

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

Date: Friday 15 May 2020

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

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
SportWest	Rob Thompson	CEO
WAFC	Troy Kirkham	Executive Manager, Youth, Community and Game Development
WAFC	Josh Bowler	Manager Facilities and Events
Football West	Alex Novatsis	Head of Members Services
WACA	Jo Davies	General Manager, Community Cricket
WACA	Kate Mort	WACA Government Relations Manager
Basketball WA	Evan Stewart	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Athletics	Nathan Charles	General Manager Pathways
Tennis WA	Olivia Birkett	Infrastructure and Government Relations Manager
RLSWA	Peter Leaversuch	CEO
NRL WA	John Sackson	General Manager
NRL WA	Tony Crowe	WA Operations Manager
Rugby WA	Bob Hunter	CEO
PLAWA	Leith Fradd	Executive Officer
City of Cockburn	Dean Burton	Coordinator Recreation Services (Observer)
City of Wanneroo	Samantha Gulliver	Club Liaison Officer (Observer)
City of Joondalup	Shane Fraser	Co-ordinator Recreation Services (Observer)
City of Joondalup	Emily Carroll	Senior Sport and Recreation Officer (Observer)

Apologies:

Organisation	Name	Position
MARAG Vice-Chair / City of South Perth	City of South Perth	Recreation Development Coordinator
WALGA	Kirstie Davis	Policy Manager Community
Netball WA	Liz Booth	Development Manager
Hockey WA	Stu Gilsean	CEO
Hockey WA	Ryan Lenegan	Member Services and Participation

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 for those that have not attended the previous meeting. In alignment with the previous meeting, the purpose of these meetings between MARAG and the State Sporting Association's is to discuss how Local Government and State Sporting Associations can work closely together to move forwards with re-opening of sport, in alignment with the advice from the State Government.

David outlined this meeting would cover:

- COVID-19 Safety Plan guidelines from DLGSC
- Understanding anticipated sport season dates so that Local Governments can undertake maintenance done
- Feedback regarding fees and challenges
- Information being collated by MARAG from Local Government facilities which will be shared with SSA's
- The opportunity for continued collaboration

2. Stage 2 – COVID-19 Safety Plan Guidelines – Update from Nicola Johnson, DLGSC

Current advice at 10am 15 May 2020:

- From 18 May, restrictions will be further relaxed and all businesses intending to reopen are required to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 – in alignment with conditions outlined in the [COVID Safety Guidelines](#) as well as completion of a COVID-19 Safety Plan.
- [Phase 2 FAQs](#) were released and are subject to change
- Tailored guidelines and plans have also been developed for:
 - Food businesses - COVID Safety Plan and Guidelines
 - Sport and recreation - COVID Safety Plan and Guidelines
- A companion document is currently being developed by DLGSC and WALGA and will look at across a set of supporting documents
- There is a requirement that these safety plans must be in place before being able to open up.
- These were not intended to be an extra layer of red tape.
- Appreciation for the SSA's which have submitted their Return to Sport Plans – strongly encouraged to review these Plans after the release of the directions from the State Government progresses.
- Outdoor multi-court venues –highlighted the need to focus on staggering game/play times in these multi-court venues so that there is not a large amount of people descending upon the court.

Questions for Nicola:

- **Question from Olivia Birkett, Tennis WA** - If a venue has both sport and recreation as well as providing food, is there a requirement to have two separate COVID-19 Safety Plans? **Answer** - Yes.
- **Question** - Who is the approving body for the plans? **Answer** - There is currently no approving body for the COVID-19 Safety Plans. Although in South Australia it is submitted to Dept of Sport and then approved by Dept of Health. But this is not the case over here.

Sportwest – Rob Thompson – The SSA's have got the direction we have been looking for from the State Government and we will work from there. Will work to make sure planning is done and they are prepared to get training away quickly.

