



## **Australian Rogaining Association Inc. President's Annual Report 2015/16**

The highlight of the rogaining year in Australia has been the 2016 World Rogaining Championship. This event proved a brilliant showcase of Australian rogaining that we all enjoyed and can be proud of.

At the grass roots, Australian rogaining is continuing a trend of steady and healthy growth in both the number of rogaining events organised and membership.

The ARA's 8 member state and territory associations are running an extensive calendar of 24 hour state championships, shorter 6 hour, 12 hour events, cycle rogaines, metrorogaines and school/scout events. Some events are hybrids of adventure racing, with occasional paddle-rogaines, novelty and social rogaines. According to the ARA Calendar, we organised 57 events in 2015, with 62 events programmed for 2016, including the world championship.

### **Membership**

Membership statistics collected by the ARA Treasurer indicate that total numbers in the sport have surpassed 8000 for the first time. The table below shows the last two years' membership and a look back of 10 years to 2005. Year on year, Victoria has put on a surge from what was an approximate membership figure in 2014. Importantly, our smallest members Tasmania and Northern Territory are growing. The long term trend indicates a steady situation in the mature markets like Western Australia, with significant growth in South Australia, Queensland, ACT and NSW.

| <b>State</b> | <b>2005<br/>Members</b> | <b>2014<br/>Members</b> | <b>2015<br/>Members</b> |
|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| ACTRA        | 580                     | 877                     | 872                     |
| VRA          | 1817                    | 1750                    | 2154                    |
| NSWRA        | 952                     | 1352                    | 1429                    |
| NTRA         | 72                      | 139                     | 157                     |
| QRA          | 546                     | 920                     | 1008                    |
| SARA         | 599                     | 1231                    | 1185                    |
| RTas         | 181                     | 171                     | 209                     |
| WARA         | 1233                    | 1135                    | 1104                    |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>5980</b>             | <b>7575</b>             | <b>8118</b>             |

### **Finances**

The Treasurer's Report for calendar year 2015 will show that the ARA's finances maintain a steady healthy balance. ARA was able to manage the necessary investment in the 2016 World Championship in no small part due to the material financial support from the Northern Territory Government. Capitation

fees have remained at \$1 per member for many years. At time of writing, levies for 2016 have not yet been invoiced. ARA Members are urged to pay the levies as soon as possible, when invoiced.

## **Insurance**

The Treasurer has again secured public liability insurance at a favourable rate of about \$3 per member. The insurance is now for a 12 month period, aligned to the calendar year. Included in the state levy is Association Liability cover to protect the Directors and Officers of the Association. Our long time broker is Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. Their contact details are on the ARA website:

<http://rogaine.asn.au/Insurance/Insurance-Documents.html>

## **State Grants**

The ARA Grants Policy enables the ARA Executive to allocate up to 40% of annual capitation income to grants to support the sport through Member projects and capital expenditure. These grants are best suited to assisting the smaller associations.

No grant applications were received by the deadline of 30 November 2015. Members are reminded that applications for grants for 2016 close on 30 November. The ARA's grant policy is on the website:

[http://rogaine.asn.au/images/pdf/ara\\_grant\\_application\\_policy\\_2012.pdf](http://rogaine.asn.au/images/pdf/ara_grant_application_policy_2012.pdf)

## **2015 Australasian Championships**

New South Wales Rogaining Association hosted the Australian Rogaining Championship in Capertee National Park, between Lithgow and Mudgee, on 10-11 October 2015. This was the third Australasian Rogaining Championship and the 36th Australian Championship. Event organisers were Gill Fowler and Michael Watts. The course setters Gill Fowler, Jess Baker, John and Robyn Cameron based the event around the historic "Port Macquarie" homestead. The large number of controls and incised valleys provided route choice challenges. Careful navigation was required due to the 11 hour night devoid of any moon. Most controls were on varied spur-gully features, with the standout being the views from an outlier of Sydney sandstone escarpment to the south.

