

# Athletics Canterbury Cross Country and Road Committee

## Chairman's AGM Report for 2017 – 2018 – Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018

It is with pleasure that I present my ninth and last annual report to the AGM of the Cross Country & Road Committee.

I am pleased to report that the last twelve months has been an exciting, challenging and productive time for the Out of Stadia section of the sport. Three areas stand out for me and I will elaborate further later in my report.

But firstly, I would like to thank the wonderful committee members who have worked so tirelessly for you over the last twelve months. Secretary Robyn Perkins and Treasurer Victor Gamperle have kept the ship running each month, while Anne Kennedy, Daniel Reese, Kevin Prendergast, Peter King, Sandy Gamperle and Annette Campbell have all had ongoing responsibilities to oversee. Last, but not least, are Kevin and Bernadette Jago who have contributed so much over the years and are still very keen to help and contribute ideas. I thank them all for agreeing to do another year on the committee but am disappointed that nobody else has put their hand up to join us for 2018-2019.

Outside the Committee, three people have worked tirelessly for us and I thank them sincerely. John McBrearty has again done a wonderful job of allocating officials to positions at all our events. Craig and Shona Brown have continued to do a fine job of sorting results and registrations. I would also like to acknowledge the support Centre President Andrew Stark has given us during the last twelve months.

I would also like to thank all those officials and club members who have given up time to help us over the last twelve months. Likewise, thank you to all clubs who have organised events.

On the racing scene, it's been business as usual, with a few twists.

Port Hills and Sumner again organised most of the summer events on our calendar and they are to be congratulated for hosting wonderful events. Port Hills have been busy, as well as the 5k series, the Crater Rim event doubled as the inaugural NZ Trail Running Champs. The Canterbury Half Marathon Champs were again run in conjunction with the Selwyn Running festival. Sadly, the number of registered finishers only totalled 16 with no males younger than 50 competing. We need to look at whether this event is still meeting our athletes needs.

I would like to acknowledge four clubs who have really stepped up over the winter to improve and grow events. New Brighton Olympic worked hard to develop their Tai Tapu Run festival, while Sumner took over the Holloway Memorial Cross Country event and shifted it to the Motukarara Race Course, providing a hilly old school event with little of the rumoured mud. Methodist put a lot of work into growing the Governors Bay to Lyttelton Road Race and while registered entries were disappointingly down, they were replaced by an increase in Sanctioned entries. North Canterbury gave the Greta Valley Relay one last shot in the arm and were rewarded with double the entries.

This leads me to the first of my standout areas for the sport over the last year. Under Annette Campbell's leadership we took the plunge and employed Julia (Joolz) Moore as our part time paid Marketing person. Joolz has dived headlong into this role and while she gets to know our sport during 2018, the long-term aim has been for her to setup structures for the 2019 winter. Already she has helped several of our events this year to raise their profile both within other clubs and especially



runners outside the sport who we call sanctioned runners. Considering all the Professional Promoters out there offering events in opposition to our events, it is important that we not only put on professional looking events for our registered athletes, but that we offer sanction runners the opportunity to join with us. The Committee made the decision early to make all events on our programme sanctioned events and while there are still issues to work through, the concept is good and even Athletics New Zealand are supporting us trialling it. Ultimately, we want to get these unregistered runners to join our clubs, but for this to happen, we have to offer services worth joining for. Annette and Joolz have been working with clubs on this and there is much to still do. While I have little hard evidence to back up my claims, my gut feeling is that we have grown the sport over the winter months because of employing a Marketing person and I believe it is money well spent.

Canterbury athletes continued to compete both nationally and internationally and I congratulate those who represented us and those who won medals. Under Daniel Reese's leadership we again very successfully hosted the NZ Road Relay Championships as part of our Takahe to Akaroa Relay. The Technical Delegates report from Athletics New Zealand highlighted no issues and couldn't offer any suggestions for improvement and in fact recommended the exact model be rolled out in future years around the country at other events. Well done Daniel and team on a great 78<sup>th</sup> running of this historic event.

My gut feeling would be that our athletes probably didn't perform nationally as well as in recent years and this brings me to my second standout area where I hope we will again rise to the top of athletics in New Zealand. The opening of the Nga Puna Wai athletics complex on October 20<sup>th</sup> is not only wonderful for Track and Field athletes, but it offers out of stadia athletes the opportunity to again train and race on an all-weather surface here in Christchurch. Our reducing base of athletes have punched above their weight in recent years, despite not having a Christchurch based all-weather track and I expect it will attract many new athletes to the sport, which will lift performances over the next few years. Much has been sung of this track and field facility opening being a once in a life time opportunity for our sport and I believe it is very much the case for our out of stadia section of the sport. It is an opportunity for all clubs to entice new members to what some would call the sexy side of the sport and then encourage the middle and distance runners to stay involved year-round by training within our club structures and running our out of stadia events. Is your club already planning and talking advantage of this opportunity? Don't miss it.

I am pleased to report that the Cross Country and Road Committee gave \$10,000 to Athletics Canterbury to help fund the provision of a world class facility at Nga Puna Wai.

For some years I have been suggesting in my reports that we need to employ a full-time person to manage the sport on a more professional basis. Not to take over volunteer's roles, but to add value. My third standout area is therefore the appointment of Ian Thomas as General Manager. While Ian has attended one of our monthly committee meetings to get to know us, it's obvious that for now most of his energy will go towards bedding in Nga Puna Wai. Congratulations to Andrew Stark and team on both Ian's appointment and Nga Puna Wai's completion.

Finally, thank you for attending tonight and I look forward to taking a slightly more back seat role on the committee in future. I wish Annette Campbell all the best as she takes over the Chairman's position.

*John Gamblin*

Chairman

6<sup>th</sup> November 2018