

Dear Friends and Colleagues in the Volleyball Community

From: Chris Schacht

Many people involved in world volleyball may not be aware that as a result of certain actions which occurred in the latter part of 2013 I am no longer President of the Oceania Zonal Volleyball Association, no longer a member of the Board of Administration of the Asian Volleyball Confederation and no longer a member of the Board of Administration of the FIVB.

This message is to explain to you how I was removed from these positions.

As I explained to many of you in 2012 and leading up to the election of the new President of the FIVB, I was standing as a candidate to ensure that there was the opportunity for all 220 national volleyball federations to vote in an open, contested, and democratic process for the President. I never considered myself to be the favoured candidate but that wasn't my main motivation for standing. As it turned out there was a very close election result where President Graca was democratically elected with a very narrow majority of just on 51% of the vote (in fact, if Ary Graca had received one vote less there would have been a second round runoff ballot). I came a distant third to both Ary and to Doug Beal.

Nevertheless, I believe the FIVB was greatly strengthened by having its first ever democratic Presidential election. When the election was over and the result was confirmed, I certainly made it clear to the new President that I would continue to work to support the growth of the FIVB and world volleyball as a major sport.

### **Oceania Meeting:**

In early 2013 I became aware that President Graca had called a meeting of Oceania National Federations to meet in Tokyo on Wednesday March 6<sup>th</sup>. All Oceania National Federations were invited except Australia. I was not invited despite being the President of Oceania. I was told that Australia was a Category 3 country and as the meeting was only for Category 1 and 2, Australia was not invited. I was also informed that the FIVB would pay the airfares for all National Federations except Australia and myself to attend the meeting, as well as have their accommodation paid. Allan Brodie, as Secretary General of Oceania, was also not invited.

Despite many attempts to speak to President Graca about this meeting I only received a letter asking for Australia to do more to develop its volleyball activities. When I spoke to Mr Bin Nasser, President of the AVC, and asked why I, as President of Oceania was not invited, all he would say was that it was a matter about which I should speak to President Graca.

I decided to go to Tokyo and call a meeting of the Oceania countries after their meeting with President Graca concluded and though I was in Tokyo for the duration of his meeting with Oceania countries I was not invited attend or sit in at the meeting, even as an observer. However, because the meeting went longer than the scheduled 3 hours, I did

finally enter the meeting room and sat at the back listening to the concluding remarks. I noted that not only was President Graca at the meeting but also

- Mr Bin Nasser President of the AVC, and Vice-President FIVB
- Mr Essa Hamza, Vice-President of AVC and FIVB Executive Board Member FIVB
- Mr Cristobal Marte Hoffiz, President of NORCECA and Senior Vice-President FIVB
- Mr Wei Jizhong, former President of the FIVB, former President of the AVC and now honorary President for Life of the FIVB.
- There were several representatives of the Japanese Volleyball Association present

Mr Graca outlined to the meeting participants (while I was present) that there would be development funds coming from the FIVB via the AVC and particularly from the Japanese Volleyball Association to Category 1 and 2 countries in Oceania. Mr Graca particularly emphasized that Japan would have a special role in providing this development assistance to Oceania. Japanese staff members would be available to work with Oceania in the distribution of such assistance.

At the end of that meeting the Japanese Association provided used volleyballs to the countries present.

Later that afternoon I convened a meeting of those that attended the previous meeting with President Graca. Some 13 countries were present out of the 23 countries that are members of Oceania. At this meeting the delegates from Marshall Islands and Cook Islands asked when was there going to be an election for office holders of Oceania. They wanted an immediate removal of all current office holders and proposed a new election take place immediately.

I pointed out that under the Oceania Zonal Volleyball Association constitution and statutes, the time for an election for Oceania was set at a General Assembly meeting to be held in 2014. The above delegates demanded to know whether some members of the Oceania Executive Committee would stand aside immediately and thereby be replaced. I pointed out that unless members resigned, their elected terms expired in 2014. But I did check subsequently with all members of the present Executive Committee if they did wish to stand down immediately and none offered to do so.

I found it extraordinary that I, as a member of the FIVB Board of Administration, AVC Board of Administration, President of Oceania and President of Australian Volleyball Association, was not invited to attend the meeting in Tokyo. Particularly as other members of the FIVB Board of Administration, other members of the AVC Board of Administration and FIVB Past Presidents and members of the Japanese Board of Administration were invited. Japan is not a member of Oceania.

