

Working Group - Sport Seasons in LG Shared Spaces – Minutes

Date: Friday 22 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
WAFC	Josh Bowler	Manager Facilities and Events
Football West	Alex Novatsis	Head of Members Services
WACA	Danny Andrews	Clubs and Affiliates Specialist
Rugby WA	Bob Hunter	CEO
Hockey WA	Ryan Lenegan	General Manager Participation and Member Services
City of Cockburn	Dean Burton	Coordinator Recreation Services
City of Joondalup	Shane Fraser	Co-ordinator Recreation Services

Welcome

Chair, David Bruce welcomed the group and thanked everyone for their time to discuss the sporting seasons in more detail.

Discussion - Interpretations of Directions

Vice-Chair, Jenni - What are the main differences that the WAFC was experiencing across Local Governments.

WAFC, Josh – Some Local Governments are taking booking vs some are not taking bookings. A lot of anecdotal information/discussion where one club may say a Local Government is doing a certain action. Correct me if I'm wrong but are City of Joondalup but are you not allowing training until the 1 June?

City of Joondalup, Shane – We don't have a problem with people using our park, but we cannot take booking on space/park otherwise will be accepting liability. In public open space it lessens the liability, but as soon as we accept a booking on a park we accept the liability for their use of associated facilities. At the moment it's simply just the toilets, but to increase cleaning requirements in public toilets – there's a total of 68 toilets across City of Joondalup parks – it would be approximately \$15k sanitisation requirements per week. We don't object to the group using public open space and they've been able to use it throughout the shutdown. From 1 June formalising bookings. We are working through our sports lighting, what we had done was that we shut down a lot of lighting infrastructure to save power. With soccer and AFL fields that meet Australian Standards with the flood lighting, we physically disconnected 60%-80% of this flood lighting poles. We now have to go and reverse that now. To this day haven't received a single complaint from clubs regarding the approach. There has been some issues with the lights needing repairs on some grounds but they aren't as a result of the approach. Only people complaining at this stage, wasn't representing the clubs or on a committee for that club. Have been in contact with all clubs prior to the decision and after the decision was made and they are understanding of the City's position. Challenging for all but best thing that can be done at this stage.

Chair, David – I can share a copy of the letter that we sent out to SSA's from City of Bayswater. It stated that the lights are on, space is open, toilets are open but don't touch your club room facilities. We have made it clear, media release, on Facebook. We also had some negative comments from a parent who pretended to be on a club committee that went through one of the football clubs. We

haven't had much complaints, and we even had some compliments even from local State MP's. If SSA's have a question come through from clubs please contact the LG contact from the MARAG spreadsheet that has been sent out. Top down approach is the best way.

WAFC, Josh – After the meeting last Friday I did circulate that each Local Governments will deal with it differently because they have their own committees and legal advice. Keep lines of communication open and I think this forum is a good way to do that.

City of Joondalup, Shane – Before we move on I wanted to raise some other inconsistent messages happening to give an idea of what we are challenged with. I met with our regional inspector at WAPOL who are the ones who enforce everything on the morning of Wednesday 20 May. At the same time our Emergency Response Coordinator was meeting with State response group led by WAPOL and DFES. We both asked the same question – where the responsibility of a COVID safety plan lies and who is responsible - and the advice provided was completely different. One said it's the operators/hirer's responsibility and the other said it was the Local Government. At this stage because there is so much differing advice, we'll deal with it in the way we are currently. No one wants to take responsibility because that will mean they will be held liable, and that is why you will see a different approach from Local Governments because of this.

WAFC, Josh – Is there something that we need to advocate for, for better clearer advice?

Chair, David – We added in the minutes for the meeting held last Friday 15 May Nicola's (DLGSC) advice which was that each Local Government was to seek their own legal advice because it was clear that the DLGSC was receiving conflicting advice from DoH. The onus is not on us, it's on the individuals. Enforcement is on the individual.

WAFC, Josh – I'm still wondering if we can advocate on a position on that?

City of Joondalup, Shane – our approach we have been advocating on a lower level than the Ministers. The challenges are that what is released from the Minister is very political in nature. This obviously isn't a political problem. I think the fact that the Department is referring us to our legal advisors show a lack of will from the State Government department to make a decision. We shouldn't be seeking our own legal advice on their legislation or their directions. Until phase 3 and phase 4 it's going to be a bit more of a risk management approach.

Vice-Chair, Jen – I would suggest moving towards a letter from MARAG to the Minister, or through WALGA, just stating that we are seeking more clarification on it. They may come back to us and state 'seek legal advice' but if they know that they have something coming from us a representative group then they can action it from there.

