



# **TENNIS SENIORS AUSTRALIA INC.**

## **BUSINESS PLAN 2011 – 12**

### **Background to the plan**

For some years now, there has been a growing concern about the declining number of registered senior players in Australia in all States and Territories – from 4500 in 2000 to 3400 in 2010. The number of players in national tournaments has varied in overall numbers over the years, but certainly this also has not been showing desirable increases.

The Gemba Research recently conducted by Tennis Australia (TA) incorporating every State and age group, and including over 8000 participants, resulted in the following major conclusions:

- Tennis Seniors Australia (TSA) captures only a fraction of total playing seniors in our model
- Among seniors, there is a large opportunity to grow the rate of participation with both men and women
- There is strong growth potential across the country in terms of attracting greater numbers of seniors in to tennis
- Over 7 out of 10 senior tennis players would prefer a “pay for play” model
- Senior tennis players are more motivated by the fun, social and family life aspects of the sport, and the fact that you can play the sport for life
- The two most inhibiting factors to people committing to playing tennis are annual membership fees and fixtures e.g. 16 weeks on the same day and at the same time

### **The broad strategy of the Business Plan**

The broad approach therefore, is to put in place strategies and action plans that will increase participation numbers in both competitive and social play, and to capture all those participants’ pertinent details on a centralized database. This could then be used to provide news items or market future events, promoting the competitive, social or fun aspects thereof, and in doing so increase the number of players participating.

It is simply not possible for State/Territory based senior committees (State TSA) comprised of volunteer officials, to achieve this alone. However, the State Tennis Member Associations (MA's) have many of the necessary skills and resources to lend considerable assistance. It is thus imperative that a productive and meaningful relationship exists between the two bodies in each State. The terms of the relationship should be documented, with clear and achievable desired outcomes, and possibly include a financial incentive for the State TSA's relative to the amount of effort and input that their volunteer base will provide in promoting and growing seniors tennis.

We need to work towards a "pay for play" or a "user pays" system, and the goal is therefore that, if financially viable, players will no longer pay a fee to belong to their State TSA or the \$13.20 to TSA. Instead, a "user pay" premium will be added to each participant and each event, which will vary according to the ranking of the event. All events must be sanctioned by their State TSA and the respective MA, and will include all social competitions/fixtures organized by affiliated clubs and associations. The process around the collection of the levy needs to be refined, and this is included in our action plans. To this end, a pilot study will be conducted in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory from 1 January 2012 until December 2012. This will test the "user pay" principle as well the robustness of the model to attract new players to join their MA, and TSA if they wish to play events.

Clubs and Associations will derive their income from any tournaments or events they conduct, and/or from their membership or affiliation fees.

The major income streams for each MA will come from a membership fee from individual club affiliated members and funding through TA. However, in 2011-12 in South Australia and Western Australia, MA funding will come from the number of courts operated by each club according to a formula designed to be fair and equitable across different sized clubs, rather than individual membership payments. TA will provide further income to each MA through service agreements that are negotiated each financial year. There are many benefits to clubs and individual member's affiliation and one of the benefits includes public liability insurance cover.

TSA will derive its income from its share of the National Carnival and Championships income (as per existing arrangement) plus the "user pay" add on from each participating event in Australia. The expectation of TA is that, in time, TSA generate sufficient income to fund its operating costs, plus the amount required for overseas teams representing Australia in the World Championships. The trial to be run in 2012 in New South Wales and the ACT referred to above will test the "user pay" approach, and the revenue that can be raised.

State TSA's will derive their income from any tournaments they conduct, other than the "add on" fee per event per player which will be channeled back to TSA. They will also derive services and/or income from their MA according to the terms of their Service Agreements, and any shortfall in their operating costs will be financed by TSA from the add-on levy from events that it will be receiving.

Because it will cost nothing, or very little, for a club or association to register an individual member, this should encourage them to do so and hence to increase their database, which in turn provides further marketing opportunity, and the widening of our participation base. Players wanting to enter a sanctioned TSA event must be registered with their MA.

