

ANNEXURE G

OCEANIA SQUASH FEDERATION

Report to the World Squash Federation Annual General Meeting
October 2001

Over the past 12 months squash in the Oceania Region has had a period of relative stability. The number of member countries of the regional federation remains unchanged, however it was pleasing to see Cook Islands and Samoa take the step from Associate to Full Membership of the WSF. Cook Island and Samoa also took advantage of WSF Grants and the results of this will be discussed at the next general meeting of the OSF to be held in Norfolk Island in December 2001.

Norfolk Island will be the venue for the South Pacific Mini games during this period and squash will be one of the participating sports. Six OSF member countries will be participating in the squash competition which will also be recognised as the 2001 Oceania Squash Championships/South Pacific Cup.

On a sad note, the region was shocked by the sudden on-court death earlier this year of Phillip Cridge. Phil was a very active administrator, coach and player in PNG and was well known throughout the region. In recognition of Phil's contribution to the sport, the 'Phillip Cridge Most Improved Player Memorial Award' is to be introduced for future Oceania Championships.

DEVELOPMENT

In my report last year I outlined the New Zealand development thrust 'Competing in the new environment'. Advertising including TV and radio are increasing player numbers. Squash New Zealand believes that the selectiveness of the private club system with closed access to the wider youth market in particular needs to be addressed and this is happening with clubs learning how to attract younger players. The National body has led by example with the opening in September of a \$2 million public facility which is located on an Auckland university campus. The development is seen as visionary as it incorporates a number of firsts for the region. It is a facility providing for games and leisure pursuits other than exclusively squash. It features a café where players and spectators can meet in modern surroundings. Hi-tech court systems create flexible indoor space for multi-use. It is a pioneering joint venture between Squash NZ, Squash Auckland and the Education Provider. It is funded entirely by stakeholders and public funding agencies, and it provides for both the competitive player and the public on a pay-as-you-play basis. The high performance program will be based there as well as it being a venue for a huge interschool weekly competition which attracts new juniors.

Squash needs reference points on which to promote its future. We are confident this centre is a prototype for business investment in new facilities that will contribute to the growth of squash.

MELBOURNE FESTIVAL

This is the highlight of the region's year. It is a huge undertaking for Australia, and Victoria is to be congratulated as hosts. The event would not have been possible without the excellent backing of Tourism Victoria and the Australian Sports Commission. Major publicity from the event is expected to further add to the resurgence of the game. This is the first time a World Masters and Men's and Women's World Title events have been brought together in the same format.

This year the current British Open Champions, David Palmer and Sarah Fitzgerald, came from Australia. Their wins were great for them personally but also for the region as a whole.

Neven Barbour