



*Small Community Club
Management Guide*

Introduction

The following pages form part of the Tennis Australia's ***"Tennis 2020 – Facility development and management framework for Australian tennis"***.

The intention is that club administrators and members will consider the information contained herein and complete the suggested stages in order to assist them with their thinking and planning for the future of their club/facility. Although not a "blueprint", the document can be used as a guide to assist clubs throughout Australia to strengthen their current operations and where it is deemed appropriate grow to provide enhanced programs and services for current and future users and members.

How do you use this guide?

At this point it is important to stress that this document has been produced to assist tennis clubs and facilities throughout Australia. As readers will appreciate although there are many common threads that unite tennis across this vast continent there are also many unique differences brought about by geography, climate, history and evolution. For this reason some aspects of this document will be applicable to some readers whereas others may be less so. As a consequence this document can only serve as a catalyst to the thinking and planning process.

The following suggested stages are intended to place some structure and order around planning for the future. They do not assume, nor do they require, any previous expertise or familiarity with strategic or business planning. What they do require is a group of people who are prepared to set aside a few hours over a month or two for quality thinking and debate and who are prepared to balance the history of their club/facility with the current needs of users and most importantly the emerging trends and demands of future users. It may also encourage you and your colleagues to consider progressing to the next level... whatever that means for you.

It should also be stated that the process is continual. Just as you and your colleagues complete one cycle of the planning process, which will inevitably involve some action and implementation, it is important to commence the next round of thinking and planning. This is intended to keep our sport and your club/facility fresh and attractive and to avoid the traditional lurching and lumpy approach to action that is symptomatic of most sports.

What are the stages?

The suggested stages are summarised below. As you will see they are not complicated or onerous and so they can be used with the full spectrum of stakeholders from all age groups and walks of life. Additional information in relation to each of the steps is provided in subsequent pages and some suggested agendas for meetings are offered in the Appendix section..

Stage 1 – Gaining support to Commence – This first step involves gaining agreement to commence the planing process. Depending on the size and nature of the club and facility this may involve anywhere from two to twenty people! Wherever you land on this scale it is important for participants to understand that they will be involved in one of the most important activities that their club can possibly undertake as it will serve to shape the facility and sport in that area for the foreseeable future. This section will provide some useful tips and techniques to involve the most appropriate and motivated group you can.

Stage 2 – Exploring the Future - Whether it is due to information technology, cheaper air travel or the impact of the media it is commonly accepted that we now live in a globalised world where fads, fashions and trends sweep the world in weeks and months. For this reason tennis at all levels needs to keep one eye firmly focussed on the future to ensure that the form, function and facilities of the game are in tune with the expectations of participants, members, users and visitors. Section 2 contains a series of scenarios to help users consider what their club and facility could be. They are far from radical as many of the elements are currently in operation somewhere in Australia. Nevertheless it is hoped they will encourage those involved in the thinking and planning process to consider what their clubs and facilities could be like in five years time.

Stage 3 – Initial Performance Assessment – As with any enhancement program for athletes it is important in the planning process to establish a “baseline” regarding current performance. This involves gathering together existing data and information regarding the operation of the club/facility from the recent past. It may involve looking into factors have been demonstrated by clubs and facilities elsewhere to be important indicators for a healthy and vibrant club/facility. Some of the elements to be considered include performance measures, policies, systems, structures, staffing (paid and unpaid) and governance.

Stage 4 – Planning for the Future – Based on the exploration of the future, combined with consideration of the recent past, we are now able to commence the process of planning for the future. Simply put, it involves focussing on the small number of actions that have been identified as likely to have the greatest impact on achieving the future outcomes that you and your colleagues want. By focussing your efforts on these items and pursuing them with passion and energy...just as elite athletes do...then the likelihood for success is enhanced. It is also important to involve a broad cross section from the club/facility/stakeholders/community so that you can spread the load and ensure there is continuity for the future.

The intention of this stage is to have clubs/facilities of all sizes commence the process of reviewing current performance and planning for the future. Some clubs will have a long history of planning along with experienced and capable contributors. Our concern is that there will be a large number of clubs/facilities who are primarily focused on day-to-day operations or the next round of competition with the result that too little time is invested in undertaking activity that is focused on the future, relative to its importance.

Once clubs and facilities have completed these stages they will at least have a clearer perspective on where they are going and some of the core activities they will need to undertake to achieve this vision. In addition they will have established a suite of measures that provide greater clarity and understanding regarding their current performance. Once clubs/facility become comfortable with this process they are in a better position to "graduate" to the existing Tennis Australia planning kit or the club development checklist produced by the Australian Sports Commission both of which guide the process in a far more detailed manner.

