



Australian Rogaining Association Inc. 2003 President's Report

2003 continued to be a busy and successful year for all the state associations. 18 months have passed since the 2003 Australian Rogaining Championships and Annual General Meeting.

This period has been dominated by concerns over Public Liability Insurance. Due to a worsening insurance climate throughout the world and a rewording of our PLI policy by our former insurer CGU, our coverage was made virtually worthless. This precipitated an urgent search in May/June 2003 for more appropriate coverage which was eventually found through a new broker, IEA Brokers, and insurance company, Sportscover. However, this came at the cost of a greatly increased premium. Fortunately, due to the robust finances of the ARA and the state associations, this was able to be met.

The other major impact of the insurance problems was to force many of the proposed initiatives outlined in previous annual reports to be put on the back burner. Hopefully the opportunity to investigate these will return as the PLI issue dies down.

6th World Rogaining Championships, 2004

WRC6 was held in the forests of east-central Arizona in the United States, on 8th/9th May, 2004. 380 participants representing 15 countries took part. 30 Australians competed, which was an excellent representation. For the first time a non-Australian team won the event overall, and by a team of first-time rogainers! Placings were taken out by Australians: David Rowlands (2st Overall, 2st Mens, 1st Mens Vets), Ted van Geldermalse and Derek Morris (4th Overall, 2nd Mens Vets), Julie Quinn and David Baldwin (1st Mixed), Rod Gray and Geoff Lawford (3rd Mens Vets), Robin Spriggs (2nd Womens, 1st Womens Vets, 1st Womens SuperVets) and Anne Chapman (3rd Womens, 2nd Womens Vets).

7th World Rogaining Championships, 2006

For the first time in a decade, the World Rogaining Championships have been awarded to an Australian state with the New South Wales Rogaining Association successfully winning unanimous support to stage the event in 2006. An organising committee has been appointed and event preparations are well underway.

2003 Australian Rogaining Championships

The 2003 "Midland Manoeuvres" Australian Rogaining Championships were hosted by the Rogaining Tasmania near Ross on 18th/19th January, 2003. The hot weather and unusually brown and dry countryside provided tough conditions for most teams.

Rogaining Tasmania won the interstate trophy, by half a point to Queensland and South Australia who tied in second place.

National Events

In lieu of the calendar details for 2003, I have listed the 2004 events. This year is bigger and better than ever before:

Type / State	24 hr	15 hr	12 hr	9 hr	8 hr	6 hr	5 hr	3 hr	Metro gaine	Tri gaine	Cyclo gaine	Canoe Foot	Canoe gaine	Total
ACT	1		1		1	2	1		1		1			8
NSW	1		2			3			1					7
NT		1		1	1				1					4
Qld	1	1	1		2	2			1	1	1			10
SA	2		2					1	1					6
Tas	1		1									1		3
Vic	2	1	3		1	5			1		1		1	15
WA	2		3			1								6
Total	10	3	13	1	5	13	1	1	6	1	3	1	1	59
%	17%	5%	22%	3%	8%	22%	2%	2%	10%	2%	5%	2%	2%	

Of note this year is the amazing variety of different types of events. QRA are event staging a 'multisport' rogaine which couldn't be categorised in any of the columns above!

Information Systems

Web sites for all rogaining associations have continued to promote the sport and provide information and results to competitors. In recent times, more states have started to investigate and refine electronic entries and payments over the internet. Currently only ACTRA are currently doing this. NSWRA have revamped their website and discontinued electronic entries in the short term due to logistic problems. The emailing of final event instructions as an alternative to posted entries is becoming more widespread.

QRA have become the first state to provide a regular electronic newsletter to its members.

Thanks once again to Alistair Honeybun who has provided another year of service as webmaster of the ARA site, www.rogaine.asn.au. He has also setup a website for the ARA Council containing relevant material for the functioning of the group: <http://rogaine.asn.au/aradocs>

All relevant documentation for the new Sportscover insurance policies have also been placed on the ARA website making them easily accessible to event organisers:

Publicity

The Wild Diary in the Wild magazine has been kept up to date with national events. This has continued to be a very effective form of publicity for the sport.

No other publicity initiatives were undertaken during the year. With record numbers in some states and numbers dropping in others, perhaps publicity should be targeted in regions in the future rather than being undertaken on a national basis. There is still a vacancy for a National Publicity Officer, although this was not actively advertised by the executive during the year.

Finances and State Grants

With assistance from the reserves of some of the larger states, the ARA was able to meet the sudden requirement in June 2003 for an insurance payment of over \$65,000 due to the switching of insurance policies.

Over the year, the ARA incurred a minor deficit of approximately \$500. This came after deciding to waive the capitation fee for the year to allow the states some financial breathing space due to the increased insurance premiums. It still continues to be in a very healthy financial state with a closing balance for 2003 of over \$23,000.

No grant applications were received from the states in 2003. As a result, there are still substantial reserves available for worthwhile projects. Some promotion will be needed to encourage states to apply for this money.

Public Liability Insurance

As a result of the insurance issue, an Insurance Subcommittee was appointed to review the new Sportscover policy and the insurance market in general to make recommendations for the future direction of insurance for rogaining. The subcommittee comprising of Warren Smith (chair), Annette Miller and Tony Kelly began their work in August 2003.

One major event during this period was a meeting with the IEA Brokers in November 2003 at their head office in Brisbane. Richard Robinson, Annette Miller and myself met with the CEO Rod Hughes to outline issues identified with our current policy and to explore ways to work with the insurance companies to reduce premiums in the future.

The work over the year was successful in obtaining a reasonable reduction in the premium for the 2004/05 year and the inclusion of novelty events such as cyclogaines and snogaines without a surcharge. However, we are still a long way from returning to the moderate costs of PLI coverage that the sport has traditionally paid. With recent legislative reforms, improved risk management and more stable financial balance sheets for insurance companies it is hoped that normality will return to the insurance industry in the coming years. On behalf of the ARA, a big thanks to Warren, Annette, Tony and Richard for their time and expertise over the past year.

International Rogaining Matters

At the 2003 AGM, the ARA Council showed renewed interest in negotiating with the IRF Executive to become a member of the IRF. Prior to that, there has been no formal correspondence since the ARA's last response to the IRF on 21st March, 2002.

A meeting was held in February 2004 between Neil Phillips, IRF President, Rod Phillips, IRF Secretary and Phillip Holman, ARA President. At this meeting it was agreed that Rod Phillips would document a case for the ARA to become a member of the IRF. He undertook to address all the outstanding issues raised in the ARA's correspondence from March, 2002. A lot of the justification for the ARA to accept the IRF's current position is due to over two of years of successful governorship by the current IRF Council. This contrasts with some of the concerns expressed by the ARA prior to this period. To date, nothing has been received from Rod, but this may have been due to the distractions of the staging of WRC6.

Committee Roles

Richard Robinson began as Treasurer in January 2003. He has brought the energy and focus to this role that characterised his time spent in previous positions within the ARA. A lot of the success of our reduced insurance premiums can be attributed to his hard work.

Mike Hotchkis has nominally held the role of Chair the Technical Subcommittee. However, due to other commitments, no work has been done in this position.

The Secretary role has remained vacant and has largely been filled by the President. This has taken some time away from performing other work for the association. However, a nomination has been received for the AGM.

Conclusion

Although the past 18 months have been dominated by insurance threats, the individual state associations have continued to thrive. The sport is now being enjoyed by more people each year than ever before.

Congratulations to each of the state committees and rogainers all over Australia that continue to make the sport grow and prosper.

Phillip Holman
ARA President
30th June, 2004