



# *Medium 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.

***Stage 1 – Gaining support to Commence*** – This first step involves gaining agreement to commence the planning 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*

A so-called medium sized community club, comprising approximately 6-10 courts, will have as its primary focus the provision of tennis facilities to a local geographic region within an indicative radius of 2-4 kms. This facility is likely to be slightly larger than a small community club both in court number and other facilities and could begin to operate in a more commercial and expansive manner.

In order for it to be self sustaining in the long term it is important for a medium sized community club to achieve a workable blend of “community oriented” activities such as active and passive recreational pursuits whilst beginning to offer small scale commercial activities such as a café, “pro-shop” and health and wellness services.

The community orientation will enable the club to establish positive relations with a wide catchment of local residents beyond just tennis players and in so doing facilitate the promotion of both the club and the sport as being accessible to all comers. The conduct of contemporary commercial activities will increase the attraction and amenity of the club and hence retain users. The revenue derived from these complementary services will also assist with supporting the operations of the club and the membership charges that are paid by players and users.

## *Governance*

It is likely that a medium community club would be overseen by a voluntary board of management/committee comprising nominated or elected representatives from the current financial members of the club.

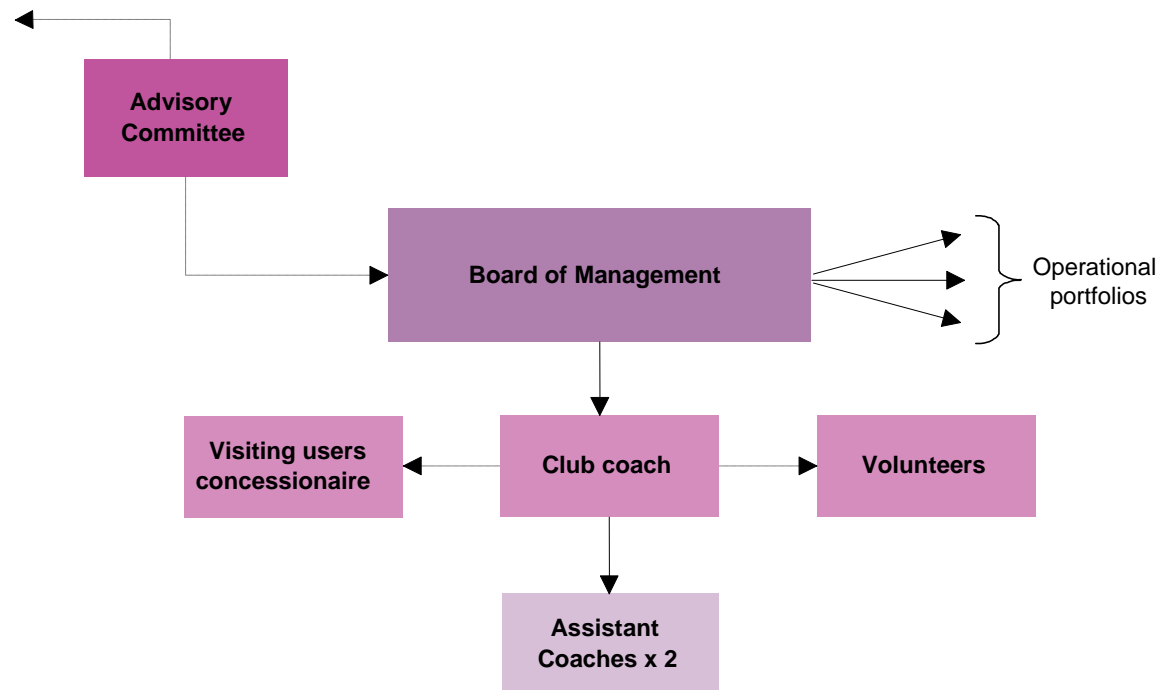
The “board of management” (BOM) would operate to a clearly defined charter and comprise up to 8 members each elected for a two year period with half of the members up for election every two years. This “rolling” cycle will ensure greater stability and knowledge transfer and increase the likelihood of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

The “board of management” would be encouraged to seek input from an advisory group involving representatives of the broader community and key stakeholders such as non-tennis users of the facilities, local residents, nearby schools and even state and local councils. 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.

