

Sport and Environmental Sustainability (Sport Innovation Research Group webinar series)

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SPEAKERS

Dr Tim Breitbarth, Dr Brian McCullough, Dr Pamela Wicker, Dr Martin Rice

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:22:06

Welcome to today's webinar on sport and environmental sustainability as part of the second webinar mini series on current and future matters in sport by the Swinburne University sport Innovation Research Group. My name is Tim Breitbarth from Swinburne University in Melbourne, and I'm a founding member of this research group and my enthusiasm and experience is in strategy, sustainability change and communication.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:22:36

So as we are waiting for a few others to settle out, just give us all another minute just to take a breath for everyone to arrive.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:22:51

And then we'll start with our exciting and important topic today.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:23:34

So I would like to read our acknowledgement of country. As we gather for this event physically dispersed and virtually constructed. We take this moment to reflect on the meaning of place and doing so recognise the various traditional lands on which we come together today.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:23:53

I acknowledge that I'm hosting this webinar from the lands of the window right people. I also acknowledge the traditional custodians of the various lands on which you all work today, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in this webinar. I pay my respects to elder's past, present

and emerging and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal original people, and the ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:24:28

Please be aware that this session is being recorded, I guess that's a good thing, because then we can share it afterwards we can share with you. And you can also share it with your networks in your networks. And so just to let you know, we'll be in touch after the webinar with all of you.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:24:52

Now your a wonderful audience, not in terms of not only in terms of size, but also in terms of diversity. Unfortunately, you can't see the whole and full list of who's participating today. But it's an extraordinary number from an extraordinary number of places. Thank you for tuning in and for being and or otherwise becoming an accomplice to push for sustainability and environmental issues in sport. We are joined today by a most knowledgeable, informative and inspiring international panel, which I will introduce in a moment. The audience today for today's topic, can't be big enough, really, especially here out here in Australia. I've just seen news of a study from Oxford and the United Nations that finds that Australia is the worst performer on the list of the world's fifth largest economies for green recovery spending to kickstart economic growth after the COVID pandemic. But it's the pressing topic of climate change and other steep ecological challenges. And they are everywhere. At least we can see them everywhere if you don't choose to ignore them, maybe for convenience, convenience reasons. What is most uncomfortable about this is that the richest 10% of the planet are responsible for more than half of the very dangerous greenhouse gas emissions since 1990 alone, and it is very likely that everyone in this call today is part of this 10% as other parts of society and other industries, sport does have the obligation to face inconvenient truth that derived from scientific data and disastrous impacts many people in many places around the world are experiencing already.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:26:54

And it's not only that sport has to adapt to changing environments, but sport organisations, athletes, spectators and others themselves have to change their operations and their modes of consumption.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:28:42

Now, today with us are three experts in the field. And let me briefly introduce those three colleagues. So we have Dr. Brian McCullough from Texas A&M University in the United States. And his research has always been around combining environment sustainability with the business of sport.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:29:12

He has he is the co founder of the Sport Ecology Group, a network of researchers that has for a number of years accelerated research in that space. But he is also he was involved in the United Nations support for climate action framework development, and is still involved in the United Nations sustainability, goal 13, which is climate change, and excellent within the Commonwealth.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:29:44

We have as a second panellist, Dr. Pamela Wicker from Bielefeld University in Germany, as a professor in sport management and sports sociology. And she's also a very prolific writer and researcher.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:30:03

Besides that, she's she's also the associate editor of some of our most important journals in the field. Excitingly for Australians. She also spent some time at Griffith University. So she is somewhat familiar and interested in what's happening out here in Australia.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:30:21

Talking about Australia, we have Dr. Martin Rice, and he's the head of research at the Climate Council.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:31:02

What brought him into this sports webinar today is that he's also the lead author of a report that came out maybe two, three weeks ago, called Game Set Match, calling time on climate inaction. And this is concerned with the effects the impact of climate change on Australian sport.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:31:27

So Martin, let's get right into the the interviews which we have first. So just for everyone else, we have a short interview with all the three panellists then we have a sort of round robin discussion. And at the end, we have the q&a section and again, feel very welcome to to join in with your comments and the chat box and the Q&A section.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:32:00

Martin Good morning.

Dr Martin Rice 18:32:02

Good morning, Tim. And good morning viewers, and

Dr Martin Rice 18:32:06

Good evening to those in Europe and elsewhere across the world. So really excited to be on the panel and thanks to Swinburne University as well.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:32:15

It's great having you. And at the same time, you will be tasked with the most the biggest tasks of today, which is giving us a bit of an overview on the state of affairs, what is happening, what is happening with the earth system, climate change environmental issues, if you just outline it from your perspective, that would be great.

