

**MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY SPORT ADVISORY BOARD**  
**MEETING 3/2022 – 8 September 2022**

The minutes of meeting 3/2022 of the Melbourne University Sport (MU Sport) Advisory Board held on Thursday 8 September at 9.30am in Social Space A, Nona Lee Sports Centre.

**PRESENT:**

Mr Ian Marshman (Chair)  
Professor Pip Nicholson  
Professor Sarah Biddulph  
Ms Rosemary Bissett (via Zoom)  
Mr Paul Holland  
Mr Matt Roseby  
Mr Tim Lee (Director)

**APOLOGIES:**

Professor Richard James  
Ms Joanna Weston  
Ms Lara McKay  
Ms Meezaan Dickinson

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Jean-Luc Garlick (Secretary)  
Ms Julie Caundle (Minute taker)  
Mr Rod Warnecke for item 1.3  
Mr Michael Owen for item 1.3

**1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Welcome**

The Chair welcomed all present and noted that Ms Bissett was joining the meeting via zoom. The Chair also welcomed and acknowledged the appointment of Mr Roseby to the Advisory Board.

**1.2 Apologies**

Apologies were noted.

**1.3 Club Presentation - Soccer**

The Chair welcomed the Soccer Club and Mr Warnecke who introduced Mr Owen, the Club President.

Mr Owen's presentation focused on the current structure and the opportunities for student-athletes. The ambition is to be the club of choice for current and potential students at the University, and Mr Owen outlined a range of strategies to achieve this goal. The immediate

focus was to secure appropriate facilities to enter a women's team in the National Premier League for Women (NPLW) as early as 2023 and presented a proposal for the Sports Precinct. The Chair thanked Mr Owen for his presentation and asked if the University was the only Victorian university eligible for the National Premier League (NPL) to which he confirmed. Mr Warnecke outlined that with the Club he will approach Football Victoria to discuss the ground requirement for the NPLW. Mr Owen noted that a range of other issues would need to be resolved and it was unlikely that the Club would be able to support a team in NPLW next year. Professor Nicholson outlined the responsibility of Dr Wells, VP Strategy and Culture, to lead the relationship with City of Melbourne (CoM) and suggested engaging her in the process. It was noted that CoM would be interested in how we support and engage international students in our activities, and how the CoM could assist with bolstering our diversity and inclusion to support advocacy. The Director advised that a briefing note was currently being prepared for Dr Wells as part of the Sport Capital Plan that included the requirement for access to council facilities.

Discussion followed about the relationship with CoM and the approach to current assets in the capital investment plan for the sport facilities. The Director outlined that the principle is to secure the best sporting facilities available for our performance clubs, which in most cases were off campus, and increase the availability of the Sport Precinct for activities which needed to occur on campus including informal and casual sport. As the Club is currently located in Princes Park that the best approach was to continue to work with CoM.

Mr Owen and Mr Warnecke left the meeting at 10.00am.

Professor Nicholson commented that while foot traffic was down, engaging and partnering with local communities may increase numbers into our facilities. The Director suggested that demonstrating support for the local junior sporting clubs where we shared council facilities in particular would encourage council to look on the strategic partnership with the University more positively. The Director was encouraged to support the Club in the negotiations with the CoM for a NPLW facility.

Mr Holland suggested identifying the demand and current gaps in sporting facilities access. The Director outlined that the Sport Capital Plan would include an audit of current usage (including clubs), what was currently available and what is required now and in the future. The Chair suggested it would be useful to include information on the percentage of students and the level of inclusion in each club. The Director outlined that this would be presented to the Advisory Board at the next meeting as part of the Sport Capital Plan. The Chair noted that it is the responsibility of the Advisory Board to advocate for the improved provision of sport facilities, including highlighting key issues, but also providing practical solutions.

#### **1.4 Minutes from the previous meeting**

The minutes were accepted as a true record as per circular resolution sent on 15 August 2022.

#### **1.5 Business Arising/Action Item Updates**

##### **1.5.1 2022 Strategic Update**

Included at agenda item 2.2.

## **2. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **2.1 Advocacy and Risk**

The Director presented on four key strategic goals from the Strategic Plan for Sport, the key stakeholders and University decision makers, and the advocacy strategies required to make progress.

The Strategic Plan for Sport was reviewed last year to ensure alignment with the University's Advancing Melbourne and Student Life strategies and the return to campus ambitions of the University as a consequence of COVID.

The return to campus of students and staff to engage in regular physical activity remains the immediate goal. Prior to COVID sport, fitness and recreation activities were one of the largest single co-curricular activities at the University, however, 'business as usual' was never going to be enough, as many students had no previous experience of campus life. A significant investment was required to get our clubs, programs, and services up and running again and to address the barriers to participation that remain. Ultimately, this depends on how successful the University is in encouraging students and staff to return to campus. Pleasingly the response to many of the new initiatives and the return of programs and services has been positive however many students are on campus less often which is having an impact on fitness memberships and income.

The organisation has been able to demonstrate the value of regular physical activity during a range of university strategic planning processes with mixed success. It is important to ensure an ongoing presence on the various working groups and committees that support the student experience strategies and to promote the benefits of regular physical activity, and what is required for student and staff engagement to the key decision makers broadly across the University.

The Director outlined the plans to improve the quality, capacity and accessibility of sporting facilities including the development of the Sport Capital Infrastructure Plan. There are indications that the University will support several shovel-ready sport projects, but this has not been confirmed formally as of yet. The organisation is responsible for the ongoing management of facilities which is a critical, complex, and at times expensive process with many costs carried by MU Sport. The decision to appoint Turnberry Consulting to develop the Sport Capital Plan has been advantageous however ongoing advocacy will be required to ensure support for shovel ready projects and to shift some of the cost burden for facilities.

