

NZMA AGM 2016 – President’s Report

Welcome to 42nd New Zealand Master’s Athletics AGM being held here in Dunedin and my first President’s report. I have decided to compile a written report so those who cannot attend will be able to read this report on our website.

In the April issue of Vetline I presented a list of possible areas of governance and procedures that I considered we needed to review, so now is the time to reflect how well we have achieved this during the year.

As president, I am constantly being bombarded with e-mails having received 1355 and sent 877 replies. Sometimes I feel this is not always the best method of communication as messages can be misinterpreted, plus the time taken to compose e-mails can be longer than making a phone call. But this is the modern way and it does allow us to communicate with the masses at a push of a button.

If I refer to my list as published in the April Vetline, what have we achieved during the past year?

1. **Combined Event Records Update:**

Firstly, although not included in my Vetline list, at the February board meeting last year it was decided that the directive from OMA to recalculate points totals for post May 2010 combined event records was going to be impossible unless individual event performance for those records could be obtained. That has proven difficult so we have been forced to archive the old records.

I appreciate that is not ideal and disappointing for those who held those older records. To ensure that we do not need to archive records in the future, an appendix for each combined event performances has been created, where individual event performances have been recorded. If the age factors change again, new points totals can be calculated using the new factors.

This was an enormous task sorting through results over the past five years and I suspect we still may have missed some. I would like to acknowledge the work done by Chris Thompson (NI records) and Fiona Harvey (SI records) who assisted and checked my work, plus Michael Wray who kept us all honest by pointing out potential and actual missed records.

2. **The Generic NZMA Track & Field programme:**

Having trialed a possible generic championship programme at the 2014 North Island Championships (Hastings), this programme with a few modifications was used at the 2015 NZMA Championships (Tauranga). Once again we are using this programme this weekend. While this is the recommended programme, there is still flexibility for a centre to make modifications based on local field configurations and health & safety requirement. As our membership changes, it may well be necessary to modify the programme and we will be looking at how this weekend goes, with that in mind.

3. **New NZMA Website:**

I had hoped that a new website would be up & running by now, but we failed to obtain funding from outside agencies. Therefore, while some work has been done on the website, the project has been on hold until the board meeting to be held the day before the AGM. There we will decide how to fund the project going forward and I will report on what happened at the AGM.

One of reasons for the upgrade is that the current website requires particular software that is not available to all, therefore it limits who can maintain the content. The new website is being built using Wordpress software, which

allows multiple users to log in to the website, from any computer anywhere. We are committed to upgrading our website, as this will become our preferred method of communicating via a bulk e-mailing feature we already have trialed. We intend to allow any Centre space on the website so they can develop their own website pages. It is planned to have an on-line entry system created that can be used by centres who organize our championships.

4. Venue for Championships:

We are all aware that it is getting increasingly more difficult for the smaller centres to host our championships. We do know that officials from around the country always step up to help during the weekend, but there is a lot of work that goes on before then to get ready for the day. I believe that NZMA via its website should provide generic documents that are available to all centres, such as programme booklet templates, as well as assisting with the handling of entries.

Having spoken to the hosts for the 2016 North Island (Manawatu Wanganui), South Island (Canterbury) and NZMA (Tasman) Championships, I am confident that these centres will be able to run our events ... with the help of the local centre officials. I personally believe the island championship meetings would benefit by having a combined meeting which includes local interclub events. For those who attended the SI Championships, we successfully held our events incorporated within an Athletics Canterbury Combined Championship two-day meeting. It made sense as we could utilize their officials on the track and self-managed some of our field events with the help of master's officials from Otago & Southland. This is something those organizing the NI Championship later this year might like to investigate.

5. New Zealand Masters Athletics & Athletics New Zealand 'Merger':

Since early July 2015, I have been having discussions with Linda Hamersley (CEO of Athletic New Zealand) about how we can work together for the good of master's athletics within New Zealand. Having initially called it a 'merger', it became apparent that by using the word merger, it implied to some that ANZ was trying to 'take us over'. The comment has also been said that all they want from us is our money, which was never their intention. The benefit to ANZ of having our non-club members within their database is that their funding is linked to membership numbers. The more members they have, the more funding they can obtain. It's that simple.

We then suggested it was a 'partnership'. However, some people were still not happy with that word. Finally, the best way to describe what we are trying to achieve is a 'sharing of membership'. What it is called is not as important as how it is going to work.

