

## 6.2 FEES & CHARGES RELIEF FOR SPORTS CLUBS UNDER LICENCE

Submitting Councillor: Shane McCluskey

### **MOTION**

*That Council:*

- 1. Notes the significant interruption to community sport in Monash since the onset of the global Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 and the associated public health response and orders of the Victorian Chief Health Officer (CHO).*
- 2. Notes the adverse effects on the ability of the administration of sports clubs operating in Monash community facilities under seasonal licence arrangements to remain viable and financially stable due to the interruption to business as usual due to the Covid-19 pandemic.*
- 3. Congratulates sports clubs on their continued efforts in providing active recreation opportunities for Monash community members in such challenging circumstances.*
- 4. Recognises the positive impact on our community of active recreation and the general improved health and wellbeing it promotes and provides, and the financial strain placed on clubs due to the Covid-19 pandemic.*
- 5. Notes that due to the cancelled 2021 winter season, sporting clubs have been credited any fees and charges associated with this period.*
- 6. Resolves to waive the future fees and charges for all sports clubs operating under licence from 1 October 2021 until 30 June 2022 inclusive and refund any fees already paid during this period.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Active recreation opportunities through organised sport are an essential part of the Monash community fabric delivered through the many clubs and organisations via Monash community infrastructure, many under a seasonal licence agreement with Council.

### **DISCUSSION**

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has meant that community sport has had to endure a challenging landscape in terms of participation, club membership and financial stability. The public health response and associated public health orders of the Victorian Chief Health Officer have curtailed, and in some cases ceased, sporting activity for long periods of time. This has been particularly prevalent for the Winter season clubs and organisations.

As many costs associated with business as usual for clubs have remained, revenue and fundraising streams have been severely and adversely impacted to the point where the short- and medium-term sustainability of some clubs has been threatened.

Participation has generally reduced from pre-Covid levels, particularly at the junior level, so too has revenue. Junior AFL participation in Monash for example has been estimated to have experienced a 25% decrease from pre-Covid levels.

As clubs look to rebuild from the unexpected and unforeseen effects of Covid-19 on their particular sport and club, one lever available to Council in supporting clubs is fee relief in terms of seasonal use of facilities and infrastructure. Whilst the effects on various clubs and chosen sports vary due to the timing of Covid-related restrictions, from an equity and administrative perspective, fee relief for a period in line with the 2021/2022 financial year would provide a consistent approach to relief for all seasonal licence holders.

Fees have not been levied on clubs during lockdown periods including the 2021 winter season. The suggested support of future fee relief to clubs for the 2021/22 financial year is estimated to be \$285,212.

### **CONCLUSION**

It is recommended that Council, in acknowledging the strain placed on sporting clubs operating under seasonal licence due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the pivotal part they play in striving for a healthy and resilient Monash community by providing active recreation opportunities and the importance of maintaining their individual and collective longevity, waive all associated fees in relation to their seasonal use of Monash facilities and infrastructure for the period 1 October 2021 to 30 June 2022.

Our clubs provide vital support to our community and it is essential that Council supports our clubs.