



Inline Hockey Australia Chairman's Report AGM 2008

Inline Hockey is into its second year of the merger between Skate Australia and AILHA. Some things have worked out well and some not so good – a learning curve for all of us. The 12 months between AGM's has simply flown by and found nationals looming upon us again next month. The biggest issue we seem to have is the same as everyone else – lack of volunteers from club level to national level. The wonderful volunteers we do have are often burnt out with simply too much work. However there are also many positives to reflect upon.

The year started with our Inaugural National General Assembly Council (NGAC) Meeting 9-10 February in Adelaide. It was a very busy weekend. Vivian Thelander facilitated a Strategic Planning Workshop for us. Two months prior to our meeting Vivian sent out a Survey to all Clubs and members for feedback and this feedback was the basis of our workshop.

The workshop proved to be very successful and got everyone involved. The outcome is a draft Strategic Plan that all Clubs have had an opportunity to have input. The NGAC members will be finalising the plan during their second meeting at nationals in September. The plan provides us with Mission, Vision, Values and a direction for inline hockey over the next three years. Thank you to Vivian Thelander for giving generously of her time and expertise.

We reviewed our age divisions and some surprises in that the NGAC were very keen to ensure players stayed as much as possible within their own age range until they turned 18 years. There has been a real pull in the past to play juniors up long before they were ready.

We introduced a new national ILHA uniform in 2008. The navy blue and gold travel uniform proved to be a winner among the players and management alike. South37 came on board with a sponsorship agreement bringing Mission, Itech and Easton as sponsors. The use of the Mission logo on all our gear was a plus for the players. Mission cover pants are very popular and affordable for our national teams. Mission gave our Snr Men's World Team matching green helmets and gloves for the World Championships. The helmets are being kept safe for next year's team and the players were allowed to keep their gloves. The same provision will be made for the Snr Women if they participate in FIRS Worlds in 2009. Mission are our medal sponsors for nationals 08 and 09.

We were pleased to have Gordon Young, FIRS Referee in Chief as our own Chair of Officials and Referee in Chief. Officials are the backbone of all our tournaments from club to international. Gordon is currently working with the State Chairs to update our Officials and encourage new officials, in particular new Referees.

We have not been so lucky in finding a Chair of Coaches and David Haynes has borne much of this work along with his own duties as NEC Executive Member.

A big focus of the National Executive Committee (NEC) from the end of Nationals 2007 was the chasing up of national teams to ensure we have participation at that level during 2008. This has proven to be very time consuming at the expense of other programs. For 2009 we are ensuring that Coaches and Team Managers are in place by National Championships so that they can take up the role immediately of chasing up their players for commitment. No team management no team is the new motto.

International

Oceania's were hosted by New Zealand in April in Palmerston North – we took the scenic route of travel – very tiring for our players. Unfortunately New Zealand won back the Tasman Cup, however the score board often didn't reflect the fast and exciting games played by all divisions.

Our Snr Men participated in the FIRS Snr Men's World Championships in July held in Germany with Jamie Sketchley as Coach and David Haynes as Team Manager. The Snr Men were placed 13th after some very exciting games. FIRS had the most teams participate this year since they started 12 years ago – 18 countries in total.

We had 4 teams attend the USA Jnr Olympics run by the AAU. They were 12's & Under, 14's & Under, Jnr Women and 16's & Under. The Jnr Women brought home a silver medal after playing off against New Zealand in the grand final. There was a disqualification of a Jnr Women's USA team for illegal players. From all accounts the teams played some great hockey and learnt a lot – congratulations to all involved.

There were a number of concerns with team travel in 2008 with respect to Oceania's and the AAU. A number of letters have been received raising a range of issues and concerns. Those matters are in the process of being reviewed by ILHA and SA with a view to ensuring that appropriate steps are taken so as to achieve better outcomes for the future.

When you are reading this report our ILHA web site will be up and running - www.ilha.org.au – our intention is that this site will be a quick source of current information for everyone.

Financial

An audited financial report of Inline Hockey Australia's finances to 30 June 2008 will be tabled at the AGM. All the ILHA accounts are audited independently and overseen by Skate Australia to ensure there is no inappropriate use of funds.

Thankyou

Thank you to the NEC for their support throughout the past year. We have enjoyed many lively discussions via email, phone and around the table. We all look forward to a heightened enthusiasm for the future development of our sport. A sincere thank you to Wayne Jones, our very own financial expert with responsibility for assisting with budgeting and strategic planning; David Haynes, care taking coaching, Chairman of Selectors and Team Manager to our Senior Men's Oceania and World Teams and Gordon Young, Referee in Chief and Chairman of Officials. Thank you also to Carl Carrubba who resigned in early August. Carl was a member of the merger steering committee, inaugural member of the NEC in 2007, ILHA Chef de Mission and Deputy Chairman in 2008.

While it is often difficult coordinating a Committee across our vast country I appreciate that it is equally or more difficult to run a State where the Committee's issues are on a daily basis at the very coal face of development and participation. A huge thank you to each of our State Committees for all their hard work during the year.

Thank you to all those members who coached and managed our international teams in 2008, often under difficult circumstances.

We do appreciate the many volunteer hours all these people donate to our sport.

Thanks to Skate Australia Head Office for their assistance in 2008 we look forward to a healthy association in 2009.

Paula Maclou
Chair, ILHA