

To the Members of the GSBA,

My Role

As President of the GSBA, I take my responsibilities seriously. My primary focus is to enhance the opportunities, playing experiences, and engagement of our members within the basketball community. I'm committed to ensuring the association's accountability and sustainability, and to positioning the GSBA for growth both now and in the future. It is equally important that we honour and showcase the contributions of those who have supported the GSBA, both past and present.

Association Relationships

I've made it a priority to build relationships with successful basketball associations to bring best practices, benchmarks, and insights to our own operations. One partnership has been especially valuable in strengthening our relationship with the Greater Shepparton City Council. I've been working closely with Gary Randhawa, the Director of Infrastructure at the Council, to advance our collaboration regarding Council venues.

The Greater Shepparton Council

Our relationship with the Greater Shepparton Council office is stronger than ever. Communication is open and productive, and Council CEO Fiona LeGassick deserves recognition for her prompt and active engagement with the GSBA. Mayor Shane Sali has been a proactive supporter of our facilities and opportunities, often attending Gators games, and with his children who are now participating in our junior competitions.

Councillor Stephen Threlfall, who represents the ward where our facilities are located, understands the economic impact and healthy outcomes sports precinct provides, which brings millions of dollars to our region, and he seeks to advance this.

New Courts

Together with Greg Stevens, Leigh Finlay, Tony Long, and Robert Frame, I've had several meetings with Council representatives, advancing the proposal for four additional courts. Architectural plans and visions have now been tabled, and the progress looks promising. The Council has been receptive to our feedback, and we're excited about the potential.

Training Facility

Late last year, Greg Stevens, Tony Long, and I met with Council leaders to discuss the challenges our volunteer association faces in providing enough training space for our clubs and teams. We're grateful to report that the Council is supporting us in finding a suitable space for training that will also be available to other local sports.

Umpires Supervisor and her team

I commend Ataliah Zito for her professionalism and dedication in advancing, coordinating, supervising, and safeguarding our referees. She has officiated at the National Junior Championships and in BigV Championship games, consistently demonstrating her skill and commitment. Ataliah's attention to detail and clear communication are highly respected and admired by all who work with her.

All Abilities Program

I am deeply moved by the All-Abilities program and the people who make it a reality. It's a joy to witness the happiness it brings to participants, their families, and volunteers alike. I also commend the efforts of Mellisa & Jenny Freestone and Gary Driver in delivering this program. Tony Long, Gary Driver, and I recently met with Steve Saynor from Sale, who is advancing their All-Abilities program, and we are working together to share ideas and opportunities to strengthen these programs across the region.

Tony and I are also preparing sponsorship presentations and collaborating with the Council to further promote this initiative.

Master Tournaments

We initially planned a Masters Tournament for the 2025 March long weekend, but another association beat us to the jump and scheduled theirs for the same time. After discussions with Steve Saynor, we've decided to expand our event to include Masters, Wheelchair, and All-Abilities competitions. This new approach will make it a landmark event, attracting more teams and providing a significant economic boost to the GSBA and the region. This event will be presented in details for CoM consideration and approval.

'We Play in Unity' Logo

To reflect the diversity and inclusivity of the GSBA, we've developed a new 'We Play in Unity' logo to represent our association's values. This logo will be used across our materials in response to multiple requests for race and faith-based symbols.

Fluorescent Vests for Officials

In collaboration with the Operations Manager and Referee Supervisor, we've introduced fluorescent vests for officials, featuring the GSBA logo and titles like 'Game Commissioner' and 'Umpire Supervisor' on the back. This new approach has been well received and further enhances the professionalism of our operations.

Senior Men's Gators

The Senior Gators have continued their impressive success, securing a spot in the Champs league and advancing to the finals. Their performance, along with the engaging atmosphere at their games, continues to draw a full house and entertain fans.

Basketball Victoria has provided invaluable guidance on ensuring the sustainability, compliance, and financial management of our representative programs. We are now working with team management to ensure written statements on operations and conformance to GSBA responsibilities.

Junior Gators

The dedicated and passionate individuals, including committee members, coaches, assistant coaches, team managers, officials, as well as all our volunteers and parents—who work tirelessly to advance our junior programs in fair, transparent, and accountable ways, deserve to be applauded. You are noticed and admired!

Back to Event

In November, we held our Back to Event bringing together players, coaches, officials, and board members from 1969 onward. For many, it was the first time they had reunited, and it was a chance to reflect on the key individuals whose contributions have shaped the GSBA. The evening was filmed, and photographs were taken, all of which will be preserved in the GSBA's history vault, with plans for a future GSBA history book to inspire future generations.

I dedicated more than 40 hours combing through archived history to create 10 large posters that highlighted key moments in the GSBA's history. These were unveiled during the evening by individuals with a long and respected connection to the association.

A memorable moment of the evening was the unveiling of the 'Passed Persons' board, which honours those who made significant contributions to the GSBA but are sadly no longer with us. Additionally, the Life Members Honour board was revealed, recognising the new members inducted at the Life Member Gala Event in 2022. It's vital to highlight and celebrate the dedication of those who have volunteered their time and efforts to the GSBA.

Basketball Victoria Support

I would like to acknowledge David Huxtable for his consistent support. David has visited Shepparton several times, providing invaluable advice and guidance to help the GSBA advance in areas like business operations and representative management.

The Committee of Management (CoM)

Unfortunately, the CoM's performance was impacted by issues such as disharmony, absenteeism, resignations, and challenging behaviour. The constitution should be updated to better support and enhance the GSBA CoM operations.

A recent review with our Financial Auditor confirmed that more transparent and accountable financial processes need to be put in place.

My Goals for 2025 (For CoM consideration)

Looking ahead across 2025, my key goals for the GSBA are:

1. Update the constitution to incorporate learnings and best practices from recent years and like-minded successful associations.
2. More transparent and accountable financial processes to be put in place as suggested by the Auditor.
3. Revise policies and procedures in line with best practices from dynamic associations.
4. Develop clear position descriptions and expectations for all CoM members.
5. Update position descriptions / requirements for all coaches, officials and volunteers.

6. Review and update competition rules based on insights from the 2024 season.
7. Address the demand for a Senior Lady Gators team, and further development across the women's competition.
8. Ensure elite pathways are best suited to the greater volume of our players.
9. Attract and secure more tournaments and event opportunities.
10. Highlight the achievements of our members, including domestic players.
11. Improve the playing experience across both senior and junior domestic competitions.
12. Ensure a safe, happy, and healthy environment for all involved.

In Closing

I would like to thank all our Life Members, officials, players, coaches, team managers, parents, volunteers and Basketball Victoria. Your collective efforts make the GSBA what it is, and together we continue to create meaningful basketball experiences.

Onwards and upwards, with all my passion and respect for the good people.

Peter Sutherland
President
GSBA Inc.