



Australian Rogaining Association Inc. President's Annual Report 2011/12

Australian rogaining saw another strong year in 2011. We had another competitive and challenging Australian Championships and participant numbers remain strong although the shortage of volunteers remains an ever-present concern for many States.

The key focus for the ARA during the year has been consolidating our position as a member of the International Rogaining Federation (IRF) and working within the IRF framework to take all practical measures to support the interests of ARA members at an international level without adversely impacting the development of rogaining internationally.

2010 Australian Championships

The 2011 Australian Rogaining Championships was conducted by RT in the South Esk area of northern Tasmania. The area offered a good variety of technically and physically challenging terrain and had something for all levels of participant. It also had a large variety and abundance of wildlife, certainly the most I have ever witnessed at an ARC. The event was well organised and gave rogainers an opportunity to again experience different terrains and use different rogaining skills.

The event was won by Julie Quinn and David Baldwin.

Finances and State Grants

The allocated amount for State grants in 2011 were fully disbursed.

The International Development Fund (IDF) that was established to permit the ARA to become more active in the promotion and development of rogaining outside of Australia is now standing at over \$10,000-. The Council approved process for the administration and disbursement of this fund has now been posted on the ARA website and advertised to the international rogaining community. To date no applications have been received albeit at the time of this preparation of this report the first application closing since the guidelines were posted had not passed.

The matter of IRF capitation fees is discussed below in International Matters.

Information Systems

David Baldwin and David Rowlands have continued to develop and populate the ARA main website www.rogaine.asn.au and the Council website www.rogaine.asn.au/aradocs. This continues to be a significant effort and I again thank them both for their perseverance and time commitment to this activity.

Insurance

As noted in the Treasurer's Report we were able to secure Public Liability Insurance and Association Liability (or Directors & Officers) cover for 2010/11 with no increase in premiums.

Technical Standards

David Baldwin, Technical Committee Chair, has been actively working with the States to develop the next update of the ARA Technical Regulations. More significantly David has been working with the IRF Technical Convenor to attempt to unify the ARA and IRF Technical Standards. Whilst this latter task remains a work in progress indications are that the two standards are likely to move further apart than closer together.

Intersarsity Rogaining Championships

With the continued enthusiastic and material support of the Nigel Aylott Memorial Sports Foundation (NAMSF), 2011 saw the Australian Intersarsity Rogaining Championships held in conjunction with the Western Australian Championships in August with 11 team representing eight universities. A fantastic outcome!

This year the Intersarsity are being held in conjunction with the ARC, which is the preferred event subject to it suiting the university year.

The NAMSF has agreed to provide the same form and level of sponsorship again next year and it is planned to agree on the event to be used for the 2013 Intersarsity Rogaining Championships at the 2012 AGM so that publicity can commence immediately.

International Rogaining Matters

As noted in in last year's President's report after 12 years of, at times, intensive effort the International Rogaining Federation (IRF) agreed to the ARA's requested constitutional changes and the ARA officially became a member of the IRF in early 2011. As agreed at last year's AGM the ARA's two representatives on the IRF Council have been myself, as ARA President, and David Baldwin. I thank David for his commitment and contribution to trying to protect the ARA's members' interests and further the international development of rogaining in his role as an IRF Councillor.

The ARA has been extremely active in IRF matters over the past 15 months and we continue to be so. This has not been without its challenges as the direction being taken by the IRF does not always align with what we believe to be in the best interests of ARA members or the international development of the sport. Key issues where the ARA has taken an active role in the past 15 months include:

- **WRC Entry Criteria** – In February 2010 the IRF broadcast a draft set of WRC entry criteria that were expected to apply to the 2012 WRC. Then in July 2011, following no process of consultation or discussion that the ARA was aware of, they issued a revised version that bore very little resemblance to the February 2010 version. This revised version essentially reserved the majority of WRC entry places for elite competitors and "Rogaining Leaders". The ARA, strongly supported by the NZRA, led an action to return the WRC entry criteria for 2012 to what the rogaining community could reasonably expect to be a progressive development of the February 2010 draft and the 2010 WRC criteria. Since then, the IRF Council have approved a set of generic WRC entry criteria that are a further refinement and development of the 2012 WRC criteria. These will continue to evolve over time

- **WRC Frequency** – WRCs have been held every two years from 1996 to 2012. In mid-2011 the IRF proposed that there be a WRC in 2013. The ARA stated that we felt that it was not appropriate for there to be a WRC in 2013 without there first being a policy decision to conduct WRCs annually. We also stated that we felt that moving to annual WRCs from 2013 was not in the best interests of the sport. The IRF Council subsequently agreed to conduct WRCs in 2013 and 2014 but did not take a decision to move to annual WRCs.

