



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE



University of Melbourne **Strategic Plan For Sport**

Sport Matters at Melbourne
It Inspires, Connects and Leads



Version 2

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Vice-Chancellor's Foreword

'I am pleased to present *The University of Melbourne Strategic Plan for Sport – Sport Matters at Melbourne*'

Sport does matter, and it matters at the University of Melbourne. Throughout history sport has been a great bridge-builder between nations and communities, and has formed an important part of the educational journey of many individuals, myself included. Sporting participation can also inspire lifelong passions, and continuing connections with other people.

So, this Strategic Plan is very important. It comes about after and as a result of extensive consultations with stakeholders. Workshops were conducted with the Senior University Management, the MU Sport Board and staff, residential colleges, student participants and athletes and our sporting clubs and opportunities provided for other stakeholders to contribute directly to the development of the plan.

As a consequence, the new vision emerged; *Sport Matters at Melbourne – It Inspires, Connects and Leads*.

The University of Melbourne has a proud tradition of providing students with quality programs and facilities that foster participation, volunteerism and community leadership, nurture sporting excellence, and support exceptional athletes.

Our aim today is to continue to build on this legacy.

Professor Duncan Maskell

Vice-Chancellor
The University of Melbourne

At a Glance

Our Vision

Sport Matters at Melbourne
It Inspires, Connects and Leads

Our Values

- Excellence
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Respect
- Open and Honest Communication
- Leadership

Our Mission

Improve student and staff physical and mental health, reduce social isolation and create lifelong connections to the University

Pillars	 Participation	 Leadership	 Performance
Goals	Improve the physical and mental wellbeing of all students and staff	Develop and enhance leadership and active citizenship	Celebrate and support sporting excellence
Actions	Provide opportunities for the University community to regularly engage in a diverse range of physical activities that are safe, respectful and inclusive.	Provide a range of leadership development activities and programs to train, reward and recruit student and alumni volunteers.	Recruit and support talented student athletes by providing a high-performance sporting environment and comprehensive athlete support services.
	Improve the quality, capacity and accessibility of sporting facilities that support regular physical activity for students and staff across all campuses of the University.	Support programs and events that address important social issues and raise the educational aspirations of young people from underrepresented groups.	Increase our involvement in national University leagues and sporting events and provide a dynamic spectator experience and attract broad media coverage
	Increase participation by providing targeted programs that recognise and address the unique issues of students from disadvantaged groups and those not engaging in regular physical activity.	Improve the level of engagement with our sport and club alumni and increase their support for our sport programs, clubs and student athletes.	Ensure that the University sporting clubs are the first choice of our student-athletes with support for quality coaching, professional administration, athlete development and student recruitment.
Results	A healthier University community	A community of leaders	A centre of sporting excellence

Sport At Melbourne

Sport has always held a special significance in the life of the University through the performance of our sporting clubs, teams and student-athletes, and in the vast array of sporting programs and facilities that provide students and staff with an outstanding campus experience.

Students have participated in informal and organised sporting and physical recreation since the formation of the University in 1853. They came together to form clubs and teams to compete in weekly or regular community competitions, with the first recorded contest a cricket match in 1857. Our sporting clubs evolved to become some of the pre-eminent university sporting clubs in the country.

Intervarsity sport followed in 1870 and the University soon adopted the British practice of awarding sporting 'Blues' for outstanding performance. In 1874, the land north of Tin Alley, the Sports Precinct, was provided to the University for recreational purposes, with the original Pavilion built in 1906. The Boat House was constructed on the Yarra River in 1908.

In 1904, the governance and management of sport at the University broke away from the Students Union with the establishment of the Sports and Physical Recreation Committee and the Sports Union, with the first Director of Sport appointed the same year.

Intercollegiate sport was established in 1921 and now involves hard-fought competition between 12 residential colleges with many finals – in particular, the rowing regatta on the Yarra River – attracting

colourful and vocal supporters. After the Second World War, the arrival at the University of returned servicemen and the children of post-war migrants led to the introduction of new activities such as fencing, judo, badminton, basketball and soccer. Many of these could not be accommodated on campus and required access to sporting grounds and facilities in Princes and Royal parks, as well as facilities within the local community.

