



Australian Rogaining Association Inc.

President's Annual Report

2020/21

Presented to AGM 5th August 2021

2021: Agile Rogaining

As I write this report, Sydney and Brisbane are in lockdown, with rogaining events cancelled or postponed. VRA has been particularly hard hit again this year with two major 6 hour rogaine weekends cancelled. NSWRA has postponed the 24 hour Championship until next year and the 30th anniversary Macquarie rogaine is deferred to October.

This time last year, we were optimistic that the worst was behind us, with expectation that the rogaining world would be back to normal by now. But despite rollout of vaccines, the pandemic continues to have a significant impact on rogaining in Australia and the world. The word to describe rogaining today is "agile": as rogaining associations have events planned and ready to go, must organise events at short notice, or make decisions to change event dates, or in the worst case, cancel and process refunds.

A great success story for the year was SARA holding the Australian Rogaining Championship in May 2021, after being deferred from 2020. However, the World Rogaining Championship in California USA has been postponed again, now scheduled for mid-2023.

It is not all doom and gloom, as states that closed borders aggressively, or by geography, have been able to continue life in a more normal manner. WARA, RTas, NTRA and QRA have run a full range of events, relatively unscathed.

Our Rogaining Associations have refined Covid-safe practices established in 2020, including contactless punching, modified food serving arrangements, use of the MapRun app, and reduced interaction between competitors and organisers. The latter has impacted the social interaction at the heart of the sport of rogaining, which is something to focus on as we plan a return to normal.

Finances and Insurance

The Treasurer's Report for calendar year 2020 will show that the ARA's finances remain in a healthy state, which has allowed ARA to underwrite the ARC in 2021. At the 2020 AGM, it was decided to set the Capitation fee for 2021 at \$1 (which was waived), with no International Development Fund (IDF) levy.

The ARA Treasurer was successful in negotiating a reduced rate for public liability insurance in December 2020, on the basis of the lower participant numbers in 2020. The outcome is a decrease in the "Sports Combined" insurance premium, leading to a slightly reduced Insurance levy of \$3.40 per

head. Invoices will be sent out to Members imminently, based on participant numbers as recorded in arrears by the states.

As discussed at the last AGM, the ARA Treasurer has now arranged Volunteers Injury Insurance at an attractive rate. This insurance has been implemented for the whole of ARA for the remaining 6 months of 2021. States can choose to endorse his insurance ongoing as a package, or on a state-by-state basis.

Our broker remains Arthur J. Gallagher & Co, with their contact details are on the ARA website:

<https://rogaine.asn.au/documents/insurance>

2021 Australian Championships – SARA

The 41st Australian Rogaining Championship, postponed from 2020, was held on 29-30 May 2021 north of Burra, South Australia. The SARA organising team produced a detailed technical challenge on the “Deceptive Lands” map at Bri Glen Springs.

The terrain was open and fast with areas of Mallee scrub, complex, and often deep, dry watercourses. The event will be remembered for the cold morning as the temperature dropped below -4 degrees.

Organiser was Craig Colwell, with course setter and vetters Jenny Casanova, Zara Soden, Steve Cooper and Mark Corbett. At close of entries there were 108 teams and 251 competitors in the 24 hour event. A Covid outbreak in Victoria during the week before the event lead to last minute border closure, preventing Victorian teams from attending. Consequently, 22 teams had to withdraw from the ARC. The results show there were 183 competitors in 80 teams, plus a further 26 teams in the 8 hour event.

The winners of the open categories were:

- Julie Quinn, David Baldwin (ACT): First Mixed, 3690 points
- Ronnie Taib, David Williams (NSW): First Men, 3170 points
- Anna Sheldon, Kate Houghton (Qld): First Women, 2650 points

The Interstate and Trans-Tasman Trophy was won clearly by Tasmania for the first time, with ACT and Queensland almost tied for the minor placings. There were no competitors from Western Australia and one team from New Zealand. The Intervarsity competition was not held in 2020 or 2021.

ARA Underwriting of Australian Championship

ARA committed to underwrite the Australian Championship, on the basis that all competitors were offered a full refund of event fees, should they be prevented from competing due to changes in border rules. The proposal was circulated to Council in February 2021 and was approved without objection. The intent was to ensure that competitors had confidence to commit to the event, thus ensuring maximum participation.

The lockdown in Victoria came at a cost to SARA of just on \$10,000. The event subsequently made a loss of \$4768, which will be reimbursed by ARA.

Future Australian/Australasian Championships and Trophies

There is a live proposal from NZRA to hold the Australasian Championship in the south island of New Zealand in January 2022. The viability of Australian participation will depend on the status of Covid suppression and the “travel bubble” with New Zealand. Delegates are requested to discuss this option, with a view to making a decision soon after the AGM.

The hosts for the next Australian/Australasian Rogaining Championships and Intervarsity (according to the rotation schedule) will be:

- 2022 – VRA
- 2023 – NSWRA
- 2024 – WARA
- 2025 – ACTRA

The ARA Secretary manages the return of the trophies for each Australian Championship. At present all the trophies are in good condition. The Mens’ Ultra Veteran trophy did not make it to South Australia and will be despatched from Victoria to the winners in NSW. One trophy, the U23 Mens, requires extension to allow for future awards.

