

**AUSTRALIAN BRIDGE FEDERATION  
2018 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Vibe Airport Hotel, Canberra

Times: Saturday 9.30am

3.30 pm Marketing Workshop

Sunday 9.00am concluding at 12.00 Midday

**AGENDA IS IN 2 PARTS: 1ST PART FORMAL AGM REPORTING FOLLOWED BY STRATEGY WORK AND A MARKETING WORKSHOP**

The President Mr Bruce Neill opened the meeting at 9.30am.

**1. Identification of Attendees**

**1.1 Roll Call**

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| ACT:                      | Roy Nixon (Treasurer), Marianne Bookallil  |
| NSW:                      | Bruce Neill (President, out-going Councillor), Julian Foster, Richard Douglas (in-coming Councillor) |
| NT:                       | Judy Herring   |
| QLD:                      | Therese Tully (in-coming Councillor), Richard Wallis   |
| SA:                       | Adel Abdelhamid (in-coming Councillor), Bill Lockwood  |
| TAS:                      | Dallas Cooper (MC Member), Hugh Grosvenor  |
| VIC:                      | Kim Frazer (MC Member), Christopher Leach  |
| WA:                       | Allison Stralow (Secretary), Robina McConnell  |
| Legal Counsel:            | Geoff Chettle (in-coming Legal Counsel)  |
| Supplemental Councillors: | Laurie Kelso, David Morgan   |
| Executive Secretary:      | Jane Rasmussen   |
| Apologies:                | Mairead Kelly (NT)   |
| Observers:                | Graham Rusher (out-going Councillor), Peter Cox (Head of Marketing)                                  |

**1.2 President welcomes new Councillors and thanks retiring Councillors and Office Bearers**

Bruce Neill welcomed the new councillors to the meeting:

Therese Tully from Queensland

Adel Abdelhamid from South Australia

Richard Douglas from NSW

The meeting noted that Russel Harms, the outgoing legal council will join the meeting later today.

**1.3 Bona Fides of each person present voting or observing**

The President welcomed Peter Cox, the National Head of Marketing as an observer. He also welcomed Graham Rusher who is the out-going councillor from Queensland.

**1.4 Apologies.**

Mairead Kelly (Northern Territory)

**1.5 Election of Supplementary Councillors**

The meeting re-elected the following Supplemental Councillors:

David Morgan

Laurie Kelso

*Moved: Bruce Neill; Seconded: Dallas Cooper; Carried*

#### 1.6 Chairman's power to vary Agenda as circumstances dictate

The meeting agreed that the President may vary the agenda as required.

### 2. Minutes of Previous Annual General Meeting (22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2017)

#### 2.1 Confirmation of minutes of 2017 AGM.

It was moved that the minutes of 2017 AGM were accepted and confirmed.

*Moved: Marianne Bookallil; Seconded Allison Stralow. Carried*

Matters arising:

Nil

#### 2.2 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Mid-Year Meeting (28th October 2017)

The minutes of 2017 mid-year meeting were accepted and confirmed.

*Moved Hugh Grosvenor; Seconded: Roy Nixon. Carried*

Matters Arising

Nil

### 3. Election of Office Bearers

#### 3.1 Management Committee (President, Secretary, Treasurer, two members)

Nominations for Management Committee positions have been received as follows:

|             |                                 |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| President:  | Allison Stralow                 |
| Secretary:  | Kim Frazer                      |
| Treasurer:  | Roy Nixon                       |
| MC Members: | Dallas Cooper and Therese Tully |

There being no other nominees, the President Bruce Neill declared the MC elected, and handed the Chair to the incoming President Allison Stralow.

#### 3.2 President Emeritus

Council was invited to consider the election of Bruce Neill as President Emeritus, to enable the new Management Committee to have access to his knowledge and experience on ABF matters.

*Moved: Allison Stralow; Seconded: Dallas Cooper. Carried*

Bruce Neill thanked the council for his nomination and he expressed his willingness to support the new President in the transitional phase.

### 4. Constitutional Amendments and Explanations

#### 4.1 Motion 1

To amend Clause 14 (1) of the Constitution by adding immediately after the word "law" and before the words "in a State or Territory" the words: "or being a current, reserve or retired Judicial Officer"

14. (1) At each Annual General Meeting at which the term of the General Counsel is due to expire the Council may if it so desires appoint an ABF registered player (being a person entitled to practise law *or being a current, reserve or retired Judicial Officer* in a State or Territory of the Commonwealth but not being a Councillor) as General Counsel of the Federation for a term of two years expiring at the Annual General Meeting in such second year.

*Moved: Allison Stralow; Seconded: Julian Foster. Carried 15 - 0*

It was noted that the above motion did not encompass 'Federal retired judges'. The council agreed that this issue would be considered by MC as a constitutional matter.

The meeting discussed the potential opportunity to register as a National body, however, deferred further discussion on this until the section on Governance later in the agenda.

