

Team Sydney Inc – Board Paper

This board paper is submitted by: Geoffrey Radford and Dave Randall

For acceptance as an agenda item in the meeting to be held on: 24 October 2004

Date: 19 October 2004

Title: FGG Membership

Portfolios involved: All

Proposed duration: 10 minutes

Estimated financial impact: \$300 plus

Proposed activity or matter for discussion: Continuance of FGG membership

Membership of the FGG has limited benefit for any of our member clubs. Any information about upcoming events is provided by host cities that are always lobbying for participants. We also do not want to give support to activities that distract us from TS aims and objectives or our work for member clubs at a local level.

Team Sydney needs its member clubs more than they need Team Sydney. We don't know if the same applies to the FGG but if no external organisation took an interest the FGG would not exist. We recognise the value of major international events as focus points for our members and have a long history of association with the FGG. These are valid arguments for continuing that membership as shown in previous board minutes and board papers on the subject.

There are some negative aspects. The FGG has now presided over several Gay Games that have contributed to losses of millions of dollars. It is easy to remember all the good things about Gay Games: changing the world, meeting new people, ceremonies, competing and counting the medals. It is also easy to forget the venues and thousands of people who contributed and didn't get paid and the legacy economic mismanagement leaves behind in the host cities. Insolvent events work against the credibility and reputation of our community as a whole. These are valid arguments for not supporting the licensing body. If it is sick, heal it properly or let it die.

Then we have issues at a local level. The Team Sydney board has been distracted repeatedly over the last eighteen months or so by inconsistencies in its relationships with its delegates. The delegates have shown conflicts of interest in their desire to first serve the FGG rather than represent Team Sydney. We have new directors and a number of member clubs on the Sports Council have been persuaded to join us because of their perception we have rid ourselves of political infighting; any suggestion that we are going to spend time parrying on subjects other than local ones and we are likely to lose them again.

Then there are concerns stemming from our AGM. Possibly the protagonists for membership of the FGG regardless of its effects on the viability of the TS board were fuelled by the ire of our past delegates and, unfortunately, the result of their advertised action saw a defeated motion that could well be read as a mandate for TS not to join the FGG. This action saw no benefit for TS, TS members or the FGG. The idea that we can only contribute from within must now be taken up knowing that some of our members just don't want us to be involved.

We must also consider that the clubs with which our ex delegates associate may consider forming an organisation in opposition to us solely to ensure membership of the FGG. This seems disingenuous. It may be that despite the very vocal attitude at the AGM our ex delegates do not really believe the FGG restructure will be passed because they do not see alternative opportunities for FGG membership. The new structure would allow clubs such as Fronrunners, Spokes and Tennis Sydney (if they be the ones) to send their own delegates to the FGG. As an aside we would encourage them to do so; the more representation we can get from this part of the globe the better. There is also the problem that, if they join the FGG, there is a long wait before they can be effective under the present structure.

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It was a pity that to ensure defeat of the motions at our AGM that sought to put control of delegate appointment in the hands of the membership we had to defeat the motion about joining. The idea that such a change in control would have made TS totally dysfunctional wasn't considered by those who put up the motion and probably isn't entertained by them now. We need to be thankful our organisation has survived. Nevertheless, there will always be some people who will not look at our previous board papers or minutes regarding FGG membership and, if we move ahead with it, will claim victory because we have capitulated. We have to live with that.

Note also that we are not alone. A general request for membership dues has again gone out from the FGG and we do not have to pay until shortly before the AM in November. Wrestlers Without Borders in the USA, a long term member of the FGG, has advised the FGG they will not renew their membership unless the restructure is passed.

Arguably, from our AGM we have a mandate to not join the FGG. Against that argument it can be said that the motion was technically incorrect; it made an assumption about a future event that could not be taken as given. If the motion had stopped at membership the mandate would be very strong but to include a scenario that only might exist after the AM weakens the argument.

For the sake of the long association we have with the FGG we suggest we only pay the membership fee for the time being.