

**COMMUNITY CABINET AUCKLAND  
15<sup>th</sup> April 2016, 6.30-7.30pm**

**Tri Star Gymnastics Club, Keith Hay Park, Arundel Road, Mt Roskill**

**Board members**

Denis Mowbray (Chair), Tracey Diack, Carolyn Stiles, Cheryl Bowie, Andrew Miller

**GymSports NZ**

Tony Compier (CEO), Angela Lawrie

**Attending**

Howick Gymnastics Club	Ashley
Tri Star Gymnastics Club	Jenny Jujnovich (Manager) Bevin Packer
Franklin Gymsports	Vanessa Craig (Manager)
Hamilton Gymnastics Club	Clare Frankhouser (Manager)

The session opened with a welcome by the Chair, Denis Mowbray.

The first Agenda item (as submitted by North Harbour Gymnastics Club (apology)) was put to the floor to open the discussion.

- 1. What are Gymsports' plans around the development of a genuine high performance structure, and the plans that show how we are going to win medals in 2020 and beyond?**

***Chair of Board Response:***

- Tony, I and the Board recognised the need for changes to the High Performance area. The first task was to look at how athletes are selected. In particular, the selection panel process and how clubs attend International Tours – the process lacked structure.
- We identified that GymSports NZ needed to emulate good standards and a process that would be open and transparent. Once a process was decided upon, that it would then be implemented with no short cuts.

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**CEO Response:**

- It has been recognised in the past that a High Performance programme is needed at GymSports NZ. What has also been recognised is that to solely focus on HP would ignore the athlete base which would support it, and ultimately 'feed' it. This is compounded by the fact that, as per commonly accepted definition in NZ, gym sports currently only have one athlete that fits the definition of HP. As such, the development of any plan around HP will need to be incorporate a pathway that leads through talent identification, development program, competitive, performance and ultimately high performance. Our goal is to address this pathway in greater detail whilst continuing to support those who are currently in and around the performance / HP space. The organisation is committed to this, as is the Board.
- In leading up to the Olympics, GymSports NZ has concentrated on the selection process. In the past the processes have been poorly managed and have resulted in confusion, misunderstanding and poor decision making. This has meant that we have either sent athletes who do not meet internationally recognised standards or who have not been through a 'robust' process of selection. Now there is a process that is quantifiable with the athlete application requiring supportive data backed up with performance. There is a strict process around selection.
- All athletes who travel overseas are fully aware of, and understand the process they need to achieve to be there. In some codes this still requires further work but obviously with limited resources and an Olympics year the focus has needed to be on codes who are already active in the performance / HP space.
- There is now also athlete awareness with regard to the second criteria i.e., athlete funding in the competitive/performance/High Performance space.
  - The Roadshows at the end of last year presented the model, giving clarity around the tiering system and what needs to be achieved in order to qualify.
  - In 2014 there were 25 'funded' athlete applications. In 2015 six were funded and targeted in terms of meeting specific performance based criteria. This year, there are 7.
  - The model was constructed to future proof the framework whilst allowing for statistical alteration based on current international performance outcomes.
  - This year, there is only one pinnacle event being the Rio Olympics. Due to the limited number of athletes involved in Rio, the funding model has thus been altered to identify the next level down for each code and the performance expectation as a result. This will be a continuous process year on year.
- The other changes made are with regard to the thresholds around the funding i.e., looking at the previous year and what the athlete has achieved.
- The question asked refers to defining the High Performance structure.
  - Based on the NZOC and High Performance Sport NZ criteria, GymSports NZ has only one athlete who qualifies.
  - In relation to a genuine High Performance structure, there are athletes and coaches placing themselves in the high performance space. However, GymSports NZ must meet the NZOC and HPSNZ standards – otherwise athletes they are not selected nor are they eligible for HPSNZ funding.
  - There is a plan to move towards a genuine high performance structure. The start of this began with the Sport NZ funding application.

