

Critical action needed to build a new stadium for Perth

Visit any indoor court on the weekend, and you'll find it bursting at the seams with young people engaged in various team sports. Indoor sport, especially basketball, is booming in Perth. What isn't booming is court availability and indoor sports facilities.

"Ask any basketball association in Perth, and you'll find they have a significant waitlist, with many associations recording well over 1000 kids wanting, but not able, to play sport," says Perth Basketball Association (PBA) Board President, Anthony Nixon. "And it isn't just basketball that is affected by a lack of facilities. My colleagues in other indoor sports like Volleyball struggle to find courts for their teams to train and play. The indoor courts situation in Perth is at a critical stage and action is needed, now."

"Perth Basketball Assoc is not only one of the largest basketball clubs in WA, but it is also the only without a dedicated home. We have 2800 members and more than 1000 kids on our waiting list. Constant phone calls and emails from families trying to get into teams is heartbreaking when we are already at full capacity. The Perth Redbacks must use, on average, 25 plus different venues a week. Many parents must drop their playing kids at multiple locations on game days, which is a logistical nightmare for them. It's also a huge impost on our older players, our referees, coaches, and volunteers and negatively impacts our teams' ability to train."

The situation is so concerning that Perth Basketball Association partnered with Basketball WA and Perth Reds Volleyball Association to understand the facts when it comes to demand and supply of facilities in the relevant inner-east metropolitan catchment area, which takes in 500,000 residents in seven local government authorities, including the Town of Victoria Park and the Cities of Perth, South Perth, Canning and Belmont.

The feasibility study confirmed the urgent need for a 12-court Indoor Sport Stadium; the time for decisive action is now as it must occur before all possible sites are consumed by urban infill and density growth. The study found that without action now, the local area (covering most of the inner metropolitan region) might never have suitable local indoor sporting facilities for the kids of the future to play in sporting competitions.

The findings of the feasibility study, along with considerable consultation across a range of stakeholder groups, has led the PBA to take action on behalf of their basketball community, and the Perth sporting community more broadly.

Launching mid-June, PBA will run a campaign to gather signatories for an e-petition direct to Parliament seeking immediate government action to solve this critical issue. The petition, calling for a new stadium for Perth, is being sponsored by the Hon Hannah Beazley MLA and is scheduled to be presented to the Legislative Assembly in mid-August. The construction of a new stadium for Perth not only addresses the critical issues of a lack of indoor courts in the area, it will also free up the considerable piecemeal court space currently used by PBA across multiple venues. This brings the benefit of returning these spaces to other sporting and community activities – from gymnastics classes and yoga lessons to bingo and everything in between, activities that are also in crucial need of space.

"Many young families in Perth are seeking sporting opportunities for their children," says Hannah of her support of this campaign.

"Our community feels this at many levels – at the family level where parents want to get their kids into teams yet face long wait lists, then if they manage to join a team, they must travel significant distances out of the area to juggle training and games across multiple venues.

"Sporting clubs themselves must invest staff and volunteer time to solve location and scheduling issues, rather than focusing on player development, which is their true calling. As the Member for Victoria Park, which is currently the heart of PBA and the Perth Redbacks, I

am determined to find ways to ensure our young families have access to local sporting programs and a local sporting community, and our youth have the facilities they need for this to happen. Critically, we must be forward-looking in our infrastructure planning,” she added. The ‘new stadium for Perth’ campaign will officially launch at the next Redbacks NBL1 home game on 14th June, with a media briefing scheduled for the morning of 13th June. It is anticipated a number of members of WA’s basketball royalty, who have been themselves highlighting the issue of the desperate need for indoor courts for many years, will attend the Friday night game, and throw their support behind the petition. Mounting this campaign on behalf of the wider Perth community, the PBA encourages all those with an interest in indoor sports, no matter the code, be they players, coaches, referees, administrators or fans, to add their names to this important petition.

“The petition calls on the government to act now and address this critical issue,” explains Anthony. “Our vision is for a 12-court sporting and mixed-use stadium in Kensington, that will not only provide the Perth Basketball Association its first home in its 60-year history, but will also provide a much-needed facility for many indoor sport clubs, schools and community groups in the area. The stadium will be a new heartland of indoor sports for Perth. “The indoor court situation is critical. The time for action is now. We must solve this together,” he adds.

Ends

Petition can be found at:

Campaign media launch: Thursday 13 June 8.30-8.45am, Leisurelife Victoria Park.

Attendees will include the Hon Hannah Beazley MLA, Anneli Maley, Board and leadership staff from the Perth Basketball Association, representative from Basketball WA and a range of players across all levels (domestic through to NBL1 West).

Campaign community launch: Friday 14 June from 5.30pm at Belmont Oasis Leisure Centre (Redbacks v Rockingham Flames home game). Contact Redbacks CEO, Ryan Lenegan for more details.

RSVP essential to both events: Ryan Lenegan, CEO, Perth Basketball Association 0434 517 867