

**MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY SPORT ADVISORY BOARD**  
**MEETING 2/2022 – 9 June 2022**

The minutes of meeting 2/2022 of the Melbourne University Sport (MU Sport) Advisory Board held on Thursday 9 June at 9.30am in Social Space A, Nona Lee Sports Centre.

**PRESENT:**

Mr Ian Marshman (Chair)  
Professor Pip Nicholson  
Professor Sarah Biddulph  
Professor Richard James  
Ms Rosemary Bissett (via Zoom)  
Ms Joanna Weston (via Zoom)  
Mr Shawn Ingle  
Mr Paul Holland  
Ms Lara McKay  
Ms Meezaan Dickinson  
Mr Tim Lee (Director)

**APOLOGIES:**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Jean-Luc Garlick (Secretary)  
Ms Michelle Edwards (Minute taker)  
Ms Julie Caundle  
Mr Ken Barton until item 3.1

**1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Welcome**

The Chair welcomed all present and noted that Ms Bissett and Ms Weston were joining the meeting via zoom. The Chair also welcomed and acknowledged the appointment of Professor Nicholson and Ms Dickinson to the Advisory Board and a brief introduction was provided by each attendee.

**1.2 Apologies**

No apologies were listed.

**1.3 Minutes from the previous meeting**

The minutes were accepted as a true record as per circular resolution sent 6 May 2022.

**1.4 Business Arising/Action Item Updates**

**1.4.1 Sport Capital Infrastructure Plan**

Included at agenda item 2.2.

**1.4.2 2021 Annual Review**

The Director to discuss with Professor Nicholson how to provide review to senior University Managers.

## **2. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **2.1 2022 Strategic Update**

The Director presented the 2022 Strategic Planning Update, and the 2022 Strategic Tasks.

The Director acknowledged the ongoing strategic planning undertaken by the Advisory Board and staff over a 12 month period, reviewing that the objectives in the Strategic Plan for Sport are in line with the University's *Advancing Melbourne* and *Student Life* strategies, and the impact of COVID 19. The senior management team then reviewed the outcomes of the Strategic Planning Workshop in November to identify the five high level strategic tasks, and targets.

Encouraging students and staff to return to campus to engage in physical activity is our immediate priority as well as the development of a longer-term Participation Strategy to address the impacts of the lockdowns. The objective is to develop and deliver an expanded range of programs and services to encourage students and staff to engage in physical activity on campus in support of the University's return to campus objectives.

Support is required from the University to increase the prominence of the program in the University student communications channels, provide access to facilities across campus, and secure additional financial support. The Advisory Board, staff, and stakeholders also need to advocate more strongly for the benefits of regular physical activity to increase the prominence in the Student Life Strategy, Mental Health Framework, and other key strategies. This will be an 18-month journey to understand the impacts of the lockdowns, and requires an ongoing investment, as income is unlikely to return to pre COVID levels quickly.

The key strategic task was the completion of the Sport Capital Infrastructure Plan, which commenced in 2020, has already made significant progress as a result of the appointment of Turnberry Consultants in late 2021, and the ongoing work with senior management, to ensure that we are included in the Estates Planning process. There is also a parallel process to identify and prioritise our shovel ready capital projects for submission this year.

The confirmation of the club affiliation arrangements with the University is a critical higher-level task for completion this year. The task has emerged in response to the range of significant club issues that identified the need to clarify and improve the governance arrangements, and provide greater oversight and management of the operational, financial, and reputational risk associated with club activities.

The organisation has also been focused on providing an increased suite of club services to reduce the burden on club volunteers and assist the clubs to meet their financial and legislative obligations. The services include in-house financial, HR and risk management systems, and office-bearer and volunteer training to support clubs and provide greater oversight. It is planned to confirm the suite of services required and endeavour to get a range of them in place this year. Ms Bissett commented that she had noticed an improvement in the professionalism of the clubs due to the increasing support provided by MU Sport.

