



**12th GENERAL MEETING
BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA
OCTOBER 2012
PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

I extend a warm welcome to you all, especially to those attending this weekend's Annual General Meeting & Workshop, and have pleasure in presenting this 2012 report.

2012 has been a transitional year following the adoption of a new Constitution for the Federation at the 2011 General Meeting. The foundation Constitution adopted in 1992, with only minor amendments, served the organisation well during the difficult period of its formative years, and provided a solid base for the future of the OSF.

However, the need to move to the next phase of the Federation's development required a full review of its governance and the adoption of a new Constitution that is reflective of the current environment. This also required a new operational charter which has been progressing during the last 12 months.

The experience of its initial year of operation indicates that some fine tuning of the Constitution is desirable to further improve the Federation's governance and operational arrangements.

One area of concern relates to the unacceptably low representation of member countries at the 2011 AGM and again in 2012. With only nine (9) full members of the Federation, the importance of having at least a majority of delegates in attendance cannot be overstated. The present situation is not satisfactory and is an issue that should be high on the agenda for the incoming Officers.

I am also concerned at the instability that has existed with the administration in Fiji in recent years. Hopefully with the recent changes in personnel Squash Fiji will resume its active role on the OSF and squash will be better placed to fully develop in the country.

The Officers elected at last year's AGM fulfilled their full term and were as follows:

President	Col Clapper (Australia)
Immediate Past President	Murray Day (New Zealand)
Vice Presidents	Butch Gifford (New Zealand)

Executive Officer Mal tarrant (Norfolk Island)
 Carol Kawaljenko (Australia)

In many respects it was a challenging period for the Officers adjusting to the new Constitution and its operating environment. This related especially to Carol who had responsibility for the day-to-day affairs of the Federation, and Murray who found himself back in the decision making process after 16 years of OSF retirement.

Sincere appreciation is extended to my fellow Officers for their commitment to the OSF and dedication to our sport in the region.

I should also take this opportunity to make special mention of Butch Gifford. Butch will be retiring as a Vice President and Officer of OSF after a long association (since 1997) with the Federation as New Zealand delegate and an OSF Vice President. During this 16 year period he also held the position of Convenor of the OSF Coaching & Development Committee and at times represented the OSF on the WSF Coaching & Development Committee. Butch also acted as Championship Director at a number of regional events accompanied by his trusty laptop. His concern for the well being of the sport particularly with the smaller countries was well known and his presence will be missed. Regrettably Butch will not be in attendance at this year's AGM due to health issues.

I am sure the entire Oceania squash community support me in extending to Butch and Ann best wishes for an enjoyable future and good health.

Of the nine OSF member countries, only Australia and New Zealand hold full membership status of the WSF, while the others are Associate Members of the world body with their membership fees paid by the OSF. It would be in the best interests of our sport for more associate members to graduate to full membership, and it has been proposed that the WSF consider making the process easier for this to take place.

The Federation continued to fully support the WSF and its objectives to develop and expand our great sport world wide and Oceania in particular. I made an active contribution as Regional Vice President in submitting reports, comments and proposing initiatives where appropriate.

The WSF has been heavily committed to achieving the "Olympic Dream" with the inclusion of Squash in the 2020 Olympics. This is the third bid process undertaken by the WSF, and is being conducted far more professionally - having learnt from the mistakes of the previous two occasions. The bid process has, however, consumed considerable resources and funding and a great deal of credit must go to WSF President N. Ramchandran and the bid team for their total commitment in their efforts to convince the IOC that squash should have its rightful place on the world stage.

I am very optimistic of a positive outcome on this occasion; however, a great deal of work still needs to continue to be done before the decision is made next year. Furthermore, should the bid be successful the challenge to retain the hard gained position in the Summer Olympics will be on-going.

To Andrew Shelley and staff at WSF headquarters, my personal thanks and that of the OSF for all the support and assistance you have provided over the past 12 months.

OSF Standing Committees and their personnel were maintained by the Officers during the last 12 months. While some committees were active others were inactive due to the nature of their area of responsibility. Consideration was given to amalgamating some of the committees, however, the issue is yet to be finalised. Attracting specialist personnel to each committee is a key element of its effectiveness and needs to be taken into account together with providing input and suitable representation to the respective WSF standing and special committees.

Our most active committee continues to be the Refereeing & Rules Committee, and a special thanks is extended to Mrs Chris Sinclair for her dedication and commitment in promoting refereeing and knowledge of the rules throughout the region. Chris and Assistant Convenor John Small have also made a considerable contribution to the WSF Rules & Refereeing Committee. Congratulations are extended to Nathan Turnbull for achieving World Referee status and to our 5 regional referees.

It is also appropriate to recognise the contribution from Dr. Ken Watson in the area of coaching and development, especially as our representative on the world body. The depth of knowledge that Ken has acquired over years of involvement in the sport is invaluable and added significantly to this specialist area of the sport.

The continued support and contribution from Convenors and Members of the Standing Committees is greatly appreciated. Thank you all.

The 19th Oceania Masters Championships was held in 2012 in Rarotonga and hosted by Cook Islands Squash. Our sincere appreciation is extended to Grant Priest and his experienced team for making the players welcome to the Cooks and presenting a well run event.

