

# Ryde Council waives fees for local sports clubs

[Nicole Pierre](#), Northern District Times

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Thousands of dollars in fees for ground hire and sports lighting have been waived for cash-strapped local clubs in Ryde.

Ryde Council unanimously passed a motion allowing the complete waiving of fees for ground hire and lighting for local sports clubs for winter season.

It comes after a motion was moved by Labor councillors Penny Pedersen and Bernard Purcell at last week's council meeting calling on council to continue making local clubs pay fees for sportsground use.



*Cr Trenton Brown, Cr Peter Kim, Cr Roy Maggio, Cr Sarkis Yedelian OAM, Cr Chris Moujalli, Warren Price President on the goalpost cover Rear Cllr Simon Zhou – Clayton James Secretary -Cllr Jordan Lane – all pose for a photo outside Harry Anderson Park Pavilion in Ryde Park on Friday, 26 June 2020. The Council waives fees for sports clubs. (AAP Image / Monique Harmer)*

Their motion required clubs to satisfy criteria and negotiate with council’s general manager if they needed fees deferred.

While Cr Purcell said he was “pro clubs” he claimed the motion was more “fiscally responsible” on Tuesday night.

Both Cr Purcell and Cr Edwina Clifton said they were against a “blanket” one-size-fits-all policy for all clubs.

Yet independent Cr Roy Maggio said clubs were suffering revenue shortages and local parents couldn’t afford registration fees as a result of the pandemic.

Cr Maggio proposed an amended motion to waive sportsground and lighting fees for the rest of the winter season.

His motion also called for special sports lights at all sports grounds to cater for night games and for the winter season to be extended to mid October as a “one off” due to the pandemic.

In support of the amendment, liberal Cr Trenton Brown said a subsidy “across the board” to local sporting clubs will take away anxiety as well as offer financial support to the clubs.





*AAP Northern District Times L-R Luke & Angus Lochrin & Riley Price photographed on the field outside Harry Anderson Park Pavilion in Ryde Park on Friday, 26 June 2020. The Council waives fees for sports clubs. (AAP Image / Monique Harmer)*

“Supporting sport in our community shouldn’t be a political issue ... It shouldn’t be a partisan issue,” he told council.

Yet mayor Jerome Laxale claimed it wasn’t over politics saying he was a “huge supporter of local clubs.”

“Vote for the amendment,” Cr Maggio interjected before Cr Laxale said he supported the original motion over the amendment.

“When we offer support, we offer support to those who need it, not unilaterally,” Cr Laxale said.

“I don’t think we should change that reason tonight.”

Cr Peter Kim who supported the amendment said he hoped everyone would get behind the motion.

A letter by Philip Chen, who is the president of Korean Sports Association of Australia, was read out saying his sporting groups had a better chance to “survive the crisis” if council waived the sportsground and lighting fees.

Cr Simon Zhou said council were not deciding about “yes or no” on supporting clubs but “how” and requested “upon application” be included in the amendment.

Cr Maggio’s motion was unanimously passed.

### **“A massive relief,” Ryde Rugby Club president says**

From drops in registrations to clubs no longer being able to hold canteen and fundraising events, local clubs have been struggling for months.

Ryde Rugby Club President Warren Price said that the waiving of fees will provide a “massive relief” to his club and many others.

Mr Price said they pay about \$10,000-12,000 a year in fees and had suffered a plummet in registrations with parents being unable to pay lately.

He said it was tough not being able to hold trivia and fundraiser nights as well as run their canteen.

“We might make \$500 a night on the canteen and times by 20 that’s \$10,000,” he said.

With no one seeing the pandemic coming, he said they had already paid for pre season equipment including \$40,000 worth of sports uniforms at the start of the year.

“We couldn’t cancel that order – we ordered it in January.”

Mr Price, who lost his day job during the pandemic and whose wife was on Job Keeper, said it’s been tough balancing the personal struggles with what his club was going through.

“Having fees waived is a tremendous boost in the arm. Kudos to Roy and the six others,” he said.

### **Maggio’s win for local clubs**

Speaking after his motion was passed, Cr Maggio said he was really happy with the outcome.

“The waived fees will assist mums and dads who pay for their kids to play. The majority of them have been off work and on Job Keeper,” he said.

“This is going to provide thousands of smiles to locals.”



*AAP Northern District Times L front Clr Peter Kim – Clr Sarkis Yedelian OAM-Clr Roy Maggio – Clr Trenton Brown rear L Clr Simon Zhou -back middle Clr Chris Moujalli – Clr Jordan Lane holding the goal post cover pose for a photo at Harry Anderson Park Pavilion in Ryde Park on Friday, 26 June 2020. The Council waives fees for sports clubs. (AAP Image / Monique Harmer)*

With the winter season set to start in July, he said it was “fantastic timing.”

Cr Maggio said sports lighting 100 lux will allow games to be played at night and clubs to continue on after the interruptions from the pandemic.

“This is a big relief for the local clubs and a fantastic initiative.”

He also thanked councillors Trenton Brown, Jordan Lane, Peter Kim, Christopher Moujalli, Sarkis Yedelian, and Simon Zhou, for their support.