The event attracted 303 competitors in 143 teams. This year, the top three teams were from the open category (non-veterans). Rob Preston and Damon Goerke won overall, reminiscent of their second in the Warrumbungles WRC in 2006. Tamsin Barnes and Thorlene Egerton won both Womens Veteran and Womens Open. Victoria won the Interstate Challenge narrowly from NSW and ACT. The age group winners were:

- Mixed – Georgia Whitla, Greig Hamilton (New Zealand)
- Mens – Damon Goerke, Rob Preston (Victoria)
- Womens – Tamsin Barnes, Thorlene Egerton (Queensland, Victoria)
- Interstate Challenge – Victoria.

## **Future Australian and Australasian Championships**

The 2016 Australasian Championship is hosted by WARA on 17-18 September, at Nannup, 3.5 hours south of Perth. We are told to expect a course with a wide range of terrain, from old growth pine plantation, long ago logged Karri and Jarrah forest and recently cleared pine plantation, to farmland with a mixture of sparsely vegetated paddocks and blue gum plantations. Event Coordinator is Warren Smith, course setters are Jeff Conrades and Ian Thomsett, with vetters Bryan McClintock and Geoff Hearne.

The calendar will continue to be busy in the first half of 2017, as we look forward for the first time to both an Australasian and Australian Championships. The Australasian Rogaining Championship will be held on 11-12th February 2017 in New Zealand. The location is Northern Southland, near Waikaia. The terrain seems typical of the south island, with plenty of navigation and physical challenges. It includes some pockets of native beech forest, high tussock grasslands, and a large area of rolling hill country. Given the performances of Kiwi teams in the World Championship, our Australian elite will be up for a tough challenge. We should encourage our members to support this event since it is the Regional qualifier for the World Championship.

The 2017 Australian Championship will be organised by ACTRA. The event will take place on 6-7 May. Coordinators and course setters are Jeannie Douglass and Ron Simpson. The hosts for the next Australian Rogaining Championships (according to the rotation schedule) will be confirmed at the AGM:

- 2018 – QRA
- 2019 – RTas
- 2020 – SARA

It is pleasing that RTas and SARA have planned well ahead for their future Australian Championship commitments. The ARA Executive has discussed options for a Northern Territory ARC with the NTRA Committee, but it has been determined that for the time being, NTRA will continue to build numbers and consolidate expertise. There remains a live option at the appropriate time to run a Top End Australian Championship, or a return to Alice Springs on the WRC map.

## **Intersarsity Rogaining Championships**

Convenor: Gill Fowler

The University Rogaining Championship is open to all university students (full-time, part-time, undergraduate, or post-graduate). NAMSF has continued to offer to cover the travel costs of one team from each state in full. Many states have organised State University Championships and selection processes to choose their representative team.

Two Intersarsity Championships have been held in the last year:

2015 saw the Australian Intersarsity Rogaining Championships organised in conjunction with the Australian Championship in NSW on 10-11 October. Nine University teams competed from 5 states/territories: Northern Territory, Tasmania, New South Wales, ACT and Queensland. Laure Gauthiez Putallaz and Wendy Emerton from ANU were overall winners.

The 10th Nigel Aylott University Championships was held in conjunction with the ACT State Rogaining Championship on 30 April/1 May 2016. The trophy was won this year by Thomas Etheridge, William Tribe from Australian Defence Force Academy. Again, nine teams competed, and not surprisingly, the ACT universities were dominant.

The move to an early date this year may have affected some state associations' ability to coordinate and select teams. The ARA Executive has determined that in future, the Intervarsity should remain with the national championship where practical, to provide a consistent basis for planning.

### **Technical Sub-Committee**

Chairman: David Baldwin

Water is again the Technical Committee's main focus, with the reliability of water points on the course affecting an otherwise technically excellent 2015 Australian Championship. A written complaint was received from at least one competitor and subsequently, NSWRA prepared a report to the ARA.

The lack of advertised water is a potentially serious safety and health risk. It can be grossly unfair to competitors if forced to modify their course. This type of issue has occurred at the 2014 ARC at Fryers Ranges Victoria, 2013 North Queensland, 2012 Flinders Ranges, 2004 Black Hill in South Australia and the 2003 ARC in Tasmania.

