



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
12th Assembly

Petition

Registration No.	33 (e-petition)
Title	Eviction of badminton from Sports House
Presented on	Thursday 5 December 2013
Presented by	Mr Gerry Wood (Member for Nelson)
Referred to	Minister for Sport (Hon. Matt Conlan MLA)
Date referred	5 December 2013
Response due	27 March 2014
Response received	5 February 2014
Response to be presented	11 February 2014

Petition

**TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

WE THE UNDERSIGNED RESPECTFULLY SHOWETH

Badminton has a 40 year history in Darwin and provides health benefits to a range of Territorians. It brings together a strong social and supportive network for all people across ages, gender and culture. Badminton is played seven days a week for 50 weeks of the year with 240 regular players using the current Sports House facility each week.

It is a growing sport in the Northern Territory and players compete at national and international levels and in previous Arafura Games. Together with training of players in Asian countries, badminton provides tangible examples of Asian engagement with the Northern Territory.

Following receipt of an eviction notice in May 2013, NT Badminton Association Inc. (NTBA) together with the Department of Sport & Recreation has been unable to identify a suitable alternative venue. Should the Northern Territory Government (NTG) continue its intention to evict badminton without an adequate alternative, then badminton will most likely die.

The *NT Badminton Association New Venue Proposal September 2013* was provided to the NT Government on 30 September 2013 for consideration and incorporation into the Government's 2014/15 Budget. It proposes the development of a multi-purpose facility for badminton, judo and table tennis at Marrara and we believe it would be the best 'value for money' for the NT Government. The proceeds expected by the NT Government from the sale of the Sports House site would significantly exceed the cost of building the proposed facility.

Currently, 1,400 Territory families benefit each week from the Sports House (Badminton) and Gymnastics-Judo-Table Tennis (Marrara) facilities. The proposed facility would increase the capacity for these four sports and enable 2,700 families to benefit each week.

The proposed facility also addresses current issues with sports including judo and gymnastics, which already have long waiting lists for children who are unable to sign up and can't use their \$75 Sports Vouchers from the NT Government.

We want badminton to be treated fairly and supported as a growing sport in the Northern Territory where other sports, such as cricket, soccer, football and racing receive the lion's share of the funding.

YOUR PETITIONERS THEREFORE HUMBLY PRAY THAT

The Assembly will defer the eviction of badminton from the Sports House facility and agree to allocate funds for and facilitate construction of a new multi-purpose facility for badminton, table tennis and judo at Marrara during the 2014-2015 financial year as detailed in the *NT Badminton Association New Venue Proposal September 2013*.

Response

The Northern Territory Government is unable to support the proposal for a new badminton, judo and table tennis multipurpose sports complex; this is not a direct reflection on the sport, there is simply a greater demand and call for government expenditure elsewhere.

The two options provided to Government, an air-conditioned venue at a cost of \$9.6 million and non-air conditioned at \$6.8 million, are simply not achievable in the current financial climate. The Northern Territory Government must reduce debt and allocate monies in areas that will assist the greatest possible number of Territorians.

The statement contained within the petition that the Department of Sport and Recreation has been unable to identify a suitable venue is not correct. In addition to providing details of available recreation centres and school facilities, an offer put forward by my office to offset 50 per cent of the rent for a dedicated suitable venue was rejected by the Northern Territory Badminton Association (NTBA). This facility has subsequently been leased to another organisation.

The Department of Lands Planning and the Environment has granted an extension for NTBA to remain at Sports House until 31 March 2014. A stay past this period cannot be supported. It is imperative that NTBA look towards options other than a new facility or a further extension of time to remain at Sports House.

The Department of Sport, Recreation and Racing and the Department of Infrastructure has undertaken an evaluation of the option to relocate (recycle) the current hall to an alternative location, as suggested by the Member for Nelson, Mr Gerry Woods MLA, at Sittings. Unfortunately, this would also prove to be a very expensive exercise, \$3.6 million plus program fees and land, which cannot be accommodated in the current fiscal environment.

This Government must be financially responsible in the current difficult economic environment with the decision not to support a new facility essential if other higher priority concerns for the community are to be supported.