

Date 19 March 2021

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The year of 2020 was a challenge to all Sporting organisations in Australia due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Australian Sports Foundation provided a survey in July of 2020 and estimated the cost to sport at that date had been \$1.6bn. This was based on over 4000 responses. At that point they felt that 1 in 4 sports clubs were at risk.

The year started as normal and then in early March all States declared a shutdown for all sports with immediate effect. Interstate travel was suspended and businesses closed except for essential services. For the first time our AGM was conducted via phone link and the process to reopen public events commenced. Our State body was required to develop a Safety Plan to be rolled out through the Clubs. This document outlined the return to sport in 3 stages. Our sport was 1 of the last to be returned due to the contact nature of our competition. Stage 3 (13 July 2020) allowed full training and groups to meet again provided numbers were restricted.

We hosted a Squash Forum as soon as possible after that announcement. On the 26th of July we conducted the Forum at Newstead in Launceston. We prepared a full list of topics in an open forum style and we had representation from all clubs in the State. This format was well received by all that attended, and this format should become an annual fixture on our State Calendar. The urgent need for more accredited Coaches and qualified referees became apparent. The COVID restrictions had made it impossible to conduct sessions to address this short coming and without the credentialed personnel within our organisation this has slowed this process. This in my opinion is our highest priority.

Due to COVID a greater level of communication has emerged. Apart from State meetings, direct contact with Club Presidents via phone hook-ups has been established. Having contact with Clubs is vital to our sport, enabling quick access to provide up to date information about State and National affairs, promoting Championships and sharing development and training opportunities.

The communication with Squash Australia has increased also. There are monthly President Council meetings and also until recently Executive Officers meetings. There has been a change in leadership with the announcement of Robert Donoghue as CEO. We look forward to working with Robert and building a good rapport.

Most Clubs have reported that the majority of past members are returning to squash and some are even increasing numbers. However the number of juniors has slipped with some of our best junior 'ageing out'. A concerted effort by all clubs must be undertaken to rebuild the numbers. The State body is committed to support all clubs with finances and training in an effort to grow numbers. The year ended with a major event the Clarence Squash Championship /Tassie Open. This was held in the South on the 13-15 of November. It was well attended and it did attract some interstate entries. At a National level the Australian Junior Championships was staged at Carrara in the Gold Coast from 12-15 December. We had 3 juniors enter and our thanks to those juniors for representing the State.

Membership has increased this past 12 months with North 141, North West 231 and South 184 giving us a State total Of 556

My thanks to our committee for their participation and contribution through this trying time.

2020 was a year like none other.