While I was in Tokyo I had a direct conversation with President Graca and he explained that it would be inappropriate for me as a former candidate for the Presidency of the FIVB to attend the meeting. He said the meeting was an outcome of discussions he had had with Oceania countries during the Congress in Los Angeles leading up to the balloting for President. I have subsequently learned that during those meetings in Los Angeles President Graca and his supporters were suggesting to Oceania countries that funding

would be more readily available to Oceania if certain changes were made in the leadership of Oceania.

### **FIVB Board of Administration Meeting:**

In early April 2013 I attended the annual meeting of the FIVB Board of Administration. Again I had a private meeting with President Graca about the need for development funding in Oceania and also where and how Australia could become a stronger participant in FIVB international events.

He again explained how Japan, on behalf of the FIVB, could provide development assistance to Oceania but gave no details of the amount of financial assistance or other assistance which would be provided to Oceania federations. At this time I also informed him that in the near future, after 16 years, I would be stepping down as President of the Australian Volleyball Federation, and that I had provided strong support for Mr Craig Carracher to succeed me in that position.

During the Board meeting of the FIVB there was no mention of what had happened in Japan in early March 2013. At the meeting I did raise one issue that of the status of Dr Acosta as honorary President for Life of the FIVB while at the same time he was taking legal action against the FIVB for a sum of over \$US 4,000,000 for outstanding commissions which he said he was still owed. This created a lively debate during which President Graca said that the constitution of the FIVB prohibited legal action being taken against the FIVB until all internal appeal provisions had been exhausted. President Graca also said that he believed Dr Acosta, in commissions and other payments, had received some \$US 40,000,000 during his period as President of the FIVB. It was agreed by the Board of Administration that a small delegation of 3 FIVB Board members would seek a meeting with Dr Acosta and point out that unless he agreed to withdraw his legal action the FIVB Board and the World Congress would be forced to take other action. I have not heard of the response from Dr Acosta or whether he has actually agreed to meet the delegation, or any update on this effort.

### **AVC Board of Administration Meeting April 18<sup>th</sup> 2013 Macau:**

I attended this meeting and was surprised to learn the President of the FIVB was not attending and neither was the AVC Secretary General Mr Liu Jun.

A major topic of conversation at the meeting was a letter sent earlier in the year from the President of Japan Volleyball to the FIVB and the AVC offering to have the AVC office moved from Beijing to Tokyo. The then Japanese Volleyball President Mr Nakano explained at the meeting that he had been asked to write the letter by the President of the FIVB, Mr Graca. At this meeting the AVC Board of Administration, under the influence of Mr Wei, rejected the offer but agreed that there had to be serious administrative changes to make the AVC administration more effective.

At this meeting I, on behalf of Oceania, with Allan Brodie as AVC Executive Vice-President of the Board of Administration and Oceania Secretary General, moved that in accordance with recent practice of the FIVB that all airfares for Category 1 and 2 countries in the AVC be paid for to attend the General Assembly of the AVC to be held in Dubai in October 2013. This proposal was strongly opposed by Mr Essa Hamza, AVC vice-President and Chairman of the AVC Finance Committee. He said that it was too costly and that as there were no elections at this General Assembly it was not important to have the maximum attendance. Rather, he offered that the AVC would pay the airfares of all Category 1 and 2 Oceania countries to attend a development forum to be held in Oceania some time in the next few months. His proposal was accepted at the Board Meeting. At this meeting in view of the concern raised within the AVC and FIVB at the administrative issues of the AVC, I proposed that a full board meeting of the AVC be held in Dubai the day before the General Assembly to review how these new administrative procedures were performing. This was carried without dissent. Despite this resolution, the meeting was never held in Dubai.

In late April I announced to the Board of the Australian Volleyball Federation and the Australian Volleyball community that I would be stepping down as President on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013 and that I would be recommending that Mr Craig Carracher become the new President from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 and that he would stand to be fully elected as President of the AVF at the Annual General Meeting to be held in October 2013. I indicated that I would complete my term on the various international committees to which I had been democratically elected.

After I stepped down as AVF President, I received information from Mr Carracher, that he had been contacted by the AVC and that the proposed development forum was now to be a special General Meeting of Oceania to be held just prior to the AVC General Assembly in early October. The AVC offered to pay not only the airfares of Category 1 and 2 countries but also the administrative costs of running that meeting to be held in Sydney, Australia on Tuesday and Wednesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2013.

