

**AUSTRALIAN BRIDGE FEDERATION
2019 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES**

Vibe Hotel, Canberra

Saturday 27th April and Sunday 28rd April 2019
Start Time: 9.30am Saturday and 9.00am Sunday

1. Identification of Attendees

1.1. Roll Call

ACT:	Roy Nixon (Treasurer), Marianne Bookallil
NSW:	Richard Douglas, Julian Foster
NT:	Judy Herring
QLD:	Therese Tully, Richard Wallis (MC Member)
SA:	Adel Abdelhamid, Bill Lockwood
TAS:	Dallas Cooper (MC Member), Malcolm Sherlock
VIC:	Kim Frazer (Secretary), Christopher Leach
WA:	Allison Stralow (President), Robina McConnell
Supplemental Councillors:	Laurie Kelso
President Emeritus	Bruce Neill
Legal Counsel	Geoff Chettle
Executive Secretary:	Jane Rasmussen

Apologies: Mairead Kelly (NT); David Morgan, Matthew McManus
(Supplemental Councillors)

1.2. President welcomes new Councillors and thanks retiring Councillors

The President thanked Therese Tully for her time on the Management Committee and noted Richard Wallis had joined the Management Committee until this meeting when a vote could be held.

1.3. Appointment/election of Supplemental Councillors if any

Nil

1.4. Chairman's power to vary Agenda as circumstances dictate

The President noted item 8 – Marketing will be discussed on Sunday morning.

2. Minutes of 2018 General Meetings

2.1. Confirmation of Minutes of 2018 Annual General Meeting

The President asked the meeting to accept the minutes of the 2018 AGM as a true and accurate record.

Moved: Allison Stralow

Seconded: Robina McConnell

Carried.

2.2. Confirmation of Minutes of 2018 Mid-Term Meeting

The President asked the meeting to accept the minutes of the 2018 mid-term meeting as a true and accurate record.

Moved: Dallas Cooper

Seconded: Richard Wallis

Carried

2.3. Matters arising

2.3.1. Governance and ABF Structure Review

Richard Douglas spoke to the pre-circulated paper. He noted the ABF has a diminishing number of aging volunteers and has moved towards more paid contractors to undertake activities on behalf of the organisation. He highlighted a number of issues for council's consideration.

The paper recommended the ABF move toward more of a corporate structure with players becoming members of the ABF.

The Meeting agreed that a presentation will be developed using examples from other organisations who have undertaken similar structural change to put forward the case for change. The presentation will be taken on a roadshow around the states to gain input for next steps.

Richard Douglas will establish a sub-committee to prepare the presentation to the states. The Presentation will be circulated to council for comment prior to embarking on consultation with states.

Action: RD

3. Appointments

3.1. Management Committee

Following the resignation of Therese Tully in December 2018, and the interim appointment of Richard Wallis to the MC, a casual vacancy has occurred. As per ABF Constitution By-Law 3.1.3 nominations were requested and there being no other nominations, the President declared Richard Wallis retains his appointment until the 2020 AGM.

3.2. General Counsel – Geoff Chettle

The meeting agreed unanimously that Geoff Chettle be re-appointed as General Counsel

3.3. Public Officer – Julia Hoffman

The meeting agreed unanimously that Julia Hoffman be re-appointed as Public Officer

3.4. Auditors – Synergy

The meeting agreed unanimously that Synergy be re-appointed as auditors.

4. Executive Reports on 2018

4.1. The President - Strategic Summary and Annual Report

The President covered the pre-circulated report in detail. She made particular mention of the following areas:

- The MC had undertaken a one-day planning workshop to develop the Strategic Review document which will be discussed later in the meeting
- The Head of Marketing has been working closely with the Technology Officer to develop an ABF database to enable direct communication to the members.
- The continuing work on the teaching program led by Joan Butts was acknowledged.
- Substantial progress has been made in developing a technology strategy which has now been circulated to states and is available on the ABF website.