#### 4.2 Motion 2

To amend Clause 10 of the Constitution by adding a further sub-clause 10 (9) as follows: -  
"10 (9) An officer shall, at the expiration of any term of election or appointment, be eligible for re-election or re-appointment save that no person may serve as an officer in the same capacity (other than as the Public Officer) for more than eight (8) consecutive years except by a specific resolution of Council authorising such re-election or reappointment notwithstanding the provisions of this clause."

*Moved: Allison Stralow Seconded: Julian Foster. Carried 15 - 0*

Bruce Neill noted that legal advice has confirmed the application of this clause will apply from this meeting forward.

### 5. Appointments

The out-going legal counsel has advised his work commitments will not allow him to continue in the role of General Counsel to the ABF.

#### 5.1 General Counsel

Allison Stralow outlined the credentials of Geoff Chettle who has been proposed for the position of Legal Counsel by the Management Committee.

*Moved: Allison Stralow; Seconded: Christopher Leach. Carried*

The meeting thanked the out-going Legal Counsel Russel Harms for his invaluable support to the Management Committee and his outstanding service to the ABF over the past four years.

#### 5.2 Public Officer – Julia Hoffman

Allison Stralow advised the council that Julia Hoffman has held the position of Public Officer for several years. The Public Officer must be an ACT resident and Ms Hoffman has indicated her willingness to continue in the role.

*Moved: Allison Stralow; Seconded: Dallas Cooper. Carried*

#### 5.3 Auditors – Synergy

The Treasurer has recommended the re-appointment of Synergy as auditors to the ABF. He outlined the credentials of the auditors who have provided the services for the ABF for several years.

The meeting discussed the cost of the audit fees which were \$13,000 in the last financial year. It was noted that it is several years since a comparative quotation was obtained and the Council requested that the Treasurer undertake a review before the 2019 AGM.

It was moved that the existing Auditors, Synergy, be appointed for 2018.

*Moved: Roy Nixon; Seconded: Julian Foster. Carried*

**Action:** The treasurer shall undertake a comparative review of pricing as part of the recommendation process for auditor appointments for the 2019 meeting. (RN)

## 6. Executive Reports

### 6.1 The President

#### 6.1.1 a) Strategic Summary

The out-going President Bruce Neill spoke to his pre-circulated report. He advised the President's report would be provided in two parts.

Approximately three years ago the MC and Council agreed to a Statement of Expectations which has been available on the ABF website for members and council information. A broad strategy was developed by MC to deliver on these expectations and some progress has been made against this over the past three years.

#### 6.1.1 b) Annual Report on Strategic Activities 2017

Bruce Neill highlighted the following areas of particular note in 2017:

- The expansions of opportunities for online bridge, and in particular the support for an online youth tournament in 2018;
- The ABF has evaluated the opportunity for a National Licence for Pianola and implemented this for National Events;
- The National Marketing Strategy has been progressed under the guidance of Sandra Mulcahy who continued with her program of club support. Sandra Mulcahy resigned in mid 2017, and has been replaced by Peter Cox. Peter's major objective is to update the ABF Marketing plan and he will be providing the council with insights on this at this meeting;
- Less progress in Government Relations has been made since the appointment of David Wawn due to his work and family commitments. He has provided guidance when requested on key issues and will continue to do so;
- A new Newsletter editor was appointed in 2017 - Barbara Travis who has breathed new life into the newsletter;
- The National Teaching Co-ordinator – Joan Butts – has been very active in expanding the program. She has brought on Cath Whiddon as a Teacher Trainer and she has been very well received. In early 2017 the ABF conducted a ten-week 'Summer School' targeted at inexperienced players.
- Directing – John McIlrath has made extensive progress on the Director Development Program since his appointment in late 2016.
- International Program: Bill Lockwood has been very active in his efforts to bring a World Championship to Australia. This proposal has been questioned due to the cost tag associated with this event. The ABF been offered the opportunity to host the APBF in 2020, and this is being given serious consideration.
- Ben Thompson was appointed as the Zone 7 Delegate to the WBF, and the Zone 7 President.
- International Performance Improvement Committee under the direction of Kim Frazer has updated the Player Charter and developed a selection policy for non-target events. Additionally the committee undertook a review of Youth Governance that led to the appointment of Leigh and Bianca Gold as Youth Development Officers. Their contracts commenced in April 2018 for a 6 months trial.

The meeting noted as a general matter, all the items highlighted in the President's report will be discussed in further detail under the appropriate agenda item.

Allison Stralow offered thanks to Bruce Neill as the out-going President. She highlighted some of Bruce's achievements as President of the ABF, and looked forward to his continued participation on the Management Committee as President Emeritus.

## 6.2 The Secretary

Allison Stralow spoke to the pre-circulated report which included some statistics on operations in 2017. She noted in particular:

- the ABF newsletter will now be published in even months;
- Some changes to the ANC for 2018 were highlighted,
- A change in the roster for forthcoming ANC events in 2020 has been made following the withdrawal of the Northern Territory. She noted the meeting would need to consider how to address selection of mixed teams following the introduction of a mixed team event at World Championships.
- A Workshop for Tournament Organisers was held in late 2017 which was well received by participants. The meeting acknowledged the work of Laurie Kelso in running this event.
- A new national recorder – John Brownie, a retired judge – has been appointed.
- An investigation has been undertaken on DGR opportunities for the ABF to gain tax benefits for donations, however legal advice by Emil Ford has been provided which rejects this proposition since the ABF is not considered an eligible entity.

