

# Metropolitan Area Recreation Advisory Group (MARAG) and State Sporting Association (SSA's) Meeting - Minutes

**Date:** Friday 1 May 2020

**Chair:** David Bruce, Coordinator Project Services, City of Bayswater

**Vice-Chair:** Jenni Hess, Recreation Development Coordinator, City of South Perth

**Minutes:** Marissa MacDonald, Senior Policy Advisor Community, WALGA

## Attendees:

Organisation	Name	Position
DLGSC	Rob Thomson	Director Infrastructure Development - Sport and Recreation
DLGSC	Nicola Johnson	Director, Strategic Policy and Investment
DLGSC	Clayton White	Manager Community Infrastructure
WALGA	Kirstie Davis	Policy Manager Community
SportWest	Rob Thompson	CEO
WAFC	Troy Kirkham	Executive Manager, Youth, Community and Game Development
WAFC	Josh Bowler	Manager Facilities and Events
Football West	Jamie Harnwell	Head of Development
WACA	Jo Davies	General Manager, Community Cricket
WACA	Kate Mort	WACA Government Relations Manager
Basketball WA	Evan Stewart	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Hockey WA	Stu Gilsean	CEO
Hockey WA	Ryan Lenegan	General Manager Participation and Member Services
Netball WA	Liz Booth	General Manager – Community Netball
Athletics WA	Vince Del Prete	CEO
PLAWA	Leith Fradd	Executive Officer
City of Cockburn	Dean Burton	Coordinator Recreation Services (Observer)
City of Joondalup	Shane Fraser	Coordinator Recreation Services (Observer)
City of Wanneroo	Craig Bartlett	Co-ordinator, Community Facility Operations (Observer)

## 1. Introduction and Opening

The Chair of MARAG, David Bruce welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted attendance. David provided a brief overview of MARAG to the group. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss how Local Government and State Sporting Associations can work closely together to move forwards with re-opening of sport, pending the advice from the State Government.

## 2. Introductory remarks from WALGA

Kirstie Davis, Policy Manager Community at WALGA provided an overview of the working group that has been set up between WALGA, DLGSC and SportWest to discuss the slow progression towards reopening of sport. The first meeting of this group was held on Thursday 30 May together with the Royal Lifesaving Association to discuss about the aquatics industry. The working group has prioritised engagement to ensure that the announcements are being understood and communicated appropriately and that challenges and opportunities in relaxing of restrictions on sport and sport facilities is reflected through the appropriate channels.

**3. Workshop led by the Chair, David Bruce. Each State Sporting Association was requested to reflect on the following:**

**a) What are the future plan for your State Sporting Association when restrictions are lifted? Are you cancelling all sport, seniors, and juniors, shortened season or season during the off-season for your sport?**

- **Josh Bowler - WAFC** There has been a significant impact on the WAFC which has included reduced hours for staff and approximately 60% staff stood down. As the Jobkeeper allowance has come on board it has allowed some staff to return. Everyone is starting to get a bit more active within current staff model. WAFC has developed a Framework for return to play – this has included looking at club financial viability, safe practices etc WAFC intends to get the season running again as soon as possible, likely with a shortened season. Attempting to stick within the allocated season but having discussions with WACA and WA Little Athletics if it runs over into October. The season needs to be as viable for clubs as soon as possible.
- **Jamie Harnwell - Football West** – Running at 70% capacity with staff stood down. Football needs to be played this year in terms of viability. Looking at mid-June as a start date for community running through to mid-October. Senior men's and women's will likely have a later start.
- **Evan Stewart - Basketball WA** – Similar to football. Have been working with the National body about what it will look like when they return. In basketball, country basketball is played in summer and metropolitan basketball is played in winter. Working closely with metropolitan associations on what a restart might look like. Domestic comps in metro associations, followed by WABL juniors. They are hopeful to run a season to at least October. Most have availability of stadiums through to October for competition plus junior kids. Aiming for training in June and games by July. There may be a cancellation of the State Basketball League as without crowds it is not viable.
- **Stu Gilsenan - Hockey WA** –Have modelled on a worst case scenario. Have had to reduce FTE. Start of the season suspended until 31 May, will revitalise in some form, still modelling on start dates. Operating synthetic turf and grass. May extend into summer, but grass facilities will become an issue. Concern regarding the appetite for hockey. Will wait until Government advice is relaxing. Staged approach. Will be looking at health guidelines to underpin restarting.
- **Liz Booth - Netball WA** – Over 50% staff were stood down end of March. Through Jobkeeper allowance have brought back staff. Communicated to clubs, was through to 30 May. But now revising based on Government advice. Looking to extend it. Looking at a training period sometime in June and competition by July. Most of clubs

and associations have fees, two thirds have re-registered. Netball league – pushing the date out further. For larger competitions in community, looking at running later in year with shorter season. Metro Associations mostly do spring competitions. When competitions start-up it will be October –December.