I also extend our appreciation to Victorian Squash for hosting a very successful Oceania Juniors in 2012. This event has been a struggle to attract a suitable host in past years. However, with the recent introduction of world ranking points for juniors, the event gains new significance and to protect the interests of our Oceania Juniors the highest priority should be given to it being held every year.

The 11th Oceania Squash Championships will be held in Norfolk Island next year as Squash is not included in the Pacific Mini Games program. Although Australia and New Zealand are ineligible to compete in the Pacific Games and Mini Games, it is my view that they should be eligible to participate in our regional championships and that the event be structured to protect the interests of our smaller countries by having a two tier competition - the second tier competing for the Pacific Cup. The Championships should be a regional event for all OSF members while ensuring that players representing each member country have the opportunity of participating in a competitive environment of even competition as well as gaining experience against higher level players.

The Australian Open is now recognised as the principle PSA and WSA event in our region. Congratulations Australia for once again staging another successful Australian Open in Canberra. It is also very encouraging to see the growing number of PSA/WSA classified events taking place during the same period, mainly in Australia and New Zealand.

I encourage our smaller countries to explore the options available in attracting world ranked players to visit their country and whether it is possible to link their national open event into the same period. A comprehensive and co-ordinated tournament program for our elite players should still remain a key objective of the OSF.

PNG was allocated the Oceania Open for a period of years, however, this year's event could not be held due to court availability issues. The allocation needs to be reviewed for 2013 and beyond.

Although squash is a sport for all ages and abilities it is the youth of today who will carry the responsibility of taking the sport into the future. The squash profile has for some time represented an ageing population which is of concern. Attracting our youth to become involved in all aspects of the sport and then retaining them is the greatest challenge for our administrators and should be of the highest priority. The OSF and its members need to work more collaboratively and look "well outside the square" to develop new initiatives to address the matter in our region.

The Coach Education Program (CEP) is one initiative towards addressing the issue in the smaller countries, as is the WSF Ambassador program. The CEP initiative is a shared funding initiative with the Commonwealth Games Federation and is anticipated to commence in 2013 and be supported by the Ambassador program.

The 2015 Commonwealth Youth Games will take place in Apia, Samoa and Squash is included on the Games program. I extend to Norman Wetzell, Etuale Sefo and their band of willing workers every success for a successful and no doubt enjoyable Youth Games.

The Pacific Games is an important event for our smaller countries (it is their Olympics) and as Squash is not a mandatory sport it is a continuing battle for its retention on the Games program. Port Moresby, PNG will host the 2015 Games and hopefully Squash will receive final confirmation for inclusion on the program. Best wishes are extended to PNG for a successful 2015 Pacific Games and we look forward to well needed new squash facilities in Port Moresby in preparation for the Games.

The OSF has continued to play an active role to ensure that squash is part of the sporting family with the Pacific Games Council.

The Arafura Games held in Darwin, Australia has evolved into a significant sporting event, with squash included on the program. Players from a number of OSF member countries participate and best wishes are extended to the organisers and participants for a successful event in 2013.

New Zealand will play host to next year's WSF General Meeting and Conference and I have no doubt will put on a memorable and enjoyable occasion for the visiting officials and their partners. My appreciation is extended to New Zealand for taking on the task of hosting the event and I am sure it will be a rewarding experience for the organisers.

Australia and New Zealand put significant investment into elite player development with the aid of government funding. This is an extremely important aspect of our sport. However, with more countries investing in this area, the challenge for players to reach the top is ever increasing, which may require a different approach to elite player development in this region.

Sincere appreciation is extended to Sandie Davis for continuing to maintain and fund the OSF Website.

Dunlop International Sporting provides squash balls for all OSF competitions and to our smaller countries for local tournaments and youth development. This sponsorship arrangement has been in place for many years and the OSF is extremely grateful for the ongoing support squash receives from Dunlop. I urge members to promote the Dunlop ball brand wherever possible.

The OSF has continued to maintain its membership of the Olympic Sports Federations of Oceania (OSFO) and foster close relationships with the Oceania National Olympic Committee (ONOC). I would encourage a continuation of the active role with both these organisations to ensure our sport is well recognised in the region.

My personal thanks go to OSFO President Steve Smith and Secretary General Chet Grey for their interest and support.

The financial position of the Federation has slowly reached a point whereby it is now reasonably sound and has a financially sustainable future. Australia and New Zealand provide the bulk of funding for which we are extremely grateful. I do not foresee this situation changing in the future. The financial accounts for the financial year ended 30th June 2012 have been prepared for presentation and have been duly audited. Our appreciation is extended to Stephen Bowen for having undertaken the audit of the accounts in an honorary capacity.

In conclusion, my sincere thanks go to all those who have contributed to the development and well being of our great sport of Squash in the Oceania Region over the last 17 years of my Presidency and 20 years as Executive Director. There are many wonderful people involved in the sport, and for this the sport is extremely fortunate.

I am deeply honoured and it has been a great privilege to have been your President over this period and one that I will always remember and cherish. I sincerely hope that I have fulfilled your expectations and made a significant contribution to furthering the sport in Oceania and world wide. I extend my best wishes to the incoming President and his team for a successful year ahead when our desire of realising the "Olympic Dream" hopefully comes to fruition.

Yours sincerely,

Colin J. Clapper AM

President
Oceania Squash Federation
October 11, 2012.