

Team Sydney Inc – Board Paper

This board paper is submitted by: Dave Randall

For acceptance as an agenda item in the meeting to be held on: 14 September 2006

Date: 12 September 2006

Title: FGG Renewal Options

Portfolios involved: All

Proposed duration: 10 minutes

Estimated financial impact: US\$200.00

Proposed activity or matter for discussion: Potential future as member of Federation of Gay Games.

Geoffrey Radford has presented a paper for this same meeting entitled "Position with Federation of Gay Games (FGG)" with which I concur. It covers recent events stemming from a meeting with Richard Hogan, a director of the FGG. In considering whether or not Team Sydney should remain a member of the FGG we might take a wider view.

History

TS has a long chequered history with the FGG that includes host city team for the 2002 Gay Games. Our board has, in the main, allowed its delegates free rein to act and vote as they thought fit with little or no accountability to the TS board.

After the 2002 Gay Games the TS board was maintained at mere existence level and we were not adequately represented by delegates at FGG meetings. Since the strengthening of the board from around March 2005 many directors have taken greater interest in our responsibilities. The dreadful financial result for the Sydney Gay Games prompted a concern that we should be more influential in FGG matters through our delegates.

Unfortunately confidentiality restraints placed upon our delegates and their unwillingness to challenge FGG activities or methods meant that the TS board could have little effective input into proceedings. In most dealings with our delegates they have taken the side of the FGG and sought to be allowed to express their own views. One example is the refusal in September 2005 by Kate Rowe to comply with a board request that she take direction on voting at the FGG Annual Meeting; this resulted in private disciplinary action being applied in the form of a letter indicating that her status as our delegate would be withdrawn. Kate made this a public issue and severely criticised the TS board in doing so. Majority of board opinion was that the position of delegate was more important to Kate than the duties involved. This matter took up several hours of board meetings which would have been better employed pursuing the aims and objectives of Team Sydney. A second example occurred when Wayne Morgan chose to disobey a direction on voting on an FGG matter in June this year.

We had further nuisance and embarrassment when Kate Rowe made accusations about the conduct of two fellow directors at a reception held by the Australian Consul in Chicago. Kate informed that she had taken up the matter with consulate staff and we wrote an apology. Kate had taken no such action with the consulate but persisted with inflammatory activities that included threatening Geoffrey Radford with police action and an AVO.

So much for our relationship with our delegates. Earlier this year the board decided to withdraw support for their positions but delayed action until after the Chicago Gay Games in order not to submit a major issue while FGG volunteers were staging a major event. As we were unable to convey our concerns through our delegates we communicated directly with Kathleen Webster, FGG co-president while in Chicago. We also advised our withdrawal of delegates issue to the governance committee of the FGG; in the main members of that committee have expressed regret but not solutions.

**PLEASE SAVE THIS BOARD PAPER WITH A UNIQUE FILENAME AND
ATTACH IT TO AN EMAIL ADDRESSED TO ALL CURRENT TEAM SYDNEY DIRECTORS
AT LEAST ONE WEEK BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING.**

Current Position

The FGG is moving from its old structure into a new one. After the next annual meeting, provided the votes are in favour, there will be a new 16 member directorate and a general assembly of up to about 60 member organisations. The majority of TS board approves this change because it seeks to give directors purposeful portfolios and make them more accountable. In the future Team Sydney is eligible to be a Category 1 member of the assembly. Category 1 allows two delegates and stronger voting rights than category 2 which only allows for one delegate. A break in continuity of TS membership might jeopardise our rights to vote in site selection for the 2014 Gay Games IX.

The main issue remains confidentiality agreements. Currently the FGG allows these to exist only between the FGG and the delegates. I believe it is irresponsible for the TS board to not be fully aware of the issues that are being voted on in its name and cannot properly represent the wishes of its members and constituents under such a system. All responses from the FGG indicate that it will not change its position on confidentiality agreements and the matter will remain an issue to some degree even though TS will no longer be a director organisation. Messages from the FGG are on file showing an unwillingness to tackle this issue should any director or member wish to see them. Given that history shows delegates have been to be untrustworthy concerning communication I believe this issue must be resolved before TS makes any firm commitment to membership of the FGG.

Because delegates to the assembly will not be compelled to work on committees there will be fewer votes to be considered. However, those that will need to be considered are likely to be important.

Options

In the matter of appointing delegates: There is a majority board opinion that to be both a delegate and a director invokes a conflict of interest. Team Sydney's delegates to the FGG should not be party to discussions or decisions about funding for their fares. Further, given the preponderance for delegates to support FGG opinion rather than that of the organisation that appointed them, their views should always be supported by communication directly between the FGG and the TS board. We should also note that our recent delegates to the FGG have done little or no work in their role as directors of TS except attend some board meetings.

In the matter of confidentiality agreements: Agreements should be made between the FGG and the TS board with the TS board at liberty to pass on to its delegates those matters which it feels worthwhile to be taken up. If this cannot be done then, as a poor alternative, we could consider an arrangement whereby the FGG approves an agreement between our delegate and the board to share confidential information.

These are some options:

1. Do not renew our membership.
2. Renew our membership without appointing delegates, write to the FGG to explain why and offer to terminate our membership if the FGG cannot comply with our request for a change in confidentiality agreement arrangements.
3. Renew our membership and communicate to the FGG that the matter of delegates will be considered in the future.

TS has a long history with the FGG and it would be sad to end it. Nevertheless, those people who volunteer as TS directors and actually do the work required are interested in progressing the aims and objectives of TS and not spending time dealing with issues outside that area. Those aims are about working at a local level to promote involvement in sport and healthy life styles for our constituents as viable alternatives to the bars and drugs culture. Major sporting events will always be important focus points and TS should always support them; not, however, to the extent that time is spent dealing with issues we cannot control. By conscientiously working at a local level we will supply the drive and incentives to compete internationally and will be adequately promoting major events by doing so.