

A PLAN FOR GROWTH

Presented by Pistol NZ Council, June 2008



Background

In 1990, Pistol New Zealand (or as it was then known, NZ Pistol Assn) had a membership of around 2800, largely serviced by a national executive and committees of volunteers, with small honoraria paid to two positions (Secretary and Treasurer). The positivity of this growth was offset by the expanded need for delivery of services, combined with the diversity of the shooting options which had become available during the 1980s, such as action, muzzle loading, metallic silhouette and practical (IPSC). While the need to have volunteers to manage the growth and participation of specific shooting disciplines had already been identified, the systems still relied entirely on voluntary service to exist.

In the mid 1990s, Pistol NZ recognised the need for a more professional delivery of service to the sport, and changed the administration structure of the association to have a paid Administration Officer, and deprecating the volunteer roles of Secretary and Treasurer. While there were teething issues implementing these changes, they are still with us 13 years later, so the majority of the aims must have been satisfied in those early days of change.

Many factors, including external political issues, plus further development within our sport, such as the introduction of cowboy action shooting, and the separation of management of the Practical and Action Sections, put further strain on the volunteer system of administration, and the sport lost more than 10% of its membership in the latter half of the 1990s.

Since 2001, our membership has steadily rebuilt to the levels enjoyed in the early 1990s, and currently sits just under the 2800 mark. We have the highest number of registered juniors ever, and an improving demographic within our numbers, with a good diversity of gender and ethnic background.

However, the same growing pains of the 1990s are setting in deeply again, requiring a very small number of volunteers to put in service over and above what should be expected by this association's membership. Some individuals are spending as many as 40 whole days in a calendar year on voluntary service, and most if not all of our volunteers are putting real personal sacrifice ahead of family and financial wellbeing in order to deliver services to this association, and its shooter base. With the shortcomings of other shooting organisations being exposed, such as the New Zealand Shooting Federation, which has imploded due to many years of poor governance and poorly directing financing of its core business, our volunteers have

had to spend more hours on matters previously handled by these other organisations, which again have added dozens of hours each month to the voluntary workload of a small number of people.

Another troubling aspect of our growth over the last 7 years is the Administration Office performing a wider range of duties both for our Sections (shooting disciplines), clubs and individuals which are not, and have never been, part of the contractual requirement of running our national office. This has indisputably led to our Administration Officer putting in substantially more hours than our contract provides for over the last few years, and we are extremely fortunate, if not morally culpable, to have been able to take advantage of this unpaid time. It would not be common in any business or organisation to have a part time employee on a modest remuneration provide a virtual full time service, at what would amount to less than the minimum wage.

Council has a responsibility to manage the affairs of our association, and to ensure clubs can operate with the minimum of obstacles, and with the maximum opportunity, security (of being) and enjoyment by its member base. Having a dozen volunteers meet 3 times a year, at an annual cost of around \$15,000 does not provide any surety whatsoever that Council is able to achieve all, many or even any of its goals set annually. Even the widest optimism embraced at the first Council meeting after an AGM can wane within weeks, if not days, without regular contact between the executive, and a fair bit of “whip cracking”. While all members of our executive and its sub-committees are volunteers, many are co-opted to their roles, few genuinely seek to serve. Almost all have “day jobs” and families.

The President’s Annual Report to the 2007 AGM discussed a “Section Director Triangle”, highlighting that a truly significant number of our volunteers were lost to our sport immediately after their term on the executive concluded. In more than one case in the last 8 years, those volunteers had even ceased to be members of pistol clubs. There are two glaring realities, for whatever reasons, regarding our Section Directors on the national executive.

1. The vast majority cease to have any active involvement in our sport once they retire from Council
2. Few Section Directors ever return to Council in any other role, and no Section Director has ever held the role of either President or Vice President after their term as a Section Director.

While there can be many reasons why this is the case, it is easy to form a simple opinion that these people did not enjoy their time on the executive, nor the environment in which they had to operate and serve. This suggestion could be countered by the fact that most Section Directors stay in their role for a reasonable number of terms, but this is principally because they feel the pressure to remain in the role if no one else is prepared to stand for the position. Contested elections for

Section Director positions are uncommon, and in the last 8 years, we have had at least 4 vacancies for various Section Director positions on Council after an AGM.