Chair, David – Some further advice from Acting Commander Emergency Coordinator has been released. I'll share this. It should answer the points coming from Josh, but still comes back to each LG has been advised to contact their own legal advice. Still the same message. The key message from sport is we got the field open and lights on and we are working as hard as we can behind the scenes.

Discussion - Sport Seasons Start and End Dates

Chair, David - Aligned message on sporting fields and shared spaces. We are keen to have a meeting each week and get it resolved within 2-3 weeks because we need an aligned message and an agreed approach. There are some non-negotiables for individuals LG's to deal with.

	Elite	Community Senior	Community Junior	Considerations
WAFC Josh	Elite = WAFL competition No info. Challenges with crowds and being able to fund the season.	Includes- country, amateurs, A grade down. Assuming announcement mid-June.	Junior footy won't start 18-19 July.	It there are specific Local Government grounds that are out of action we can work together to work it out.

		<p>Senior football aimed to start first weekend July.</p> <p>End date October 3-4 in alignment with conversations with Jo at WACA.</p> <p>Finals -There has been no discussions on how the model will look like. But amateur football will likely have finals.</p>		<p>Don't foresee community football going beyond end date unless the start date is shifted based on advice from the State Gov.</p>
Football West - Alex	<p>Includes State League 1 and 2</p> <p>Start 4 July, finish 11 October.</p> <p>Depending on option taken might have a finals series - finals ground specific so no interference – 8 October</p>	<p>Start date 21 June Finish 11 October, with no finals</p>	<p>Start date 21 June, Finish 4 October with finals</p>	<p>Difficult to bring the round forward to avoid interference.</p> <p>Is there an option to play that last game during mid-week to avoid 11 October date? Yes. Sunday cup cancelled.</p>
Rugby - Bob	<p>Elite level is mostly Pro 4's which is mostly on east coast y. Might be some backend games but subject to border opening. Not relevant and will be field specific.</p>	<p>Start date 4 July, End date 26 September – finals on 3-4 and 10-11 October.</p>	<p>Start date 4 July to end date 3 October.</p>	<p>For the finals in October dates looking at scheduling to make sure we are not conflicting with shared fields. Looking at rugby specific fields.</p>
Hockey WA - Ryan	<p>3 options for fixture sent out for consultation but looks like option 1 preferred.</p> <p>Premier division start date 26 June, End date 17 Oct. Premier division all on turf and eating into summer facilities.</p>	<p>Lower grade comps on grass. Grand final 2-4 October.</p>	<p>Start date 26 June, end date – 13 September with finals after. Use of some shared facilities needs to be worked through. Finals to go for 3 weeks up to around 4 October.</p>	<p>Leeway on where finals are played grass or synthetic facilities. Conversations will continue.</p> <p>Do you have an option to bring forward comps on synthetic turfs or bring forward to mid-week? Yes already looked at this and there may be some</p>

				wriggle room to change. Intention is to get as much as possible fitted in for elite competition. Already spoken with the other SSA's and cooperation will continue.
WACA-Danny	Premier cricket 1-4 plus junior premier grades ordinarily start on 3-4 October – still the ideal date.	Senior men's community cricket start date 3-4 October and weekend after. First 2 weekends of October historically.	Start date 17-18 October close to school holidays.	But open to a delayed start if it helps with other sports. Willing to work with Local Governments and other sports to sort it out. Ideally looking at 17-18 October start date as latest date for cricket. Preparation for cricket, turf wicket is the challenge.

Chair, David – most of the discussions so far is that 3-4 October generally seems to be the end date for most of the sports except for Football West. Shane what about Softball WA?

City of Joondalup, Shane - Softball WA completely closed down and no advice during the closures. Is there an intention from SSA's to run both increased mid-week and weekend fixtures – concerned about impact on turf. Local Governments will need to invest lots into maintenance and this will be challenging.

Football West, Alex – Trying to avoid too many fixtures.

WAFC, Josh – Wouldn't do it extensively. It would be in replacement of training. So all players would be playing a game instead of training.

Chair, David - From a City of Baywater perspective, neutral grounds for competition hosting. Now that 3-4 October is a common thing coming through – we would encourage mid-week fixtures and encourage it.

WAFC, Josh – To clarify you are saying you want sports to play mid-week fixtures and finish earlier than 3-4 October?

Chair, David – If we can get a common agreement on 3-4 October so that Local Governments can get their ground maintenance in. Not possible on junior football ovals in the City of Bayswater as they don't have appropriate lighting, but where possible. For example Noranda Hawks – to sneak an extra fixture in during the week.

WACA, Danny – I'm assuming it's a regular process of working with Local Governments to get the turf wicket sorted out in the changeover.