STAGE 1 – Gaining Support to Commence

As previously indicated, thinking and planning for the future is perhaps the most important task that you and your colleagues can undertake as it will position your club or facility for the future. Unfortunately the mere suggestion of "future planning" can produce a chorus of groaning along with contagious disinterest among possible participants. This is most often not the fault of planning per se but due to long winded and failed efforts in the past.

In order to overcome some...but not all... of this reticence it is important to develop a simple action plan that may involve consideration of the following questions.

- What is the range of groups currently involved in the club?
- Who appears committed to the sport and the club/facility?
- Who are some of the opinion leaders or influential types within the club/facility?
- Do you have a committee that will expect to participate?
- Who are members/users with skills that could be useful to the process of planning?
- Will you call for volunteers or co-opt participants?
- Have you considered involving younger people to groom them for "succession"?
- Have you considered older people to tap into their wisdom?
- What is a good time to gather a cross section of the above?
- Will the physical environment be inviting and comfortable?
- Can you increase participation by offering food and drinks?

In broad terms it is best to have a cross section of people willing to contribute to a discussion of the future and who ideally are drawn from a wide catchment area covering the club/facility, stakeholders and even the community. This will ensure good representation from interested users, best use of available skills and most importantly a broad base for possible future action.

Personalised invitations to attend an initial session of up to two hours tend to increase the numbers who are willing to participate as do follow-up phone calls closer to the session time. It is useful to attach an indicative agenda with timings to this invitation and encourage attendees to consider the items to be discussed or even a range of scenarios regarding possible "futures" such as those outlined later in this document.

Once your nominated group has arrived can we suggest that you consider the following points as a way of structuring the session. An indicative agenda with ideal outcomes is presented in Appendix A

- Provide an overview of the session, covering the aims, expectations and timings.
- Encourage participants to introduce themselves
- Invite attendees to establish a set of ground rules for the meeting.
- Discuss current and emerging trends in sport and tennis.
- Consider some of the trends in the provision of services
- Explore the strengths and weaknesses of the current club/facility
- Consider the motivation to proceed to the next stage in planning

The aim of the first meeting is to generate understanding and appreciation of the need to regularly review club/facility operations and to update the "service offering" in order to retain current members as well as attract new players, participants and visitors. Undertaking these activities on a regular basis will serve to build a culture that values the importance of reviewing performance, aligning sporting and ancillary services to the needs of customers and building a planning culture that avoids the traditional reactive response to a gradual decline over a number of years.

A suggested agenda and running sheet for the first stage workshop is included as Appendix A

STAGE 2 – Exploring

The next stage in the planning involves an exploration of future options for all aspects of the club/facility. Here again this process is best undertaken with a small group of interested, motivated and competent individuals drawn from staff, players and managerial ranks. It is hoped that this discussion will spark consideration of "what could be possible" as well as where the club/facility might like to go in the foreseeable future.

As with Stage 1 it is desirable to convene a short meeting (1.5 -- 2.0 hr) to consider the discussion paper presented below. Readers will note that a range of elements have been included covering the focus of the club/facility, its catchment area, "governance", administration, usage, physical layout and structures and even ancillary services. Some of the suggestions are deliberately provocative in order to challenge prevailing beliefs and perspectives bearing in mind that many of the recreational and sporting initiatives that we now take for granted were first presented by so-called heretics. A suggested agenda and running sheet for the second stage workshop is included as Appendix B. In broad terms the aim is to continue the process of cultivating a future oriented planning culture within the club/facility and to obtain agreement from the participant group to progress to Stage 3.

STAGE 3 – Club/Facility Development

The third stage of the planning process involves clubs/facilities undertaking a "desk top review" of their current operations. This process is intended to be conducted against a backdrop of discussions held in Stage 1 whereby consideration was given to the current operations of the club/facility and Stage 2 that looked at future options. In order to guide this process the following 20 core questions are presented as a starting point.