ARA Incorporation and Public Officer

The ARA’s incorporation in South Australia requires a Public Officer resident in that state. Craig Colwell has kindly volunteered to become ARA’s Public Officer, replacing Steven Cooper. We thank Craig for stepping into this position for ARA, in conjunction with his role for SARA.

As an Incorporated association, ARA is required to prepare annual financial statements and present these to Members at the AGM. However, being small in size, there is no requirement for ARA to submit audited financial returns.

The ARA Executive has reviewed ARA’s Incorporation requirements and come to the conclusion that ARA should become a Registrable Australian Body (RAB). The Incorporation in South Australia is designed for organisations that carry on business there. While a RAB is an entity registered under commonwealth law with ASIC. Registration involves submitting certified copies of the association’s Incorporation Certificate and constitution, office holder details, plus a fee of \$422.

Technical Sub-Committee

Chairman: David Baldwin

As flagged at last year’s AGM, the ARA has purchased a stock of 2500 high quality cloth wristbands for \$1211 to be used at future ARCs. These wristbands, with a colourful rogaining custom rogaining design, saw their successful debut at the ARC in South Australia.

For the Australian Championship, the Technical Committee has ensured that the organisers provide at least 2 punches at each control flag. This approach has been successful to mitigate against the risk of failure, and to ease congestion at the first controls. A proposed change to the Rules and Technical Regulations will be tabled to formally implement this.

The Water Management Planning process approved at the 2016 AGM, requires the ARC organisers to formally prepare a Water Management Plan. This process has been successfully implemented at all subsequent ARCs, including 2021. The ARA's Water policy is on the website at:

<https://rogaine.asn.au/documents/policy/water>

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 are relatively low value grants, best suited to assisting the smaller associations. There were not any applications received in 2020. Grant applications are encouraged before the deadline of 30 November each year. The ARA's grant policy is on the website: <https://rogaine.asn.au/documents/policy/grant-policy>

International Rogaining

The ARA is formally represented on the International Rogaining Federation (IRF) by President David Rowlands and delegate David Baldwin. Due to the pandemic, unfortunately there will not be an IRF meeting again this year.

The most important IRF developments in 2021 affected the World Championship.

- The WRC planned for Lake Tahoe, California in 2021 was again postponed. It has been deferred to 2023, following the Czech WRC in 2022. The IRF Council voted to approve the postponement of the event due to international travel restrictions affecting most countries. The Council also approved a dispensation to allow USA to use part of the WRC mapped area in August this year for the North American Championship. This was an important concession to assist Bay Area Orienteering Club (BAOC) manage its cash flow. Although some from Europe were opposed to giving a few competitors a preview only 2 years in advance of WRC, it was understood that this is a once-off.
- Long time IRF Secretary Rod Phillips is hoping to retire soon and the IRF President Matt Bixley was planning to discuss this opportunity personally with Australian rogainers in South Australia, until Covid restrictions made his trip impractical. ARA should be in a position to find a suitable candidate.
- Ukraine has flagged the potential for a change of national body from the current arrangement under orienteering, to an independent rogaining association. This matter is still being debated internally, with a formal decision expected later this year.
- The 17th European Rogaining Championship will be held in September 2021 in Estonia.
- An expected IRF motion to change the date at which a competitor's age is calculated for the age categories, as flagged last year, has not yet materialised. ARA Executive is supportive of this change and will work with IRF to implement it at the international level, before considering Australia's rules.

International Development Fund (IDF)

Convenor: ARA Treasurer Mike Aylott.

The International Development Fund provides a unique opportunity for ARA to leverage its skills to assist the growth of rogaining internationally.

There has been no activity by the IDF Committee this year with little opportunity to promote this opportunity due to travel restrictions. There remains potential for IDF to make further bridging loans to the organisers of the next WRCs. Informal discussions have taken place, but no proposals received.

Members are encouraged to promote the fund when in contact with international rogainers.

Information Systems

The ARA's website is <http://www.rogaine.asn.au> and Facebook page www.facebook.com/ausrogaining.

The ARA is responsible for hosting a number of websites including the ARA, IRF, smaller Member websites, WRC 2016 and the IRF qualification database.

The ARA Executive has endeavoured to maintain the National Calendar, both as a central reference on the ARA website, and as a historic record.

Executive Roles

The ARA Executive holds regular Executive Meetings via Skype, at approximately six week intervals throughout the year. I would like to thank the ARA Executive team: Secretary Paul Guard, Treasurer Michael Aylott, and Technical Committee Chairman David Baldwin, whose dedication to the sport, knowledge and rogaining experience continues to be invaluable and a source of inspiration.

Conclusion

A special thankyou to each of the Council delegates, state committees and rogaining volunteers, who have persevered in difficult circumstances this year, and kept the sport alive, whilst running some very successful events.

Rogaining provides a sport where young and old can grow their skills in teamwork and self-reliance. As we emerge from the pandemic, rogaining has a role to play in restoring our mental health, while taking us back to nature in a safe, friendly environment.

David Rowlands
President