



**Minutes of the Squash New Zealand Forum 2016  
Jet Park Hotel & Conference Centre, Auckland  
9.30a.m. Saturday 3 December 2016**

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**Attendance:**

Greg McKeown (GM) – Chair, Fran Hopkins (FH), Linda Kenny (LK), Tony Johnston (TJ), Jim O’Grady (JO), Luke Morriss (LM), Sam Crawford (SC), Michelle Rogers (MR), Karen Dykzeul (KD), Gaye Trimble (GT), Keri Rhodes (KR), Tim Marshall (TM), John Fletcher (JF), Mike Weston (MW), Andrew McKinnon (AMK), Glenda Knox (GK), Vicki Beker (VB), Marcus Niles (MN), Robbie Wyatt (RW), Mike Willis (MW), Jacquie Sutherland (JS), Sally Stantiall (SS), Warren Hall (WH), Willie Bicknell (WB), David Hawes (DH), Vaughan Utteridge (VU), Vicki Rae (VR), Aynsley Munro (AM), Kevin Muir (KM), Bruce Thirkell (BT), Kashif Shuja (KS), Graeme Randolph (GR), Shelley Kitchen (SK), Steve O’Toole (SO), Michel Galloway (MG), Char Niles (CN), Neven Barbour (NB), Glenn Carson (GC).

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- **SNZ Results, Plans and Planning**

GM and JO outlined the strategic plan and results from 2016.

JO provided an overview of Squash NZ’s performance for the past year, highlighting trends in the sporting landscape via the Gemba report. Participation is the biggest area of concern and there was a decrease in juniors through secondary school’s numbers and particularly Auckland secondary schools.

TM asked for clarification on Gemba figures – JO explained these were for participation in activities, not membership.

JO explained notes to the financials for the year. Income increased with commercial sponsorships and extra grants, along with a reduction in costs due to an international event being cancelled.

DH asked for a breakdown of Sport NZ funding. JO outlined the portions of funding received from Sport NZ noting some were allocated for a specific purpose and is not discretionary.

JO noted that iSquash development for 2016 was put on hold to ensure we have a technology roadmap and that we are going in the right direction with this. This included plans for an accounting integration package and a mobile app.

JO outlined the annual planning process and indicated what Squash NZ may focus on during 2017 (some participation growth ideas, new products, campaigns).

JO discussed the challenges around the Unitec campus area with potential residential and commercial developments and how this may affect the long-term future of the National Squash Centre.

It was noted that the lease for Club Kelburn is up for renewal in 2017 and SNZ will be negotiating renewal of this with the Wellington City Council. The facility requires significant investment to update the building including a roof replacement.

JO outlined plans to grow income over the next year with the launch of the Squash Foundation which will aim to raise donations, bequests and the like. GM reminded everyone that the foundation would be governed by trustees and would distribute funds per a set criteria.

JO outlined the purpose of Squash NZ, Districts and clubs and gave an overview of the staff and the functions that they perform.

JO provide a budget forecast for the next 5 years, indicating a net loss at the end of this period. DH asked what strategies are in place to deal with the budget if membership doesn't increase to match. JO mentioned that the board meets regularly to assess budget vs. actual and adjusts accordingly; and it is challenging when membership numbers are taken at a snapshot each year.

WH asked how much expenditure is discretionary. JO replied saying very little as most funds are linked to specific purposes.

VB asked if any profits come from the National Squash Centre. JO explained that this is a separate entity not owned or controlled by SNZ and breaks even through casual play, public bookings and tenant rent (Subway).

GM outlined that a target of 2000 new members can be achieved collectively if we work together.

- **SNZ and Districts - Function and Structure**

DH and WH ran a session on *"What are we trying to fix and what is the issue?"*

Problems identified from the room included

- Participation growth
- Disconnect
- Funding
- Ageing facilities and the people in them
- Club or venue capability – can it be more than just a squash club
- Cost for players
- Profile
- Volunteers hours reducing
- Modern society
- SNZ & Annual districts don't have shared annual plan – disconnect
- Competition with sports and time
- Structure
- Clubs competing for the same market – internal competition
- Lack of understanding of what the customer wants
- Populations getting less fit
- Population becoming more diverse
- Perception to be fit before start playing
- Where resources are being spent in administration and money not being spent in development
- Quality of membership services

Tables were then asked to list what they believed the 3 main problems within our sport to be:

#### Table 1

- Participation growth
- Use of club facilities (versatility)
- Disconnection and focus on administration

#### Table 2

- Participation growth
- Ageing facilities and the people in them
- Modern society – volunteers and less people willing to volunteer