1. What is the primary focus of the club/facility?
2. How many members/customers regularly utilise the facility?
3. What are the patterns and profiles of current usage/patronage?
4. How many juniors are involved and in what form?
5. What is the turnover rate of members/patrons?
6. What is the quality of relationships with the immediate neighbours?
7. To what degree is the club/facility involved with other community groups?
8. What is the current management structure and systems?
9. Is there a current strategic & business plan?
10. Who oversees and reports on the application of these plans?
11. How many paid and unpaid staff/volunteers are involved?
12. What was the revenue and profit/surplus last year?
13. What was the current expense recovery percentage?
14. Is there a current facilities plan?
15. What are the administrative structures and systems?
16. To what degree are volunteers used and how?
17. Detail the range of programs conducted
18. How is the facility currently used?
 - a. Buildings
 - b. Courts
 - c. surrounds/grounds
19. What is the current yield per court?
20. What is the current court occupancy rate?

Some of the above questions can be dealt with in a workshop format whereas others may require individual data and information collection. The aim is to gain an understanding of the current functioning of the club/facility in contrast with the future possibilities discussed in Stage 2. Once this is complete the club/facility is then in a better position to commence the process of identifying corrective or developmental activity in order to achieve ongoing growth and success into the future. Here

again it is best that a small and motivated group take responsibility for collecting and reviewing this information and beginning the process of synthesising it into a forward-looking action plan.

Depending on the motivation and the capacity of the group involved, participants to this process are at liberty to undertake a more extensive exercise using the questions above as well as those outlined below.

- What are the key elements of the strategic and business plan?
- Who has responsibility for these areas and how and when do they report?
- What are the key performance measures of the club/facility?
- What are the coaching programs by hours?
- What is membership per court year round?
- What is the surplus/subsidy per visit?
- What are the fees per visit?
- What is the secondary spend?
- How much promotion is undertaken and in what form?
- How much promotion is undertaken per prospective player/member?
- Describe the competition hours per annum.
- What is the total court hire in hours per annum?
- What is the total facility hire in hours per annum?
- What are the gross receipts per court?
- What are the labour costs to total receipts?
- Define the catchment multiple?
- What is the promotion cost share as a percentage
- What are payroll to labour costs?
- What is the degree of direct programming?
- What is labour cost share?
- What is presentation cost share?
- What is occupancy cost share as a percentage?
- What is energy cost share as a percentage?

The purpose of these questions is to further identify areas where performance and/or practice are less than desirable and which may have an impact on the future operations and success of the club/facility. This process is sometimes known as a "gap analysis"...a contrast between the current performance and the desired level of performance.

STAGE 4 – Planning for the future

The primary intention of planning is to establish a set of goals in the future and then identify the steps or activities required to bring about the achievement of these targets. The fourth stage in the planning process seeks to build on the preceding stages and establish a focus for the future including the following broad elements;

- What is the vision for the club/facility in the foreseeable future i.e. 5 -- 10 years?
- What are the key activities that will be the focus for attention in this time in order to achieve the vision?
- How will the club manage this plan?
- What will be the key performance indicators to gauge improvement?

It is hoped that by this stage the group of contributors to the planning process have developed a reasonable grasp of the planning process as well as defining where they feel the club/facility can be in 5 -- 10 years time. Based on this, the first activity for the group in Stage 4 involves defining a reasonably detailed description of the so called "end state" or vision the club will work towards. This "word picture" needs to detail the key elements that make up the successful "end state" or goal that everyone will work towards. In some instances it may be appropriate to support this with a picture or sketch to help others better understand what the future may look like. Whatever vision is selected it is important for clubs/facilities to align their plan and activities with the needs and expectations of current and future users as well as make sure it is consistent with local associations, state bodies and ultimately Tennis Australia. It is also critical to establish a set of performance measures that can be used to track the impact of the proposed changes to achieve the desired vision.

Various writers in the field of planning have advocated that it is better to focus on a small number of important tasks rather than establish a large "shopping list" of proposed actions. In part this is because most organisations have limited resources and hence it is better to concentrate your efforts and energies in those areas that will produce an outcome. This approach is also more likely to build support for planning because these successes will encourage continued involvement and may even draw new contributors into the process.

The activities or actions that are selected will need to be clearly defined and scoped so that the correct resources and support systems are put in place to bring about success. Typically this will involve a nominated person who will oversee the activity working with a group of contributors who may have volunteered their time or who may have even been co-opted to assist, based on their knowledge or experience. This mini project team will need to establish a schedule of activities and associated timings that all will agree to work to and can report on to a management or planning group. These project teams will need to report to the management or steering group on a regular basis (monthly or bimonthly). Whilst these developmental activities are being undertaken it is important to maintain the day-to-day functioning of the club/facility.