The long term viability of the organisation is the key objective of the final strategic tasks to secure agreements with the University on funding, staffing, financial and building management. This would also include a review of our operating model to provide more efficient and effective delivery of services, management of facilities and support for clubs and activities.

The planning tasks remaining include the development of the Advocacy Strategy and Strategic Risks Audit for presentation to the Advisory Board, and the review of the *Strategic Plan for Sport* to commence in 2023. The Director concluded the presentation by thanking the Advisory Board, in particular the Advisory Board Chair, and the staff for their work in the review process last year and in confirming the strategic tasks, reviewing simplifying the format.

The 2022 strategic tasks were noted.

Professor Nicholson observed that students appeared to be returning for some classes but that they may be more selective about their time on campus. Staff are also exhausted and stretched. It would be challenging to bring the community back to campus the longer this continues and recommended that the organisation continue to work closely with the University to get the right settings and that a satellite operation in or around the new Student Precinct be considered. The Chair suggested a target for reactivation is to link MU Sport into other student engagement activities and embed sport into broader University student engagement and participation strategies.

Mr Holland suggested that the campus traffic will remain low for longer than expected and enquired what more could be done to market to our target audiences, and what alternative participation strategies might be implemented to increase usage at our facilities and to convert casual usage into longer term memberships.

The Director noted that the campus experience for staff and students may ultimately change significantly as a consequence of the lockdowns and in future this may be more informal and casual activity requiring a reset of services and programs. However, it is unlikely to be clear what the long-term impact on our operations may be until at least the end of first semester next year, at which time a more detailed review of our operations will take place.

Professor Nicholson enquired about possible activities provided by faculties and schools for their casual social and informal sport clubs and how the organisation could promote and support these activities. The Director outlined that there is a range of new programs proposed for second semester targeted at graduate students and informal sport that would support the activities taking place in the academic divisions. There have been a range of proposals submitted to the SSAF Funding Committee which will determine the level of support that can be provided.

### **Action**

*That the Director and General Manager develop an Advocacy Strategy and undertake a Strategic Risks Audit for presentation to the Advisory Board.*

### **Resolution**

*The Advisory Board noted the 2022 Strategic Planning Update and 2022 Strategic Tasks.*

## **2.2 Sport Capital Improvement Plan Update**

Mr Barton presented an update on the Sport Capital Improvement Plan and the concurrent priority projects.

Mr Barton reflected on the workshops held previously with the Advisory Board, sporting clubs, and City of Melbourne in the development of the plan, highlighting the theme of student experience and partnerships. The feedback from the workshops will be taken into consideration in the draft plan which will be distributed in July.

The Estate Planning Group is developing a University Capital Master Plan, for which we were asked to provide our priority projects list for presentation at the July 4 Estate Planning Group meeting. This paper will be considered by senior University staff for projects in 2022 and 2023.

The Chair thanked Mr Barton, noted the update, and asked for any comments or questions. Professor Biddulph enquired about the long-term plan for Union House and if any opportunities might arise for sport. Mr Holland suggested that the master plan will determine what the space will be used for and there is likely to be a number of different parties interested in the future use of the site.

Ms Bissett enquired about the projects on our priority list, the criteria for prioritising them, and the amount of capital required for each. The Director advised that the list had been loosely prioritised at the time but that the Advisory Board would be involved in a further review of the list.

### **Resolution**

*The Advisory Board noted the Sport Capital Improvement Plan Update.*

## **3. MATTERS FOR NOTING**

### **3.1 Advisory Board Update**

The Director presented the Advisory Board Update.

The Director highlighted that it is now a good time to reflect on our performance in semester one, as the exam period is when activity traditionally drops off and students will not return to campus until the start of semester two in late July. The staff and clubs are doing an outstanding job to encourage the students and staff to participate in regular physical activity on campus. Over 90 events have taken place to introduce students to the vast range physical activity offered, including over 70 introductory come and try activities. A range of weekly events have taken place across campus to raise awareness of our recreation and fitness programs and facilities, with 1300 students registering for the Student Life Active Pass.