In 1954, the Beaurepaire Centre was built with the generous support of Olympian and former Melbourne Lord Mayor Sir Frank Beaurepaire, and the first hard surface running track laid. The Sports Centre was developed in 1967, providing opportunities for the development of indoor sports on campus as well as weight training and general fitness programs. The building of the Ski Lodge at Mt Buller and the Mountaineering Hut at Mt Feathertop in the 1960s reflected an expanding interest in alpine sports and bushwalking.

Franz Stampfl arrived in 1955 to teach physical education and successfully coach a generation of student-athletes, many of whom represented Australia, including 1968 Olympic gold medallist Ralph Doubell. Some of Australia's most successful athletes have been students at

the University, many of whom have gone on to be significant community and industry leaders. Alumni include World War II hero and humanitarian Edward 'Weary' Dunlop, the first Victorian-born rugby player to represent Australia, and Olympian and former Governor of Victoria John Landy, to name but two.

The stand-alone Intervarsity model was replaced by the emergence of the Australian University Games (AUG) in 1995 and the University has taken out the title of Overall University Champion six times, most recently in 2013. In 2009, the tradition of head-to-head competition was revived with the *Australian Boat Race* (ABR), reigniting a long-standing rivalry with Sydney University that has become an important annual event on the University calendar.

A significant upgrade of the Beaurepaire Centre was completed in 2006 incorporating a refurbishment of the pool and extensive strength and cardio-training areas. Two group fitness rooms were also established in the Sports Centre, significantly increasing the participation of female students. The Lincoln Square Fitness Centre opened in 2011 to accommodate the growing campus population south of Grattan Street.

The Boat House was extended, and a function space added in 2009. Shortly after, the northern end of the Sports Centre was remodelled, and the building renamed in recognition of a significant gift from Nona Lee. The new Pavilion was opened in 2014 and named in honour of long-serving head curator Ernie Croleby at the request of the many

generous benefactors who made the development possible.

In 2009, the Sports and Physical Recreation Committee was replaced by a University-appointed Board to advise the University Council on sport and recreation strategy and policy. The move reflected the increasing complexity and scale of sport, fitness and recreational activities across the University, as well as the level of professional management and oversight required. In 2018, the University adopted a Charter that outlines the mission and purpose for MU Sport along with the governance and management arrangements.

'Our sporting clubs evolved to become some of the pre-eminent university sporting clubs in the country'

Students have traditionally contributed to the cost of participation through compulsory student fees and the payment of participation, entry or membership fees. The University funded sport directly during Voluntary Student Unionism (VSU) between 2007 and 2011, before a Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) was reintroduced in 2012. The SSAF allocated to MU Sport is directed to support student sporting activity, provide direct and indirect support to sporting clubs, and to maintain the University sporting facilities and grounds.

For the comprehensive history of sport at the University of Melbourne, see *The Ties that Bind* by June E Senyard.



Students state that sport does matter

In November 2017, the second University of Melbourne Student Wellbeing Survey gathered information on levels of student activity to identify hurdles to participation and the impact of sport on the University Student Experience. The survey was distributed to **38,000** students and drew almost **7000** responses.

It found that:

- **77 per cent** of respondents participated in regular physical activity at least once a week; **45 per cent, three or more times**, of which **50 per cent** were involved in regular physical activity at the University
- More than **80 per cent** of students believed that it was important — or very important — that the University provided sporting programs and facilities
- **23 per cent** of the student population were **not** engaging in regular physical activity and were reporting a lower level of satisfaction with the student experience
- **85 per cent** of students indicated that they would like to participate in recreation, fitness and sporting activities
- Major barriers to participation were cost, and a lack of time due to study, work or family commitments
- Students who were not participating were more likely to be from non-English-speaking backgrounds, both international and domestic



