



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION
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Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into the Future of School Infrastructure in the ACT

Submission Number: 10

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**Australian Capital Territory
Badminton Association Incorporated**
ABN 5143 6937 463
<http://www.badmintonact.org.au>

President: Olaf Schuermann
Secretary: Sheehan Lim

**JOINT SUBMISSION BY BADMINTON ACT (BACT) AND CAPITAL JUNIORS
BADMINTON CLUB (CJBC) INTO INQUIRY INTO THE FUTURE OF SCHOOL
INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE ACT**

To Inquiry Committee Secretary,

This submission is focused on two of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference, specifically in relation to the hire of school sports halls by BACT clubs:

- i/ synergies with the wider community; and
- j/ long-term planning and demographic change

Background

Demand to play the indoor sport of badminton has grown substantially in the ACT over recent years; a doubling of BACT member numbers to nearly 1,000 players over the five years to the end of 2022. AusPlay data indicates that around 4,250 participated in badminton play at least once per week over 2021/22 in the ACT (see [Microsoft Power BI "Badminton Report"](#) at AusPlay results | Clearinghouse for Sport). This growing demand to play badminton also reflects the changing composition of the community in the ACT, with an increasing population from cultural backgrounds where badminton is the number one or two sport, such as the South East Asian and South Asian regions e.g. China, India.

Indeed, in a 2 March 2023 ABC TV News Report on badminton ("[BADMINTON IS BOOMING](#)" [ABC TV NEWS STORY – ACT Badminton Association \(badmintonact.org.au\)](#)) it was noted that according to the 2021 Census, 13 per cent of the Gungahlin district population was born in south Asia, nearly double the 2016 figure and when compared to under 7 per cent for Canberra as a whole in 2021. Indeed, Canberra's population from those born in India increased by nearly 60 per cent from the 2016 Census to the 2021 Census periods, and over 160 per cent from the 2011 Census. Those born in China increased nearly 100 per cent over the 2011 to 2021 Census periods.

The availability of suitable indoor sports facilities is compounded by the absence of a dedicated badminton facility in the ACT. Further, the ACT Government's policy focus on indoor sporting groups hiring the sports halls of public schools (with no public investment in multi-purpose indoor sports facilities), has meant that nearly all of the 21 BACT affiliated clubs are largely at capacity. Indeed, some clubs are having to turn prospective new members away or create Wait Lists and many potential new clubs are unable to be established. This lack of availability of suitable facilities is particularly problematic during the peak weekday evening periods after 7pm and during weekends.

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The demand for venues to provide for junior coaching outside of school hours is particularly problematic, as highlighted by the experience of Daniel Akkidasari's Capital Juniors Badminton Club (featured on the ABC TV News story noted above) which has reached capacity only one year after its formation. Club managers like Daniel find themselves embarrassed to respond to inquiring parents, including only being able to offer interested players a place on Wait Lists that are sometimes more than one year long; causing considerable disappointment to the parents and the children.

Limitations on the Hire of Public School Sports Halls

While BACT and its affiliated clubs, including the Capital Juniors Club, appreciates the ability to hire public school sports halls, badminton competes with a number of other indoor sports to hire these facilities during the peak hire periods. Badminton is, therefore, limited in meeting the exponential increased demand to play the sport over the past five or so years.

Further, many of the existing public school sports halls, particularly the older schools, are unsuitable for badminton use (mainly due to low ceilings and/or air conditioning or heating vents protruding down from the ceiling, as well as fixed basketball hoops on the sides).

Surprisingly, many of the newly constructed schools, such as the Margaret Hendry School and Throsby High School, provide sports halls that are unsuitable for badminton use. The former also has too low a ceiling and the latter only provided for two badminton courts when it could have potentially provided for eight and thus be very useful for club use; BACT have been advised that it is apparently too expensive to change the existing badminton line markings as it would require a complete sanding down of the courts and remarking of all lines. BACT is very disappointed in these developments given the particularly strong growth of badminton demand in the Gungahlin region and as BACT was consulted on badminton court designs and the need for at least six to eight courts per venue to make them economic for a badminton social club or competition use.

