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REGISTERED OFFICE
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Summary of Mulgrave Country Club Member Forum Thursday 15th February 2024 at 6 pm in Panorama Room

1.0 PRESENT

Board Members: J. Saunders (President), F. Coull (Vice President), G. Reid (Treasurer), B. Murphy (Secretary) M. Waters (Director), D. Samuel (Director), A. O'Shannessy (Director)
Staff: P. Johnson (Interim/G/Manager), B. McHoul (Sporting Coordinator & Community Liaison Officer)

Attendees - 59

Forum opened at 6.01 pm.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

President Jim Saunders (JS) opened the inaugural forum and welcomed members and thanked them for their attendance given recent weather & power outages. Purpose of the forum was for the Board to communicate more with members. Acknowledged life members and past Board members present. Outlined that there would be presentations by the Chairs of the Board Committees and would commence by answering questions submitted by members.

2.1 *Position of the General Manager* – JS indicated that Kerry Scarlett was still our General Manager and Peter Johnson was currently interim GM. Kerry is on extended leave and Peter brings a wealth of knowledge to the role whilst he is in the position. Peter is engaged on a monthly contract basis.

2.2 *Additional Squash Courts & Roof on the Bowling Green* – JS indicated Chair of Strategic Committee would provide further update and the Treasurer would provide the affordability of our future plans.

2.3 *Courtesy Bus* – a business case was required - it hasn't been voted on or discussed.

2.4 *Casual vacancy on the Board* – information had been sent out today advising of a vacancy, explanation provided for reasons, applications had already been received.

3.0 SPORTING SECTIONS COMMITTEE

Chair, Michael Waters (MW) outlined individual Chairs of each Sporting Section, their purpose to bring all sports together, unified as one, as Mulgrave Country Club. Importantly to break down the silos and bring the community spirit of the club together. MW introduced Bill McHoul, explaining Bill had been in the role for 6 months, he is promoting both internally & externally the club's sporting endeavours. Bill indicated the volunteer base at Mulgrave was amazing; he was working towards making sport number one at the club. Bill explained initiatives to increase sport membership to 1,000 members, including additional activities proposed, such as pickle ball. Barefoot bowls had attracted over 550 participants on Friday nights. MW indicated committee's focus was to increase awareness of the sporting sections of the club.

4.0 GOVERNANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

Chair, Fenton Coull (FC), introduced committee members, the committee was integral and key to the development and success of any business, in the club industry. The purpose of the committee is the oversight of the Board and management's functions, ensuring they continually meet all obligations ensuring the highest level of governance of the club, and the effective performance in all areas under its scope. Meetings are much regular than quarterly, having already met 6 times this past year. Outcomes included a Board Charter had been developed, delved into the organisational structure, job descriptions for the executive members of the Board, complete review of the club handbook and By Laws. Currently the focus was on the performance review of the Board itself, and looking towards an external performance review of the Board. Various Codes of Conduct are being updated, an induction process for Board directors being compiled. As the AGM approaches any changes to the Constitution are being considered, all Policies have been reviewed, some dating back to the 1990's, culminating in a new Policy Manual.

5.0 FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Chair, Greg Reid (GR), outlined purpose of the committee, to assist the Board providing high level oversight of financial reporting and audit, to make recommendations to the Board on matters relating to audit, finance, budget, strategic investments, developments, and related capital expenditure. GR outlined achievements – auditor change, presentation of annual accounts, reviewed fixed assets register, outsourced accounting function, closer management of the club's cash facilities, land & buildings re-valuation, regular monthly reporting to sporting sections on income/expenditure. GR outlined horizon – closer attention by the ATO on income tax exemption and sporting bodies with mandatory annual reporting from 1/7/2024, need for upgrading and increase in physical infrastructure capacity for sporting sections, increasing the in-house efficiency for systems and processes, considering changing the financial year. No official confirmation from the ATO on the GST shortfall the club self reported last year. Gaming statistics, catering information, profit and loss information, and various costs to the club were discussed. Sports membership numbers outlined, net costs, statistics on sports numbers, infrastructure builds, trading revenue.