**Action:** Follow up on whether establishing a foundation would facilitate the opportunity for DGR benefits. (AS)

## 6.3 The Treasurer

The Treasurer Roy Nixon spoke to the following pre-circulated reports:

### 6.3.1 ABF Financial Report

He highlighted the following matters:

- The ABF financial position hasn't altered significantly from previous years.
- Income is relatively static, or trending slightly down. There are ad hoc events which cause minor fluctuations both positively and negatively.
- Expenses have continued to grow in the past year however not quite as much as projected. Resource availability to progress projects is a factor in delivering on projects, however we expect resources will continue to grow due to some initiatives which have been put in place.
- The budgeted deficit is lower than expected. He noted the budget outlook would be discussed later in the meeting.

The Treasurer invited questions from the meeting and responded as follows:

- GNOT projected expenditure for 2018 is likely to be slightly lower than 2017.
- Other fluctuations in income and expenditure are attributable to events occurring slightly earlier or later than anticipated.

### 6.3.2 James O'Sullivan Financial Report

The Treasurer noted that income has been falling due to the early retirement of loans by clubs. The trust has approved two new loans in 2017 – Hawk's Nest and Toronto Bridge Clubs.

Bruce Neill commented on his attendance at the opening of the Hawk's Nest Bridge club's new rooms which he reported was well attended by local dignitaries and politicians.

The JOS Trust has capacity to undertake further loans and the treasurer hopes that the publicity from the activities in 2017 will stimulate further loans in 2018 and beyond. The advantage of a club taking up a loan from the JOS trust are the low establishment fees.

Richard Douglas also noted his recent visit to Hawk's Nest recently and advised council that Hawk's Nest Bridge Club do not own the land upon which the clubroom sits, and as such they have constructed the clubrooms in a manner which will allow relocation should this be a requirement in the future.

### 6.3.3 Review of Operations 2017 - income

### 6.3.4 Review of Operations 2017 – expenditure

### 6.3.5 Actual Vs Budget 2017

There were no questions on the pre-circulated reports

### 6.3.6 GNOT Travel Arrangements

The Treasurer reports on the new travel arrangements that had been put in place for the 2017 GNOT. He reminded council of the rationale for the change which was to attempt to ensure that teams which qualified late were not disadvantaged in the cost of purchasing airfares for team members. The new travel arrangements allowed for pre-purchase of airfares which mitigated this concern. The acquisition of airfares by the ABF also assists in ensuring the ABF meets its duty of care obligations in assisting participants to arrive safely at the venue since air travel is considered a safer means of transport than motor vehicle.

Some advantages to this change, which are not readily apparent, is also the insurance coverage available to players by the ABF purchase of airfares. In the event of cancellation, the players travel costs will be covered by the ABF policy.

In 2018 the ABF wants to preserve the benefits of the travel arrangements for both players and the ABF while addressing the key issues which were highlighted in 2017. The ABF preferred method for GNOT travel arrangements is for all bookings to be managed through ABFHQ/Treasurer.

Key changes in 2018 are:

- We will allow players to have more control over the timing of their travel.
- Bookings will be made in consultation with team captains who will consult with their team members.
- Alterations to travel arrangements after the tickets have been issued will be permitted, however the traveller will bear the cost of alterations, not the ABF.

Key feedback from 2017 was that many players prefer to travel by car or make other arrangements such as booking frequent flyer tickets.

The meeting agreed that:

- Team members who wish to make their own arrangements will be permitted to do so.
- In this case, ABF subsidy/travel support will be provided to a maximum of four team members, and it will be the responsibility of the team to co-ordinate the distribution of subsidies within the team.
- Players will receive an air fare equivalent to the best available economy airfare of the day as at September 1 2018 less 10%. Payments will be made to the players at the GNOT via transfer to the designated bank account for the team.
- Players who undertake their own arrangements will bear responsibility for any costs which might arise due to cancellations or changes. ABF insurance will not cover these players.
- Team captains should notify the ABF Treasurer of their team's required travel arrangements no later than 10 days after the conclusion of the qualifying event in their region.

The meeting expressed concern regarding the administrative workload and complexity in undertaking this methodology.

**Action:** The meeting suggested that a log of time expended on the GNOT travel activities be kept to gain an understanding of the effort to support this. (RN/JR)

The meeting confirmed the requirement for teams seeded 1 – 4 to fly out on Tuesday due to the high likelihood of these teams making the final, however it was noted that the ABF would continue to fund any other changes to travel arrangements required as a result of a team reaching the final.

Motion: That the Financial Reports be accepted:

*Moved Roy Nixon; Seconded: Julian Foster. Carried.*

## 6.4 The General Counsel

The General Counsel reported that:

- Seniors Team selection issues had created a significant amount of work in the early half of 2018.
- In 2017 some drafting of regulations for the Tournament Committee has been undertaken.
- Two matters are currently under consideration regarding two players which will be discussed with in-coming Legal Counsel.

