Fourteen million tennis balls. Well, 13,949,126 last year according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. For some inexplicable reason, Australia imports 14 million tennis balls each year. That is 0.6 tennis balls per person every year. Are they kidding? Where do they all go?

Are there that many tennis players out there hoarding tennis balls? Mind you that may go some way to explaining Australia’s recent tennis success. Just ask the English Davis Cup team. Maybe Leyton Hewitt and Pat Rafter have few more spare tennis balls than they are letting on.

Perhaps they are being thrown out, resulting in environmental pollution? You would think that, given their bright green or yellow colour, they couldn’t be missed. Strangely, we seem to have a company called Waste Audit, who specialises in, you guessed it, counting waste material. According to them, tennis balls do not even rate as a litter item. What a relief! With the recent drought breaking rains, we may have been at high risk of tennis ball impaction resulting in blocked drains and flooding.

An illegal tennis ball export black market to third world countries hoping to emulate Australia’s recent tennis prowess perchance. Maybe that is why they now x-ray all the bags on international flights. Forget the bombs, they are looking for 14 million missing tennis balls!

Allowing for a few balls eaten by errant dogs, there are still a lot of tennis balls unaccounted for. Perhaps a Royal Commission may help answer this question. Or a Tennis Ball Summit. Any suggestions should be sent to the Australian Prime Minister.
Expression of concern about content of which Dr Paul McCrory is a single author

This paper is authored by Dr Paul McCrory. During 2021 and 2022 there was an investigation by BJSM and BMJ which found that some of his work was the product of publication misconduct. Such misconduct includes plagiarism, duplicate publication, misquotation and misrepresentation in publications in respect of which he was listed as the sole author. We are placing a notice to readers on all content in relation to which he is identified as the sole author to alert them to the conclusions of our investigation.

REFERENCE