6.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Chair, Delyth Samuel (DS) provided background of committee being a merger of two committees, community engagement which was focused on what would happen at the club and strategic planning which was focusing on the facility development. This committee was now focused on bringing the two components together. Taking those plans and turning them into pragmatic things that can be done in the budget. Two stakes in the ground are increasing the squash courts and the undercover bowls green. However a recent meeting with the architects is to rethink a lot of those things in the concept drawings. Prior to Christmas another strategy meeting was held with the firm who conducted the strategy plans in 2021, and a lot of things have changed since that time, the financials are a bit more challenging. Strategy is a function of the Board, and a priority now is a "re-jigging" of those plans to get that staged & sequenced. Then business cases have to be built around them. Having someone like Bill on board is amazing as we need to have different things happening to bring people into our business. Once the plan is together the committee will revert much more to the community engagement and membership committee and focus more strongly on those sorts of activities.

Question: Whether there would be a sports bar and upgrade of TAB? DS outlined that they were still in the plans, but outlined the need for combining activities with dining, reviewing the plans as there was far too much function space compared to leisure and sporting space, needed to utilise our spaces better, to be able to have choices and provided a number of examples.

7.0 RISK & COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

Chair, Anthony O'Shannessy (AO) outlined this was a new committee, it is required to ensure oversight on compliance and risk, the Board has responsibility of setting the level of risk it is willing to accept and monitor the operations to ensure the business is managed within that accepted level. Risk isn't something that is set; it changes on a regular basis. Looking at the risk of two days ago, the magnitude of that wasn't on our radar, losing power for two days. Risks at Mulgrave have been identified into a number of categories, and the focus in coming months is making sure under each of those is ensuring there is a clear understanding of what they are, what are the mitigating actions we can put in place to reduce those risks, it can't be removed totally, but being aware of what the risks are and, being aware of the actions you can take to reduce the risks. One of the compliance risks is violating legislations, codes of conduct, convening guidelines, and sacrosanct in this organisation is our liquor licence, gaming licence, AML and CT, Keno, if we don't have full protection around them we don't have an organisation we can run. The tolerance of the Board is zero. Acknowledging risk does exist, the role of the committee is about helping identify with management ways in which risk can come to eventuate, but also working together to mitigate those actions and then the likelihood of them occurring is reduced.

8.0 MEMBER QUESTIONS VIA EMAIL

8.1 *Does any committee member use the Jells Road entrance/exit?* JS explained it was difficult to get in and out of the club, future plans may improve this situation if that entrance/exit is for service vehicles only.

8.2 *The reason for changing trivia from Wednesday to Monday?* Peter Johnson explained it was mainly due to traffic flow in the venue, looking at revenue it needs to be holistic, in terms of what is generated out of the bar, dining, gaming, TAB etc. Some nights the carpark is filled with events that are detrimental to parts of the revenue/business.

8.3 *Is there any consideration to changing the name of the club and removing the words "country club"?* JS outlined it had been raised a number of times, some life members did not agree to changing the name, but the club isn't in Mulgrave, and not a country club. DS indicated it had come up in the focus groups that the younger demographic were put off by the name, as well as other demographics were confused by the name and didn't know what occurred in the club, the name is dated. The Strategic Committee proposes to investigate this change further.

8.4 *Why are staff who are red card holders not included in Friday night draws?* JS advised it was industry standard not to include staff because of the perceived conflict and this is the same as larger businesses not allowing staff to participate in similar competitions. As a consequence a decision was made that Board members were also ineligible to participate. It is about appearances.

8.5 *Is table tennis being considered as a sport?* JS indicated it was covered earlier in the sport presentation; we are looking to add more sports and increase our sporting participation.

8.6 *When are the new squash courts coming?* JS advised announcements were made but we didn't make commitments time wise – it is in our plans. We do want more courts, when and if we can do it financially and responsibly.

9.0 MEMBER QUESTIONS FROM FLOOR

9.1 *Does the club have a standby generator?* JS advised no, good question, but it was around risk. One was organised but it was planned to arrive just as the power went back on. It is proposed to look at this as a contingency for the future.

9.2 *Any plans to fix the intercom in the members?* JS advised yes, he wasn't happy with it, quality of sound not good enough.