4.2. The Secretary

The secretary noted a report had been pre-circulated which outlined the routine activities undertaken. She highlighted there had been substantial changes to areas of the website and acknowledged the work of Keith Ogborn (historian), the Youth Co-ordinators and the Head of Marketing in making these changes.

Council was asked to acknowledge the work of Pauline Gumby in maintaining and pro-actively updating the website. The secretary will send a letter of thanks to Pauline Gumby.

Action: KF

The President highlighted that Roy Nixon had been appointed as Playoff Organiser for 2020 and she thanked Jane Rasmussen for stepping in following the illness of Sean Mullamphy to run the playoffs for the past three years.

4.2.1. Proposal for an ABF Foundation

The secretary presented a proposal to establish a fund-raising entity which was currently being called "The ABF Foundation". She noted the entity will provide an avenue for those members who wish to make a donation or leave a bequest to the ABF to do so. She discussed the options available to establish such an entity – either as a fund with rules or as a trust, and described the merits of each.

She presented council with two recommendations and advised that should council accept the recommendations, further work would be undertaken to establish the entity

- The recommendation to set up a fund with rules was accepted.
- The recommendation to set up a trust should one be required was accepted.

It was noted that investigation should be undertaken to ascertain whether the ABF could establish a charitable trust similar to EBED which was set up by the English Bridge Union.

Action: KF

4.3. The Treasurer

- 4.3.1 ABF Financial Report
- 4.3.2 James O’Sullivan Financial Report
- 4.3.3 Review of Operations 2018 - income
- 4.3.4 Review of Operations 2018 – expenditure
- 4.3.5 Actual Vs Budget 2018
- 4.3.6 ABF Profit and Loss Jan-March 2019

The treasurer spoke to the above pre-circulated reports highlighting particular areas of interest and challenge for the ABF.

In particular he noted in comparison with 2017:

- Income rose by 1.93%
- Expenses dropped by around 5% driven principally by lower spending on International Teams in year 4 of the cycle.
- GNOT travel arrangements had been managed more effectively in 2018
- Youth spending had increased with the appointment of youth co-ordinators and an increase in activity
- Surplus for the year was \$25,965

The Treasurer also presented council with a snapshot of spending and revenue by key area over the past four years which showed an operating loss of a little over \$43,000. He noted the ABF has significant cash reserves and in recent times the ABF has moved to more balanced budgets, however funding for the strategic initiatives planned over the next 3 years will have a significant impact on the budget.

The President acknowledged the significant amount of work undertaken by the treasurer in preparation of these reports and general management of the ABF accounts.

4.4. The General Counsel

Legal Counsel advised concerns had been raised regarding the recorder system operations. It was suggested that a national database of players with ‘recorder issues’ be created.

The Council agreed to the recommendation.

Legal Counsel to progress development of the process to manage recorder issues. **Action:GC**

5. Notice of Motion to amend Constitution

To amend Clause 14 (1) of the Constitution by adding immediately after the word “person” and before the words “entitled to practise” the words: “who is or was”.

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 who is or was 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.

Proposed: Kim Frazer

Seconded: Christopher Leach

Carried unanimously

6. Notice of Motion: Appointment of Bruce Neill to ABF Committee of Honour

In accordance with Section 25 of the Constitution, Mr Bruce G. Neill be elected to the ABF Committee of Honour.

Proposed: Allison Stralow

Seconded: Julian Foster.

EXPLANATION:

Mr Bruce Neill was President of the ABF for 4 years and elected President Emeritus for a further 2 years. He served on the ABF Council from 2011- 2016. Bruce attended Management Committee meetings as an observer for 4 years prior to becoming ABF President. He was on the New South Wales Bridge Association Council for 9 years, primarily responsible for Rules and Ethics and served as Chairman for 5 years from 2008-2012. Bruce was made a life member of the NSWBA in 2014.