Chair, David highlighted:

- Local Governments have started to plan for phase 2 commencement, MARAG is collating information in a spreadsheet for metropolitan Local Governments. Most Local Governments will be turning lights on and allowing use of reserves but with social distancing. Local Governments are not opening up the facilities until stage 3 as additional cleaning will be required.
Eg. With extra cleaning requirements there will be an additional cost of approximately \$22k per week for some Local Governments. With zero rate increase, it will add burden onto LG's who are working out ways to absorb this cost and not users.
- From a public liability aspect, there is the question of whether Local Government will be held liable if someone has COVID-19 and is using Local Government facilities. Advice required from DLGSC regarding this. Answer from Nicola, DLGSC - If Local Governments have any concerns about legal liability or other insurance related issues if they are to reopen their facilities they should seek their own independent legal (and other professional) advice.
- From an operational side a number of the larger metropolitan Local Governments need a full week to turn back on the facilities and then provide notice for the cleaners. At least two weeks' notice for this. But we are turning on the lights.
- Stage 3 concerns – How to enforce social distancing for children while they are playing sport? Clubs sharing the concerns. Advice from Sportwest – Rob Thompson - State is providing directions and I think we can rely on responsibility of the community.

3. Re-activation of sports

Encourage checklists. Has SSA's developed checklists? Is Local Government approval on the checklist?

The Chair led a discussion regarding developing checklists to guide the return to playing sport. The example provided at the meeting was the checklist from the WAFC.

Winter:

- **WAFC** - Josh and Troy – the checklist has been positively received and available on the website
- **NRL** – developed checklist in with AIS. Return to training protocols. Waiting to finalise. Will be published next week
- **Football West** – have developed different checklists e.g. for players, coaches, officials and available on their website
- **Rugby** – have developed different checklists e.g. clubroom checklist, coaching, return to play
- **Hockey WA** – in process and in development,
- **Basketball** – have developed a checklist and will be made available pending further direction

Summer:

- **Cricket** – Australian return to play guidelines, return to play checklists – generic across the country and overlaying those to be specific to WA clubs
- **Tennis** – guidelines developed, tennis is one of the sports that have been able to continue to have some sort of competition
- **RLSWA** – work in progress - different types - water polo, artistic swimming, swimming, lifesaving programs
- **Athletics** – same as royal lifesaving. Meeting with national bodies to get more guidance. Nothing formalised yet.

Most of the checklists developed had mentioned obtaining approval from Local Governments.

There was agreement from the SSA's that there has been mostly positive feedback from the checklists that have been developed.

4. Point of contact for SSA's for MARAG

Chair, David asked the group if they are happy to nominate a relevant contact person so that Local Governments from MARAG know who to contact if they would like to discuss queries and questions. SSA's were happy to provide those details of relevant staff member.

5. LG Facilities Spreadsheet – Collation by MARAG

Spreadsheets as collected from LG's by MARAG – David showcased City of Cockburn as an example. In the spreadsheet it discusses:

- Reserve Name
- Training availability date
- Clubroom / changing room
- Cleaning
- Shared grounds
- Preparation time for grounds
- Winter codes cut-off date recommended by LG's
- Public Toilets

SSA's found this example very useful. It will be shared with SSA's by the MARAG Chair on Monday.

6. Anticipated Season Dates

Winter codes:

- **NRL**– will need to extend season into late October, would like to discuss with MARAG about it as it will be an issue for shared spaces.
- **Rugby** - no competitions until first weekend of July. With modelling there might have two weekend rounds in first two weekends of October. Difficult with shared spaces. Start being creative around dates and approaches.
- **Football West**: Start dates – community, junior soccer, includes amateur Sunday League looking to start 21 June and finish 3/10 Oct. Some contact training at the elite level. NPL Completion anticipated to start end June and finish around 10 October. Any finals would be at a venue which doesn't affect summer codes. Mid-week games is likely an option.
- **Basketball** – Indoor centres needs to be added to MARAG LG spreadsheet. Looking at domestic comp – depends on LG. If conditions are as same – 20 people – then probably not. Look to start WABL end of school holidays. SBL has been cancelled.
- **Hockey WA** – Start date circa 22 June; End date weekend 3/4/5 Oct for turf hockey Synthetic turf facilities to continue into summer pending heat,
- **WAFC** – working with WACA and Little Athletics around end season dates. Conclusion date hopefully will be the first week of October for shared spaces. Start date – mid-July 17-19 July.

