

# NZMA AGM 2017 – President’s Report

Welcome to 43<sup>rd</sup> New Zealand Master’s Athletics AGM being held here in Nelson. It has been a very busy year in which we have introduced several new initiatives. In this report, I will highlight the significant areas of change.

## 1. NZMA Website Development:

Our preferred method of communication to our members is via website and using e-mail. Since the last AGM, John Campbell (Board member) has rebuilt the NZMA website using the generic Wordpress platform and our new website has been up and running since early July. Using Wordpress allows us to access the website from any computer, anywhere in the world. If you have been to the new website, you will see that we have introduced many new features:

- NZMA news posts on the Home page to highlight important information or achievements of our members.
- We have imported the NZMA Database using Mailchimp and use this programme to e-mail our members.
- An NZMA e-News section has been created in which I write more detailed articles. Members are invited to read this page via an e-mail request sent out using Mailchimp. This provides a continuous record of messages sent to members that may otherwise be lost if only sent via e-mail and this includes information sent to Centre secretaries.
- All NZMA documentation can be downloaded from the website, such as the Board Meeting & AGM minutes, our Constitution & Handbook, plus the Annual President’s report.
- On-line registration for SI, NI & NZMA Championship Events, therefore making it easier for LOC to handle entries.
- Online subscriptions for Vetline for Athletics New Zealand members. We are looking at accepting credit card payments and we intend to make it possible to order and pay for uniforms on-line.
- New NZMA Facebook page and we have an Athletics NZ link, all on the Home page for easy access.
- Also there are the usual links to other athletics sites of interest, such as Australian Masters Athletics, OMA & WMA, plus World Masters ranking list and age -graded percentage calculator etc.
- There are also links to all Centres with their own website and any Centre is welcome to piggy back off our site and have their own pages.
- We have also created an NZMA Dropbox in which we have added some of our generic files, making them accessible for more than one Board member.

The website is a work in progress and we welcome your feedback as to how we can improve what we do.

Once the season is over, John and I will be looking at other Wordpress templates to see if we can find one more appropriate and with some better features, such as a calendar etc.

## 2. Memorandum of Understanding between Athletics New Zealand and New Zealand Masters Athletics

At the last year’s AGM we were unable to vote on whether we should work with Athletics New Zealand and accept the MoU that had been created by both groups. As a result of this, a **Special General Meeting** was called for and held during the weekend of the ANZ organised Cross-country Championships (Auckland on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2016). Ten of our eleven Centres were represented, with all but one Centre supporting the MoU. It was acknowledged at the SGM that work needed to be done to bring our Constitution and By-Laws into line with the

intentions of the MoU. The Board has worked hard to ensure this has been done and a 'draft' copy of the proposed changes to both the Constitution and By-laws have been sent to all Centre Secretaries and posted on our website. All individual members were sent an e-mail link to the NZMA e-News page where these documents could be downloaded, inviting feedback. I can report that only one person has responded to this request. I adopt the approach that unless you comment against the proposed changes, to not comment at all implies that you agree with the changes. Based on that assumption, we will have very little debate when these two documents are reviewed later in the AGM.

### 3. NZMA Membership Numbers

We knew that membership to NZMA only, would drop and therefore we have received less directly from this group. As our financial year end is at 31 August, this drop off will only be reflected in next year's accounts.

The current NZMA membership figures within each Centre as at 27 February 2017 are as follows:

Centre	NZMA Competitive Members	NZMA Social Members	Vetline Subs (ANZ Members)
Northland	7	0	13
Auckland	37	0	0
Waikato Bay of Plenty	25	3	19
Hawkes Bay Gisborne	13	0	0
Taranaki	2	0	0
Manawatu/Wanganui	18	0	4
Wellington	37	4	25
Tasman	20	0	1
Canterbury	28	2	20
Otago	11	3	11
Southland	5	3	11
Vetline online orders			48
	<b>195</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>152</b>

It has been acknowledged that if NZMA is to benefit from entering into this MoU, it would come from our ability to attract the Athletics NZ Masters to our events, i.e. the group of ANZ who have never joined NZMA.

