

Presidents report 2016/17

To host what has universally been praised as the best Masters World Championships ever has been a great honour for MAWA and a tribute to the all the hard work put in by so many members. We lost count of the number of international athletes who wrote to say how much they enjoyed their time here. So we should all rightly be proud of what we achieved. Lynne and Bob were an inspiration throughout, Geoff did an amazing job keeping our contracts and finances in order, while Delia looked after all our admin issues with her usual efficiency and thoroughness. But not least the numerous MAWA members who became volunteers, many of whom enjoyed it so much they asked for extra shifts.

And astute financial management by the LOC ensured that we not only delivered on all our promises for the Championships, but achieved surplus funds as well, to be used to further Masters Athletics in Australia. MAWA already has plans to submit a number of project proposals for funding.

But beyond this MAWA of course enjoys the legacy benefits of the money that was spent on up-grading facilities and purchasing equipment. Top of that list is the transformation of ECAC from a run-down facility on the list for closure, to a first rate Championship venue that we intend to call 'home' for many years into the future.

Around 350 of our members competed. They all trained so hard and I was proud to see so many wonderful performances. 29 Gold medals went to MAWA athletes, along with Australian records for John Gilmour, Loraine Lopes and Ruth Johnson, and no less than 46 State Records. Lasting memories for me were sprint doubles to Wendy and Barrie, Alan Gower's gutsy X-country win, Jim's X-country tussle with Don Mathewson, Byrony's dominance in the throws even at the end of the age-group, and on a more personal note, Barbara's return to international competition and medal-winning after many years away through injury.

Our membership passed 700, but more pleasingly many who joined for Worlds have remained, and we currently sit at well over 500. The trend to a younger age profile continues, plainly evident when I look at the line-up every Sunday morning. Peggy Macliver is stepping down as Registrar after many years in the role – Barbara will take over in addition to keeping the position of Statistician.

Robin King resigned from the committee due to work commitments and her place was taken by Campbell Till who has done an invaluable job as the committee lead person for Track & Field.

Perth is hosting the Australian Masters Championships in 2018 and an LOC has been working on this since February under my leadership. I have a great team with Barbara looking after Competition; Delia Social, Catering and Merchandise; Mike Anderson Venues and Admin; Keith Hill Finance and Sponsorship. I am sure that club members will give the LOC their full support.

Numbers at Sunday runs have continued to be very strong and competition often fierce – I recall the single-mindedness of Giovanni and Gillian as they determined to make the age-graded trophies their own. The handicap trophy went to the wire this year and hung on the last race, with Keith Atkinson able to watch on as his competitors blew their chances and handed him the prize. We held a presentation breakfast at the Marathon club which was very successful and is being repeated this year. And we have a new powerhouse in the Women's membership as Rochelle Rodgers turned 30, and took out the Weir Run and RRC Trophies in her first few weeks with the club.

Numbers at Track & Field meets fell as expected after Worlds, but many returned to competition for our State Champs attracting the second largest ever entry, and being superbly organized as ever by Barbara. We all so much enjoy being back at ECAC. There is no State Champs in 2018 due to Nationals but our return to ECAC in 2019 will depend on the installation of an electronic timing facility – something the committee are actively working on.

June saw the first ever National championships at Darwin, which has proved very popular attracting 73 of our members to enter. They enjoyed a feast of good athletics with fierce but friendly competition. Highlights for me were the number of new MAWA members competing, Peggy Macliver's magnificent haul of gold medals, Colin Smith's elevation to the top tier of Australian Masters sprinters, three State Record records, and of course Barbara's part in the memorable W65 World Record 4x400m.

David Carr turned 85 on 15th June, an eagerly awaited event as in recent months he has been breaking M85 world records in a number of events. And to celebrate he broke the 1500m record in a magical night at ECAC.

The coaching initiative launched in May last year has proved to be popular and we have been able to continue with most of the coaching sessions.

Following the popularity of our new modern uniform design we added both a T-shirt and a Track Suit top. The T-shirt was added to the online shop, but for the present the track suit top can be purchased from Margaret Bennett

Elaine Dance continued to manage our social programme and the pattern of weekends away, breakfasts after Sunday runs and the Melbourne cup lunch will continue.

Finally a special thanks to Vic Waters and to Graeme Dahl for producing our two outstanding club publications, to Hamish McLeod for maintaining and developing our excellent website, and to the numerous members who help either at events or behind the scenes to make our club the success it is.

Richard Blurton