Another product from the planning process will need to be the establishment of a set of performance indicators that accurately reflect the nature and form of the club/facility. It is best that data and information in relation to these indicators is collected and reported monthly so that those who are assisting with "management" are focussing on the drivers that will most likely lead to success. At a minimum it is recommended that clubs/facilities focus their attention on a handful of key measures that include;

- Number of members/participants – adults and juniors
- Program Range
- Court Occupancy
- Expense Recovery
- Yield per court}
- Revenue from Secondary Sources}
- Current Assets/Current Liabilities}

By reviewing the performance in each of these areas...and others if there is the motivation and skill...then the club/facility and the key people therein can develop and maintain a focus on managing for today and tomorrow. It will also assist with the training and development of new staff – paid and/or unpaid – which will facilitate a smoother hand over from one management group to the next. The club/facility will also be in a better position to see trends as they emerge and where needed manage these in a timely manner.

Tennis Australia has developed a set of industry benchmarks in association with the University of South Australia. For more information about this project please go to the Tennis Australia website.

Focus

The primary aim for a small community club is to provide an accessible facility for the local community within a radius of 2-3 kms. The primary focus will be tennis although it may offer additional services due to the structure of the club facility and/or its physical location in a suburb. Some of the additional services may include a venue for passive recreational and community pursuits (i.e. bridge, community health) as well as an outpost for local council services (i.e. information kiosk, meeting hall).

Similarly these clubs may want to offer reduced membership rates for immediate neighbours in order to encourage involvement and participation. This gesture may serve to connect these families more closely to the club and in so doing offer a form of neighbourhood watch for security, reduce resistance to club activity and hence protect what is known as the “social licence to operate”. The failure to connect with the immediate community may foster resentment which over time may limit the scope of activity and operations of the club or even see it under threat.

By adopting a “community engagement” approach clubs can better work with current and potential members and key stakeholders in order to broaden their participation and usage base and in so doing increase direct (revenue) and indirect (advocacy) support whilst maintaining an ongoing “social licence to operate”.

At an aggregated level it is possible for similar sized and oriented clubs that are within a common geographic region (3-6kms) to cooperate on some activities such as running tournaments, sourcing products and services and fielding premier teams whilst at the same time promoting their individual orientation and benefits separately.

Governance

As the name suggests, a small community club would seek to establish a strong and enduring “connection” to the local community that it is a part of. Perhaps contrary to current practice this may mean it engages a broader group of constituents beyond players and parents of juniors to include local residents, other current and potential users as well as supporters and “funders” such as local councils, state bodies and sponsors.

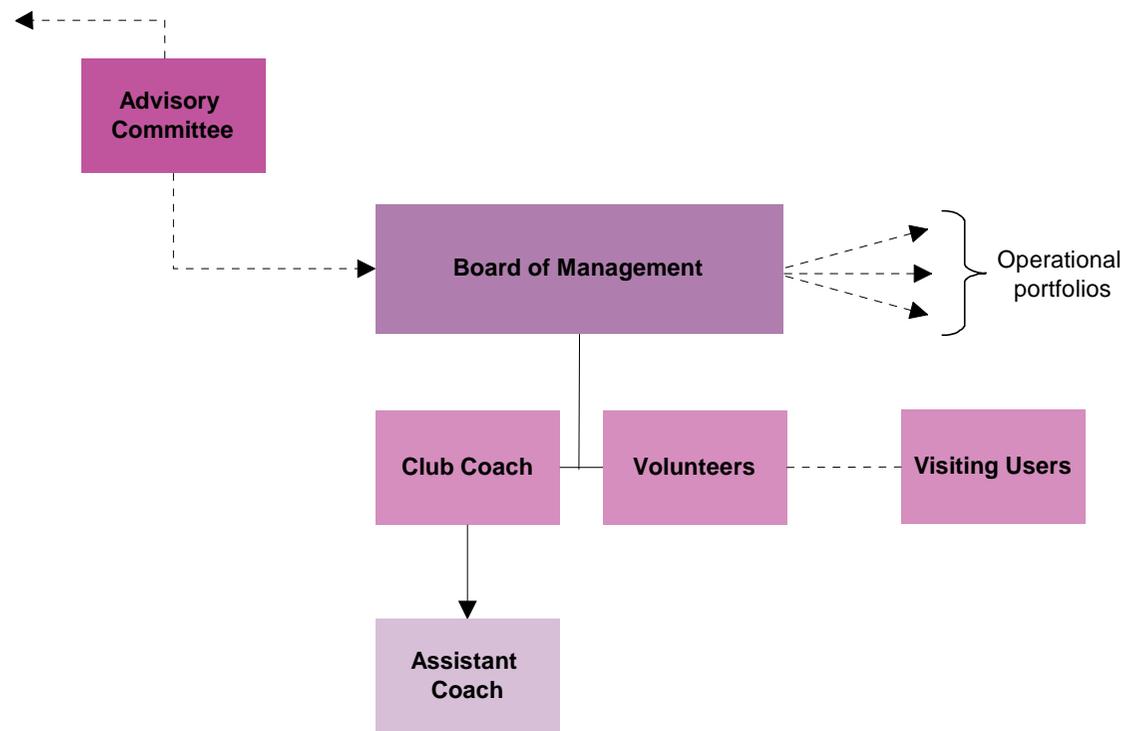
It is likely that a small community club would be overseen by a voluntary “board of management” (or committee) comprising elected representatives from current financial members of the club.