The management of a discipline, which includes its operation, development, growth, marketing and above all safety, is important, and is a core area of business for this association. There is not, and will likely never be, any call to have “Sections” scrapped, but recent history shows that the way we currently operate does not provide the best environment for those managing the discipline, and frequently leads to disappointment among the shooter base when they feel their needs are not able to be met in a timely fashion.

Vision

Pistol NZ has achieved much in its short 39 year existence, including Olympians, Commonwealth Games and World Championship gold medallists, positive growth and recognition as a sport by the NZ government (via SPARC and NZSF). While the reasons for our sport’s acceptance and existence in the early days are still true, our diversification has made our sport very different in modern times, and we are now firmly established on the NZ sporting landscape, and our future is more secure than ever with our national and international involvement and successes across all the disciplines we enjoy.

While we will never be a “mainstream” sport such as rugby, cricket and netball, we should always strive to be seen as one of the best smaller sports, with sound administration, strong participation levels, successful high performance, and a positive public profile. Issues such as marketing, recruitment, and just as importantly, member retention, are of significant importance, as is a diversity of clubs and activities, accessible throughout NZ. While we currently have less than 80 member clubs, the geographic spread is good, and activity is good around all regions.

It is very important that the operation, wellbeing, development and enjoyment levels of these clubs is properly supported by this association, and the best possible value for money is obtained in delivering the services needed to ensure our clubs prosper.

This includes, but is not limited to, administrative assistance, range construction assistance and safety certification, provision of information needed to take advantage of our many shooting disciplines, nationally developed and delivered standards for range operation, safety training and shooter education, quality communications systems within our sport, and with external bodies and agencies which contribute to the operation of our sport.

The long term security of our sport relies on this association being able to continue to provide service to its member clubs, in a professional manner, on time, and to best suit the member’s needs. While our numbers and growth continue to be positive, the

higher workload to ensure this security needs to be met in a more professional manner.

It is the vision of Pistol NZ's Council that the national association is seen to be a service oriented organisation, that is able to meet to needs of its members and achieve the constitutional objects of the association. Moving forward, it is clear that a better system of governance and administration than currently provided for is needed.

The model that would best suit our association, is one where core services are provided by a professional administrative operation, separate to the board of governance (Council), and with the continued support of volunteers at national and club level.

Stakeholders

It is important to identify who are the key stakeholders to whom the services of this association are provided for, and for the benefit of.

Primarily, this association operates for the benefit of its member clubs. By implication, it operates for the benefit of the individuals who form the affiliated membership of each of these clubs. In effect, Pistol NZ is "owned" by its member clubs.

The objective of improving our operational structure is to provide long term benefit and security to our member clubs, and their own membership base.

We also, by way of support for our member clubs, provide the interface between NZ Police and our sport, which is regulated by law, and controlled under law by NZ Police. The operation and activity of our national association must stand up to scrutiny by NZ Police from time to time. Our sport is unique in the amount of statutory regulation affecting its existence and operation.

Current Structure

Our current structure is based on a registered constitution that provides for a national executive of between 9 and 14 individuals. We typically operate with 10 active members of Council annually.

Beneath this layer, we have a small contractor base, providing financial and membership administration, target distribution, production of our national magazine, and operation of our small merchandise facility.

Our executive includes individuals who directly provide support to six different shooting disciplines, and they have the opportunity to co-opt volunteers to sub-committees for their discipline.

The executive also operates committees which include individuals who are not members of the executive, in areas such as range inspections, safety, match rules and other areas. Often these committees are primarily populated by members of the executive, with the exception of the range inspection committee, which is usually populated by senior range inspectors.

Recommended Structure

Since 2002, Council has considered a number of options to enhance the operation of the association, and best meet the needs of its member clubs in a fiscally responsible way, whilst providing the highest level of service possible. At no time has Council entertained increasing costs to meet these goals, but consideration to the distribution of current funding levels to best deliver services has been a prime consideration.

