

23rd November 2023 - Melbourne, Australia –

The National Pickleball League today announced Steve Wood, former Tennis Australia CEO as a non-executive Director and Board Member for the next three years.

The National Pickleball League plan to revolutionize the sport of Pickleball in Australia via investment in dedicated Pickleball venues, professional tournaments/leagues, grassroots initiatives, affiliate clubs and marketing content; with a clear vision to grow participation in the sport to more 1 million people over the next few years. Steve Wood brings significant experience and expertise in growing sports communities and racquet sports, having overseen Tennis Australia as Chief Executive Officer for 8 years from 2015 to 2023.

As part of that role, Steve was responsible for nurturing the \$3B Australian Tennis Industry including operating the Australian Open Grand Slam and overseeing all sanctioned tennis tournaments in Australia. He was also responsible for significant developments across facilities, coach education player participation and player development pathways. He unified Australia's tennis pathways including both tournament structures, player pathways and coaching accreditation whilst expanding on the existing infrastructure to ensure Australia's position as a sporting powerhouse remained unquestioned.

NPL, the pre-imminent Pickleball organisation in Australia, plan's to utilize Steve's expertise to significantly grow player and coaching participation and pathways across the whole country, leading to the launch of Australia's professional pickleball competition – NPL Season 1, launching in March 2024 with over \$100,000 in Prize Money.

Steve will sit on the Board of Directors for NPL along with current NPL executives and aims to help shape the strategy for NPL's expected hockey-stick growth from 2024 to 2026 as Pickleball begins its journey to becoming a mainstream sport in Australia.

“We are beyond excited to welcome Steve to the NPL team and couldn't think of a better fit to help drive and shape our aggressive expansion plans in both Australia and Australasia. With Steve's guidance and expertise, we plan to significantly expand our national footprint via NPL Venues and NPL Affiliate Clubs offering events, social leagues and tournaments all over the country; helping to legitimize the sport and create true, integrated player pathways. Steve has been there and done that with Tennis Australia and together we plan to bring the elevate the fastest growing sport in the world (Pickleball) together.” – Ron Shell, CEO (NPL).

“My passion is in building communities from the ground up. After overseeing Tennis's rise in Australia – I can see many similarities in the most inclusive sport in the world – Pickleball. NPL has a vision to create the largest Pickleball community in Australia and I believe their unique grassroots, marketing and venue driven strategy is going to see them become the #1 Pickleball Brand in Australia. With my history and experience – I look forward to working with Ron and the rest of the team to bring Pickleball to the mainstream Australian sporting public in the quickest and best way possible.” – Steve Wood, Director (NPL).

The NPL recently launched the first indoor Pickleball supersite in Australia – The Jar in South Melbourne, Victoria. With 4 Bookable Courts, 150+ Person Event Space and Food/Beverage, NPL

plans to showcase the best parts of the fastest growing sport in the world to the Australian public, with large expansion plans to come.

About National Pickleball League (NPL)

NPL is the premium pickleball organisation of Australia. The NPL brand offers Australia's professional national league, tournaments, corporate days, school/university programs, social leagues, events and introductory Pickleball days. NPL aims to build the total number of Pickleball players in Australia via professional league pathways, marketing, content and venue investment. NPL aims to expand its product internationally in 2024.

Key Information

Website: www.nplpickleball.com.au

Instagram: [@nplpickleball](https://www.instagram.com/nplpickleball)

Facebook: [@nplpickleball](https://www.facebook.com/nplpickleball)

Twitter: [@nplpickleball](https://twitter.com/nplpickleball)

About Steve Wood

As the son of parents who were professional tennis coaches, Steve has natural and lifelong involvement in tennis. He played NCAA and professional tennis until 1987 when he transitioned to become a business executive in the technology industry. In 2005 Steve was appointed CEO of Tennis Australia and the Australian Open grand slam event which he ran for 8+ years. In 2015 Steve joined Aruba Networks, a high-profile technology start-up that was acquired by Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) where he was the Vice President of the \$5B networking division covering the Asia Pacific region.

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Steve Wood

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