#### Table 3

- Not doing what market wants – not right programmes in place – participation growth
- Clubs not being able to do it – club capability
- Disconnect – Not having operation plans between SNZ, Districts and club

#### Table 4

- Funding – smarter on how dollar is spent – “We”
- Facilities and programmes – Front end of service and how participate
- Focus on participation not membership – understanding how people want to play – mindset of clubs – how we meet market needs

#### Table 5

- Disconnect – lack of co-ordination within organisation
- Disconnect leading to decline in participation and facilities
- Duplication of people and resource uses

DH noted participation decline is an effect of things not happening. The causes of this effect are linked to

- A focus on administration,
- Quality of service membership,
- Profile of the game,
- Reduced volunteer hours,
- Competition with other leisure activities
- Not understanding what customers want

Disconnect is an effect and the causes are

- No shared annual plan
- Organisational structure

DH noted if we want to fix the effect of participation growth then we need to look at the causes. It was agreed that 3 major things our sport needs to look at included

- Participation growth
- Disconnect (between the entities of the sport)
- Lack of resilience

Fixing these effects would include but not be limited to:

- Understanding and responding to our market
- Disconnect – appropriate structures and or function
- Smarter use of resources (alignment), people, clubs, funding

WH noted there are limitations of the club service, these include

- Failing to meet our club member’s needs,
- Squash clubs use to be a social hub as well as place to play squash but this has now changed where people come and go and do not socialise

GK noted that our sport can deliver on a lot of things that research says society wants i.e.

- Fun
- Relaxation
- Health
- Fitness

VU noted we are not providing for this and how do our smaller 2 court clubs meet the needs of our society?

VB asked if there is a national branding message which we can use to keep promoting the same message and the brand of squash so this can be duplicated in to every operating model

DH noted research by Sport Canterbury says the most important thing for joining a sport is that it is the community and the social aspect which gets people to join.

GK noted that this conflicts with Sport Waikato’s research and this shows the needs for our districts are different. Therefore, these need to be addressed and the clubs need help to understand what the needs of their club are.

<u>Effects</u>	<u>Cause</u>	<u>Actions</u>
Participation	GK – clubs are stuck in their ways and the traditional model VU – noted there is a focus on competition GR – noted customers are not the problem, there is a problem with clubs not being able to handle the next step DH – noted do they put the programmes in the right way KM – noted biggest issue is that clubs don’t want to change DH - noted this is fine and we should put our focus on the clubs that do want to change and do things GK – understanding your market is the key to attract participants. It is also important how you convert, retain and keep them. It is not just understanding the market it is the club’s capability to deal with them as well VU – we need capability to meet the needs and that we may need to look at it (membership) another way to get participation	
Disconnect	VB – participation and HP are our (districts and SNZ’s) 2 things. There is disconnect between players and parents (the stakeholders) and between how we (districts) can add value. VR – SNZ and the districts must have a better profile, question is how do we keep the players without raising the profile of the sport VB – There is disconnect and dysfunction DH – No shared vision for squash in New Zealand	WB – MOUs between SNZ-District-Clubs DH – questioned should one of the actions be to look at our structure – review of structure

	<p>WH – What should we (Districts) be doing to align with SNZ</p> <p>VU – noted the use of us and them at all levels and we need to create it as a “we”</p> <p>MW – noted that we only cater to affiliated members and does this model work?</p> <p>MN – noted that the issue was with districts sharing information with the clubs</p> <p>GM – noted we developed the vision (strategic plan) very well together and that we need processes and plans that get everyone up to speed and operating in the same way</p> <p>GR - noted that there is annual change in clubs and they need to future proof</p>	<p>VB – reviewed the year, noted helped financially, got clubs got reengaged and that we need to get the resources from SNZ and get it to the clubs. Notes that she does not think she is adding value at board level filing grants, but she thinks that they are better used on the ground</p>
Resilience	<p>To do with funding and being resilient to changes in the market</p> <p>DH noted it is succession and keeping people going</p> <p>AMK - Heavy reliance on a few</p> <p>VU – noted it is about being smarter about spending money and how we use our resources, noted that 11 people are trying to do 11 things and is this sustainable and effective efficient uses of our resources</p>	

### Summary

<u>Effects</u>	<u>Cause</u>	<u>Actions</u>
Participation	<p>Understanding the markets</p> <p>Capability to meet the needs – attract and retain</p>	<p>Market Research</p> <p>Identify clubs who want to grow participation</p> <p>Improve capability (delivery and promotion)</p>
Disconnect	<p>No shared vision and guidance</p> <p>Us/them mentality</p> <p>Strategic plan delivery</p> <p>Lack of role definition</p>	<p>MOAs SNZ-Dist-Clubs</p> <p>Review of structure/function for best option to deliver plan</p>
Resilience	<p>Succession planning</p> <p>Sustainable funding</p> <p>Resource utilisation</p>	<p>Review if current/desired use and whether there is a better way to spend</p>

### Pros and Cons of the District Structure

GK – having regional bodies allows for access to more funding than through a national body

VB –keep paid employee but have someone who is doing grants and keeping funding bodies (Districts). It is about applying the energies in the right place.