In 2004 a draft change to the constitution was presented to clubs prior to the 2004 AGM for discussion, and there was no dissenting view expressed by any clubs present, but there was equally no energy to rush towards change. A workshop held after the 2007 AGM with club delegates discussed structural change, and changes to the way the association's monies are spent to achieve improved delivery of service, and again, there was a positive message from those present to the concept.

Since that time, a Council committee has worked towards presenting this paper to the 2008 AGM with a view to a positive direction from the member clubs to move towards an improved structure for the secure, positive future of our sport, and this document is the outcome of this committee's endeavour.

The recommend changes, which will involve constitutional changes and require the support of a substantial majority of our member clubs to be implemented, are:

- That the national executive consist of up six members: an elected President, and 5 elected Councillors (with a possibility that a minimum number of Councillors be required from either of the North or South Island).
- That the national executive primarily provide a governance role, setting policies, ensuring the direction the association as set and/or approved by the membership at general meetings is being followed, and that the administrative operation is performing to the needs of the membership.

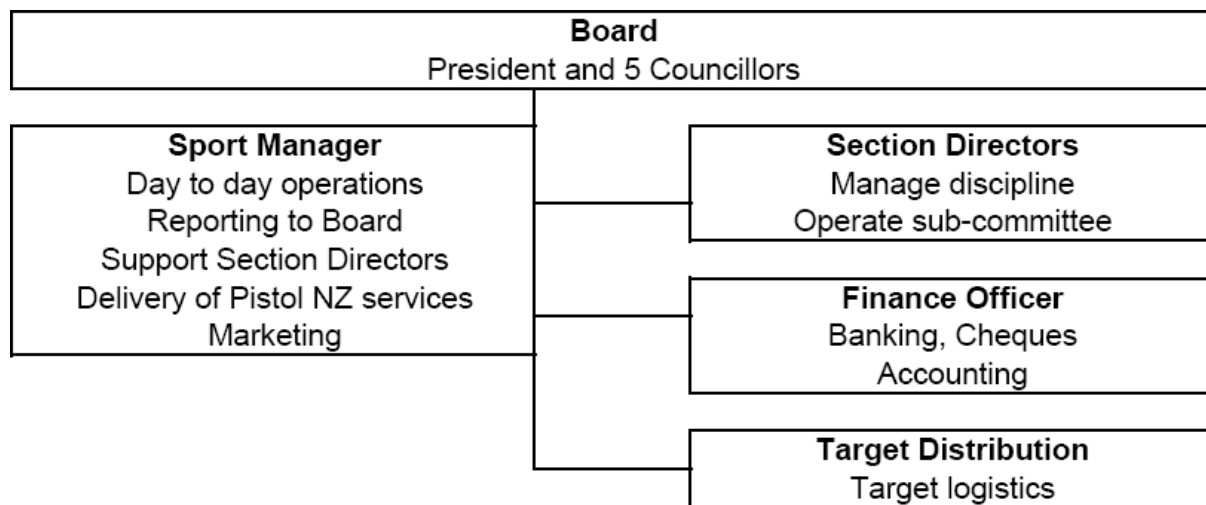
- That the administrative structure be managed by a central officer, known as the Sport Development Manager, and this officer be provided a fair remuneration for the level of service required.
- That a financial officer be retained on a part time basis to manage the financial affairs of the association, and provide financial information and services to the executive, through the Sport Development Manager. All payments of the association would be made with the final approval of members of the executive.
- That each “Section” or shooting discipline have an officer managing the section for a term decided by the executive, but not likely less than 3 years, and be provided an annual budget from member fees to manage their discipline and achieve goals set by the executive. This would include travel allowances to national championships, provision for medals and attendance pins for the same, and funding for development within the discipline, such as coaching, range staff training and high performance support.

The success of this structure would rely on a solid platform on which to base the operation of the association on, including concise job descriptions for all those obtaining member funds, from the Sport Development Manager through to the “Section” managers. It would also require the executive to regularly evaluate the performance, achievement and activity of the officers providing the delivery of service.

This structure would provide that members of the executive would not have to personally spend many dozens of days each year attending to the core business of the association on a voluntary basis.