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- Many may know of the recent headlines and communications regarding the Sport NZ decision reducing GymSports NZ's funding.
  - One of the initiatives (as included in the Sport NZ application) requested a full time high performance director position. Several Codes are asking for such a person. This would involve bringing someone in to provide a structure to the high performance pathway and defining what that looks like. The funding decision by Sport NZ forces a re-think on bringing someone into this position.
- Plan B is to target support for individual coaches in a number of Codes to provide a conduit between GymSports NZ and the competitive / performance / HP space. Some codes are prepared for this, some are not.
    - GymSports NZ will put out an Expression of Interest for this person. They will be involved directly in the shaping of what the performance pathway will look like for their specific code so that this can then be presented to the community for consultation and buy-in.
  - There is an opportunity for members to say whether and how important the High Performance space is to them at the forthcoming AGM during the strategy review.
    - At present there are not the economies of scale to support a High Performance landscape in the same way that there is for recreation.
2. **How do we get the 10 year olds (competitive early performance) to the High Performance space?**
3. **How can GymSports NZ support clubs in getting there?**

**CEO Response:**

- The next stage is for GymSports NZ to look at the development space and how to make this happen. The MAG 360 program is currently an 'informal' structure that could provide a viable blue-print for how GSNZ and the community may work together in supporting the pathway space.

**Response from the floor:**

- As long as the clubs support these programmes they will have a chance of being successful. There are significant administrative costs in running a development programme like MAG 360.

**CEO Response:**

- It also requires community support to get behind a programme to move it forward.
- GymSports NZ has to start from the top and to get this right before then moving down to the next level.

**Chair of Board Response:**

- The requirement for GymSports NZ has been to firstly improve and put in place the selection process – this has been paramount.
- We recognise that it is a difficult balancing act managing the 10% competitive to the 90% recreation.

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**Response from the floor:**

- When GymSports NZ saw that the MAG 360 was getting the support and commitment of the club and the community, the organisation came on board to support the MAG 360 programme.
- The difficulty that our club has is that there are a handful of athletes, parents and coaches that would like to be involved in a development programme however as a club we find that there is insufficient communication and information available from other clubs/coaches.

**CEO Response:**

- GSNZ recognises the need for clubs to push forward and would encourage putting a proposal together. To also take a collaborative approach with other clubs as it is much harder to get something started without wider support.

**Response from the floor:**

- Our club finds there is a block - other clubs are generally happy to pass on athletes but less inclined to take on our club's due to the singular approach to wanting to be the best. Often there are certain people holding back on information for example.

**CEO Response:**

- GymSports NZ's plan is to make it easier for clubs by drawing on examples of where it can work.

**Response from the floor:**

- Historically there used to be a development clinic held twice a year at Ohakune which was paid for by parents but administratively managed by GSNZ.

**Chair of Board Question:**

- How would clubs react if GymSports NZ set up a clinic - set the time, day and place and offered it to clubs?

**Response from the floor:**

- This would only work if the clinic included athletes and coaches and was totally transparent.
- The coaches need to be educated to clearly understand what needs to happen to get to the next level.

**CEO Response:**

- To the last point, another good example is Trampoline where there is currently a system for understanding and defining each level - the iTRACCS system. This identifies the stages to development. This is again something that could have a cross-code applicability.

**Response from the floor:**

- The clubs are also looking for a holistic approach to support an athlete on the High Performance Pathway - nutritionist, psychologist, media etc.

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**CEO response:**

- Discussions have been held with HP Sport NZ on the grey area that sits under High Performance (and is more grass roots).
- This performance level still requires support for those athletes - to feed them into High Performance above. HP Sport NZ only provide a small band of support in that HP category.
  - By default, Sport NZ through its community sport funding will have to look at this space as currently GymSports NZ has only one athlete sitting at the High Performance level.
  - There is a gap between HPSNZ and the Pathway to Podium program. Both HPSNZ and Sport NZ acknowledge this and we need to continue to push both organisations to do something about. Otherwise, the currently funded sports get to maintain momentum whilst we struggle to get traction.
- As an aside, the way in which organisations such as HPSNZ and the NZOC attempt to provide a one-size-fits-all mentality when developing funding or selection criteria is also doing sports like an injustice. Next Monday I will be attending an NZOC workshop regarding the setting of the Commonwealth Games criteria. I will raise the issue of the unfair criteria as it has been set for the Olympics.
  - All sports are judged using the same measuring criteria, evidence of top 16 with a potential to be in the top 8. This ignores multiple factors that go in to determining top 16 with a potential for top 8, particularly when comparing a subjectively measured sport such as ours, with measurement based sports such as athletics or shooting for example.

