MIDCOAST
council

MIDCOAST SPORTS STORAGE GUIDELINES

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Acknowledgement of Country
We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and live, the Gathang-speaking people and pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside in the MidCoast Council area. We extend our respect to Elders past and present, and to all future cultural-knowledge holders.

Introduction

The purpose of this guideline is to provide direction to sports clubs on the issue of sports storage at their sports facilities. These guidelines will provide the strategic framework on which we provide for and manage our sports facilities, cover some of the issues relating to sports storage, provide direction on what types of sports storage we will approve and an options flowchart to assist clubs.

We have determined that there is a need for a document such as this to provide direction to sports clubs on the storage of their club's equipment, how it is to be stored, what types of storage we will support and how clubs should interact with each other regarding storage of their equipment.

Ultimately, the storage of club equipment is the responsibility of the club.

Background

The open space planning framework contains several documents that deal with the provision of sport services in our area. The primary document is the MidCoast Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2023 – 2035 (OSRS). The OSRS, developed during 2022/23, contains extensive information about how we provide for and manage sports services. Extensive community consultation was undertaken, through two community engagement phases. This engagement sought the views of sports clubs on all factors that relate to the delivery of their programs to their members. The issue of sports storage was raised during this engagement and is therefore covered in the OSRS.

The Issue

The following factors are impacting the provision of storage in our sports facilities:

- Most clubs have too much equipment for the storage that they have available to them.
- The storage available may not be to a standard that protects the club's equipment.
- A focus on multi-sport venues can create conflict between users and the limited storage that is available.
- Clubs are providing more food items in their canteens, thus needing items such as pie warmers, fridges, freezes and other appliances, all of which need to be stored.
- There are more clubs using individual sports facilities than when they were first designed/built.
- Clubs have more teams than in the past, more juniors and seniors' teams per club.

How did we get here?

If we go back twenty or thirty years, the issue of sports storage would not have been conceived of. Sports clubs had very little equipment back in the 1980's, just the basic, such as balls, jerseys and other minor equipment. This was normally held by the team coach and stayed in their garage and was brought to each training session and game in the boot of their car. Clubs didn't have the money to afford more extensive equipment.

Most things in grassroots sport are driven by grants. It is the same with sports equipment. Because sports equipment is a minor expense compared to the amounts spent on sports facilities all three levels of government, and private companies, such as supermarkets, mining companies, and local businesses started providing grants or sponsorship, in the form of equipment to local sports clubs. Over years the clubs acquired more and more team jerseys, balls, tackle bags, goalpost pads and many other types of equipment. Some clubs have even started to acquire plant, such as ride-on mowers, rollers in the case of cricket and other larger pieces of equipment.

The more equipment clubs acquired the more storage they needed. This then influenced the design of amenity buildings. Paradoxically, the provision of less expensive sports equipment then drove the design of million-dollar buildings.

At the same time as clubs were acquiring more sports equipment, they also realised that their canteens were their main source of income. They therefore started to put appliances in their canteens to provide a more diverse range of food. This then created a situation where these appliances needed to be stored in the off-season. Many storage areas are full of what would be kitchen goods. If a sports venue has multiple clubs, you might find two or three fridges in a canteen, for each club.

Types of Sports Storage

For community sport (grassroots sport) there are three types of storage, internal, external, and portable.

Internal – internal storage is that provided in amenity buildings at sports venues. Because of the diverse range of amenity buildings, and the different periods that these buildings were constructed there is no standard provision for internal storage. The OSRS has a section detailing our position on storage. The general rule is that 10% of the total floor space of an amenity building should be allocated for storage, and this is the position that we have adopted in the OSRS for future builds. However, this is subject to the diverse range of storage needs of our sports clubs. If a single football or netball club has tenure of an amenity building, then 10% should be more than sufficient to cater for their storage needs. However, if the building has multiple clubs' resident, then more storage will be needed. Also, the type of sport drives provision, for example if a a little athletics club is resident, then more storage will be needed due to the large and more diverse range of equipment that this sport uses.

External – external storage comes in the form of standalone sheds or structures, that are separate from an amenity building. These are often freestanding sheds, built on concrete slabs. They can be singular or multiple. The storage facility at Old Bar Park is a good example of a multi-bay storage facility. These facilities are secure and provide a good secondary storage option from internal storage.

Portable – lastly, we have portable storage. This comes in the form of shipping containers, whose purpose is the transportation of goods. Over the last couple of decades, a number of land managers have taken to allowing these shipping containers for clubs to store their equipment. As highlighted in the Sports storage option flowchart this is a temporary option, that should only be used when the other two options have been discounted. They are perfect for when we are upgrading amenity buildings.

Supplemental to the three main storage options are cages. These are metal fence enclosures where equipment that is not damaged by being outside can be stored. Cricket wicket rollers, goal posts and other such equipment can be stored in these cages. They are often attached to amenity buildings to secure them.