The out-going Legal Counsel expressed regret that his work commitments prevented him from continuing in the role for the ABF.

## 7. HOTSА Report

The Head of Marketing Peter Cox spoke to the HOTSА report which had previously been circulated.

He expressed concern at the membership numbers which he believes have reached a tipping point and suggested the ABF risks heading the way of other types of organisations whose activities have gone out of favour in recent years.

It is important to consider the external factors which may influence the participation numbers in the various tables.

He noted that club numbers are relatively static and suggested there are some growth areas in cities which may present opportunities for new clubs to form.

Council was asked to consider what numbers it might like to have included in the annual HOTSА report. The meeting agreed that this topic should be discussed during the Marketing Workshop in this meeting.

It was suggested that a youth report may be a useful inclusion in any reporting on HOTSА.

**Action:** The Youth Co-ordinators will be tasked with developing a Key Performance Indicator for Youth Bridge. (KF)

## 8. Directions for 2018

### 8.1. 2018 Strategic Activities report

The President outlined the background to the development of the 2015 strategic plan and noted that this plan would require updating as part of the development of the 2018 - 2020 strategic plan. She highlighted the key areas that would be addressed as part of this development. She spoke to the various areas of the strategic plan and noted in particular:

- The ABF has made good progress in the areas of Teaching, Directing and Marketing. Appointing contractors specifically to these roles has allowed the ABF to make substantial progress in these areas.
- Technology will be a major focus in 2018.
- In early 2018 Youth Development Co-ordinators Leigh & Bianca Gold were appointed. They have been working on development of a strategic plan for the growth and development of youth bridge which will be discussed at the next MC meeting.
- International Teams – Monitoring and Performance of international teams will continue to be a focus in 2018. Development of procedures to support the policies which are in place will be a focus in 2018. The inclusion of and funding for Mixed teams will be a focus area for the ABF in 2018. She noted it was important to consider mixed teams in the context of the overall international team participation program. It may be necessary to also consider how the states might contribute to the development of international mixed teams through their own state events. She also noted that a paper had been developed on proposals for Women’s team selection which will be considered by MC at its next meeting.
- Consideration of running a 2020 APBF event will be a discussion point for later in the meeting.

## 8.2. ABF Budget 2018

The Treasurer spoke to the proposed budget for 2018:

- The meeting discussed in particular the youth budget which will be dependent on a decision regarding the format of Youth Week in 2019 and youth selection. It was noted that youth budget requirements would be clarified after the discussion on the Youth Strategic Plan at the next MC meeting.
- He noted an increase in both receipts and expenditure at the Summer Festival was observed at the 2018 SFOB since the 2018 Summer Festival saw an increase in team participation in week two (and associated increased costs) leading to better utilisation of space, particularly in week two.
- A one-time donation of \$10,000 received during Youth Week fund-raising remains on the books while consideration is given to utilising these funds for youth activity in 2018 and beyond.

### 8.2.1. ABF P&L Jan-March 2018

Early 2018 has shown a surplus. Income was higher due to various factors however it is anticipated that expenditure will increase in the remainder of 2018. The meeting queried the breakdown of ABF expenditure on insurance.

**Action:** Insurance Costs: A summary of insurance costs should be circulated to states (RN)

### 8.3 Motion to increase Masterpoint Fees by 4.9% effective 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019

At the Mid-Year meeting in October 2017, Council agreed to a recommendation from the Treasurer that we move to set up an annual increase to fees as described above. This motion was first discussed at the 2015 AGM. This motion proposes a “catch-up” increase in 2019 to reflect the fact that fees have not changed since 2014. In subsequent years fees will increase by annual CPI.

A summary of the changes is detailed in the Schedule below:



## Schedule of Fees as at April 1<sup>st</sup> 2019

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| 1. Masterpoint levies per masterpoint<br>(including GST): Grades A3, B3, B4, B5 | \$1.94   |
| Grades C, D, E, F   | \$1.84   |
| Grades B4c, B4s, B5i  | \$1.47   |
| Grades A, A2, B   | \$1.26   |
| 2. Capitation fees per home club player:  | \$15.74* |
| April 1 <sup>st</sup> - September 30 <sup>th</sup> .                            |          |
| October 1 <sup>st</sup> - December 31 <sup>st</sup>                             | \$7.87*  |
| January 1 <sup>st</sup> - March 31 <sup>st</sup>                                | Nil      |

**Motion:** That the ABF increase Masterpoint Fees by 4.9% effective 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019

*Moved: Roy Nixon; Seconded: Julian Foster. Carried*

The meeting noted that some states need to cater for members who pay these fees by cash. Consequently:

The meeting moved that capitation fees in future years be rounded up or down to a whole figure amount of five cent amounts.

