



2011 Executive Officers Report

The 2011 Season was light on for snow but cold conditions made it workable for races to get off the ground after a few nervous days that saw 30mil of rain fall on top of 30cm snow. Not even Italian Gelati resembled the conditions we were faced with leading up to the Australian Champs weekend.

The year has been successful for participation numbers both in terms of budding athletes and supporters to assist in running events. The participation numbers have increased across all ages and from various states around Australia with participants now existing in Qld, S.A, NSW, A.C.T and of course the home ground of the Sport, Victoria.

With an increase in numbers there naturally exists teething problems and communication problems to get the messages out there for events and general news that may be of interest to all biathletes and supporters, this barrier of communication has been greatly broken down with our Communications Officer Emma Flanagan and our Web Master Greg Anderson keeping their back to the wheel and turning things over regularly.

This year was also the first year we have had participation in Summer Biathlon in Europe with Lucy Glanville and Alex Almoukov taking part in the IBU Summer Biathlon Championships last month. For Alex and Lucy it was a quick transition from our winter program to get overseas and train a few weeks on rollerskis before competing in summer. For Alex it is an ideal lead up to the World Cup season and he will consolidate on this event by staying in Europe now until the 2011-12 season commences. Lucy has more frequent flyers points racked up as she comes home to finish the years schooling and will then head back to Europe in November to commence the IBU Cup Trimester early December. Dyllan Harmer will also commence the IBU Cup races starting the 2nd Trimester in January after qualifying through a very successful competition program at the 2010 World Youth Junior Championships.

Performance standards here are increasing which is also pleasing to see and further reflect the work put in by our coaches to match their athlete's determination to succeed. Regular coaching and training opportunities run at Hawthorn and MISC throughout the year have also been a great incentive for Melbourne based youth/juniors to get involved. Further programs run by coaches in the NE of Victoria and NSW have also value added to the development of our athletes.

Often we focus only on World Cup or IBU Cup representation and which is certainly a sign of an athlete's success. The other area of focus must also be on those lower levels of competition that are the building blocks to greater things. In the year since our last AGM we have had athletes and coaches at an IBU Development camp in NZ as well as athletes take opportunities to head to Europe and train or race in events such as the British Military Championships or Alpen Cups.

Certain athletes will stand out from the year past for their performances and the strength/determination they shows toward the sport. A variety of coaches have worked with these athletes and of course all our athletes which demonstrates the need for flexibility in styles and working out what works in the recipe for success.

Underpinning a lot of the development we have achieved this year has been made possible through successful Victorian State Government funding grants. The specific grants we were successful in applying for are centred on future development programs and ongoing support programs run in Victoria at a grass root level. Through the dedication of a small number of people we have been hosting come and try events on a regular basis throughout the year as well as some impromptu training camps and more formal camps in the winter. The grant program allows us to recognise the time and effort put in by coaches and thus cover their costs for events as well as subsidise activities to participants making it a more attractive option to take part.

The assets of the AVBA are also being used a lot more with the positive growth we are seeing and the ABA club rifles have been a very sought after item for many novices to use prior to committing to buy their own rifle. The much awaited arrival of 3 more club rifles from Larsen is imminent. The rifles are coming in with 3 other rifles for private individuals who have taken the big step to committing to a new rifle and a long term plan in the sport. Second hand rifles in Australia are as scarce as hen's teeth and a very saleable commodity for those thinking of upgrading and wondering what to do with your old rifle. With the new rifles arriving ABA will then have 8 club rifles to hire out. Target systems are the next item to address and a recent AOC grant approved to us will enable us to buy a new target system for setting up at a venue still to be determined.

Grants are the backbone in our funding options and hence we are heavily reliant on the success of applications to keep the organisation operating. Over the years there has been a shift from Grant providers in how they determine a funding application and it is very much a result driven assessment through a proven method of achieving performance targets over the life of Grant. The accountability and acquittal of funding sources has increased which is why the Organisation may appear to fund one thing and not the other, it is all down to the guidelines of a grant.

I would like to thank the Committee and various subcommittee members that have helped to run the Organisation over the past 12 months and believe the strength of the team is testament to the sport taking the right direction for development and continually offering opportunities for all involved. Success rest not on one person alone in an organisation but on the team. Risks are something any organisation tries to mitigate and lessons are always learnt along the way to reach success.

I wish the incoming committee for 2012 a continued success so we have more to report in 12 months' time as the sport continually evolves and our athletes develop.

To those heading overseas in the near future I wish you all the best of success in your personal endeavours and look forward to hearing results of trips later.

Thank You

Paul Connor Executive Officer