Other initiatives that are contained in the Business Plan include reviewing and possibly expanding the number of playing opportunities available, and also conducting a survey of players to determine the reasons for participation in the Australian Carnival and individual championships. We plan also to re-visit the criteria employed in the selection of Australian teams for the World ITF Championships. We hope to improve the functionality and the co-ordinated look of the various State websites, including the branding “35+ Seniors”, and to improve the promotional and marketing material available to all the States.

## **The Mission and Objectives of TSA**

From some comments raised at Presidents meetings, it seems that there is still some debate or confusion about the role and objectives of TSA. Particularly in a Business Plan of this nature, it would seem to be appropriate to document these as viewed by the Executive of TSA.

### **National Mission**

- To grow, promote and showcase Seniors Tennis, by providing specialized tennis and social opportunities for players aged 35 and over throughout Australia.

### **Major Objectives**

- Provide a continuously evolving Business Plan, through which TSA and the State TSA's can continue to grow and develop seniors' tennis, and increase participation numbers at both competition and social levels.  
The goals included in the 2011-12 Business Plan are:
  - Increase participation numbers at both competition and social levels
  - Develop one consolidated database for all participation players
  - Maintain and enhance the financial viability and operating efficiency of TSA and State TSA's.
  - Investigate and trial a “pay for play” user pay system
  - Achieve common branding across all States, and improve marketing
- Ensure documented and productive service agreements are in place between all State TSA's and their MA, and that these continue to evolve in the interests of furthering the development and growth of seniors tennis

- Within the business plan, provide strategies that ensure financial independence for the administration of TSA and the State TSA's
- In consultation with the State TSA's, provide policy and direction for the operation, management and development of Seniors Tennis nationally.
- As the governing body for Seniors Tennis:
  - Ensure that all TSA major events are officially sanctioned, professionally organized and conducted, according to ITF and TSA guidelines
  - Own and conduct, in conjunction with the hosting State, the National Teams Carnival and Individual Championships, and allocated International events
  - Review, develop and implement strategies for the growth of the above events
  - Review and issue the TSA annual calendar of events
  - Ensure that any issues that arise are communicated and heard at a national or international level
- Continue to develop and implement a national registered player database, incorporating an event participation database, in liaison with TA and the State TSA's
- Maintain and develop as appropriate, the national brand policy of "35+ Seniors" in consultation with TA, in all our marketing communications.
- Identify and secure national sponsorships in liaison with TA and the MA's
- Ensure that each State TSA adopts a common set of guidelines for their respective websites and marketing material generally, to ensure that they present a professional image with a clear identification with the parent brands TSA and TA
- Ensure the continued development of ranking and rating systems that can be easily understood.
- Sanction and appoint State TSA endorsed national selectors, who will, amongst other duties, select Australian representative players. In conjunction with TA, provide financial and organizational support for those players to represent Australia in the World ITF event
- Maintain financial and corporate viability through efficient processes, governance and financial management
- Implement all matters of policy, and conduct our business, with regard to the needs of the majority of the seniors tennis community

### **Attachments available on request**

- Business Plan – Goals, Objectives, Action Plans, Responsibilities and Timing  
Objectives should ideally include measurable and realistic hurdles, but they have been deliberately omitted as at this stage, they would involve a large degree of

guesswork. As the plan evolves, numerical targets will be incorporated. However, it is fair to say that in the trial in NSW and ACT, a 8-10% increase in participation numbers over the next year would seem to be a realistic target. With improved service agreements, and the successful implementation of all aspects of the business plan, we could hopefully be confident of more than doubling our participation numbers over a five year period, and head towards 10000 participants.

- “User pay” levy financial modeling. This spreadsheet shows, for varying assumptions about the number of events players participate in, the number of participants per event, and the levy per event, the revenue that could potentially be raised nationally. Although the total of approximately \$130,000 falls short of requirements, this should increase in future years as more participants are registered, and/or the number of events increases.