

PRESIDENTS REPORT 2015/16

The Sale Tennis Club progress over the past year has been one of steady development as we strive to reverse the community trend of declining participation in sport by delivering a diverse range of programs and options to suit the evolving needs of our user groups. We are pleased that these diverse programs have been successful in attracting new participants at both junior and senior levels and that our overall participation and membership has grown over the past 12 months.

Another significant challenge for most community based organisations is the decline in volunteerism. Without volunteers our Club cannot run and without a Club our facilities cease to be maintained, to the detriment of all current and future users. It is alarming that in 2015 only 8 Clubs now make up the teams of the Wellington Gippsland Tennis Association with Rockley Tennis Club having folded in the last year. There were over 20 clubs in 1990. We are most fortunate that we currently have a very strong and long serving group of volunteers but we cannot be complacent as we search for the next generation of Club administrators and try to share with them the great sense of achievement that community service and volunteerism provides.

The highlights for the last year have been:

- **Participation**

- During 2015/16 we fielded a total of 74 separate teams in competitions in the Wellington Gippsland Tennis Association, Sale & District Mid-Week Ladies, Traralgon Tennis Association and Club based competitions. This covered junior and senior summer pennant, night tennis on Tuesday and Thursday nights, mid-week ladies and winter junior pennant. We were delighted that in 2016 our junior participation numbers increased for the fourth year in row and are now 25% up on four years ago, our historical low point.
- Sale junior teams won 3 of the 7 WGTA sections and were runner up in another 2 sections.
- Won a pennant in Section 2 in the seniors of Wellington Gippsland Tennis Association Grand Finals and were runner up in Section 1.
- Entered a team in the Traralgon Tennis Association competition that made the finals. Club Champion, Abe Schuback, ultimately filled in and won in the Grand Final.
- Hosted our 7th Junior Points Tournament over the Queen's Birthday weekend attracting 135 entries from local, State and national competitors. After the continued success of our upgraded "silver" tournament we have been approved to host a further junior point's tournament in September of 2016.
- Delivered tennis as part of the After School Activities at St Mary's Primary School.
- Worked with Tennis Victoria and 3 local primary schools as part of the National Schools Partnership. In 2016 Gippsland Grammar, St Mary's Primary School and Briagolong Primary School all delivered the ANZ Hot Shots program as part of their curriculum as well as receiving over \$1,200 of free tennis gear and a comprehensive training program. Gippsland Grammar has been nominated as Most Outstanding School in the 2016 Tennis Victoria Champions Awards.
- Delivered for the 8th year the Tennis Australia ANZ Hot Shots program. This program has gone from strength to strength with the numbers increasing from below 10 per week to over 20 children participating in beginner tennis activities

each week. For the first time ever Hot Shots is continuing over winter. Well done and thanks to Nicole Bauer for her unstinting efforts.

- Continued our involvement in the GippSport Healthy Sporting Environments program which is a structured program that assists with inclusion for all abilities, alcohol management, healthy eating, injury protection, UV protection and reduction of tobacco use.
- Hosted 6 Family Tennis Nights on the 3rd Friday of each month during winter. Starting at 6.30 pm attendees were offered 3 sets of Fast 4 Tennis, music while on court, supper and a chance of a prize on the spinning wheel. A huge thanks goes to David and Sharon Field whose enthusiasm and support of these nights has been absolutely outstanding.
- Following the resignation of Club Coach, Nick Board, our Club embarked in a wide-reaching search for a replacement that could assist us to develop the next generation of local junior tennis players. This process was managed by a Coaching Sub-Committee made up of Sonya Stephenson, Abe Schuback, Steve Shanahan and Robin Lowe and Ken Barton from Tennis Victoria. The initial search resulted in expressions of interest from 14 qualified coaches from Victoria, Queensland and South Australia as well as applicants from the USA, France and Switzerland. After an exhaustive assessment and interview process, Mick Mullen from Geelong was the standout applicant. He has brought a wealth of experience at both the Club and the national level that will add a whole new dynamic to our Club and we are already seeing the benefit of this experience.
- We had 2 officials at the 2016 Australian Open with Taylor Stephenson as a ballkid and Steve Shanahan as a linesman.
- New coach Mick Mullen has introduced Cardio Tennis every Wednesday night.
- Hosted a Corporate Challenge in October and February to try to encourage local businesses to try out the Fast 4 format of tennis. Fast 4 is an initiative of Tennis Australia and has proved very popular for social tennis with its fast pace and fun format.
- Hosted the Bradtke Luzak Cup for 15 & Under, a mixed format in which Taylor Stephenson was one of the players representing East Gippsland.

