



1 December 2025

Newsletter No 7 for 2025 - Haere Ra, Au Revoir, Goodbye

My term as Chair and board member of NZ Bridge is coming to a rapid end. I have been asked about staying on but my time is up, and it is with a great deal of confidence that I hand over the batten to Peter Newell whom I am sure will do a marvelous job.

There are a lot of people I wish to thank, and I will come back to them later as the list is long.

The focus over the last nine years has been on steering Bridge in this country and ensuring the game is in a healthy state and the game is growing. Everyone involved wants to leave a positive legacy, and I am no different. We have achieved a great deal which I would like to share.

In my experience life is punctuated by defining moments that have a significant impact, shaping what and how you approach things.

My involvement in bridge management has been no different. I can break my nine years into

1. The first three years where the focus was on consolidating the organisation, building confidence, and ensuring we pursued a model of openness and transparency.
2. The second period was about Covid-19 and the many challenges faced by sporting and recreational clubs. We also saw online bridge become a permanent part of the game.
3. Lastly, dealing with governance and structural changes.

It is this latter point I want to focus on as the rebuild and Covid are well behind us.

2022- 2025

We have undertaken structural changes to meet the future needs of clubs and players and to facilitate succession in certain key roles. We have updated our constitution. We have built a toolkit for club use. More specifically

Incorporated Societies Act 2022

Registration under the Incorporated Societies Act required a major overhaul of the constitution. In addition, changes to reporting standards have meant we have shifted from pure financial reporting into having to prepare a statement of performance.



We have provided advice and tools to help clubs with the transition. Only recently we received a letter from the Orewa Bridge Club which is shared below.

"I am writing on behalf of Orewa Bridge Club to thank you for the guidelines / webinars etc. that you have provided via the NZ Bridge website and for the comprehensive toolkit that is now available to affiliated clubs.

The new toolkit has not only assisted us in the production of required policies and codes; it has also validated our committee's assertion that these documents (such as a Privacy Policy) were necessary in today's more regulated environment, even for a Bridge club, and assisted us in driving the changes needed to develop a business strategy and goals that align with the strategy and business plans of NZ Bridge.

We have navigated this project amid considerable resistance and conflict. The positive by product of those issues has been that the Committee and vast majority of members now recognise the importance of having robust rules, processes and succession planning in place.

You have asked for suggestions as to other documents that may be useful: we sought legal advice in respect of member complaints re: the Privacy Act / Harassment Act etc. during this exercise; this highlighted the need for several documents including a Database Management policy in addition to the Data Management Policy already in the toolkit. In the event of a complaint, it is the Club (Committee) that is answerable for any breach. We are currently preparing this document."

Changes to the Chief Director Role

The directing needs of the organisation have evolved to a point where the functions and responsibilities of the role of chief director have required reassessment and realignment. We spent considerable time reviewing how best to create a framework that spreads the load, meets the needs for governance oversight and reduced risk, and how we can capture expertise from within our community.

We decided to divide the responsibilities into 5 discreet parts.

1. Head Director
2. Laws and Regulations
3. Fair Play
4. Teaching and Learning of Directors
5. Event Management (including Congress)

In isolation it might sound like just a change in titles but there has been a shift in emphasis. The Head Director will have a focus on advocating and developing pathways for directors and developing and growing the pool of tournament and national directors. We are also focused on the head director providing learnings and insights that will help all directors do a better job.

I and NZ Bridge want to acknowledge the work done by Murray Wiggins over the last 12 years. He worked tirelessly throughout his tenure, and I know the change was hard, but I am confident we are better set for the future.

Fair Play Committee

The other significant change we made was the establishment of a 'fair play' committee. Historically we have been like the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff, picking up the pieces (dealing with complaints). We saw this as a negative approach and did little to foster a safe, respectful and fair playing environment for all participants. This committee will spearhead a cultural and procedural shift towards higher standards of behaviour across all play, through education, empowerment, and resource provision.