Dr Martin Rice 18:32:39

Yeah, sure. Thanks, Tim. I'll just a word of caution. Now we'll go into the climate crisis. But then later on, I'll shift gears on to the solutions. So bear with me. So ultimately, the burning of coal, oil and gas is driving greenhouse gas emissions, rising temperatures, and naturally supercharging, the climate system that's exacerbating and worsening extreme weather events globally. So I understand we've got

European, those from Europe and the US. So we've seen really, when you look back at the past two years, for example, we've seen unprecedented mega fires burning in California, even in the Arctic Circle, and we had the black summer bushfires here in Australia, these were all driven by rises in temperature, reduction and rainfall. So really devastating consequences. And big hits on the economy, big cuts on our lifestyle, people's livelihoods, homes have been lost. And then I'll talk later about how that impacts sport. And we've also had an unprecedented hurricane season in North America as well. So Brian's from the States, and obviously no stranger to some of the devastating consequences. And in fact, I mean, he's based in Texas, and they had really quite destructive storms that came through and took out the electricity system really highlighting the need to shift away from fossil fuels and not exposed infrastructure to renewables. And for those in Asia, we've got an increase in intensity of cyclones and typhoons. And I guess it depends which basin it runs from. So in Japan, we had devastating typhoon that actually ran through just before Scotland played Japan and the Rugby World Cup. So there was actually devastating loss of life and property and so forth. So these are just some examples of how climate changes really exactly exacerbating and supercharging extreme weather, because Australia is actually on the front line. When it comes to climate change. We're probably the most vulnerable developed country. And we've seen that with the devastating black summer bushfires, we've seen extreme heat waves there are less than they're hotter, the lasting longer occurring more often. And we've seen the bleaching of the World Heritage icon, the Great Barrier Reef, and then those that are New South Wales and Queensland I'm I'm based in Brisbane, and I used to live in mid North New South Wales. So that's actually been pummelling with devastating floods, all because of climate change. And so look, Tim, that's the cheery stuff on climate change. I should say that with the with the emissions, we've seen an increase in global temperatures of one degree, just one degree, we're heading to three, four degree world. So that's essentially game over. And that's why in our report, is we want to call time on climate and action.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:35:54

Yeah, and this is right leading into today's topic, sport and the environment. So what are the disruptions and the changes that sport is facing in Australia? Due to the circumstances that you've just outlined?

Dr Martin Rice 18:36:07

Yeah, so look, sports an institution in Australia and of course, many parts of the world. And there's millions of Australians either play or or watch sports every weekend. Sports worth \$50 billion annually to the economy and employs over employs almost a quarter of a million, but because of climate change, supercharge climate, worsening extreme weather events. It's affected sport, particularly summer sport. We've seen major disruptions in recent years. I'm just thinking initially the big profile event so the Australian tennis open where you're based Melbourne, of course, that's one of the big global tennis events. And yet because of extreme heat conditions, we've had players Keeling over they've been playing in 40 degree plus temperature. One year I think it was 2014. We had 1000 spectators actually requiring medical treatment because of extreme heat. And then when we go down to the community level because of a reduction in courses in rainfall in southern Australia, we're actually saw more intense droughts, the Millennium drought in the naughties at the beginning or end of the 90s. rolling through to 2007. Communities sport was devastated. And we're talking cricket. We're talking Australia football rules. And because of the hard pitches we've seen, and 23% spike, for example, in shoulder injuries, we also saw insurance premiums rising. As I said, Queensland we've got intense

rainfall, we've seen floods in Townsville quarter million dollar hits to the damages for community clubs. So professional and community sports are greatly disrupted by climate change. And here in Australia,

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:38:02

and your making very much sort of like a business in terms of talking about insurances you're making an economic argument here is is that what is needed in order to drive change in the sporting world and economic argument?

Dr Martin Rice 18:38:16

Yeah, well look any any frame. When you look at Australia, for example, we have the largest uptake of solar PV household that is well over 2 million getting up to 3 million that is driven largely by economics, people understand that you save money by renewables. So I think what's really exciting is sports. Obviously, athletes, clubs are revered here in Australia. sport has a can be a powerful voice for action. That includes using your voice as an athlete, as a community athlete or a professional. We had Olympic gold winners, we had David Wilcock from the Wallabies, we had them Pat come into the vice captain of fair, Australian cricket, we had an AFL women player for the launch of a report all talking about the need to tackle climate change. So what's really exciting is the solutions that ever disposal, and we just need to get on with the job.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:39:16

Okay, that's that's a great encouragement. And thanks, Martin, for now. We'll hear more from you late shortly. And let's turn our heads to Germany where it's pretty late and dark. And thanks, Pamela, for staying up and joining us here today. Um, so what is the what are the bigger discussions in in Europe, in general, or maybe related to sport, if you could enlighten us on this?