The 2016 World Championship demonstrated how to solve this problem by providing 1000 litres of water at 8 manned water points. However, the large course and untracked wilderness type terrain meant water planning was still essential and some teams ran dry.

The Technical Committee is determined to ensure that ARC organisers plan and implement reliable on-course water supplies at future ARCs. A proposal from the ARA Executive to be discussed at the AGM consists of the following key requirements:

- The ARA appoints a "Water Steward" for each ARC from a panel of non-competing experts.
- The ARC organisers are required to formally prepare a Water Management Plan detailing water locations, volume, resources and planned replenishment procedures.
- The Water Steward, in conjunction with the organisers will refine the plan to ensure that it is adequate and will be implemented successfully.
- The Technical Sub-Committee retains the details of each plan and recommendations, in order to build knowledge and assist future organisers.

### **International Development Fund (IDF)**

Convenor: ARA Treasurer Mike Aylott. The fund balance remains at just above \$30,000.

The International Development Fund has not received any applications from international rogaining groups in the past year. A Course Setting Workshop was again planned for the two days after the World Championship, but attracted little interest.

Looking forward, the IDF can be better promoted and potential beneficiaries approached pro-actively. There seem to be plenty of opportunities for the IDF, especially in rogaining's developing countries,

where the sport is growing, but infrastructure could improve. WRC Course Setter David Baldwin has proposed to again utilise his considerable expertise through a Course Setting Workshop around the 2017 WRC in Latvia.

Members are encouraged to identify suitable projects and personnel who could volunteer for IDF projects in 2017 and beyond.

### **International Rogaining**

The ARA is formally represented on the International Rogaining Federation (IRF) by President David Rowlands and delegate David Baldwin. Australians continue to serve the IRF in various roles, most notably, IRF President Richard Robinson is the ARA's Immediate Past President.

The IRF held a meeting of national representatives and interested individuals the day before the 2016 World Championships. ARA was represented by David Rowlands, David Baldwin and Secretary Paul Guard. There were 18 attendees representing 7 nations. The following is a summary of key IRF developments discussed:

- Several IRF elections are overdue and will be held shortly. The positions are: Treasurer, Promotions, President and Vice-President.
- The next WRC will be in Latvia on 18/19 August 2017, held in Rāzna National Park, with the intriguing promise of terrain never used previously for rogaining or orienteering.
- There will be no WRC in 2018, since no bids were received.
- The IRF is currently evaluating two Expressions of Interest for WRC 2019: from Ukraine and Spain. This process is planned to be concluded with a vote towards the end of September. The merits of the respective bids will be discussed at the AGM.
- There was much discussion about WRC frequency and regionalisation. It was noted that there were no attendees at this WRC from the 2015 WRC host Finland. The ARA believes that the world championship should be conducted every second year, as it was until 2012. The mood in the IRF may be changing now that bids for the WRC have become rare: to potentially threaten the viability of bi-annual events. The IRF as yet has no formal policy on the frequency of WRCs. There is an opportunity for ARA to put this to a formal vote at the appropriate time.
- The IRF capitation fees remain unchanged. For ARA, this will be USD \$200pa.
- The 2017 WRC in Latvia will have no restriction on competitor numbers. A fixed limit of 800 was suggested for future events. Some view a cap as necessary to preserve the navigation challenges. However, it was noted that the WRCs have never reached any competitor capacity, when enforced.
- The North American Championship has been revived after a hiatus. Rogaining in USA has to battle against the advertising presence of the hair restorer product with the same name.
- Live tracking of competitors is a regular occurrence at the European Championship. An option is being considered to use this technology at WRC2017 in Latvia to enhance the spectator appeal of the event. The IRF Technical Committee has to balance this against the potential conflict with the rules of rogaining: R13. "A team shall not accept assistance from, nor collaborate with, other people, nor deliberately follow another team".