Toolkit

Historically the efficient running of bridge in New Zealand was detailed in the NZ Bridge Manual. Whilst a useful document it has been challenging to keep it up to date and easy to use. Progressively information will be shifted into a club toolkit, and the manual will only deal with the laws and regulations.

The Club Toolkit is our go-to resource for running a successful, welcoming, and future-ready bridge club. The toolkit is there to make club leadership easier and to help clubs grow and thrive. The Toolkit is divided into 4 parts.

1. Governance

Strong governance provides the foundation for a successful bridge club. This section supports committee members and club leaders with practical tools and templates to guide how your club is structured, how decisions are made, and how responsibilities are shared.

Whether you're reviewing your constitution, developing a strategic plan, or clarifying the role of your governing group, you'll find resources here to help you plan with confidence and lead with clarity.

Governance Delivery  Business Planning (0.12MB)  Commitment of Governing Group (0.13MB)  Compliance (0.12MB)  Constitution (0.14MB)  Governance Structure (0.15MB)  Preparing for a Terms of Reference (0.12MB)	Strategic Planning  Planning Overview (0.12MB)  Succession Planning (0.11MB)  Strategic Planning (0.12MB)  Sample Bridge Club Strategy (0.46MB)  Strategic Plan on a Page - Word doc (0.20MB)  Operational Planning Grid Template - Word doc (0.20MB)
governance - the people  Composition and function of committees (0.12MB)  Duties and responsibilities of an Officer (0.14MB)  Privacy Officer (0.10MB)  Role Profile Chair.pdf (0.13MB)	governance - the meetings  Chairing a Meeting (0.11MB)  AGM Agenda, Minutes Template (0.03MB)  Development of an Agenda (0.15MB)  Effective Committees (0.13MB)  Interest Register Template - Word doc (0.06MB)

 Role Profile Secretary (0.14MB)	 Management of Conflicts of Interest (0.13MB)
 Role Profile Treasurer (0.12MB)	 Meeting Minutes (0.12MB)
 Officer Consent Form and Certificate (0.10MB)	 Running an AGM (0.10MB)
 Who can be on a Committee (0.12MB)	

2. Policies and Procedures

Clear, consistent policies and procedures are essential for running a well-managed, inclusive, and safe bridge club. This section provides guidance and templates to help clubs navigate important areas like health and safety, data management, behaviour, social media and more.

Data, Social Media and Privacy Management  Communication Policy incl. Social Media (0.15MB)  Data Management - background (0.11MB)  Data Management Policy - suggested outline (0.12MB)  Management of Emails to meet Privacy Requirements (0.13MB)  Privacy Policy Outline - Word doc (0.29MB)  Social Media Best Practice (0.15MB)	Developing Club Policies  Development of a Code of Conduct Policy (0.13MB)  Development of Club Policies and Procedures (0.13MB)  Policy Outline Example (0.14MB)
Health and Safety  Development of a Health and Safety Plan (0.15MB)  Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Notes (0.19MB)  Incident Register (0.10MB)  Incident Report - example Word doc.docx (0.29MB)  Outline of a Health and Safety Policy.docx (0.29MB)  Preparation of a Health and Safety Policy (0.13MB)  Procedure for Delivery of Health and Safety (0.13MB)  Risk Assessment Proforma (0.30MB)	Behavioural Standards  Acceptable Behaviour Policies (0.17MB)  Child Protection Policy (0.10MB)  Development of a Dress Code (0.12MB)  Development of Drug and Alcohol Policies (0.11MB)

3. Operations

This section brings together the practical tools, templates and guidance you need to keep your club running smoothly day to day. From staffing and volunteers to finances, tournaments, masterpoints and dealing with complaints, you'll find helpful resources to support every aspect of club operations—whether you're a director, treasurer, committee member or simply lend a hand.

