



## Newsletter No: 2 for 2019

26 March 2019

Following the Board election cycle I am pleased to welcome back both Anne Barrowclough and Greg Whitten. Hopefully we are correctly reading the tea leaves and the bridge community are happy with what we are doing and how we are going about the task.

Below is a summary of matters discussed at last week's board meeting:

### Masterpoints Platform

For several months we have been grappling with the data integrity and functionality of the new masterpoint platform. A number of key functions were not carried over to the new system and as a result we have been unable to perform the following:

- Monthly transfer of Australian awards for NZ players.
- Baden Wilson Competition.
- Monthly Rank Leaders competition.
- Player Rank Change Certificates.

In addition to this we are aware that the Masterpoint search function is frustrating for players to use and at times the website speed is very slow.

Over the past few weeks Alister has worked closely with the programme designers ETheory Ltd to seek a resolution to these issues. At our meeting a proposal was accepted and a budget allocation approved to get a full work programme underway.

This project includes the following:

- Build from scratch an automated transfer function for the Australian awards.
- Rework the criteria to ensure Baden Wilson & Ranks competition results are accurate.
- Make corrections to the players certificate criteria so that accurate certificates are produced. This includes a high resolution logo to improve print quality.
- The player search function will be improved with the date range requirement removed.
- The Google maps function on the Website will be discontinued.
- Deceased player records will automatically be transferred to the Archive.



- The annual rating points function will be corrected.
- Historical player records will now be transferred over from the original system. This will ensure that former player records cannot be reissued to new players as is the case now.
- The tournament entry function will be updated so that changes cannot be made after the close of entries. Players will as a result have to contact the host Club direct to cancel or change entries after they close.

These improvements / changes will be rolled out progressively after extensive testing. As yet we do not have a timetable for completion however the number one priority for us is the issue with Australian Masterpoints. Understandable this has caused a lot of angst for players with several months yet to be transferred. Alister has all of the details for the events yet to be processed including this year's Canberra Summer Festival and the Gold Coast Congress. We will let you know as soon as we are able to run these files, until then we very much appreciate your patience and perseverance.

### **Christchurch**

On the 15th March New Zealand was shaken to the core from the events in Christchurch. We decided at our meeting to make a donation of \$2000 to the Christchurch Bridge Club to be earmarked to help the people of Christchurch directly affected by this cowardly act of terrorism.

### **Constitution**

As you are all aware in 2017 we made some quick fixes to the constitution. We were hopeful of completing a full review in 2018 but fell a little behind. Work has continued and we are hopeful that a draft will shortly be available for review, discussion and consultation. The plan is to formally discuss the draft at this year's National Conference on the 8th June. Thereafter if everything is in order is to bring the constitution to the 2019 AGM for adoption. The new constitution will look different. Focus has been on removing operational matters that should be handled by the Board and/or Regional Committees. We will also be attending to compliance matters raised of us by the IRD.

### **Regulations**

The manual update has not progressed as we had hoped. This is now receiving urgent attention. Tournament level exams will resume in 2019 but in a different format. The written exam will be replaced with a 2 day hands on approach. The first cab off the ranks is Otago Southland in July, followed by Waikato Bays and/or Auckland Northland later in the year. We have asked Murray to provide information regarding the proposed weekends ASAP and also to firm up and advise dates for the Club level papers. Assuming changes to the constitution are adopted then there will be a need to further amend the manual. We want to simplify the manual so information is readily available and is easily understood.

## **Growth**

Over the preceding months we have spoken about the importance of growth in playing numbers and participation. The "regional bridge mates' initiative has been central to much of the work we have undertaken. As you are aware we embarked upon a 2 year pilot which will come to a natural end in September. In the coming months we will be considering the findings of the pilot and determining its future. It is pleasing to see playing numbers and participation are up at club level, tournaments and trial participation for the Interprovincials. Our growth strategy cannot be limited to organic growth. We need to put our minds to a much wider audience.

We are presently considering a marketing strategy which will focus on a much wider stakeholder base including non-affiliated clubs, social players and business house. We know many players learn this wonderful game but only a limited number join an affiliated club. The other day I was talking to Angela Royle who owns and runs the Royle Epsom Bridge Club. She has had to rent additional space to accommodate the 60 people she has registered for lessons. This is a wonderful example/demonstration of the number of people who want to learn. But Angela would be the first to acknowledge converting those attending lessons to being a member is a challenge and not easy. We need your help.

A further initiative is the adoption of a 5 year Youth strategy. We need to build the next generation. I am pleased to advise that the New Zealand Bridge Foundation will be supporting this initiative. Funds from the Babich New Zealand Wide Pairs will go to support this worthwhile project.

## **Congress**

Plans for the 2019 Congress are well underway. You will have already spotted changes to the programme as a response to feedback from players. The committee is focused on presenting a first class event where everyone participating can have an enjoyable time. It was interesting to observe at this year's Gold Coast event the increase in novice, restricted and intermediates participating. The growth of our game needs to focus on this sector as they represent the bulk of our numbers and are our future Open players.

## **Teachers Group Meeting**

Lessons and education are an important part of mastering this game. The group met recently to further development to progress lesson material. A teachers conference has been scheduled for 16/17 August 2019 in Wellington.

## **International**

We have a very large programme in 2019. We have 4 teams (open, women, seniors and mixed) going to Singapore in June for the APBF. Then in September we have 4 teams going to the world championship in Wuhan, China. We hope you get behind these teams and support them as you did when they went to Lyon. Knowing they have the support of players back home is positive and lifts performance.

**Interprovincial Trials**

These are scheduled for 11th and 12th of May. We hope you get behind this event and give it a go. The Interprovincials are an important part of calendar and we are keen to see greater participation.

**Other Matters**

Whilst at the Gold Coast Congress we took the opportunity of meeting our counterparts in the ABF. Clearly they are thinking about the same issues. We have agreed we will meet later in the year to compare notes. If we can combine our knowledge, thinking and planning we will inevitably gain from the experience. There is no benefit in reinventing the wheel. In the meantime they are keen to have access to the Bridge Zone. I hope you are listening.

The Foundation and New Zealand Bridge met last week to explore ways to improve what we do for the bridge community. The Foundation is putting together a value proposition and we are putting together a promotion strategy. The more we can grow the Foundation the more we can do for the bridge community.

Enjoy your bridge

Cheers Allan