



Eastern Suburbs FC

31st May 2020

Dear Members

Eastern Suburbs FC COVID Update

Background

Now that we are beginning to emerge from lockdown across the State, I am writing to update you on a return to playing football at the Club, and to give you an overview of what is planned for the coming weeks to ensure a safe and orderly return to playing football again at Heath Park.

In recent weeks we have been working with the government, the FFA, FQ and FB on a plan to restart footballing operations as soon as is practicable. It is fair to say that, with the overriding importance of trying to keep everyone safe during this Covid-19 outbreak, this planning task is enormous, especially at the club level, where the vast majority of our resources are volunteers.

Significant progress has been made by all involved, and although there is still much work to be done, a process for the restarting of football is beginning to emerge and to be agreed upon. We would therefore appreciate everyone's further support and patience as we plan the final details required for a successful reopening process. I can assure you that as soon as this task is complete we will inform you.

Progress to date

On the 13th May 2020, the FFA released its *"Game plan for resuming grassroots football in Australia"*, which encapsulated guidance from the national government and details laid out by the AIS in its *"Framework for Rebooting Sport in a COVID-19 Environment"* advisory document. The guidelines prescribe a three-stage process which has been adopted by the Queensland Government, supported by FQ and FB, with specific state-wide modifications as recommended from time-to-time by the Queensland Government.

Stage #1 – 13th May to midnight 31st May 2020

The first stage of the return to play process allows outdoor training in pairs with no contact, but has **not** enabled us to commence operations at the Club to date.

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Eastern Suburbs FC

Stage #2 – 1st June to midnight 10th July

We note the Queensland Government announced on the 31st May that it will bring forward Stage #2 implementation from the 12th June to the 1st June.

Stage 2 allows us to slowly re-open the Club fields on a limited basis capping training numbers **to a total of up to 20 people at any one time over our total Club venue** (not per field !!).

Significant control procedures will need to be put in place to ensure the provision of a safe training environment and with the strict restriction on numbers for our entire venue (Heath Park) we will have to significantly ration training for all teams for this first month of the return to play.

Your club was in the process of working out how to implement these procedures and was using the weeks leading up to 12th June to finalise and communicate this to all members. Given the new brought forward date of 1 June, we are not in a position to restart a safe training environment commencing 1 June. It is likely the restart date will be Monday 8th June.

Details of a schedule to accommodate these measures is coming together and will be shared with you when completed.

Stage #3 – From 11th July onwards

Stage 3 of the process will commence on 11th July 2020, **when up to 100 people will be allowed to be at our venue any one time**, albeit still with strict control procedures in place.

Following commencement of this stage Football Queensland and Football Brisbane are currently indicating a re-start for competitive fixtures from the period of the 17th – 24th July 2020 onwards.

It is their intent to schedule as many games as it is safe and practicable to do so through to the end of an extended season, currently forecasted to conclude in November 2020.



Eastern Suburbs FC

COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions

Stages 2 and 3 require that the Club establish strict and comprehensive Covid – 19 safety controls at Heath Park, over and above those that have been required to date. Some of the detail involved is laid out in the Football Queensland “Return to Training Guidelines – v2” - <https://footballqueensland.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/FQ-Return-to-Training-Guidelines-V2.pdf>

In summary, strict social distancing, sanitisation, health monitoring, equipment cleaning and attendance recording procedures are mandatory. Other than the fields and toilet facilities, no other club facilities will be opened in Stage 2 and players will be encouraged to arrive wearing kit and “Get in, Play, Get out”.

In Stage 3 the Board will consider opening additional facilities such as the changing rooms. It is not yet clear whether the bar, clubhouse and canteen will be able to function for a further period beyond the commencement of Stage 3.

Club restart volunteers

It is clear from the above that, irrespective of cost, the re-opening of the Club for football is going to require a major increase in our volunteer resources to ensure we meet our compliance obligations on a day-to-day basis.

With this in mind we will be writing to members immediately asking for a call for volunteers to assist in tasks required to provide a safe environment for our players and coaches. The intention is to base volunteers around each specific team group so that attendance at the ground is not onerous for those involved.

I strongly urge you to consider becoming a **‘Restart Volunteer’** for a few months so that we can all work together in keeping everyone at the Club safe and get players back on the pitch.

Moving Forward

As we approach this new phase in the disrupted season, I would just like to remind everyone that everything being planned and implemented over coming months will be new and uncharted waters for all involved.

Your club officials, volunteers and coaches will be trying their best to provide the best possible environment for a safe return to football. There will be a lot of learning on the job,



Eastern Suburbs FC

perhaps some misunderstandings and even the odd mistake. I know from long experience that we can fortunately rely on the members of Easts to carry the Easts spirit with them through these difficult times and treat everyone they encounter at the Club with the full respect that they deserve.

I strongly urge you to review the Football Queensland return to training presentation which we have provided a link to previously in this correspondence.

I also look forward to seeing many of you down at the Club over the coming weeks, proudly sporting the "**Restart Volunteer**" bibs.

We all need to come together to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for the many players and supporters who call Easts FC their club.

We are Easts.

Yours sincerely

Glen Brown

President - Eastern Suburbs Football Club