Staff and Volunteers  <u>Developing a Volunteering Strategy</u> (0.13MB)  <u>Employing Staff</u> (0.12MB)  <u>Ideas for Volunteers</u> (0.10MB)  <u>Staff Information Form</u> (0.07MB)  <u>Volunteer Management</u> (0.13MB)  <u>Volunteering Strategy Template - Word doc</u> (0.29MB)	Finance and Asset Management  <u>Asset Management</u> (0.11MB)  <u>Budgeting</u> (0.11MB)  <u>Cash Handling</u> (0.11MB)  <u>Financial Reporting</u> (0.11MB)  <u>Insurance</u> (0.11MB)  <u>Record keeping</u> (0.12MB)
Complaints and Discipline  <u>Conflicts of Interest explained</u> (0.12MB)  <u>Disciplinary Process - The steps</u> (0.16MB)  <u>Managing a conflict resolution meeting</u> (0.14MB)  <u>Natural Justice explained</u> (0.12MB)  <u>Overview of complaints, disputes and misconduct</u> (0.11MB)  <u>The Role of the Recorder</u> (0.15MB)	NZB General Information  <u>Director Training Summary</u> (0.11MB)  <u>International representation - summary</u> (0.12MB)  <u>Masterpoints scheme and grading</u> (0.13MB)

4. Marketing Material

Marketing & Retention Support for Clubs

Effective marketing is about telling your club's story in ways that attract and inspire people to give bridge a go. With a little planning, you can raise awareness in your local community, fill your bridge classes, keep learners engaged, and grow a thriving club culture.

Refer to the toolkit for more information.

Teaching and Learning

Our initial focus has been on the provision of teaching material, which is up-to-date, relevant and contemporary. Notwithstanding, having scoped the project it has taken longer than envisaged. The material is nearly complete and is scheduled to be with the printer on or before the 18th of December and will be available for clubs by 31 January 2026.

There have been consultations with teachers, and we are confident we will have a package of information that will be fit for purpose. The exciting aspect from my perspective is that beginners will be playing the cards right from the outset. The more we can excite beginners there is a stronger likelihood they will become permanent.

The Teaching and Learning Sub-Committee is currently reviewing and adding to the existing resources for improver and intermediate players. Online lessons for improvers are also being offered, broadening access to learning.

A WhatsApp group of bridge teachers throughout the country receives information and support. Zoom meetings have been held to discuss teaching and learning issues. A two-day Teachers Conference will be held in 2025.

Bridge teachers are an important part of the club. For many people wanting to play they are the window to the club. They need to be equipped and supported.

Connecting with People

Over the past two years, NZ Bridge has invested in social media advertising and has supported clubs to raise their profile and attract learners into lessons via social media, reaching over 1.1 million people. In addition, we're seeing an increase in receptivity by journalists to cover bridge stories, averaging about two stories per month in local and national media.

All positive stuff but there is a but! Over the last two years we have invested a significant portion of our revenue in engaging more and bringing more people into the game. Some clubs have taken advantage of the offering, but others have not. On a positive note, we have seen an uplift of over 1000 new players but that has come at an unsustainable cost. Membership is currently sitting at 13,013 but that will reduce over the next few months based on historical patterns.

I applaud the work clubs have done to get beginners to lessons. We all know retention of beginners is our lifeblood and making learning fun and reducing inappropriate behaviour are critical.

To sustain a resource to help grow the game we need a membership base of 15,000+. Net growth of >15% over the next two years. Pre Covid, we reached ~13,700 but post Covid we are presently at a high point. I don't want to be negative, but we are an aging group, and we are competing against many other sports and recreations for available time.

Whilst being recognised as a sport is one of our strategic objectives, we have not been able to move the dial with Sport New Zealand. They do not recognise mind sports as a sport while most other countries and the TOC do.

Focus is now on connecting with New Zealand Esports. That work is yet to commence.

Another part of our growth plan is connecting with younger people.

We've got some way to go to achieve this by

- Raising the profile of bridge as suitable for all ages
- Supporting our top young players to compete internationally and generating coverage to help attract more young players
- Ensuring Duke of Edinburgh Award participants in schools know that bridge is a 'new skill' option towards this certificate, and supporting them to join lessons
- Promoting the mental health benefits of bridge

Whilst the club environment is our mainstay, we need to expand our engagement with the broad community of players which includes non-affiliated and social players. We need to think how we best achieve this.

