

MINUTES | Water Polo ACT Board Meeting

Date	Wednesday, 14th December 2023
Time	6:30pm-8:00pm
Venue	In person – The Jetty, Canberra
Attended	Matt Turnbull (MT) Tim Bennett (TB) Alexandra Spark (AS) Viviana Torres (VT)
Apologies	Liam Shepherd (LS) Ryan McDermott - CEO (RM)
In attendance (for item 5)	Brady Nixon – (Acting) President Kracken Water Polo Jackson Holdway – Treasurer Kracken Water Polo Chelsea Riviere – Kracken Water Polo
Absent	N/A

1. Welcome

A quorum was present and the meeting opened at 6:26pm.

Members of Kracken were welcomed to present at item 5.

An acknowledgement of country was given.

Water Polo ACT acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country the Ngunnawal and Nambri People and recognises their ongoing connection to lands, waters, and communities. We pay our respects to the continuation of cultural, spiritual, and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to Elders past, present and emerging.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from RM and LS. The Board members noted RM had been delayed in Perth following the U19s tournament. LS was unable to make the meeting in person and online attendance was not available for this meeting.

3. Conflict of Interest Declarations

A conflict of Interest register was introduced and procedures to mitigate risks were discussed.

Action: Board members to add and maintain the register of interests, noting any conflicts.

4. Approval of previous board minutes

Resolution: The board resolved that the minutes from the previous meeting, previously circulated by email and contained in the board papers, be **approved** as a true record of the 11th October board meeting.

5. Canberra Krackens Membership Application & Presentation

The President and Treasurer of the Canberra Krackens were invited to present their proposal to WPACT.

BN outlined:

- The Canberra Krackens had been formed to provide a high performance option for Senior Men to participate in Waterpolo competitions.
- The team has participated in the Sydney Superleague and Country nationals.
- It is a “player driven” club, for elite players, representative of the ACT
- It seeks to be the ACT club from which National players are selected.

Kracken are proposing that they “take on” the development/ Senior pathway for the Mens program (in the 2024 year), from WPACT.

- They will build this program from the current 2023-24 Kracken players (men).
- They propose to look to the current U18 players/ squad to ensure the continued development of players into the “premier” ACT mens team.

The proposal has been discussed, in its formative stages, with the CWPC and MT & RM.

A discussion between Board members and Kracken was held which canvassed the following (Kracken responses in italics)

What is Kracken seeking from WPACT?

- *To join WPACT as an Affiliate member, when appropriate.*
- *For WPACT to “designate” Kracken as the elite/ premier team for the ACT Senior Men, able to participate in National, WPA events as the ACT’s representative team. WPACT would not conduct a development program/ elite activities at the Senior Men’s level (at the current time).*
- *To retain autonomy for team and coach selection, in particular for participating in the SSL.*

Whether the values of Kracken were consistent with those of WPACT with respect to:

- a) Inclusion of women, and the development of an elite pathway for women?
While Kracken were open to having a women’s program they had not been successful in establishing sufficient interest to support a team to date.
 - b) Inclusiveness, noting that it is an “elite” club?
Kracken would seek to retain independence (from WPACT) in the selection of team members and coach/ coaching staff.
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Would Kraken be a “first claim” club?

Kraken would not be a first claim club. All team members would remain members of existing Club’s. Individual members/ players will be required to attend squad training sessions and selection events prior to being invited to participate in the Krakens/ representative team. Players would be required to pay for their attendance at training sessions and contribute to coaching fees etc., as are reasonably incurred by a Senior mens team.

What “banner” would Kraken participate under at tournaments?

It was considered likely that Kraken would continue to participate as Kraken in the SSL and other tournaments held by WPA or State/ Territory Clubs.

What is the longevity of the team/ club?

As WPACT would be transferring the Senior (Men’s) program to Kraken it is envisaged that WPACT retain “control” of the development of players up to / including u18s, until those players transition to Seniors. Players would remain members of Clubs participating in WPACT first grade games as they see fit.

Overtime it is anticipate that there will be a sufficient number of women developing out of the u18s womens program into the Senior program, such that Kraken (ACT) has a Senior Women’s team.

There needs to be further work done to consider how and when to best incorporate u18s into the Kraken selection program (including training) and to consider training days/ times to ensure these “fit” with training (and playing) commitments of players.

