



OCEANIA SQUASH FEDERATION

PRESIDENTS REPORT 2017

The Oceania Squash Federation was established in 1992 and is primarily responsible for the coordination, development and promotion of squash throughout the Oceania Region.

The membership base currently includes all countries within the Oceania Region who have squash facilities – Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Norfolk Island, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Vanuatu and Tahiti. The big challenge facing squash in the region is the lack of squash facilities and it will continue to be an obstacle to increasing participation and attracting new members to the sport.

Given these constraints however, our member countries continue to work tirelessly to develop the sport and encourage new players. Samoa and Papua New Guinea have steadily increased player numbers over the past year and introduced new competitions for both adult and junior players. Australia and New Zealand have been working closely with territorial authorities and government agencies to increase the number of squash courts in local communities. With new squash facilities having been constructed in Australia and New Zealand over the past 12 months and many more currently in the planning stage the future looks bright for the sport in Australia and New Zealand. Unfortunately it is a far more difficult challenge for the other members of OSF where resources and support are scarce.

The region continues to offer top level squash tournaments that attract players not only from the Oceania region but from around the world. Tournaments in Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia, Fiji and Tahiti have provided a showcase for touring professional players and given fans an opportunity to watch the action live. In April 2017 New Zealand hosted the World Masters Games in Auckland with more than 25,000 competitors taking part. Squash attracted 450 entries with 155 overseas competitors representing 18 nations including an array of current and former world champions. The event was an outstanding success both on and off the court.

In July New Zealand also hosted the World Junior Squash Championships in Tauranga. There were 28 nations in attendance with 14 junior women's teams, 72 individual junior women and 76 individual junior men. The event was a huge success enjoyed by players and spectators alike with a worldwide audience of over 4.2m unique viewers who saw content associated with the event's Facebook page.

Coaching and referee education programs are an important focus for the region and the combined resources of Australia and New Zealand are important for the development of these programme areas within Oceania. Increasing the number of accredited coaches and referees will have a positive impact on squash in the smaller countries and with initiatives such as WSF Coaching Accreditation Program the number of officials should continue to increase.

The 2017 Oceania Championships will be held in Tahiti in September, combined with the OSF annual general meeting, and for the first-time Australia and New Zealand have been invited to attend, which should lead to an increase in the number of participants. It is also an opportunity for players outside of Australia and New Zealand to gain some valuable international competition in the lead up to the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Australia.

OSF remains actively involved with other sporting organisations within Oceania including OSFO and ONOC who play an active role in fostering and promoting sport in the region, and it continues to support the WSF in the governance and development of squash throughout the world.

Jim O'Grady
President
Oceania Squash Federation