Tournaments

Tournaments and Congresses are run throughout New Zealand and are an important way for players to improve their bridge, experience tournament play and meet other bridge players. Tournaments are available every weekend of the year and there are many that cater to the intermediate or junior player.

Tournament Type¹	Dec 24	% of Total	Mar 24	% of Total
Pairs	287	75%	330	78%
Swiss Pairs	38	10%	38	9%
Teams	54	14%	54	13%
Sixes	2	1%	2	0%
TOTAL	381		424	

Grade^{1 3}	Dec 24	% of Total	Mar 24	% of Total
Open	195	51%	242	57%
Restricted Open	7	2%	7	2%
Intermediate	81	21%	84	20%
Junior	57	15%	54	13%
Novice	8	2%	7	2%

Restricted	26	7%	22	5%
Ladies	2	1%	3	1%
Mixed	1	0%	2	0%
Senior	2	1%	1	0%
Sixes	2	1%	2	0%
TOTAL	381		424	

	Dec 24	% of Total	Mar 24	% of Total
Face to Face	360	95%	396	93%
Online ²	16	4%	13	3%
Cancelled	5	1%	16	4%
TOTAL	381		425	

An exciting thing to observe is that many tournaments are booked out. At Congress 2025 we had our largest number ever with over 800 registrations. Palmerston North (Palmy) was a huge success with a positive response from all players.

Laws and Regulations

Like many sports our rules are complex. As an affiliated member of the WBF we are obligated to follow the governing rules, however we do have flexibility to modify the rules to meet the needs of our community. At a personal level I would like to see the rules simplified for club bridge. Already the rules applying to online bridge differ to F2F.

Every 10 years the rules are reviewed. The next iteration is 2027. The process is already underway.

International

I want to acknowledge and commend those players who have worn the silver fern, representing us on the international stage. Whilst we financially contribute we need to recognize the bulk of the cost is borne by the players.

More importantly, involvement at an international level is healthy for the game. It allows the game to grow and mature, bringing new things to our local tournament environment and play at a club level.

Congress

At the start of my tenure Congress was played in Hamilton as it had for nearly two decades. Then Covid-19 intervened and the Distinction Hotel elected to become a quarantine hotel, so we were forced to find a new venue.

After a long search we decided upon BayPark at Mt Maunganui. In hindsight a good venue but the wrong location.

This year we went south to Palmerston North (Palmy). A great decision with record numbers. Centrally located with accommodation and restaurants within walking distance. A good vibe and we look forward to the next two + years in Palmy.

People

The success of any organisation is about the people, and we are no different. I want to

- Acknowledge the contribution of all past, present, and future club committees and volunteers.
- Acknowledge the work of all directors and scorers.
- Acknowledge the contribution of our standing committees- international including chef de mission, laws and regulations, Conduct Discipline and Disputes, teaching and learning, tournaments and events, fair play.
- Acknowledge the work of the Foundation.
- Partners and suppliers- accountancy, technology, scoring packages.
- Honorary solicitor.
- The Bridge Zone.
- Latest daily bridge news

All of you have made my job easier and the acknowledgement I have received is all due to you.

There are, however, several people I wish to specifically mention.

- The Board- Peter Newell, Anne Barrowclough, Sue Brown, John Skipper, Sam Coutts, Kate Terry, Karen Marteletti (deceased), Anna Kalma (retired).
- Members of the management team- Bridget Willcox, Murray Wiggins (retired), Caroline Wiggins, Rona Driscoll.

Before wrapping up I want to thank all the players.

Lastly there is one person who has been the cornerstone of this organisation who has made my job easier. He knows more than anyone else, and I appreciate what he contributes to the wellbeing of NZ Bridge. I like to think what started as an acquaintance has finished in friendship. Even though he does not drink I raise a glass. **THANK YOU**, Alister. Maybe we will find time to play an event or two.

On the 31st of December when I turn the computer off, I will reflect on the fact that I have enjoyed every minute of my time. It has been a blast.

Thank you for your support.

Cheers Allan