

27 February 2022

Ms Celia Hammond MP  
Member for Curtin  
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**RE: BASKETBALL FACILITIES IN CURTIN**

Dear Ms Hammond

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the support that you and the Federal Government provide to support sport in your electorate of Curtin.

I wish to provide detail on the major issue that currently restricts more local Western Australians participating in basketball as their sport of choice – the lack of appropriate indoor facilities to support sustainable basketball programs being run by community volunteers in our local basketball association.

**Basketball WA's current research confirms there is a need for one indoor basketball court for every 6,250 residents.** This figure is based on previous research that an indoor court can cater for between 300-350 players before being over-programmed. **The AusPlay research 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 1,375 will participate in basketball and at least four courts will be needed.

It needs to be noted that this national average is actually been far outstripped here in Western Australia, where in 2020, according to the latest Ausplay survey, the number of Western Australians who regularly play competitive basketball continued to rise more than all other sports. In the past 2 years, basketball participation has risen by over 50% for juniors and 22% for adults (15 years and above). This is reflective of the growth of our game across Australia where the number of people playing competitive basketball increased by over 200,000 during the same period, showing the game's resilience through a challenging and covid impacted year.

Basketball in Western Australia has stamped itself as the most participated team sport for juniors with almost 65,000 children regularly playing competitive basketball, of which over 55,000 are registered in our Associations.

Importantly, as opposed to previous understandings, we are defining an available basketball court as **a court that has at least 80% of programming capacity in peak hours of the week for basketball.** In essence, one court provides 48 hours per week for mid-peak utilisation, Monday - Friday 4pm to 10pm and Weekends 9am to 6pm.

As the sport has been expanding, with our sport now having the second biggest membership base of any sport in Western Australia, it has been hampered by facilities that are not able to fulfil the needs and demands of participants, and a lack of facilities and courts in our area to accommodate population growth.

**To drive efficiency and growth it is critical that our metropolitan and large regional associations have 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 3,000 members (and more) at which point it becomes viable to have staff support the operation of events, competitions and growth strategies. **Critically, it also is viable to sustainably manage the maintenance and operation of the facility without ongoing need for local government subsidy.**

**When an indoor facility is appropriately constructed (with at least four courts and appropriate facilities) and managed it can fully cover it's ongoing short and long term costs and allow a flourishing community basketball association to deliver benefit to the whole local community.** This is in contrast to other community sporting facilities that may require less up front financial contribution but then generally are subsidized by Local Government on an ongoing basis.

The lack of investment in indoor facilities for community access in West Australia over the past 20 years, instead of steady development and upgrades to infrastructure over time, has led to a critical shortage that is a major barrier to participation and growth in an era of increasing obesity and sedentary behaviour. All facilities in our area are now at capacity, with Perry Lakes Association having a waiting list of over 300 children unable to play. For our club, the Newman Holy Rosary Raiders Basketball Club this means that for this and likely next season we have to turn numerous kids away.

This situation is critical as it means there are children unable to participate and gain social, physical and mental benefits of being involved in our local community Association. We would appreciate if you could meet with the Perry Lakes Basketball Association and be an advocate for Federal funding to improve the facilities available in the area.

Yours sincerely