

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2024

As president of the Darling Downs Bridge Club, it is my pleasure to present my annual report of the club's and the management committee's activities throughout the past year.

Repeating what I said last year, club membership and playing numbers have taken a major hit since the onset of COVID-19. Many people who played online or socially in 2019, or found other interests, have not returned to Bridge. As of today we have 103 financial members (53 home members and 50 away members). This time last year there were only 94 financial members so things continue to improve gradually, although well down on pre-COVID years. A special thanks to Trudy, because most of our new members have come from the beginner classes that she runs at TBC. She makes a point of encouraging them to try playing at DDBC.

Major Events, Competitions and Congresses

The Autumn Pairs Championship was played for the third year over two Mondays (6 & 13 March) and was won by Ian Jesser and Rhondda Dean.

Enid Busch Day was played on 22 & 29 May with 13 pairs contesting the event in week 1 and 15 pairs in week 2. This meant that a Howell movement was played in week 1 and a Mitchell movement was played in week 2. This was far from ideal, but a result was obtained, and the event was won by Ian Jesser and Rhondda Dean.

The Club Teams Championship was played on Sunday 18 June with 6 teams playing. The event was won by Will Higgins, John Erlandson, Desley Mundell and Roey Kelley. This event really needs a minimum of 6 teams to compete to make it worthwhile, so I would encourage more members to consider playing in this most enjoyable event. Thanks go to Carol and Robyn for the excellent catering on the day.

The Winter Pairs Championship was played on 3 and 10 July with 14 pairs contesting the event. It was won by Michael Doherty and Gus Govan.

The Club Pairs Championship was played on 7, 14 and 21 August with 15 pairs contesting the event. It was won by Barbara Wippell and Pauline Lutton.

The DDBC Pairs Congress and the Teams Congress were held on the weekend of 26/27 August. As was the case last year, we did not receive the support from Brisbane Clubs that we had in previous years but we had a satisfactory field on both days with the support of other clubs on the Downs. There were 22 Pairs on day 1, with the A Grade winners being Jenni Buckley and Jim Wood and the B Grade winners being Chris Cooper and James Cooper. Eight teams played in the Teams event on day 2. The A grade winners were Jenni Buckley, Jim Wood, Hema De Zoysa, and Shannaal De Zoysa. The B grade winners were Trudy Dunne, Tony Dunne, Elizabeth Anderson and Cynthia Palmer. Many thanks to Judy, Carol, Ann and Robyn for their hard work organising the catering for the weekend. Thanks also to Judy for her organisation of the raffle prizes. Thanks also to Rebecca for her donation of wines that were enjoyed at the end of play. We have programmed a repeat of the congress in the same format for August this year.

The club's "Bring and Buy" Charity Day was held on 9 October and was a great success as usual with 19 pairs playing and \$1,275.00 being donated to the Toowoomba Hospice in memory of Desiree Fenaughty who passed away during the year.

The Friday Pairs Championship was scheduled to be played on Friday 13 and 20 October, but due to poor numbers, the event was cancelled and held instead as a Monday two-weekly event on 23 and 30 October. 16 pairs played on week 1 and 22 pairs played on week 2. It was disappointing that only 11 pairs played both days and hence qualified for the championship, which was won by Kim Nicholl and Sue Crooke.

The President's Cup was played on Monday 6 and 13 November. It was contested by 16 pairs and was won by Rod Brilliant and Bill Redhead.

Jim Blaikie Day was played on 27 November and was contested by 16 pairs. It was won by Rod Brilliant and Bill Redhead.

Congratulations to all the winners in the various events during the year.

Our Christmas Party was held on Monday 11th December with more than 44 members in attendance. Wendy Allen from Mobile Travel Agents again donated a fabulous prize which was won by Jill Ekroyd.

Your Committee

We started the year with a full committee of 10 members, being myself, Gus Govan, Trudy Dunne, Tony Dunne, Carol Dashwood, Robyn Jackson, Anne Roberson, Jenny Speziali, Judy Reynolds and Rebecca Knight. We ended the year with nine members, Jenny Speziali having resigned for personal reasons.

As Vice President, Gus Govan was a valuable deputy having to stand in for me several times due my absences. Unfortunately, he is not available to stand for the committee this year, but I hope his situation allows him to come back on to the committee in the future.