I was told by the new Australian President, Mr Carracher, that he had received information that Mr Essa Hamza might make a quick trip to Australia to discuss the Oceania meeting. Subsequently Mr Hamza made a quick visit and held a meeting with Mr Carracher, the new AVF President and Mr Riad Tayeh, AVF Finance Director and member of the Finance Committee of the AVC.

Though I was no longer President of the AVF, I still held all my international positions, I was not invited to the discussions and only received details of it four days after the meeting occurred. Mr Carracher informed me that Mr Hamza was speaking on behalf of the President of the FIVB. Mr Hamza made it clear they wanted me removed from international positions and if Australia agreed to me being removed from these positions, Mr Carracher would become the new President of Oceania. Mr Allan Brodie would also be removed as the Secretary General of Oceania.

They wanted the Oceania meeting to take a decision on the removal of myself and Allan Brodie from the Board of Administration of the AVC. It was not clear to me whether this included the AVC removing me as a member of the FIVB Board of Administration. During

this discussion it was implied that with these changes Australia might or could receive favourable consideration from the FIVB for such things as entry into the FIVB World League and maybe even in the Women's Grand Prix.

As a result of these discussions with the AVC there was a lot of communication between Oceania countries that if these changes were made then the FIVB/AVC would provide more development financial assistance.

I was aware of much of this lobbying but I chose not to get involved as I found myself in a difficult position of appearing to disagree with the new President of the Australian Volleyball Federation.

### **Oceania General Assembly Meeting Sept 24-25, 2013 Sydney, Australia:**

In the lead-up time to this Oceania meeting a number of Oceania countries were circulating a resolution for a replacement of all Oceania executive Board positions. Informal agreement had been reached of who would be elected to the Board of Oceania and who would be supported from Oceania to be the new members of the Board of the AVC. I chaired the meeting from the beginning and though there was no discussion on development, it was purely focused on the issue of changing the board. All but 2 of Oceania's 23 countries attended. Also attending were Mr Essa Hamza and Mr Wei. This was the first time that anyone can remember senior officials from the AVC and FIVB ever attending an Oceania meeting. It was clear that Mr Wei Jizhong and Mr Hamza were there to carry out the wishes of President Graca to change the membership of the Oceania Board. There were at least two Oceania NFs who were delinquent with their annual membership dues. Mr Wei interrupted and said that didn't matter, they were still eligible to vote.

During the meeting Mr Wei intervened on several occasions pointing out that I was a disliked person within the FIVB and that I had only been elected to the FIVB Board of Administration with his support in 2011.

Being attacked by Mr Wei and Mr Hamza does not worry me. My record for over a decade in calling for a more transparent, open and democratically governed FIVB is something I am very proud of, even though some people may dislike me.

Just before the vote to change all positions I declared to the meeting that irrespective of the decision I would be stepping down as President. I did this to show support for Mr Carracher who would be the incoming President of Oceania.

The motion was carried to change all the positions by 19 votes out of 22. Most of the positions were subsequently filled unopposed due to the agreements made beforehand. I found it interesting that the two new Oceania Board members who were subsequently also elected to be on AVC Board, namely from the Marshall Island and Cook Islands, had both been long-term unpaid members of the FIVB, AVC, and Oceania. Also the Marshall Islands had never entered a team in any Oceania volleyball event.

Because of the uncertain financial position of the Cook Islands, Mr Hugh Graham from the Cook Islands who was elected the new Secretary General of Oceania, it was decided that he should not hold the position of Treasurer. Instead, Mr Riad Tayeh was elected to the new position of Treasurer.

I then handed over the running of the meeting to Mr Craig Carracher, the new President of Oceania, and sat in on the rest of the meeting as an observer.

A week later, on Tuesday October 1<sup>st</sup>, the AVC General Assembly was held in Dubai. I did not attend to represent Australia as I was no longer the President. I disagreed strongly with the AVC being able to replace me and Allan Brodie from our positions on the Board after being democratically elected in 2011 and that our term was for four years expiring in 2015. It makes a mockery of any democratic process that a body can terminate someone's term without due cause and without reasons given for someone's term to be truncated.

I discovered by phone during the meeting that the Oceania countries had decided not to support Craig Carracher to replace me on the AVC Board. I insisted to Craig Carracher that it was ridiculous and an insult to Australia for him not to be on the AVC Board of Administration. To encourage Mr Carracher to remain a candidate, I emailed him my letter of resignation from the AVC Board of Administration. I did this out of loyalty to the new Australian President, Australian Volleyball and in the interests that Australia, the strongest performing country in all of Oceania, should be represented on the Board of the AVC by its President.