The “board of management” would operate to a clearly defined charter and comprise up to 8 members each elected for a two year period with half of the members up for election every two years. This “rolling” cycle will ensure greater stability and knowledge transfer and increase the likelihood of the board operating to the standards advocated by Tennis Australia and the Australian Sports Commission.

The “board of management” may seek input from an advisory group involving representatives of the broader community and key stakeholders. As well as receiving input regarding the operation and impact of the club on the local community, the aim of the advisory committee would be to assist with communication about the club and the promotion of it as an open and accessible facility for the community and not just the exclusive province of tennis players.

The members of the voluntary “board of management” could be assigned a portfolio and then be assisted by targeted working groups or committees. These committees might focus on issues such as membership, competition, junior development and promotion/fundraising.

Given the burgeoning costs associated with facilities for tennis such as court surfaces, clubhouses, lights etc it is important for the voluntary “board of management” to plan and budget for maintenance, replacement and progressive development within the context of their operations. Ideally this would be represented as a “facilities plan” with associated objectives and costs so that there is purposeful and targeted action in this area on a regular basis rather than allow clubs to physically and operationally decay.



Administration

Given the size of a small community club it is most likely that they would be managed by a small number of passionate and committed volunteers with the time and inclination to provide adequate “rostered coverage” across the range of opening hours. These volunteers would need to have sufficient skill and expertise to fulfil their role as well as adequate guidelines and procedures to ensure safety and consistency of operation.

Depending on the membership, demographics and associated activity levels it may be appropriate to actively involve the “resident coach” in the operation and administration of the club. The “resident coach” could be engaged to manage the club on behalf of the BOM through a number of relationships including lease/sub lease, management agreement, or a contract. The above factors may also impact on the nature of this involvement however if the levels of activity were high this could translate into some form of remuneration with incentives for membership and revenue growth for the coach.

Usage

As indicated above the primary focus of the small community club would be tennis. The investment in the development, operation and maintenance of the 2-5 courts emphasises the need to achieve reasonably high levels of usage across operating hours balanced against the needs of nearby residents.

As a result a normal week day may include the following activities;

- 6.30am – 8.30am tennis workout for business people
- 9.30am – 11.30am community tennis for parents with young children
- 1.30pm – 3.30pm social tennis for the active aging
- 4.00pm – 6.30pm coaching and squads for individuals and groups
- 7.30pm – 10.30pm night tennis for all ages

Activities on the week end may look as follows

Saturday

- 8.30am – 12.00 noon junior competition
- 12.30am – 6.30pm senior competition

Sunday

- 8.30am – 12.00 noon coaching and squads for individuals and groups
- 12.30am – 6.30pm community and social tennis or craft market(see support services)

Involvement in each of these activities could be included in a variety of membership packages or charged at a premium based on a “pay for play” arrangement. As indicated above the management and promotion of these activities would likely involve a mixture of volunteers and the “resident coach”.

Support Services

The physical facility and the surrounding grounds may also allow additional services to be offered to both members and the wider community. In order for this to occur, current and potential users need to see the club as more than a venue for tennis as well as being open and accessible to all comers and not just for those who are members. In the first instance the clubrooms could provide space and facilities to enhance a sense of community both within and outside of the club. This could include spaces to meet and relax, access to coffee and snacks, and adult and child changing rooms.

These same spaces may allow for the conduct of a wide variety of fitness, health and recreation courses. Revenue from hire charges could be derived from promoting the venue (inside and out) for parties and functions.

Similarly the tennis court areas are “valuable spaces” or “venues” for activities such as local markets, community displays and even hard court bowls!

