees waived for a six month period effective from 1 April 2020. This will be reviewed, pending the situation and further Government advice in response to COVID-19. If current conditions continue to exist, it is likely fees will continue to be waived and reviewed as required – all booking/s will be reserved for organisations until such a time as activities can resume.

Club or organisation access or hire arrangements with private venues are subject to individual discussions.

13. Is there support for sporting organisations that are tenants in ACT Government facilities?

The ACT Government is providing rental relief for community organisations using ACT Government properties that have been impacted by COVID-19. From 1 April 2020 these tenants will not be charged any rent for a period of six months.

This includes organisations that are leasing Territory owned assets and paying an annual lease rental.

For organisations conducting commercial activities from ACT Government properties, these businesses will need to demonstrate that their operations have been significantly impacted due to COVID-19. ACT Property Group will coordinate this assessment and contact individual operators.

ACT Property Group tenants with any queries should contact ACTPGExecutiveSupport@act.gov.au or phone (02) 6205 2368.

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/winter, 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/physical activity.

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

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 sportsground access and training allowances?

ACT Government sportsgrounds are currently closed for formal bookings, however remain available for community recreation use.

Any continuing use of ACT Government sportsgrounds for informal activities must comply with limitations on physical density (one person per 4m²), physical distancing (1.5m), adherence to the maximum gathering size (2 persons) and hygiene measures to lower the risk of virus transmission.

Where any activities continue, advice remains that participants who are aged over 70, aged over 65 with pre-existing condition or indigenous people aged over 50 with pre-existing conditions are advised to stay home wherever possible for their own protection.

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/user.

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

All existing bookings from sports, where requested by the respective peak body, have been suspended.

Hire fees for the use of ACT Government sportsgrounds for the 2020 winter season, starting mid-March to end of September, will be waived.

In addition, all outstanding invoice payments due for ACT Government sportsground hire fees have been suspended for an initial period through to 1 July 2020 – outstanding fees remains payable from this later date.

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

Sport and Recreation Facilities has 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). Please note, suspension of a booking does not remove it completely, so there is no need for a 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) with payment schedules suspended for an initial period through to 1 July 2020.