

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Australia's Bridge Teams Set to Shine on the World Stage with Trailblazer Sophie Ashton Making History

Sydney, Australia – 21st May 2025– The Australian Bridge Federation have announced the official lineups for the Australian teams competing in the 54th Asia Pacific Bridge Federation (APBF) Championships in Hefei, China, this May, and the prestigious World Bridge Championships (Bermuda Bowl) in Herning, Denmark, this August. Among the representatives is a groundbreaking member who is making history in Australian bridge.

Sophie Ashton will be the first woman to compete on Australia's Open Team since Pauline Gumby in 2007. Sophie earned her place by winning the 2023 Open Playoff alongside teammates Dave Wiltshire, Phil Markey, and Joe Haffer. They have since added Liam Milne and James Coutts to complete the team that will represent Australia against the world's best.

Sophie's journey to the top is remarkable. Transitioning from a career in risk management and quant analytics in Tokyo to founding a healthcare hub in regional New South Wales, Sophie brings resilience and strategic thinking both at and away from the bridge table. Her passion for bridge sparked during a trip to Argentina where she was introduced to a unique two-player version of the game, eventually leading her to competitive play in Australia. Balancing family life with her husband and fellow top player Sartaj Hans, Sophie exemplifies dedication and skill.

"The opportunity to compete on the Open Team is both an honour and a challenge," said Ashton. "I'm proud to represent Australia and to help inspire more women to take part at the highest levels of bridge. This team has great potential, and we're ready to give our best on the international stage."

The APBF Championships, held from May 17-25 in China, bring together elite players from across the Asia-Pacific region, competing in Open, Women's, Mixed, and Senior categories. This event fosters friendship and growth of bridge throughout the region.

Midway through the APBF Championships in Hefei, Australia's bridge teams are mounting a serious campaign for regional glory. After four days of play, the Open Team (pictured) is holding an impressive second place, while the Women's and Seniors' Teams are both placed fourth and within striking distance of the podium. The Mixed Team remains competitive in sixth. With three days to go, Australia is well positioned for a powerful finish across all four divisions — a performance that could see our teams proudly flying the flag on the international stage.

Later, the World Bridge Championships in Denmark will see Australia's teams face the world's top competitors in the Bermuda Bowl and other categories, underscoring the country's growing presence in the global bridge community.

Bridge is recognised as a mind sport requiring teamwork, strategy, and mental agility. The World Bridge Championships, held every two years since 1950, are regarded as the pinnacle of the sport, with titles highly coveted worldwide.

Supporters and enthusiasts are encouraged to follow the Australian teams' progress online and celebrate the achievements of these talented players. For full team lineups and updates, visit [Australian Bridge Federation - Meet the Teams](#).

About the Australian Bridge Federation

The Australian Bridge Federation (ABF) is the national body responsible for the administration, promotion, and development of contract bridge across Australia. Representing more than 35,000 members and nearly 330 affiliated clubs, the ABF fosters a strong national community and connects Australian players with the international bridge arena through its affiliations with the Asia Pacific Bridge Federation and the World Bridge Federation.

The ABF supports Australia's elite bridge talent through well-established pathways for selection and participation in international competition. Each year, the ABF conducts national championship events and selection trials across multiple divisions—including Open, Women's, Seniors', and Youth—to determine the national teams that represent Australia on the world stage. These teams compete in prestigious global tournaments such as the **Asia Pacific Bridge Championships** and the **World Bridge Championships**.

The ABF provides training resources, financial support, and logistical coordination to ensure Australian representatives are well-prepared to perform at the highest level. This investment in excellence is matched by the ABF's broader commitment to growing and innovating for the future of bridge—encouraging participation from people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.

For more information, visit www.abf.com.au or contact david.fryda@abf.com.au.

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