The idea of NZMA & ANZ joining together is nothing new. It has been talked about for more than twenty years, so why has it not happened? One of the reasons can be put down to personality clashes resulting in mistrust and a lack of goodwill between the two groups. ANZ have historically looked down on masters and they have not treated us with the respect some feel we deserve. However, that works both ways.

ANZ have a new CEO who has no 'history' of dealing with NZMA and nor have I with ANZ. Therefore, we have been able to have an open and honest discussion about what NZMA want to achieve by sharing membership and whether or not that fits in with what ANZ are hoping to achieve. ANZ has indicated that they would like all areas of the sport to work together, which is also a goal of the IAAF.

During the months of July to November, ANZ & NZMA Board have been able to come up with a Memorandum of Understanding, whereby we have indicated the roles and responsibilities of each group and a membership structure that is workable. It acknowledges the fact that club athletes already support the sport and that not everyone wants to, nor needs to join a club. ANZ have catered for that second group, i.e. our non-club athletes within the IMG ClubNet database system.

To ensure that all members had an opportunity to ask questions and air their concerns about this suggested 'sharing of membership', I attended both the South Island and North Island Championships where I presented a flyer that presented the various membership options available for club athletes and non-club athletes.

The membership options have also been published in the January 2016 Vetline and all present and past NZMA members going back to 2011 were e-mailed a link to the CMA website where this information could be viewed. We have also added a copy of the MoU to the website, having first had the wording & content reviewed by Alan Galbraith our honorary legal advisor. In his opinion the wording is okay, although lawyers would have worded it differently, at a cost. There will be a need to up-date on Constitution in several areas to reflect the various membership opinions and the NZMA Board has already considering possible amendments, should we vote for the MoU.

Having now embarked down the road of working with ANZ to create this MoU, we needed to know how centres and members would be affected if it goes ahead. The general consensus when talking with others is that it is a good idea and about time. To collect this information I created a Centre survey and requested feedback from all members.

Centres Survey Summary:

In January all Centres were sent a brief survey requesting information about how their centre operates and the impact this sharing of membership would have at a local level, particularly in terms of lost income if a local master's fee is no longer collected. This information will help the NZMA Board decide how best we can help, if required. I am pleased to say that all but one Centre replied and their responses have also e-mailed to centres and are available on-line to view.

The summary of the Centre comments are shown below. The full version of their comments has been posted on the CMA website.

Centre	Local fee	Annual Centre Costs (approx)	Relationship with Centre	Track & Field meetings
Northland	\$20	\$200	Better	Very few masters only meetings
Auckland	\$25	\$4000	Improving	Stand alone
WBOP	?	?	?	?
Man / Wang	\$5	\$100		Club nights
HBG	\$0	\$100	Excellent	Combined with local club & Centre
Taranaki	\$5	nil	Good	Combined with local club / Centre
Wellington	\$5	\$2000	Excellent	Combined with Centre
Tasman	\$0	nil	Excellent	Combined with Centre
Canterbury	\$10	\$1000	Excellent	Combined with Centre, with 3 stand alone
Otago	\$0	nil	Excellent	Combined with Centre
Southland	\$5	minimal	Excellent	Combined with Centre

Membership Feedback Summary:

I have received feedback via e-mail from 63 members and their comments have been circulated to Centres. I have also posted these comments on the CMA website, which is linked to the NZMA website.

Several members took the time to ask questions and raise concerns which I will address shortly. All but one member

was supportive of the idea of this 'sharing of membership' with ANZ. Nine members commented about retaining Vetline as it is and two considered it should be optional. There will need to be more investigation as to what we do with Vetline going forward.

These are some of the issues raised and my responses.

Why have an MoU with ANZ?

In the relatively short time that I have been involved in masters, I have noticed a huge drop in the number of athletes attending our championships. It is not much fun having no-one or only one or two in the same age group to compete against. We need to increase attendance and tapping into the masters athletes within ANZ clubs is a start.

This table shows the current membership (525) as at 24 February.

NZMA Membership Details as at 24th February 2016				NEW	2015
Centre Details:	Male	Female	Total	*Total	Total
Northland	15	16	31	10	4
Auckland	75	24	99	24	9
Waikato BOP	42	32	74	9	6
HBG	7	0	7	0	1
Manawatu / Wanganui	5	6	11	1	1
Taranaki	13	11	24	1	1
Wellington	59	24	83	8	6
Tasman	14	4	18	6	2
Canterbury	59	30	89	20	3
Otago	31	32	63	14	4
Southland	19	7	26	3	5
	339	186	525	96	42

The 'NEW' column indicates the number of new members that have joined this year (96).

