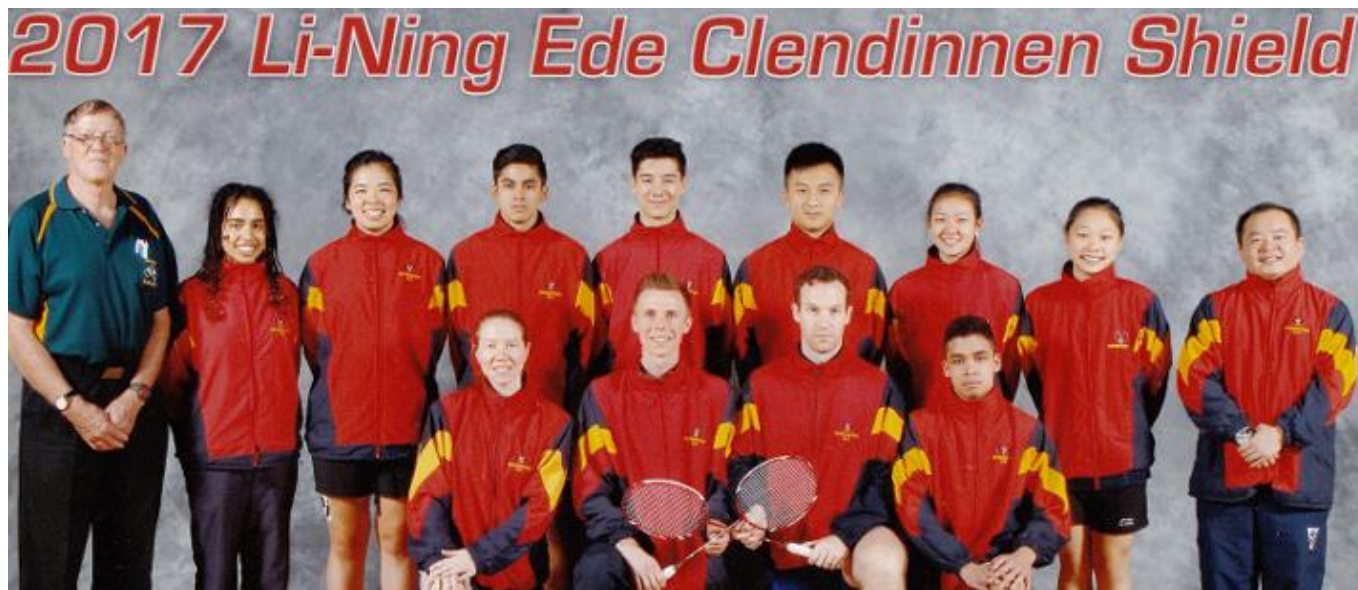


## BOARD OF MANAGEMENT REPORT

### SENIOR STATE TEAM



**Back Row: David Cromie (umpire), Malvika Hemanth, Sirina Fan, Keith Edison, Emerson Krstic, Lionel Seah, Lee Yen Khoo, Chloe Lee, Kevin Khaw (manager)**

**Front Row: Talia Saunders, Stuart Rowlands, Andrew Surman, Tristan Edison**

The 2017 Li-Ning Australian National Championships and the Ede Clendinnen Shield Teams Tournament were held in Melbourne, Victoria. The South Australian state team this year were without a couple of key players from last year's silver medal team. Although not a strong presence compared to last year in the individuals, the team shined yet again in the teams' event. The team spirit and bond that have been the key to past successful results were ever so present.

### 2017 Li-Ning Australian National Championships

In the Men's Singles, Keith Edison and Lionel Seah reached the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of the competition.

In Women's Singles, Malvika Hemanth performed well to reach the quarterfinals losing to Tiffany Ho (NSW) in 3 sets; 12-21, 22-20, 5-21.

In Men's Doubles, Keith and Tristan Edison reached the quarterfinals going down to eventual finalists Robin Middleton and Ross Smith (VIC); 12-21, 15-21. Lionel Seah and Stuart Rowlands also reached the quarterfinals for Men's Doubles losing very narrowly in 3 sets against Joel Findlay and Jeffrey Tho (VIC); 14-21, 21-11, 19-21.

In Women's Doubles, Lee-Yen Khoo and Malvika reached the quarterfinals going down to eventual finalists Grace Hanratty and Louisa Ma (VIC); 15-21, 21-16, 15-21. Lee Yen and Malvika performed extremely well in the match and were unfortunate to have lost the 3<sup>rd</sup> set.

In the Mixed Doubles competition, Stuart and Talia Saunders performed well to reach the quarterfinals losing to eventual finalists Matthew Chau and Louisa Ma (VIC); 12-21, 18-21. Lee Yen together with Ashwant Gobinathan (VIC) also reached the quarterfinals narrowly losing to Joel Findlay and Gronya Somerville (VIC); 15-21, 20-22.

### 2017 Li-Ning Ede Clendinnen Shield Teams Tournament

This year's round robin format allowed all 7 states to compete against each other which was a fresh change compared to the past many years of group stages and cross over matches. This of course meant that there was no finals to look forward to but nonetheless, each team played their best and overall, competition was still very much alive throughout the Ede Clendinnen Teams Tournament.

The team welcomed debutant Emerson Krstic who worked hard at training in order to be selected. Sirina Fan and Chloe Lee, both of NSW were also welcomed additions to the team to support our women's line up. They both fitted into the team seamlessly. These 3 new faces contributed very well to the team's dynamics and performance. We also welcomed back Andrew Surman who brought with him experience and tactical edge.