*Moved: Therese Tully; Seconded: Dallas Cooper. Carried*

## 9. Committee & Other Reports

### 9.1. Tournament Committee – D Morgan

The TC Chair David Morgan reported Eric Ramshaw has served the TC for several years with distinction & is already a Committee of Honour recipient. In order to recognise the distinguished service provided by Eric, a plaque has been arranged which will be presented to Eric in Ballarat next month and a story will appear in the June ABF Bulletin.

He also highlighted the following items from the TC pre-circulated report:

- TC consultation with players has been occurring with a number of players on key issues. One area for consideration has been to attempt to recognise high level women players' performances.
- Consultation with players on the location and timing of the playoffs is about to be undertaken. Players will also be asked how much more they would be willing to pay to contest playoffs in their preferred location.
- As the four-year cycle nears conclusion, consultation will also be undertaken to assess the format of the playoffs.
- Some adverse feedback was received regarding the SFOB, particularly with respect to players who found the event was full; additionally players who were contesting the finals of women's / seniors were unable to drop in to the weekend Open Pairs event due to space limitations.

The meeting discussed whether the calendar should be re-organised to remove clashes or provide a better structure for the year. The meeting noted that some states may be reluctant to relinquish their dates. However, some events might benefit from synergies which could consider running events concurrently or leveraging off existing events.

**Action:** MC to consider the methodology for review of the calendar.

## 9.2. Finance Committee – R Nixon

A report had been pre-circulated. There were no issues for council.

## 9.3. ABF Masterpoint Centre –D Weston

A pre-circulated report was taken as read. The Masterpoint Centre had provided a detailed report on activities for council.

The meeting discussed the mechanism for the removal of names from MPC lists, particularly for deceased players, and noted that system data integrity was reliant on the clubs managing their membership databases effectively.

## 9.4. Systems Committee – L. Kelso

Laurie Kelso spoke to the pre-circulated report. He highlighted some of the changes to regulations which had been undertaken. Small changes continue to be made to the system cards, and the old 'Edwards' system card has been removed.

## 9.5. Ethics Committee – R Harms

No report. No activity in 2017

## 9.6. National Authority – R Harms

No report. No activity in 2017

## 9.7. Regulations Committee – L. Kelso

The meeting discussed 'Stop Cards' and their use in various jurisdictions. The decision to use Stop Cards has been essentially left to Tournament Organisers. The meeting noted there was considerable player resistance to the use of Stop Cards, despite their use in some jurisdictions. The meeting was informed that recently the ACBL has dispensed with Stop Cards. The major reason for their discontinued use is that while in theory the stop cards are supposed to assist with addressing issues associated with hesitations in biddings, in practice the Regulations Committee felt this has not been the outcome.

**Action:** Council agreed that Australia should formally advise New Zealand regarding Australia's decision to cease the use of stop cards in all competitions (LK)

It was noted that some alterations to screen regulations have been undertaken to remain in line with international practice. Many of these alterations have been brought about to limit the opportunities for unethical behaviour.

Generally, the Regulations Committee's approach has been to update Tournament Regulations annually since these regulations impinge mostly on Tournament Organisers, however have limited impact on the players. System regulations which have a much higher impact on players have less frequent updates.

## 9.8. Masterpoint Committee – D. Anderson

A pre-circulated report was discussed. In particular, mention was made regarding the incidences of immigrant players who may have prior experience beyond their 'Australian' masterpoint level, and whose prior experience may not be recognised by masterpoints from their home country or via transfer of masterpoints.

The meeting noted that a guide for clubs on registering new members was available to mitigate this concern. <http://www.abf.com.au/masterpoints-and-pqps/masterpoints/overseas-players-seeking-membership/>

The recommendation from the Masterpoint Committee was that the State Tournament Directors be empowered, subject to the agreement of the local State Masterpoint Secretary, to determine that a new player is of sufficient standard for an immediate promotion to Life Master, or Grand Master, to

occur. This action will then be carried out at the Masterpoint Centre, with the player being given sufficient points (retrospectively) for the promotion to occur.

The meeting felt that the decision as to who could make this determination should be decided by the states, however there was in principle agreement with the recommendation.

**Action:** The MP unit has raised the issue of overseas players entering restricted events. The secretary should write to the states requesting the appointment of the relevant person/unit in their state to establish a process for assessing overseas players to ensure an appropriate ranking is awarded to that person. (KF)

The meeting discussed the issue of other players such as players from private clubs (e.g. Grand Slam), and Online Players who have not participated in formal ranking schemes. Therese Tully reported that the GCC was in negotiations with the Grand Slam club regarding transfer of points.

**Action:** Matter to be referred to MC. (KF)

### 9.9. Player Liaison –David Morgan

There is no formal report. Most of the player liaison has occurred via consultation activity on specific issues through the Tournament Committee's activities.

### 9.10. National Directors Accreditation Committee – J. Brockwell

A formal report had been submitted to council. The report raised a concern regarding the appointment of international directors at national events. The general view expressed by the meeting was that utilisation of international directors was useful for enhancing knowledge and experience of both players and directors. While it may be the view of the NDAC that these appointments deprive Australian Directors of National Event opportunities, nevertheless the council view was that whilst the use of Australian Directors should be encouraged, it remains the responsibility of Tournament Organisers for the decision.

