



Fencing Victoria Incorporated  
PO Box 958  
North Melbourne  
VIC 3051

## **PRESIDENTS' REPORT 2019**

I acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we are meeting. I pay my respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

It is again my pleasure to present this report on the Associations activities for 2019. The year began as the previous year ended with Fencing Victoria hosting a National event. The last Australian National event in 2018 was followed by the first two events on the National calendar for 2019: Junior National Championships and AFC1 (D.H. McKenzie). AFC1 was scheduled to be held in Brisbane but after a logistical issue, the AFF, QFA & FV agreed to swap the venues for AFC1 and (the newest addition to the National Circuit) AFC4. This allowed QFA extra time to secure a suitable venue in which to hold the events. For Fencing Victoria, that made February & March extremely busy. In amongst this we participated in the Arnold Sports Festival for the fifth year, with Arnold coming in for a visit again. Our younger members also travelled to the first round of the Australian Minime Circuit (AMC) in Adelaide.

This level of sustained activity put a large strain on our volunteer and personnel resources. The canteen proved to be an ongoing source of difficulty. The coffee cart in our shared foyer was taken over and impeded our ability to run successful coffee offerings. Thankfully, Ros Whitehead led a few volunteers to provide sustenance to our competitors and officials for Junior Nationals. AFC1 was serviced by a great BBQ which really saved the competition from the food perspective.

At the 2018 AGM in May, three new directors were voted in, they were: Deborah Gough (Volunteer Coordinator) and Kesara Gunaratne (Assistant Finance) & Julie Burbidge (Secretary). Norbert Reidl was also voted in unanimously and continued in his previously appointed role of Vice President. Emily Marotta renominated and was also voted unanimously, she continued in the role of Communications Director. Julie took over from Simon Hamm. Simon did not stand for renomination. The board are grateful for the time that Simon had devoted to the role of Secretary, particularly considering his role with the Commonwealth Fencing Championships 2018. We understood the large impost on his time and thank him for his work in those circumstances.

### **Board for 2019 (As at AGM):**

Carol Bond – Finance

Julie Burbidge – Secretary

Deborah Gough – Volunteer Coordinator \*

Kesara Gunaratne – Assistant Finance/Bookkeeper \*

Emily Marotta – Communications

Graeme Orrman – Club Liaison and Compliance

Norbert Reidl – Vice President  
Kayt Spano - President

\*Sadly, Deborah resigned due to external pressures and personal increased workload. Kesara was unable to fulfill her duties as a Director and her tenure was cut short.

The Fencing Victoria Vice President and Board called a Special General Meeting, the sole purpose of this was to extend my tenure on the FV Board. With the adoption of a new constitution, Directors' may only serve for 8 years, an extra year's grace was applied around the changeover from one constitution to the other. This however meant that for me to continue, an SGM had to be held. The resolution of that meeting extended my tenure for 2 more years.

From a governance perspective, the current directors have all completed an introductory governance course and any newly elected directors will also do this course as part of their induction process. We are continuing to forge ahead with updating policies and strategy for the continued sustainable growth of the sport of fencing in Victoria. I completed the Company Director's Course with the Australian Institute of Company Directors and am planning to continue to study in 2020, concentrating on areas relevant to the betterment of the Association.

Fencing Victoria has met all its compliance regulations and have met and exceeded the mandated quota for female representation on boards (as required by Sport and Recreation Victoria). I am also very pleased that FV is continuing to work closely with VicSport as well as the respective government departments, including the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation. These continued associations raise the profile of our sport, assist in securing funding and continuing to build relationships and understanding of the sector, its challenges, and barriers as well as its successes. These ongoing relationships with peak bodies in the sport & recreation sector are hugely important to the continued success of sport in Victoria.

In April, our Head Directoire Technique, Jasper MacCuspie began using the Fencing Time Live website for our competition results. This allows more people to keep abreast of the competitions in real time and then have access to the results. This has proven to be a very handy resource for our members.

The next series of events was the schools league epee. This continues to grow at a rate of 10% per annum, with more schools joining and more school aged fencers from clubs seizing the opportunity to compete regularly. Due to this sustained growth, we began discussions with the State Netball and Hockey Centre in order to move these competitions to the larger venue. This venue affords us the ability to expand, initially to a 20-piste area and scope to use a larger area (approx. 30-piste) in the future. We look forward to working with them more closely in 2020.

The second half of the year was personally exceedingly difficult, and I would like to thank my fellow board members and the community for the support and understanding shown to me during my bereavements.

Our JD (Joseph D'Onofrio) Challenge continued to grow and be a source of great fun and community spirit. This is the second leg of the AMC, attendance proving that kids love to travel. There was an increase in attendants from our interstate neighbours with a

total of 188 entries individually. As we have done in the past, we chose to do a fundraiser to support a worthy group. In this instance, we decided to raise funds for Kids Under Cover. We raised in excess of \$1600 for this worthy local cause.

Entries for the Club Challenge were also heartening with 161 entries in one day's worth of competitions. Several our clubs have some great initiatives for participation at the younger end of the spectrum and the numbers at competitions reflect that.

The youngest fencers travelled to Sydney for the Koala & Friendship cups as last of the AMC competitions for the year. Again, our young ones were active and supportive of each other, some making friends for the first time, others continuing to cement those relationships formed through travelling for specific events, like this circuit.

#### Victorian notable results:

In total (u15, u17, u20, u23, Open, Veteran)

16 Individual Titles

13 Team titles (Inc Blacklords winning the Club Teams)

85 Podium presentations (inc: 2 Open Sabre Teams at Open National Championships, Men's for the first time in over a decade)

U23 Men's Epee also had a clean sweep with the Top 4 all from Victoria.

Our membership platform was changed by SportsTG to the new GameDay platform. Robyn Hunter in her newly created Operations Manager role worked tirelessly to do the changeover. This was not the smooth transition we were promised and has generated not only a lot of work, but also the uptake of GameDay by the clubs was not as strong as with the previous system. This has also skewed our membership statistics as our capture was not as high as the preceding year.

#### **2019 memberships & squad activities:**

752 Club/School Affiliated

133 Full Junior Affiliation

104 Full Adult Affiliation

58 Coach

There were approx. 238 Schools League (Epee) participants.

We also began a Sabre Squad early in the year. The AFF transferred the running of Foil Squad back to us at the beginning of Q4 (October):

#### **Sabre Introductory Sessions.**

Throughout the year 21 people tried the Introductory Sabre Sessions

a total of 82 Individual sessions were paid for and one (AFT) member paying for a Full Quarter of sessions in Q4

10 fencers also attended the Special Sabre Night in November

#### **Epee Squad - Averages for 2019**

1 Session per week - Average 8

2 Sessions per week - Average 4 (non- AFT/AFS) + 10 AFT/AFS Fencers (2 sessions per week) = 14

Plus, a total of 87 Individual sessions paid for by Victorians and 10 paid for by Non-Victoria Fencers - Averages 25 Individual Sessions per quarter

**Foil Squad** - Q4 Only, as this was an AFF Squad until Oct. 2019  
Development Squad - 6 Many of whom stay on to do the Friday night Individual session.

1 Session per week - 16

2 Sessions per week - 9

Plus, a total of 13 Individual sessions paid for this quarter

As you can see, it has been a remarkably busy and eventful year.

I would like to thank the Board and Management of Fencing Victoria for their ongoing work and dedication to the Association and to each other. I look forward to our continuing success in 2020.

All the best

Kayt Spano  
President