The '2015' column indicates the number of members that have NOT rejoined from last year (42).

This table shows the number of members per Centre (2011 - 2016).

Centre Details:	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Northland	41	42	41	28	31
Auckland	105	87	82	100	99
Waikato BOP	115	103	90	87	74
HBG	17	33	14	15	7
Manawatu / Wanganui	20	20	16	16	11
Taranaki	29	25	25	28	24
Wellington	94	105	85	90	83
Tasman	14	24	15	16	18
Canterbury	109	95	82	71	89
Otago	44	62	57	56	63
Southland	18	26	46	34	26
	606	622	553	541	525

This table shows the number members who have NOT rejoined NZMA. No member has been counted twice.

Centre Details:	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
Northland	4	5	9	13	7	38
Auckland	23	27	20	14	27	111
Waikato BOP	10	28	22	14	24	98
HBG	9	1	20	4	8	42
Manawatu / Wanganui	6	3	4	4	7	24
Taranaki	12	7	4	1	7	31
Wellington	17	13	19	10	20	79
Tasman	6	5	13	2	6	32
Canterbury	23	18	23	16	11	91
Otago	9	6	14	10	17	56
Southland	8	1	1	12	11	33
	127	114	149	100	145	635

ANZ have over 1200 masters aged athletes who do not join NZMA. Several have stated that paying two fees is a reason not to join. Having this MoU will remove this barrier. These athletes will automatically become NZMA members and can therefore attend our events. They are the masters athletes easiest to identify, as they are already involved in the sport. We all have a collective responsibility, especially the club athletes amongst us, to promote what we have to offer, i.e. non-stadia events at OMA & WMA events to ensure we get the message across that they can now join in with us.

I am a club athlete. How will it affect me?

You will join your club as per normal, paying the ANZ, Centre and Club fees and will automatically be a member of NZMA. You can compete in all events organized by ANZ, NZMA and local masters / interclub. You no longer pay the separate NZMA fee of \$45.00, but will be required (next year) to subscribe to Vetline.

All members of this group are eligible to break local masters provincial or NZMA championship & national records.

I am a non-club athlete. How will it affect me?

Nothing has really changed. You pay an NZMA fee (\$30.00) that allows you to compete in the events you have already been competing in, i.e. SI, NI, NZMA, OMA & WMA Championships, plus local masters events. You cannot compete in ANZ organized Championships. You can compete in local inter-club, but expect to pay a slightly higher competition fee, as is the case in some centres. You will also no longer pay the separate NZMA fee of \$45.00, but will be required (next year) to subscribe to Vetline.

How will this affect us, if we want to compete in OMA or WMA events?

The MoU has been seen by administrators of both groups above. They have no problem with the concept as NZMA will continue to affiliate to OMA & WMA as before. Therefore as far as they are concerned, all members of both ANZ & NZMA will be considered 'equal' and both groups can attend these events.

We will have to create a procedure for handling overseas entries, but that does not have to be complicated.

How will the MoU impact on NZMA financially?

The division of our membership into club and non-club athletes will have an effect on NZMA ability to collect revenue from all members. All fees paid by club athletes to ANZ will be retained by ANZ and similarly all fees paid by non-club athletes to NZMA will be retained by NZMA. I have been asked - why give up this income? Why not MAKE all ANZ club athletes pay a small fee to NZMA? How can ANZ master's athletes be members of NZMA without having to pay us a fee too? That is the purpose of this MoU, i.e. to share membership. We have to acknowledge that club athletes are already supporting our sport, so why make them pay twice?

The reality is that ANZ is seriously underfunded and expecting them to pay even a small part of the fees they collect is simply not going to happen. I did ask! In return we get to keep all the fees paid by the non-club NZMA members. Where we can make up some of this lost income is by greater attendance at the events we organize, i.e. SI, NI & NZMA Championships. As a board, we will also review our expenses, such as travel to board meetings. Are three face to face meetings a year necessary? Can we apply for funding to cover our running costs, as centres do when hosting big events?

What will happen to Vetline?

I have heard it said Vetline it is a 'world class' publication, yet the reality is that it has survived in its current format because the cost of production has been linked to our subscription, i.e. it is compulsory. If it is as good as people say, then people will buy it? However, having it included as part of the subscription is not the same as allowing people to buy a subscription.

