

Gary Brennan  
Mayor  
City of Bunbury  
c/- Sport and Recreation Strategy Feedback

## RE: CITY OF BUNBURY SPORT AND RECREATION STRATEGY AND BASKETBALL NEEDS

Dear Gary

Thank you for your staff's ongoing consultation in regard to new indoor court facilities in the City of Bunbury. Basketball WA are committed to working with you to support the unmet need for community basketball in this area, including outlining how this needs fit within the strategic facilities plan for basketball in WA.

### Basketball Background

Basketball is

- the second highest participation sport in the world, played in **237** countries
- played by
  - **450 million** people across the world
  - more than **1.1 million** people in Australia
  - **100,000** West Australians
- the second largest team sport by participation in Australia

In Western Australia

- Ausplay statistics indicate that approximately **100,000** people regularly play competitive basketball.
- Over **44,000** people participated in BWA affiliated organised basketball competitions in 2018.
- Another **3,000** young people participated in junior entry programs with BWA affiliated associations.
- **34%** of this participation are **females** and **66%** male.
- Over **5,000 teams** play representative club basketball each week in more than **30 venues** across Perth, Peel and the South West.
- There are over **40,000** social basketballers playing in metropolitan Recreation Centre programs.
- There are over **18000** players registered to **57 Affiliated** country associations.
- Over **25,000** students participate in school basketball clinics run by BWA each year with many more run by our affiliated associations.
- More than **5,000** volunteers assist in running basketball programs across WA.

The following highlights some key aspects which are influential in the growth of basketball in Western Australia:

- In 2011 the estimated population in WA was 2.3 million persons and this number is forecast to increase to **3.0 million** persons by 2026 with the majority of this growth to be accommodated in the Metropolitan, Peel and South West regions.
- Basketball is the fifth most popular organised sport for boys (ages of 5-14) with a participation rate of **8.5%** and girls (ages of 5-14) with a participation rate of **6.3%**.
- Basketball is a game principally played indoors on wooden sprung floors. In the Metropolitan area in particular, demand for access to basketball courts for competition and training purposes is high and as a result teams use whatever court access times are available.
- Our Associations have varying control over their facilities. Depending on the level of control exercised by each association, this invariably impacts on the extent of programs which can be facilitated (i.e. greater control by each association generally results in a greater capacity to develop these programs).
- Many local governments will operate their own casual play for basketball. These activities are not currently recognised by Basketball WA within recorded participation figures. Often, casual play facilitated by local governments will draw funds away from associations who could run these informal competitions if they had appropriate access to court space. In addition, local government run activities do not develop the coaches, officials and volunteers necessary to sustain the sport.
- Indoor court space particularly has been limited in community facilities managed / controlled by local

government whose core focus has usually been to provide a breadth of recreational activity to their ratepayers while creating a sustainable funding model.

- There is increasing junior participation in basketball and the Western Australian Basketball League (WABL) continues to expand.
- More juniors are participating in development programs in WA (Aussie Hoops, Hot Shots etc).
- There is an increasing number of basketball participants who are involved for more than one session per week.
- There is a very high interest in basketball within the aboriginal population and by new arrivals to Australia. Basketball is the only sport that is over-represented in participation in the Aboriginal population when compared to the overall population.
- There is high demand for basketball facilities and programs in growth areas (including as diversionary/engagement programs for disengaged youth).

### The Basketball System in Western Australia

Basketball Australia is the governing body for basketball in Australia, overseeing the sport at all levels, from the grass roots to national teams and national leagues. Basketball WA is the peak body for basketball in the state. As well as supporting our associations and running competitions, Basketball WA coordinates a number of participation and player development programs along with coach and official programs.

There are over 70 affiliated basketball associations across Western Australia. Each of the associations conducts domestic competitions as well as having representative teams competing in regional and state-wide competitions.

Talented basketball players may be selected in an association's representative team. The peak representative competition for juniors is the Western Australian Basketball League (WABL). This WABL competition caters for both boys and girls in the Under 12 to the Under 20 age group in a range of divisions.

There is also the WA representative league for adults, the State Basketball League (SBL). There are 14 associations / clubs that compete in the SBL Competition, with basketball being the only state level league that includes regional teams from Mandurah, Bunbury, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie.

The SBL is played across the weekend, with the WABL being played on Sundays. Domestic adult competitions are generally conducted on week-nights or Sunday night, whilst the scheduling of domestic junior competitions varies from association to association with Saturday competitions the most popular in metropolitan areas.

Junior Club/ Representative team practice is on weeknights with many teams also seeking to train twice a week. Senior elite team training occurs on week nights. Often training is conducted at annexe facilities, primarily because of the shortage of available space at the primary basketball centres. Feed-back from a significant number of associations is that their training schedule is severely constrained by a lack of suitable court time space.

Most associations also offer Aussie Hoops or other introduction to basketball programs for 10 to 15-week seasons.

High peak use occupancy of courts is Monday to Friday 4.30pm to 10pm and Saturdays 9am to 5pm. During WABL seasons, Sundays are also fully used from 9am to 5pm.

As the sport expands it is hampered by facilities that are not able to fulfil the needs and demands of participants, and a lack of facilities and courts in key areas to accommodate population growth. Importantly, many of the current facilities do not allow the best conditions for a basketball association to sustainably operate and grow participation.

***To drive efficiency and growth it is critical that a metropolitan of large regional association has access to a 6-8 court facility.*** This allows the concentration of activity within one venue that reduces the need for volunteers to cover more than one venue. It also generally allows for growth of up to 2,000-3,000 members (and more) at which point it becomes viable to have staff support the operation of events, competitions and growth strategies

to ensure that the basketball pathway remains accessible and sustainable. This allows real community growth and value rather than solely being about generating revenue, by people dropping in and out for multiple activities, and creates a community hub.

The lack of investment into indoor facilities in West Australia over the past 20 years instead of steady development and upgrades to infrastructure over time, is leading to a critical period where the risk of not investing will be a major barrier to participation and growth in an era of increasing obesity and sedentary behaviour.

The soon to be published Basketball WA Strategic Facilities Plan indicates a need for 1 indoor court for every 6250 residents. This figure is based on previous research that an indoor court can cater for between 300-350 players before being over-programmed and the AusPlay research that indicates that on average across Australia 5.5% of the population regularly play basketball. As such, for every 25,000 people there is a conservative estimate that 1375 will participate in basketball and at least 4 courts will be needed.

### **Basketball in Bunbury**

The Bunbury Bears Basketball Association is currently based at the South West Sports Centre. The facility currently houses 3 indoor basketball courts

The population of the City of Bunbury in 2016 was just over 30,000 with a total population of some 90,000 (growing to approximately 112,000 by 2030) in the greater Bunbury Geographe region. This population equates to 5 indoor courts (with a total of 15 in the greater area) that the Bunbury Association can access greater than 80% of peak time (generally 48 hours per week) in the area to service the basketball playing population. Basketball currently has access to less than 50% of the current 3 courts available to the community, which indicates a further need of at least 3 courts in the area to accommodate the need for basketball.

Basketball WA fully supports the identified need within the strategy to increase the availability of indoor court space at the South West Sport Centre. The Bunbury Basketball Association, as an anchor tenant of this facility could utilise 5-6 courts for 80% of peak time to meet current (1600 members) and projected needs during the peak season. In a time of decreasing physical activity we believe it is important that there is space for basketball (as well as other sports) all year round.

For Basketball WA this is a critical and priority area of need for the sport in our state. We look forward to working together to support the need for further court space in the region.

Regards



Evan Stewart  
Deputy CEO  
Basketball WA