I am pleased to present my report for the year since the last AGM in November 2015.

NEW VENUE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

After national advertisement and input into the selection process from Tennis NT (TNT), Jordyn Howarth and Benjamin McLachlan were appointed as Service Providers and have done an excellent job of operating the Gardens Tennis (GT) Centre over the last year. Since their appointment, the opening hours for the Centre have been extended and protocols introduced to facilitate safe out-of-hours access for members and guests. The range of programs and activities offered has been significantly expanded. New Hot Shots, launch pad and match play sessions have been added to existing pathways for junior tennis players which include three levels of Hot Shots tuition and development and elite coaching squads, new competitions introduced for top level players and those starting competitive play based on Fast 4 formats supplementing the established weekly Club competitions and Cardio Tennis re-introduced. School holiday programs have been expanded and GT has re-engaged with the TNT sponsored Schools program offering lessons to several schools and making the facility available to Darwin High for year 11 assessments. GT again supported an Indigenous Tennis Come N Try Day run by the Evonne Goolagong Foundation and have 6 Indigenous students playing at GT following this event. GTC has re-introduced court booking systems and maintains cost-effective options for participation including pro-rata membership arrangements. GT has implemented new software systems to improve data collection and client interaction.

GT achieved Level 1 accreditation to the Australian Drug Foundation’s Good Sports Program assisting the club provide a healthy, safe and family friendly environment with responsible service of alcohol and introduction of a no smoking policy. GT has also adopted the Code of Behaviour of the national Play by the Rules framework for all users of the Centre.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Supported by a Northern Territory Government (NTG) Facilities and Capital Equipment (FACE) Grant of $18,000, a comprehensive facilities master plan has been developed for GT based on a thorough geotechnical investigation carried out by Cardno and a master planning exercise undertaken by Sport Dev, a leading Australian tennis facility designer and master planner. The plan sets out a pathway for the development of GT including necessary infrastructure refresh and has already been used to support an application made to NTG for another FACE grant to renovate the GT clubhouse and will form a strong basis to seek funding for major court re-building required at Gardens Tennis. A range of maintenance and infrastructure upgrades has been undertaken at GT including repair and marking out of courts 1 and 2.
with Hot Shots lines supported by $3,400 funding from Tennis Australia, replacement of failed lights with modern LED fixtures and switchboard upgrade, new benching, new nets, court cleaning and painting of concrete surrounds to the clubhouse.

GT received a NTG Sport and Active Recreation Grant for Women and Girls of $10,000 to renovate the female changing rooms and has committed a further $17,000 to also upgrade the male changing rooms and toilet for people with a disability as well. In excess of $45,000 will have been invested this year on facilities maintenance and upgrade at GT.

**COACHING AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT**

GT has worked hard to expand its coaching team, recruiting coaches with qualifications and experience matched to coaching duties including the appointment of coaches with a Club Pro qualification, previous Head and Club Coach experience and national and international player rankings. Opportunities have been provided for talented juniors to join the coaching team starting as assistant coach and graduating to full coach responsibilities. GT successfully applied to the NTG Grass Roots grant program for $3,700 to support our service providers complete the Tennis Australia junior development coaching course. The members of the coaching team have fortnightly meetings to ensure consistency in service and opportunity for reflection and improvement in practice.

GT has grown its coaching program, trialling Fundamental Motor Skills sessions and then introducing Launch pad blue stage classes for 3-5 year olds developing foundation skills important to players’ success in later Hot Shots stages. Extra Hot Shots classes have been added with a total of 16 Hot Shots 1, 2 and 3 sessions being offered across the week, facilitated by the two courts with new Hot Shots line markings. First introduced for red ball, match play sessions are now available for all junior levels and subscription has grown to over 30 participants on the Friday family night session in just 6 months. In total, around 200 juniors participate in group coaching sessions on a weekly basis. Juniors also account for several of the 60 private lessons offered
each week with the balance taken up by adult clients. 20 to 40 adults participate weekly in two group coaching sessions which have been differentiated to accommodate beginners and more advanced players.

Senior coaches at GT are working closely with several talented juniors who have had tournament success both locally and interstate and enjoy strong national rankings. GT runs weekly development and elite coaching squads with Friday night match play being compulsory for players in these squads. Top GT juniors are entered into weekly senior Club competitions to provide opportunities for more challenging matches against older and more experienced players. Junior players have been encouraged to participate in ranking tournaments in Darwin and further afield. For example, GT took more than 30 junior players to Katherine to participate in junior and AMT events, the latter being won by a female junior from GT. GT hosted this year’s cross Territory School Sport Tennis event, from which the NT Bruce Cup Team was selected. The team, which includes several players from GT, was coached by Jordyn Howarth who travelled with the team to NSW for this year’s competition. Half of the players selected for the NT Super 10s Team to compete in the national championship are from GT.