**Action:** MC to formulate a response to the NDAC report (KF).

Council expressed concern at the number of committees running directing matters nationally, and the longevity of service of some members. The President advised the council that a meeting had been conducted with the three groups earlier in 2018 to attempt to co-ordinate the activities of the disparate groups.

**Action:** Review governance of Directing in Australia with a view to rationalising the committee structure (MC).

### 9.11. Technology Committee – H Grosvenor

The ABF technology requirements have broader issues beyond those which a committee of volunteers might be able to achieve.

The treasurer's initiative to implement an entry system for national events is seen by council as an excellent initiative and the technology co-ordinator role is important for the continued support for the ABF. However, as an organisation we need to focus on a number of issues:

- A plan for how we are going to use technology to improve our service to the bridge organisations that form the ABF and to the players.
- Deciding what information is required and determining how this will be achieved and managed.
- A consistent on-line interface at least for ABF events and activities but ideally extending further than this.
- A social media strategy.

- A strategy regarding on-line bridge.

Obviously most of this will be the purpose of the new Technology Coordinator however it is a major task that needs input and thought from all of us.

The meeting held some discussion on how a technology strategy would be influenced by the structure of the ABF.

The meeting agreed that creation and management of player data was integral to the future plans of the ABF. It was noted that presently, there are several different databases in operation, each with varying amounts of player data which is inefficient.

**Action:** MC to develop a strategy for management of player contact details.

**Action:** Subsequently, ABF to prepare a letter to be sent to clubs via state associations seeking member email addresses. The letter should explain the purpose of obtaining email details and incorporate a privacy and opt-out policy (GC).

Hugh Grosvenor also detailed some issues currently being experienced by club directors with scoring software and the ABF's reliance on a small number of individuals with proprietary software. Issues associated with the scoring software are the level of support provided by the individuals, accessibility by a broader audience, and the lack of a standard interface for players.

The meeting discussed the ABF risk profile, particularly with respect to technology, scoring systems, and key personnel.

While there was some concern expressed at the likely willingness of the owners of the software to co-operate, it was noted that co-operation has existed in the past in the development of hand generation and seeking the same type of co-operation between the various owners of scoring systems is worth pursuing by the Technology Co-ordinator once an appointment is made.

The technology unit also reported on a new dealing unit available called Bridge+Four which enabled board dealing at the table. While it was felt this type of technology may hold more appeal for application in a home environment, it was noted that innovative technology such as this may change the way in which clubs operate in the future, and it is important to keep abreast of such developments.

**Action:** The secretary to write to all committee chairs requesting committees consider risk elements as part of their areas of responsibility and include this in their reports at the ABF general meetings. (KF)

#### 9.11.1 National Online Entries and Payment Gateway Project

The Treasurer spoke to the pre-circulated paper which outlined the broad approach to the Project. The Council see this as an important first step in developing a more robust support system for tournaments.

#### 9.11.2 Way forward – ABF Technology Co-ordinator

The meeting noted that development of a national technology plan has been difficult primarily because what is required goes well beyond what we can reasonably expect from volunteers. A pre-circulated document detailed a proposal to appoint an ABF Technology Co-ordinator.

Council agreed for MC to create an expression of interest for the position of ABF Technology Co-ordinator. Likely requirements of the role are:

- the development of a 5-year technology vision and the projects required to meet stated objectives.
- ensuring the ABF has sufficient control over the ABF's critical software IP and hardware systems either directly or through licence agreements.
- new website

- online bridge
- national marketing through use of our existing databases
- succession planning in the technology area

The meeting noted the suggested remuneration may need to be increased by negotiation to ensure the right appointment is made. Management Committee will ensure the contractual arrangements established with the appointee clearly define the desired outcomes.

#### 9.12. Governance Committee – J Foster

No formal meetings. Some consultation has been undertaken on constitutional matters in the past year. The meeting noted the resignation of Julian Foster as Chair of this committee.

**Action:** Legal Counsel be requested to review the constitution to rectify various issues including gender neutrality and to clarify the wording with respect to election of supplemental councillors regarding the length of appointments and when re-election is required. (GC)

The meeting noted that consideration of the structure of the ABF may be worthy of review. The establishment of the ABF was undertaken in a different generation, and perhaps consideration of a different structure is necessary to ensure it supports the objectives of the ABF in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The meeting agreed that State Delegates would discuss the concept of changing the structure of the ABF. MC will develop a summary document to assist states with this discussion. The document should include:

- Comparison with other national bridge organisations
- Comparison with other sports
- The General Governance model
- Definition of the role of the state within the new structure and what responsibilities it might have
- What might the ABF ‘council’ look like?

**Action:** Christopher Leach and David Morgan will supply some draft notes on the topic to the secretary as input to the paper. (CL/DM)

**Action:** MC to undertake a process of structural review of the organisation. All associations will be contacted regarding the proposition.