Trudy Dunne has continued the Secretary's job, despite being a very busy individual with her golfing commitments and being a teacher at the Toowoomba Bridge Club. Trudy has been an exceptional Secretary, always prompt with production of meeting minutes and always making valuable contributions to management issues. She has been a real asset to the Management Committee and I sincerely thank her for the work she carries out. I am pleased to say that she has agreed to continue in the role for a further year.

Tony Dunne has taken to the Treasurer job with gusto. All of the accounts are now computerised and reports to the committee are very professional. Thanks to his advice, we have been able to absorb the ABF and QBA fee increases that occurred this year and keep our membership fees the same as last year.

Carol Dashwood and Ann Robertson have worked very well together, arriving early on Mondays to open up and looking after the kitchen. They both contribute to committee discussions and provide valuable advice.

Robyn Jackson volunteered to look after the kitchen on Fridays and has done a great job all year. She also carries out regular checks of the defibrillator, that we hope we never have to use. Robyn was also instrumental in recommending the purchase of a collapsible bed and mattress, as there have been occasions when a member has required an ambulance and has had to lie on the bare floor whilst waiting.

Other members of the committee get mentions elsewhere in this report, where their contributions have been acknowledged with thanks for a job well done.

Although no longer on the committee, Barbara Wippell has always provided an enormous amount of assistance to the club, continuing as Masterpoints Secretary. Her whiteboard skills are also used regularly to update the notice board of coming events. She also sends cards to people in hospital and does our Christmas decorations, as well as making a delicious Christmas cake. She also keeps me on the ball with things that I forget to do, and with her knowledge of the club's history she is a great sounding board for advice. Barbara also produces the Certificates of Achievement that are awarded at the Christmas party. Thank you Barbara for all that you do.

Volunteers

The DDBC is a volunteer club and without help from many people outside the committee we will not be able to operate into the future. I would like to acknowledge the work of a number of people who are not committee members but have assisted the club to function throughout 2023.

A Bridge Club would not be able to operate without Directors and I thank all of our Directors for their service. Michael Doherty, John Hede, Rebecca Knight, Richard Newman, Roy Reynolds and myself all share the load of directing.

Juleen Cavanaugh and Anne Kirkpatrick have continued to look after all dealing of boards. This is despite Juleen not attending playing sessions due to health concerns. Her continuation in this role is much appreciated.

Sue Crooke and Richard Newman spend a lot of time keeping our computers up to date and this has been quite challenging at times with updates that cause glitches. A lot of time is sometimes required to sort these issues out. Richard is usually one of the first people at the club and one of the last to leave. I also acknowledge and thank Trevor Henderson for the part he has played in sorting out computer problems. His computer expertise and assistance to Sue has been invaluable to the club and is much appreciated.

Nev Lutton mows the grass when required and keeps our hedges tidy. He replaces the water filters each year and is always looking for ways to help out.

I would also like to thank Kim Nicoll, for a job she has been doing every week for the DDBC and the TBC. Every weekend, she submitted the results for publication in the Chronicle the following Tuesday. She has now stood down from that role, leaving the job currently vacant. If members believe that this role should continue, a volunteers needs to come forward. I would be happy to assist anyone who comes forward to undertake this task.

Our sponsor, Wendy Allen of MTA Travel, has continued her relationship with the club and has provided fabulous major and minor prizes to support our raffles. We thank her most sincerely for her continued support of the club.

I thank all past Management Committee members, Office Bearers and other members who have volunteered their services to our club. You have all done such a great job and without your support the club would not be able to offer all it does to its members.

The Future

A few words about our future and the use of MyABF software. Most of you would be aware that most clubs are now using the MyABF software for Congress management as well as for normal club play. Up until now, our club has resisted this move in the belief that it complicated our procedures and practices. Whilst it certainly does involve changes that we would have to learn and get used to, I believe it is inevitable that we accept the change. One of the reasons given for our low numbers at the last congress was that people (especially Brisbane players) use MyABF to enter congresses. Trevor Henderson has generously offered to brief DDBC members on what is involved and to assist with setting up the process at our club and I propose that we take him up on the offer as soon as possible. One of the main concerns of members was the belief that MyABF credits were the only way to pay for congresses and club play. This is not the case, as cash payments are also acceptable. I plan to arrange a day for Trevor's presentation – probably a Monday prior to play. I will send out an email with details when it is arranged.

I look forward to the coming year with confidence that the club will continue to be a friendly place to enjoy the game we all love. I also look forward to working with the new committee over the coming year (assuming that I will be voted in).

Floyd Wilson
12th February 2024