This structure would also provide that the core business and necessary development of the association would be worked on daily, in a professional manner, with a high degree of continuity and achievement, which has been, and will always be, unobtainable when relying exclusively on volunteers to achieve these aims in their spare time.

A simplified diagram of the proposed structure follows:



The implementation of this structure would not require member clubs to provide any additional monies over and above the existing affiliation fees. No individual shooter will receive less benefit from this structure. The vast majority of our active participants will receive direct benefit from this structure.

Capability And Funding Of Structural Change

On current club membership, Pistol NZ's annual income from affiliation fees, plus income from interest on reserve funds, provides an annual operating budget of about \$170,000. Currently this is spent as per an annually approved budget, with the largest amount being spent on the national magazine, Bullshooter, and about 15% spent on administrative operations.

The Sport Development Manager would be tasked with carrying out many jobs which are included in our existing budget with funds made available to volunteers. A portion of the work required would include work that is currently being performed by paid contractors. About 50% of the funds expected to fund this structure would be shifted from existing budget provisions, and provide a greater deal of surety, as funds would not be committed to projects with an element of risk, where the volunteers required to complete various projects are not always able to put the time in to achieve the results

The rest of the funding to achieve this structural change within the existing financial model would be taken from more discretionary elements of the annual budget, but should not affect the operational good of the association as a result. The reverse is more likely. Such funds would include the generous annual donation made to COLFO historically (although in the next financial year, Council are recommending that this figure be reduced regardless of any change). Portions of other discretionary funds such as the International Competition Fund would be reduced, with the

expectation that having a full time administration working for the Sections would provide sufficient added value that this would not represent a loss to the sport.

The actual budget the association operates to each year is set by the member clubs, but is generally based on the recommendation of the outgoing Council each year. This structure would require about \$80,000 annually to be spent on key contractor roles (Sport Development Manager, Finance Officer, Target Distribution), which would represent less than half the annual income the association receives. The balance would be spent on operating expenses, executive meeting costs, and the remaining 40% directly on activity related expenses, such as range certification, support for national championships, training, and generally providing activity services (range officer courses etc).

A key part of this plan would be the requirement that the contractors provide a significant amount of the equipment (or “hardware”) to operate to the standard required, and provide space in their home or chosen place of operation to support the materials required to provide the level of service expected. This may sound unattractive, but we have never paid “rental” on the office areas our various contractors have provided, and only pay for a small amount of long term storage and a limited amount of operating equipment, such as a photocopier (which we own).

Most of our contemporary organisations operate with key contractors working from home, on a gross payment basis, without specific compensation for workspace or administrative equipment. Some equipment required for best operating practices that is currently owned by Pistol NZ would be directed to the appropriate officer under the new structure.

It is the belief of your current executive that the long term future of Pistol NZ under the current executive and administrative structure is not secure, and improvement in the way we operate and deliver services is vital.

Key Challenges

The key reason our national association exists is to support the operation of the sport of target pistol shooting. While this has been done with a good measure of success over 40 years, it is important that the sport continues to grow, and that the association provides a quality service to the member clubs.

Our sport has grown from a small number of ISSF matches in 1969, to having 10 differing national championship events each year, and offering over 20 individual matches, with a wide range of firearm and equipment variation.

External factors, particularly with matters such as range certification, Police requirements for club and range approval, urban spread and several changes to firearms law have seen a number of additional challenges put before our sport, but

we have continued to grow, and after a decline in numbers in the 1990s are back to our record high numbers of 15 years ago.

Without a strong plan to continue providing operational needs, improve our marketing and member support for the next 10 years and beyond, we risk another decline. We all have less leisure time available than we did 15 years ago, and a wider range of activities to support and grow within our sport. To expect the level of service required for our sport to prosper in the future to be delivered almost entirely by volunteers is very risky, if not unreasonable.

All volunteers offer their services with the best intentions, but many issues, such as work, family and health can adversely affect the effort they are able to provide annually. It is difficult for the board to criticise in areas where progress is poor, as the services were offered free of charge, and it can be equally difficult to find new people to take over where projects are not completed in a timely manner.

We can't expect a "professional" administration for free. Equally, we can't expect our sport to survive without the continued involvement of our volunteers. Core services would be provided by the administration of the association, but at club level, there would still be a need for volunteers to work with the national association to achieve the best opportunities at club level, and continued growth and activity levels in the future.

