



17 October 2022

Newsletter No: 7 for 2022

Hi Everyone

Annual General Meeting and Congress is always a big week. Pleasingly, the vast majority who attended appeared to enjoy themselves, particularly the new location. It was great to have everyone in a single room, enjoying the competition and of course chatting and mingling with friends. If for some reason you were unable to join us at Baypark we hope you can in 2023. Congress is for all players, and it was pleasing to see an uplift in the number of intermediate players. After all novice, junior and intermediate players are the future tournament players.

Our congratulations go out to all the winners, from Alex Shan at the age of 13 who along with Kate Wade won the novice pairs to Ashley Bach, Malcolm Mayer, Michael Ware, Peter Newall, Martin Reid, and Paul Dalley who won the premier New Zealand Teams. The performance of Prem Soundra and Jeffery Ren calls for special mention. They won 4 events:

1. **Restricted Open Pairs**- Prem Soundra and Jeffery Ren
2. **NZ Restricted Teams**- Prem Soundra, Jeffrey Ren, Anthony Wilson, and Hafizur Khan
3. **Restricted Open Swiss**- Prem Soundra and Jeffrey Ren
4. **Restricted Open Teams**- Prem Soundra, Jeffrey Ren, Anthony Wilson and Kafizur Khan

Please take time out to read the Congress Bulletins. Ed (Roggeveen) the Ed did a great job. All nine editions are on the website and make for some very good reading. There were some interesting distributions which resulted in some spirited bidding. The most freakish hand with 7 diamonds and 6 clubs led to a great sacrifice in 7 clubs.

Congress was more than just bridge. The Tauranga Bridge Club choir sang a tribute to Karen Martelletti. Hours of practice resulted in a polished performance which was hugely appreciated by all players. Hopefully in the coming weeks you might hear the rendition on the Bridge Zone.

Congress does not happen without a lot of work behind the scenes and on the day. We have many unsung heroes who give up their time to help. To them we say thank-you. Then there are directors, caddies, staff, and organizers. You too are champions.



The choice of Baypark was a major step up. The support of our sponsors - Tauranga Council, Bay Tourism, TECH, NZ Bridge Foundation, and Apex Rental Cars helped to make this event even more special. To each and every one of them we are appreciative and grateful. We hope with Covid behind us that 2023 will be our biggest congress.

Next year congress will take place in the first week of the holidays. By then we hope the road works around the Mount and Baypark will be over making it even easier to get to and from the event. Make sure you make arrangements to be there.

In the coming weeks the organizing committee will regroup for a full debrief. We are always looking for ways to make the event even better.

You should by now have a copy of the congress survey in your inbox. It would help us if you would take time out of your schedules and respond to the questions as quickly as possible. Your responses always assist the congress organizing committee prepare for the next event.

### **Annual General Meeting**

Provided we continue to consult and have a continuous disclosure regime our AGM's will continue to be procedural in nature. More importantly is the general discussion where we can have a chat about anything and everything. We hope this will continue.

Before you ask what is happening with the online review, the matter was not discussed at the AGM. It is hoped that the Board will receive the findings of the working party in the coming weeks. In addition to the interest here there is significant interest from overseas on the findings of the review and the decision by the Board.

Even though our annual report is shared with all clubs, we thought it would be useful to share, in summarised form, the content.

1. Hopefully we are through the worst of Covid, which is an upside. Membership is on the rise, with players returning to their club and new people joining. As at 30 September overall membership is sitting at 12,925.
2. On the finance side the organization is in a good state. Levies remained relatively static for the year but there was a rise of 52% in masterpoint revenue. Overall, our income was up \$77,188 (20%) compared with 2021. Net income was marginally down on at year at \$40,761.
3. Our open team played the Bermuda Bowl in Salsomaggiore. The balance of our international programme all took place online against Australia and a tri-series with Indonesia.
4. Ahead we face changes under the Incorporated Societies Act, along with an update to the Privacy Act. These Acts plus other legislation will impose obligations on clubs and committees. To help we are working on an advisory and production of a toolkit.
5. A review of the Manual is underway.
6. Through the year we have worked on the development of marketing collateral. The major initiative was the development of [www.playbridge.co.nz](http://www.playbridge.co.nz). More will follow post Congress.

