



Australian Rogaining Association Inc. President's Annual Report 2008/09

My predecessor had established a trend of production of very lengthy, well researched and informative annual President's report. Just to show that a change in personnel brings a change in style let me commence by saying that this is not a trend I propose to continue.

However I can say quite confidently that Australian rogaining had an excellent year in 2008. For the first time in my more than ten years on the ARA Council the number of members/participants within the ARA affiliated State bodies exceeded 6,000 and I would be confident that this means that rogaining participant numbers in Australia exceeded this figure for the first time ever. We have also seen a surge in rogaining events in other parts of the world, with Russia, for example now conducting as many or more 24-Hr events on an annual basis as Australia.

2008 Australian Championships

The 2008 Australian Rogaining Championships held in the Copeton Waters State Park on the Gwydir River near Inverell in NSW offered a technically challenging course in truly spectacular countryside. Unfortunately the very remote location, with respect to a major airport combined with the decision to stage the event on a Friday/Saturday led to far fewer entrants than we have come to expect for an ARC and certainly far fewer than the course and the area deserved.

The winning and runner-up teams from 2007 combined in a three-person team of; Julie Quinn, David Baldwin and Phil Whitten to clear the course and take the win comfortably

2008 World Championships

Several dozen Australian rogainers made their way to the Karula National Park in southern Estonia in September 2008 to experience a rogaine in very different terrain from that we are used to. They enjoyed a well organised and quite unique event that was dominated by eastern Europeans who proved well suited to their home terrain.

The next WRC is planned for the Canterbury area of New Zealand in November 2010 with the following event in 2012 most likely to return to Europe.

Recently a paper has been circulated within the worldwide rogaining community regarding a possible set of criteria for WRC entry in the future given the high popularity of the most recent WRCs. A number of ARA members choose to provide comment on this paper.

Finances and State Grants

The State Grant monies held over from 2007 were fully expended in 2008 however no grant applications were received for the 2008 grants programme so opportunity remains for States with worthwhile development or support needs.

At the 2008 AGM Council agreed to establish an International Development Fund to permit the ARA to become more active in the promotion and development of rogaining outside of Australia. The levy for this fund was set at a nominal US\$0-50/member. As at the end of 2008 this fund contained a little over A\$2,500-. The Executive has discussed a mechanism for determining appropriate projects for the use of monies accumulated in the fund and is in the process of documenting this for review by Council. It is recommended that this fund continue to be grown with the same contribution in 2009 as was made in 2008.

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 has been a major effort and I thank them both sincerely for their perseverance and time commitment to this activity.

Insurance

As noted in the Treasurer's Report in 2008 we were able to secure Public Liability Insurance at lower premiums and on better terms than the previous years. We also, for the first time, secured Association Liability (or Directors & Officers) cover to further reduce the risk exposure to the volunteers who are the absolute lifeblood of our sport.

Technical Standards

There has been no major activity in the area of technical standards since the last AGM. The key technical issue that has been discussed by the Executive is the potential to mandate electronic punching with one tag per entrant for Australian Rogaining Championships. The practice varies widely between States with many States already doing this for all or most of their events. However the 2008 ARC used only one tag per team whilst the 2009 ARC will use manual punching only.

David Baldwin, Technical Committee Chair will shortly be reactivating the Committee to deal with this and a range of other technical issues that are currently on the table and were mentioned in last year's President's report.

Intersivity Rogaining Championships

With the enthusiastic and material support of the Nigel Aylott Memorial Sports Foundation (NAMSF) 2008 again saw the Australian Intersivity Rogaining Championships held in conjunction with the ARC. Again, the remoteness of the event combined with the Friday/Saturday timing saw the number of entries well down on 2007.

The 2009 Intersivity Championship will be held in conjunction with the ACT Championships in early August to ensure a maximum participation by having the event well away from university holiday periods and relatively central to the major areas of population. The NAMSF will be continuing their sponsorship of a team from each State and Territory and in addition will pay the entry fee to the

event for every High School and University student entrant 16 years or older. This generous support is greatly appreciated by Australian rogaining.

International Rogaining Matters

Progress towards a representative and democratic international peak rogaining body that is comprised of national peak rogaining bodies remains frustratingly slow. The key issues of concern to the ARA were set out in detail in the 2007/08 President's report and Councillors are referred to that document if they seek to refresh their memories.

The undersigned had a long discussion with the President of the IRF in early January 2009 and, whilst many parts of the discussion seemed disjointed and not relevant to the issue of IRF constitutional reform, there appeared to be general alignment on many of the key issues. Unfortunately when it was attempted to confirm this discussion in writing it became abundantly clear that there was no alignment whatsoever.

On 1 February 2009 the President of the IRF, in response to a question from the undersigned, advised the ARA that the IRF had no intention of discussing any further constitutional change in the short or medium term future. This advice was inconsistent with advice received from the IRF in February 2008 when they had advised their own Council and the ARA that the time for constitutional change was "now"!

Subsequent to this, discussions have taken place with executives of both the New Zealand Rogaining Association and the Czech Association of Rogaining who have both suggested strong support for the types of constitutional reforms that are being proposed by the ARA. A draft possible motion to the IRF, which was prepared by ARA Secretary David Rowlands, has been sent to both NZRA and CAR for their consideration and possible modification for use within the IRF processes.

The ARA Executive will maintain a close watch on progress and provide an update to Council as and when things change.

Executive Roles

At the 2008 AGM there were no new candidates for the position of Treasurer and thus the undersigned retained the role in addition to the President's position. I need to be honest and say that I have not been as assiduous as I should have been in pursuing potential Treasurers albeit I would be very keen to relinquish the role. Any potential candidates are encouraged to volunteer!

Over this past year I have been very strongly and ably supported by; David Rowlands as Secretary, David Baldwin as Technical Committee Chair (and IT guru) and Phillip Holman as Immediate Past President. Phil in particular has continued to take on tasks well beyond the expectations of his role which has greatly assisted me to juggle my two ARA roles along with my QRA ones and those of normal personal and professional life. I sincerely thank all three of these gentlemen for their support during the year.

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 we should rate the last year as very positive for the ARA. We have seen:

- Our membership/participation rates pass 6,000 for the first time
- A continued reduction in cost, and increase in cover, in our insurance
- The establishment of an international development fund
- The continuation of the conduct of high quality events by the affiliated State Associations

The only significant negative has been the continued failure to make tangible progress towards a representative and democratic international peak rogaining body that is comprised of national peak rogaining bodies. However given that this frustration has existed for some dozen years now, and there does appear to be the potential for progress at the moment, it is probably unreasonable to consider this a negative.



Richard Robinson
President