

**MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY SPORT ADVISORY BOARD**  
**MEETING 1/2022 – 17 March 2022**

The minutes of meeting 1/2022 of the Melbourne University Sport (MU Sport) Advisory Board held on Thursday 17 March at 5:00pm in Social Space A, Nona Lee Sports Centre.

**PRESENT:**

Mr Ian Marshman (Chair)  
Professor Sarah Biddulph  
Professor Richard James  
Ms Rosemary Bissett  
Mr Tim Lee (Director)

**APOLOGIES:**

Ms Joanna Weston  
Mr Shawn Ingle  
Mr Paul Holland  
Mr Michael Dardis  
Ms Lara McKay  
Professor Sarah Wilson  
Professor Gregor Kennedy

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Jean-Luc Garlick (Secretary)  
Ms Michelle Edwards (Minute taker)  
Ms Julie Caundle  
Mr Rod Warnecke  
Mr Ken Barton  
Mr Brad Harris for item 1.3  
Mr Jonathan Coulson for item 2.1 (via Zoom from the UK)

**1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Welcome**

The Chair welcomed all present and noted the appointment of Ms Rosemary Bissett to the Advisory Board. The Chair also thanked members for attending on campus.

**1.2 Apologies**

All apologies were noted.

**1.3 Club Presentation – Snowboarding (MUST)**

The Chair welcomed the Snowboarding Club and Mr Warnecke introduced Mr Harris, the club president, and invited him to present.

Mr Harris's presentation focused on the club's longer term strategy and outlined the club's intentions and expectations post COVID. The immediate focus is on reducing organisational and financial barriers for students and addressing the seasonal limitations of snow sport and diversifying their membership.

The Chair thanked Mr Harris for his presentation and asked for questions from the Advisory Board. Ms Bissett enquired about out of season engagement including a focus on fitness. Professor James enquired about trip safety to which Mr Harris responded that the club manages trip risk mitigation, encourages members to take lessons, and informs members about the snow code of conduct.

Mr Harris left the meeting at 5.20 pm.

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

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

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

There were no action items arising from the previous meeting.

The Secretary outlined that the draft minutes would now be circulated to the Board after the meeting for approval via circular resolution so that they could be made available on the MU Sport website sooner.

## **2. GUEST SPEAKER PRESENTATION**

### **2.1 Sport Capital Infrastructure Plan**

The Chair welcomed Mr Coulson from Turnberry Consulting to present on the Sport Capital Infrastructure Plan and provide his initial observations.

Mr Coulson outlined the work undertaken to date including an extensive document review, benchmarking, and stakeholder engagement with MU Sport staff and management group, the City of Melbourne, and club workshops. Mr Coulson outlined seven key themes emerging from the project, many of which were also contained in the 2012 Sport Capital Plan.

The University of Melbourne is a globally recognised leader, however sport is not perceived to be central, or with the same standard, to the University's mission. The importance of sport in providing outstanding student experience should be recognised and uplifted in the university's mission to become a point of aspiration for potential students and a deciding factor in their enrolment. This could be done by understanding the University's operational model and where MU Sport fits in the corporate structure.

The backlog of infrastructure maintenance, and the poor condition of existing sport infrastructure, does not service the increasing capacity of the growing campus population. There is an opportunity to build capacity by expanding our external facility network and partnerships with other organisations.

The University has expanded to the point that south of Grattan Street has not been provided the same level of sport facilities for students and staff. However, from Mr Coulson's workshops, our clubs indicated that the fragmented geography of facility access was not a major barrier. The clubs that he spoke to feel challenged with their ability to grow and that the current condition and access to facilities is impacting adversely on their operations. Issues include access to quality facilities with sufficient capacity, adequate storage and social spaces.

These themes will be explored further and be developed into the guiding principles which will shape the future capital infrastructure plan for sport. Mr Coulson will continue to engage with

the Advisory Board, the MU Sport senior management, and obtain feedback from the student engagement process by conducting a student survey before moving to the next stage.

The Chair thanked Mr Coulson and asked if there were any institutions that were good examples of a better alignment with the University's mission and sporting facilities. Mr Coulson commented that universities such as Sunshine Coast and Latrobe had demonstrated a better alignment. The Chair asked if there were UK examples that show more dissonance between their mission and their sporting facilities. Mr Coulson noted Bath and Birmingham are examples that could be considered.

Professor Biddulph asked about the impact of university's fragmented geographical campuses for allocating capital sport facilities. Mr Coulson stated studies conducted suggested that this is not a major issue and could be overcome through better timetabling, communications, sign posting, and narrowing the perceived physical barriers. From his workshops, our clubs indicated that the fragmented geography of facility access was not a major barrier.

Ms Bissett asked about the link between academic reputation and sporting connection, enquired about offering sport academic courses, and questioned what can be done about offering sporting scholarships. Mr Coulson responded that there is a correlation with more established universities and their reputation in attracting more students, irrespective of the quality of sporting facilities or sports on offer. He indicated that scholarships and grants may attract more students and prevent them from leaving Australia for other university opportunities.

Professor James commented that the University does not have a clear understanding of the connection sport and recreation has on the quality of the student experience, wellbeing and leadership development, which needs to be elaborated on in the report and highlighted to the University the value of investment in sport.

The Chair thanked Mr Coulson for his presentation, and he left the meeting at 6.10 pm.