Concern was raised that perhaps NZ Bridge was in direct competition with clubs. This was disappointing as we have stated on several occasions that the Club structure is the backbone of bridge in New Zealand and will continue to be so into the foreseeable future. I want to respond to the allegation that we sanctioned NZ Bridge tournaments with Masterpoints but would not approve club events.

NZ Bridge has since the onset of the pandemic and in the months since provided support, guidance to all Clubs.

The Board does not support the premise that it has operated in competition with Clubs over this period.

The Board allowed Clubs to award masterpoints for their regular sessions converted to the online platform very early on and this concession continues today.

During the peak of the red traffic light settings Clubs were free to transition scheduled tournaments to an online platform.

In May 2022 NZ Bridge shared details of its intention to consult regarding the long-term future of bridge and the blending of a mix of "in person" and "online" offerings. With a return to play at the Clubs a halt was placed on the conversion of scheduled tournaments to online other than those where approval had previously been provided.

To meet the needs of those players seeking an online event the Board sanctioned a national event to be held monthly on a Sunday evening concluding at the end of the year. This was a one-off event. It was never designed as a revenue generator. After meeting all costs there will only be a very modest surplus.

The Sunday evening event was scheduled at a time where there were very few regular sessions in place so as not to compete with Clubs working hard to rebuild participation.

Covid, online bridge, and a return to in person play has been challenging. Clearly there is a strong call for "in person" bridge. Over 90% of players are exclusively club players.

Perhaps we should have allowed market forces to prevail. The problem with this approach is the stronger clubs with an online presence could have decimated smaller clubs. Having said that we have not curtailed players playing online anywhere they choose.

We know the Auckland Bridge Club responded early in the piece, providing an online offering. This service was hugely appreciated by players from around the country, many providing financial support. Today Auckland Bridge Club has nearly 1200 online players. Whilst online play has been a fillip a return to in person play is slow, compared to that of other clubs around the country.

We accept there is a place for online bridge but at the time (earlier in the year) we were very cautious not to undermine club participation. We are now well advanced in reviewing everything connected with online and developing an online strategy.

## **International**

We wish the men's team of Michael Ware (player and captain), Ashley Bach, Malcolm Mayer, Jeremy Fraser-Hoskin, Jack James, and Leon Meier every success at the Asian Cup in Jakarta. By the time you read this newsletter the team will be ensconced in Jakarta.

New Zealand Bridge has been very fortunate to have the services of Derek Evennett as Chef de Mission and as a selector. We thank Derek for the countless hours he has devoted to the game. Like so many other volunteers he is an unsung hero. Derek's decision to step down as chef de mission has prompted a need to seek a replacement. In the coming days we will be releasing the following expressions of interest

1. Chef de Mission
2. Role of selector
3. Role of team captain (men, women, mixed, senior)

Later in the month we will be releasing a draft policy setting out future Principles of Representation. This is to ensure there is a pathway to representation and selection will be made on present performance, the work being undertaken by the partnership, team dynamics, and other matters at the discretion of the selectors.

## **General**

In February next year the President of the World Bridge Federation, Jan Kramas, will be attending the Gold Coast Congress. Jan's attendance provides an opportunity of a direct conversation about the future of bridge and the geographical challenge we have. It will also provide an opportunity to share in detail our response to online bridge. I played Congress which was my first in person event since January 2020. It was good to be back at the table, mingling and socializing with friends. I am now back playing events and look forward to catching up over the coming weeks and months.

Enjoy your bridge

Cheers Allan