#### 9.13. Head of Marketing – P. Cox

Peter Cox had spoken to the activities he had undertaken as Head of Marketing in the past year. Many of these activities were discussed in detail during the Marketing Workshop held in the marketing workshop.

He stressed the importance of infrastructure to support any initiatives implemented at the national level.

#### 9.14. National Teaching Co-ordinator – J. Butts

The meeting acknowledged the pre-circulated report from the NTC and acknowledged the activities underway to establish Teaching Co-ordinators in other states.

Survey of accredited teachers is being undertaken to review activities, and the NTC is seeking new areas to run teacher training.

A suggestion was made that utilising the accredited teaching fellows as part of the CPD program for teachers might be worth consideration.

**Action:** The NTC to be asked to provide data for the Mid-Term meeting based upon agreed KPI’s. e.g. What data is available to the ABF on the effectiveness of teacher’s who are currently accredited? How many people are they teaching? What is the retention rate for students? Etc. (AS)

#### 9.15. 2017 NEC Activities

A table of activities was provided.

#### 9.16. National Director Development – J McIlrath

Due to time constraints, the NDD report will be discussed by MC.

### 10. ANC Calendar

#### 10.1 2018 ANC Hobart – D Cooper

ACT has lodged a request for a slightly over-age player to be included on the youth team for the ANC. Council agreed to this request.

It was noted also that:

- Youth Butler dates have changed due to the proximity of the World youth championships in China. This has been communicated to all youth players, however states should also be informed.
- A Government House reception has been arranged which has strict rules and dress code for attendance.

**Action:** ANC Organiser to write to states advising the process for nominating attendees at the reception.

#### 10.2 2019 ANC Melbourne –K Frazer

Report re-submitted post meeting.

### 11. Tournaments and Licensed Events

#### ABF Managed Tournaments

##### 2017 (i) GNOT – Ray Ellaway

Report taken as read.

##### 2018 (ii) Summer Festival – R Nixon

Report taken as read.

##### 2018 (iii) Australian Playoffs – J Rasmussen

Report taken as read.

##### 2019 (iv) Selection of Australian Mixed team 2019 – B Neill

The WBF has announced the addition of mixed team events to the 2019 WBF championships. A summary of activities undertaken to address this matter is detailed below:

- Events which have featured mixed teams in the past have generally had teams formed via an expression of interest process.
- Subsidies for mixed teams have been limited in the past – primarily entry fees and a limited subsidy.
- A survey is currently being conducted on the topic by Ben Thompson and early indications from interested players are that a separate playoff for the mixed teams is preferred.
- A mixed team's event might be run concurrently with the Women and Senior teams' events at the SFOB. For 2019 due to the short notice provided by the WBF, the process used in 2019 might differ from the process implemented long term.

**Action:** The meeting requested David Morgan and Marianne Bookallil prepare a paper on Subsidy Arrangements for 2019 for the June MC Meeting. It was also requested that they undertake a more extensive consultation process for subsidy arrangements beyond 2020. (DM/MB)

## 12. International Events and Performance

### 12.1 Report on Negotiations to run a WBF Event in Australia in 2021 – B Neill

Bruce Neill thanked Bill Lockwood and his colleagues for the extensive work he has done on this proposal. It appears likely that the cost to the ABF of running an international WBF event might be in the order of one million dollars, mostly due to the style of a WBF event requiring many extracurricular activities as part of the contractual arrangements. Investigations into viable options to offset this cost such as sponsorship, etc., have not been fruitful. It was noted that The Netherlands have withdrawn from their 'offer' to host the event in their country due to cost. We also note that the increase in the size of the event since our investigations due the introduction of mixed teams is likely to increase the cost of the event for the ABF.

The meeting discussed the options which might be points of discussion with the WBF as components which would reduce the costs for the tournament. The WBF President had indicated reluctance on the part of the WBF to alter any of the standard contractual arrangements beyond what has already been proposed – ie. A small reduction in the fee which is likely to be offset by the increased cost of adding mixed teams.

**Action:** The ABF MC recommend the ABF secretary writes to the WBF withdrawing from the negotiations expressing disappointment at the WBF position. (KF)

### APBF Hosting in 2020

The APBF has approached the ABF regarding hosting an APBF event in 2020. A suggestion at the meeting was that a possible location is Adelaide, although consideration needs to be given to the proximity of the ANC with the proposed International Event.

Bruce Neill will provide some draft financial data (prepared by Ben Thompson) to enable an assessment of the viability of hosting the 2020 APBF.

### 12.2.1 International Team Performance 2017 and 2018 Team Selection – K Frazer

Report taken as read.

### 12.2.2 International Performance Task Force – K Frazer

Report taken as read.

## 13. Independent Organisations ABDA Report

The ABDA report was taken as read.

## 14. General Business

### 14.1 VBA correspondence - investigating an ABF investment policy

The VBA has raised a question regarding whether the ABF should have a more robust investment strategy and whether it should seek to invest in activities (e.g. Blue Chip shares, ETF's, etc) which may provide the ABF with a higher rate of return on its accumulated funds. Whilst such an investment strategy encompasses a higher risk, the VBA queried whether this might be worth considering.