- **Jo Davies - WACA** –In terms of organisation, working through financial modelling. Full time staff are working at the moment, although some have been asked to keep leave balances down. Have a little more time to shape what return will look like. Indoor cricket and a few competitions up North, pending announcements, will shape what that looks like. Discussion with winter codes and what crossover will look like from a grounds perspective. Figuring out when can come back into training. Waiting to see what elite content will look like.
  - **Vince Del Prete - Athletics** — Impacting on North West of State which generally kicks off in May; they have a winter program there. Potentially no revenue stream April-August. Experiencing the impact from national bodies merging. Undertaking a financial modelling exercise. Seeing if can assist with winter codes. See a lot of volunteers working across sports. Early days, hoping by October can kick off again as per normal.
  - **Rob Thompson - SportWest** –Commend the SSA's. Happy about collaboration between DLGSC, WALGA and SportWest to get the communications through.
  - **Clayton White - DLGSC** – From a facilities perspective have Local Governments brought forwards maintenance regimes that were going to take place later in the season - given that there will likely be a crossover of sport seasons? **Chair MARAG, David Bruce** - Yes a number of LGs have. Brought forward capital works, maintenance works. Some LG's are looking at stimulus packages and grants to assist clubs, LG officers have contacted clubs to offer support.
  - **Nicola Johnson - DLGSC** – echo thoughts from Rob and Kirstie. Working together.
- b) **What do you see as some of the challenges for your sport moving forward and potentially restarting your competition? (Funding, availability of fields, operational staff)**
- c) **What are LG's not doing currently, that we can assist you with?**
- **Josh Bowler - WAFC** – Currently many variables across the leagues which makes the restart difficult. WAFL looking at crowds, country is looking at spectators too. Some country leagues might have an opinion that a 10 week competition is not good enough. Differing opinions of the amount of time. Big unknown ability to engage youth in the competitions. Club alignment to LG and State Government advice is not happening as much as they like. Lifting the number of people that can gather from 2 to 10 people – clubs interpretation is they thought they could restart training. We need to be working together and aligned.
  - **Troy Kirkham - WAFC** – Sustainability of clubs from a financial perspective. Clubs coming out of this need to be supported to be as financially sustainable in the long term. Number of LGs have offered support to clubs. Questions regarding internal

health teams within LGs - do LGs have an understanding on what mass gatherings would be? **Chair MARAG, David Bruce – Answer** - A lot of COVID Committees have been set up within LGs and are under direction of Department of Health.

- **Jamie Harnwell - Football West** – How soon to open up for bookings. Lots of questions from clubs. In terms of availability of fields. Viability of the season. Reliance on mid-week matches. Doublers on Sat and Sun for juniors. Might have to deliver alternative formats to link with DoH guidelines. Puts strain on clubs, markings on grounds. Regional issues – need to have something up and running. LGs have been supporting clubs. Concerns about length of season. Have met with WACA regarding crossover of codes. Don't want to push or impede on summer codes – cricket and athletics.
- **Evan Stewart - Basketball WA** – Concerns about the sustainability of associations, some are leasing or hiring facilities. LGs have been very supportive, especially in terms of waiving hire fees. Impact on associations that lease or run facility by themselves and them being in a position to restart. Consistency across LG's - we need to try to achieve this. Indoor facilities – getting government to understand that challenge and the issue of what constitutes mass gatherings. For basketball stadiums - it is different for different sized stadiums – it should be applied per court rather than a stadium. Talked to clubs about getting people back at a cheaper rate than at full rate because less likely to lose people that way. Without the ability to have crowds it may not be viable.
- **Liz Booth - Netball** – How soon will LG facilities be open. Availability of sharing these with another sport e.g. basketball – most likely applies to regional areas. Any assistance for relief of payments, waiving fees, etc. is really important and makes a difference. Alignment and consistency of communication across LGs.
- **Nicola Johnson - DLGSC** – State Government is very clear that clubs need to check with SSA's and land manager regarding insurance.
- **Stu Gilsenan - Hockey WA** – Echoing the sentiments of other sports. Challenges – agility access to grass. Survey clubs. Staggered re-start. Clubs have collected fees. There will be an impact if we are not able to restart the season. Club structure is vast and varied – some owned and operators, others not. Just came out of a competition rules review launched this year 2020. Need to make decision on coach payments, number of rounds. Consistency of messages coming out of LGs is crucial. Clubs do talk to each other – why can't we, if that other club can.
- **Jo Davies – WACA** – Concerned about the economic impact on families and how they will be making decisions on winter and summer sport registrations. So many job losses will impact registrations, even Kidsport. Pressure on summer sport, a lot of Kidsport vouchers may be used during winter sport. Picking up on what Clayton White mentioned on maintenance issues – shorter crossover of seasons – pressure will be on LGs to get the ground ready from winter to summer sports.
- **Vince Del Prete - Athletics WA** – There are challenges if winter sport restarts and crosses over with summer, it will impact on people signing up for summer sport. Kidsport plays a big part with a lot of centres. The impact in terms of will parents have appetite to use Kidsport for summer sports that might be shortened.