Summer:

- **Cricket** – Working with winter codes where there is a crossover, trying to get agreement on general principles. The last week of shared spaces with winter codes is around 3-4 October. It allows 2-3 weeks period of maintenance to get underway by

24-25 October. Maybe be allowed to get underway in grounds that are not shared with winter codes. Aiming to start WACA premier grade on 10 or 17 Oct 2020.

- **Athletics WA** – potentially June look to run some track distances to stay in line with numbers, winter season is in the North West and try to get up running by 15 June. Summer season commences end of September, around schools. Weekly competitions early October. Shared grounds – e.g. Noranda athletics track – schedules and start dates may need to be amended.
- **Tennis** – Currently still in winter playing – clubs doing inter-club competitions, intra-club would run July-October. The ability to run tournament would hope by July school holidays
- **RLSWA** – Peter had to leave the meeting

Chair, David – Agreement with Cricket raising the potential for an agreement between SSA's and Local Governments on principles of end dates for shared spaces particularly round last week Sept/ 1st week Oct. David asked the group who would like to form a working group to progress this work. Nominations from – Bob, Alex, Jo, Troy/Josh and Dean. Meeting to be set for **Wed 20 May (Confirmed now for Fri 21 May at 11:30am)**.

Dean, City of Cockburn – Discussed the concerns regarding the short times preparing the grounds for a changeover from winter to summer codes and extending seasons. The advice provided from the parks operations staff at the City of Cockburn was that extending seasons would place pressure on the turf. For example if pushed the winter codes and subsequent maintenance out too far in October or November – added with warmer temperatures – it could be detrimental in the longer term to the turf and reduce the quality/standard. Winter usually ends in end of September or first week October, when it's not too warm and it's the optimal time.

Chair, David – mentioned there are also challenges with the water licences to water reserves – the further we are into a warmer temperatures the more water is required. We know we are going to the end of the September but shared spaces is where the damages occur.

With indoor facilities – Comes down to how it is managed. Crossover between basketball and netball, particularly in regional areas. Both Associations are having conversations.

Questions:

- **Tennis** - Question to Nicola Johnson, DLGSC re COVID Safety Plans. Is it the LG's responsibility to complete the plan or the tennis club? **Answer Nicola** - Required by the venue owner. Feedback should go through to Nicola re the COVID Safety Plans.

7. Financial initiatives

What is being offered by SSA's currently?

- **WAFC** – fixed fees, pro-rata depending on the number of games, no fees charged yet
- **NRL** – allocating time to devise a strategy re membership fees and incentives, once we know we can address it
- **Rugby** –club members fees is where there is flexibility and they will have the opportunity to make the call
- **Football West** – similar to NRL – club level have fixed costs, waiting to hear from higher level before making a decision
- **Basketball** – different level of fees, there is an overall annual fee, no other fees charged yet, competition fees have reduced, waiting to hear back regarding Lottery west funding

- **Tennis** – still charging affiliation fee to clubs but pushing it back, not discounting pro-rata yet, in terms of comp fees – they'll be set based on length of season
- **Cricket** – few moving parts on what we can control, but depends on Australian cricket at the national level

Local Government financial responses:

- Number of LG's have been waiving fees
- Cockburn – not charging winter fees
- Sportwest – encouraging consistency across LG's with waiving fees, applaud Cockburn for waiving fees
- Bayswater – refunded all club fees for winter to this point and no junior fees. City waived all leasing fees for 6 months, taking on rates and charges for leased facilities from 1 July pending new agreement signed.

8. Summary and next meeting

Chair, David thanked everyone for contributing to the meeting. The minutes from this meeting will be shared with all MARAG Local Government representatives and all invited SSA's.

This group will meet again **Friday, 5 June 2020 at 10am-11:30am.**

9. Actions

- **SSA's**-To provide a contact for their organisation with email, name and contact number to allow LG's to confirm if Clubs have completed items for their safety plans and then City can approve their booking. (Also good opportunity for SSA to meet LG contacts if not already).
- **SSA's**-To share any return to sport information, checklist to Chair to distribute to the MARAG group.
- **Chair**, David to set up working group with nominated representatives to discuss agreement of principles for crossover of sport seasons using shared facilities.
- **Chair**, David to distribute the Local Governments facilities spreadsheet collated by MARAG to SSA's. (Also collate governments that have provided grants, waived fees and add basketball/ netball courts)