



Athletics Victoria
Level 1, 31 Aughtie Drive
Albert Park, VIC, 3206

News from the AV Board – October 2014

Some of the recent feedback to the Board has focused on *communication* – or more specifically, *deficiencies in communication*. The Board is obviously concerned about this, and has/is reviewing the effectiveness of communication throughout the organisation.

One of the recommendations requires the Board to communicate better with the general membership, regularly letting members know what has been on the Board's agenda, and what decisions are being made at Board level. The bulletin that you are now reading is the first response to that requirement. Bulletins such as this one will appear shortly after each meeting of the Board.

We want to stress that communication is a two-way street. If you have feedback for the Board, or an item that needs attention from the Board, please address such items to president@athsvic.org.au.

Budget

The annual turnover of Athletics Victoria funds is approximately \$1.8m. For the last several years, up until the 2012/13 year, Athletics Victoria had a succession of surpluses and eventually accumulated reserves of about \$1m. Reserve funds are good to have, but ultimately, they should be used for the benefit of the organisation and its members.

In 2013/14 the Board elected to use reserve funds to make some significant investments in staff and equipment in order to sustain and improve the services to members. This contributed to an overall deficit in the 2013/14 year of \$247,000. The size of this deficit was a surprise to many members – especially those who had become accustomed to year-on-year surpluses.

There were elements within the 2013/4 deficit that were also a concern for the Board – mainly expenses associated with turnover of staff within the Athletics Victoria office. The staff situation has now stabilised, and the Board is of the view that we now have a more highly skilled and professional office.

The Board is maintaining a very close watch on the budget, and indications at the halfway point of our current financial year are that we will be close to even at the end of March 2015.

Membership Fees

The Board is well-aware that the fees that athletes pay, and the way in which those fees are distributed, is a major concern for clubs. The Board is currently reviewing the fee structures, and I hasten to assure you all that there will be no changes without a full consultation process with clubs. In the initial part of this process, the Board is gathering information, and

is already digesting models used in New Zealand and the UK. We need to achieve a system that provides incentives at club level to assist with recruiting and retaining participants, as well as providing the central body with funds that it needs for the provision of services. As indicated above, there will be further communication on the matter of fees.

Special Awards Committee

Athletics Victoria has been very well served over the years by a nominations committee that has considered and evaluated nominations for important awards such as the Merit Award, Life Membership, and the Regional Service Award.

The Board has now revised the terms of reference, and re-named this committee the *Special Awards Committee*. The new committee will now also advise the Board in relation to those many awards that fall outside the province of Athletics Victoria, but would be enriched by nominations from Athletics Victoria. Examples of such awards are the State Sports Awards, and the various State and National Honours.

Development Officers

The Board is well-aware that Metropolitan Melbourne is at an advantage over our regional members when it comes to ready access to services. The Board is looking into ways in which it might make some progress in redressing this imbalance.

The Board is currently focusing on a proposed trial of a *development officer* position. The funding arrangements for such a position will be a challenge, but we hope that we can move soon in this direction. Many other sports have for some time had regional development officers, and we need to consolidate and further develop our regional activities.

Shield Competition

The Board has watched nervously as the new Shield competition got underway on 11 October. We are aware that some clubs were not happy with the new format, and also some clubs were not happy with the process by which decisions were made. It must also be stated that some clubs were happy with the new format and the process.

This came down to problems with two-way communication, as referred to earlier in this bulletin. In order to improve the process for the future, the Board has:

1. Revised the terms of reference for the Shield Committee (see attached), and
2. Created a new committee, the *Athletics Victoria Advisory Group (AVAG)*. The overall purpose of this Group will be to review and advise on all competition that falls under the purview of Athletics Victoria, ensuring that it meets as many objectives as possible.

The AVAG will consist of equal representation from the following groups:

- Registered members from Elite, Sub elite, Over age and Juniors,
- Registered Coaches from Sprints, Jumps, Distance, Field and Walks,
- Club Administrators, and
- Representative from Victorian Officials.

The AVAG will meet at least three (3) times a year and will be asked to provide recommendations on the following:

- Athlete, club, coach and officials pathways,
- All forms of competition,
- Requirements of athletes, coaches, officials and club administrators, and
- Effective forms of communications to the membership.

The AVAG will initially be appointed in consultation between the Chair and the CEO with the balance coming from nomination from the greater membership. Members will sit on the Group for two years before vacating their positions.

Board Meeting

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 2 December, 2014.