

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO 2007 BFACT AGM

The following are the issues/matters/highlights of this past year that I feel should be brought to the attention of the General Body:

- BFACT has a new **Public Officer**. Eric Glass took over from the long-serving George Stockham who I would like to thank for his many years of good service to BFACT. George also vacated his position as the SCBC representative (he was replaced by Bruce Crossman).
- Plans are well-advanced for organising the holding of the **ANC in Canberra in 2009**. Lyn Turner has kindly agreed to convene the event and Wendy Boxall has agreed to be treasurer of the ANC Coordinating Committee. Valmai Mitchell is the BFACT Council Liaison Officer. The venue will be the Hellenic Club and the dates 3-17 July 2009. My thanks to all those involved for their help so far.
- Many of you may not know but we have been working patiently to set up a **BFACT Website** which is now active at www.bfact.com.au. Rebecca Plush (Vice President) ran the project and Henry Hudson volunteered to assist with the initial setting up of the website. I would like to thank Rebecca, Valmai and her daughter Avril Barrett who have worked hard to design the site and upload the content.
- BFACT ran **Directors Courses** at Club and Intermediate Levels in 2007. I would like to thank Ian Dalziell for his work in promoting these courses, plus for updating the list of BFACT accredited directors which he sent to all the affiliated clubs to assist them in running events in the future. Ian also became our BFACT News editor during the year.

While the Tournament Secretary will report separately on tournament matters, I would like to mention:

- Some success on the **youth bridge** front with Valmai Mitchell running sessions for youth players on Friday afternoon with pleasing participation and progress. BFACT Council also implemented a policy of obtaining prior police checks for all involved in supervising minors in BFACT-run events or activities. This was prompted by BFACT dealings with some of the schools in the ACT.
- BFACT-run **interclub competitions** is worthy of note. We responded to requests by the participating clubs for a more inclusive format for the Inter Clubs Teams. Eight clubs entered the Seniors Event and seven clubs entered the Restricted Event. Congratulations to the **Capital Bridge Club** who won both events in 2007. Our thanks once again to David Hoffman for finding the time to continue to run this event for us. BFACT is also holding one session of the **Simultaneous Pairs** in 2007 to be run in the week 21-26 November. Thanks to Tim Bourke who has agreed to provide the bridge hands/commentary and to Jane Rasmussen who will do the scoring.
- Far too much time in BFACT Council meetings is taken up discussing the **ABF run Grand National events**. Many of you will be familiar with the teams format (GNOT). Frankly, ACT player interest in this event has declined substantially in recent years both in the open and restricted categories. Various proposals have been tried with very limited appeal. Participation imposes significant entry costs on BFACT and the burden on the clubs has also increased. Now the ABF are introducing a pairs format Grand National in 2008. The retiring Council has major concerns about the viability of these events in 2008 and one of the first tasks of the new Council will be to review our participation in 2008. It seems inevitable that

for 2008 we will need to restrict our GN commitments on financial grounds unless we can come to some compromise with the GN Convenor.

- We had a very successful year including wins at the GNOT late last year and of course our Open Team at the ANC in July.

Finally, I would like to mention briefly our **engagement with the ABF**. I and Earl Dudley are the duly appointed ACT representatives to the ABF Council and served in 2007. Ian Thomson attended the ABF Mid-Year meeting in Perth in July as an alternate for Earl. In addition, from February 2008, I was appointed to fill a casual vacancy on the ABF Management Committee (the executive arm). Issues of note during the year include:

- Earl Dudley raised the question of Australia-wide **Professional Indemnity Insurance** (similar to the club-level public liability cover) at the ABF AGM. The ABF has indicated it is not interested in proceeding with this matter and that it would be up to the states and clubs to discuss this matter themselves. Earl approached Allan Scerri who kindly facilitated an interactive session with members of CBC Committee and BFACT Council to assess the risks re Professional Indemnity. BFACT Council expressed its thanks to Allen Scerri for facilitating the workshop. Earl reported back on the results of the discussion at the workshop which concluded that while it was considered unnecessary at this time for BFACT to take out such cover for professional indemnity (as the perceived risks were too low), a number of risk management actions could be followed up to minimise the risk even further. These are: Developing a Code of Expectations for Players; Developing of a Code of Conduct for Directors; Developing a written protocol for dealing with disputed outcomes in selection events. While not discussed at the time, it was specifically recognised afterwards that BFACT's policy on supervising minors was an additional risk to be considered.
- I reported back on the decision of the ABF Management Committee Meeting in May on the matter of the Summer Festival of Bridge Masterpoints income and compensation for the ACT agreeing **not** to hold a Gold Point Event in 2008 and 2009. The Management Committee decided that BFACT should receive compensation in the amount of \$2,000 in each of 2008 and 2009 with the matter to be reviewed again in 2009 for possible starting date of 2010 for an ACT GP event. This compensation is in addition to the declining amount that BFACT shall still receive from the Summer Festival of Bridge in those 2 years.
- Like other members, BFACT was given \$3,000 (plus \$300 to cover GST) by the ABF to assist states advertise and market bridge in their region. Specifically the ABF was looking for initiatives at club level to attract new players to the game. BFACT received applications for funding under the terms of the ABF Advertising/ Marketing Grant from The Canberra Bridge Club, The Monaro Bridge Club and Capital Bridge Club. All applications were approved. The amount of the grants awarded was proportional to the membership of the three clubs so Canberra Bridge Club received \$2200 Monaro Bridge Club \$550 and Capital Bridge Club \$550.

In closing let me thank all Councillors for their terrific help and support and while I do not like singling individuals out I must thank our incredibly efficient Secretary Sue Scerri and our amazingly prudent Treasurer for their tireless efforts in 2007. Thankfully, they have both agreed to remain on Council in 2008.

Roy Nixon
President