AMK – noted that if we take regional body out it may mean a further disconnect and how do the clubs in the middle of the nowhere get supported meaning the smaller clubs become more disconnected

DH – noted we need to think nationally and act locally. Noted there would be an SDO who would service an area, they would be a paid employee of SNZ with accountabilities they must deliver on and they can focus on areas where get the best return. The person would still be local with a local committee.

GK – Difficulty in getting volunteers and with the board you have buy in from other to volunteer whereas if you go to purely paid positions then how are you meant to drum up more volunteers?

The boards can share at a regional level with their clubs. There may be further disconnect with 1 manager/SDO who is struggling to get buy in

MN – noted that the board would stay, the managers drop the operational and do more at the club level

TJ – summarised that there are more jobs that can be done at the national level and that we do not have to do away with districts.

VB – noted we have duplicated processes.

GM – why do districts not spend more time on developing the game

MN – noted that there is a lot of time spent training new people every year as the board (district) turns over. Noted that programmes (SNZ) don't have teeth and that districts choose how to do it and when.

TM – Noted that Squash Auckland wants a good relationship with SNZ but to maintain autonomy. Their board does not do the admin but to do the things which matter in the game. Noted that district boards are at developing the relationships (clubs, sponsors etc.) in their districts and there must be local ways of meeting the district picture

VB – noted she sees SBOP as a committee of people who have vested interest and love for the game not as a board with governance.

VU – noted we are missing a group who are to focus on the different areas. Noted that there needs to be a presentation later in the year and that these are real issues and we have an opportunity and mandate to create this group.

## **Agreed**

After lunch GM presented 3 options on the whiteboard that were agreed:

- *Form working party to research structure/function and report back to mid-year presidents meeting*
- *Co-ordinate operating plans – SNZ and all districts – and present at mid-year presidents meeting*
- *Develop a co-ordinated growth/promotion plan for 2017*

## **High Performance**

JO discussed the High Performance Strategy and outlined the details from the 6 areas within – players, coaches, events, centre of excellence, funding and leadership.

JO highlighted that Squash NZ have called for expressions of interest for the HP Manager role and look to appoint someone into this in 2017.

WB asked for clarification of what high performance meant. JO replied saying that high performance encompasses our top players who are, or have the potential to compete with distinction on the international stage. This is all detailed in the new HP Framework document.

WH asked how much of the funding from High Performance Sport NZ is discretionary and how funding is allocated from this. JO replied saying that funding from HPSNZ is campaign based and none of it is discretionary. SK and KS have been in HP Manager roles for 2016 and this has involved sitting down to create individual performance plans with each player. Funding is allocated towards contracted players which supports them through training camps and the use of contracted coaches.

JF asked how the HP Programme would link into District programmes. JO replied saying this will be the role of the HP Manager once appointed. At this stage, it is envisioned that Districts will work together with the HP Manager to identify talented players and provide good programmes to ensure they continue to develop. WB commented that he would like the HP Manager to visit Districts to provide advice on District programmes to ensure alignment.

### **Eyewear**

GC provided some context to Squash Waikato's remit for junior eyewear to be made more consistent. Currently juniors are only required to wear eyewear in Squash NZ National junior events but juniors can play each other in a senior event and the policy does not apply.

Several people raised concerns over eyewear detracting from the overall experience and leading to fewer people involved and a lower quality of play.

DH stated that Squash Canterbury has used this policy for a couple of years now and that it has become accepted by all. There were some initial kickbacks on the policy and it is now the norm. They have not seen any drop in junior players and highlighted that Paul Coll and Megan Craig both came through the system, choosing to not wear eyewear once they turned 19.

Issues regarding health and safety were raised. ACC covers any accidents that may occur.

### **PAR11**

KS provided some international context to the scoring system used by squash - the PAR system reduced the winning score to 11 points which initially saw a reduction in game time to start and later increased as players adapted.

KS highlighted that this has created a faster pace, more attacking style of squash and thought we need to align our scoring system to international standard to ensure our players are use to it.