Dr Pamela Wicker 18:39:45

First of all, thanks for the invitation, Tim, and thanks to the Sport Innovation Research Group here for having me here to tonight or this morning. within Europe, I think the current environmental policy debate is a bit overshadowed by the management of the pandemic, and the vaccination or the lack thereof.

Dr Pamela Wicker 18:40:06

Beside that, I think there is not a collective action, another systematic strategy towards tackling the impacts of climate change. And as Martin mentioned, there are many concerns about experiencing economic trade offs when you do something for the environment. And there's, at the moment, no Europe wide strategy, there's a plan in place of the European Union that they have some some climate targets that they would like to meet until 2030 in terms of reducing carbon emissions, while within sport, I think it's like, across all industries that travel are reduced, because less sport is actually happening, both at the amateur level and also partially at the semi professional level. So like in other industries, people just travel less than that is also beneficial for the climate. On the other hand, we have some some football games happening in the European competitions, where it's a bit of a paradox picture where teams playing in the European league that are based in Germany, and they play their home games in Hungary, for example. So they basically travel a lot for for home games. So we really see a bit of a paradox picture here. And that is, of course, not a good role model for environmental sustainability. We do have some Bundesliga clubs to have climate sustainability on their radar,

especially father Wolfsburg. So that's with the diesel scandal. I think they are trying to gain some ground here in terms of CSR and environmental sustainability. The German Olympic sports Confederation they have some broad goals but again, like the German state, not very specific. I think the the most specific action is the introduction of the carbon tax this year.

Dr Pamela Wicker 18:42:06

In Germany by the German government, which will of course affect all industries, including sports. But to give you an idea of the magnitude of the financial incentives, so it's 25 year olds, about 25 euros per tonne of carbon emissions. So it's, I would say, rather, a low financial incentive a low punishment.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:42:30

Yes, I think if I remember correctly, we would need something around 250 US dollars per tonne in order to really, really accommodate for the, for the for the damage being done. So that no, that's great. And certainly different to what we're seeing out here in Australia. In terms of policies and and introduction of such such attacks. Now come a little bit to your research, maybe you could just enlighten us on sort of a highlight of your research, it is a lot around travel. So maybe you could just feature your your latest findings, your latest spotlights.

Dr Pamela Wicker 18:43:09

Yeah, well, my environmental refit actually started aggressive when you mentioned that I've worked there when the cyclone and the flooding happened in 2010 2011. And we studied the impact of natural disasters on community sports clubs. And that's where it all started. And currently, I'm looking at the environmental impact in terms of carbon emissions that is produced, as you said, by travelling to, to sport events, to sports, training sessions to sport competitions. I've also done some work on the intersections of sport or the pro environment to behaviour and how that affects well being. Because we've learned that there are some perceived costs when you behave environmentally friendly in terms of increased time, money, reduce convenience, but increased effort and how that affects your well being. But on my most recent work, we we see some some initial findings that it's actually possible that people can play sport, behave environmentally friendly, and also improve their well being. So it's actually possible to achieve a both health goals, health policy goals, and also climate goals.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:44:20

That's great, because that's the message we also need besides all the doom and gloom, we need pathways out of this, and and actually, that is effective, and ideally also helping other ends, like improving health. Um, thanks, Pamela, for now. And, Brian, so you've been listening to what's going on in other parts of the world? How about the US what's happening up there?

Dr Brian McCullough 18:44:44

Well, no one heard we had a presidential election recently. And so we pivoted from a prior administration who had some interesting approaches to environmental sustainability by simply ignoring it, and deregulating a lot of areas of national policy. And subsequently, you know, certain states would reengage like states like California or west coast, Oregon and Washington would engage more so with more progressive policies. But by leaving and declaring that we were going to leave the Paris Climate Agreement that caused corporations to start the worst still in it campaign, which brought a lot of

questions as well of why weren't these companies advocating for this before even they signed up, or before the country signed up for the Paris Climate Agreement, but it still created some good momentum within corporations to start considering these things. And to kind of Pamela's point, we were in a seminar on campus when I was still in Washington. And we had the chief Sustainability Officer of Microsoft, and they charge their clients \$35 a metric tonne for their cloud services. So probably right about the same carbon taxes as Germany's applying across the board. But to those points, it's really important to make sure that we are taxing, whether that be through offsets or other other means to really put a value on this and start moving the needle. Now, with our current administration, we're back in Paris, you know, and there'll be additional grant dollars that will become available for additional research and infrastructure investment. That's kind of the next thing on the docket, I guess, to pass through Congress here is to really improve our infrastructure. And the promises are that that would really be focused on sustainable transportation, and also sustainable energy infrastructure as well, which we've been neglecting for several administrations now. So that's a really encouraging aspect. But what again, what you really see is the states leading the way with certain mandates. certain cities and progressive cities are also leading the way