As a player, he has represented Australia 11 times between 1996 and 2017 at World Bridge Federation events, as well as on numerous occasions at Asia Pacific Bridge Federation events. He is a multiple national event winner and his contribution to bridge in Australia has been outstanding. A brief statement cannot do justice to his efforts on behalf of the ABF and bridge in Australia. It is with considerable pleasure that I move a motion for his elevation to the Committee of Honour for his outstanding service.

Carried unanimously

7. Increase in Fees 2020

- 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 all Masterpoint Centre fees (both Capitation fees and charges for masterpoints) based on the movement in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The first such increase came into effect on 1 April 2019.

- ABS data calculates CPI growth for the 12-month period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 at 1.9%. This is the amount being applied from 1 April 2020. The new Schedule of Masterpoint Centre fees (both Capitation fees and charges for masterpoints) is contained in the circulated Motion for Council approval.

Roy Nixon, Treasurer

The proposed increase was accepted.

Council expressed some concern with tying the increase to CPI given the current low rate of CPI.

8. 2019 Directions & Beyond

8.1. 2019 Strategic Review Report

The President presented the Draft Strategic Review document to the meeting. A full copy of the strategic review paper can be found at: <https://www.abf.com.au/abf-strategic-review-2019-2022/>

Council accepted the ABF Strategy and Objectives 2019-2022, although some members expressed concern that mention of the state associations was not greater.

8.2. ABF Financial Plan 2019 – 2021

The Treasurer spoke to the pre-circulated 3-year financial plan. He discussed the significant funding levels required to support the plan and the impact this will have on ABF cash reserves. He noted that additional total funding of over \$900,000 to fund the plan will be made into:

- technology (to develop and secure our basic systems that clubs need to operate efficiently) - \$560,000
- marketing and teaching to drive membership satisfaction and growth - \$103,000
- improving directing training and development - \$80,000;
- international team performance and youth bridge - \$180,000+.

He noted that the remainder of the Marketing grants to states and territories would be withdrawn and reinvested into other national and regional club development initiatives to drive member growth. (see item 8.3 below)

Additionally, the states and territories are also being ask to forgo half of their annual masterpoint commissions in 2020 and 2021 to support some of the initiatives.

With this financial re-investment by the States, the ABF will be able to:

- offer all software systems developed during the three years to States and all their affiliated clubs free of charge.
- not resort to raising annual masterpoint fees and charges over and above the CPI increases already contemplated

Council discussed the proposal for funding the development of the software systems and expressed some concern about the ability of the organisation to deliver the project given past experiences in this area.

The expenditure on international teams was queried in the context of the overall plan & budget.

Action: Councillors to consult with their respective states and territory associations and provide comments on the Financial Plan to the secretary by end June.

Action: The secretary will ask the IPTF to consider the overall budget for international teams across all categories in the context of a plan for the 4-year period regarding which events/teams should be funded & which events might be self-funded. Consideration might be given to not sending a team to some events or for some years.

8.3. ABF Marketing Plan for Clubs

Peter Cox presented the meeting with information on a successful program running in New Zealand which utilises regional bridge 'buddies' who work with clubs to grow membership.

The meeting discussed the proposed process for marketing grants and in particular:

- Requested that closing date for applications will be later;
- State bodies should be notified about applications from clubs in their area; and
- Questioned several points associated with the criteria for clubs and in particular smaller clubs.

Action: PC to refine the criteria based on the feedback from council & circulate to states for distribution to clubs.

Proposal 1: The remaining marketing grants to states will be withdrawn in 2020 for one year to support the introduction of a trial of the Regional Bridge 'Buddy' program with a view to extending this based on the outcomes of the trial.

Carried. (1 Abstention)

Proposal 2: The trial of the Regional Bridge Buddy program will be undertaken. NSW has agreed to consider acting as the trial region.

Action: P. Cox/NSW to progress

8.4. Succession Planning

The meeting reviewed the pre-circulated paper on succession planning. The President advised council that suitable candidates will be required to fill key positions at the next three voting meetings; namely:

- The Treasurer and one Management Committee member in 2020
- The President by 2022
- The Secretary by 2024

Council were asked to consider appropriate candidates for these key positions as well as for casual and other vacancies on committees and council.