GT has made its facilities available to several TNT and Tennis Australia talent development activities including the Emma Doyle’s Girls camp targeting female players and other Talent days focusing on how individuals can determine their destiny.

GT has established a dedicated Junior Development fund in which monies raised from various fundraising activities are deposited for use in supporting junior development. GT has made input into a Tennis Australia project on Child Safety while the Club President has been appointed to the Tennis NT Athlete Development Committee.

TOURNAMENTS & COMPETITIONS

GT has had strong involvement in hosting and running several major tournaments including four major ranking events, the Sky City Darwin and NT Opens and the NT and Darwin Age Championships. An indication of the success of these events is provided by an average 16% increase in participation across these major events. An innovation this year was the running of the VIP Sky City NT Open Finals event by GT.

GT has also been the venue for several other events including the Club Super Challenge, the Inter-Schools Challenge Cup and rounds and finals of the Junior and Senior tennis Leagues. GT strongly supported, and again performed well in the TNT Premier League being runner up in the final. Representatives of GT participated in a review of the new Premier League led by Tennis NT. Over 100 players participate in GT team competitions on a weekly basis. Club competition was expanded with the trialling of a Ladies Doubles series, the introduction of a FAST 4 competition for those wishing to start competitive play and a singles competition exclusively for top-level players, also in an abbreviated format. Additional teams were added to the established weekly Mixed and Mens Doubles competitions run at GT with new processes and incentives including points bonuses introduced to ensure teams always have a full complement of players. A new competition was introduced for GT clients wishing to have competitive play in the School holiday period. A Pro-Am Doubles event involving 12 professionals was organized for 32 GT players in a 32 point set format sponsored by dn Building, Bruce’s Charcoal Chicken and Coopers.
PROMOTION & ENGAGEMENT

GT has promoted the opportunities for participation and tennis services offered through several initiatives including running social nights with free court hire and subsidized refreshments, a well-attended free “Come and Try” day with games and activities for juniors, special offers on adult coaching providing a free lesson to clients who introduce a new person to the Club, free Saturday morning match-play sessions to juniors participating in Friday night match play and free trial sessions for Cardio Tennis.

GT has increased its media presence with Facebook being used as a main point of communication and advertising. A regular newsletter for GT has been produced for clients (http://www.tennis.com.au/gardenstennis/newsletters) and additional information, such as on facilities master planning, the Good Sports program and summaries of Club Committee meetings promulgated via the website, which is being upgraded through a project with Vida Tennis of Melbourne supported by a $3000 grant from Tennis NT. Feedback sessions have been instigated where Club members can raise issues and get responses from members of the Club Committee.

The Committee has established subgroups with responsibilities for a range of areas including media, grant writing and sponsorship. In terms of sponsorship GT has developed a new sponsorship policy and promotional package and has attracted a number of sponsors including new sponsors for the Pro-Am tournament. Many applications for grant funding have been submitted and to date around $40,000 in grants has been awarded to the Club. Finances are in a strong position compared to prior years due to grants, the implemented Service Provider model and sponsorship received with further detail outlined in the Treasurer’s report.

The DTA Committee has worked closely with Tennis NT. Representatives of GT have attended TNT Industry Leaders workshops and professional development sessions and made responses on the draft Tennis NT Strategic Plan including strategies for the promotion of, and engagement with, tennis across the NT.

In the 12 months from 2015 to the 2016 AGM there have been 10 Committee meetings and I would like to acknowledge and thank fellow current committee members – Deb Liddiard (Vice President), Jamie O’Brien (Treasurer), Paul Kelly (Secretary), Lindsay Hutley (Public Officer), Phillipa Tziolis, Jane Sheehan and Luke Black as well as former members Susannah Scaturchio and Rhonda Peek for their work and contribution of time which in many cases has been very significant. The Committee has undertaken a review of the DTA Constitution and has made recommendations for some change to be considered at the 2016 AGM which will also see the first award of the Gardens Tennis Ambassador of the Year Trophy, donated by our patron, the Honourable Sally Thomas, AC.

I thank members for the opportunity to be involved with the governance of DTA and with the move to our excellent commercial operators, completed master plan and a commitment to further build strong relationships with peak bodies and other key sponsors I feel confident about the future of Gardens Tennis.

Charles Webb
November 2016