The level of support from the University has been reassuring with increased profile and prominence in student communications and access to additional space. However, as mentioned earlier, we are still waiting on the results of SSAF funding proposals.

The participation graphs for first semester were presented which demonstrated that progress had been sluggish, as many students and staff had still not returned to campus. Visits to the Beaurepaire Centre (gym and pool) are at about 1/3 of 2019 levels which is about the same rate as foot traffic in the libraries, so our performance aligns with the general return to campus rate.

Ms Bissett asked about the role of the clubs to attract students back on campus and provide extra benefit to the student experience. The Director outlined that this had been the focus of the workshop at the recent Club Forum where clubs shared ideas around engaging with new and returning students. Each club has also been provided with \$1,000 to support a student engagement activity in semester two.

The 2021 Club Financial Health Check has been completed, and the Director was pleased to report that 41 of the 43 clubs are in a sound financial position. Interestingly, the data also indicated that the financial performance of the clubs improved in 2021 against the previous year. Income increased by 60% to \$2.7m, with expenditure increasing by 40% to \$2.2m with \$1.7m cash in bank a 31% increase. In addition, a sample of 7 clubs were able to demonstrate

that appropriate financial management procedures were in place which we will test more broadly next year. There were two recommendations that have carried forward to be actioned in 2022, recognising that we need a more robust financial management model to provide greater oversight.

The Scholarship Advisory Groups have also considered 109 applications from student-athletes with 27 students from 15 sports receiving scholarships with a total value of \$135,000. Ms McKay enquired if the scholarships were mostly cash or if there was some tuition assistance provided to the student-athletes. The Director advised that the majority is cash tied to travel grants to represent the University and support living costs, along with in-kind support for gym memberships, physio, and strength and conditioning. Ms Dickinson commented that whilst financial support is appreciated by the student-athletes, the access to strength and condition training and the general support that the staff provided was equally valuable.

A key cabinet was installed this week in the Sports Centre, improving the customer experience of our clubs and other users, as club officials are no longer required to line up at reception to get the keys for their storage areas. In addition, Home 2 Café, a social enterprise that supports homeless young people, has been relocated from Swanston Street to between the Sports Centre and the Beaurepaire Centre along with the reconfiguration of the ramp down to Tin Alley. This is now a much more attractive and engaging location.

The Director reported that 42 club presidents and delegates, along with the Advisory Board Chair, Professor Biddulph, and staff came together for the recent Club Forum. The Director asked that the Advisory Board note the update, finance report, and scholarship minutes attached.

The Chair thanked the Director and asked if there were any comments or questions on the report. The Chair asked about the process to manage the club sexual harassment reports. The Director advised that the staff are working closely with the clubs to review and manage in accordance with the Club Grievance Principles and on advice from the University's Safer Community Program.

Mr Holland enquired if the forecasted \$500,000 deficit was funded out of cash in hand. The Director confirmed that this was the case and our financial position reflects the significant investment in the reactivation program and the reduced income forecast for fitness memberships as initially outlined in the 2022 budget presented at the March meeting.

#### **Resolution**

*The Advisory Board noted the Advisory Board Update and the Finance Report.*

#### **4. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

#### **5. MEETING FINALISATION**

##### **5.1 Meeting Close**

The meeting closed at 11.05am.

##### **5.2 Next Meeting**

Next meeting on Thursday 28 July 2022 at 6.00pm.

Signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record:



Chair Mr Ian Marshman

23 August 2022

Date

**MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY SPORT ADVISORY BOARD**

**ACTION SHEET 2/2022 – 9 June 2022**

| <b>Minute no.</b> | <b>Item Title</b>     | <b>Action</b>  | <b>Person/s Responsible</b>  |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 2.1               | 2022 Strategic Update | That the Director and General Manager develop an Advocacy Strategy and undertake a Strategic Risks Audit for presentation to the Advisory Board. | Director and General Manager |