Action: The MC will consider re-establishing a succession planning committee to explore appointments for key positions.

9. Committee Reports

9.1. Tournament Committee – L. Kelso

The President noted that David Morgan will stand aside as Chairman of the TC for six months due to health issues. The MC will discuss an interim replacement at its meeting after the AGM.

Laurie Kelso spoke to the pre-circulated report on behalf of the TC. He noted:

- Some changes to the regulations governing playoffs were discussed.
- An increase in BBO recording at major events will be implemented.
- Future mixed team playoff events will be open only to contending teams
- TC will implement publishing a summary of key decisions which will be communicated to various stakeholders.

9.2. ABF Masterpoint Centre – D Weston

The President & Treasurer spoke to the pre-circulated report.

The meeting noted many clubs fail to manage their membership databases effectively resulting in invoices being sent for deceased or inactive members. To address this the meeting agreed that:

- a more prominent reminder will be sent to clubs in February 2020, and;
- an article will be included in the February edition of the ABF newsletter regarding the requirement to update member records prior to end of year billing. (It was noted the NSWBA had included a comprehensive article in its February newsletter on this matter which may provide useful source material).

Action: RN

9.3. Governance Committee – R Douglas

Report previously covered under ‘matters arising’.

9.4. Other MC Reports:

9.4.1. National Teaching Coordinator – J. Butts

The pre-circulated report was discussed. The NTC noted key activities in the past year included:

- Surveys to clubs and teachers re the effectiveness of the Accreditation Programme
- A Review and clean-up of the Accreditation data base had been undertaken
- Various support activities for teachers including writing Monthly Teachers updates & online support.
- Maintenance and upgrading of the Education Page and the ABF Facebook page
- Setting up and running TTP’s CPD Days and keeping the Accreditation Programme visible to clubs and teachers

Council asked how the opportunity for accredited teachers to run CPD days which was introduced last year could be better communicated to eligible teachers.

Action: AS to discuss with J. Butts

The NTC also provided a detailed summary of the activities of the NTC’s assistant Kate Wilson.

9.4.2. Head of Marketing – P. Cox

The pre-circulated report was received and accepted. The HOM has undertaken a significant amount of work in the past year and he has developed a number of papers which have led to a comprehensive understanding of the Australian bridge market and its demographics. Other activities have included:

- Development of the marketing strategy for the next three years
- Promotion of ABF activities at various national events

- Various media and promotional activities
- Updating of the marketing pages on the ABF website
- Consultation with various stakeholders on marketing matters
- Liaison with ABF sponsors
- Investigation into a venture with Funbridge
- Trial of a facebook marketing campaign which will be utilised more broadly in 2019.
- Support with marketing and launch of the Daily Bridge Column.

9.4.3. National Director Development Officer - J McIlrath

The proposal for a National Director Development program based upon the International Directors Training program was discussed.

There was general agreement to the proposal however the following concerns were raised:

- The location for the proposed event was questioned
- The effort and resources required to develop the material to run the program is considerable and concern was expressed regarding the timing and participation.

Action: MC to address these and any other concerns with the NDDO

9.4.4. National Event Co-ordinators – L. Kelso/M. McManus

Laurie Kelso spoke to the pre-circulated report. In particular he discussed the process for managing restricted players who win national events and their eligibility for future events. He noted there had been reasonable acceptance by all stakeholders for this change.

Council commented on the introduction of the new SMS results/draw service which had been well received by players.

Special mention was made of the decline in Senior entries in most National events which was necessitating a review by some national events on the decision to hold Seniors' events in the future.

9.4.4.1. BBO Operations – Ray Ellaway

The pre-circulated report was received.

BBO coverage is provided at all national events with finals however some concern had been expressed about availability of suitably qualified operators at some events.

The meeting discussed the need for training & development of BBO operators and in particular broadening the pool of available people. It was generally agreed that wider advertising to identify potential BBO operators could be undertaken.