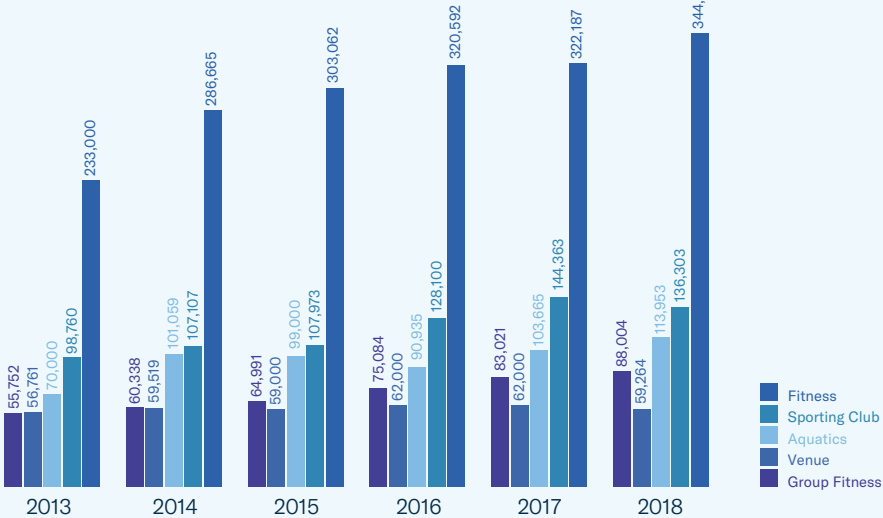
Participation

Goal — Improve the physical and mental wellbeing of all students and staff.

The link between regular physical activity and emotional wellbeing, as well as improved academic performance, are comprehensively documented. Regular physical activity improves student wellbeing and academic success through improvements to physical and mental health, confidence, self-esteem and reduced social isolation.

Sport has always been able to engage students in significant numbers and, since 2009, recorded participation has increased on average by 7 per cent a year. In 2018, there were around 18,000 students participating on close to 750,000 occasions. This is the single largest cohort of students engaged in a regular extracurricular activity at the University.

University of Melbourne Student Visits



We have set the ambitious target of having 70 per cent of the student population engaged in regular physical activity at the University by the end of 2023.

These include a diverse range of competitive, instructional and recreational activities provided by the 45 affiliated sporting clubs; fitness services, including aquatics and group fitness; local and international representative sport; intercollegiate sport; campus sport; and casual use of sporting facilities.

Sport has also recently been able to provide a range of programs targeted at many underrepresented groups. The Water Safety Program, for example, provides international students with the essential skills and knowledge for survival around water, while targeted sport, recreation and fitness programs are available for the

Indigenous student population. Students at the regional and smaller metropolitan campuses are also now being provided with regular activities.

We have set the ambitious target of having 70 per cent of the student population engaged in regular physical activity at the University by the end of 2023. The challenge is to develop a healthy and thriving University community whilst managing an increasing student population, including more international and postgraduate students spread across an expanding campus footprint.

Support established programs and provide new and emerging activities

A significant proportion of our students continue to be drawn to the traditional mix of activities offered at the University, and we will ensure that these activities are relevant to students, convenient to access, affordable and professionally managed to maximise student participation.

Increasingly, students are also keen to learn new skills and/or participate in sporting activities for the first time but are hesitant about making a significant financial or time commitment if they are unsure about the activity or likely demands of study. Students are looking for more flexible program options such as 'come and try' activities (free for a short period of time) aimed at providing access to the activity without having to commit to the cost of membership or a drawn-out program in the first instance. Many of our programs and club activities already provide access in this manner, so we will look to co-ordinate and communicate these opportunities more fully.

Our students are often at the forefront (early adopters) of new and emerging physical recreation activities such as skateboarding, which may not be provided formally at the University. We will work with student groups to identify and cater for new and emerging activities.

Ensuring that these activities are safe, respectful and inclusive is a central priority of our organisation. Historically, club and

sporting activity has been provided without major incident due to the diligence, skill and dedication of the staff, volunteers, coaches and club administrators. Thankfully, major incidents are rare, but there is an increasing complexity in managing the risk associated with sporting, recreational and instructional activity.

A recent University review to consider 'best practice' for the oversight of sporting clubs and sports activities established that the University had a clear duty of care to students and their physical and emotional safety. This now requires increased oversight of how activities are conducted, coaching and instructor recruitment, management of equipment, and volunteer support and training.

