



21 March 2023

Newsletter No: 1 for 2023

Hi Everyone

### **John Wignall and Alan Turner**

The last few days have been a sad time for New Zealand Bridge with the loss of two titans of our game. Both John Wignall (life member) and Alan Turner (life member) delivered unsurpassed service locally, nationally, and in the case of John internationally, to bridge. Between them they amassed a very impressive record at the table. Nationally and regionally some 53 titles. Their success extended beyond New Zealand with John representing our country 20 times and Alan on 5 occasions. Their involvement on the international circuit extended beyond playing to that of non-playing captains a staggering 28 times (Alan 23 and John 5). We extend our heartfelt condolences to Adele and Judy and their respective families. Tributes to both gentlemen can be seen on our website.

### **Cyclone Gabrielle**

Not since cyclone Bola have, we experienced such destructive weather, with unprecedented rain and wind hitting the upper north island and then Hawkes Bay and Gisborne. People lost their lives, communities were isolated and for some families lost everything. Typical of kiwis, they have rallied behind those severely affected offering help in many ways. Bridge clubs and members have got behind the initiative of the New Zealand Bridge Foundation to raise money to help clubs and players adversely affected. Every bit helps so if you want to contribute you are invited to connect with the Foundation.

### **Forthcoming Regional Meeting**

Later this month we have a planned hui with the regional committees. It is clear with the distraction of Covid-19 we have lost impetus. Membership has declined from recent highs three years ago of ~13,600 to a present number of 12,440. It is not all doom and gloom. There is plenty of energy and activity going on to encourage players back to clubs and to the table, which is exciting. However, we need to do more and invest in our future. That is the focus of our upcoming get together. We are confident between us, the regional committees, and clubs we have an exciting future.



## **Role of New Zealand Bridge**

Our role is to support the management, development, and growth of the game. We are here as an enabler, and not here to compete with the clubs. We want to offer tools that clubs might find useful. We want to support an environment that fosters growth and participation. We want to encourage the next generation of competitive players to the tournament table.

We know clubs provide a vital service within their community, providing not only intellectual stimulation but a place for people to meet and socialize. Lifetime friendships are developed that often extend beyond the bridge table. We want to support clubs in everything they do.

## **2023 Congress**

Believe it or not, planning for Congress 2023 is well underway. With Richard Solomon retiring and Lesley Chubb stepping down we have had to appoint a new leadership team. Bridget Willcox (better known as Bridget Hannaway) has been appointed as Congress Events Manager. Bridget is the manager of the Wellington Bridge Club and comes with an impressive resume. She will be ably supported by Teri Logie who assumes the role vacated by Lesley. They have big shoes to fill but we are confident they will be successful. Please support them and make their lives a little easier.

We want to see Congress grow in strength and numbers. We want to ensure Congress is a rewarding experience, with players wanting to return year after year. Moreso players will encourage new and old players to attend. Let us see if we can make Congress 2023 the biggest ever. An exciting aspect is that we will have additional events for Junior and Intermediate grade players.

Online entries for the 2023 Congress will be activated over the next few days. We will post a note on the website when things are up and running.

## **The Board**

As you are all aware we have a rotation regime as a member of the Board. This is to ensure opportunity exists to refresh the board and bring on new talent and ideas. This year I and Sue Brown were required to step down but put forward our names for re-election. Sue and I wish to thank you for supporting us and having confidence we are doing our best.

The constitution now requires the board to elect the chair. At our last board meeting the board re-elected me as chair. I was both honored and humbled to accept the role. All I can say is we are doing our best.

## **Online**

We have already shared our plans for online. The trial is underway with a mix of events happening in person and online. As time advances, we will evaluate the outcome of the trial and share those findings. We fully understand the benefits offered by online but are equally encouraged by the return to in person bridge.

We have talked about running a series of webinars. These are planned to start after Easter.

Without pre-empting the outcome of the trial, it is not hard to see a hybrid model that facilitates both forms of the game existing side by side.

The challenges we are addressing are no different to those being experienced around the World. Whilst I was at the Gold Coast, I had the opportunity of meeting and talking to Jan Kramas, president of the World Bridge Federation, and Allison Stralow, president of the ABF. Whilst we are further advanced than our friends across the ditch the underlying challenges are the same all around the world. There is pressure on night-time bridge.

### **Numbers**

We continue to apply prudence to the management of our financial affairs. In January we ran at a profit of \$20,000 compared to a budgeted loss of \$9,100. February, we had a small loss of \$1,300 against a budget loss of \$14,600. Year to date, at end of February, we had a recorded loss of \$55,400 against a budgeted loss of \$192,400. A significant portion of the year-to-date loss involves unrealized losses from equities. The balance sheet remains strong.

### **Internationals**

Teams have been selected to represent us in Hong Kong (June) and Morocco (August). We wish them every success. A decision has been taken not to send a senior's team to either event.

### **Interprovincials**

The interprovincial finals will be contested online from Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> to Monday 27<sup>th</sup> November with the weekend of 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of May set aside for regions to hold selection trials, either in person or online.

### **Bonus B Points for junior and Intermediate Pairs**

The current policy of awarding additional B points to the highest unplaced Junior & Intermediate pairs in open 8B tournaments will cease from 1 April 2023. While the original intention was to increase player participation from lower grade pairs it has had unforeseen consequences with some players being regraded before they should be.

Enjoy your bridge.

Cheers Allan