Action: BBO Co-ordinators

9.4.5. National Technology Officer – M. Guthrie

The pre-circulated report was received.

- Development and approval of ABF technology strategy for 2019-2021.
- Set up and subsequent go live of technology platforms to support ABF daily bridge column by Ron Klinger.
- Creation of pilot SMS results service trialled at the GCC and now being rolled out further.
- Technology Unit created to oversee implementation of ABF technology strategy.

- Bridge+More devices (dealing machines for each table) are on loan and being trialled.

The NTO noted that the implementation of the technology strategy is not without challenge and extensive planning is being undertaken at present.

The President noted the extensive amount of work which had been undertaken by the NTO since taking on the role following his appointment in late October.

9.4.6. Finance Committee – R Nixon

The pre-circulated report was received. Roy Nixon noted that while the committee had not met formally, email correspondence regarding a number of budget & financial matters had been undertaken. The following issues were raised for council's information, all of which are on the MC agenda or covered elsewhere:

- Financial Plan 2019 to 2021 – endorse proposed approach to funding
- Daily Bridge Column – viability and continuation
- Treasurer succession for 2020 forward

9.4.7. Systems Committee – L. Kelso

The pre-circulated report was received.

Laurie Kelso noted an updated ABF Systems Card which is being developed by Rex Livingston will be available for use later in 2019.

9.4.8. Ethics Committee – G Chettle

Legal Counsel delivered a verbal report concerning two recorder matters. No further action is to be taken on these incidents. Other matters were discussed as part of Legal Counsel's report.

9.4.9. National Authority – G Chettle

No report. The committee did not meet in 2018.

9.4.10. Regulations Committee – L. Kelso

The pre-circulated report was received. Laurie Kelso highlighted key changes to regulations which have occurred in the past twelve months. In particular:

- The Board Rule requirements for PQP's have been clarified
- ABF Screen Regulations and Bidding Box/Written Bidding Regulations have had minor amendments
- Standardised content of ABF Supplementary Regulations continues to be updated as required.

9.4.11. Masterpoints – D. Anderson

The pre-circulated report was received. The report noted some minor changes have been made to Masterpoint regulations. In particular some changes to allocations of masterpoints to overseas players. It also noted that the right to approve Super Congresses has been delegated to State MP secretaries.

Council were advised by the NEC's that the allocation of PQP's based on the board requirements in the national final which was mentioned in the report was still under discussion.

The secretary thanked David Anderson for the prompt submission of his report.

9.4.12. Player Liaison Committee – D Morgan

No Report. The committee was not required to meet in the last twelve months.

9.4.13. National Directors Accreditation Committee – J. Brockwell

The pre-circulated report was received. A number of director's have had their Director Classification upgraded. The NDAC has developed a National Tournament Directors of Australia Code of Practice.

Council noted there was a significant overlap between the NDAC's charter & the NDDO responsibilities.

Action: The MC will consider the amalgamation of the NDAC within the National Director Development Officer's responsibilities.

9.4.14. International Player Committee (IPTF) report – S. Bird

The secretary spoke to the pre-circulated report. She noted that Sheila Bird had taken over as Chairman of the IPTF and had prepared the report on behalf of the committee. A key activity in 2018 was a review of the selection methodology for women's bridge which led to the appointment of Kate McCallum (International Player & Bridge Coach) as coach for the Australian women's team. The IPTF also provided reporting on team performances at international events and made some minor amendments to the selection policy for non-target events.

Plans in place for 2019-20 include established an international budget encompassing costing for training and development activity and development of coaching plans for teams.

9.4.15. National Youth Co-ordinators – L. Gold/B. Gold

The secretary spoke to the pre-circulated report. The Youth Co-ordinators have had an active year which has included:

- Restructuring youth week and introduction of a youth squad.
- Development of a youth progression model to run alongside the ABF masterpoint scheme.
- Designed a school curriculum which is currently in the testing phase.
- Successfully ran a youth day which attracted 40 children in Melbourne using the plans from #3.
- Developing a current youth database, with the help of active state bodies.

