

## **TENNIS SENIORS AUSTRALIA**

### **LETTER TO PRESIDENTS AND SECRETARIES RELATING TO THE BUSINESS PLAN AND MOTIONS**

This letter is prepared and written for the information of presidents, secretaries and Divisional Committee members. I do not have approval from the executive to write this letter but I am writing it to answer some unfair criticism levelled at members of the executive. I have heard the comments from at least two people who should know better but I am afraid that some who have attended meetings are grossly unfair or they forget very easily.

Comments such as 'the executive has done nothing in the last five years' and 'they are rushing the Business Plan through because their time on the executive is nearly over' are misleading and inaccurate comments. In addition, I see the listeners to these people nodding and agreeing. The listeners have not been privy to the meetings but still nod taking in all that is said and then telling someone else. So easily, misinformation gets delivered.

I joined the executive in January, 2009. In the two years that I have been a member, Denis has been our chief negotiator with Tennis Australia, not an easy time with Tennis Australia trying to get agreement with the State Associations. So the changing scene between Tennis Australia and the States has impact on decisions being made by TSA. In the past two years, TSA, through Denis, has been able to advance the service agreements between the State Seniors and the Member Associations and has improved the relationship and service agreement between Tennis Australia and TSA where TA is committed this year in putting well over \$100,000 towards our Australian Teams. In addition, Denis' negotiations, partly, is responsible for the extra resources being given to the Member Associations to offer increased resources and services to Tennis Seniors State Associations. The effect of the extra staff with Community Tennis Officers working with clubs and Tennis Senior Associations is starting to be noticed and will have a very big influence on the way we operate if the Business Plan is accepted. As Tennis Australia's research findings became apparent, it cleared the way for the promotion of a Business Plan. These research findings were released around mid-year. Previous to the past two years, Brian Dew worked assiduously producing documents and arguing cases to advance the five year plan. These contributions have been detailed in the Annual Report included in the player booklets for the Championships each January. Minutes of AGMs and Presidents meetings have been circulated early in the year and displayed on our website.

To say that the executive has done nothing in the past two years is a misrepresentation of the truth and the purveyors of these inaccuracies should hang their heads.

As for whether 'we are rushing the Business Plan,' is not a credible statement. The Business Plan will not start to operate until mid 2012. All we have done is define some basic principles to form a National strategy to bind everyone to a single cause: the growth of Seniors Tennis. The growth of Seniors Tennis is the very reason and underpinning for the Service Agreements. If we do not stimulate activities and, hopefully, an increase in membership, we will lose support from Tennis Australia. The motions are but a start which can be overturned by other motions along the way.

Most of the present Presidents sat and listened with me to Robin O'Neill nearly two years ago when he indicated support for three years. At the Presidents meeting last January, he indicated we had two years of support remaining. His message was clear: reduce your costs, develop firm and good relationships with your MAs and work towards a satisfactory service agreement making use of the economy of scale to reduce cost. Two years has gone and we are yet to show that we are serious about growing Seniors Tennis. If we leave it for another year, we may have no support from Tennis Australia and this is the last time we have all delegates together before our grace period of three

years is up. The search for a Business Plan and its development has been two years in the making and all the presidents have been aware of these facts for two years.

I take full responsibility for the drafting of the motions to introduce the Business Plan. As too, I take full responsibility for the drafting of the rationale for the motions. These were supported by the executive. In addition, by the time Sunday passes, members of the executive would have met with the committees or representatives of all Divisions except Tasmania. The Business Plan has been discussed in details with most committee members. Each of these Divisions has been asked to advance a better plan and, up until now, none has been forthcoming.

Since I have been in Tennis Seniors I have heard hundreds of members express the view that we want to remain in control of Seniors Tennis. I believe Tennis Australia has given us the opportunity to be responsible for Tennis Seniors and to grow this section of the game. That is our part of the bargain. The research shows there are thousands of people 35+ who want to play the game. Tennis Australia has provided the Member Associations with resources to assist Tennis Seniors in growing the game. To leave the introduction of a National strategy for another year, I believe, would be a dereliction of duty by the executive to keep our part of the bargain and to place at risk the support presently given by Tennis Australia.

Tom Hancy,

Honorary secretary, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010.