The Board commended the Kraken on their commitment to the development of elite water polo in then ACT to date, and the successful establishment of the team. The Board commended the team on their performance at the Country Championships and in the SSL during 2023.

The Board noted that Krakens had been able to conduct fundraising activities, and receive sponsorships “more easily” than WPACT.

What is the timing required for a decision from WPACT?

Country Championships are held in April/ May (first tournament).

A decision is required approx. 10 weeks prior to ensure team selection, training and registration is able to be completed. In End January 2024 a decision is required to confirm whether Krakens will represent the ACT at this tournament.

18 players is the ideal squad size

Action: WPACT to confirm whether it endorses the Kraken participation at the Country Championships (April/ May 2024) as the ACT Senior Mens team.

Action: Kraken to work with RM to provide further information as to the player development pathway, ensuring that the Kraken team is representative of the ACT’s elite players (men and women), and with regard to u18 players.

Action: Kraken to work with RM to provide further details of the roles and responsibilities of Kraken vs WPACT, including at tournaments. A proposal, including fee schedule to be drafted and provided to the Board for approval. This proposal should consider support required if, and when, from WPACT (RM/ CEO) and insurances, policies and procedures (including selection policies).

Action: WPACT to determine whether it approves the proposal to “hand over” responsibility for the ACT’s Senior Men and Senior Women teams to Kraken, following receipt of the above proposal/ memorandum of understanding.

6. Action items

None noted for closure at this meeting.

7. CEO Update

The following items were **discussed** by the board:

- Vikings WP Club – delay in providing an updated articles of associations was noted and the Board approved the extension of time to provide this update until Vikings had finalised the draft.
- Risk Waivers – WPACT **agrees** to continue to support the use of the WPA player risk waiver form. It is considered best practice. WPACT **agrees** that it should apply to players outside of the 4 year window that are playing over aged players. **WPACT asks the CWPC** to consider whether it is appropriate for 14&U players to be playing in the Youth League, noting the significant risks that are present due to size and strength differentials in players, in particular.
- Representative Program – the Board noted the Representative program update.
- Awards Night
 - [Structure] The Board approved the proposed structure of the Awards night.
 - [Program] The Board suggested a reduced number of Awards, noting that it was important that Awards were for outstanding performance/ critical contributions were recognised. The Board has suggested the following categories/ awards:
 - Stuart Heddle Award – existing
 - WPACT Coach of the Year – existing
 - WPACT Official of the Year – existing
 - Representative Player of the Year - existing

With regard to other awards proposed:

WPACT Volunteer of the Year – suggested that this could be/ should be “rolled into” the Stuart Heddle Award. The Board were supportive of the need to recognise our volunteers and felt that this was achieved in/ through the Stuart Heddle Award.

WPACT Club Growth Award – was not supported

Delfina THINK.ACT.PLAY Team of the year – was not supported. While having due regard to our values (THINK.ACT.PLAY) was considered important, it was felt that this award, as drafted was not able to be measured.

Competition team of the year – this was not supported. It was felt that the team of the year is the team that wins each age group/ competition level and that this is / should be acknowledged during the evening (perhaps through visuals/ a visual display) rather than a specific award category.

Competition MVP/ MVG – yes, this should be awarded, but not through a specific “award/ presentation”. Rather this should be awarded visually.

8. WPA Operations Model Update

TB presented on the WIP of WPAs proposed National Operating Model.

Feedback was sought from Board members on the current direction of work completed to date and what other concerns/ matters the Board may have that they would like the working group to look at/ incorporate in the new National Operating Model.

The Board noted the importance of, and focus of the work of the working group, on optimising the “back end” of water polo operations in Australia, and on preserving the autonomy of the State bodies and Clubs.

The Board **agreed** to continue to support the work being conducted by WPA. The Board noted the national challenges of a reduced volunteer workforce and increased legislative/ compliance environment which is difficult for all member based organisations.

8. Presidents update

MT presented the following items that were **noted** by the board:

- The Fee Equalisation Policy of WPA has been scrapped. WPA are working on providing compensation to players affected by the policy (September 2023 onwards).
- Provided thanks all Board members for their support during the year, noted the exceptional work of RM and the growth of the sport with membership exceeding 1000 members.
- Provided thanks to our sponsors for the 2023-24 season. All competitions have sponsors.

9. Community Water Polo Committee

November and December CWPC meeting minutes were **noted** by the board.

10. Other Business

There were no items of other business.

Meeting closed at 8:00pm. Next meeting: TBC