Summary

Small clusters of courts have been the true grass roots of tennis in Australia for well over 100 years. It is important to protect these venues in such a way that they can continue to encourage the participation of players of all standards as well as foster the next generation of champions. Opposing this traditional view are consumers who are becoming more demanding of better services and facilities, are more concerned with health and wellness but paradoxically who are time poor.

To satisfy both pressures it is important that small community tennis clubs expand their view and reach to connect with all communities in their immediate catchment area. To do this they need to be presented and seen as open, friendly, inviting and flexible spaces that can be used by anyone as opposed to wire bound and gated facilities for the exclusive use of a small group of “members”. By doing this clubs can grow, develop and prosper so that they support tennis in all of its forms and embed themselves as important and valued contributors to the broader community.

Conclusion

The management and development of all sporting clubs and facilities has become increasingly complicated over the past decade. Greater recreational choices, increasing demands from legislators and customers and “time poor” users has meant that greater attention and expertise needs to be directed towards the management of today and tomorrow. In addition all sports and clubs need to proactively manage trends sooner rather than later either to address a market need or arrest a slide. The aim of this document has been to serve a catalyst to start the review and planning process and to inform and hopefully educate a group of motivated managers, members and participants to contribute to the current process and ultimately build a culture that recognises the need to monitor and manage performance into the future.

Appendix A – Stage 1 indicative agenda

The following agenda is intended to be a guide for officers within tennis clubs and facilities who are looking to gain the support of key staff, members and stakeholders to commence the process of exploring future options for sporting, coaching and ancillary services. This initial workshop is intended to serve as a catalyst to spark thinking and discussion around possible alternatives so that the club/facility best meets the needs of current and future members/users as well as remains abreast with contemporary standards.

Welcome and Introductions (10 min)

It is appropriate to welcome participants to the session and to outline the aims and objectives for the next 1.5/2.0 hrs.

(The primary aim is to commence discussion regarding the future of the club/facility. It is not about making decisions or commencing planning just yet!)

Once the aims have been covered it is an appropriate to invite attendees to introduce themselves.

Emerging Trends in Sport, Tennis and Services (30 min)

At this point participants can be invited to contribute their perspectives regarding current and emerging trends within sport, facilities, Tennis as well as customer service. It is best for this material be recorded somewhere in order to identify key elements.

Some of the trends we are seeing include

- More people are participating in sports/activities that are not organised such as yoga, cycling and surfing
- Sports that require equipment and facilities show a slow but steady decline in participation
- Trends suggest people are drifting away from team sports
- In Australia roughly 23% of people over the age of 15 actively participate in sport with the majority being in the 15 – 44 age group.
- Australian households spend on average \$15.70 per week on selected sporting activity
- Those who play tennis do so on average once per week
- Registered tennis player numbers in Australia are currently stable

(The aim of this activity is to identify that the market for tennis is increasingly competitive with more sporting and recreational options available to current and potential participants. For those who continue to play their needs and expectations have risen and so clubs and facilities must as a minimum keep pace otherwise membership and participation will gradually decline.)

Current Strengths and Weaknesses (30 min)

Based on the discussion regarding emerging trends attention can now turn to your club/facility. Encourage participants to identify current strengths and weaknesses of your club/facility.

(It is important at this stage to avoid going into too much detail and considering solutions. Here again we are simply seeking the commitment of participants to commence the process of planning rather than identify and address all issues in one meeting.)

Where to from here? (10min)

At this point it is appropriate to gauge the level of interest and commitment from the attendees to continue the process of exploring future options for the club/facility.

(Ideally facilitators to this session would be seeking to gain agreement from participants to undertake a strategic planning process. At a minimum it would be desirable to gain agreement regarding proceeding to the next step which involves discussing some of the future options for the club/facility at another meeting of similar length.)

Next Meeting

If possible, gain agreement regarding the next meeting time, who will be the convener and whether the current group or others will be invited to participate.

(It is desirable that the size of the group involved in the planning process ranges from 6 -- 12 participants in order to ensure an adequate spread of workload as well as build a firm foundation for succession.)

Appendix B – Stage 2 indicative agenda

The following suggested agenda and "running sheet" is intended to serve as a guide for a possible meeting associated with Stage 2 of the planning process. It is built around the discussion document outlined above and it is intended to spark discussion and thinking regarding the possible future form, function and services of the club/facility.