I am pleased to say that we have achieved this goal ... to a point. At the SI Championships, seven of the 65 competitors were ANZ members and fourteen of the 125 that attended the NI Championships were ANZ members.

To attract ANZ members to our events, we need ANZ's help to advertise our meetings and there is room for improvement there, so I am hopeful that we can improve upon these numbers next season.

At these championships, there are 221 entries and of these, 42 (19%) are ANZ members who have never joined NZMA before, plus we have a further 17 new or rejoining NZMA members. This would be the highest attendance at the NZMA Championships for several years. Has the MoU helped? Even those against the concept or those who had reservations about it, will have to concede that it has made a difference.

### 4. Vetline and its future?

In several issues of Vetline, I have commented in my President's column that we need help to keep this magazine 'alive'. It always seems to be left to the same few contributors to provide articles. If you, as members, want this magazine to continue, the attitude that 'someone else' will do it needs to change. We need some fresh ideas and

input.

As you will be aware, all NZMA members have continued to get Vetline as part of their subscription. Unfortunately, the number of ANZ masters taking up a subscription has been very low, even by the ex-NZMA members who previously received the magazine. In terms of print run length, it has reduced with approximately 200 fewer copies being printed, therefore the unit cost has gone up. The \$25.00 for four issues does not cover the current production costs. Unless we can obtain more advertising or the print run length increases, we will have to increase the cost next year.

It would be helpful if someone with marketing expertise could come on-board to help promote what we have or maybe we have to accept that times have changed ... and that using the website or providing articles to the ANZ 'Athletes in Action' online newsletter is a better way to promote ourselves. I am open to any suggestions.

## **5. Constitution and By-Law Changes**

Later on in this meeting, we will be going over the Constitutional and By-laws changes. I think it is appropriate to note that the athletics scene has changed a lot in the last few years. Fewer people of all ages are taking part, as can be seen by the number of senior athletes that compete locally and nationally. The traditional 'NZMA' Masters athlete has also changed. Those that remain loyal to NZMA more often than not restrict their activities to track & field only. The NZMA members who participate in all year round competition have already joined clubs. These are the facts.

We cannot turn back the clock to the 'good old days' of the late 70's, early 80's where participation numbers were at their peak. We have to accept change and work with ANZ to promote our sport and look at what we offer to ensure we attract more of the ANZ masters to our event. The Constitution and the By-laws that we as a Board are suggesting, reflect this new environment.

## **6. NZMA Successes during 2016 – 2017**

The WMA Track & Field Championship were held in Perth last year. It was a great event ... well organised. The full results and a list of NZMA medal winners has been posted on the NZMA website, so I will not go over it in details again here. For the record we had 71 medal winners (14 gold, 22 silver & 35 bronze). I would like to thank John Campbell for compiling the list of medal winner / top 5 place-getters and Stewart Foster for going through those results looking for NZMA records. At the Award Dinner this weekend, we will have an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate our member's achievements for the 2016 calendar year.

## **7. NZMA Going Forward.**

I have been on the Board since 2011 and during this time we have made some significant changes as to how we do things. Last year was taken up with getting the MoU sorted and signed. In the coming year we have other important issues that need to be considered.

1. Reviewing how the NZMA Board operates / number of committee members / when, where & how often to meet face to face, in line with the reduce income we receive.
2. Create a workable Strategic Plan.
3. Job descriptions for NZMA Board roles, i.e. succession planning.
4. Reviewing the future direction of Vetline.
5. Looking at ways to attractively / promote NZMA to all masters aged 'athletes', not just those within clubs. This will mean working closer with ANZ.

6. Looking at how we manage our membership database. All NZMA members are entered into the ANZ system. Do we still need local Centre database 'managers' or should we be encouraging members to join themselves up, as many ANZ club members do already?

Finally I would like to thank my fellow Board members for the work that they have put in during the year.

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.

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 2017)*