

BFACT 2023 Annual General Meeting Presidents Report

The numbers at face to face sessions are slowly improving and online bridge is here to stay! Even though the latest variant of Covid has been around in 2023, thankfully the impact has been small compared to the previous three years.

There are great initiatives by the ABF to help the Bridge community meet other players and to compete against other players without having to travel. The ABF has continued the ABF Teams Knockout on RealBridge, with an increasing number of participating Clubs in all categories. The ABF also run the Nationwide Pairs, now face-to-face (remember the online version during Covid), twice a month, again with an increasing number of Clubs and participants.

The InterClub Teams event was hosted by Canberra Bridge Club this year, with an excellent turn out. Next year it will be at Cootamundra, who also hold their annual congress each September. These country congresses are great events to support and participate in.

The annual Canberra in Bloom congress starts at the end of September. Numbers are getting back to pre Covid rates with a considerable number from interstate. We are trialing a 'rookie' event to help encourage budding participants. With Floriade back in full swing, visitors should be able to see the best Canberra has to offer.

Here at BFACT we are very fortunate to have Will Jenner O'Shea as the Youth Development Officer. Will has held a number of sessions throughout the year for Youth and also managed to organise a full youth team for the ANC. Not an easy task. His sessions have been quite popular and we also thank Canberra Bridge Club for the use of their premises. Youth is the future of bridge and it is great to see them all enjoying the game. The Youth team, with a number of new faces, did quite well at the ANC, finishing a respectable 4th.

The ACT Open Team finished an impressive second to South Australia in the annual interstate open teams championship. In 2024 the ANC will be in Orange (I believe a first) - there will be a number of sideline events as well as the interstate competitions - so book your accommodation now!

BFACT is organising annual Director training workshops each November. These are well attended and it is great we can call on the local expert Sebastian Yuen and his band of helpers. Sebastian also ran a professional development session during the year (on judgement rulings) which was also well received and attended. If you are thinking of becoming a Director, please chat to one and then if you are still interested come along to the workshop. Sebastian and a number of other ACT directors support the region, directing at a number of regional events.

Jodi Tutty, together with Pam Crichton and Julia Hoffman are running player development sessions to help debunk any myths around playing at a higher level. These have been well received, again a big thank you and to Canberra Bridge Club for the use of their premises.

Sadly the BFACT Council has another retirement this year. Stephen Fischer is retiring due to health reasons and we wish him all the best. Stephen has been a stalwart for BFACT, running the accounts with aplomb and representing the ACT at the ABF. On behalf of BFACT and the wider bridge community I thank Stephen for all the work and time (which many do not see) he has given to bridge both at the local and national level.

I would like to thank the sterling effort of all the BFACT Council members. They make my job easier, which is always a good thing, and the zoom general meetings are now the norm. I encourage anyone who thinks that they may like to take a position on BFACT, now or in the future, to talk to me. More hands can help us achieve even more.

Cathy Nichols