



President's Report to Pistol NZ AGM 2008

In delivering my seventh President's Report to Pistol NZ's AGM, I take great pleasure in reporting that Pistol NZ now has the highest number of shooters affiliated in its 39 years of existence. The affiliation level at 30 June 2008 was 2829. Seven consecutive years of growth after almost 10 years in decline is an excellent turn around for our sport, and things should continue to build, with expanding junior programs, and public interest as a result of the Olympic Games in August.

This year's annual report will be shorter than my previous efforts, but this in no way reflects any lack of activity, participation or development our sport has enjoyed over the last 12 months, rather a shorter message on the past year than usual, and a message that I want the membership, and all pistol shooters, to think about the future, and most particularly, what their expectations of Pistol NZ are, and how can they be achieved.

Executive Performance

Council have had three full meetings since last year's AGM, and two additional smaller meetings. The first of these was a Section Director's retreat over 2 days, which produced some worthwhile outcomes, which I hope all active shooters will see through the website, improved Bullshooter columns and of course, on the ranges.

There are three members of your executive retiring at this year's AGM, Mike Colligan, Ian Knight and Debbie Wakker. Debbie Wakker has advised she may still stand for a general Council position, but is retiring from the ISSF Director's position she has held for the last 3 years. In addition to the Muzzle Loading Directors role, Ian Knight also briefly managed the ISSF Section when there was a vacancy on Council. Both Debbie and Ian provided a much wider focus on Council activities than just the needs of their own Sections, which is a much desired attribute of Section Directors, as they make up the majority of your executive.

Mike Colligan retires as the longest serving member of the current executive, having been on Council since the late 1990s. Mike has perhaps been best known to clubs through his work on the Range Development Committee, and was the sole Range Inspector for the South Island for many years until a group of new Inspectors was trained recently.

Ardmore Complex

The National Shooting Complex at Ardmore was finally closed to all shooting on 31 March 2008, and the last salvageable parts of the complex were removed by the NZSF just days before the deadline to vacate the property at the end of June. Some of the equipment has already been loaned out to ensure the shooting community still obtain value from it, including air pistol target changers loaned to Hamilton Pistol Club. It is likely that Pistol NZ will have the greatest input to where remaining chattels go, and this will be worked through with organisations that can make benefit from them. At present the remaining equipment is stored in 4 containers on another part of the Army property at Ardmore, where a process is underway to re-establish shooting ranges. Most of the remaining equipment is only suitable for pistol shooting, except for the 50M range target systems, which can also be used for small bore rifle shooting.



The club house was cut into three pieces and sold off, and during its removal I understand the middle section collapsed somewhat, and required much higher costs to re-establish.

Competition Highlights

The standout performance of the last year was Yang Wang shooting the NZOC Olympic MQS for 10M Air Pistol. This score had to be shot twice, and Yang achieved the two scores at events in Auckland in the early part of this year. Yang's Nationals score of 581 equalled the NZ record set by Greg Yelavich set

almost 20 years ago. After having to endure an appeals process initiated by a rifle shooter who narrowly missed Olympic selection, Yang was named in the NZ Olympic Team to Beijing, and in August will become one of a small band on NZ pistol shooters to compete at the Olympics. Our first, Bruce McMillan competed at Munich in 1972, and our last Olympian was Tania Corrigan, who competed in the 2000 Games in Sydney.



Ultimately, this was also only possible due to an Olympic Quota for 10M Women's Air Pistol being won at the Oceania Championships in Australia last year, which was then transferred to Men's Air Pistol. I attended some of the ISSF events at Oceania, and the highlight for NZ was Thomas Nobes of Whangarei winning the Junior 10M Air Pistol gold medal. At Oceania, all juniors shoot the 60 shot air match together, which is a strain on our female juniors, who typically shoot a 40 shot match here, as in Women's 10M Air.

After attending some of the Oceania events, I then also had the pleasure to be present when a NZ shooter won the Australian Action Pistol Nationals for the first time ever, with Brent Millard of Auckland recording the only "possible" of 1920. Brent is the only NZ shooter to achieve the possible score in a major event for many years.

There were records shot in some of our National events over the last year, and this, on top of the aforementioned results, shows that at the elite level, our sport continues to grow and improve.