#### **4. The new strategic plan – what is the time frame for this?**

**CEO response:**

- Our current strategic plan runs from beginning 2014 to end 2016. As such, we will need a new strategic plan in place by the end of this year.

**Chair of Board response:**

- Trying to put together a 4-year plan is challenging due to the pace of change and the way the organisation is funded which is currently more fragile.
- My personal view is to identify the purpose of the organisation - what are we here to do.
  - Understand the purpose first then set the goals to be achieved realistically in an 18 month – 2-year period with certainty of what can happen.
  - Outside of 2 years there is more guessing and less certainty.
  - Better results can be achieved and decisions made in a shorter time frame.

**CEO response:**

- There are two key drivers for being on a 4-year plan, Sport NZ's 4 year cycle being one of them, and staying in line with the Olympic cycle being the other. GymSports NZ now has an opportunity to review a cycle that best fits with organisation objectives.

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**Tracey Diack response:**

- Believe there should be 4 year goals but 2 year measures thereby achieving the benefits of short term targets and longer term objectives.
  - For a club it is important to have a longer term view to be working towards e.g. 4-5 strategic objectives with a planned approach.

**CEO response:**

- It is important that all clubs take the opportunity at the forthcoming AGM to provide a contribution on the design and content of the new strategic plan. Clubs own the organisation and need to exercise a voice – this is the time and place for that.

**5. What support can GymSports NZ provide for a club that has an increasing a membership and a facility that is no longer adequate?**

**CEO response:**

- Andy Adams on the GymSports NZ team is currently working on a National Facility Strategy that will provide a framework for clubs to work with. Andy also currently works one-on-one directly with clubs who are in the process of facilities review.

**6. Generally, should clubs be educated in becoming a ‘feeder’ club rather than defaulting to developing their facility particularly if they have only a handful of competitive gymnasts?**

**CEO response:**

- A great question! The National Facility Strategy will help clubs to identify whether developing their facility, as they currently see it, is the best way forward based on factors like location, membership type, proximity to other gym clubs, demographics, code specific demand, recreational need, local and regional body facility plans, etc.

**Response from the floor:**

- Our club is currently feeding MAG gymnasts to Counties but need to make sure our coaches are aligned with the Counties coaches.
  - The challenge as a manager is to deal with the egos of coaches who do not necessarily put the gymnast first.

**Cheryl Bowie response:**

- There is a NZ Trade and Enterprise community business mentors programme available specifically for SME's that provides a supportive programme for time stretched managers. The programme offers some fantastic mentors.

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***Response from the floor:***

- The GymSports NZ Auckland Managers Group set up and facilitated by Danielle Halliday was an invaluable source of information and greatly appreciated.

***CEO/Board response:***

- This will be started again. Since mid-2014 both Andy and Danielle have needed to be involved in more organisational, than regional work. This was formally recognised in last year's organisational restructure. With the addition of Dee Lampe as Auckland / Northern Relationship Manager, I would expect clubs within this region will see a greater degree of interaction with GSNZ and the return of the centre managers group.

***Response from the floor:***

- From an educational point of view GymSports NZ may need to provide support to clubs e.g. HR, management, commercial processes.
  - Performance development for managers.
- Head Coaches are also challenged by administrative obligations. Some are excellent coaches but are not able to manage the other side of being in that position.
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Thanks were extended to the Board and CEO by the attendees for providing the opportunity to attend the Community Cabinet and for the open discussion.

Meeting closed 7.30pm