As this facility will likely have a growing commercial orientation it is anticipated that the “club coach” would also function as a part time “facility manager and promoter”. For this reason he/she would work with the board in an ex officio capacity and report on all key operations and performance. The 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. In some instances it is possible that the club is managed as a commercial enterprise come community facility by council.

The members of the voluntary “board of management” could benefit from a short form of induction and training to ensure that they understood their roles and responsibilities and that they were thinking and behaving with a “whole of community facility” perspective rather than from self interest or myopia regarding the facilities. Each would be assigned a portfolio and then be assisted by targeted working groups or committees whereby the necessary skills and experience could be coopted as needed. These committees might focus on such issues such as membership, competition, junior development and promotion/fundraising/grants.

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 operational decay.



## *Administration*

It is likely that the medium sized club will provide sufficient tennis activities and support services for it to be lucrative enough to be managed and promoted by a “club coach”, at least for the busier or peak periods. In order to safeguard all concerned it is anticipated that this person would be engaged by way of a formal contract for an agreed period that outlined the role, expectations and performance parameters that are expected of all parties.

The club coach would work to satisfy an agreed set of performance targets covering such items as members, players, patronage, growth, revenue/profit, competitions and where appropriate report on these on a regular (monthly, bi monthly) basis to the board of management. The club coach would have worked with the BOM to shape a strategic and operational plan covering the period of his/her tenure. Once written in draft form this plan could be presented to the advisory committee for comment and then be communicated to members and stakeholders.

As a result of the mid size nature of the club the coach would be assisted by a small group of trained volunteers who would work to an agreed set of guidelines to ensure that the services were consistent and of a high standard.

Some of the core functions of the club coach in this expanded facility manager role may include;

- Coordination and conduct of competitions and player development
- Preparation of annual tennis plans
- Preparation of annual recreation and leisure plans
- Work with the BOM to develop an annual strategic plan and budget
- Facilitation of community engagement activities
- Liaise with key groups and stakeholders
- Support and train volunteers
- Report to BOM on agreed performance targets

Some of the core competencies of the “club coach/facility manager” would include

- Accredited Tennis Coach
- Basic administration and book-keeping skills
- Activity and competition coordination
- Facility promotion and management
- Recreation and Leisure planning

Although it is difficult to precisely define, it is important for the “club coach” to have certain personal qualities as well in order to build a positive, vibrant and attractive atmosphere and culture. They could include;

- Positive and extroverted demeanour
- Good interpersonal and communication skills
- Passion for sport, recreation and well being
- Patience and tolerance for all types
- Customer orientation
- Self starting and motivated

An interesting benchmark is the positive mood and atmosphere displayed by “ski schools” and their instructors who despite often hostile operating and weather conditions project an engaging mixture of energy, excitement, fun and challenge for participants of all ages and abilities.

As indicated above the “club coach” would be contracted to the club for an agreed period (preferably 3 years). Remuneration for this person would comprise a retainer plus access to additional incentive payments based on the performance of the off court facilities, club membership and player growth. Importantly the coach would need to agree to notify the club in writing 3 months prior to leaving and undertake not to solicit players or business from the club for a period of 6 months after departure.

## Usage

As indicated above the core focus of the medium community club would be tennis. The investment in the development, operation and maintenance of the 6-10 courts emphasises the need to achieve quite high levels of usage across operating hours balanced against the needs of nearby residents and the community as a whole.

