



CROQUET AUSTRALIA EXECUTIVE REPORT

Reflections of 2006

It has been a busy year for Croquet Australia, primarily due to the preparation and hosting of the MacRobertson Shield in November. Numerous people devoted an enormous amount of their time and expertise to ensure that the Event was staged successfully. Sincere thanks to everyone who assisted.

The Trans Tasman Test Series was held in Melbourne from April 24 - 30 2006. The Australian Team looked strong but New Zealand was the better team, winning the first two tests convincingly. Australia played well in the third test, but there was too much ground to be caught up and New Zealand won the series 2 tests to 1. Player of the series was New Zealand's Paddy Chapman, who won all of his singles and doubles. The next test series will be held in New Zealand in 2008.

Croquet Australia Magazine. The first issue of the 'new look' magazine was published in July 2006 with all credit going to Editor Claire Gorton and Vice-President Rosemary News. At the Executive Meeting in November, concerns for the viability of the magazine were aired again. The magazine is operating at a loss equivalent to 20% of all available funds. The Executive decided that a survey of all clubs Australia-wide would be conducted to determine the perception of and demand for the magazine. It was also decided that two more issues would be published and then a review of its viability would be conducted by the Executive.

ACA Equipment Officer Joyce Bray retired after many years in the position. We thank Joyce for her wonderful contribution to the ACA. We welcome Shirley Hallinan as the new ACA Equipment officer and her details are available on the Croquet Australia Website through the 'For Sale' link.

Deposits into the ACA Bank Account can now be made directly enabling easier payments for entry fees, badges, dinners, stationery items etc for players and states. Details of the BSB and Account number can be obtained from the Treasurer or Secretary. We request that you advise us by email or phone when you have made a payment into the ACA Account and that you identify yourself as the depositor at the time of making the transaction.

The Member Protection Policy (MPP) for Croquet Australia was published and came into effect on 31st July 2006. Croquet Australia is looking to form a co-

operative venture with the States to assist in the resolution of both state and national issues.

The policy is subject to annual review and update according to the rules governing The Australian Sports Commission Recognised National Sporting Organisations (NSO's). ASC has provided a new template and an update of Croquet Australia's MPP will be performed after the AGM.

John Fransen and Maree Skinner are the Member Protection Officers for Croquet Australia. All queries should be directed to the MPO's in the first instance (contact details on the Croquet Australia Website).

Croquet Australia has established a pool of well-qualified volunteers who will form appeals panels to deal with matters arising from the Complaint Resolution Provisions under the MPP and the Selection Policy Appeals Provisions.

ACA Selection Appeal. The first appeal under the new Selection Policy was lodged in July by Ken Bald in response to his non-selection in the MacRobertson Shield Team. A hearing was convened in August and a decision handed down on the day of the hearing. The Panel examined all elements of the Team Selection in great detail and determined that the Appeal was upheld and the Selection Committee should re-evaluate in more depth, the relative strengths of likely doubles pairings. This process was duly carried out by the Selectors, however, the team was not changed.

This Appeal highlighted some areas within the Selection Policy that needed review. Although the Appeal reinforced the accountability and transparency in selection processes it also proved quite costly to the ACA as there was only a provision for a hearing rather than a 'determination'. The Executive decided that it was reasonable to allow the Panel to decide whether there should be a hearing or a determination. If a hearing is to be convened, then the appellant shall pay a fee, refundable if the appeal is upheld. Changes to the Selection policy will be tabled at the AGM. The composition of future Panels will be the subject of review. Please note, a decision made by an Appeals Panel may not be appealed.

Croquet Australia's Anti-Doping Policy has been reviewed, updated on the new template and submitted to the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority for approval.

The President's Eights events were held in Adelaide from 29 September - 2nd October 2006. Thank you to SACA for hosting the events (Hutt Road, North Adelaide and Norwood Croquet Clubs) as the New Victorian Croquet Centre (VCC) was not completed in time. Future Eights will be held at the VCC and the

entry fee has been set at \$220 (Croquet Australia subsidises these events extensively).

The Executive feels that there were inherent difficulties in the past process of issuing invitations and ranking players for the event. The following provisions will apply to future Eights:

- Selectors will be asked if wild cards will be used in the event;
- The ranking list to be used, will be as published on the day the invitations are issued;
- Invitations will be issued three (3) months prior to the event;
- Players will be given two (2) weeks to respond and their place in the event will be forfeited if there is no response within that period of time;
- Games will be un-timed (a time limit may be imposed if necessary after 1 ½ hours).