- **Community**

- In 2016 we conducted a further Responsible Service of Alcohol Course which was provided free of charge to all participating Club members and their immediate family. This brings to 95 the number of Club members who now hold an RSA certificate as a direct result of our program.
- Hosted a Girls Night In in November which attracted nearly two hundred women and raised a total of \$17,110 for the Cancer Council and Central Gippsland Health Service Oncology Unit
- We have finalised discussions on the use of some of the grassed area to the west of our facility as a Community Garden. A community garden will provide Sale with an important social and recreational outlet and we were keen to encourage and support this initiative.

- We had an estimated 35,000 separate visits to our facility from players, spectators, parents, tournament participants, school groups, casual users, function attendants, coaching students and other users.
- Sale Tennis Club was represented by our President, Robin Lowe, at a White Ribbon Day function at the Wedge. White Ribbon is Australia's only national, male led Campaign to end men's violence against women. The function was a partnership between Wellington Shire, Gippsland Women's Health and Groundwork Youth Theatre and involved an oath from male community and business leaders followed by a performance of Shakespeare's *Shrew & Other Lies*.
- We have this week confirmed that Sale Tennis Club will deliver coaching to students of Sale Specialist School in the 12 to 15 age group. This is an exciting initiative that we hope will become a permanent feature of our Club.
- Held Hot Shots in the Botanic Gardens as part of Parks Week in conjunction with the *LIVE WELL*ington. Nicole Bauer and Paul Egan had the kids captivated and the speed service was a real hit.

• Recognition

- Sale Tennis Club was awarded the 2015 Best Tennis Club by Community Clubs Victoria at the CCV Annual Awards Night in April. The annual CCV Awards recognize high performing individuals and clubs whose efforts contribute to the social and economic well-being of their local communities. The Best Tennis Club award was judged on the range and quality of the participation opportunities presented, the provision of social opportunities to members and the community and the quality of the courts and change facilities.
- Sale Tennis Club has been part of the Vic Health Healthy Sporting Environments program for three years. GippSport selected 12 clubs to do video case studies to show the great work being done by clubs to care for their members. Sale Tennis Club was selected to show case their work around UV protection. Filming took place in May 2015 and the finished product was released in late 2015.
- Each year for the past 5 years Tennis Victoria has nominated applicants from the Victorian Tennis community for the Victorian Tennis Awards. Sale Tennis Club was a finalist in the Most Outstanding Club, Centre or Association award category. We were ultimately runner up to Mt Eliza Tennis Club.
- Our Club President, Robin Lowe, was also nominated by Tennis Victoria in the Volunteer Achievement award and was ultimately the winner of this category.
- Club President Robin Lowe was nominated by Tennis Victoria for the Tennis Australia Newcombe Medal Volunteer Achievement Award. The ultimate winner was Lyn Duffy from Melton South Tennis Club who was recognized for the many hours of work she contributes to tennis.

• Facilities

- We have worked with Council and the Stephenson Park user groups to investigate ways to improve the whole precinct. This would include some reorganisation of Club facilities to allow for improved access roads, carparks and possible dual use of some of our facilities. A community garden is just one of the possible initiatives.

- In early December we had the opportunity to present to the full Council of Wellington Shire our detailed facility upgrade plans. Robin Lowe and Abe Schuback along with Club Professional Coach, Mick Mullin and Tennis Victoria Participation Leader, Tanya Mason, had an hour with the full council. With the assistance of Glenys Butler, General Manager Community and Culture and Marcus Stone, Acting Coordinator Lifestyle Facilities, we were able to show councillors the proposed upgrades and outline the benefit to the tennis and broader Wellington community that these would bring. We have since been approved to apply for State Government funding later this year.

Annual reports should acknowledge of those who help to make things happen. Our three committees work tirelessly to deliver our programs. Our Junior Committee had a tough year with the transition of our coach and selection was acknowledged as a difficult process. However they did a wonderful job and we should all be proud of the way they stepped up at the critical time. A special thanks goes to Carmel Elliott who organised the canteen each Saturday morning. We were fortunate to have Debbie Krusic continue as our Ladies President and with the help of Debbie Jackson, Jill Anderson, Bronwyn Warner and Julie Murray they have made a major contribution. Debbie's enthusiasm and commitment for our ladies competition is the thing that keeps this unique tennis opportunity alive. Our General Committee has been very well served by: Our "Special K's" Karen Pollett, our Treasurer, and Karen Deschepper, our Membership Coordinator; Mark Elliman and Di Arnot who have kept our minutes; Abe Schuback who coordinated our Club Championships; and Murray Fitzclarence and Di Arnot who have ensured that our bar remains stocked. A special thanks to Sonya Stephenson for her herculean efforts with the catering at our Junior Tournament and the Bradtke Luzak Cup. Her efforts are both enormous and to many seemingly invisible. Thank you also goes to all of our other General Committee members for their ongoing contribution, commitment and guidance.

As with every year, I encourage everybody who enjoys the many benefits of our Club to find a way to make a contribution at some level. I also wish to acknowledge all of those people who have made a contribution, big or small, or have helped out in a myriad of ways. Without this support the Club does not run.

Thank you.

Robin Lowe
President