



MEDIA RELEASE

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NOTHING WRONG WITH OUR SPORT!

Basketball Victoria President Dan Kirtley and CEO Wayne Bird have today come out strongly denying claims that Basketball is in trouble. "It is a frustration that the perception of the sports overall wellbeing is based on the condition of some of the privately owned NBL franchises" they said.

The recent problems with the NBL clubs, the Brisbane Bullets and the Sydney Kings, have seen a surge of enquiries into the health of our sport. Basketball Victoria can assure the basketball family and sporting community in general that the sport in Victoria continues to enjoy very strong demand across all our programs and has not been healthier.

"The constantly negative press about basketball belies the fact that there are now three WNBL and two NBL clubs in Victoria and all are committed to next season. Other Leagues operating within our state, including the Big V and the Victorian Junior Basketball league, continue to be vibrant and are operating very successfully".

"The 100 plus Associations in Victoria, which are the backbone of mainstream basketball, continue to perform very strongly indeed with some of them experiencing waiting lists of people wanting to play our great sport. Participation is growing faster than the general population and basketball is doing well in the face of increased competition from other sports that are much better sponsored and which have vastly greater resources. Let's not be distracted by some NBL clubs' difficulties which are unrelated to mainstream basketball, and in one case, have more to do with the secondary impacts of the global financial credit crisis than the popularity of the game", stated Kirtley.

"At the level where we have responsibility, grass roots, we have never been stronger. The fact is the continued growth is outstripping available facilities for our competitions. There are now some 120 Associations state wide delivering basketball. A significant number of them are the largest sporting bodies in their region", says Bird.

Basketball Victoria's participation programs this year will involve over 40,000 children from Primary and Secondary Schools around Victoria. McDonald's Hoop Time alone, which is run over a 7 month period, will involve some 29,000 primary school players in more than 3300 teams.

On Friday nights in Melbourne, 970 teams (and growing) compete in the State Junior Championship competitions; this involves over 9000 players plus their families. It is the largest competition of its type in Australia.

Registered participation in basketball in Victoria this year exceeded 120,000 and continues to grow year on year with an increase over the last five years of 11%.

"Clearly the NBL is a vital component of our sport, but in its current condition it only brings a constant negative perception. The fact we have just seen one of the best final series in the leagues history is now lost because of poor management by some clubs. There is an obvious need for reform of the business models adopted by these franchises; the first thing they need to do is genuinely commit to re-engaging with the grass roots; that's what gave them success in the past and can do so again in the future." Mr Bird said.

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