



Australian Rogaining Association Inc. President's Annual Report 2014/15

Australian rogaining is healthy and strong and continues to attract many new participants, with total numbers in the sport at historic highs.

Our 8 member state and territory associations continue to run an extensive calendar of 24 hour state championships, shorter 6-12 hour events, cycle rogaines, metrogaines and school/scout events. Together, we ran 57 events in 2014, with the ARA calendar showing 56 events programmed for 2015. It is pleasing to see four events in Northern Territory this year and two in Tasmania, including a 24 hour planned for late November.

Victoria hosted a highly competitive and very technically challenging 2014 Australasian Championships, while Australians took a number of high placings in the World Championships held this year in Finland.

At an international level, the Australian Rogaining Association (ARA) has continued to work cooperatively with the International Rogaining Federation (IRF) for the benefit of the sport. Through the IRF Council and its sub-committees, the ARA's rogaining experience is valued and we are able to promote the interests of ARA members. The ARA's International Development Fund provides a mechanism whereby ARA can assist the development and sustainability of rogaining internationally.

Finances and State Grants

The ARA's finances for calendar year 2014 show a continued steady balance. The necessary investment in the preparations and planning for the 2016 World Championship were expected to stretch the ARA's financial position, but this has not occurred due to material financial support being received from the Northern Territory Government, something we are sincerely grateful for. The greatest risk for ARA is the balance between participant numbers and fixed costs. With entries opening on 23rd October, we will soon see the trends and benefit from improved cash flow. ARA Members are requested to promptly pay capitation fees, once agreed at the AGM.

Three state grant applications were received by the November 2014 deadline, with an available pool limited to 40% capitation, being \$2857. Another part-grant of \$1200 was approved to RTas for their equipment shed. The expected grant to NTRA was not required, instead the ARA Secretary has provided NTRA assistance with using their mapping software. ACTRA applied for a grant to support the bus to the 2015 ARC. The Executive has agreed to underwrite any loss on the bus, similar to the arrangements for the host NSWRA. Members are reminded that applications for grants for 2015 close on 30 November.

Insurance

As noted at the last AGM, the Treasurer has secured public liability insurance for 18 months, covering the period July 2014 to December 2015. Shortly, we will be requesting membership numbers applicable to 2014 and proceeding to obtain quotations for the 12 month period of calendar year 2016.

Our long time broker **OAMPS** was acquired by **Arthur J. Gallagher & Co**, but the key contact personnel have remained unchanged. The broker has been very helpful in adjusting the policy wording to formally note some further government stakeholders, as requested by event organisers throughout the year. Ideally, we would like to find an approach to alleviate this maintenance requirement.

2014 Australasian Championships

The Victorian Rogaining Association hosted the Australian Rogaining Championship near Malmsbury on 11-12 October 2014. This was the second Australasian Rogaining Championship and the 35th Australian Championship. Event organiser was Greg Robinson. The course, set by Andrew Baker and vetted by Derek Morris, made excellent use of the complex spur gully terrain of the Fryers Ranges to provide constant technical navigation challenges.

There were 450 competitors, including those in the concurrent 6 hour event and Intervarsity Championship. Kiwi teams were once again prominent in the Australasian Championship. The top three overall were Mixed teams, with Australia's Julie Quinn and David Baldwin from ACT edged out from first place by a mere 20 points. Victoria won the Interstate Challenge through placings in senior and junior categories. Age Group Winners were:

- Mixed – Greig Hamilton, Georgia Whitla (New Zealand)
- Mens – Robert Jarvis, Phil Wood (New Zealand)
- Womens – Christine Brown, Karen Pedley (Tasmania)
- Interstate Challenge – Victoria

David Baldwin has reviewed the size, weight and capacity of our oldest perpetual trophies. The Mixed Open and Mixed Veteran trophies have been remodelled and he has produced boot trophies for the new Ultra Veterans categories.

2015 World Championships

The 2015 World Championship in Finland on 22-23 August was the first WRC held above the Arctic Circle. The terrain was wild, hilly and open, providing more cross country navigation than usually seen in Europe. The top placed teams overall were from Finland, Estonia and Russia.

