

2022 Oceania Squash Federation Report to WSF

The last twelve months has been a rebuilding period for our member countries. Most are getting back to a sense of normality but for some it has taken longer as the effects of the covid pandemic have had a greater or longer lasting impact. Squash in most of the smaller countries is essentially a club-based activity and they have been greatly affected by the disruption caused by the pandemic. They have struggled to maintain normal activities while their main focus has been on family and whanau and it has been a battle to survive through this period.

As travel restrictions ease and borders reopen, we hope to see more events on the regional calendar that will attract international participants and visitors. The recent confirmation of the 2022 Oceania Junior Championships to be held in Sydney, Australia from the 17th to the 19th of December is good news. Both Australia and New Zealand have national and international events in the later part of 2022 which is very encouraging and a positive sign for squash in the region.

The 2023 Oceania Junior Championships will be held in New Zealand and Tahiti are still very confident that squash will be included in the 2027 Pacific Games and working towards that goal. OSF will shortly be engaging with Fiji to start organising the 2023 Oceania Closed Championships.

The highlight for 2022 was the squash programme at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham. The venue and coverage were excellent, and it was great to see athletes from Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Australia and New Zealand representing Oceania. All credit to the squash organising committee for delivering a high-quality event. There are changes looming for the CWG format, but we hope that squash is able to retain a place in future games. The 2032 Olympic Games in Brisbane also represents a fantastic opportunity for squash to finally be included in the Olympic games.

The Cook Islands are trying to rebuild some of the momentum they had previously and have introduced a new business competition. They have an enthusiastic group working hard to get events and activities up and running but it is a challenge on limited resources.

Norfolk Island has had a great revival of their programs and are regularly holding competitions for their members and trying to encourage more. The OzSquash kits have been great for their junior programs.

Fiji have been very active and holding several successful tournaments throughout the year. Their Business Competition, held in Suva, has been very successful with over 100 players competing on a regular basis.

New Caledonia is back up and running and holding regular local tournaments and events. They are very proud of Brice Nicolas, a New Caledonia Junior, who has been playing in France (and representing France at the World Juniors). He is another local junior with outstanding achievements under the coaching of David Navarre.

Papua New Guinea has had little domestic competition over the last 2 years and no overseas travel having a negative effect on Junior development, which prior to COVID was very strong.

2022 has seen a positive resurgence with the best the PNG squash results at B2022 – men’s doubles through to plate semi-final and women’s singles Amity Alarcos through to a round 2 match against seeded English player Lucy Turmel.

World Squash Juniors Nancy - PNG ranked No 1 junior boy Joshua Porter had some good matches and gained valuable experience. A large contingent is now training for the Oceania Junior Championships in December.

Junior development is on track at Port Moresby Racquets Club making use of the OZ Squash kits. On average there are 20 juniors now attending weekly junior coaching at elite, intermediate and beginners from 5 years to 19.

Next year’s focus is a large PNG team to attend the Oceania Closed Championships which will improve rankings for future Team PNG representation and the 2026 Melbourne Commonwealth Games.

PNG Squash acknowledges the assistance and support from OSF and WSF, particularly Sean Warden.



Samoa are trying to get things moving again and a priority for them is to engage a coach living in Samoa who can reinvigorate the local squash community with new programmes and activities. If successful it will have positive benefits for squash in the country.

Tahiti is also making good progress as well. They have held a number of local tournaments recently and seem to be attracting more players. They are fortunate to have the support of France and they have a French coach who has been based in Tahiti for several years now.

This year the federation executive undertook a review of the strategic plan. This involved a series of e-meetings with member countries to identify their concerns and development priorities. There were several recurring themes throughout these meetings with the lack of coaches, officials, the cost of international participation and club management resources at the top of the list. These issues represent significant barriers to growth and development of squash in the region and are not that easy to resolve.

One of the biggest challenges for OSF is developing and implementing sustainable programmes not fully reliant on external funding. It has been encouraging to see the support Australia and New Zealand continue to offer to our members. Both countries are self-sufficient and have the resources to assist with our development programmes.

One example of how this support and cooperation works in practise has been the provision of OzSquash kits for the island nations. Squash Australia has partnered with OSF to provide these resources to our OSF members. The kits are great for junior development and have been greatly appreciated by the recipients. Both Australia and New Zealand have embarked on major upgrades to their online learning platforms and have generously offered access to these

services for our OSF members. Modules will include event management, coaching and governance. Both Australia and New Zealand are adopting the WSO programme.

The Oceania Squash Federation is committed to supporting our Member Countries to grow our sport and showcase squash as a vibrant and exciting recreational activity in the region. We are very grateful for the support and encouragement we receive from our members and from the World Squash Federation and we look forward to a positive and rewarding 2023.

Jim O'Grady

President
Oceania Squash Federation