'Our students are often at the forefront (early adopters) of new and emerging physical recreation activities'

MU Sport is now clearly responsible for ensuring that all club and sporting activities comply with University policy and procedures, national or state body rules and regulations, and industry best practice to ensure the safety of participants, and that the behavior of students, our teams and club participants and officials meets community expectations.

Action — Provide opportunities for the University community to regularly engage in a diverse range of physical activities that are safe, respectful and inclusive.

More spaces and places

The University envisages a campus population of 50,000 students and more than 7000 staff, with more students living in residential accommodation. The campus is now spread across a larger footprint, with the University's expanding residential colleges providing no or minimal sporting facilities.

The sports facilities have not expanded since the student population was closer to 16,000 and now operate above capacity, cannot accommodate increasing demand and are no longer fit for purpose as they don't provide adequate disability access and gender-neutral change rooms. Organised and informal activities also take place in sporting facilities and grounds located in the surrounding parks and local community, with the sporting facilities at the regional and smaller metropolitan campuses either non-existent or poorly maintained.

New and upgraded facilities are now urgently needed across the University, along with securing longer-term access to local community facilities so as to achieve the 70 per cent student participation goal and to support the performance of our clubs, teams and athletes. This includes the development of a Sport Leadership and Visitor Centre to celebrate the history of sport at the University and house programs that raise the aspiration of secondary school students.

A review is required involving the University and all stakeholders to ascertain the immediate and long-term requirements to ensure the provision of quality sporting facilities across all campuses that meet the diverse and constantly changing needs of the University community.



'The provision of quality facilities will require the support of the University, our clubs and alumni, along with partnerships with local councils, schools and state and national sporting associations'

Action — Improve the quality, capacity and accessibility of sporting facilities that support regular physical activity for students and staff across all campuses of the University.

Making a difference to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged students

The 2017 Student Wellbeing Survey identified that the 21 per cent of students not engaging in any regular physical activity were reporting a lower level of satisfaction with the student experience. These students were more likely to be from non-English-speaking backgrounds, low socioeconomic and equity groups (including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students), commuting significant distances or based at regional or smaller metropolitan campuses.

'A range of programs such as the Water Safety Program and the Indigenous Sport Program are now providing a positive experience and a sense of belonging for many students'

Sport has recently made great strides in engaging many of the most vulnerable and isolated students through a range of targeted and innovative programs that increase levels of regular activity and reduce social isolation. A range of programs such as the Water Safety Program and the Indigenous Sport Program are now providing a positive experience and a sense of belonging for many students.

Cost remains a significant barrier, so student fees have been reduced steadily, or are being capped, for many programs. Removing or reducing the cost will remain

our goal. However, this is not likely to be enough to engage many underrepresented groups as they also need tailored programs that recognise and address their unique issues and requirements. To this end, opportunities will be explored to provide additional tailored programs for students with disabilities, women from disadvantaged communities, mature age students, students with mental health issues and those experiencing genuine financial hardship.

Ongoing University support and partnerships with student clubs and groups, faculties, departments such as Murrup Barak, residential colleges and accommodation providers, as well as our sporting clubs, will remain crucial in providing safe and culturally appropriate environments for activities to take place.



Action — Increase participation by providing targeted programs that recognise and address the unique issues of students from disadvantaged groups and those not engaging in regular physical activity.



Leadership

Goal — Develop and enhance leadership and active citizenship.

Sport provides the platform to showcase and develop exceptional leadership. Many student-athletes and club members make rewarding contributions to our clubs, sporting teams and the broader community by becoming articulate and engaging advocates for the University.

In May 2011, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, at the 2nd International Forum on Sport, Peace and Development in Geneva, called for the inclusion of sport in development, peace building and peacekeeping initiatives, emphasising the tremendous capacity for games to

educate, create positive role models and reach out to the poorest and most troubled areas of the world.

The Engagement at Melbourne Strategy (2015) committed the University to: *'Establish a Student Leaders in Sport program, developing leadership capabilities across the University's sporting clubs (and programs) through a program of mentoring and societal engagement.'* (Page 13)

The Leadership pillar supports the development of leadership capabilities in our programs and clubs to enable students, staff and alumni to demonstrate leadership and active citizenship.