Australia was represented by 35 of our best and most dedicated rogainers. Australia's top results were:

- Julie Quinn, David Baldwin, 4th in Mixed Open and 2nd in Mixed Veterans
- Richard Robinson, Vivienne Prince (NZ), 2nd Mixed Super Veterans
- Robyn Spriggs, Sharon Crawford (USA), 2nd Women Ultra Veterans
- Tim Dent, Rob Taylor, Graham Anderson, 3rd Men Ultra Veterans
- Mike Hotchkis, Neil Hawthorne, 4th Men Super Veterans
- Jean Douglass, Ron Simpson, 5th Mixed Super Veterans

Future Australian and Australasian Championships

2016 will be a busy year, with Australia hosting the WRC in Alice Springs in July, then the Australian Championship in September. WARA have kindly brought forward hosting the ARC from its original date in 2017 to 17-18 September 2016, and this will also be the Australasian Rogaining Championship.

The hosts for the next Australian Rogaining Championships according to the rotation schedule will be confirmed at the AGM:

- 2017 – ACTRA
- 2018 – NTRA or RTas

The Australian and New Zealand Rogaining Associations have agreed that every 5th Australasian regional championships will be run in New Zealand. In keeping with the agreement, the 5th Australasian Championship is scheduled for the weekend 11-12th February 2017 in the Otago region, New Zealand.

Intersarsity Rogaining Championships

Convenor: Gill Fowler

With the continued support of the Nigel Aylott Memorial Sports Foundation (NAMSF), 2014 saw the Australian Intersarsity Rogaining Championships held in conjunction with the Australian Championship on 11-12 October.

Universities competed from 6 states/territories: Victoria, New South Wales, ACT, Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia. There were three universities from Victoria represented. Victoria University, which includes a 24 hour event each year in the coursework for Sport and Exercise Science, provided an astonishing 30 teams.

This year the Intersarsity Championships are again being held in conjunction with the Australian Championship. NAMSF has agreed to provide the same form and level of sponsorship and many States have organised selection processes to choose their representative team.

Intersarsity Coordinator Gill Fowler has this year gained level 3 sanctioning for the event from Australian University Sports (AUS) at modest cost of \$200. This is a step up in the official recognition for the event, which is advertised on the AUS website www.unisport.com.au/Events/Pages/SanctionedEvents.aspx as a "Sanctioned Event".

Technical Sub-Committee

Chairman: David Baldwin

The 2014 Australian Championship had a problem with availability of water at one of the water points. This type of issue has occurred too often, most notably at the 2012 ARC in Flinders Ranges, 2004 Black Hill in South Australia and the hot 2003 ARC in Tasmania. This is clearly a safety issue and running out of water is something we need to ensure does not happen again in future ARCs. The Technical Committee has discussed this and will make recommendations.

Looking forward, the Committee will continue to work with the States to develop the next update of the ARA Technical Regulations, with a goal to address current issues, and improve alignment between the ARA and IRF. It is pleasing to note that the IRF has adopted the ARA's Under 23 age category.

International Development Fund (IDF)

Convenor: ARA Treasurer Mike Aylott. The fund balance stands at about \$30,000.

ARA has for some time identified an opportunity for the IDF to support course setting or event organisation workshops outside Australia. David Baldwin, who has championed this concept, conducted a course setting workshop in Finland after the 2015 World Championship. The workshop was very successful in achieving its objectives and participants found it beneficial. Attendance numbers were low due to relatively late notice of the dates, but it is seen as a good foundation to be built upon. Costs against the IDF were minimal, consisting of venue hire and accommodation. A repeat performance is planned for 2016 in conjunction with the world championship in Alice Springs. This will be advertised well in advance in the event program. Members are encouraged to identify suitable personnel who could volunteer for this or other projects.

International Rogaining

The ARA is represented directly on the IRF by the President David Rowlands and delegate David Baldwin. In addition, Australia is well represented on the IRF by its President Richard Robinson.

The ARA has continued to be active in IRF matters over the past year. David Baldwin, the ARA's Technical Committee Chairman, has represented ARA as an integral member of the IRF Technical Subcommittee.

The IRF holds a meeting of national representatives and interested individuals at each of the world championships. ARA was represented in 2015 by David Baldwin and ACTRA President Julie Quinn. The main topics at the meeting were the IRF strategic plan, WRC frequency, rules and technical challenges, and Finish preparations for the WRC.

The following are a summary of key IRF developments affecting ARA:

- The IRF choose Latvia as the host for World Championship (WRC) in 2017. There were no bids for a WRC in 2018, so an event will not be held in that year.
- The IRF has no formal policy on the frequency of WRCs, but plans to take a formal vote on this towards the end of 2015. Five years ago, there was a flurry of interest in conducting WRCs from new European members, but this demand has now subsided. The ARA believes that the world championship should be conducted every second year, as it was until 2012. This remains the most important issue facing Australian rogainers at the moment. The advantages of bi-annual (rather than annual) WRCs include:
 - Reduced regionalisation and increased opportunity for the best rogainers to attend
 - Reduced costs for regular competitors (especially those from the southern hemisphere who have faced 4 out of 5 WRCs in the northern hemisphere)
 - Increased quality of each world championship when the IRF can apply more time and resources.
- David Baldwin has produced new boot trophies for the new Ultra Veterans categories at the World Championships.