BACT is heartened that the ACT Education/Sport & Recreation Directorates have been extensively consulting with BACT over the construction of the sport halls for the next two public schools being built in the Gungahlin region (with the school in Kenny scheduled to be opened in 2024). We understand that these will be a 'model' to be used for all future public school sports halls to be built in the ACT. They will apparently provide for eight badminton courts on a sprung timber flooring.

BACT notes that many of floors at existing public school sports halls are not of a good quality (either a layer of rubber or just paint over a concrete base). This results in injuries to many badminton players (mostly ankle and knees), compounded that the floors are not effectively cleaned at the end of each day (mostly swept and only machine cleaned at the end of every school term).

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BACT recommends that all school sports halls are machine cleaned at least every week (preferably at the end of each day) to prevent injury by both community hirers and students.

Court Hire Rates

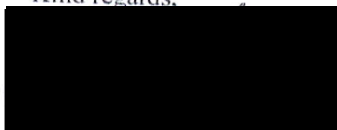
The ACT Government has recently instituted a policy to centralise the hiring of public school facilities, including sports halls, within the Education Directorate. School Business Managers no longer have complete control over who to hire to and the hire rates. They previously had some discretion with, for example, some providing cheaper hire rates to non-for-profit community groups like BACT clubs. BACT understands that this centralisation was to make it fairer for all those competing groups wishing to hire school facilities, reflecting the substantial increased demand by various groups to do so, such as sporting associations like BACT, and the lack of any other public facilities.

While BACT appreciates the necessity for such fairness, we are concerned both at the significant increase in hire rates arising from this centralisation and by some of the extreme variation in these hire rates. For example, the Amaroo School's hire rates are \$70/hour (increased substantially over the past two years) for the hire of four badminton courts (**Nb.** two BACT clubs hire all available eight courts for two hours at a time, thus costing them \$280/session). However, Gungahlin College is just over \$50/hour for six courts (with a two hour session thus costing a little over \$100). Both schools have similar court surfaces. Other hire rates for public school sports halls are around the \$50-\$70/hour range for mostly six courts.

BACT recommends that the hire rates of school sports halls be reasonable, given many are hired by non-for-profit community groups like BACT clubs, and for there to be some consistency in hire rates depending the size and quality of the venue.

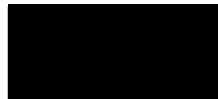
We would be happy to elaborate on any of the above.

Kind regards,



Olaf Schuermann
President
Badminton ACT

31/3/2023



Daniel Akkidasari
Manager
Capital Juniors Badminton Club

30/03/2023



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Attachment

ACT Badminton Association (known as Badminton ACT)

Badminton ACT (BACT) has been active in the ACT since 1975 and is the state peak organisation recognised by the ACT Government affiliated to Badminton Australia. Always run by volunteers, it represents all affiliated badminton clubs and associations in the ACT. We provide opportunities and a fun environment for people of all ages and skill levels to play badminton in the ACT.

BACT has significantly promoted and raised the profile of badminton in the ACT, with membership of 21 affiliated clubs comprising around 1,00 players at the end of 2022; a fourfold increase in member numbers since 2014. BACT run various graded tournaments and social events throughout the year; encourages players to participate in local and interstate competitions; and provides introductory coaching for new players. BACT also has two dedicated junior clubs and active direct coaching of school children at schools and through the training of school PE teachers in the preeminent 'Shuttletime' junior coaching program (accredited by the ACT Government). BACT thus encourages the participation of new players from all ages and levels, with a particularly focus on young children.

While demand to play badminton started slowly at the foundation of the ACTBA/BACT, reflecting the growth in the ACT population, particularly migrants from countries where badminton is a very popular sport, demand to create and join new BACT clubs has grown substantially over the past decade or so. It has now reached the point where the lack of suitable and available indoor sporting facilities in the ACT is significantly hampering the further growth of the sport, with most BACT clubs, which largely hire public school sports halls, now at capacity. Many BACT tournaments are now held at the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), where the venue has placed badminton line marking on two basketball courts to provide for eight badminton courts for our main competitions (the AIS, however, remains an unreliable venue for BACT to hire as they generally close their venues for community hire when they are required for some higher level performance use by athletes. BACT is, however, working with a private school which has generously provided access to its sports hall in relation to conducting some social competitions and junior events.