



# Eastern Suburbs FC

27<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Dear Members,

## Eastern Suburbs FC COVID 19 Update

As you are aware the club was forced to suspend all footballing operations at Heath Park from mid-March 2020 until further notice as a result of the Covid-19 virus outbreak. Since the suspension of footballing operations I can report that your Board and all the Club's amazing volunteers have been working diligently to minimise the impact of the interruption to the season on our Club, our staff and our members and to ensure that the Club's facilities and organisational systems are maintained in a position to be quickly reactivated as soon as it is safe to do so.

In this regard the Board has prioritised several key areas. We moved swiftly to ensure our facilities were shut down in a safe and orderly manner, whilst also ensuring the essential on-going maintenance of our fields and facilities can be performed in a safe and efficient manner throughout this period of suspension of operations.

We also took immediate steps to secure the position of our key employees and hope that with additional assistance from the various recently announced government support packages we will be able to assist them through this difficult time.

The Board is also thankful for the full support of all our coaching staff. Whilst they are unable to coach directly through this period of suspension, our coaches are keen to maintain contact with their players and support staff to ensure, as far as possible, that the "Easts Tigers team spirit" is maintained through this difficult period. The Board is happy for any members that wish to seek guidance from their coach on self-training and fitness maintenance to contact their coaches who will no doubt be happy to help.

Importantly, the Board is also working hard to position the Club to be able to resume operations as soon as it is safe to do so. Key to this aim is liaising with the various government and footballing authorities we rely on for guidance in this regard, whilst also husbanding our financial resources to try to ensure the Club remains financial.



# Eastern Suburbs FC

Thanks to the efforts of our Board and members over the past decades our Club is currently in a relatively stable financial position. Unlike many other clubs in our area of which we are aware we are currently not saddled with any long term debt and have always had tremendous support from our investment partners such as The Merton Easts Old Boys, and also our sponsors, which we have no doubt will continue into the future.

However, the suspension of footballing activities has seriously impacted our ability to source funds going forward from our usual sources, such as fees, sponsorship and merchandising activities such as apparel and bar sales.

Your Board, however, is confident that with strict control of expenditure through the balance of the 2020 season, whatever shape the season might take, your Club will be able to maintain a positive financial position and have a strong base from which to quickly rebuild operations, both on and off the field, as soon as it becomes sensible to do so.

To assist in this aim the Board determined at the time of the suspension of footballing operations that, for the Club to navigate the uncertain times ahead, it was a prudent course of action to curtail immediately all non-essential expenditure of Club funds.

Irrespective of sponsors and merchandising activities, I am sure most members are aware that the Club's major source of funding for annual operations comes from membership fees. Being run as a not-for-profit concern which does not hold significant cash reserves, the membership fees we receive are critical to ensuring the Club remains financially viable. Your Board puts a huge amount of effort every year into setting the annual fees structure for the Club to ensure we fund the operations of the Club adequately. Not surprisingly in considering the budget requirements for the 2020 season, the current suspension of operations was not considered in the Board's planning. However, until there is more clarity on how the rest of the season will unfold, it is difficult for the Board to assess at this stage the remaining funding requirements for the Club through to the end of this year.

Your Board is fully committed to providing value for money for the fees paid to the club on an annual basis. Once it becomes clear how the balance of the 2020 season will unfold, the Board intends to review the budget requirements accordingly and consider any appropriate refunds of fees paid to date at that time.



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As always the Board greatly appreciates your understanding and continued support in this regard at this difficult time as we try to ensure the Club is well placed to recommence footballing operations in the near future.

In the meantime, I can advise that the club is working closely with both Football Queensland and Football Brisbane to try to ensure that football operations, and particularly competitive matches, can resume as soon as possible. We are in no doubt that the governing bodies are doing everything possible to try to schedule a competitive season of matches as soon as the virus restrictions allow.

Whilst Football Queensland recently confirmed that footballing operations will now be suspended until at least the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020, the latest advice from the governing bodies is that they are planning to be ready for a restart in July, if sanctioned to do so.

They have also advised that it is still possible, by extending the season into November/December (subject field availability and potential clashes with summer sporting codes), to still complete a competitive competition of home and away fixtures in 2020. Indeed, even with a resumption as late as September, the governing bodies believe a single round competition is possible within 2020.

Obviously, it is too early to provide any details as to when training activities will be able to recommence to meet any revised competition requirements. The Board will endeavour to keep you advised of further developments as soon as they become clear.

Finally, in difficult times such as this, I find it is always useful to have something positive to look forward to in the future. I am therefore happy to advise you that whilst footballing operations have been suspended at the Club, and as the cost has no direct impact on the Club's operating finances, the Board decided to push ahead with the long planned lighting upgrade of our pitches.

Thanks to project specific grants of \$110,000 from the Brisbane City Council – Building Stronger Communities Grant Program 2019/20, and \$35,000 from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund Grant, as well as the usual support from the Merton Easts Old Boys, state-of-the art LED lights have now been installed on all three fields at Heath Park.



Brisbane  
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The testing was completed last Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and the lights now sit ready for use when footballing operations resume. Having witnessed the testing of the lights, I can confirm that the result is “brilliant” and irrespective of what we need to endure in the coming days, the future is “bright” at Easts!

As we await notice of a restart, please feel free to keep in touch with your regular contacts at the club, be they fellow players, coaches, other members or, of course, your board members and I look forward to us all being able to kick a ball again under the “bright” lights at Heath Park in the near future.

Thanks again for your tremendous support!

Yours sincerely

**Glen Brown**

**President - Eastern Suburbs Football Club**