

OCEANIA Squash President's annual report. November 2013

This being my first year as President of Oceania Squash, has given me an insight into the vast differences and challenges in our region. With local enthusiasm and innovation I am sure there are some tremendous new opportunities to develop squash in Oceania.

After more than 20 years involvement in the Federation, 17 of these as President, Mr. Colin Clapper AM stood down from the Board in October 2012. OSF and its members extend our sincere thanks to Col for his tireless effort over these years to develop the sport throughout the Oceania Region.

Butch Gifford also retired after being involved with OSF since 1997, both as New Zealand delegate and VP. Butch was made a life member at the 2012 AGM.

Officers elected at last years' AGM

Neven Barbour	President	New Zealand
Carol Kawaljenko	Executive Officer	Australia
Mal Tarrant	Vice President	Norfolk Is
Jim O'Grady	Vice President	New Zealand

Communication is vital in such a spread out diverse region. Without regular contact between member countries it is difficult to plan and assist, so we have completed the launch of a new Oceania website to encourage more interaction between countries. I encourage members in the next year to be far more proactive in use of the website by letting us and other members know what is happening in our sport.

Junior Development has been significant in the past year with both Australia and New Zealand developing specific programs to introduce the game to school-age children. Squash New Zealand's 'Kiwi Squash' has been piloted this year and will be launched in 66 schools in 2014 with a targeted participation of some 6,000 students between 5 and 19 years of age.

After Squash Australia successfully trialing their 'Oz Squash' junior participation program in 2012 it has been included in 25 Active After Schools Programs throughout the country this year. The program based on the 'Playing for Life' philosophy uses modified equipment to introduce children to squash. It has also extended to In-School and In-Centre Programs with further trials planned for later this year and released in 2014 to the wider community.

Approximately 100 coaches have been specifically trained to deliver the program.

In 2012 the Oceania Junior Championships were re-introduced after a hiatus of many years.

The next Junior Championships will be hosted by Squash Australia in January 2014 at Queensland's Gold Coast. Preparations are well in hand with the Gold Coast Tourism Commission supporting the event. The 2015 event will be hosted by New Zealand.

Australia has also implemented a Junior Squash Tour in 2013. 75 tournaments were registered across the nation with over 938 players registering. Entries in the annual Squash Australia national junior events have increased steadily with more than 221 players competing in the Australian Junior Closed Championships.

Preparations for the 2015 Commonwealth Youth Games in Apia, Samoa, are progressing. It is anticipated that the squash event will be a major success and the Samoan squash enthusiasts will provide plenty of support for this event which will showcase their country.

The increase of **elite level** competition across the region has continued during the year. The ongoing Australian Circuit has been a resounding success in attracting players to visit the Oceania Region. The circuit held in every state and territory throughout Australia hosted 27 professional tournaments and attracted overseas players from 28 different countries.

Although the number of professional tournaments in New Zealand decreased in 2013 due to lack of sponsorship opportunities, **events for local players** have increased to 450 events, many of these being regional and club based. Our smaller island nations have also been active in hosting events with the Cook Island Open in Rarotonga, New Caledonia hosting their annual BCI International in Noumea and Fiji Squash hosting the Fiji P Meghiji Squash Revival Tournament. Squash Fiji are working hard to re-ignite the sport in their country and with secured sponsorship for next year's event they are well on their way to succeeding this.

Masters Squash throughout the region has been very active with good entries in events especially in Australia and New Zealand. In late 2012 the Cook Islands successfully hosted the 19th Oceania Masters Championships and in September Norfolk Island has hosted the 2013 Masters event.

The **Pacific Games and Mini Games** are essential to the ongoing development of our sport in this Region, so the bi-annual Oceania Championships are held in conjunction with the Games. It is unfortunate that squash was not on the Pacific Mini Games Program in 2013 as the event was being held in Wallis & Futuna where there are no squash facilities. However, the Oceania Championships is being hosted by Norfolk Island as a stand-alone event in early October where member countries will be vying for Team and Individual Championship Trophies. Our thanks to Norfolk Island and Mal Tarrant for hosting this important event.

The 2015 Pacific Games will be held in Papua New Guinea where squash is one of the core sports. Planning is well underway for a new facility with 6 glass-backed courts of which 3 have movable walls to incorporate 2 doubles courts. The OSF is working closely with the PNG Organising Committee to ensure the facilities will be to international standards. The 2018 Commonwealth Games will be hosted on the Gold Coast in sunny Queensland and we look forward to a large contingent of Oceania countries competing. A strong representation at the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games is anticipated.

New facilities have been built in Darwin Northern Territory Australia capable of hosting world class events in both singles and doubles squash. In September the Darwin International Doubles Tournament attracted players from Scotland, Australia and New Zealand. This was an important event in preparation for the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games for these countries.

On the **World Scene** Australia and New Zealand have continued to compete at an excellent level with 5 Men ranked in PSA's top 50 and 7 Women in WSA's top 50. At the 2013 World Men's Championships they acquitted themselves very well, Australia 4th and New Zealand 15th in the final placings. At the World Junior Women's Championships New Zealand surpassed Australia in the final rankings.

Through Chris Sinclair's leadership OSF has a sound structure for the examination and accreditation of referees and markers. Over 200 markers and referees are accredited across the region with 3 World and 7 Regional Accredited Referees. Oceania is fortunate to have this number of highly qualified referees who make a considerable contribution to the ongoing development of 'The Rules of Squash'. Thank you Chris for your energy and enthusiasm.

I also acknowledge the support of Jim OGrady and Mal Tarrant on the Committee.

Finally, my appreciation goes to Carol Kawaljenko our Executive Officer for the exceptional amount of effort and time she commits to efficient organisation and administration.

Oceania Squash would like to thank World Squash and the many individuals and organisations that put in such a huge effort to give Squash its chance for inclusion in the 2020 Olympic Games. There seems little more could be done. It was our best shot.

Oceania Squash remains committed to supporting WSF in the governing and development of Squash throughout the World, and fostering and promoting the sport in the Oceania Region.

Neven Barbour
President
Oceania Squash Federation