



2012

Chair Report

Newcastle University Sport

chair's report

Each year brings its own set of challenges and opportunities for NUsport and in this respect 2012 was no different. Challenges included our desire to fruitfully progress negotiations on a management agreement with the University which had commenced years earlier as well as the need to improve our financial operations in the face of increasing competition within the fitness industry in this region. Opportunities arose from initiatives signalled by the new University administration and from the possibility of greater support for recreation programs for students that the Students Services & Amenities Fee might bring.

Developments in 2012 included the following:

Management Agreement

Last year, the Chair advised that during discussions with the University about its concerns about the status of NUsport raised in late 2009, the need for a management agreement to help clarify the relationship with the University was recognised. In response, NUsport undertook much of the preparatory work to develop a suitable agreement. However, the burning issues for the previous University administration, no longer have the same urgency and finalisation of a management agreement has become a lesser priority. While the relationship with the University has improved, the Board believes that completion of a management agreement which documents the responsibilities of the two parties and services to be provided would be of benefit to both.

New Student Accommodation Callaghan

A major issue in 2012 was the University's notification that additional residential accommodation for students would be developed on the Callaghan campus and that it would be on the site of the tennis courts. NUsport agreed in principle to a Lease variation to remove the tennis courts, tennis sheds and NUsport cottage, provided the University agreed to construct replacement facilities for sport and involve NUsport in the planning process. The project stalled and was thought to be deferred to late 2013 when NUsport was informed on 14 January this year that the tennis courts would be resumed on 18 January, so work on the accommodation project could begin. This placed the Board and management under great stress as no agreement had been negotiated but the crisis was quickly resolved when the University agreed to NUsport's earlier conditions and the Board approved a variation to the Lease.

The accommodation project has significant implications for NUsport, not only because of the loss of tennis courts and possible disruption to activities or access to facilities that might occur during the construction phase, but also because the larger student population that will be resident on campus will need more recreational facilities and services which NUsport will be expected to deliver.

Capital Development Planning

The imminent loss of the tennis courts and concerns about how NUsport would meet the challenge of a larger campus



population, led directors to emphasise the importance of having a clear strategy for meeting these challenges and a coherent plan for facility development. I wish to thank Dr Curran and Professor Fityus for the initiative taken to ensure NUsport plans for capital development were reviewed and updated. Clubs and members were asked about their sporting and recreational needs and a detailed Capital Development Plan for the Callaghan Campus Sports Precincts was drafted. I thank CEO Chris Hicks and Webber Architects for the substantive report that was produced and which ensures NUsport is now well prepared to provide the University with prompt advice on how best to improve recreational facilities on the campus for the growing population.

Facilities

While planning for foreseeable near-term eventualities is critical for any organisation, NUsport has continued to pay attention to maintenance of its existing facilities. Members are requested to be mindful that the sporting infrastructure on the campus is ageing – that even The Forum Sports & Aquatic Centre is now over 15 years old and consequently, that the cost of maintaining the building is increasing. Therefore, NUsport wishes to thank the University for refurbishment of the Centre undertaken by its Facilities Management division last year. Work done included: major refurbishment of the building roof, gutters and metal fittings; external painting; electrical works; and mechanical repairs to the lift and to improve ventilation in the aquatics area.

NUsport also refurbished the change rooms in the Squash Pavilion and

converted the Pavilion studio into a Training gym for small groups focussing on University staff and clubs.

A variety of maintenance work was completed on the Rowing Pavilion at Berry Park and the septic system which was damaged in a fire was replaced.

Increased competition in fitness facilities

A detailed report on NUsport finances follows, and the deficit reported for 2012 was in part due to the steady increase in the number of fitness industry providers that has occurred in our catchment area, which led to Forum Membership numbers plateauing in the past 2 years while costs, especially for electricity, gas and water, have continued to rise. Work undertaken at The Forum Harbourside in late 2011 and maintenance of facilities on campus, were aimed at ensuring our facilities remain attractive to customers. In addition, an advertising campaign was commenced to inform Novocastrians of the range and high quality of facilities and services offered at The Forum.

Member survey results.

83% of Forum Members surveyed in April 2012 reported they were either very or completely satisfied with NUsport facilities and services at Forum venues and 97.2% reported they were somewhat satisfied. Over 90% rated facilities as good. The main source of dissatisfaction was with change rooms.

Participation

As a central tenet of NUsport is to assist people to be physically active,

it was most encouraging to see a rise in participation numbers in various programs in 2012 especially in Swim Academy but also in club membership and University representation. However, members need to be aware that it is becoming more difficult to increase participation as recreational facilities are often at capacity at popular times.

EUG and AUG

245 students competed in the Eastern University Games held in Tamworth winning 4 Gold, 3 Silver and 7 Bronze medals and placing 3rd overall. 166 students travelled to Adelaide for the Australian University Games where they won 2 Gold, 6 Silver and 7 Bronze medals and 12 students were selected in Green & Gold Merit teams. 36 students competed in the Australian University Snow Sport Championships at Mt Buller Victoria, winning a Silver medal and also the Spirit of the Mountain award.

University Sports Awards

Sporting awards presented in September 2012 included 3 Blues, 5 Colours and 8 scholarships. Laura Harris was the Sports Person of the Year and Stephanie Halpin and Celia Sullohern were finalists. Club of the Year was won jointly by Water Polo and Snow Sports. Our Campus Programs Manager Andrew Yapp also assisted the University in the management and delivery of the Elite Athlete Friendly University Agreement which covered 68 elite student athletes during 2012.

Student Services and Amenities Fee

A major change for students last year was the commencement of the Student Services & Amenities Fee in 2nd semester. NUsport's application for SSAF funding to support recreational programs for students in 2013 was successful. SSAF funding will enable greater support for student programs and has been instrumental in reducing 12-month Forum membership fees for students by over \$100 this year.

Future

Looking ahead, a key challenge for NUsport is to operate more efficiently as participation numbers level. However, NUsport will be working with the University to expand existing facilities and / or develop new facilities where possible to help meet the growth in demand.

Thanks

Few years pass-by when the Board is not faced with important or trying matters, and 2012 was another demanding year. I again wish to thank fellow directors for their input. All directors are volunteers and they continue to give generously of their time for NUsport. In particular, I wish to thank Cara Mulligan for her active role on the Board over the past 2 1/2 years as she is standing down after this meeting. I would also like to thank our Company Secretary Adrian Iakin and our Executive Coordinator Belinda Marshall for their work in support of the Board.

I also wish express the Board's appreciation for the work done by NUsport management and staff throughout the year. I conclude this report by thanking you, our members, for your participation and support, which is essential if NUsport is to prosper.



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