Professor James outlined his concerns about the example universities mentioned in the benchmarking and that the rationale for why sport was important may not resonate with University management. These concerns were shared by other Advisory Board members. The Director suggested that the Advisory Board members could either meet with Mr Coulson individually or that another group session could be organised to explore these issues and themes further. It was also suggested that additional stakeholder engagement be conducted to include meetings with senior University management, and including the Provost and the incoming DVC Professor Nicolson. The Director advised that the draft report from Turnberry would be distributed to the Advisory Board as soon as it was available.

#### **Action**

*That a follow up stakeholder session be conducted with the Advisory Board.*

### **3. MATTERS FOR DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 2021 Annual Review**

The Director presented the 2021 Annual Review.

2021 was another challenging year, due to the detrimental impacts of COVID and the extended lockdowns. The year started very positively with the facilities open and club activity back in full swing during the first semester, with the University announcing the intention to get students and staff to return in semester two. Unfortunately, Melbourne went into an

extended lockdown in July, with the University announcing in September that lectures and tutorials would remain online for semester two.

The staff became experts at closing the facilities but also in quickly pivoting to provide services remotely to keep the University community active and connected using a variety of online content. Many of the systems and processes developed during lockdowns, such as online fitness programs and zoom club network meetings, have proven popular and will continue to be provided.

In November, we commenced the process of returning to campus with the safe reopening of our facilities and services, as well as the return of club activities. This occurred prior to much of the campus reopening due to the significant number of college residents who had remained on site.

The Director presented the annual highlights video but noted that it was a draft version.

The Olympics were a welcome distraction with highlights including Master of Surgery student Elena Galiabovitch carrying the Olympic flag at the Opening Ceremony, Dylan Alcott winning his fourth gold medal, and Buxton Scholarship holder Jaryd Clifford winning two silvers.

The University Basketball League (UBL) competition finally commenced after a delay in 2020 with the matches live streamed and men's team captain, Joel Rimes, being named joint league MVP. UniSport Australia named the Strong Women Network as the Most Outstanding University Sport Program and awarded the Soccer Club with the Club Leadership Award further acknowledgement of the great work that the organisation and the clubs continue to do in inclusion.

The ongoing detrimental impact of successive lockdowns on the physical and mental wellbeing of students and staff resulted in the University increasing the focus on the campus experience in 2022. As a result, we were encouraged by the Advisory Board to develop an ambitious plan to use sport and recreation programs to encourage students and staff to return to campus in 2022, thus named Reactivation.

The allegations of sexual harassment against a club coach were a significant and ongoing issue that will continue to reverberate in 2022.

Significant progress was also made with the review of the Sport Capital Plan with the appointment of Turnberry Consulting to support the project. We were also able to complete the Club Performance Strategy which was presented to the Advisory Board late in the year.

The financial position was very strong despite COVID. With a final operating surplus of \$38,348 largely due to SSAF income from previous years being carried forward into the 2021 budget and the allocation of a surplus SSAF collected from the year before. There was also a change to the University reporting requirements which has resulted in the Trust and Sports Foundation accounts being incorporated in our financial statements, resulting in an overall surplus of \$777,723. The annual financial report attached to the Advisory Board Update was noted as read.

The Annual Report will be completed and distributed shortly along with the updated video. The Chair recommended that an updated version of the Advisory Board Annual Review be presented to the senior university management or the Provost group as an important way to profile sport and to highlight some of the underlying operational issues. The Director will discuss the most appropriate forum with Professor Kennedy.

The Director suggested that despite the many challenges, MU Sport continued to make great progress in 2021 which was a credit to the staff, clubs, student athletes and volunteers who

demonstrated extraordinary commitment and resilience in response to the ever-changing environment. The Director also acknowledged the important role of Advisory Board.

**Action**

*Distribute the Annual Review to Senior University Management.*

**Resolution**

*The Advisory Board noted the 2021 Annual Review.*

**3.2 Strategic Planning Update**

Due to time constraints, the Strategic Planning Update was not presented and taken as noted.

**4. MATTERS FOR NOTING**

**4.1 Advisory Board Update**

The Director presented the Advisory Board Update.

Participation data of the early weeks of semester one shows a slow increase across most of our significant activities, including the gym, pool, group fitness, and casual venue hire. The clubs have not yet provided their membership data but this will be reported on at the next meeting. Despite the numbers trending upwards, participation is not meeting the 2022 targets apart from venues. Anecdotally the students are returning to campus as it is noticeably busier but COVID isolation in the colleges and the closure of the Union Building is having an impact.

The Club Advisory Group (CAG) met in early December to consider a range of issues including the 2021 club sport awards, the Sporting Club Performance Strategy and the proposed 2022 Club Funding allocations. The Elite Athlete Advisory Group (EAAG) also met in December to assess the Year 12 student-athletes seeking entry under the Elite Athlete and Artistic Performers' Entry Scheme (EAAPES).

The Directed noted this was Mr Dardis' last Advisory Board meeting and thanked him for his contribution to the Board. The Expression of Interest process had been completed and six applications had been received from students who will be interviewed by the Chair and Director to determine the two best candidates.

**Resolution**

*The Advisory Board noted the update and acknowledged the receipt of the Club Advisory Group and Elite Athlete Advisory Group meeting papers, minutes, and agendas.*

**5. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

**6. MEETING FINALISATION**

**6.1 Meeting Close**

The meeting closed at 6.45pm.

**6.2 Next Meeting**

Next meeting on Thursday 12 May 2022 at 9:30am

Signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record:

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**Chair Mr Ian Marshman**

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**Date**