Each member of the team very much looked forward to the teams event and first up was Queensland which was a very important tie to win as they have always been a very hard team to compete against. If we were to match our performances from last year, this first tie was essential to kick start our momentum. Keith and Malvika gave the team a positive start with their single wins. Stuart won a very tough 3 setter against Wesley Caulkett; 16-21, 21-15, 21-19. This win was crucial as Stuart injured his right arm and ended up playing most of his men's doubles using his right and left hands interchangeably. Stuart and Lionel lost that doubles match in 3 sets; 8-21, 12-18, 14-21. The tie was 5-5 by the time we reached the mixed doubles stage. Andrew and Sirina although playing together for the first time won their match; 21-15, 21-19 while Lee-Yen and Lionel took us over the line winning their match; 21-15, 21-16. We won the tie 7-6 with the team starting to show great potential for the coming matches.

Victoria Strikers were our second opponents on the same day. The team, evidently tired from their last grueling tie performed exceedingly well against the Strikers. Although Victoria's second team, the Strikers were not to be underestimated and S.A did well to keep their focus. Our women's line up proved to be very strong on this occasion and the perfect women's singles, doubles and mixed doubles wins were testament to this strength. S.A won the tie 11-2 convincingly. The only downside from this tie was that Stuart had to retire due to his injury and we did not know at the time whether he could feature again in the remainder of competition.

The next day, we were up against NSW who were always worthy opponents in the past as the two teams battled for at least a silver medal for 4 consecutive years. Without our number 1 player, strategies and combinations had to be changed. Lionel and Keith gave strong performances against their respective opponents in men's singles winning in straight sets.

Sirina won her singles match; 21-14, 12-21, 21-16 to make the tie 3-3. Our doubles did not fare well for both men and women against very strong NSW pairings. Malvika and Lee-Yen however played very well to win their women's doubles 21-14, 21-18 while the successful combination of Andrew and Sirina gave us hope with their mixed doubles win taking the tie to 5-6. Unfortunately, NSW made sure that history would not repeat itself and won the remaining matches. S.A lost the tie 8-5. The team finally had a chance to rest as we didn't have to play the next opponent until the next day. This gave us all an opportunity to have dinner together, rest and lift spirits up through the usual S.A team bonding sessions.

The Territories and Tasmania were our next opponents on the very next day. As the team started to believe they could lift their games up even more with one eye on a medal, each player gained momentum in their performances. No team in this competition should be taken lightly so staying focused was very crucial. Every player we came with to Melbourne were given chances to play against The Territories and Tasmania. Such was the confidence in each other as the team dispatched The Territories and Tasmania; 11-2 and 12-1 respectively. Tristan Edison performed exceptionally well in his singles and doubles matches. These results meant that we could return home with at least a bronze medal. As we always say every year when we're performing at this level; bring on Victoria!

The final day of the Clendinnen Shield event was to be a very memorable one. Each time we met Victoria in the past 3 years, we always came a step closer to winning the tie. We were already beaming with confidence and undeniably happy with how well we've performed this year. The team as always, decided to fight till the very end even though Victoria was a very much stronger team on paper. Stuart made his return after a lengthy rest on the side lines but we were a player down as Malvika had to fly home the day before due to family reasons. New strategies were in place and although the team's intention was to fight till the end, we wanted to do that and enjoy the moment at the same time. Lionel and Sirina gave us wins in their singles matches but we were down 4-2 before the doubles matches. Sirina and Chloe then gave us a push with their doubles win; 21-15, 21-15 to bring the tie to 4-3 down. Keith and Lionel gave an outstanding performance to win their doubles match in 3 sets; 21-18, 17- 21, 22-20. This inspired Talia and Lee-Yen to follow suit and match such a performance by winning their doubles; 15-21, 21-12, 21-19. Before the last 3 remaining mixed doubles matches, the tie was now 5-5. The whole S.A team was encouraged and became even more focused. We believed that those closer steps we took in the past 3 years against Victoria could become defining steps now. Although Sirina and Andrew went down 14-21, 12-21, Lee- Yen and Lionel won their match 22-20, 21-11 which brought the tie to 6-6. It was down to the final match. The atmosphere was filled with pressure, excitement and deafening cheers. Talia and Keith played their best mixed doubles game in the whole competition by winning the last match; 21-15, 21-18. They played for each other and won it for us all. S.A won the tie 7-6. Joy was unconfined.

Yes, we beat Victoria but the competition format this year meant that NSW, VIC and S.A were tied at the top of the table as we each lost only once. This resulted in a count back to how many games won in comparison with each other. Victoria was ahead, while NSW came second and S.A came third.



We were nevertheless all smiles and beyond jubilant. The match against Victoria was a gold medal match in our hearts and will forever be in our memories.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every player in the team. We started off strong and we finished strong and above all we did it together. I commend debutant Emerson on his support and team spirit even when he wasn't playing. I also would like to thank Sirina and Chloe for being part of the team and contributing even more to an already strong team environment. Thank you Tristan for helping me prepare meals for the team which allowed us all bonding time. Special mention goes to Stuart for showing great leadership when on the sidelines by coaching and supporting the team. Thanks to Andrew Surman who provided experience and

support. Well done to Lee-Yen who returned from an Achilles tear and surgery and thanks for driving players around as well. Special tribute goes to Malvika whose brother Nikhil sadly passed away the day before our match against Victoria. The entire team dedicated our win and medal to Malvika and her brother. S.A Proud.

Kevin Khaw  
Senior State Team Manager