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BASKETBALL IN NSW CONTINUES TO GROW

A Statement from Basketball NSW President, Dr Adrian Hurley OAM and Chief Executive Officer Mr Daniel Martinez

The President of Basketball NSW (BNSW) Dr Adrian Hurley stated today that basketball in NSW was very sound and in fact continuing to grow in numbers.

"There may be a false perception by the public and basketball participants that basketball is in crisis or in trouble in NSW and in Australia. In fact the opposite is true" said Hurley.

"Basketball continues to grow at the grass roots level with most States reporting increasing numbers of participants over the past year.

"In NSW we have seen a 14% growth in numbers compared to this time last year and the main concern is finding enough gymnasiums and halls to accommodate the continued increasing demand by people to play the game".

Daniel Martinez, Chief Executive of Basketball New South Wales stated "I actually play in three different Associations and am in constant contact with the grass roots. The numbers are certainly increasing. In one Association alone they have had to turn away 27 full teams as they could not fit them into draws"

"Many times kids as young as 14 and 16 are being forced to play games starting as late as 10pm simply because there are so many teams wanting to play that local Associations are having to run later than desirable of an evening just to fit the games in" Martinez added.

The Board of BNSW is working with its Members to approach local, State and federal governments to establish strategies for developing new facilities.

"It is very important that government at all levels is aware of what sports such as basketball can do for society and people in general. The fight against obesity is one obvious area where basketball can assist government" said Hurley.

"It does worry me though to continually see government backing the big sports such as football with substantial funding to assist the growth of their game and as well to make bids for things such World Cups".

Hurley went on to say, "Basketball had chances to bring the 2010 World Men's Basketball Championships to Australia but government wasn't interested. Yet the event would have brought many benefits to Australia,"

"One of the great anomalies in Australian sport is that the big sports get the big dollars from television rights and the big dollars from government."

"There are many smaller sports doing a great job for the health and youth of the nation but if the headlines aren't there then government is not very interested," said Hurley a three time Olympian.

'However we will continue to do the hard yards and to be successful.'

"Basketball in NSW and Australia is very healthy and we are very confident about the future" concluded Hurley.

Martinez also added "Unless Governments at all levels become fairer about their distribution of grant monies, then the big sports will get bigger and the smaller sports will continue to suffer from lack of their support."

Australia is founded on the principle of giving everyone a fair and even go. Governments have to follow that Aussie principle when they decide what to do with grants." he also stated.

"The World Cup bid is going to cost the Government an indecent amount of money. I wondered if anyone has calculated how many gyms could be built that would remain with us for years and years after the World Cup has come and gone.....and how many children we would have saved from obesity and other social ills" Martinez queried.

As far as the new NBL is concerned, Hurley is very positive. "I am also very encouraged by the directions that Basketball Australia is taking the sport. The NBL had to be reformed."

"Also I am not unhappy about there being no NBL team in Sydney this coming season. I think there is a great advantage in giving aspiring owners of a Sydney team another 12 months to get it all right. When they do BNSW and our Members will be right behind them", said Hurley

"We are also delighted that Wollongong, one of the original participants in the NBL, is still in the competition and building a new model for professional sporting teams in Australia".

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