9.3 *Regarding the courtesy bus, what were the negatives against having one?* JS indicated it was tried once before, didn't work, was abused, wasn't viable, problems with insurance, liability – a lot of things need to be considered. A show of hands who would like a community bus? (Half of audience responded affirmatively) A work in progress.

9.4 *How was the club going to expand if we are restricted by space? Have we considered purchasing nearby land?* JS advised it was difficult; possibly we could expand our sporting options by acquiring/supporting other clubs as an alternative. We have 3 bowls green, two were needed. Member suggestion that parking can be provided with green on top of carpark like other bowling club locations.

9.5 *Was there any plans to fix the furniture in the members as the tables were disgusting?* JS indicated a delay in replacing them was due to the future plans, however, that wouldn't stop them being levelled in the near future. For attention by Peter Johnson.

9.6 *What is the progress on a roof for the bowling green- has it been progressed?* DS responded that it was part of the strategic master plan; It wasn't going to be progressed now if the green needed to be moved in the near future. (And whether a cover is put on one or two greens)

9.7 *Any timeframes on the steps that were proposed in the master plan (which was 6-8 years) Is there a timeframe when we will see some product out of that? And how is the timeframe for 6-8 years- the finality of that plan- changed at all?* DS indicated it would move a lot quicker after the re-jigging, the time line will be reduced, given the underground carpark may not be a viable option at all – it is way too expensive and disruptive. The Rolls Royce model was built and some of the things can be scaled back – with one discussion with the architects the cost has been reduced by \$6million. It is being pragmatic and realistic about how we are going to use the venue and what spaces we need, and how big they will be. It will be refined.

9.8 *Any consideration given to a medallion draw being held on a Thursday night instead of two on a Friday night?* JS indicated there hadn't been discussion however that was an operational decision. General discussion that draw hadn't been won on a Friday night for a number of years.

9.9 *Query about what Bill (Sporting Co-ordinator) was doing in relation to attracting junior bowlers?* Bill outlined currently through barefoot bowls they are trying to attract and focus on a younger demographic of 30-40 years old, not kids, further discussion to be undertaken off-line in relation to juniors.

9.10 *What are the chances of pickleball?* DS added that as she was President of the Waverley Tennis Association they were looking at setting up a competition pickleball league, the biggest challenge is places to play as a hard court surface was needed, people are hiring venues/leisure centres to play, don't need much space to play, can get 4 pickleball courts on one tennis court area.

9.11 *In relation to sporting section costs per member on an annual basis, it would be great to see a customer relationship management system, where you have the ability to see what revenue each sporting section brings to the club & build on that strategy and understand the membership better/more and be more positive on that.* (Shane McCluskey) JS indicated he did not like the designating of funds per membership; that it didn't matter to us as a sporting club. Please, all sporting members don't get hung up on those numbers, we support all sporting sections, there are no plans to reduce that support, and we want more members doing sports.

9.12 *It is encouraging, positive, potentially transformative, from a bowls perspective, it has been a tangible change in support for sporting sections, a philosophical change that we are*

starting to see, which I am really encouraged by, credit where credit is due. It is a credit to the Board and management in changing that philosophy; that we are focused more on sporting members and members generally rather than other focuses in the business model. It is a major transformation in sport with the introduction of Bill McHoul and Peter Johnson, sport has never been stronger, particularly with bowls. It is a tangible difference; we have never seen a crowd like we did on the greens two weeks ago at the club in years. Credit where credit is due to management, in particular Bill McHoul and Peter Johnson and the Board because it seems encouraging if that is the path you are on.(Shane McCluskey) JS acknowledged that a sports coordinator has been on the radar since 2020, with some reluctance, but Bill has taken it a lot further than we thought. Kudos to Peter Johnson for the changes he is making. Positive changes are being made which is encouraging.

9.13 *Member from the Toyota Landcruisers Club, coming to the club for about 12 years, monthly meetings, hiring rooms, why is their club being shoved out in a few months and not allowed to stay as long as possible, a big club not being allowed to stay and bring more money in?* JS indicated that as a Board most of the commercial decisions were left to Operations and it would be taken up with management. JS wasn't aware of the details so couldn't respond to this specific matter.

Meeting closed at 7.30 pm.

BELINDA MURPHY
SECRETARY