



TENNIS SENIORS AUSTRALIA

THE STRENGTHENING OF WORKING RELATIONSHIPS AND THE SEARCH FOR A NEW MODEL FOR TENNIS SENIORS

It is pleasing to report that there is a strengthening of relationships between Divisions of Tennis Seniors and the state tennis associations (Member Associations or MAs) and between Tennis Seniors Australia and Tennis Australia. All Divisions of Tennis Seniors are presently either engaged in negotiating service agreements or strengthening their relationships with their state tennis associations within signed service agreements. Tennis Seniors Australia has signed a service agreement with Tennis Australia. It is exciting to see the amount of goodwill being extended in all negotiations.

As a result of additional funding and the consequent additional resources to the Member Associations (the state tennis associations) by Tennis Australia, the Member Associations are offering additional services to each state Division of Tennis Seniors Australia. These service agreements vary according to the needs of the Divisions and the resources being made available. However, the Member Associations are helping with tournament organization, assisting with communication to the wider tennis community through email, 'newsletters', and magazines, integrating tournament calendars, helping with advertising and marketing, sponsorship and secretarial support. Although the working relationships between our organizations are strengthened, the Divisions (or State Tennis Seniors) are responsible (and independent) for seniors tennis throughout Australia.

Tennis Australia and the Member Associations are extremely supportive but do not want to run Tennis Seniors. They want us to do it.

At present, we are working towards a new model or way in which we organize ourselves as we confront many of the issues for strengthening Tennis Seniors as a strong group within the wider Tennis Community. The executive has looked at different models and has discarded most. At present, the executive is proposing a Business Plan with a 'user pay system' as a way of meeting the emerging challenges. Within our present system or model, we know that high membership fees are an impediment to increasing membership. We must increase membership to become a strong organization. Furthermore, we know there are over 120,000 35+ regular players in Australia and, from the research conducted by Tennis Australia, there are just as many interested in becoming regular players. Our membership is approximately 3,500. How do we increase membership?

How do we increase our membership and at the same time become financially sound and independent? Bruce has suggested ways within his National Strategy for Growth for increasing membership and Denis has stated that the Business Plan is but bare bones that need fleshing over the next six months. Through discussion and comment among the Divisions and TSA, we want to forge a strong model but it will take time to achieve this. We want all the Divisions involved in this process of sharing ideas.

Denis has made it clear that through communicating and sharing ideas, we hope all the Divisions are in a position in January next year to vote on whether the model we are proposing is suitable to all.

If you are interested in what the Presidents discussed at the meeting on the Gold Coast, read what was covered at the meeting in the minutes posted on our website. You might be interested in some of the research results undertaken by Tennis Australia and shared with us by Belinda Kleverlaan, Tennis Australia's National Programs Manager.

Tom Hancy, Honorary secretary, August 2nd, 2010