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 mothers 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 weekend may look as follows

Saturday

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

Sunday

- 8.30am – 12.00 noon coaching and squads for individuals and groups
- 12.30pm – 6.30 pm community and social tennis

It seems from local and overseas experience that the “club coach” is critical to generating tennis activities such as coaching and competitions for all age groups. Given the number of courts it is possible to have the “club coach” oversee a pool of sub-contract/associate coaches who could work with club or association players, school groups, disabled and disadvantaged players along with mature and active aging groups.

Some of the performance indicators that would need to be monitored by the “club coach” and the BOM to ensure a vibrant and thriving centre could include;

Court utilisation	Number of participants in other coaching programs
Yield per court	Number of participants in “Tennis workouts”
Off court revenue	Court Hire
Number of participants in internal competition and social play	Number of Corporate Days
Number of participants in “Hot Shots”	Customer Service

This facility and associated staffing will also allow for the involvement of “casual players” who are looking for an occasional hit with someone of a comparable standard. Rosters and courts/slots could be made available for this service which will also encourage drop in visitors who may become longer term members.

Involvement in each of these core activities could be included in a variety of membership packages or charged at a premium based on a “pay for play” arrangement.

## Support Services

An essential ingredient to the ongoing development of tennis and tennis clubs is the need to communicate and connect with current and potential users that the club, the physical facility and its surrounds are more than a collection of courts. In the case of the medium sized club it is possible to consider a range of additional commercial and non commercial services that could be run by the club using paid or voluntary staff. In some cases these services could be leased to concessionaires who have proven expertise and demonstrable experience in the field. Some of these services could include;

*Pro shop* – the number of courts and hence the number of players means that there would be demand for a small shop providing a limited range of goods such as clothing, racquets, footwear and accessories as well as the consumables that go with tennis such as balls, grips and restrings.

*Café* – consumer expectations are constantly on the rise and so the provision of good snacks and beverages in a comfortable and contemporary setting increases the perception of value for members and users and encourages them to continue their patronage and even tell their friends of a “hidden gem”.

*Health/Wellness* – those coming to the facility are concerned to varying degrees about their physical and mental well being and so it may be possible to offer services such as dietary and beauty products as well as rooms for visiting providers such as hair, podiatry or child health.

*Gym/Fitness* – as clubrooms increase in size and/or have access to greater surrounding space there is the greater likelihood for the conduct of health and fitness sessions such as gym circuits, pilates, yoga or tia chi. Each of these pursuits potentially caters for a different segment of the market which in turn increases the number of those who visit the club and for whom the club is seen as “theirs”. These services could be delivered indoors, in car parks, on courts, or court surrounds which again uses all aspects of the physical asset.

*Crèche* – depending on the demographics of the users there may be both the need and demand for crèche facilities. As with the gym services this may be best outsourced given regulatory requirements however it would still provide a revenue stream and value added service for the club. It should be noted that both the gym and crèche may not need a dedicated space as the internal use of the clubrooms could be reconfigured to cater for the users using flexible and movable wall systems.

*Information Access* – information technology allows clubs such as this to provide “kiosk” services for local councils (information), libraries (catalogue access), banks (ATM’s), and general advertisers as well as an internet hot spot or terminal for individual users.

*Community Facility* – the open and flexible interior of the club rooms could serve as a suitable environment for meetings of local residents, youth groups and senior citizens. It could also facilitate more passive forms of recreation such as interest groups as well as a facility that could be hired for parties and functions.

*Open Space* – with increasing urban infill the access to open spaces is diminishing and so the courts, court surrounds and car parks are also suitable spaces for such things as craft markets, information displays, radio controlled cars and “come and try sessions” for other forms of recreation.

## Summary

Medium sized community clubs can benefit from a blend of community and commercial activities in order to gain access to additional streams of revenue as well as the much needed local support from tennis and “non tennis” users. Critical to the success of this model is to secure an energetic and enthusiastic “club coach” who is also able to operate in an expanded role as a facility manager and promoter. This person will need the support of a capable and trained board of management along with a small group of reliable staff and volunteers.

## 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.