

AU eSports Inc.



ADELAIDE
UNIVERSITY
ESPORTS

Strategic Plan

2022 - 2024

Executive Summary

Adelaide University eSports Incorporated aims to provide an environment for high-level, casual and social gamers to participate in tournaments, social events and group gaming. The club's strengths lie in the large variety and size of its membership and audience, affiliation with AUSF and the numerous competitive teams achieving high tournament placings. Our major weaknesses are the lack of competitions to enter including the strict university student restrictions, and lack of member diversity. We have identified key opportunities in collaborations with other esports organisations and potential sponsors and new revenue sources. Key threats however, are the competitor organisations at state and national level, along with cybersecurity vulnerabilities of our infrastructure and online accounts.

The main short term goals for the club are to increase our outreach, grow our social media followers by 15%, get 100 members, host 2 major tournaments and an International Women's Day gaming celebration. Long term, we aim to increase our membership diversity, create and manage an e-safety and cybersecurity program for presentation in schools, and to continue to develop revenue sources and equipment. These goals will be measured by our three key performance indicators; membership rates, event engagement and competition engagement. These will allow us to validate our goals and judge the long term health of the club. Our major competitors are other esports organisations such as UniSA Esports, QUT Esports and the AEL. They currently outperform our social media pages, so we aim to increase our followers and engagement through increasing our post rate on existing channels, create new channels such as TikTok and Youtube and develop cross-posting relationships with other organisations.

The club has achieved significant post-COVID growth, from the increased level of in-person activities and the opening of the room. The club has already achieved more members than the entirety of 2021, along with a large amount of other revenue from room access and events. This has placed the club in an excellent financial situation, with the significant revenue achieved this year allowing further investment in equipment, allowing for full peripherals to be purchased for each PC, along with additional controllers and streaming equipment. This has also allowed for a greater investment in events, such as the club running a Valorant Tournament with a \$400 prize pool. The future projections demonstrate that we will continue to grow, allowing for more investment in events and club equipment in the coming years.



Our Mission

Adelaide University eSports Incorporated provides an environment for esports athletes to compete in local, state and national level intervarsity esports competitions. We also provide an environment for social activities and casual gaming for people interested in video games to participate in, and to find like minded individuals to play and interact with.

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS

- Large number of diverse genres of potential games, providing a wide audience and potential members.
- Eligibility for grants within AUSF, the University of Adelaide as well as local council, state and federal governments.
- Affiliation with AUSF and the University of Adelaide, providing institutional knowledge, access to resources and multiple venues such as our eSports Room and the Rumours Cafe.
- Large social media engagement, with over a thousand followers across all social media platforms.
- Multiple competitive teams placing in the top 4 of national level competition, bringing acclaim and interest in the club.
- Sponsorship relationships with Johnny's Popcorn and RedBull.

WEAKNESSES

- Major lack of member diversity, demonstrating a club accessibility and brand issue.
- Current eSports Room limits expansion of club facilities, as there is no room for extra equipment to be added.
- Lack of organised competitions outside AEL and QUT Intervarsity for most games, limiting the ability of the club to form competition teams.
- No professional coaching structure or elite athlete pathway, potentially turning away high-performance athletes from engaging with the club.
- Majority of competitions only allow university students to compete, reducing our pool of athletes.



OPPORTUNITIES

- Collaboration with other eSports organisations, from local and national university clubs to professional organisations such as Legacy Esports.
- New sources of revenue such as twitch affiliation and eSafety commission presentations.
- Grants being created within AUSF and the University to target the return from COVID and re-introduction of international students.
- Grants being created to target high school students and support athletes.
- New sponsorship relationships with brands involved in the gaming industry and other local Adelaide businesses.

THREATS

- Other university esports organisations within the state and country compete for members and audience for tournaments and events.
- Lack of cybersecurity, as members and other people with access to the computers may try to hack and damage the room computers or club accounts.
- COVID and related rules and regulations preventing in-person activities.

Our Goals



Short-term

1. Increase social media followers by 15%
2. Surpass 100 club members
3. Expand social media presence on other platforms
4. Become a Twitch Partner
5. Host two major tournaments and multiple minor events
6. International Women's Day for Gaming celebration

Long-term

1. Increasing membership diversity
2. Establish an e-safety & cyber security program for schools
3. Adapt policies and constitution for changing club size and situation
4. Improve the equipment in the room, through increasing the number of PCs, as well as improving peripherals
5. Initiate fundraising programs
6. Establish more sponsorships
7. Establish a casting, streaming and entertainment community in the club

Key Performance Indicators



Membership Rates - defined as how many people join the club as fiscal members within a year. This can be compared to previous years to identify growth and provide predictions for the future.

Event Engagement - defined as how many people attend club events. This can be compared to how many people see the event and previous events, to provide insight to the event and allow for future planning.

Competition Engagement - defined as how many teams we enter into tournaments, to be compared to previous semester and tournaments' team intake.

