

## ***Developing Relationships with Government***

**There are three tiers of government in Australia - local, State and Federal. The most important relationship for tennis clubs will most often be with local government through their council.**

It is important to be mindful of opportunities to engage with State and Federal government too, particularly with Members of Parliament (MPs).

Government at all levels manage competing demands for attention and resources, including demands from other sports and community organisations for funding through grant programs, and for the use of community facilities. A positive working relationship with government will help you promote the growth and success of your club. Here are a few handy hints to help your club work effectively with government.

- Identify the relationships you need to foster. For example, get to know your local council through the elected members and staff who manage your facilities.
- You may like to nominate a club representative to manage the relationship with council and other levels of government. If you don't have a relationship with government, an initial meeting would be useful to discuss how your club can work effectively with government.
- Communicate with government to ensure they are informed about your club, its activities and its needs. Send copies of club newsletters and annual reports to councillors along with details of your club website to councillors and MPs and, if necessary have regular meetings.
- Involve government in your club. Invite government representatives to club functions and important fixtures.
- Demonstrate your appreciation for the facilities, services and support provided by government particularly in the public arena.
- Don't just complain. Approach problems with solutions. Make an effort to understand the issues facing government and identify where you can work together for mutual benefit.
- Align your priorities with government priorities where possible. Common ground is the best platform for a strong relationship!
- Be realistic. Understand that government manages a range of relationships and focus on what is achievable.
- Communicate, build relationships and raise your profile within the community. A good reputation in the community and amongst your neighbours will advance your standing with government.

### **A Local Government strategy should include some of the following:**

- Recognise council as a major sponsor.
- Appoint a club liaison person/s who is primarily responsible for communicating with council.
- Get to know the councillors including the Mayor, Council Senior Officer, Recreation and Maintenance staff.
- Acknowledge council publicly.
- Assist and participate in some council recreation programs and festivals.
- Attend council sponsored training, education and forums.
- Invite councillors to special club functions, and provide them with the opportunity to present awards.
- Use social media to acknowledge council's good work.