The ARA subsequently drafted a motion for the IRF that no WRC be conducted in 2015 and that no decision on a move to annual WRCs be made until a formal professional survey of the impact of having WRCs in three consecutive years and of having consecutive WRCs in the same region (Europe) was conducted. This draft motion was discussed among a subset of IRF Councillors, the ones most active in most debates, and it became quite clear that if moved the motion would be unsuccessful. Thus we decided to withdraw the motion.

Very recently a motion has been moved in the IRF Council to conduct a WRC in 2015. The ARA has restated our view that there should not be a WRC in 2015 without there first being a policy decision to conduct WRCs annually. We also restated that we felt that moving to annual WRCs at this time was not in the best interests of the sport and we should wait until we understand the impact of having WRCs in three consecutive years and of having consecutive WRCs in the same region.

Our concern regarding conducting WRCs annually without having a policy to do so is that it suggests a poor decision making structure and a lack of strategic direction within the IRF. Our concern regarding moving now to annual WRCs is that it will "cheapen" the WRC and make it more "regionalised". If we now move to annual WRCs now the most likely scenario is that the majority of WRCs will be held in Europe which will lessen the incentive for Europeans to travel to WRCs outside Europe and the capacity/desire for non-Europeans to attend every WRC.

Copies of the correspondence between the ARA and IRF on this matter are available on request for any interested ARA Councillor or member.

- **IRF Executive Structure** – The ARA led a review of the IRF Executive Structure which resulted in a significant change to the structure of the IRF Executive. The key changes are:
 1. The Executive be expanded from the current five members to seven members with the following changes:
 - a. A position of Vice-President is added. The protocol will be that the Vice-President will take over the role of President when the then current President steps down albeit this will not be stated in the Constitution
 - b. The current Secretary/Treasurer role will be split into separate Secretary and Treasurer positions
 - c. The current; WRC Manager, Promotions & Development Officer and Technical Manager positions are retained
 2. The term of all Executive positions shall be three years
 3. There will be elections for Executive roles annually to permit staggering of the change of Executive positions:
 - a. The President and Vice-President shall be on a concurrent election cycle

- b. The Secretary and Treasurer shall be on different elections cycles from each other and from the President (and Vice-President)
 - c. The other three Executive positions shall be on different election cycles from each other
4. None of the; President, Vice-President, Secretary or Treasurer may hold the same office for more than two consecutive terms (ie six years)
 5. The President, Vice-President, Secretary or Treasurer shall be elected by the IRF Council and do not need to be members of Council prior to their election. They will become full voting members of Council upon election
 6. The WRC Manager, Promotions & Development Officer and Technical Manager shall be elected by Council. If not already on IRF Council, they will become Observers on Council for their term of office.
 7. The quorum for IRF Executive meetings shall be four

We feel this is a very good outcome because it:

- a. Allows the workload to be spread amongst more people
 - b. Provides for formalised succession planning
 - c. Does not allow the key Executive members to become entrenched (the current IRF President and Secretary/Treasurer have been in place since the IRF was formed in 1989) or create the risk of people feeling they may become "trapped" in a role
 - d. Does not increase the number of Council votes held by the Executive thus minimising the risk of them become a dominate voting "block"
- **Technical Standards** – There is an ongoing debate within the IRF on technical standards and rules in which David Baldwin is representing the ARA. Whilst I will not dwell upon the details here, the general thrust of the proposals within the IRF, driven primarily from Europe, is to make the standards and rules far more prescriptive and complex than what we have had traditionally within the ARA. The ARA will continue to resist this move, but there is a certain inevitability that the standards will drift in that direction and we will be faced with a decision as to whether we allow the current gap between the ARA and IRF standards to widen or choose to adopt the IRF standards despite any reservations we may have about them.
 - **IRF Financing** – The progress towards development of a sustainable financing model for the IRF has been slow, mainly because the writer of this report needs to prepare a discussion paper on the subject for the IRF and seems to be struggling to make the time. In essence the IRF has historically relied on levies on the WRC and ERC competitors. As the organisation grows this is simply not sustainable and a migration towards some form of capitation approach will be required. It is currently anticipated that an interim hybrid (capitation fee & event levies) model will be adopted with a transition towards a higher reliability on capitation over time

Executive Roles

I would very much like to thank the ARA Executive team; David Rowlands as Secretary Michael Aylott as Treasurer and David Baldwin as Technical Committee Chair, IRF Delegate and IT guru for the support you have given me and the sport of rogaining during 2011/12.

The Executive has continued to have telephone hook-ups at approximately six week intervals which have assisted greatly in keeping key items moving forward.

Conclusion

Overall it has been another good year for the ARA. We have seen:

- Continued strong participation rates in our sport
- A significant growth of the sport outside of Australia
- Active participation by the ARA in the development of rogaining internationally
- Continued high quality events organised by the affiliated State Associations

I thank Council for their support during the year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Robinson', written in a cursive style.

Richard Robinson
President