

AUSTRALIAN POLO FEDERATION LTD

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2012

Looking back over the last year I believe it is fair to say there have been noticeable changes in the direction of the APF administration.

Apart from administrative duties, the board has focussed on other areas such as national sponsorship - with all attendant support requirements, new budget setting strategies and a review of the current APF structure to determine if there are more effective ways for the APF to fulfil its duties as the national administrative body.

A major goal of the APF is to capitalise on sponsorship opportunities attached to the Australian National Team with a view to assisting clubs to recruit new players and provide training across all disciplines of the sport.

Members of the board have received input from the broader Australian Polo Community expressing both interest and concerns as to the course the APF is following, or the course it is perceived to be following.

Committees have been appointed to investigate and report on the above. Their findings and recommendations to date will be presented at the APF Board Meeting to be held immediately following this AGM and will be incorporated in the minutes of that meeting.

It is important to note that committees engaged in these new projects require additional time to finalise their recommendations and to conclude negotiations with third parties such as potential sponsors. Each committee has spent much of the past year seeking input from the polo community, negotiating with aligned parties such as the Australian Institute of Sport and canvassing opportunities for sponsorship.

New enterprises require time for initial research and to gather input from interested parties – after which time, momentum gathers at an increasing pace. This is the current position of our various subcommittees and therefore, it is desirable for everyone involved to stand for re-election to ensure continuity in the development process.

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There have been many highlights over the past year with Australian teams competing in a variety of events both at home and abroad.

Australia competed in the first World Cup of Snow Polo in China - beating Italy and Brazil before being defeated by Chile. Australia then went on to the quarter finals where they were knocked out of the tournament with a loss to South Africa.

It is pleasing to note Australia has been invited back for the same event in China next year.

Australia competed abroad in two other events.

The Australasian Gold Cup was played in New Zealand with Australia winning 10/9 and an Australian under 25 team played in the Suffolk test, in England with Australia losing 10.5/8

To many, the highlight of our national team's accomplishments was to win two out of their four games at the World Cup in Argentina. These victories were the first by an Australian side in a world cup on foreign soil.

At home, Australia defeated South Africa 9/5 in the test match played at Windsor and won again by one goal at the Sydney RAS test match.

The Australian Colts played the South African Colts at Windsor with the visitors proving too strong and winning 6/5.

For the first time, Australia has sent an 8g school team to compete in New Zealand, starting from Nov 11 through to Dec 2. This is a significant and pleasing development and I am sure I speak for all Australian Polo enthusiasts in wishing this young team a safe and successful series.

This overall level of international competition marks Australia as a significant polo playing nation. It is therefore important that the APF continues to provide logistical and financial support in order to maintain and extend Australia's involvement in international events.

It is both interesting and pleasing to see an increasing number of women playing polo in Australia. On the weekend prior to our AGM, eight teams competed in the annual ladies tournament at Windsor. While this number of ladies playing at one tournament may surprise some, it is indicative of a growing trend across the country.

The APF has recently received a request to establish a women's polo subcommittee "to develop and drive specific initiatives for women with a national approach". This request will be tabled at our director's meeting and I am confident the proposal will receive a positive and enthusiastic response from the board.

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The following is a summary of initiatives recently instigated by the APC.

1. Appointment of a Structure Review Committee –
to investigate different administration models and to recommend what, if any changes should be considered by the APF and its members.
2. Appointment of a Sponsorship Committee –
to seek sponsorship opportunities for the Australian national team with a view to obtaining funds to assist with player recruitment and training and to provide financial support for the Australian National Team.
3. Convening of a Budget Review Committee-
to examine the existing budgeting and reporting methods utilised by the APF – in particular, the way players subscriptions are allocated – and to recommend changes that will result in greater financial transparency.
4. Instigating the Australian Polo Hall of Fame -
This was initiated by Jeremy Bayard and has been enthusiastically endorsed by the APF. We thank Jeremy for his foresight and wish him every success with this most valuable project. The inaugural HOF investiture and dinner will be held in Sydney on March 28, 2013. This event presents a unique opportunity for polo players, past and present, to get together with other polo enthusiasts.

As previously indicated, the tasks undertaken by our subcommittees is, and will remain a work in progress as they continually seek better outcomes for Australian Polo.

It may be timely to remind everyone that directors and committee members act in an honorary capacity and all have other priorities on their time. The work involved is challenging and time consuming. I would therefore like to think the polo community appreciates their efforts and in future, address any conflicting views in an appropriate manner directly to the APF Board.

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On a personal note, I would like to thank my fellow board members for electing me to the prestigious role of President of The Australian Polo Federation and for their support and backing as I worked my way through a steep learning curve.

I would also like to express my gratitude to all members of our subcommittees who have fulfilled their roles with enthusiasm and professionalism.

In particular I would like to thank our secretary Amanda Jansen. Amanda's grasp of all things polo, her attention to detail and dedication to her job is commendable. Her support for the President has been outstanding. I cannot imagine how I would have managed without her ever reliable back up.

In closing, I would like to say it has been a pleasure and an honour to hold the office of President of the Australian Polo Federation. I have truly enjoyed working with my fellow directors and members of our numerous subcommittees. I thank them all once again for their valuable support.