



# AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND BACKGAMMON FEDERATION

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT - 2023

I'm happy to report that 2023 has been one of the best years Australian and New Zealand backgammon has ever experienced.

We launched the ANZBGF Championships very successfully, attracting around 50 entries, many of whom travelled from interstate to play in Melbourne in June. The interest was so strong at the event that we managed to fill a field of 128 with buybacks. It was won by Malcolm Hutson. We've had nothing but positive feedback since.

We attracted strong entries for the Open, the Intermediate and the BMAB and we expect all three tournaments to grow next year – along with possibly more events, yet to be fully explored. I expect the event to get bigger and better in the coming years.

Earlier in the year, the NZ Backgammon Championship had another highly successful renewal, attracting a field of 67 including Australian Open organiser Simon Woodhead, who went over and picked up the Silver Trophy. Chris Taylor won the main prize, while NZ continued its promotion of backgammon for the young by having a student division – with Josh Sajan this year's NZ Student Champion.

It's been less than a week, of course, since the Australian Backgammon Championships – which were a major success. The event provided solid backgammon for three days and produced some remarkable results, not the least by new Open and Speed champion Ben Phillips, who won two and almost three of the events.

For the time being, we have agreed to make the newsletter a twice-yearly production due to the amount of work and time it takes. That may change if necessary. On that matter, I once again thank Narelle McKenzie for her work in laying out the newsletter – and her efforts in covering the recent Australian Open.

It's incumbent on me to recognise Simon Woodhead's tireless work in running the Australian Open – along with those who helped including Barb Salamon, Sharne Dyett and our own Greg Ash.

The women's game got another shot in the arm with the inaugural running of the Queen of the Boards (won by Jenny Saunders). The ANZBGF committee has since discussed ways to build on that interest among women.

The ANZBGF has launched a points system to identify the best live player, which I believe is a well overdue initiative. Committee member Andy Liepins and I have been setting the points, but we're open to any advice on whether an event may be worth more or less points, depending on its status in the game. Needless to say, Ben Phillips is the clear early leader.

The exciting thing to come out of 2023 is that there's plenty of live and online play around Australia and New Zealand again - and all evidence points to a vibrant backgammon community.

Shane McNally  
ANZBGF President