Pre-work

In order to make best use of the available time it is recommended that the discussion paper is presented to possible participants before the meeting to allow them time to read and digest some of the concepts. This document will need to be clearly labelled as a discussion paper so as to avoid igniting undue concern or apprehension.

Welcome and Introductions (5 min)

In order to engender the correct spirit and atmosphere for the meeting it is appropriate for the convener to welcome participants and provide a form of overview and introduction for the meeting.

(The primary aim is to discuss future options for the club/facility and its associated form, function and services to members/users. The options presented in the discussion paper are intended to simulate consideration of the services that are currently provided as well as those in the foreseeable future so that membership, participation and ultimately revenues increase for the club in focus.)

Club Future

Each of the items mentioned in the discussion paper will need to be discussed in turn as illustrated below;

Focus -- discussion in this area will explore whether the club/facility sees itself as retaining the current focus within its present catchment area. (20 min)

Governance -- this item will consider how to provide the best possible management and governance of the club/facility whilst taking player, participant, member, stakeholder and possible owners needs into account. (15 min)

Administration -- this section will consider how best to provide day-to-day management and administration of the club/facility (15 min)

Usage -- discussion in this area will explore how and when the facility will be used and for what purposes. (20 min)

Support Services -- this will involve consideration of how else the building, courts and surrounds could be used and what other services could be provided to members, stakeholders and the broader community. (20 min)

(The aim of this series of discussions will be to expand the understanding of the club/facility and to sensitise participants to the possibilities and opportunities to provide a better range of services and facilities to current and future member needs.)

Where to from here? (10min)

At this point it is appropriate to gauge the level of interest and commitment from the attendees to continue the process of exploring future options for the club/facility.

(Ideally facilitators to this session would be seeking to gain agreement from participants to undertake a strategic planning process. At a minimum it would be desirable to gain agreement regarding proceeding to the next step which involves undertaking an initial assessment of the club/facility at another meeting of similar length.)

Next Meeting

If possible, gain agreement regarding the next meeting time, who will be the convener and whether the current group or others will be invited to participate.

(It is desirable that the size of the group involved in the planning process ranges from 6 -- 12 participants in order to ensure an adequate spread of workload as well as build a firm foundation for succession.)

Appendix C – Stage 3 indicative agenda

All organisations irrespective of size, need to undertake some form of periodic “health check” to assess their operations and identify areas for improvement. This diagnostic process can take many forms depending on the level of sophistication of the entity involved. The framework presented below is intended to be a starting point.

Pre-work

In order to make best use of the available time it is recommended that the performance indicators be circulated to those involved in the process well ahead of any planned meeting to allow for data and information collection as well as facilitate discussion.

Welcome and Introductions (5 min)

In order to engender the correct spirit and atmosphere for the meeting it is appropriate for the convener to welcome participants and provide a form of overview and introduction for the meeting.

Assessment of Core Elements (1.5 hrs)

The following questions are intended to guide data and information collection regarding the current functioning of the club/facility.

1. What is the primary focus of the club/facility?
2. How many members/customers regularly utilise the facility?
3. What are the patterns and profiles of current usage/patronage?
4. How many juniors are involved and in what form?
5. What is the turnover rate of members/patrons?
6. What is the quality of relationships with the immediate neighbours?
7. To what degree is the club/facility involved with other community groups?
8. What is the current management structure and systems?
9. Is there a current strategic & business plan?
10. Who oversees and reports on the application of these plans?
11. How many paid and unpaid staff/volunteers are involved?
12. What was the revenue and profit/surplus last year?
13. What was the current expense recovery percentage?
14. Is there a current facilities plan?
15. What are the administrative structures and systems?

16. To what degree are volunteers used and how?
17. Detail the range of programs conducted
18. How is the facility currently used?
 - a. Buildings
 - b. Courts
 - c. surrounds/grounds
19. What is the current yield per court?
20. What is the current court occupancy rate?

(The primary aim is to go over the questions and assemble information to provide an accurate response. Clearly it is better to have hard facts and demonstrable evidence such as numbers, percentages and documents.)

Assessment of Additional Factors

Depending on the level of skill, experience and sophistication clubs may want to consider a suite of additional factors that are presented below. By collecting data and information on these it may shed further light on the performance of the club/facility and spark consideration of future plans in some greater detail or insight.