Dr Brian McCullough 18:47:06

Where my parents live in California, they were impacted, faced by air quality, not necessarily directly with wildfires, but the cities now are limiting the amount of grass that you can have in your landscaped yard to minimise water usage and other precious resources like that. And the state of California that's so prone to drought. And so I mean, those are certain aspects of policy environmental policy within the United States itself, as it relates to

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:47:40

Yeah, how is the that's, that's good to see you back in Paris, for example. But how would that also playing out in terms of the the sport organisations and sport in general in North America,

Dr Brian McCullough 18:47:52

What you really see is, you know, sport organisations, you know, in some ways thriving those that are the premier leaders in the environmental space, are really those that are in the cities and states that have the highest regulations. So the Seattle Mariners and the San Francisco Giants, two baseball teams, they compete very regularly for the internal award of the green club award, which has the highest diversion rates in major league baseball stadiums. And those two cities require composting at all, city venues. And so you know, with that regulation comes those, those thoughts, and performance. But we also see, too, in Seattle, the Seattle City Council required that the Seattle crackin, the new NHL hockey team expansion team, that they had to preserve certain aspects of the arena that they're building. So the oak view group, who is managing that facility, the climate pledge arena, you've what you've seen, there is a lot of great preservation of kind of the culture of Seattle, but also, it's being used as a blueprint on how you can repurpose older facilities, rather than simply building in a new area. And, to that point to, again, I have a lot of Seattle examples, because again, we're more progressive in that in those areas. But you see a lot of teams using renewables, the climate pledge arena, in a partnership with Amazon, was able to really build in that naming rights opportunity and own environmental sustainability and really have that as the DNA of the organisation. Whereas existing organisations have

slowly started to implement that into their organisational culture. But oftentimes, it seems to be slower than what most people would anticipate or expect.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:49:54

Okay. Well, thank thanks for that overview. I think we're going to move into the discussion section. And but I have a question straight away for you, Brian. So what is actually the new thing here? I mean, we know about the impacts or has on the environment, we also know about some of the impacts that the environment has on sports. What's really new now that that we are more concerned about it, what has changed. We have bombed we have bombed mountains in Europe for four decades, in order to create really nice, steep slopes. We've seen pollution and congestion around large sporting events in the past, we've seen the piles of waste after a football match, and so on in the past, but what's what's now what's new for us to be more concerned about?

Dr Brian McCullough 18:50:46

I think that with the proliferation of social media, you know, the direct communication that people can bring awareness to different inequities, or environmental degradation is really advancing the conversation. within the United States. I don't think mainstream media and I'm not trying to spin a conspiracy here, but that they're so closely related, and the revenues are so generated by organisations that they're hesitant to kind of point out those negative impacts. But I think you're what you're starting to see teams as being really cognizant of where their largest environmental impacts are, their carbon footprint, their energy consumption. The the Seattle Mariners, again, they implemented in put installed LED lights for their stadium lighting, and their energy bill decreased 75%. And when I present that in my classes, my students are all over if they are energy bill would decrease 75%, much less a facility that hosts over 90 events annually. And so I think those are one aspect and then starting to offset. Now, the degree of which they are offsetting and the value of those offsets is up for debate. But there's now shifting focus to those areas. And I think in some regards, that if they were to appropriately address that those offsets that starts to become again a carbon tax for the organisation, and starting to put again a value on whether or not we upgrade certain aspects of our organisation, or move forward. And when we make those pitches to the organisations, we just say, you know, this waste is pollution is also wasting you your organisation money as well. And then that's really where their ears perk up and they become more motivated to do something.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:52:31

Hmm. And maybe one of the other two maybe Pam and Martin. So building on that one, um, do we know enough about how spot is impacting the environment? Are we good and observing, measuring tracking it?

Dr Pamela Wicker 18:52:52

I mean, if I can jump in, I think we still need to know much more. I think, especially in Europe, there's not that much research out there. We know a bit on non carbon emissions. There are some selected events that have been studied. I've done myself some studies on amateur sport participator sport, but I think a big question is certainly whether elite sport or amateur sport is the larger contributor to carbon emissions. So and I think we need more research to see the evidence, see the status quo, and then

based on that we can develop more informed and evidence based implications on how to change things.

