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Critical Court Shortage in Launceston Affecting Junior Basketballers Access to the Sport

Launceston Basketball Association is the largest sporting organisation in the Greater Launceston region with over 3500 registered participants and 630+ teams competing annually. We manage year-round competition Monday through Sunday for eight months of the year and Monday through Saturday for the remainder of the year, equating to nearly 4000 games annually. We continue to grow at a consistent pace of 15-20% membership year on year and this has increased due to the impact of JackJumpers and recent Olympic successes of our national teams.

Currently, we are forced to share infrastructure with numerous other sports and competing businesses. Recently we have lost court time to these sports and other for profit organisations causing us further difficulty in servicing our membership. We utilise every available space capable of servicing basketball including Elphin Sports Centre and education department facilities at various colleges, high schools and primary schools. Due to a lack of infrastructure for basketball, we are unable to provide an acceptable level of service to our members and are forced to modify the rules and duration of our games to allow us to fit as many members in as possible. We are also forced to offer games at a very late timeslot including junior games finishing at 10pm weekdays and seniors as late as 11pm. Many of our teams are unable to train weekly on a full court and share space just to be able to practice on a fortnightly basis. **We currently have a waitlist of junior players totaling 235 who are unable to access weekday basketball competitions through our winter season due to a lack of court space to fit this many additional teams.**



Our aim is to provide basketball which is accessible by all members of the community. LBA membership currently includes 58/42% male/female ratio. We run programs for the Migrant and new Australian community, and the local at-risk youth. We have both mentally and physically impaired members as well as a new walking basketball program for the aged, and we currently have teams from the LGBTQIA+ community participating weekly.

There have been numerous solutions and proposals over the preceding years that suggest additional courts are pending however none of these have come to fruition to date. The closest of these, Northern Sporting Hub in Mowbray, which is scheduled for 2025 with seven courts. 60% of the court infrastructure in this development is sport specific as the home of netball and will be to the highest standard for indoor sports however no use to our members. The other three courts being provided are substandard in comparison and will be multi-user. Basketball will be forced to compete with other users like Futsal, badminton, pickleball, volleyball, wrestling, group fitness and any other organization that chooses to book these spaces. The education department has employed Community Liaison officers in an attempt to unlock what is perceived as additional space on school venues however in the twelve months to date there has been no further time opened up in these venues. In fact, LBA has lost court time to other sports recently, leading us to further time constraints on the weeknights affected.

We urge all levels of government to **prioritise basketball** and **dedicate resources and funding** to develop new infrastructure tailored specifically for basketball. The time has come for the government to **pledge its commitment** to creating additional court space. Basketball is **flourishing** in the Launceston region, rapidly gaining popularity, and it is imperative that we address this demand promptly.

Immediate action is required to meet the needs of our basketball community.