The Director outlined the goal to ensure that all sporting programs and services, including clubs, are safe, respectful, and inclusive in line with our duty of care to students. The complexity of managing the risk associated with sporting, recreational and instructional activity is increasing resulting in a greater level of oversight of the sporting clubs and sporting activities. The reputational and financial risk to the University is significant, and issues are becoming more complex and expensive to manage which may exceed the perceived benefit as the cost of providing services and management of issues may become excessive. The organisation needs to ensure support and expertise is maintained internally, University support is provided, and demonstrate the benefits of the activity against the risk of doing so.

Ultimately the goals for sport can only be delivered if we are able to improve the long-term sustainability of the organisation with an operating model and agreements that can secure funding support, access to facilities, and manage the cost of staffing and systems. The Director noted that there may be a reluctance from the University to address the cost of doing business, so we need to demonstrate the business case for a more effective business model based on a prudent financial and operational model.

The Chair expressed disappointment about not receiving any additional SSAF funding for the four proposals submitted and the lack of information on the decision. Professor Nicholson has discussed this with members of the SSAF Grant Committee and suggested that the Director follow up directly with the committee to request formal written feedback. Professor Biddulph thanked the Director for his recent presentation to the China Engagement Working Group as an opportunity to work more closely with the Academic Divisions.

The General Manager outlined the University's risk management framework which is the process to identify, manage and monitor key risks, and suggested that MU Sport could replicate the system or be integrated with it or a bit of both. The Chair recommended that the University's reporting system be replicated to identify the key risks and actions to be reviewed twice a year outlining if the risk has been mitigated. This was noted by the Director for action.

#### **Action**

*That the Director approach the SSAF Grants Committee seeking further information and formal written feedback for the express purpose of presenting it to the Advisory Board.*

*That a MU Sport Strategic Risks register be developed for regular reporting to the Advisory Board.*

#### **Resolution**

*The Advisory Board noted the Advocacy and Risk paper.*

## **2.2 2023 Budget and Budget Principles**

The Director and General Manager presented on the 2023 Budget and Budget Principles which were listed as separate items on the agenda but combined due to time constraints.

The University's financial and budget process requires a high-level budget for the following year be submitted in August that only outlines total income, expenditure, and net position, with the final more detailed budget confirmed in late October. The Advisory Board Budget is the second stage and outlines income and expenditure for all the key service areas which was included in the budget papers.

The Director outlined that the budget strategic principles have been adjusted for next year to continue to invest in the return to campus strategies and to provide back of house services and sports capital planning support. The net operating result is a forecasted deficit of \$991,081 and Mr Garlick clarified that this was an operational deficit, noting that Chancellery request that we report including our trust and Sport Foundation income. The figure that gets reported and submitted to Chancellery Finance will be a \$502,000 deficit which will require a further draw down from the cash reserve next year.

The Director acknowledged that continuing deficits were not sustainable beyond next year and as a result the financial performance will be reviewed at the end of first semester with any required adjustments to be made to ensure a return to breakeven from 2024. In the event that the University will not accept a deficit adjustment will be made to the 2023 budget to achieve breakeven however this would be difficult and require a significant reduction in services and programs.

The Chair asked the Advisory Board members to support the 2023 Budget, and continued investment from the cash reserve, noting the commitment to review the financial performance at the end of first semester 2023.

Professor Biddulph left the meeting at 10.45am.

## **Resolution**

*The Advisory Board noted the 2023 Budget.*

### **3. MATTERS FOR NOTING**

#### **3.1 Advisory Board Update**

The Director presented the Advisory Board Update.

There has been a reasonable start to semester two, with students attending activities in strong numbers with the highest weekly attendance for the year occurring during the second week. Over 1000 students had registered for the Student Life Active Pass and there had been 52 club come and try activities. The accumulative number of unique student users over the year is about 8,000 compared to around 13,000 at the same time in 2019. Progress remains sluggish, as many students and staff have either not returned to campus and many are attending campus less often.

The Director thanked Professor Nicholson for the \$50,000 provided by the University from SSAF to support students to attend the Uni Nationals in Perth. This was critical in ensuring that the team was viable as many of the teams were struggling to recruit sufficient students. In total 221 student-athletes would now be representing the University. Professor Nicholson also congratulated MU Sport for the quick turnaround in establishing a complex process to award the grants in a short period of time.

The Director repeated the presentation given to the China Engagement Working Group which highlighted the various opportunities available to international students and the impact of sport.

The Director and Mr Barton met recently with the University's master planning architects, Hassell, who outlined the Parkville Campus masterplan and a range of concepts in and around the Sports Precinct. The proposals would be included in the University Capital Plan which the Director hopes to present at the next meeting.

The Board were shown a video documenting the experiences of seven student-athletes involved in the elite athlete program to end the meeting.

## **Resolution**

*The Advisory Board noted the Advisory Board Update and the Annual Financial Report for the period ending 30 June 2022.*

### **4. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

### **5. MEETING FINALISATION**


#### **5.1 Meeting Close**

The meeting closed at 11.20am.

#### **5.2 Next Meeting**

Next meeting on Thursday 10 November 2022 at 6.00pm.

Signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ian Marshman", is written on a light-colored rectangular background.

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**Chair Mr Ian Marshman**

18 October 2022

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**Date**

**MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY SPORT ADVISORY BOARD**

**ACTION SHEET 3/2022 – 8 September 2022**

<b>Minute no.</b>	<b>Item Title</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Person/s Responsible</b>
2.1	Advocacy and Risk	That the Director approach the SSAF Grants Committee seeking further information and formal written feedback for the express purpose of presenting it to the Advisory Board.	Director
		That a MU Sport Strategic Risks register be developed for regular reporting to the Advisory Board.	General Manager