It was acknowledged that while much work had been undertaken in the past year to establish & trial programs, it will take time before the programs bear fruit.

Council suggested the youth co-ordinators might travel to other states to present some of their programs.

Action: KF to consider with Youth Co-ordinators.

9.4.16. International Women's Coach – K. McCallum

The secretary spoke to the work that Kate McCallum has been undertaking with the women's team and a broader group of players. She noted that there had been a strong level of participation and enthusiasm for both the online bridge sessions and the discussion group forum, as well as a more inclusive level of discussion involving players outside the women's cohort.

Council asked if the youth co-ordinators could be asked to set up a similar forum for youth players and were advised this was in progress.

Action: KF/Youth Co-ordinators

The President asked the secretary to write to all report authors on behalf of council thanking them for their reports.

10. ANC Calendar

10.1. 2019 ANC Melbourne – B Lindsay

Christopher Leach spoke to the pre-circulated report. He noted that much work had been undertaken to develop an appealing event, however the proximity of the ANC to the VCC will make participation levels challenging. It was noted that a Government House function has been arranged.

A brochure advertising side events under the banner of the Bridge Fringe Festival was available for Council's perusal. Council raised some questions regarding a requirement to clarify fees for interstate pairs in the brochure and on other advertising material to ensure it is clear that entry for interstate representatives is at no charge.

Some questions were raised in the report regarding the interaction between the ABF and the ANC organisers.

Action: MC to discuss ABF support for ANC events.

Action: Secretary to write to B. Lindsay seeking clarification on the questions raised in the report.

10.2. 2020 ANC Adelaide – A Abdelhamid

Report received and accepted. The venue is booked, most key staff are booked and plans are progressing. The TO plans to visit the ANC in Melbourne for discussion and information to assist with requirements for organising the 2020 event.

10.3. 2021 ANC NSW – Venue Proposal

The Council raised no objection to the proposal to consider using a regional venue for the ANC. The secretary will write to John Scudder advising him of council's decision.

Action: KF

11. Tournaments and Licensed Events - ABF Managed Tournaments

11.1. GNOT – Ray Ellaway

The pre-circulated report was received.

The revised method for travel subsidies was discussed briefly. No change is proposed for 2019, however some review will be required in 2020 and subject to the requirements of the new treasurer.

11.2. 2019 Summer Festival – R Nixon

Roy Nixon spoke to the pre-circulated report. He noted the decline in entries in key teams events and advised that a review of venue location would be required before any decision was made on the 2021 location.

The suggestion to move the SFOB timing to one week later was also discussed and there was general agreement by Council that a later timing was not preferred due to the proximity to the GCC and the Mixed Team's trial.

11.3. 2020 Summer Festival – J. Reynolds/R. Nixon

Feedback on the 2020 SFOB was incorporated in 11.2 above

WBF Tournaments

11.4. Review of 2018 (teams, results, short comments on performance, playoff results; target events) – Sheila Bird

The report was received. Australia competed in:

- the Commonwealth Games where a Silver Medal was won by the Open team;
- the Asia Cup where the Gold Medal was won by the Mixed team and the Bronze by the Women's team;
- The APBF Youth & World Youth team championships; and
- The World Series of Bridge

Australia has come close to medals in a number of events, particularly youth, but failed to get over the line.

11.5. APBF 2020 Perth – Robina McConnell

Robina McConnell spoke to the pre-circulated report. She noted that preparations are well underway with sponsorship having been attained and advertising already commenced. The President & TO plan to travel to Singapore for the APBF in June to undertake promotion of the event in the region.

12. Independent Organisations

12.1. ABDA Report – S Mullamphy

No report

13. General Business

Confirmation of proposed meeting dates:

- 13.1. Mid Term Meeting November 23rd 2019 (Sydney)
- 13.2. 2020 AGM Date May 9-10 2020 (Canberra)

The dates were agreed.

14. Meeting Close

Kim Frazer
Secretary, ABF