

PRESIDENTS REPORT 2017/18

After the excitement of the announcement of funding in March 2017 we are unfortunately 12 months on and still only in the planning stages of our redevelopment. However good things come to those who wait and it will be fabulous when the actual digging and building starts in October and we have an almost brand new facility to host tennis for years to come.

During the year we were fortunate to have Olivia Potter appointed as our Marketing and Program Manager. Olivia has tried many new initiatives to increase participation at our Club. With a delightful Mancunian accent she has been a pleasure to work with. Olivia has moved on to continue her Australian adventure and we are pleased to announce that Tania Jarred has accepted the position as her replacement. Tania is a former player at Sale Tennis Club and will bring a wealth of tennis experience to the role. We are looking forward to working with her.

The 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. 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 2017/18 we fielded a total of 70 separate teams in competitions in the Wellington Gippsland Tennis Association, Sale & District Mid-Week Ladies 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.
- Of the 14 Sale junior teams in the Wellington Gippsland Tennis Association 11 teams made the finals. Of these 5 made their respective grand finals and 3 were successful in winning the grand final, an identical result to 2016.
- Of the 5 WGTA senior teams 2 made their respective grand finals but were ultimately not able to bring home the pennant. What was fantastic was that one of the teams was made up entirely of players that were in juniors in the prior year. The transition from juniors to seniors has been our "Achilles heel" so it was fantastic to see a team of juniors coming through.
- Won a grand final in Section 2 of Sale & District Midweek Ladies Autumn Pennant and backed up in the Spring Pennant to win again. Sale team numbers increased in 2018, a testament to the hard work of our Ladies President, Debbie Krusic.
- Conducted our 65th consecutive Sale Tennis Club Championships. In a heartening trend entry numbers were again solid with good fields in most junior events and an overall increase in the open events.
- Hosted our 9th Junior Points Tournament over the Queen's Birthday weekend attracting 80 entries from local, state and national competitors.
- Hosted our 2nd Spring Junior Tournament, attracting 55 entries. In recognition of the delivery of past events our spring tournament was upgraded from a "white" to a "silver" which significantly increases the ranking points on offer.
- Hosted the Tennis Victoria John Fitzgerald Cup for 13 & Under boys in October. The event attracted teams from around the State and was won by a strong Barwon team. East Gippsland were represented by Sirawit Wongsawat from Sale Tennis Club, Jordan Johnston from Bairnsdale Tennis Club and James Edney and Darcy Cumming from Longford Tennis Club. John Fitzgerald attended and was an inspiration to the children.

- Worked with Tennis Victoria and 5 local primary schools as part of the National Schools Partnership. These schools 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.
- Delivered for the 11th 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 now nearly 30 children participating in beginner tennis activities each week. Further in 2017/18 we continued to deliver the Hot Shots program throughout the full year giving children the opportunity to accelerate their tennis development. This was a first in country Victoria. We also had 10 children attend the Australia Open and participate in the “Kids on Court” program where the children play on the AO courts before the first matches of the day and get to toss the coin at the start of play, a once in a lifetime experience.
- STC junior Hunter Pearce qualified as a ballkid at the AO for the second year and made it all the way onto Rod Laver Arena.
- Delivered Cardio Tennis on Wednesday nights. Cardio Tennis is a group activity for anyone at any playing level looking for a fun way to burn calories and interact with others outside of the gym.
- Hosted another Business Challenge in February and May to encourage local businesses to try out the Fast 4 format of tennis. Fast 4 is best compared with T20 cricket and has proved very popular for social tennis with its fast pace and fun format that suits beginners and entry level players.
- Revived, after an absence of over 15 years, the Dahlsens Challenge, an inter-town challenge for juniors and seniors played between Sale and Bairnsdale Tennis Clubs. Events such as the Dahlsens Challenge are essential for the development of junior players in regional areas as it provides a rare opportunity for them to be part of a larger team representing their Club and to compete with and test themselves against their peers from other areas. We have now had 4 rounds of the Dahlsens Challenge with Sale holding a 3 – 1 advantage.
- Created another series of junior player participation opportunities with a Friday night junior competition with up to 30 children playing each night. We had a “pizza pennant” and a “Subway slam” as the children had tennis and treats on a Friday night.
- Conducted a Free Tennis Day that attracted 75 participants who enjoyed a great day of tennis and tennis themed activities and introduced them to our Club and facility.

