



## **OCEANIA SQUASH FEDERATION "OSF"**

### **Report to the World Squash Federation's 2007**

#### **Annual General Meeting**

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Over the last 12 months the Oceania Squash Federation and its member countries have continued to address the issues impacting upon the sport and exploring opportunities that can expand the profile of Squash in the Oceania Region. This is a formidable challenge in a highly competitive, diverse and difficult environment in which the region operates.

However, it is essential if the sport is to grow and maintain its relevance in the region. Highlights of activities and events that have taken place over the last twelve months, together with future planned activities, include those summarised below.

1. The number of full member nations/territories affiliated with the OSF remains at 8. Although the OSF continues to work at fostering new membership, the task is extremely difficult where countries have no squash facilities. Construction costs present the greatest challenge for the sport to expand into new and emerging areas of the Oceania region.
2. Although the Oceania Region is comparatively small in member representation to the WSF, it continues to perform well above its weight within the Squash world, particularly at the elite player level and with its contribution to World Squash in the areas of coaching development, refereeing development and administration. The election of Gerard De Courcy to a WSF Vice President position at the 2006 AGM created a vacancy of Oceania Regional Vice President to the WSF. Squash Australia President, John Holland was appointed to the position and will provide a depth of experience to the WSF.
3. The OSF continues to be supported by a number of standing committees which play a valuable role in the region. The OSF also continued to fulfil its obligation to the WSF with the appointment of OSF representatives on various WSF committees. The time and commitment these representatives put into furthering the sport is greatly appreciated.
4. The Oceania Squash Championships continue to be a priority activity for the OSF, whether as a stand alone event or as part of the Pacific Games or Pacific Mini Games. The Championships are held biennially, and the Eighth Oceania Squash Championships took place in August/September 2007 in Apia, Samoa under the umbrella of the XIIIth South Pacific Games. (Future Games will be referred to as "Pacific Games and Pacific Mini Games" under a new Charter.)

Over 5,000 athletes and officials assembled in Apia to compete in 33 sporting disciplines. Squash was one of the disciplines and new facilities were constructed for the Games. Three Singles and one Doubles court were built at a multi-purpose venue, and one Singles and one Doubles court constructed at the University of South Pacific Apia Campus. Both facilities were used for the Games competition and will remain a permanent facility for Squash in Samoa post Games. It was a major financial investment of the Samoan Government towards the sport.

The Squash discipline was one of the few sports that occupied the full two week period of the Games, and covered competition in Men's and Ladies Teams, Men's and Ladies Singles, and for the first time Men's, Ladies and Mixed Doubles.

Six countries competed in the Squash discipline, which was an outstanding overall success, including the Doubles competition which attracted considerable interest.

Unfortunately, a virus affected the performance of many athletes, including a number of Squash competitors.

Four qualified referees (2 from Australia and 2 from New Zealand) travelled to Samoa at their own airline expense to volunteer their services, for which the OSF was extremely grateful.

Two issues of significance that did emerge from the Squash discipline involved the ball and doubles rules. The Dunlop ball was used and was extremely bouncy and provided players with "little value for a good shot". This suggests that a review of the type of ball may be needed for different climatic conditions – such as hot and high humidity conditions that prevailed in Samoa.

The second issue relates to the rules for Doubles Squash, and where lets are awarded in almost every instance. In addition to impacting on the length of matches, and seemingly unfairness in many rulings, it is very confusing to the public.

5. Junior development remains a major challenge for the OSF and the region, particularly in respect of opportunities for young developing players in our smaller countries and remote areas of Australia. There is a high demand for greater technology tools and resource material to counter the vast distances and expensive travel costs with the region.

At the recent OSF General Meeting it was resolved to re-establish the Oceania Junior Squash Championships as an important element of the region's strategic direction for junior development.

The Championships are planned to take place in Fiji in 2008 and will be open to competitors from all WSF member countries.

6. In 2005 funding was provided by the WSF to regional federations for nominated coaching programs. Funding provided to the OSF went towards programs in Cook Islands, Fiji and Norfolk Island. Additional funding was provided by the

OSF, while further funding was obtained locally and in the case of Fiji, aid funding was provided.

This was a very positive initiative, and has produced considerable benefits for the sport, particularly in the junior development area.

Hopefully, the program can be continued by the WSF on a regular basis, perhaps with funding assistance from a corporate sponsor.

7. Elite players from the Oceania region continue to perform well on the world scene, particularly sisters, Natalie and Rachel Grinham, David Palmer and Stewart Boswell of Australia and Shelly Kitchen of New Zealand who have high rankings with PSA and WISPA. Australia and New Zealand invest significantly in high performance programs, which is extremely important for furthering the development of our sport in Oceania.
8. Masters Squash continues to play an important role in the Oceania region. In supporting Masters Squash, the Oceania Masters Championships are held each year. The 2007 Championships were hosted by Norfolk Island Squash and were an outstanding success. The 15<sup>th</sup> Oceania Masters will also be held in Norfolk in 2008.

Australia and New Zealand also hold Masters Championships, which attract large attendances and are very popular events.

Planning is well advanced in Christchurch, New Zealand for the World Masters Championships to take place from October 17 to 25, 2008.

9. Squash Australia recently held the Australian Open Championships in the Clare Valley region of country South Australia. The event was an outstanding success and supports the view that a major squash event does not have to be staged in a major city.
10. The Arafura Games 2007 took place in Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia in May 2007. Approximately 2,500 competitors from 30 countries participated in 23 sports, including Squash.  
The Squash competition attracted competitors from the Oceania and Asian regions, competing in both Men's and Women's Teams and Singles events. The Arafura Games are held biennially.
11. The Pan Pacific Masters Games are held on the Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia and attract Masters competitors world-wide, and in particular from the Oceania Region. These Games commenced in year 2000 and are held biennially.  
Squash is one of the 38 sports contested at the Games. The 2008 Games are being held from 1-9 November 2008.
12. The Olympic Sports Federations of Oceania (OSFO) and the Oceania National Olympic Committees (ONOC) are important organisations that foster, promote, facilitate and coordinate the development of sport in the Oceania region. The OSF is a member of these organisations, representing the sport of Squash and its member countries in all aspects of regional organisation and development. The OSF proposes to play a more active role in future in both

organisations, aimed at raising the profile of the sport, lobbying for greater support for Squash in the region, and contributing towards submissions to Governments and Olympic organisations.

13. During the last twelve months both Australia and New Zealand have had significant changes in their administration, with new CEO's being appointed and changes in other support personnel. It was also necessary for New Zealand to appoint a new Board Chairman, Jim O'Grady, following the elevation of Gerard De Courcy to a WSF Vice President position. The above changes resulted in a "settling in" period for both organisations.
14. The OSF has developed its "Strategic Objectives 2008 – 2012" and drafted a Vision and Mission Statement which will be open for comment and review over the coming months. Strategic Objective statements and Operational Statements are also proposed for each OSF Standing Committee, including a development & marketing plan.
15. The OSF is committed to a close working relationship with its peer body, the WSF, and supporting its strategic objectives in the governing and development of Squash throughout the world, including its efforts of achieving full Olympic status.
16. The OSF will continue to work with and support its member countries to promote and develop the sport of Squash in the Oceania region, and to encourage non-member countries to develop squash facilities in their area and embrace our great sport. The OSF operates on a very small funding base, and will continue to be serviced by volunteer support.

Colin J. Clapper  
President & Executive Director  
Oceania Squash Federation  
15<sup>th</sup> September, 2007.

John Holland  
Oceania Regional Vice President  
to the World Squash Federation  
15<sup>th</sup> September, 2007.