Bullshooter

Another exciting change to Bullshooter this year saw the adoption of a full colour cover, at no extra cost in the production process. Hopefully this will make the magazine stand out more, and more people will want to pick it up and read it. What is inside the colour covers is still entirely at the mercy of the contributors, and I am sure the editor would be pleased to be inundated, month in, month out, with quality articles and pictures for inclusion.



The production contract for Bullshooter was approved by Council for a 3 year renewal up until October 2011. The Section Director's workshop held in April led to a commitment from all present to make their columns appealing to all readers, rather than the core active participants in their events. We still need more items from the "shooters on the ground" about matches, clubs and activities around the country. I thank all those individuals who did take the time to put pen to paper (or should that be keyboard to screen) and send something to the editor. I also would like to thank the editor, Wally Cole, for seeking and obtaining improvements in our production and mailing systems.

NZ Post added a further cost to Bullshooter this year by requiring our bulk mailing list to be subject to a Statement Of Accuracy, or we would lose our mailing discounts. The first quote we received to achieve the result required was \$1400, which is a significant amount. Ultimately we managed to achieve the required result for under \$400, and our mailing list accuracy was high, much higher than the standard NZ Post required. Despite this, there will be an ongoing need to annually have our mailing list qualified to receive the mailing discount, without which, our affiliation fees would likely need to be raised.

The new distribution method, which is used by most gun magazines in NZ, got off to a slightly rocky start when the back cover of the issue was exposed with gun adverts visible. While we received one single email of complaint, purporting to speak for their whole club, we spoke to a number of individuals from many clubs and they had no concerns about this slip up, but from now on the back page will also be hidden from view.

Range Development Committee

Challenges continue to confront our clubs, and our inspection team. "No Danger Area" ranges will likely come under closer scrutiny as time moves on. One concern I have is the possibility Police may ultimately recognise people trained outside our system, as there are now Open Polytechnic papers which cover things such as range design.

The critical factor our inspection team consider when assessing the safety of our ranges is the activities on those ranges. Having people who do not have a strong understanding of our activities could lead to an unsafe practice being allowed, or safe practices being restricted. Ranges that are completely safe for some events may not be safe for others.

It is likely there will be a small change to the management team of this committee at this year's AGM, and their focus will remain on assisting our clubs to maximise the use of their facilities, with the emphasis on safe operation.

The Coming Year, Our 40th Anniversary

2009 is the 40th anniversary of Pistol NZ coming in to being. In 1969 The New Zealand Pistol Association Inc was formed by the pistol committee of the then NZ Smallbore Rifle Association. Since those days we have grown from a body using single shot .22 pistols held only by club armourers, to a sport with over 20 different matches, using a range of different handguns and long arms, and our numbers are greater than ever.

Council, through the Online Shop, will be announcing a number of souvenir items to recognise this milestone, and as with our 25th anniversary, there will be a special commemorative item which will only be available to people who attend a National Championship match in 2009.

The biggest sporting event in New Zealand in the coming year is the 6th NRA World Action Pistol Championships, which are being hosted by Hamilton Pistol Club in November. Up to 50 internationals are expected, including some marquee names from the US professional shooting circuit. This is only the second time a World Championship pistol event has been held in New Zealand, the last occasion being the same event hosted by Hamilton in 1999. This is a unique opportunity for NZ shooters to attend a World Championship event, shoulder to shoulder with the world's elite, for a very modest cost compared with travelling overseas.

A Plan For Growth

Since 2001, Council has considered a number of options to improve the services clubs receive from their national association. This has included how to best use the membership's money, and how to operate more efficiently. The first proposition, which did not make it past the Council table, was to reduce the number of people involved in executive meetings, and have people who are charged with delivering the services spending their time and the membership's money specifically on achieving their goals as advised to Council and the annual meeting.

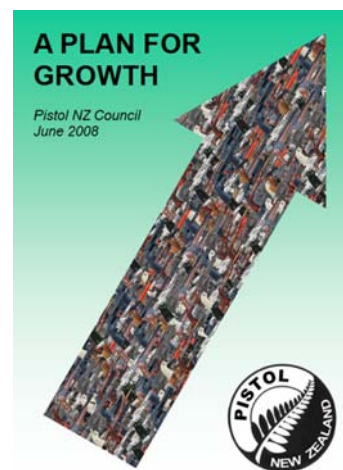
In 2004 a draft Constitution was presented to the AGM for discussion, which to some degree modified the initial plan, and again provided for less money to be spent on travel, accommodation and food for executive meetings, by again having the people delivering services off Council, and also provided a greater surety of tenure for people putting their names forward for voluntary roles.