Result — A community of leaders

Support volunteerism and develop strong leaders

There are more than 1000 student and alumni volunteers who lead, manage and coach 400-plus competitive University sporting teams on a weekly basis and provide a diverse range of recreational trips and instructional activities. These contributions range from committee and strategic leadership tasks and highly specialised coaching and instructing roles, through to cutting the half-time oranges and sweeping the clubrooms.

Student volunteering in clubs and sporting teams also develops a commitment to community service and provides opportunities for students to develop and refine their leadership and management skills while working in teams, setting goals and managing time. Such experience increases their employability as they make

vital and invaluable contributions to the many programs.

The volunteer model remains the most efficient method of providing mass-scale student participation programs. However, student volunteers, in particular, need support and training to challenge the behaviours of peers and participants, and to ensure that activities are inclusive and respectful.

The Sport Leadership/Volunteer program will be established to train, reward and recruit student and alumni volunteers to ensure that all activities are inclusive and respectful, and the behavior of coaches, managers, volunteers and participants meets University and community expectations.

Action — Provide a range of leadership development activities and programs to train, reward and recruit student and alumni volunteers.

Raise aspiration and demonstrate leadership on important social issues

Sport is an important vehicle for engaging with equity groups as student-athletes willingly take on important mentoring roles in a range of programs that raise the educational aspirations of young people. *Raise the Bar* (RTB) is a partnership with Athletics Australia involving more than 40 Indigenous secondary school students from across the country, many from remote communities, who are participating in athletics and leadership activities mentored by the University's student athletes. RTB was awarded the 2015 AUS National Community Leadership Award. The football club is also working

with the Carlton community and recently arrived migrant families to support the establishment of the Carlton Primary School Auskick and junior football club, demonstrating how sport can bring communities together.

We will continue to explore opportunities to work with our clubs and other University stakeholders to develop programs that target underrepresented groups aligned with the public mission of the University in engaging with Melbourne's west, neighbourhood communities and the Goulburn Valley.

Sport is also an important vehicle for providing leadership on important community issues that can engage local and global communities alike. The University's sporting clubs have led the broader sporting community in establishing inclusive programs such as the "Gay? That's OK!" program that was launched in 2015 to give young people struggling with their own sexuality the confidence and reassurance they need

to be themselves. The Pride and Diversity in Sport Program was developed in 2018 to support and celebrate diversity, ensuring the safety and ongoing support of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community at the University. We will continue to explore opportunities to utilise sport as a vehicle to enhance student leadership and address important social issues.

Action — Support programs and events that address important social issues and raise the educational aspirations of young people from underrepresented groups.

Engage with our alumni and celebrate the history of sport

The alumni connection through sport is considerable, with a significant number of graduates actively supporting one or more of our sporting clubs by attending matches, volunteering, mentoring athletes or by contributing financially to the University in support of their sporting club or sport generally. A significant proportion of skilled volunteering is provided by alumni utilising their expertise and experience to lead club committees, through coaching and instruction, and through event management that drives philanthropy.

We will support our clubs to further strengthen their alumni/past player groups and will establish a Representative Sport alumni group to conduct regular events

and celebrate major club and sporting milestones. A Visitor Centre will also be established to celebrate the rich history of our clubs, teams and athletes and to demonstrate to prospective students the quality of the sporting experience and level of support provided to student-athletes at the University.

We will actively engage with the sport and club alumni and provide opportunities for them to support and mentor our student—athletes, provide sport and equity scholarships and support our sport leadership programs and sport facility projects.

Action — Improve the level of engagement with our sport and club alumni and increase their support for our sport programs, clubs and student athletes.



Performance

Goal — Celebrate and support sporting excellence.

‘The performance of our sporting clubs, teams and student-athletes reflects positively on the reputation of the University’

Sporting events and competitions also bring the University community together and are opportunities for meaningful engagement with alumni, business, government and the wider community.

Some of Australia’s most successful athletes have been students at the University and include Olympic and Commonwealth Games medallists,

world champions and national representatives. We have celebrated their athletic triumphs as demonstrations of excellence, and follow them closely as many develop into significant community and industry leaders.

Our sporting clubs are some of the pre-eminent university sporting clubs in the country and our sporting teams have competed successfully since Intervarsity was first established in the 1870s.

