Student Services and Amenities Fees (SSAF)

What did Sport receive and how was it utilised?

A message to students, sporting clubs and stakeholders.

The University reinstated a compulsory Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) in 2012, following an alteration to federal legislation in October 2011, and subsequently determined to charge the full amount allowable at $263 for full-time and $197 for part-time students. The University, working with student groups and service providers (including MU Sport) developed a draft proposal to distribute the revenue and asked students to provide feedback in November 2011.

University Council finally determined that MU Sport would receive $2.28m which is 19.5% of the total amount collected at approximately $53 per student. This was an increase of $1.03M in University funding from 2011 but $300,000 less than the allocation to Sport in the initial draft proposal which included a 'no worse off scenario'. The additional funds were subsequently redistributed to other organisations as part of the consultation process.

The following pie chart illustrates the final distribution of the $11.8M SSAF collected by the University in 2012.

![Pie Chart](chart.png)

The vision for sport is:

That the University of Melbourne will be the leading Australian University for sporting performance, level of participation and the quality of facilities.

MU Sport in striving to meet the vision currently services over 2,000 student members of sporting clubs, 3,500 student members of the fitness centre, and 10,000 student casual users with over 1 million visits per annum to the University’s sporting facilities and services.

The management and board of MU Sport carefully considered how the additional SSAF funds would be best utilised in line with the ‘The University of Melbourne Sport Strategic Plan 2010 – 2015 mindful of the current and future financial position of the organisation, and that the long term future of the SSAF is not assured.

It was determined that the initial priority was to address the backlog in sport related building maintenance and capital projects partly caused as a result of the introduction of Voluntary Student Unionism in 2007 whilst also supporting, in a more limited capacity, initiatives to
increase participation and improve the quality of sporting performance. As the backlog of maintenance and capital projects is addressed funds can be redirected in future years to increasing participation and improving performance. The strategies will be carefully explored with all stakeholders including sporting clubs and groups and general users over time and introduced as and when more resources become available.

The following pie charts illustrate the income and expenditure in broad percentages for MU Sport.
The pie charts identify that only 27% of the total income generated by MU Sport is derived from the SSAF and that this amount is subsequently expended in maintaining the buildings and grounds. The bulk of the remaining income is derived from student fees and charges in fitness services, clubs and facility hire and highlights that students involved in sport, fitness and recreation at the University effectively pay twice to participate. First through the payment of the SSAF and secondly through additional user pay fees and charges to participate. For many students cost continues to be a significant disincentive to participation in sport and fitness activities and this will continue to be difficult to address whilst a significant percentage of income is shocked up by the cost of buildings and grounds.

Despite the current challenges the SSAF provided MU Sport with the opportunity to reduce the cost to access some services, improve the quality and/or provide additional services in 2012:

**Fitness Services**

MU Sport is committed to providing tailored, affordable, fitness service options. The cost for some of the most popular fitness memberships was effectively in 2012:

- The 4 month student membership fee was reduced from $250 in 2011, to $225 in 2012. Traditionally this is the most popular membership option for students. ($50,000 loss of income)
- A direct debit option has also been introduced for the first time, giving students the flexibility to make smaller fortnightly payments rather than pay a larger lump sum.

**South Hub Fitness Centre ($250,000 operating loss in 2012)**

MU Sport opened an additional fitness facility Lincoln Square Fitness Centre in early 2012. The students located in the area South of Grattan Street account for approximately 30% of the student population (10,000), and it is apparent that the majority of these students are not utilizing the Sport Precinct fitness facilities due to the location. It is predicted that the number of students in this precinct will continue to increase and that participation will increase as a result of the proximity of the new centre.

**Program Initiatives ($20,000)**

A range of new program initiatives were introduced to provide students with increased access to casual and one-off sporting and fitness opportunities at low or no cost. These programs included monthly group fitness master classes and Friday free shoot-around. These programs will be further developed and resourced during 2013.

**Club Support ($100,000)**

**Club Project Fund**
Additional funds to support club based strategic initiatives and developments.

**Coaching and Administrative Support**
Increased support for targeted club coaching and management appointments.

**Shared Services Model**
A range of central services will be provided over time to reduce the burden on voluntary club officials. This will include administrative support for financial and payroll transactions and reporting, increased web based support including coordination of web based communication and on-line membership registration and renewal systems.

**Strategic Club Support**
Opportunities for clubs to access additional support in the areas of club marketing/fundraising, alumni relations, sponsorship, merchandise, and event coordination.

**High Performance Sport ($50,000)**

**Representative Sport**
Additional funds to improve the performance of student athletes and teams at national sporting competitions.

**Strength and Conditioning Support**
Increased support for elite athletes and teams to include programming, testing and performance review.

**Buildings and Grounds ($600,000)**

**Sports Facility Audit**
The *Sports Facility Condition Audit* has assessed the condition of the University’s sporting facilities and recommended $5M of essential maintenance over the next three years. Funds have also been set aside for a number of urgent minor capital projects and upgrades in the Sports Precinct, Alpine Lodge at Mt Buller, and the Boathouse on the Yarra.

**Current Capital Projects**
An additional $1M in funds over two years towards the $9.5M for the development of the Main Oval Pavilion and Sports Centre refurbishment projects.

**Future capital projects**
Property and Campus Services are funding a consultant to develop a *Sports Capital Improvement Plan* to be completed by late October 2012. It is anticipated that the report will identify over $60M in capital projects required over the next 10 years to upgrade and replace the ageing University sport and recreational infrastructure, provide new facilities south of Grattan St and upgrade current off campus facilities. The total funding for the projects exceeds the current and likely future SSAF allocation and the current annual allocation to sport infrastructure development. A range of options will be explored including an increase from the University Capital Budget, targeted sporting benefaction and joint development projects with internal and external partners to create critical project mass and improve access to local and state government capital funds.

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