- **Rob Thompson - SportWest** – Must stay in alignment with restrictions and directions from key State agencies.
- **Nicola Johnson - DLGSC** – Will be looking at Kidsport – modelling to assist families as transition from winter to summer season. **Question from Chair, David** – What about those residents that don't meet guidelines for Kidsport e.g. no healthcare card. But parents have lost jobs or there has been an impact on sources of income or cannot get a refund for winter code - Is DLGSC looking at it? **Answer** - DLGSC will ask the Manager for Kidsport to give David a call to discuss.
- **Chair, David Bruce** - Knowing the transition date from winter to summer, will assist LGs to get facilities ready. For example goal posts – there are significant costs to put them in. Exploring options to potentially use portable goals - some LGs have contacted suppliers.

**d) How can MARAG (local government) work together with SSA's from this point? Can we develop a working group or MOU to work ahead with restarting sport?**

- A working group our MOU was seen as beneficial by attendees however there is a need to be clear on the outcomes of the group. Focus on the current recovery period and then reassess the need for this group. Everyone agreed it would be beneficial for this group to meet again.
- Communications is very important, need to be clear and direct to relevant Local Government officers. If MARAG know some estimated dates and official messages from SSA's we can get the messages out to LG's straight from the source.
- What do SSA's have in place for cleaning procedures, guidelines? Most SSA's have developed or are developing guidelines. Consistency of messages between SSA's in the guidelines is important. SSA's need to be saying the same things e.g. sharing of drink bottles, towels and hand towels.
- Will SSA's require the support of LGs Club Development Officers? General agreement that they are valuable however requirement to be clear on the commonality of what clubs really need at the moment and sharing of resources is appreciated.
- **Rob Thomson - DLGSC** - Encourage MARAG to write to Minister for Local Government Hon. David Templeman MLA to highlight everything that is being done by LGs. From infrastructure perspective bring forward CSRFF. Encourage to look at small grants.
- Until 31 May nothing is happening up until then. Waiting on the announcement. If anyone looking at longer re-start date then would be useful to know as questions are coming through from Mayors, Councillors etc.

- WAFC – training by mid-June
  - Basketball – training by June
  - Netball and Hockey – training by June
  - Football West – might be earlier
  - WACA - restart depends on when winter seasons get under way and what it means at the back end. Potentially October.
  - Athletics – similar to cricket depending on length of season. Very tight State and National calendar in 2021.
- **Rob Thompson - SportWest** – Request for other sports, especially those typically active during winter to be included.

#### 4. Other business

- **Rob Thomson - DLGSC** – Concerns around shared use arrangements of facilities shared with Dept of Education. Happy to discuss offline.

#### 5. Summary and close

The Chair of MARAG, David Bruce thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The major points from the discussion included:

- The importance of consistent messaging and communication required from Local Government and SSA's.
- Consistent communication regarding crossover of winter and summer codes sharing facilities, to ensure that LG's are able to get the facilities ready on time.

#### 6. Actions

- MARAG Chair and Vice-Chair to encourage Local Government members to write to the Minister for Local Government, Hon. David Templeman MLA to advise of initiatives being implemented.
- MARAG Chair to organise another meeting for this group, including other winter codes and other Local Government representatives from regional areas.