Chair, David – Jo Davies asked this question and it's not an issue with changeover – turf wickets can still be prepared. May be issues with trying to start with grade competition 1-4 where some ovals for 2-3-4 for WACA grade those turf wickets are in the middle of football fields. We would work with WAFC, Josh to see if they don't play the final football rounds on the shared fields, to allow for the changeover/prep to occur. We need the assistance from the sports – that's why we shared the spreadsheet with SSA's. If you can review your field and look at the column in the spreadsheet for each LG. That will help with fixtures. If we can come to a decision and announce that we have an end date for shared facilities which will be 3-4 October – what is everyone's thoughts?

City of Cockburn, Dean – Regular season finishing 3-4 October and then selected shared grounds where will be an issue for finals for two weeks. When would the summer sports start after that? From a Cockburn perspective, they would technically wouldn't be able to start until end of October, start of November. With regular season ending on 3-4 October (beyond the original 30 September indication) will need to consult with parks crew regarding the maintenance. Parks are engaging contractors already and will need to communicate updated dates.

Vice-Chair, Jenni – Is there a possibility for cricket to start in November?

WACA, Danny – Certainly a possibility. It won't be particular popular. We need to engage lots of stakeholders because we don't set fixtures.

Vice-Chair, Jenni – Local Governments are probably going to need a 2 week window to be able to do the preparation. Parks crew would probably prefer 3-4 weeks. They'll certainly need to be a break between seasons and there's always the spring September break for the Parks crew to do maintenance. Because there has already been significant impact on winter codes, there has to be some sort of compromise from the summer sports.

WAFC, Josh – Maybe half the clubs won't have a game on 3-4 October. So if we are proactive about the fixtures, the parks crew should have the extra time for the grounds that are not being used. There will be some grounds with the 3 week break and some with the 2 week break for maintenance. If there are some grounds that Local Governments don't want us on that is fine. But if you say for all then it's a problem.

City of Joondalup, Shane – If we work towards that the last regular winter date is 3-4 October and then there might be some finals. If we look at 17-18 Oct regular start date for summer. Anything in between that period we deal with. One the challenges Local Governments face is the scheduling of contractors to do the maintenance works which needs to be confirmed within the next 2-3 weeks which is why we are asking these questions now. So if we can confirm these dates we can confirm the contractors to work from 5 October onwards. If we get requests for football and cricket to use the ground on 11 October we can negotiate that at the club level.

Chair, Dave – 3-4 Oct end date for winter and 17 October for start of summer season for shared facilities would be preferred.

Next Steps/ Actions

Chair, David - From here, what is the approach for this joint approach?

WAFC, Josh – There is going to be a release from AFL and Cricket Aus. The national message will be more generic along the lines of 'we give a license to the States to come to a decision on this for the October period.' There will be a state based position that follows. So whatever we do with LG should be aligned to that conversation because we don't want to have it out of alignment.

Chair, David – Local Government MARAG members will be engaged regarding this discussion today on the 3-4 October winter end date and the 17 October summer start date.

City of Joondalup, Shane – Tee-ball and baseball needs to be involved with the conversations. We need to seek their commitment and agreement.

Chair, David - Softball and baseball have been contacted but they are operating with minimal staff and there was no response when we shared the previous minutes. We will need to get into contact with Tee-ball, Touch Football WA. Keep trying to contact Softball WA and Baseball WA.

Chair, David – All SSA's in this working group are in support of the end date for share spaces of 3-4 October with outside meeting agreement reached with Football West to finish all fixtures (except NPL) by Sunday 4 Oct 2020. All SSA's in this working group are in support of the summer starting date of 17 October in shared space Start date for WACA subject to talking to superiors 17 October

City of Cockburn, Dean – Interested to know which grounds are being flagged for finals. Some Local Governments will flag some grounds that are inappropriate too in terms of maintenance required.

Chair, David asked what the SSA's required from Local Governments. The SSA's all appreciated the current level of communication and to continue these meetings.

Close and Next Meeting

Next meeting of this working group **Friday 29 May**, 10am meeting (changed to **Thursday 28 May 2020**). A full extended meeting to be held on **Friday 5 June with all SSA's**. These minutes will be shared with MARAG Local Government members.

Actions

Action for SSA's – Review the spreadsheet provided by MARAG to identify the grounds that are going to be impacted for shared space and to highlight those shared grounds that would be preferred for finals.

Action for Chair – Update the MARAG Local Government members on the agreed end and start dates for shared grounds as agreed by this working group.

Action for Chair – Involve Tee-ball, Softball WA, Baseball WA and Touch Football WA in these discussions. Athletics WA is invited to the larger meetings but didn't nominate to be part of this working group.