



# Marketing Bulletin

## December 2017 Update

Welcome to my first bulletin as Head of Marketing for the ABF and the first time I have used this software. As a result I seek your understanding if it is not great and particularly my uninspiring art work.

The email list is one that exists already for the marketing newsletter however it does not have names and therefore is not personally addressed. I also want to send the email to club secretaries, state bodies and ABF officers from a separate list. This may mean that some people receive more than one for which I apologise but contact me if this happens. If you could forward the newsletter to other people who you think may be interested that would be great. If anyone wants to volunteer to help me improve the style, art work and the mailing lists that would be better still.

Do not hesitate to send me any comments or suggestions for improvement or content that you would like in the future to [peter.cox@abf.com.au](mailto:peter.cox@abf.com.au) or on 0413 676 326 - Peter J. Cox

### MARKETING – THE FUTURE OF BRIDGE

I was appointed ABF Head of Marketing in October and would like to bring you a progress report on the process that I have been undertaking to try and determine how we should build and market bridge in the future in Australia.

My background is as an executive and consultant on the media, communications and leisure industries for over 35 years. As a bridge player for a long time I am experienced in the problems for players and clubs and have been fortunate to be able call on the views of a wide range of leading players and administrators.

My first step was to analyse the history and current state of bridge in both Australia and internationally, the competitive market place, the trends in players and club numbers and to look at the challenges and opportunities in the future.

### Challenges

In the US ACBL members, clubs and number of tables are falling, similarly in New Zealand. Bridge in Australia is struggling to hold its position against competing leisure activities, a time poor market, changing consumer behaviour, aging members (ave age 70) and growing attrition. A common perception of bridge is a card game for old people, we have difficulty attracting younger players, retention rates of beginners is low, night bridge for workers has largely died and some tournaments are not growing. We could be at the tipping point of declining like golf, tennis, cricket, bowls and rugby have already. The ABF effectively does not have a marketing budget to face the challenge of national marketing. Bridge structure and practices are often stuck in the past and do not encompass modern technology and marketing.

## Vision

I am now developing a Vision for bridge in Australia following discussions with many interested parties and will be conducting polls and market research. Marketing strategies will be developed and published in the ABF Marketing Plan for 2018-2020.

The Future of Bridge presentation has been made to tournament organisers, leading directors, the NSWBA and the VBA and the council of the Australian Bridge Federation.

If you would like to see this presentation or have me visit your club or state body to discuss the presentation with your members or friends please contact me at [atpetercox@ozemail.com.au](mailto:atpetercox@ozemail.com.au) or on my mobile on 0413 676 326.

I will also be at the ABF Marketing stand in the Canberra and the Gold Coast tournaments if you wish to meet me there.

The presentation takes about 1-1.5 hours including discussion and the availability of a projector if possible.

## The Future of Bridge

### The Need For Change

for the Australian Bridge Federation

Peter J. Cox  
December 2017

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## THE WAVERLEY BRIDGE CLUB – A Model Club

On a trip to Melbourne to make a presentation to the Victorian Bridge Association I decided to visit the biggest club in Victoria, the Waverley Bridge Club with over 800 members, to see what has made it so successful.



Mary Elson and Peter Cox

It is located in an outer eastern suburb of Melbourne with a medium socioeconomic profile.

### Facilities

The club secretary Mary Elson tells me that the NFP club was incorporated in the mid 1980s in a rental premises which they outgrew and in 2010 moved 100 yards to a much larger community centre. In a unique deal they invested \$500,000 with a licence to use the premises for 25yrs and another 10 year option. It has probably the best car park I have ever seen for a bridge club with 100 parking spots.

The main playing room fits about 50 tables and a separate teaching room has around 15 tables. The club is so commercially conscious that they rent out space on a Friday night to a chess club. They use Compscore, bridgemates and bidding boxes and publish a 14 page newsletter each month.

### Teaching

It is great to see that they have a very comprehensive beginners teaching program with two by 8 weeks courses a year with four supervised sessions and a lesson every week and their own “workbook for beginners”.

The kitchen service is only minimal with soup for a \$1, free biscuits and coffee but a coffee van does come in for some sessions to provide espresso coffee.

The table money is \$9-\$11 with half price Wednesday mornings. An interesting feature is they allow non-members to come in and play socially which is a good way of getting people to be comfortable in a bridge club environment.

The result is that up to 800 people play around 200 tables a week with monthly winners

and prizes. They believe that their success is due to being the friendliest club in Victoria and by being welcoming and nice to people – an excellent approach for every club. The club committee has obviously been very effective but as I have observed in many successful businesses that much of the credit must go to the total commitment and drive of one person, Mary Elson, over many years. After 10 years of growth Waverley has experienced a slight decline in numbers this year. Lessons for all of us on the future of bridge.

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### HELP PLEASE

The biggest marketing problem we have is that we do not have direct communication with our members. We need to have a national database with the email addresses for as many of our 37,000 members as practical and as soon as possible.

This is essential for ABF Marketing, tournament organisers, Newsletter circulation, sponsors and advertising. We are looking at ways to achieve this which may require some more computer coding.

However, what would greatly assist us is that when the club masterpoint secretaries receive membership renewal fees over the next few months if they could check the MP club file that the email address is added if not already there for every member. We will comply with the Australian PPL 7 Direct Marketing provisions of the Privacy Act and the Spam Act.

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### FINALLY

I greatly value the input of all bridge players and officials so please do not hesitate to call me on 0413 676 326 or email on [petercox@ozemail.com.au](mailto:petercox@ozemail.com.au).

Have a happy New Year and a great 2018.

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**Tony Bemrose  
Insurance Brokers**