Several Districts mentioned that they have already used the PAR11 scoring system for juniors.

TJ suggested that the scoring system could be linked to ball selection.

TJ outlined that players use different balls to deal with the court temperature and playing conditions given New Zealand's climate varies from place to place all-year round.

### **Agreed**

*All junior events would be played to PAR11 for 2017 as a trial with a review at the end of 2017 which would look to include seniors and masters for following years..*

### **Member Protection Policy including alcohol**

JO outlined that there have been some situations over the year where alcohol and member safety have been questionable. JO mentioned that LM has put together a Member Protection policy in response to these.

LM gave a brief overview of what the policy's purpose – that it outlines best practice around how to ensure that we are providing a safe and healthy environment for everyone playing squash. It details codes of conduct, breaches, abuse definitions, guidelines to deal with young people and vulnerable adults, complaints, online safety, alcohol and responsibilities.

LM encouraged all Districts and clubs to adopt the policy and said it was up to us all to ensure it gets followed.

A separate policy exists to detail disputes.

### **Junior events - alcohol**

WB proposed a policy which would ban all alcohol from junior events. It was clarified that this would extend to outside of the club premises as this is often where drinking takes place.

Several people asked WB how this might be enforced.

KM said now it is up to each District to do this and highlighted that Southland Rugby requires all coaches / managers and players to sign a non-drinking disclosure / code of conduct. So far this has been successful in deterring inappropriate drinking while at tournaments.

There was no general consensus other than it being noted that some districts already implement policies for no alcohol at junior events and other districts could do the same.

### **Review – SNZ Roadshow / District Meetings**

GM and JO outlined that the intention behind not having a Mid-Year Presidents meeting in 2016 was to instead visit Districts. However, this has been more difficult to organise than anticipated.

#### **Agreed**

*That in 2017 the Mid-Year President Meetings be re-instated and at that meeting Districts would come with their annual plans ready to discuss and align for the next year to ensure resources are used more effectively.*

### **Tournament results**

JS mentioned that there seems to be a discrepancy between when results are input into iSquash and when they are displayed. JS suggested that GoogleDocs be used as an alternative.

WH and WB outlined that Simon Yorker has developed software that interfaces with iSquash.

#### **Agreed**

- *JO said he would contact Simon and look at the technology road map to ensure that any decisions around technology be part of the overall strategy.*
- *Districts to encourage all clubs to utilise the iSquash Tournament module.*

### **Calendar and events**

WB suggested that the events need to be reconsidered to ensure they are viable. There are often clashes on with several events on the same weekend which means numbers are divided between events.

DH recommended SNZ review the current tournament offering and make recommendations at the Mid-Year Presidents meeting.

AM suggested that the printed tournament calendars be delayed until early in the year so that clashes can be dealt with, highlighting that there have been 4 already for next year – due to clubs changing mind. All other Districts highlighted that they did not have any problems with the process.

SO and SC outlined the timeline that goes into collecting tournament details, putting into a layout, printing and distributing.

It was discussed that the printed copies could be sent out later but it would mean clubs wouldn't be able to put these up and start planning. A lot of clubs like to display these and use these to plan their



own years. VU and DH suggested that with a mobile app there would be no need for printed calendars of any kind.

WB highlighted the struggles for many parents to take multiple days off to get their children to the national champs.

WB asked if the Champion of Champions was serving its' purpose and if it should be prioritised. VU mentioned that until you know what the purpose of the events are it is difficult to know who to target for these.

WB raised concerns over the rotation policy and how it affects some Districts where there are not enough facilities to host certain events (e.g. Northland and Whangarei).

VU said that Canterbury were a poor District in terms of travelling outside the region.

JF highlighted that at some tournaments there have been several Auckland teams and no representation from other Districts. An example was given of a tournament in Canterbury with no teams from the South Island attending.

KM suggested that the District needs to look after this and work with the clubs to confirm, otherwise hand the event in for another District to look after.

KM discussed the commitment that goes into sending teams away and suggested that having certain tournaments in the main centres would be negative.

JF outlined the findings from Auckland's club discussions around SuperChamps – many saw it as unfair – and asked other Districts for their opinions. A number responded saying that the integrity of the event is at risk as there are many of players who switch codes to be eligible.

MN provided some insights into how many players had done this within a month prior to the event over the past year. MN thought that the finals should be played on the same weekend throughout the country.

#### **Agreed**

*GM suggested that SNZ review the calendar process.*

*JO suggested that SNZ review rotation policy to present at the Mid-Year President's meeting.*