



POSITION STATEMENT

Provision of Fitness Training & Services in Public Areas

PURPOSE OF POSITION STATEMENT

This statement is issued by the executive officer of Fitness Australia Limited.

This statement is in response to local government and statutory authority regulations being released in policy governing personal training and group fitness services being provided in public areas.

Fitness Australia, The Health & Fitness Industry Association, intends to use this position statement as the basis for negotiating with Local Government / Statutory Authorities on the issue; and, promoting public awareness of the effects of such policies on the health and fitness of Australians.

PRINCIPLES

This statement recommends the following principles which, supported by the Australian Fitness Industry, should be adhered to in the development of any policy or regulation addressing the provision / conduct of fitness training or services in public areas.

The recommended principles are:

1. That the Fitness Australia National Exercise Professional Registration Scheme be recognised as the industry 'licence' for delivering fitness training and fitness services in the outdoor environment.

2. That Local Government / Statutory Authority licence/permit fees are NOT applied to registered personal trainers and registered fitness businesses conducting fitness training or providing fitness services in public areas.
3. That Local Government / Statutory Authority permits recognise the industry standard maximum group size of eighteen (18) which maintains current benchmarks for consumer pricing and protection; access to fitness training and services; and, training quality as well as minimises risk and impact on public assets.

Fundamental to the fitness industry position is our support of managing the conduct of fitness training and fitness services on public land within local government / statutory authority jurisdiction. However, Fitness Australia is opposed to any policy that seeks to limit or restrict the level of physical activity in the community, given the current levels of overweight and obesity, and associated health risks, in contemporary society.

Fitness Australia addresses the three most commonly-held concerns through the relevant State or Territory Fitness Industry Code of Practice; Exercise Professional Code of Conduct; and, the National Exercise Professional Registration Scheme. Recognition of these industry standards will alleviate the concerns of local government and relevant statutory authorities.

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POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Fitness Australia National Exercise Professional Registration Scheme be recognised as the industry 'licence' for delivering fitness training and fitness services in the outdoor environment.

Fitness Australia's registration scheme is recognised as the only national registration scheme for exercise professionals and personal trainers in Australia. The registration scheme is linked directly to the nationally endorsed Fitness Training Package so as to ensure that only appropriately qualified exercise professionals gain the licence to practice.

We recommend that applicants for Local Government / Statutory Authority permits must:

- Be a Fitness Australia Registered Fitness Business Member; and/or, be currently registered in the Fitness Australia National Exercise Professional Registration Scheme.

This guarantees the personal trainer holds a minimum Certificate IV in Fitness, Senior First Aid Certificate and is committed to continuing education appropriate to their qualification.

- Maintain, at a minimum, exercise professionals public liability and professional indemnity insurance during the life of the permit.

Fitness Australia's registration scheme binds the registered personal trainer to the Fitness Industry Code of Practice & Exercise Professional Code of Conduct. These policies govern the conduct and behaviour of all registered exercise professionals and empower Fitness Australia to investigate complaints lodged against a registered personal trainer from a consumer or member.

We recommend that Local Governments and Statutory Authorities recognise the relevant State and Territory Fitness Industry Code of Practice and Code of Conduct in their policies and regulations.

2. That Local Government / Statutory Authority licence/permit fees are NOT applied to registered personal trainers and Fitness Australia registered fitness businesses conducting fitness training or providing fitness services in public areas.

Registered personal trainers / business members pay Fitness Australia for their licence to operate in the Australian Fitness Industry. In accepting the Fitness Australia National Registration Scheme, Local Government/Statutory authorities negate the need to charge fees to registered personal trainers in order to determine their eligibility to operate in their jurisdiction.

Permits will be automatically issued to a registered personal trainer/personal training business upon receipt of documentary evidence of registration and insurance; and, Fitness Australia business membership where a personal training business is the applicant.

3. That Local Government / Statutory Authority permits recognise the industry standard maximum group size of eighteen (18) which maintains current benchmarks for consumer pricing and protection; access to fitness training and services; and, training quality as well as minimises risk and impact on public assets.

Fitness Australia recognises the importance of minimising risk and minimising the impact on the environment in public spaces. A maximum group size of 18 is commensurate with the level of risk and impact that may be imposed through normal public use of Council/Crown land. This maximum group size allows the fitness industry to maintain the current equity of access to fitness services as well as meet increasing consumer demand. This is critical to the industry's commitment to support the whole-of-government agenda promoting physical activity as a major contributor to the reduction in chronic disease, obesity and death from sedentary lifestyle. Smaller group fitness class sizes will increase costs and decrease access to fitness services as well as render many small businesses no longer viable.



Laretta Stace Executive Officer

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