- The majority of the IRF levy will continue to be paid by regional championships. Future levies on the 2015 and 2016 Australasian Championship and 2016 World Championship will affect Australia. The IRF capitation fee for year 2015 was USD \$50.
- The IRF developed a revised Strategic Plan in 2014. The IRF has now turned its attention to facilitating implementation of this plan. An outcome of this could drive development of a strategic plan for Australian rogaining.

World Rogaining Championship 2016

A major focus for the ARA in 2016 will be the World Rogaining Championship. The competition area, near Alice Springs, promises technically challenging navigation amidst typically rugged Australian scenery.

Progress on the organisation of the event is generally close to, or ahead of plans. On the technical side, a new base map has been prepared and all checkpoints have been marked in the field, checked and vetted. On the administrative side, the full WRC management team is in place and holds regular teleconferences, the event website is operational and the entry system built and undergoing testing. The event website can be found at: www.worldrogainingchamps.com.au and www.wrc2016.rogaining.com.au.

On the commercial side, the event has secured financial support from the Northern Territory Government. A high entry fee of about \$225 is planned, necessitated by the isolation of the location, with break-even entrant numbers of over 500. An event maximum of 800 participants has been set. It is expected that the event will also require up to 120 non-competing volunteers. Phase 1 entries open on 23 October 2015.

Richard Robinson has taken the lead in both the original bid submission and coordinating the event. The key roles are:

- Richard Robinson: Event Director, course vetter
- David Baldwin, Julie Quinn: Course setters
- Peter Squires: IRF Event Adviser, Navlight punching system.

The event is being organised by ARA, with each of the affiliated State associations contributing their unique skills and manpower:

- ACT Rogaining Association: Transport, awards
- New South Wales Rogaining Association: Sponsorship
- Northern Territory Rogaining Association: Government liaison, local coordination
- Queensland Rogaining Association: Site and equipment
- South Australian Rogaining Association: Promotion, merchandise
- Victorian Rogaining Association: Website, entries, treasury
- Western Australian Rogaining Association: Catering.
- Rogaining Tasmania: Volunteer Coordination

The committee is working very effectively to delegate tasks, pool resources and discuss ideas. This approach could be a model for other nations to adopt in order to ensure the successful implementation of world championships, which are becoming increasingly sophisticated and demanding.

Trends

We plan to discuss recent trends and issues identified by members at the AGM. A key issue affecting most states is dependency on a few key personnel. It continues to prove difficult to recruit people for the more complex roles. Technology has broadened the reach of communications and promotion, whilst reducing manual work in this area. Short events have become more popular and common, risking our heritage of 24 hour championships. We must remain vigilant in addressing the challenge of converting enough participants from short to long events.

In these areas, we can learn from each other by following initiatives that have worked for other associations. This may be a role for the ARA to facilitate the sharing of such knowledge and ideas.

Information Systems

David Baldwin and Paul Guard have continued to populate the ARA website <http://www.rogaine.asn.au> and Facebook page www.facebook.com/ausrogaining with new items and notices. As reported at the last AGM, a new ARA website is in progress to resolve limitations caused by ageing software and to provide modern features and a clearer layout. Of the original website refresh \$5000 budget, \$2378 has been spent to date. There is an opportunity to complete this task by utilising some of the skills amongst our broader membership.

Executive Roles

The Executive has continued to hold Executive Meetings via Skype at approximately six week intervals through the past year. One again, I would like to publicly thank the ARA Executive team: Paul Guard as Secretary, Michael Aylott as Treasurer and David Baldwin as Technical Committee Chair and IRF Delegate, for their support and dedication to the sport of rogaining during 2014/15. Paul and David are relied upon for their wealth of experience in association management and event organisation. This continues to be a fun team to work with.

Planning ahead, the ARA Executive will benefit from a steady rotation of roles. We would encourage a future contribution from experienced administrators, particularly from the more remote states, in order to truly represent the sport in Australia.

Conclusion

Thankyou to each of the Council delegates, state committees and rogaining volunteers across Australia. May you continue to support a variety of enjoyable rogaining events, of a high standard, professionally organised and sustainably managed.

David Rowlands

President