

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Local Government

Find out what your local government organisations (local or district councils) are able to offer your Centre/Club. Searching the internet is probably the easiest way to do this initially. A positive relationship can be established with the local council and keep them informed about your club and its needs.

Your local council:

- can provide ongoing advice and support for your organisation - some councils have a recreation officer or community services officer appointed for this purpose;
- may have funds available to help in developing sport and recreation facilities and projects;
- may have a sport and recreation council or committee that encourages input in council sport and recreation policies and issues from sporting and community groups;
- may have a Centre/Club development program to assist Centres/Clubs with their management and administration.

It may be helpful for your Centre/Club to nominate a person to liaise with the council. This person could organise an initial meeting to discuss how your Centre/Club and the council can work together effectively. The council may also run forums and meetings of interest to your Centre/Club. The easiest way to find this information is by looking on the internet.

Things you can do to establish a good relationship with your local government are:

- get to know your council's elected members, senior officers, and recreation and maintenance staff;
- invite council representatives to Centre/Club functions to present trophies, enjoy your hospitality and, most importantly, show them appreciation for the services they provide;
- understand the problems your council is having and help them with issues that affect your club, for example, establish a joint committee to examine sports development in the district;
- offer to assist in the council's coaching and recreation programmes;
- acknowledge your council whenever you can, particularly in any public arena;
- don't complain, but rather approach problems constructively and seek 'win-win' solutions;
- encourage other community groups to take an interest in your sport by inviting them to participate in Centre/Club activities;
- insist on good behaviour, both on-field and off-field, displaying good sportsmanship and avoiding bad language;
- be good neighbours and form relationships with those who use your courts or own nearby property - complaints to the council will tarnish your image immediately;
- establish a positive public relations programme by appointing a member to liaise with the council.