Membership Involvement Under New Structure

Contrary to regular discussion, Pistol NZ is the member clubs. It is not an independent board of governors. It is important that the clubs provide the direction for the board to implement, and the administration to deliver.

While the most visible part of this process is the annual general meeting, clubs should (but rarely do) send requests for improvements and assistance to Council through the Administration Officer.

It is a two way street however, and clubs have a big role to play in training of individuals in range safety, understanding of our sport, and to make their experience enjoyable. The most common reason people are lost to our sport is they do not enjoy it sufficiently to remain involved, bearing in mind the requirements to be active and to pay annual fees. A huge number of pistol shooters are very active, and we have members who shoot regularly who have belonged to clubs for over 30 years.

Where clubs identify areas they are struggling in to retain members, or to recruit new members, it is the role the national association to provide assistance. An improved administrative structure would increase the education of the existing membership (both clubs, and individual shooters), and provide better marketing support even at

club level. It would still be incumbent on clubs to take advantage of these services, just as it is currently for support services currently available.

It is likely that a full time professional structure would improve the level of communication with clubs, and there would be an expectation for the Sport Development Manager to actively pursue clubs to better understand the activities undertaken at each member club, and discover what services and assistance would best suit each club.

High Performance Management

In recent times, almost all management of the ISSF High Performance program has been undertaken by the NZ Shooting Federation, and other Sections have managed their own programs. Generally this is lost to each incoming Section Director, who then has to start afresh, and this is repeated many times over, with the history of the section's involvement in elite competition lost.

Until such time that the NZSF can provide a similar level of service, it will be incumbent on Pistol NZ to have a greater working relation with the ISSF HP athletes, SPARC and other agencies. While this has been managed by the ISSF Director in recent times, it is a very time intensive requirement, and as this has been managed by paid professionals for the last 10 years, it is unrealistic to expect the same level of contact and management by volunteers.

The Sport Development Manager would be required to assist each Section Director with High Performance management, selection processes, and contact with outside agencies. While the operation of the Section would still be the responsibility of the Section Director, the increased support they would receive in this area would greatly assist them when they are new to their roles, and especially provide essential support to the ISSF Director while the NZSF also undergoes structural and staffing changes.

Summary

Pistol New Zealand is a quality, well established national sports organisation. Its growth and development over the last 39 years is commendable, and it has adjusted its administration to meet the needs of this change several times since its incorporation.

Our current structure provides for a part time administration contractor, who is often expected to provide services for many more hours than contracted, and provide services at all times of day. It is not acceptable that our association expects this, let alone allows it to continue on a daily basis.

Individual shooters believe they pay a substantial amount of money each year to their clubs for national affiliation, and they expect a professional service, delivered in a timely manner. This is simply not achievable under our current structure, but is very achievable with changes suggested in this document.

Recommendations

Pistol NZ's Council recommend that the delegates present at the 2008 AGM discuss this proposed structural change, and provide direction to the incoming Council.

Subject to any changes agreed to by the membership, the recommended course of action is that the AGM instruct Council to formalise a new constitution to allow for this change, to create an annual budget to operate under the new structure, and to create job descriptions for the new contracted positions, and formalise the structure under which Section Directors would be elected/appointed, and their operational requirements.

This would then be brought back to the membership at a Special General Meeting approximately 6 months after the AGM, after being sent to clubs to digest, with a view to voting on the formal adoption of change, and set a start date for the new constitution and structure to come in to being.

Timetable For Change

With the current Administration Contract ending in October 2010, it is important that we properly prepare for the next stage of this association's development now.

While this document recommends that the AGM approve the concept for formal presentation at a future meeting, there is no strict requirement to effect change by any particular date.

As the main outcome expected from this change is improved delivery of service, at club level, and individual shooter level, and securing the long term future of this association, it is expected that if the membership support and embrace change, that it be implemented as expeditiously as possible, without undue cost to the membership.

Should the AGM approve the development of this plan to a future general meeting, it is likely this will be the principal item of business dealt with by Council in the months succeeding the AGM.

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