



President's Report 2022 Oceania Squash Federation

The last twelve months has been a rebuilding period for our Member Countries. Most are getting back to a sense of normality but for some it has taken longer as the effects of the Covid pandemic have had a greater or longer lasting impact. Squash in most of the smaller countries is essentially a club-based activity and they have been greatly affected by the disruption caused by the pandemic. They have struggled to maintain normal activities while their main focus has been on family and whanau and it has been a battle to survive through this period.

As travel restrictions ease and borders reopen, we hope to see more events on the regional calendar that will attract international participants and visitors. Confirmation of the 2022 Oceania Junior Championships to be held in Sydney, Australia from the 17th to the 19th of December is good news. Several of our island countries will be sending players to the OJC in Sydney with the assistance of the Federation through our Junior Travel Subsidy. This is the biggest contingent from the islands for some time which is very pleasing. We wish them well and hope they enjoy the experience.

Both Australia and New Zealand have national and international events in the latter part of 2022 and early 2023 which is very encouraging and a positive sign for squash in the region.

The 2023 Oceania Junior Championships will be held in New Zealand and Tahiti are still very confident that squash will be included in the 2027 Pacific Games and working towards that goal. OSF is working with Fiji to organise the 2023 Oceania Closed Championships in October.

The highlight for 2022 was the squash programme at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. The venue and coverage were excellent, and it was great to see athletes from Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Australia and New Zealand representing Oceania. All credit to the squash organising committee for delivering a high-quality event. There are changes looming for the CWG format, but we hope that squash is able to retain a place in future games. The 2032 Olympic Games in Brisbane also represents a fantastic opportunity for squash to finally be included in the Olympic games.

This year the Federation Executive undertook a review of the strategic plan. This involved a series of e-meetings with Member Countries to identify their concerns and development priorities. There were several recurring themes throughout these meetings with the lack of coaches, officials, the cost of international participation and club management resources at the top of the list. These issues represent significant barriers to growth and development of squash in the region and are not that easy to resolve.

One of the biggest challenges for OSF is developing and implementing sustainable programmes not fully reliant on external funding. It has been encouraging to see the support Australia and New Zealand continue to offer to our members. Both countries are self-sufficient and have the resources to assist with our development programmes.

One example of how this support and cooperation works in practise has been the provision of OzSquash kits for the island nations. Squash Australia has partnered with OSF to provide these resources to our OSF members. The kits are great for junior development and have been greatly appreciated by the recipients.

Both Australia and New Zealand have embarked on major upgrades to their online learning platforms and have generously offered access to these services for our OSF members. Modules will include event management, coaching and governance. Both Australia and New Zealand are adopting the WSO programme.

The Oceania Squash Federation is committed to supporting our Member Countries to grow our sport and showcase squash as a vibrant and exciting recreational activity in the region. We are very grateful for the support and encouragement we receive from our members and from the World Squash Federation and we look forward to a positive and rewarding 2023.

Jim O'Grady

President
Oceania Squash Federation