Different sports have different needs

As highlighted in the previous section, different sports have different needs for different types of storage. For example, a little athletics club has high jump matts and stands. These are large and their shape creates challenges for storage. Not only does an athletics club need more storage, but they also need tall roller doors to be able to access the storage with the equipment. These are unique characteristics that we need to consider when designing amenity buildings for these sports.

Cricket also has some unique characteristics for equipment storage. Cricket has very little need for large storage areas for playing equipment, there is very little needed to play cricket. However, the plant that is now being acquired by many clubs, such as rollers and mowers are large and, in most cases, require their own sheds. In addition, most cricket facilities are multi-purpose i.e. winter and summer sports, and so this means that a cricket club is in residence with a winter sport, who also have storage needs, thus complicating the storage situation.

Football clubs, of all types, are acquiring more and more equipment, not only bags of training balls, but goal post pads, and even electronic equipment, and canteen appliances such as pie warmers and fridges. With multiple resident clubs these can't be left in the canteen during the off-season.

The above is just a snapshot of the complexity involved in the needs of sports clubs for sports storage.

Amenity buildings and storage need to be for everyone

Amenity buildings, and other ancillary sports facilities are long-term investments for us. A building can last 50 years. We also need to accommodate many and different clubs. Therefore, where possible we try to design generic amenity buildings that can be used by all, excluding speciality sports. This ensures that a sport that is popular now, if its popularity wanes in the future, the amenity and its storage can be used by other sports. To design for a specific sport would see us wasting money and creating issues for us and clubs in the future. We do not have a standard amenity building design, but we will avoid adjusting designs where these design features are too specific to a sport.

We will therefore seek to make our storage options adaptable. So that a specific club can use it in 2024, and another be able to use it in 2034.

The MidCoast "state of storage"

We have a wide assortment of all three types of sport storage in the MidCoast area.

We have many amenity buildings that have inbuilt storage in them. As indicated earlier these are of different ages and standards. As we progress through upgrades to these facilities we are seeking to engage with the resident clubs, ascertaining their storage needs and if applicable we are trying to meet those needs.

Over the years we have also given approval for many shipping containers to be installed by clubs. And in some cases, clubs have installed containers without seeking our permission. Some of these were installed well, are not highly visible, and are serving their purpose. However, many of them are poorly placed, are an eyesore, and some are in poor condition, starting to rust, and will be a challenge to remove.

However, even where these containers are in good condition and are suitable for the space, they have become permanent fixtures, rather than a temporary solution to the storage problem.

Well sited and fit for purpose

Shipping containers can be unsightly. They do not add to the aesthetic nature of the sports facilities that they are being installed in. The OSRS has a strong focus on the protection and enhancement of our parks and reserves, and states that we will endeavour to restrict the items that we place in them, in effect, “less is best”.

We don’t want shipping containers in our parks and reserves, but we understand that in some cases they are the only option, albeit a temporary one. When they are installed, they are to be placed in locations where they are out of sight of public view, such as behind an amenity building.

Additionally, there are currently several shipping containers that are very old and are rusting and deteriorating. They are not fit for purpose. These containers are not Council’s responsibility. It costs significant amounts of money to remove these containers, especially when they are rusting. To this end Council officers will undertake inspections of storage containers when we carry out our annual audits of sports facilities.

If we find a container that is in poor condition the club will be directed to have it removed. If action is not taken by the club and we must remove the container permission to have the container will be revoked and an invoice of costs will be sent to the club to pay.

Tips on shipping container installation

As noted, where we give permission for the installation of shipping containers for storage, they are to be a temporary option. However, there are steps that clubs can take to ensure that the facility is fit for purpose and remains that way for the period that they are being used.

Placing the container on blocks will ensure that it does not rust “into the ground”. If done properly then a ramp will be needed to access the container.

It is also suggested that solar lighting be installed, for safety reasons. Often large items are stored in containers, and these require more than one person to move, lighting will negate safety issues.

Recently the Gloucester Football Club has installed a new storage container at their fields (see photo in Portable section). This facility has followed all the directions that we have provided in this section, including elevating the container, installing a ramp, and solar lighting system, as well as being placed in a site that cannot be seen by the public.

Clubs that are considering a shipping container should inspect this facility first, before contacting Council for permission.

Graffiti can also be an issue with shipping containers. The club is to ensure that graffiti is removed as soon as possible.