Dr Martin Rice 18:53:33

Yeah, I think that's right with what Pam was saying. It's a truly underreported sports impact. And from a climate perspective. I mean, they've been studies, I think the rapid transition alliance in the UK with David Goldblatt, for example, I think, is almost back of the envelope. You know, 8% of global emissions from sport are the equivalent of Spain's national emissions, for example, but it has been difficult to actually get true numbers because of the reporting at the National and the club level, whether you're professional or community. So it's a big challenge. But I think the important thing is it's not just sport, it's society at large, everyone has an impact when it comes to climate change. And we also have a responsibility to act on climate change. And I think that's what's really exciting that sport does have a powerful role to play.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:54:30

And so what should we be most concerned about? What should sport be most concerned about here in, in this new environment that we're talking? So there is pressure there are needs with with now a lot of the data? And but what is really the that that sport should be most concerned about? And maybe who have the various stakeholders within sport should be most concerned? I mean, Pam already feature the question is its professional sport? Is it amateur sport, it is more contributing and maybe also more impacted? What are your views? Brian?

Dr Brian McCullough 18:55:05

I think that, you know, regardless of whoever's the biggest, has the biggest impact of the impacts need to be addressed, right. And so I'm not saying that Pam was insinuating otherwise. But I mean, they both need to be tackled in but we also need to be able to make a true assessment. And when we talk about and look at environmental and environmental impact assessments, teams are in some regards, encouraged to decrease and minimise their impacts. Whereas when we conduct an economic impact report, we're obviously exploding that to show the benefits there. And so, you know, to have a common way to be able to evaluate that impact, whether it is within sport, professional sport, or within recreational sport that needs to happen. Now, scope one and scope two are rather kind of clearly defined just because you're looking at the set area, but when you start going into scope three, that's a really undefined area that needs to be discussed needs to be hashed out. And, frankly, needs to be just, frankly, the straight up defined so that we can go about assessing this because if you were to look at apparel, who actually takes you know, the responsibility for that environmental impact, is it the company that I'm buying it from, or me as the sport organisation that's buying that apparel? And so, these are all different things that we need to actively consider and really start not necessarily assigning blame, but at least taking responsibility for the impacts of our organisations.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:56:37

Martin is there something sport can particularly learn from other sectors other industries in especially in regards to tracking in order to to define their sphere of influence. Brian has just featured the the scope three as a as a critical frame.

Dr Martin Rice 18:57:02

Yeah, I mean, look, I think looking at how other sectors are responding is an obvious way that can help. And then it needs to be a crutch. I mean, Brian was talking about, you know, the manufacturing, the sporting goods and so forth is limited tracking on that. So we really do have to have a fair and accurate reflection on the impact. And, but I also think it's important to give examples that are first to me as the challenge for sports. So just current perspective, the way things are going by 2040 heat waves in Sydney and Melbourne could reach 50 degrees Celsius. So what we're talking about here is that we can place for a nice heat, and he talked about the core benefits from a health You know, there's no cost implications for doing that. So sport does need to act on climate change. And in Victoria, that are some good examples, because, as a Scot, I struggle with your Australian vowels, but Nillumbik Shire Council, they've they've got fantastic. It's, it's a hybrid solar and battery off grid community sport centre. And it also doubles up as a relief centre, and for incidents such as bushfires, and so forth. So I think there's some really exciting examples of how sport and communities are responding to the challenge. But, you know, we've been saying there's so much more that needs to be done, and everyone has a responsibility.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:58:39

I mean, I've been researching corporate social responsibility and in sport and beyond for about 20 years now. And so you you don't, you easily can get cynical a little bit about responsibility and organisations taking up responsibilities and the definition of their own responsibilities. So talking the walk and walking the talk are two very different elements of it. Pam, also, from your perspective, from your past experience in sort of research papers that you've seen, do we talk in sport management research? Do we focus enough on a sceptical critical view on what the sport industry is doing? And do we see enough research? That's also that's really showing action oriented solutions, rather than just describing the state of affairs? Which in some way we know now, we know it's it's tricky. We know we are on a slippery slope here.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 18:59:39

What is how is our sport research, living up to it to the to the challenges of action?

Dr Pamela Wicker 18:59:45

Yeah, I think at the moment, we are probably currently not in a state of us of describing how the situation is on attempting to measure the the various environmental impacts of sport and and Brian has mentioned the scope one and scope two emissions of the direct and indirect emissions. So we will still need to get a handle on the the lifecycle emissions and who is actually responsible for that. I'm always thinking of professional sports teams, and the production of merchandise and insurance. And there's also a lot of travel going on. So it's not only participant travel, it's also the goods and goods travelling all around the globe, usually being produced in Asia and then travelling all over to Europe. And these are also some of the opportunities we should explore. And my understanding is that especially professional sports can also be a role model. Here in that respect. And, of course, we need more more research on how to facilitate these developments, because everybody has the fear that there are economic disadvantages, when when evil organisations behave more environmentally friendly, and we need to show them some avenues in research how actually, as Brian mentioned, how economic and savings

and environmental gains can be combined. And I think that this should be our goal of researchers to make some suggestions here how that can be achieved.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:01:16

Martin, maybe it's a good opportunity for you to feature the climate action toolkit and some of the action that can be done, or should be done because these are the big levers, especially in regards to climate change. Would you like to briefly outline the biggest leavers or what sport can do?