1. What are the key elements of the strategic and business plan?
2. Who has responsibility for these areas and how and when do they report?
3. What are the key performance measures of the club/facility?
4. What are the coaching programs by hours?
5. What is membership per court year round?
6. What is the surplus/subsidy per visit?
7. What are the fees per visit?
8. What is the secondary spend?
9. How much promotion is undertaken and in what form?
10. How much promotion is undertaken per prospective player/member?
11. Describe the competition hours per annum.
12. What is the total court hire in hours per annum?
13. What is the total facility hire in hours per annum?
14. What are the gross receipts per court?
15. What are the labour costs to total receipts?
16. Define the catchment multiple?
17. What is the promotion cost share as a percentage
18. What are payroll to labour costs?
19. What is the degree of direct programming?
20. What is labour cost share?
21. What is presentation cost share?

22. What is occupancy cost share as a percentage?

23. What is energy cost share as a percentage?

Where to from here? (10min)

At this point it is important to identify the gaps in the information and develop an action plan to address this. In addition it would be ideal to begin the process of identifying the some of those elements that appear to be low or are trending down. Again it would be good to commence some thinking about how these factors could be dealt with.

(It is hoped that this stage will begin to identify some data and performance gaps that will stimulate a desire to continue with the planning process)

Next Meeting (5 min)

If possible, gain agreement regarding the next meeting time, who will be the convener and whether the current group or others will be invited to participate.

(It is desirable that the size of the group involved in the planning process ranges from 6 -- 12 participants in order to ensure an adequate spread of workload as well as build a firm foundation for succession.)

Appendix D – Stage 4 indicative agenda

Planning for the future is a necessary element for future success. Despite the fact it is relatively straightforward it must be supported by good thinking at the front end and committed action at the tail end. This “running sheet” will serve a guide to the process however it must be remembered that there may be several versions before a final outcome is achieved.

Pre-work

In order to make best use of the available time it is recommended that participants be encouraged to undertake some preparatory thinking around the following questions;

- What is the vision for the club/facility in the foreseeable future i.e. 5 -- 10 years?
- What are the key activities that will be the focus for attention in this time in order to achieve the vision?
- How will the club manage this plan?
- What will be the key performance indicators to gauge improvement?

Welcome and Introductions (5 min)

In order to engender the correct spirit and atmosphere for the meeting it is appropriate for the convener to welcome participants and provide a form of overview and introduction for the meeting.

Our Vision for the Future (45 min)

Planning for the future is best done in reverse! This means to start with a discussion of your ideal scenario and then work backwards to work out how to achieve this. With this in mind encourage participants to think and talk as if they were living and experiencing their future vision. Have them describe their view of the future in some detail and then try to draw every ones contribution together into a series of sentences and/or paragraphs that seem to summarise the common themes.

(At this stage it is important to have clear picture of what you and your club/facility is shooting for. Describe this picture that your group has in mind with some detail and then capture it in words. It does not have to be word crafted or in perfect English but it must be clear, agreed and achievable with some effort.)

Our Key Actions (30 min)

Once the future vision is clear then it is time to work backwards and identify the key actions and steps needed to achieve success. Based on the discussion above and the work conducted at Stage 2 and 3 list all of the “things” that need to be done. Once this list has been exhausted then begin to prioritise them by the degree to which they contribute to the achievement of the end vision. Where possible identify the top 6 actions that will be the focus for your clubs/facilities efforts.

(Establishing a small number of projects will increase the likelihood that they are achieved. It also recognises that clubs/facilities have limited resources and so must focus their time, money and effort on those most likely to produce the best return.)

Action Planning (30 min)

Now that the key actions have been identified we need to develop an action plan that describes who will do it , how it will be done, when it will be achieved and how it will be measured. The action plan is most likely to succeed if it is reviewed regularly (monthly or bi monthly) and if it is overseen by a nominated person. This does not mean that this one individual must do the work but it does mean that he/she can co-opt others to become involved in the implementation.

(The action planning phase needs to involve a wide cross section of the club/facility and not rest on the shoulders of the willing few. The plans do not have to be perfectly precise but they do need to outline a clear methodology for their actioning))

Where to from here? (10min)

At this point it is important to provide support to the groups who will be working on the nominated “projects”. This can be done via monthly reporting to the planning committee and/or a management group. Establish a reporting timetable for each group as well as timings, perhaps quarterly for the whole planning group to get back together again.

(The processes in this section are akin to project management, with the aim being to keep the groups on track and ensure that they achieve the results that are intended.)

Next Meeting (5 min)

Attempt to gain agreement for the planning group to meet quarterly to provide support to the project teams. In the mean time encourage the projects to submit monthly updates to the management committee of the club/facility.