Competition

UniSA - They are the only other SA based university with an esports club. Their involvement in the scene may potentially draw students away from our club. Further, tournaments and gaming events they run may compete with ours, reducing attendance and involvement. UniSA also allows non-students to join their club, further impacting our target market within the SA esports scene.

QUT - Queensland University of Technology hosts university leagues with many different universities entering teams in various different games. As we host leagues and tournaments of our own, if they run an opposing tournament it would reduce the player base we have access to.

AEL - Australian eSports League hosts the major university league tournaments, making them a competitor. As they are the biggest host in the university scene in Australia and have prize pools of multiple thousands we can not hope to compete with them at this stage.



Marketing

Market Research

UniSA Esports was established in 2018 with a focus in bringing like minded people together to play social and competitive games. Currently they have a total of 278 followers on Facebook, 137 on Twitter, 152 on Instagram, 113 on Twitch and 622 Discord members, all of which are potential members for our club. UniSA also host small events such as club meet ups so members can socialise and game casually as well as teams competing in AEL and SA Challenge.

Target Audience

Our target audience are gamers, primarily university students, looking to take their gaming experience to a competitive level. According to the parliament of Australia, around 71% of people in the working age (18-64) play video games. This shows that we have a large potential audience for our club activity. Club membership from the past year show that this is currently an untapped market.

Marketing Strategies

- Instagram posts with trending and relevant tags
- Increase activity on Twitter
- Posting weekly on our social media
- Monthly Twitch streams
- Posting events in relevant Facebook groups such as Overheard
- Creating a Tiktok
- Creating a Youtube channel
- Posting clips of our competitive teams

Team Delegation Strategies

- Open Communication
- Group Problem Solving
- Encouraging Free Thinking
 - Fun Factor
 - Commitment
- Continuous Improvement and Reflection
 - Play to Individual Strengths
 - Define Desired Outcomes
- Delegate Tasks at the Beginning of Planning
 - Automate Tasks
 - Prioritise Tasks

Retrospectives

In 2021, we have had immense success with membership rates, event turnouts and team engagement. At the end of the year, we had a peak membership of 75, a massive increase over the end of 2020 with only 11 committee members. These were all paying members and this cashflow allowed for the successful operation of social events and tournaments, such as esports event watchparties, the 2021 AUE PogCrawl (pubcrawl), SA Challenge and multiple Quiz Nights.

The use of Discord as social hub for the club was very successful, with it allowing for our news, signups and activities to reach up to 400 people. This activity spiked with the successful opening of the room, with many individuals that had been around since day one expressing excitement that a big milestone had been reached and a flood of new people coming in asking questions about the club, the room and what we do. The inclusion of the club's Discord in the newly created Adelaide University Discord Hub led to a great increase in engagement. Many Adelaide University students who already used Discord were gamers and a prime audience for the club, but just did not know of us. The hub allowed for these people to learn of the club and get involved, greatly increasing our marketing reach.

The DOTA 2 International Watch Party was also a great success, as we were able to book out the Rumours Cafe and fill it with 21 members, ultimately turning a profit from the event despite providing food and drink for everyone. All feedback received for the event was positive, and introduced ideas for potential improvements that were taken on board. We had multiple successes in competitions as well, with a DOTA 2 team coming 2nd and a CS:GO team coming 4th in the AEL, making them the second and fourth best teams in the nation. Additionally our Overwatch team achieved 3rd place in the QUT Intervarsity competition. These great successes within the second semester of our club's existence demonstrated our ability to form teams and compete at an elite level, along with providing a prize revenue source for the club.



Throughout 2021 there were a few setbacks; primarily the launch of the esports room was delayed, with the fallout effects disrupting plans and the operation of the club. Multiple events, such as the room launch and team training were unable to run, along with impacting membership due to the room being a major draw for students. The lack of an operation space removed the ability for the club to run non-social events in-person; team tryouts and trainings, tournaments and LAN events had to be either run online with players utilising personal equipment or through the hire of equipment. This had a massive impact on the social network and community of the club, as many members didn't interact with other members outside of small 3-7 person teams. To more effectively handle the situation the club could have implemented a larger focus on social events inside and outside university to tide over until the room opened.

The other major impact of the room delay was a reduced number of members signing up. A major section of the target student market's primary interest in the club is the opportunity to utilise high-end gaming PC's at university. The chance to compete in university esports leagues or the social events were not enough to convince people to join the club, leading to a missed market share. While the room was not opened, the club could have focused on implementing alternative events and opportunities to reach out to these students and get them involved upon the first notice. This would have led to an increased membership and thus cash flow rate.

Another major issue the club faced in 2021 was the relative isolation of club members. Some members, due to time constraints, location/travel constraints or lack of interest did not spend much time at events, interacting within teams or in the social spaces of the discord server. This led to many feeling separated from the rest of the club. This was a particular problem within the international student community, due to language/culture barriers and in some cases physical isolation as they were online only students. Measures were taken to try and reach out, such as the weekly LAN nights in Semester 1 and come-and-try events in Semester 2, but more actions could have been taken, such as specific international student events and more structured in-person or online events.



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