Dr Martin Rice 19:01:35

Yeah, sure. Thanks, Tim. So obviously, with the climate Council, we don't just look at the problem, the science and the impacts, we also focus on the solutions. So essentially, community and professional sport have has a role an active part to play in the solution. So we developed a sports climate action toolkit going for going for gold. So there's, there's many Look, I'm not going to go into some of the things that have been mentioned already and obviously transitioning away hiring your venues by renew and so forth. And I think, have a think about using your powerful voice calling for climate action. If you're playing sport, then lobby your, your local council, your politician, and your Sporting Club that you love and revere to actually take action on climate change, use science based targets and approaches. So I think some that's something Australia's responded to quite well, when I talked about the extreme heat, and Australian Open tennis. So they've worked with Professor Jalali at the University of Sydney. And he's actually the thermal regulation, looking at how athlete's body temperature changes with extreme heat and so forth. So I'm using that science based evidence to inform heat policies and extreme weather policies and update them as things move.

Dr Martin Rice 19:03:03

And then we talked about corporates, but I think a big responsibility for sports professional, especially professional sports, you look at some of the major clubs and tournaments that actually sponsored by fossil fuel, invested interest. So it's really about looking at corporate sponsorship in a climate friendly way. And so look, sorry, I talk too long as always, but just have a look on our website. And we do have this climate action toolkit.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:03:32

We also sharing on I think we already shared in the registration link, a reference to your to your report. So but you also mentioned just mentioned another report that came out recently on the showing that too many sponsorships are still linked to environmentally unfriendly or negative sponsors or products. They are they are producing.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:03:58

Can I just ask Brian, briefly. So what's what's the best shot for sports or which of those actions are the most promising ones in terms of they can be implemented and also providing a big, big impact?

Dr Brian McCullough 19:04:15

Yeah, I think the challenge of moving away from sponsorships, while while notable is going to be challenging. I mean, for instance, by institution in the University of Texas as well, 10% of our state budget monies are fossil fuel related. So I mean, to be able to divest or move away from sponsors,

that's going to be extremely challenging, I think it's a bar to reach for, but it's going to be challenging. I think the the initial way that teams are going about this, to engage their current sponsors, or potentially new sponsorships is to, to educate their fans and get their fans involved. Because fans, as Pam has alluded to, are a majority of the impact, right, then travelling to the different events has a substantial impact, especially if you don't have access to mass transit, to get to your facilities. So I see that a lot of teams are engaging in that way. It does have some financial benefits to it as well. But ultimately, you can be able to signal to your fans that the team cares, especially if you look at current generational data.

Dr Brian McCullough 19:05:25

Younger generations are less likely to attend games, at least here in the United States. And so they these businesses need to start moving to something that's going to appeal to them beyond simply the event itself and have those more core values that embrace sustainability. And those campaigns can be extremely effective. And we found that in different types of events, whether that be through collegiate football, marathon running events, and then also the Special Olympics as well.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:05:59

Yeah, so I think we're moving towards the question answer section, but I'm not seeing so many questions at the moment. So I keep on going a little bit with with my, with those questions, which I have prepared. And that's because it's a sport research seminar. I'm also wondering about our sport research agenda. So maybe, Pam, you could say maybe you have one or two items that we should consider on our research list, especially from sport travel tourism perspective.

Dr Pamela Wicker 19:06:36

Yeah, if I could add some aspects to the previous selection, just the short suggestion. When we look at professional sports, I think and an intuitive change could be made where we're nobody has any large cost is the optimization of schedules. When we look at at winter sports, for example, I mean, that's a big thing in Europe, and you look at how usually the athlete travels, so they have a competition in Austria. Then they travelled to the States. They bet go back to Switzerland and they go to Eastern Europe.

Dr Pamela Wicker 19:07:06

to China and again back. So I think that could be something that can be very effectively changed without anybody being heard. And it also saves saves money and energy. And also when you look at professional sports teams, I mean, they they travel to two opponents places, sometimes by by aeroplane and you know the team versus just driving the whole distance, just for the purpose of picking up the athletes at the at the hotel and driving them in their team bus to the facility like some metres. So I think there are some, some evident opportunities where you can save carbon emissions without anybody being being heard simply by optimising the system a bit and losing losing a bit of the convenience. So that would be my my suggestion and drawing the line to research. I think that should also be our goal to provide some some some strategies in that regard, and maybe outline how making or implementing these changes how much of carbon emissions can be saved, while people do not experience this many costs.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:08:19

Okay, yeah, that's, that's great. Thanks. For one item that we have to add to the list or that we need to emphasise even more. Brian, what is what is one item or one or two items, especially from a sports marketing perspective?