The ABF MC position has been that a higher risk investment strategy was not appropriate for the organisation. Furthermore it considered the ABF has a limited resource pool with little expertise in this area. The office staff have neither the time nor the qualifications to undertake monitoring and managing such investments, and appointment of appropriately qualified personnel to manage this type of investment strategy may result in greater costs than benefits.

The Council noted that other, larger organisations with greater staffing levels, and more expertise have suffered quite adverse consequences from such investment strategies.

**Action:** The secretary will write to the VBA advising the ABF position on the matter (KF)

### 14.2 Committees for 2018

The Council considered the membership of the Governance Committee. It noted that given some of the directions in this meeting, the committee was likely to have significantly more activity in 2019 than prior years.

It was moved that the Governance Committee comprise: Richard Douglas (Chair), Robina McConnell, Geoff Chettle

*Moved: Allison Stralow; seconded: Therese Tully. Carried*

As there was no constitutional requirement for council to appoint other committees, it was suggested that the remaining committees be reviewed by the MC.

#### 14.3 Marketing Grants for 2019

Referred to Management Committee for discussion.

#### 14.4 Mid-Term ABF Meeting Date

Council agreed that the mid-term meeting would be held on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2018 in Canberra.

#### 14.5 2019 Annual General Meeting Date

Council agreed that the AGM would be held on 27 – 28 April 2019 in Canberra.

### 15. Succession Planning

#### 15.1 Succession Planning Report

Bruce Neill spoke to the pre-circulated report. He advised that the committee had originally been formed for one year, and since its formation it has overseen a successful transition to a new management committee. It has also noted that there has been a transition in the organisation from the use of committees to the employment of contractors to oversee specific areas.

It was recommended to council that the succession planning committee be re-activated from time-to-time as needs arise, however it should not be an on-going committee. The MC should review the requirement for a succession planning committee on perhaps a four-yearly basis.

Council agreed to the above recommendation.

### 16. Progress towards Marketing Strategy

The Head of Marketing and the Management Committee will be progressing the marketing strategy utilising feedback from council provided at this meeting during the Marketing Workshop (documented in Attachment 1) and other data collected over the past several months.

### 17. Checkpoint - Strategic Priorities

Referred to Management Committee

### 18. AOB

There was no other business for discussion.

### 19. Meeting Closed at 12.20pm



## Attachment 1: Marketing Workshop: 3.30 – 5.30pm April 28<sup>th</sup> 2017

During the ABF General Meeting, the Head of Marketing (HOM) Peter Cox outlined some of the work he has undertaken in the past several months in the marketing sphere. During his presentation:

- He highlighted the establishment of marketing stands to promote the ABF at recent national events as an initiative which has been well received by players. He noted that many ABF players had been pleased to participate in the recent surveys conducted with mostly national event players.
- He reviewed the draft Marketing Plan which was circulated prior to the meeting.
- He suggested the council should consider the marketing budget and its allocation in the long term to ensure the most effective spend is realised.
- He noted that marketing updates circulated to clubs are either not opened or not passed on to the relevant people within their clubs. Email address data is not readily available to the ABF which impedes marketing to the membership.
- An incentive scheme may be worth consideration, however he mentioned that the introduction of any such scheme would naturally need to target ‘new’ members as opposed to transition of players from other clubs.
- He noted that bridge does not attract ‘followers’ – ie. Spectators watching bridge.

### Consideration for further marketing projects

The HOM recommended that marketing projects proposed by the states or clubs should be evaluated by the ABF before the allocation of funds.

Allocation of funds may also need to consider whether the club actually needs funding support – for example where clubs have a robust balance sheet our limited funds might be better expended in other areas.

### Key proposals:

- Creation of a national email database will enable more effective communication with the membership.
- Introduction of a national rating system to assess players on current performance rather than longevity.
- Utilisation of technology to target young people (e.g. FunBridge, BBO, etc). The online market is increasingly more attractive for young people. Pursuit of an online bridge strategy may encompass entry into an arrangement with an online provider for bridge and awarding Masterpoints to players who participate.
- Consideration of branding of events.

A number of other broad growth objectives were proposed.

Council discussed some of the ideas which had been proposed in the marketing plan. Key thoughts were:

- Development of a member database to enable communication with members was appealing to some however any marketing effort requires support functions to take advantage of potential member interest.
- Councillors were asked to consider the merits of introducing an incentive scheme similar to the ACBL. A suggestion of a ‘points’ type scheme for clubs might be suitable with rewards like guest speakers, or perhaps play with a pro as the rewards for the club (rather than cash). Facebook advertising to specific groups has also been found as effective.
- It was noted that any marketing campaign requires the infrastructure (e.g. lessons) to be in place to support any campaign.

- Clubs may not have the structure in place to support the introduction of initiatives. Most clubs have volunteer committees who may not have the resources of skills to support initiatives and as such support will need to be provided to clubs to assist them in managing their operations to ensure the success of initiatives.
- Establishment of an interesting presentation & speaker to present to groups such as Rotary Clubs and similar entities.