## 2016 World Championships

This year, the World Rogaining Championship returned to Australia. The 2016 World Championship at Ross River Resort near Alice Springs on 23-24 July was a stunning success. This was a credit to the professional and very experienced organisation team led by Richard Robinson. As outlined in the WRC Lessons Learned Report, the secret was “a grand vision and obsessive attention to detail”.

The event attracted 665 competitors (slightly less than the 691 at WRC2006 Warrumbungles) entered in 304 teams. There were 187 international entrants, including a large contingent from New Zealand, with a pleasing attendance from USA and European countries: Estonia, Latvia, Russia and Ukraine. This also represented outstanding support from the Australian rogaining community, considering the distance from major rogaining centres and the cost of travel.

The terrain was rocky as expected, but the vegetation had changed dramatically in parts since the ARC at Ross River in 2007. The massive course provided continuous route planning challenges and fine technical navigation on the beautifully detailed map. A very high quality map was possible using specially flown aerial imagery and terrain modelling by Aerometrex, enhanced by hundreds of hours of manual work by David Baldwin.

The top placed teams overall were from New Zealand, Australia and Russia. Australia's gold medal winners were:

- Rob Preston and Kathryn Preston in Mixed Open
- Kelsey Harvey and Alison Burrill, in Womens Under 23
- Jackson Bursill and Nick Montgomery, in Mens Under 23
- Geoff Lawford and Rod Gray, in Mens Super Veterans
- Robin Spriggs with Sharon Crawford from USA, in Womens Ultra Veterans
- Vic Sedunary and Merve Trease, in Mens Ultra Veterans.

The event was supported by sponsorship from the Northern Territory Government, Qantas, Aerometrex and Paddy Pallin. There were over 100 non-competing volunteers. The welcome ceremonies and presentations were superbly organised and had the audience enthralled throughout. Briefing announcements were made in both English and Russian. The key event management roles were:

- Richard Robinson: Event director, course setter
- David Baldwin, Julie Quinn: Course setters and map production
- Tamsin Barnes, Peter Tuft, Robyn Tuft: Course setters
- Peter Squires: IRF Event Adviser.

In contrast to the three previous WRCs held in Australia, all of which were hosted by a single ARA affiliated state association, WRC2016 was hosted by the ARA, with responsibility for different aspects of the event allocated to individual State Rogaining Associations as shown below:

- ACT Rogaining Association: Transport and awards
- New South Wales Rogaining Association: Sponsorship
- Queensland Rogaining Association: Equipment and logistics
- South Australian Rogaining Association: Merchandise and marketing
- Victorian Rogaining Association: Website and finance

- Western Australian Rogaining Association: Catering, Safety
- Rogaining Tasmania: Volunteer Coordination.

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.

I commend all Members to thoroughly review Richard Robinson's WRC Lessons Learned Report.

### **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](http://www.facebook.com/ausrogaining) with new items and notices. Facebook is becoming the key resource for promotion, while the website is the repository for event results and policies.

### **Executive Roles**

The Executive has continued to hold Executive Meetings via Skype at approximately six week intervals through the past year. I would like to thank the ARA Executive team: Paul Guard as Secretary, Michael Aylott as Treasurer, David Baldwin as Technical Committee Chair, and Richard Robinson the Immediate Past President, for their time and dedication to the sport of rogaining during 2015/16.

Next year, the Executive will be up for election for a 3 year term. As noted in last year's report, the ARA Executive will benefit from a steady rotation of roles and injection of new talent. We are now seeing government moves to encourage greater representation of women on the boards of national and state sports bodies. I would encourage our experienced administrators, particularly those from the more remote states, to consider a future role in the ARA, in order to truly represent the sport in Australia.

### **Conclusion**

The aims of the Australian Rogaining Association are to promote the sport of Rogaining, to encourage the development of state rogaining bodies, and to foster the running of the Australian Rogaining Championships. Thankyou to each of the Council delegates, state committees and rogaining volunteers across Australia, who ensure that the sport continues successfully year after year.

**David Rowlands**  
**President**