The performance pillar will continue to build on our successful sporting tradition.

Result — A centre of sporting excellence

Recruit and support talented student-athletes

The University supports approximately 300 talented student-athletes each year with the provision of flexible study assistance, athlete support services, mentoring, sporting scholarships and advocacy. Many of these students represent the University with pride and form deep and loyal connections, and a sense of affinity with their peers from the shared experience of representing the University.

Increasingly, universities here and overseas, and particularly in the US, are becoming more active in recruiting student-athletes (mostly from Olympic and Commonwealth Games sports) who would normally have come to the University. This phenomenon is also leading an increased awareness among their peers and leading other students to consider studying overseas when factoring in the cost of postgraduate study.

Many athletes, and their parents, have indicated that they would have preferred to have attended an Australian university if suitable sporting competitions and a more comprehensive student-athlete support program had been available. The competition element is addressed below under 'Creating a new Varsity tradition'.

In collaboration with the faculties, our clubs and alumni, we will set in place a more comprehensive sporting, academic and professional mentoring and support system to ensure that we continue to attract the 'brightest and the best'. This will include an expanded suite of athlete services to include specialised training facilities, nutrition and sports psychology support consistent with high performance sporting environments.

Action — Recruit and support talented student athletes by providing a high-performance sporting environment and comprehensive athlete support services.

Creating a new Varsity tradition

Representing or supporting the University at a sporting event provides a sense of belonging and connection to our history that goes beyond graduation and creates a lifelong bond with the University akin to the US homecoming celebrations that drive significant benefaction. This bond creates an important emotional connection to the University for both competitors and spectators.

Intervarsity sport commenced in 1870 with the first contest against Sydney University in rowing and cricket. The stand-alone Intervarsity sporting carnival model was replaced by the Australian University Games

in 1995. However, these competitions are generally held interstate during the semester break and are increasingly viewed as social by many participants. Despite the national body undertaking significant work to address this perception, it continues to persist.

In 2009, the tradition of head-to-head competition was revived with the Australian Boat Race, reigniting a long-standing rivalry with Sydney University that engages the wider University community. The Australian Boat Race has led to the development of the first national university sporting league between some of the Group of Eight (Go8) universities. In 2019, our men's team won

the Australian Rules Grand Final against Sydney University, which was played in front of a noisy and colourful student crowd and live-streamed to the alumni globally. The development of national University leagues now appears inevitable as sporting bodies look to support the establishment of these competitions in an effort to retain talented student-athletes who are being drawn to the US.

The University is also being invited increasingly to participate in sporting events

and carnivals conducted by our international partner universities. These competitions offer a unique and exciting opportunity for our student-athletes to travel and compete overseas, as well as for the University community to support our teams against visiting international opposition.

National sporting organisations and our sporting clubs will be important partners in delivering Varsity events and in supporting engagement with students, staff and alumni.

Action — Increase our involvement in national University leagues and sporting events that provide a dynamic spectator experience and attract broad media coverage.

More students competing for University clubs

There are more than 1400 students competing on a weekly basis across 21 sports in 200-plus teams in what stands as one of the biggest competitive club programs in the country. Many of our clubs are both successful and well regarded. However, many student-athletes elect to remain with their community club because our club does not compete at a suitable level or because they are reluctant to break established connections with family, friends and school. For University clubs competing in semi-professional competitions, it is also difficult to attract and retain student-athletes who are receiving, in some cases, significant remuneration.

Students are attracted to successful and professionally managed organisations, so we will assist our clubs by supporting quality coaching, professional

administration, strength and conditioning, and other athlete services, and with access to the best quality training and competition facilities available. We will also support the establishment of development squads to strengthen internal talent development pathways and increase the number of students competing at the highest level within the club.

We will also reach out to prospective and current students by promoting the broader benefits of competing for our clubs. These include access to wider professional networks, career mentoring support, community engagement programs, international exchange and travel opportunities, and the convenience of training and competing on — or close to — campus.

Action — Ensure that the University sporting clubs are the first choice of our student-athletes with support for quality coaching, professional administration, athlete development and student recruitment.



Sports Centre

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