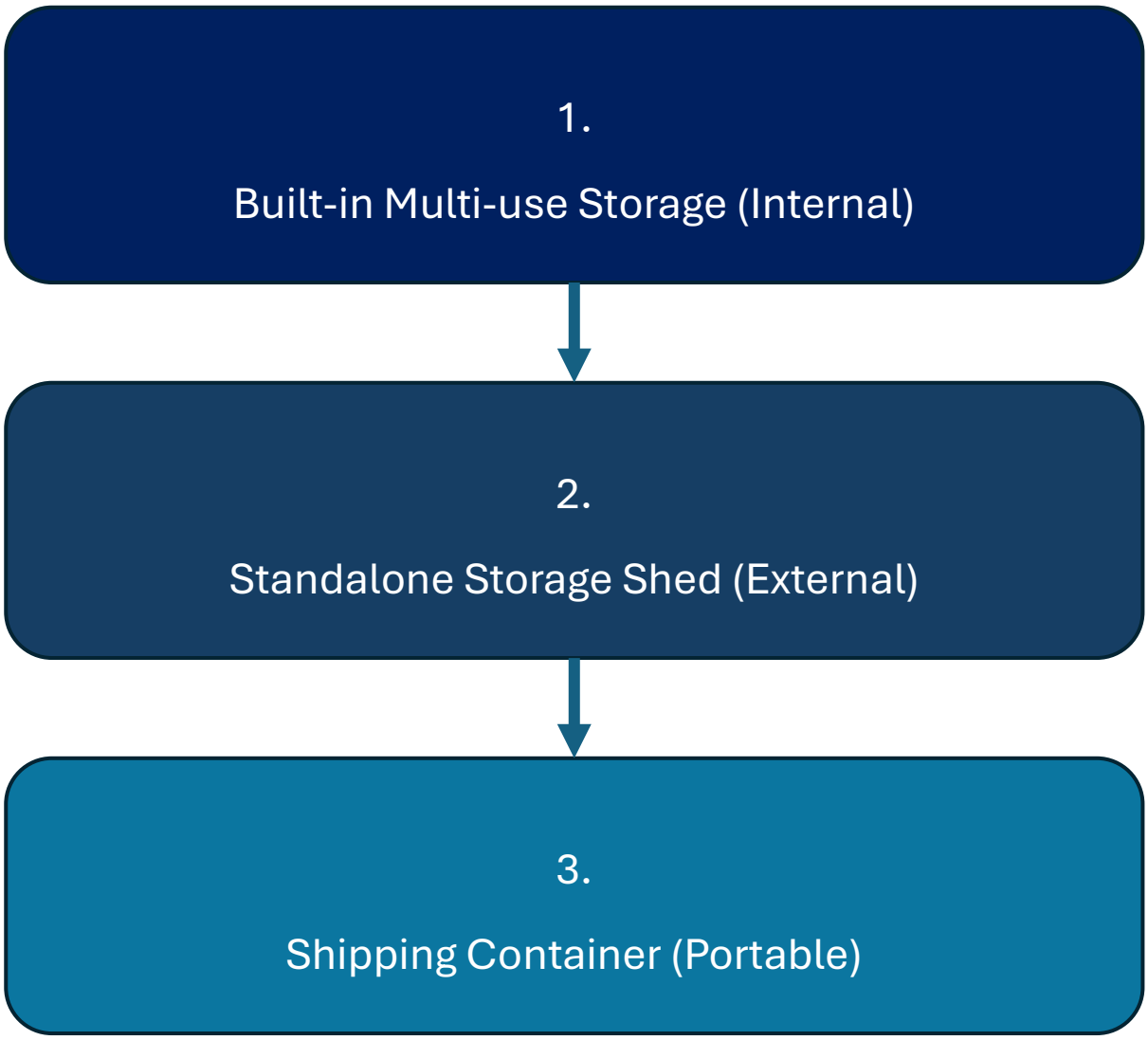
Managing your equipment

As noted in the “How did we get here?” section, there has been a significant increase in the amount of sport and canteen equipment that clubs have. This is driving the need for more storage.

When Council carries out its annual audits of sports facilities, we are looking at the type and amount of equipment a club has. If we consider that there is too much equipment being stored in Council owned facilities, or the wrong type, we will direct the club to have it removed.

In addition, we encourage clubs to undertake a “clean out” of their equipment on a regular basis. It is often surprising what clubs collect, that they no longer use. Before approaching Council with your storage requests ensure that you only have what you absolutely need.

Sports storage option flowchart



Notes on the flowchart

Option 1 is our preferred option. This is where storage is built into an amenity building. The OSRS states that each amenity building is to have at least 10% of its total floor space set aside for storage. This is to be achieved when the facility is first built or when upgraded.

Option 2 are structures separate to amenity buildings. Standalone storage should not be to add additional storage space to what is available in the amenity building, unless new resident clubs have been allocated to the facility. In other words, standalone storage is not provided because a club has acquired too much equipment. An increase in club equipment that causes option 1 storage to be inadequate is to be avoided. This is an issue for the club to manage

Option 3 is a last resort. If options 1 & 2 cannot be delivered, then option 3 is to be considered. Option 3 is temporary and is only to be used when works are being conducted on an amenity building or on a situational basis. Shipping containers are to be placed in a non-visible location, should be in good condition and if visible should be painted in a non-descript colour. The removal of the container, which is the responsibility of the club who installed it, will be required once new Internal or External storage is provided for a club.

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