For the MoU to be accepted by ANZ, Vetline had to be removed from our subscription. I know this has been an issue before when talking with ANZ. There was no way we can force ANZ club athletes to purchase Vetline as part of the registration fee structure set by ANZ. Under the MoU, the production costs / income generated from Vetline is to remain under NZMA's control.

As our financial year begins 1st September, all current financial members of NZMA have paid for Vetline up until the end of this year. This gives the Board time to work out what is the best format for this publication going forward. We will continue to seek feedback from members about this issue, so please make sure you have your say.

If the MoU takes effect from 1st April 2016, we will offer a subscription to ANZ club athletes to see what demand we do in fact have for Vetline from the ANZ club athletes who are not members of NZMA.

Ultimately the format and future success of Vetline relies on all members. I think we all agree it could do with a

'face-lift' and that it would benefit from being run more professionally. This will require people with passion, experiences with publications, writers of articles and the ability to procure advertising income etc. to help, so please let me know if you are that person or you know that person.

When will the MoU take affect and who will collect the registration fees?

I have suggested 1st April 2016. The reason is simply because that is when all ANZ club athletes are required to start registering for the new season ahead. It makes sense if you are planning to compete over the winter months. Those already in the ANZ club system will pay as they have before in previous years, either directly using the IMG system or via your club registration secretary. If we start on this date, we can then start promoting ourselves via the ANZ website to the club athletes who have never joined NZMA. Perhaps some of them might want to go to Perth?

However, for our non-club members there is no need to pay this early. Our financial year is from 1st September. You can delay paying your new registration until then and we will continue to use the current system we have. We will use a central registration person (currently me) to work with ANZ to enter the non-club NZMA members into the IMG system. At some point we will move to making this an on-line entry that you can do yourselves or it could remain a combination of both methods.

My understanding is that a weekly membership report is generated from the IMG system, that will confirm who are current members and the membership option they have selected (ANZ or NZMA, Competitive or Social).

Will we change our financial year to be in line with ANZ?

For the reason mentioned above re: non-club members registration procedure, I see no reason to change our financial year.

Most of my report has focused on the MoU with ANZ. I will be pleased once a decision has been made and we can just get on with it ... whatever happens. If this partnership goes ahead, it will be one of the most significant changes in NZMA's history. There is a lot to do to make it work, but I am committed to see that it does.

However, this is not all that we as an organization need to address. To ensure our future success it is important that we work on all of the following areas:

1. Updating the Constitution and/or Handbook. Changes to be ratified at a Special AGM. Place & time yet to be decided.
2. Create a workable Strategic Plan.
3. Job descriptions for NZMA Board roles, i.e. succession planning.
4. Reviewing how the NZMA Board operates / number of committee members / when, where & how often to meet face to face.
5. Looking at ways to attractively / promote NZMA to all masters aged 'athletes', not just those within clubs.
6. Deciding on the future of Vetline. Paper version or free PDF and user pays for paper version?
7. Creating a system to deal with ANZ club athletes wanting to enter OMA or WMA events.

Finally no report would be complete without thanking those who make themselves available to be on the Board. It can be a time consuming and demanding role, yet it is one way to give back to a sport that for many has been part of your lives for what seems like 'forever'. This year will have an election for the committee, which is great in some ways as it means people are interested by getting involved, but unfortunately someone will miss out. I am looking forward to working with whoever is successful.

This year Mike Weddell is stepping down from Board. I have no idea exactly how long he has been involved, but I suspect it's upwards of nearly 20 years? He was President for 8 years and has also serviced on the OMA Council several times. As President of NZMA he also has been involved with the 4th World Veteran Games Trust, ensuring the money was allocated correctly.

When I first came on the Board we held our meetings in Hamilton, and we roomed together. I would often arrive before Mike, go to the supermarket and buy a box Magnum ice-creams and leave him one. We also had plenty of time to talk about Board issues etc. so I got to understand what was involved. He was fully supportive when I stepped up to be vice-President and again when I became President. I have always appreciated his advice and friendship. I know his passion is fishing, so don't be surprised if he's up to his knees in water rather than watching running, because after so many years of being involved, who would blame him. Mike ... I hope you enjoy your retirement from athletics administration.

I would like to mention the loss of Bruce Clarke as a result of an unfortunate accident that occurred while competing at the NI Championship in November. We are all saddened by what happened and we will be taking all the necessary steps to ensure it does not happen again. Thank you also to those who were there and helped out on the night.

Thank you for your attendance at the AGM. I trust you will enjoy the weekend and I wish all competitors well.

Andrew Stark

President New Zealand Masters Athletics

(24th February 2016)