Community

- In 2016 we were successful in obtaining an Australian Tennis Foundation - Tennis Cares grant to fund the delivery of a tailored program for 15 students from Sale Specialist School in the 12 to 15 age group. The group had 2 terms of a specially modified tennis program delivered by our club professional coach, Mick Mullen. The feedback from the students and their teachers was so positive that in 2018 we continued the program from our Club funding.
- Hosted a Level 2 First Aid training course where 20 club members and several from other local clubs spent a full day with an accredited trainer learning potentially lifesaving skills. This was provided free of charge to our members. It was inspiring to see four of our juniors undertake the course and learn skills they will have for life. Having people trained in first aid is reassuring for all that attend our facility.
- 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. This in addition to our Club continuing to be a Level 3 Good Sports club.
- Our Club President Robin Lowe participated in the Gippsland Women’s Health 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence as part of a Gippsland wide strategy to prevent men’s violence against women.

- Junior and senior tennis players from Sale Tennis Club helped fundraise for Central Gippsland Health Service Oncology Department on their special “Pink Round” in February. All players were asked to make a gold coin donation and in total the fundraising effort raised \$1,350, which was donated to the Oncology Department in March.
- In March Sale Tennis Club hosted a fundraising day for Donate Life as part of an awareness campaign for organ donation. In addition to raising funds we also raised awareness of the lifesaving work of Donate Life.
- Sale Tennis Club hosted a second ballkids trial in March. The trial was part of the selection process for the ball kids at the Australian Open 2019. The day attracted children from all over the Gippsland region.
- Were represented in the GippSport Male Champions of Change in Sport. Gender inequality remains firmly entrenched, particularly at the leadership and governance level of most organisations, despite the fact that women are significant consumers of and participants in sports across the country. In an effort to address this issue, GippSport in association with Gippsland’s Women Health developed a Gippsland Male Champions of Change campaign which included the involvement of the Sale Tennis Club and Club President, Robin Lowe. Given the accessibility of sport and its ability to “talk” to Australians in a different way, the Male Champions of Change Sport group was in a unique position to influence the discourse on the issue of gender equality in the industry and more broadly.
- In 2018 we funded 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 over 100 the number of Club members who now hold an RSA certificate as a direct result of our program.
- 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 undertook to revive the Wellington Gippsland Tennis Association Championships. In a great show of support there were over 80 entries from the 8 clubs that make up the Wellington Gippsland Tennis Association. With large fields in the 10, 12 and 14 & Under events the children were on court early. It was a treat to see all 18 courts being used by happy young tennis players while the proud mums and dads watched on.
- As a Level 3 Good Sports Club we were accepted into Good Sports Junior. This new program focuses specifically on our junior members and helps us set the standard early and supports us to make changes that promote healthy behaviours. Good Sports Junior expands on the core program to normalise practices that promote health in sporting clubs. This includes creating the right attitudes and influencing behaviours towards alcohol, tobacco, healthy eating and spectator behaviour.
- Sale Bridge Club is now sharing our committee room on a weekly basis to conduct their club training sessions. This supports our overall philosophy of sharing our facility with other community user groups such as Sale Community Garden and Animal Aid.

Recognition

- Sale Tennis Club was awarded a Healthy Skin Award for Excellence in the Promotion of Skin Health in the Community at the 2018 Healthy Skin Awards which were announced at a special awards night in May at the Melbourne Museum.
- Sale Tennis Club was recognised as a Tennis Victoria Top 50 Club with a membership of over 480. This placed us as number 29 in the State and the only Top 50 Club in Gippsland.
- The St Anne’s campus of Gippsland Grammar was a winner of the Most Outstanding School in the 2017 Tennis Victoria Awards. They have shown tremendous dedication to promoting tennis amongst their students. Tennis has become part of the curriculum, with a one hour weekly session for all Prep to Year 6 students. St Anne’s is well supported by the Sale Tennis Club, providing the school with facilities and up-to-date tennis activities conducive to building skill level, involvement and integrity.

- Sale Tennis Club was nominated by Tennis Victoria for Most Outstanding Club in the 2017 Victorian Tennis Awards. Boroondara Tennis Centre was ultimately a very worthy winner.

Facilities

- The Sale Tennis Club redevelopment is up full technical specifications before the letting of the final construction tenders. It is anticipated that construction will commence in October and will be completed in early 2019. Construction time will be influenced by the need to ensure that the redevelopment does not interfere unduly with the summer season's tennis activities.

Annual reports should acknowledge those who help to make things happen. Our three committees work tirelessly to deliver our programs. Kurt Best has excelled in his role as President of the Junior Committee and has been adeptly guided by Mick Mullen, who brings valuable experience from other clubs and districts. This committee has done a wonderful job and we should all be proud of the way they have brought together our junior program. 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 her committee they have continued to make 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; Sonya Stephenson who has kept our minutes; Mick Mullen who coordinated our Club and WGTA Championships; Paul Egan who is our outgoing WGTA delegate, and Murray Fitzclarence and Di Arnot who have ensured that our bar remains stocked. 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