Dr Brian McCullough 19:08:35

Yeah, I think it would be it's kind of came up in the question, section, chat. But it's really been able to leverage sport organisations and Gaylin Trail and I did a national sample here in the United States and found that the affiliation that people have with their local cities, and the teams within those cities can be used to promote sustainable behaviours, not just at events, but in their everyday lives. And so by having city pride or place identity, you can also leverage that through the sport teams with sport and non sport fans. So it's really an encouraging aspect that cities need to leverage better. And in my response to the question, the city of Chicago has done that and has done so successfully. So those are different things that should be considered.

Dr Brian McCullough 19:09:23

But when it comes to behavioural change, we also need to have social pressure on organisations. Now, I'm not going to become a Los Angeles Dodger fan, if they're more environmentally sustainable than the San Francisco Giants. So, you know, we need to figure out ways that we can apply social pressure on organisations to be more proactive in reducing their environmental impact, and doing things within their communities to, again, to regenerate those local environments.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:09:55

Oh, great. And, Martin, from your perspective, especially around policy, what what do you suggest to us a little bit from this, let's say a little bit arm's length perspective, that sport business sport management researchers should get into?

Dr Martin Rice 19:10:13

Oh, I think that I gave an example there. Are they just really using the scientific expertise to help inform policy, particularly for sporting organisations? So as I said, there's already been good examples here in Australia with the Australian, and tennis open and Australia, cricket. And so I'm using the scientific basis. And I think also, academics in Australia could help inform when I look at some of their kind of forward planning, government strategies for sport, you know, 1020 years forward plans, no one of them mentioned climate change. So it's really all about getting that scientific basis to inform policy. And I think that's lacking here in Australia for these big visioning exercises. So academics has have an important role to play one of my favourite papers ever, I'm getting a bit cheeky now, but then it was Jane Lubchenco. She used to run the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in the US and she wrote this paper on science having a social contract with society. So essentially, we have a responsibility as scientists to convey our knowledge and make it usable for decision makers in the public at large. I think that's where academia can play an important role.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:11:42

Well, thanks for reminding us. It's something that is also very stressed here at Swinburne University to create impact, and especially positive social impact. So now, I mean, I provided this phrase of this,

saying from Katharine Hayhoe at the start, that it's important to have the conversation in order to generate hope and inspire us to act but at the same time,

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:12:06

Greta Thunberg, the great climate activist has reminded us that, that when we start to act, hope is everywhere. So it's an emphasis on action. So instead of looking for hope, look for action, then the hope will come. And great wise words from from a remarkable young woman. So I think it's up to all of us. And if I look at the number of registration for this, for this webinar, we can all make a difference. And I challenged the the panellists who are already quite conscious and knowledgeable around their own carbon footprints, for example, their own environmental impact, in terms of can you make a commitment today? What action Are you taking moving forward, and it's the same with me, I'm involved in this space. But at the same time, I'm just one member of the public as we all are, and we all need to take action, otherwise, it just doesn't work. So I looked through my portfolio, and in the spot rate portfolio, I've now decided to move away from getting too immersed in this consumption of golf equipment that is easily marketed and heavily marketed to middle aged men, quite pricey, and that's what sport is often about the consumption of goods that you may not need, because they are not up to your level, your game, your playing level is not really needing that sort of equipment. And I've reflected on it. And I thought I'd downsize a little bit, because and I bought myself a little pencil back, because it enables me to take my bike to the golf course, which I've never really considered before I thought, like, why am I was driving by car, because you have this heavy gear, you have those 15 clubs, of which I don't need that many. So reflecting on how you're doing sports, and what could be changed easily. I now have a bought myself a smaller bag, which takes everything I need for a round of golf. And I can take the bike to the golf course. So this is my little notch, again, just making a difference at my end. So I would like to invite all of you here also to provide your little improvements that I know you're all great leaders, and you have we all have a very portfolio that's already very conscious in terms of environmental impact. But what is your commitment here today? Can I start with, with Martin?

Dr Martin Rice 19:14:45

Yeah, sure. So I guess stop being on the internet and crying whenever I see Scotland lose a game of sport. That would be one. But they're now seriously though I look I I mean, I love playing sports and keeping active. So I try and think of them what sport has a relatively low impact and the facilities. So one of the things I really love about living in Australia, and up here in the sunshine state is outdoor swimming. So actually cycling to the swimming pool and looking at facilities that are powered by renewables. And so that I guess that's ways that I try and limit my impact and make a contribution.

Dr Martin Rice 19:15:28

Yeah.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:15:32

Great, thank you,

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:15:35

Brian.