Delegates at that AGM were not well prepared to discuss the issue, but it did in part support a remit put to the AGM that Section Directors be appointed by the shooters they represent, and not by election of all member clubs. This remit failed mainly due to it being focussed on a single section. There was some positive discussion at the time about the concept, but very negative discussion surrounding the remit ignoring all of our other pistol disciplines.

In 2006 Council again considered how to better provide the services needed within the existing financial framework, and based on the discussions over a year, a structure was discussed informally with delegates after last year's AGM. The general feeling was positive, and it was agreed that if our association was to be more "professional", then aspects of its administration indeed have to become "professional".

This year's AGM has a notice of motion requesting that the membership endorse Council completing the development of this plan, and redevelop the Constitution to enable it to happen. This is purely an endorsement for the plan to be developed to its conclusion. There will be no change to the way we operate, or our current structure at this year's AGM. Depending how quickly the plan can be tidied up, with improvements and additions brought up at the AGM, and in consultation where necessary during its finalisation, the expectation of Council is that it will be completed and presented to the membership at a general meeting in 2009 for adoption. It will be at that general meeting that binding decisions on change would be undertaken, and a timetable for implementation of the changes set.

There are a number of factors that make considering change most appropriate at this point in time. One is our growth, where our numbers are at a record level, yet participation in regional and national



competitions is static (and indeed lower than 15 years ago across the board). This suggests we are not providing newer shooters with enough resources, knowledge or support to take part in these events.

Another reason is the pending retirement of our Administration Officer in 2010, and the need to consider how best to move forward after that date. We have been very fortunate to have an active shooter with a passion for the sport in this position for so long. It is unlikely any person not directly associated with our sport would have stayed in this role for such an extended period of time. Margaret gave notice at the time of the signing of the contract in October 2007 that she would not be seeking to renew after 2010.

At present we have a number of contractors performing important tasks for the association, all at well below "commercial" rates. In each case, the hours that the contractors put in would be remunerated at a substantially higher rate than we currently pay. We also expect (and by we, I include all pistol shooters) our national office to be available during business hours, but it has never been contracted to operate on a full time basis. The fact that much of the work required happens outside normal hours, such as at Council meetings, we are lucky there is anyone available to handle the affairs of the association during working hours at all.

I would like all club's committees, and our delegates at the AGM, to consider this statement, and the two following questions:

- *We are a sporting organisation serving 2800 participants, to Olympic and World Championship level across multiple disciplines, with statutory requirements that must be demonstrated and adhered to, with solid growth, particularly with junior shooters, and a desire to continue to grow and be strong.*
- *Is it reasonable to expect this to be managed with a high degree of professionalism, and in a timely manner to meet the needs of all shooters?*
- *Is it reasonable to expect the same without having to pay a fair remuneration to achieve the same?*

If the answer to the first question is **yes**, I am certain that there will common ground amongst Council members and delegates present that not everything that could or should be being achieved in our sport is being achieved.

If the answer to the second question is **yes**, then Pistol NZ is going to need, with some urgency, to find an individual with professional skills, substantial time on their hands, and the ability to work long hours without the need for an income. The present structure has services being delivered by volunteers who only meet face to face 3 times a year, and whose own personal contact with their shooter base is limited by their own ability to attend major shooting matches, and take phone calls after hours.

All members of your executive work full time, and yet there is a definite expectation of action and results. I can assure you of this, because whenever an individual wishes to take issue with a perceived lack of attention or progress by our volunteers, they contact me! My wife will be present at this year's AGM, and you are welcome to ask of her how many phone calls and emails I deal with daily, from 8am to as late as 11pm, on matters that principally relate to shooters wanting what they believe they are justified in expecting.

Having had the draft Constitution presented for discussion in 2004, the post AGM meeting in 2007, and the Council approved "Plan For Growth" circulated to all clubs earlier this year, the time to discuss the future is **now**. I ask that delegates come to this AGM to discuss this plan, and if clubs have any concerns about it, to present alternatives to the meeting, as Council is of the firm view that the status quo cannot, and will not, provide our growing membership with the services they need, expect and deserve.

I thank you for reading my annual report for the year 2007/08.

David Tomlinson
President, Pistol NZ