At the AVC meeting it was reported that I could now no longer be an FIVB Board of Administration member and Craig Carracher was appointed in my place. Again, I did not resign from my position on the FIVB Board. I had been elected to the position in 2011 for a term of four years until 2015. There is a provision in the FIVB constitution that a General Assembly of a Confederation can remove any of its representatives to the FIVB Board, irrespective of the four year term for which the representative has been elected. I had received no notification from the AVC or FIVB that such a change was imposed or took place other than what Mr Craig Carracher told me by phone at the end of the General Assembly.

Recently I had access for the first time to the official minutes and decision of the 20<sup>th</sup> AVC General Assembly held on October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2013. On page 9 it says:

*'Due to the withdrawal of endorsement of Australian Volleyball Federation to Mr Senator Chris Schacht and upon the request of the AVC Oceania Zone Association, Mr Craig Carracher President of Australia Volleyball Federation would replace Mr Senator Chris Schacht as a new FIVB Board Member representing AVC. Mr. Craig Carracher was elected as the new President of the Oceania Volleyball Association at the region's General Assembly in Sydney in September after taking over as President of Volleyball Australia. And an official resign letter was sent to AVC by former President Mr. Chris Schacht.'*

Regarding my position on the FIVB Board this information is not correct. The Australian Volleyball Federation at no stage ever carried a resolution withdrawing any endorsement

for myself to be a member of the FIVB Board of Administration. Similarly the Oceania General Assembly held only a week before the AVC meeting carried no resolution withdrawing their support for me to be a member of the FIVB Board of Administration. I understand that the new Oceania Board of Administration carried no resolution requesting me to be removed from the FIVB Board.

The positions of President of Oceania, Board member of the AVC and Board Member of the FIVB are constitutionally separated from each other, and are separately elected and there is no constitutional requirement that to be an elected member of one of these 3 positions you must hold one or two of the other positions. The minutes do not show a mover and seconder of a resolution to remove me as a member of the FIVB Board. For such a decision one would and should anticipate a recorded vote. Therefore, my removal as a Member of the FIVB Board of Administration is not in accordance with the constitution of either the FIVB or the AVC.

As there was no resolution from the Australian Volleyball Federation or Oceania General Assembly for my removal the reasons given in the minutes are invalid. Even if the resolution was valid, normal due process would mean that I should have been given the opportunity to present my case against my removal. The invalid reasons given and the lack of due process are further examples that the administration of world volleyball appears to not be open, transparent or democratic.

Because I resigned at the Oceania meeting as President of Oceania and resigned in writing as a member of the Board of the AVC, I do not dispute those changes, but the position of the FIVB Board of Administration was in no way connected to the other positions from which I voluntarily resigned.

I would point out that at the end of the Oceania General Assembly meeting, held only a week before the AVC General Assembly meeting, I spoke privately to Mr Essa Hamza and asked him whether he knew of any proposal to remove me as a member of the FIVB Board. He said he knew of no such proposal and nobody had discussed it with him.

### **Conclusion:**

I have given a detailed explanation of what I consider to be extraordinary events for me to be removed from international positions in world volleyball without good reason, other than personal gossip that some people didn't like me.

From the time I attended my first World Congress in 1998 and my first AVC General Assembly in 1998, I have consistently argued within the volleyball community for improvement in governance of our sport. In the early part of the last decade at congresses in 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008 I consistently argued for a more transparent, open and democratic FIVB. I opposed the appalling way in 2002 and 2004, that several people were expelled from world volleyball on trumped up and unsubstantiated charges. I was almost alone in openly speaking out against Dr Acosta's commissions, which everybody openly and loudly now admit was a mistake. I strongly argued for improved development processes for Category 1 and 2 countries. I was one of the first to argue that

Category 1 and 2 countries should have their airfares paid to all FIVB World Congresses and Confederation General Assemblies.

Nevertheless, I have always enjoyed supporting volleyball as one of the world's great sports. My nearly 20 years in volleyball administration has given me great joy to see how our sport is played at all levels all over the world. My own disappointment is that the administration and governance of our sport has on many occasions fallen short of what our sport should be.

If anyone cares to contact me or get further information my email addresses are below.

Yours sincerely

Chris Schacht.  
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