



**16 June 2022**

**Newsletter No: 4 for 2022**

Hi Everyone

Over the weekend the National-Regional Conference took place with members of the Board, Executive, and representation from all seven regions.

We all know throughout history there are defining moments that shape our lives and have an influence on the sport or recreation we undertake. The last 2.5 years have been like that with Covid having a dramatic impact on our lives. Covid as we know has not been universal with a lesser impact in the deep south compared to that in Auckland. We all know Covid will be with us possibly for years, and like the flu or influenza we will adapt.

The theme of the conference was about "back to bridge" so not surprisingly face-to-face and online bridge were a core part of discussions. Without the intervention of Covid we expected our game would be vibrant and flourishing. That is not quite the case with membership having fallen by 8.5%. It is however pleasing to see players returning with an improvement month on month.

The meeting received a presentation from the Online Bridge Strategy Working Group which has been charged with developing a strategy for the future of Online Bridge in New Zealand. This will encompass:

1. Online play- club sessions and general play, and tournaments
2. Online teaching
3. Online learning
4. Online social opportunities
5. Training
6. Technical support

Earlier today you will have received a communication from the Working Group calling for expressions of interest in the Consultation from clubs and individuals. Unlike what we have done

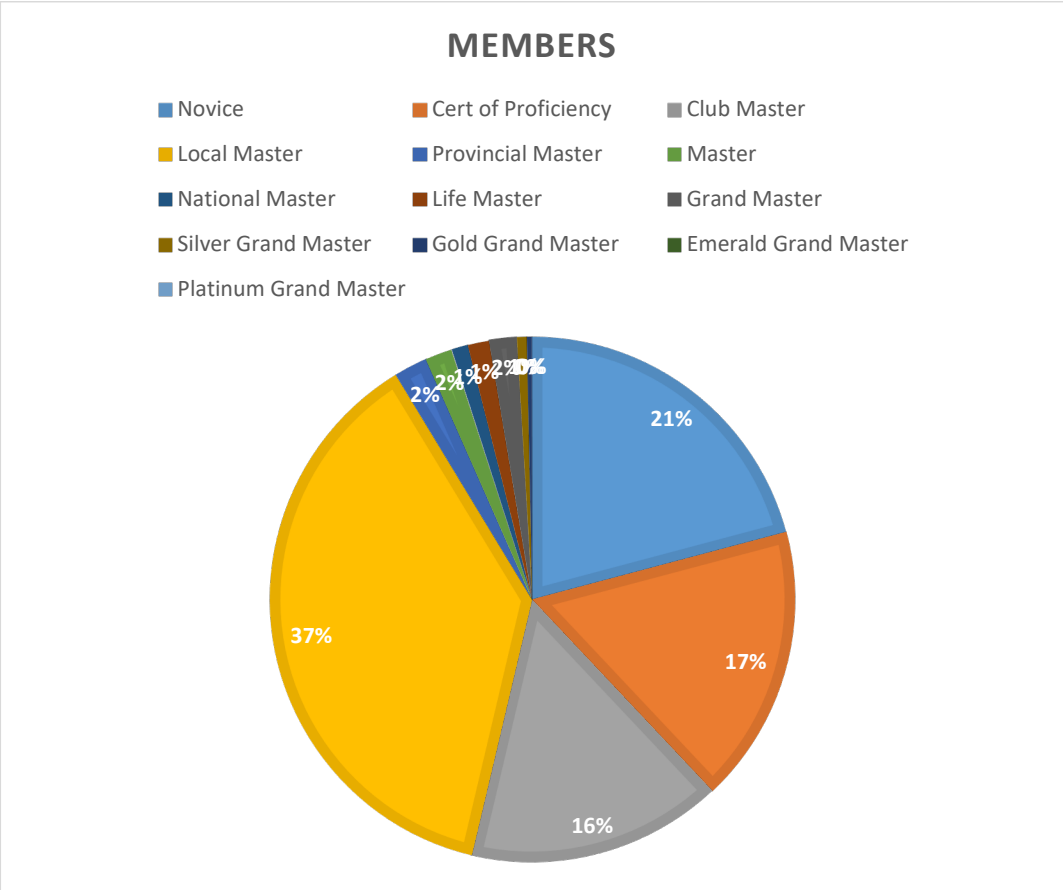


in the past the group will establish an Online Bridge Strategy "Thinktank" which will include representation from different stakeholder groups. The "Thinktank" will act as a sounding board and contribute to the development and refinement of strategy for 2023 and beyond.

A constructive conversation ensued with everyone present buying into the process. It was appreciated that through the rest of the year we may face some hard decisions that will not appeal to all concerned but it is important that this qualitative piece of work takes place. We ask two things- that you constructively take part in the consultation, sharing your views, and you are patient. The plan is to have a proposal to the Board by the end of August.

It is apparent Covid has accelerated societal change with some clubs experiencing a change in player patterns. Daytime bridge is returning but evening play is under pressure for a variety of reasons - work, travel, time, length of sessions, security, age, family obligations, etc. Again, discussion ensued as clubs will need to think about their future offering (product mix).

A proposal was made by Waikato Bays is that the restricted open division be aligned with what is used at the National Congress (i.e. members below Life Master). This was considered logical and will be endorsed at the next board meeting. Our membership is very much weighted to junior and intermediate.



Of our total membership 54.88% are junior, 31.99% intermediate, and 8.38% open.

In the past we have highlighted changes are forthcoming to the Incorporated Societies Act and privacy legislation that will impact clubs. Fortunately, these changes take effect in 2025 so there is time for clubs to sort out what is required. The changes are far reaching and will require change in governance and behaviour. We discussed how best we can help clubs and will be developing a workbook (manual) which will provide templates. We hope to have this available prior to year-end.

Planning is underway for our AGM that we will hold on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September prior to the National Congress. Paperwork will be emailed to Clubs by the end of June calling for the nomination of meeting delegates and any general items of business and formal remits. We look forward to being able to hold this in person after a two-year absence.

Regards

Allan