Dr Brian McCullough 19:15:37

Like following in that cycling theme, I'm now the head coach of a four year old baseball team, which I didn't even know it was a thing until I got here to Texas. But we, my son and I we biked to practice and our games, there's some fields that are not safe to bike to, especially with a four year old, but we do as much as we possibly can. Other aspects to is that we're you know, as game startup, you're soon encouraging families to carpool, especially those parents that are working are back at work now. Different things like that. But the other thing that we've done is started within our local baseball V is an equipment exchange programme. As children grow quickly, they grow out of their cleats or their pants or any equipment that they might have. And so we're able to have that as a free resource that people can donate, and then you can take what you need. And so it can decrease the amount of materials that are being produced for something that might be grown in a matter of a couple of weeks, maybe with you know, some children. So those are some aspects that we're doing there. And then at home, we just actually yesterday converted to 100% renewable through our energy provider as well.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:16:59

Right. Thanks, Brian. Also important that we remember individual action, but it's socially embedded action would actually create much more ripple effects and then also even even greater impacts. Um, Pam.

Dr Pamela Wicker 19:17:17

Yes, so I think in the last year my my calm footprint has already been reduced because we had no conference travel, no holidays. I've used my car only three times since November because we're in some form of lockdown light. I've started used to print less actually also in home office. So I think it's perfectly fine when you do a journal review that you look at the PDF on the screen, and then ride your reports are also when you review grant applications and all that there's no need to print extensively everything I had booked a local training camp. So usually I would fly to Spain for cycling training camp, but I had booked a local one which also was cancelled because of the pandemic, but at least I try it. And I my plan is also to travel less than the future you know, when you have these project meetings, you don't have to physically drive anywhere or or go in the train and physically show up. I think it's during the pandemic, with all the learn that we can use zoom as a powerful tool to to talk to people have a conversation, and that there's no need to meet everybody, physically, at least not all all the time. So that is also my my goal for the next years.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:18:33

Thanks, Pam. I'll just remind everyone, we're all probably in this 10% of richest people on the planet we have caused the planet to deteriorate to the state where it is, or our societies. So it's great that we can get some action going. And it's this those pledges. So both commitments should be an inspiration to everyone who's in the call. And not only to continue the conversation to create that political pressure, but also to act and not think someone else will do it at some other point in time for you.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:19:06

Um, I've now seen we have we had two questions from from Mazib Brahman and Brian has been kind enough to to answer them in the q&a section. And we have a question from from Simone Fullagar. And that's maybe the one sector one question we can we can tackle before I wrap up the session. And this

is maybe all of you see it in the chat. And it is about the problems we have with conservative governments, and maybe everywhere around the globe. How can we bring together the growing focus on equality and sport with climate action given the unequal impacts on marginalised people and the planet?

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:19:48

Can I invite one of you to respond?

Dr Martin Rice 19:19:56

I'll give a shout out. Brian, are you?

Dr Martin Rice 19:19:59

Okay? And thanks to you, Simone. That's a great question. And I mean, obviously, here in Australia, indigenous communities, Indigenous Australians, lower socio economic groups are really on the front line of climate change in rural and regional groups. And we've seen that with extreme heat, public housing, and sport itself in these communities is really strong social fabric. And it brings communities together and it can be a leveller. And I also look back at like Cathy Freeman, and you know, what she's done for sport. And I think using powerful voices in power of sport, to try and get equality. So for example, in the Women's League, soccer here in Australia, the W League, they were playing an extreme heat in the summer, just to manage the men scheduling, where they would play in the evening and the TV. Right. So I think it was strong response to that, and the Football Federation have been changing schedules and getting that balance. So I think there are there's a lot more work to be done on this. And I do think that community does play a bit of a community sport as a bit of a leveller for these issues. But certainly there are vulnerable communities and we need to actually act. One of the points of doing this report from a climate council perspective is shifting conservative voices. And sport, obviously, is one of the big players here and institutional most in Australia. So it's getting conservative voices to engage on the issue, and then hopefully, that will lead to some more action.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:21:47

All right. Thanks. Thanks, Martin. And thanks also for the question. I see some more, especially encouragement for more conversation and coming through the chat. So it seems as if we have a very engaged audience here and then everyone's very keen to continue that conversation, which is great.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:23:04

We have two more events coming up to my webinars in this small in this meeting, as we call it mini webinar series, and one is on the sixth of April and one on the 23rd of April. So every two weeks now, the next one is on sport and technology led by my colleague, Adam Kok. And the last one in this little series is on an acting and researching women's sport policy led by my colleague, Emma Sherry. So please, we see that look for out for those announcements and join us again.

Dr Tim Breitbarth 19:23:40

So it's a big thank you to everyone who participated everyone who tuned in, and let's be positive, and let's get something done. Thanks a lot and goodbye.