



2018 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Oceania Squash Federation comprises 10 member countries with Australia and New Zealand being the largest both in terms of playing numbers and facilities. The geography of the region imposes some big challenges for the smaller member countries internally and externally, which is not helped by a lack of funding and facilities. However, the national associations continue to do an outstanding job of promoting squash and encouraging participation wherever possible. Throughout the region there are 750+ squash venues with more than 30,000 registered members competing in regular competition and an estimated 100,000 plus who say they participate on a casual basis at least once a year. Squash in the Oceania region is run largely by volunteers and while Squash Australia and Squash New Zealand do employ full time staff all other member countries rely heavily on volunteer committees to run the sport.

One of the major highlights for 2018 was the Commonwealth Games held on the Gold Coast in Australia. There were 106 athletes participating in the squash events and it was fantastic to see representatives from Papua New Guinea and Fiji competing alongside the other Commonwealth nations. Australia, England and New Zealand dominated the medal table in what was a hugely successful games. The use of the Movie World studios for the squash, boxing and table tennis was a masterstroke and should be a benchmark for future major sporting events. Congratulations to Kay Kendall and her organising committee - they did an outstanding job.

In September 2017 the Oceania Championships were held in Tahiti at the Phoenix Sports Complex in Punaauia. Australia and New Zealand competed in the event for the first time. As first-time entrants it was a little hard to judge the required standard for these two countries but fortunately the level of competition ended up being well balanced. The Tahitian Squash Federation did an outstanding job of organising the event with the assistance of Carol Kawaljenko, the OSF Executive Officer.

OSF now looks forward to the next Oceania Championships which will be held in conjunction with the 2019 Pacific Games, scheduled to be held from 7th to 20th July in Apia, Samoa. I would encourage all our Member Nations to canvas your Sports Ministry to send squash players to the Games. It is a great opportunity for your players to experience competition outside their own country in a friendly and supportive atmosphere.

The 2018 Oceania Junior Squash Championships were held at the Redcliffe Squash Centre in Queensland, Australia in January. The bulk of the athletes came from Australia and New Zealand but it was pleasing to see competitors from PNG and Fiji and also Singapore and Malaysia. The event continues to grow in strength and numbers. The 2019 OJC will be held in Auckland, New Zealand in April.

Following the OJC the Trans-Tasman Test Series was held between Australia and New Zealand with New Zealand emerging as the victors.

In June, a Coach Development Program organized and funded by OSF was held in Samoa. Paul Hornsby, a New Zealand coach, traveled to Samoa and conducted 6 sessions over the 5 days with 8 local coaches participating. The feedback was very positive and it is hoped that a follow up course will be run later in the year. OSF is grateful for the support provide by Samoa Squash to assist with the delivery of the program.

Oceania continues to benefit from the support of Dunlop by way of the squash ball allocation to the region. These balls are distributed to our smaller Member Countries free-of-charge to deliver development programs in their country.

While new facilities continue to be a major challenge for the smaller member countries it is encouraging to see new courts being built and refurbishment programs underway in Australia and New Zealand. A legacy from squash at the CWG is that the courts are now part of the Carrara Sports Complex on the Gold Coast. This is a great outcome for the sport. A new 6 court facility will open later in 2018 in Wellington and work is about to commence on a new 8 court facility in Christchurch. This is great news for both regions and Squash New Zealand.

Both Australia and New Zealand entered teams to compete in the 2018 FISU University Squash Championships in Birmingham, England and are also sending players as ambassadors to the Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires, Argentina in October.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Vice President, David Navarre, who has left the Oceania Region to move back to France after many years in New Caledonia. I am sure that he will be missed by New Caledonia Squash and the many friends he has made along the way within the Oceania Region.

On a sadder note, OSF wishes to acknowledge the passing of Mousie (Elisapeta) Skews, a long serving and much-loved squash administrator, manager and player from the Cook Islands.

Jim O'Grady
President