The Australian Open Championships were held in Sydney from November 4 -12 2006. A number of overseas players took part in the event. Chris Clarke of (NZ) won the Open Singles Championship and the doubles was won by Robert Fulford (GB) and Chris Clarke (NZ). The Event served to highlight the importance of precision play and the use of low-risk shots.

Jacky MacDonald stepped in and organised the events in minimal time. Thanks to Jacky and to John Eddes who managed the events and to the clubs at which the events were held.

In the future, the Open will be hosted at the Victorian Croquet Centre and no longer rotated through the states. There is no proposal for the use of wild cards in the tournament.

The MacRobertson Shield was held at Rich River and Shepparton Croquet Clubs from November 18 - December 3 2006. It would be impossible to name everyone who contributed to the success of the event. I can only reiterate that it took an enormous amount of time and skill on the part of numerous volunteers, to ensure that the courts were in peak condition, catering was organised, referees primed and administration efficiently executed. Spectators were treated to displays of excellence in croquet. The British team was by far the strongest and won the test series convincingly.

A Series. The squad for the "A Series" was announced in December 2006. Players will travel to NZ and play at Epsom Rumuera Club from February 23 - 25 2007. Concerns regarding the format were raised and it was agreed that the series will be played as a singles championship in this instance but the format will be reviewed for future events.

The new Victorian Croquet Centre at Cairnlea is completed. Croquet Australia is in the process of negotiating an agreement with Croquet Victoria regarding the hosting of National Events at the centre.

ACA Administrative Assistant. Croquet Australia has negotiated an arrangement with SACA for administrative support to be supplied by SACA's Administrative Assistant for a trial period of six (6) months. The position will be reviewed at the conclusion of the trial period. The cost was included in the last budget agreed by Council. The Administrative Assistant works to the directions of the Secretary; all requests for administrative back-up should be directed through the Secretary.

Procedures Manual. Creina Dawson has completed the updating and compilation of a Procedures Manual that summarises a range of procedural matters in the Croquet Australia Handbook and also day-to-day practices where a consistent approach is essential for the good operation of the Association. The Procedures Manual will be published on the Croquet Australia Website following Executive approval.

Referees and Accreditation. The Executive agrees with the States that there is a need for national accreditation course for referees. Updated papers are being produced with the intent of implementing such a course.

The Referees Manual is in the process of being updated and will be published on the Croquet Australia Website.

Appointments. All appointed positions will be reviewed following the AGM. There is a need to look at how the duties and workloads have changed since the positions were last reviewed. The appointment of an Administrative Assistant should lighten the workload for some officers. The Events Manager will not be replaced for the time being. The Insurance Officer's duties have been reallocated to the Secretary until further notice.

Golf Croquet Coaching. Croquet NSW approached the Executive with a request that there be specific training for golf croquet coaches. It was agreed that there should be golf croquet specific coaches and this issue will be addressed when the new Director of Golf Croquet has been appointed.

The inaugural Australian Interstate Teams Event for Golf Croquet and Open Events will be held in the Hunter Valley in New South Wales in September 2007. Specific details such as the format are still being determined. The National Golf Croquet Handicap Events will remain at Deniliquin, to be played immediately following the National Handicap Tournament in Rich River.

States will be invited to bid for the hosting of The Australian Interstate Teams Event for Golf Croquet and Open events.

Handicapping. A review of handicapping regulations has been finalised by the Handicapping Committee. The amended regulations will be published on the Croquet Australia Website.

Changes were announced in October to all golf croquet handicaps. There was a need to standardise handicaps nationally to alleviate handicap discrepancies that were occurring between Australian and International players.

The Executive decided that there was not a need to maintain a national handicap data base on the Croquet Australia website. States are at liberty to maintain a members' handicap database on state websites. A link to state-based handicap sites is available on the Croquet Australia Website.

President's Meeting. Due to time constraints we were unable to find a suitable time to hold the meeting in 2006.

ACA Logo. A competition was launched in the magazine for entries to be submitted for a new ACA Logo. We have received a number of excellent entries. The entries will be reviewed at the Executive Meeting in Perth in March.

Funding. The Australian Sports Commission has made it quite clear that croquet will not receive any funding in the current round of allocations. The Executive has resolved to look at other avenues for funding.

New Club Grants. Croquet Australia granted Sarsfield Croquet Club in Victoria, \$1,000 under this scheme in 2006. The Executive has decided that in future there will be a \$2,000 annual limit for New Club Grants and all applications will be referred to the mid-year executive meeting for consideration.

Maree Skinner
Secretary Croquet Australia
February 2007