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Replacing the Annual Regional Representatives Meeting, the first Outreach Meeting was held in April at the Central Coast.

Chairman's Message

At the beginning of my tenure this year, I undertook to get out and about to different areas of NSW to overcome a perception that the NSWBA is too focused on what happens in Sydney (though I'm not sure that Sydney clubs would agree with that!).

In recent months I have visited Leeton, Illawarra, Grafton, Orange, the Blue Mountains and Port Macquarie enjoying the opportunity to play a number of country congresses. I have had the opportunity to discuss issues of interest with many club officials and I thank them for their time.

Every area is unique, and bridge is struggling in some areas but doing well in others. Demographic factors are important, both in terms of the ageing of the bridge population but also the population shifts between regions. However there are a number of factors which are common and very important.

In my view the most important on any such list is behaviour. Nearly all clubs struggle with behavioural issues with some of their members and it is very important that these be addressed. If players (particularly those new to the game or new to the area) do not have a pleasant experience playing the game at our clubs, they will not come back.

How do we address these issues? I think it requires a combination of courage, prudence and director training. Directors are the first and the most obvious means of ensuring everyone has a good game, which illustrates that there is more to being a director than being able to run and score a movement and make rulings. Dealing with difficult people however requires courage and I would be disappointed if clubs decided that doing so is just too hard. Prudence however is also required and I urge clubs to make use of Warren Robinson, our Honorary Solicitor, if they are

worried about the legal implications of any action they may be considering. For behaviour at congresses, our [Congress Disciplinary and Ethics Committee](#) is in operation (see page 8).



Richard Douglas
Chairman NSWBA



from the NSWBA Council

Congress Conditions and Regulations

Congress conditions and regulations have been updated. It is now a requirement that all congresses must be scored using electronic scoring units (e.g. Bridgemates) so that contract data for all matches is available via the web. And as part of the new policy dealing with behaviour (see page 5), all congress flyers must now contain the clause “All players are subject to the NSWBA’s Congress Disciplinary Regulations”. The NSWBA office has sent a letter reminding clubs about the changes in [congress conditions and regulations](#). [Details](#) can also be found on the NSWBA website.

Mastering Masterpoints

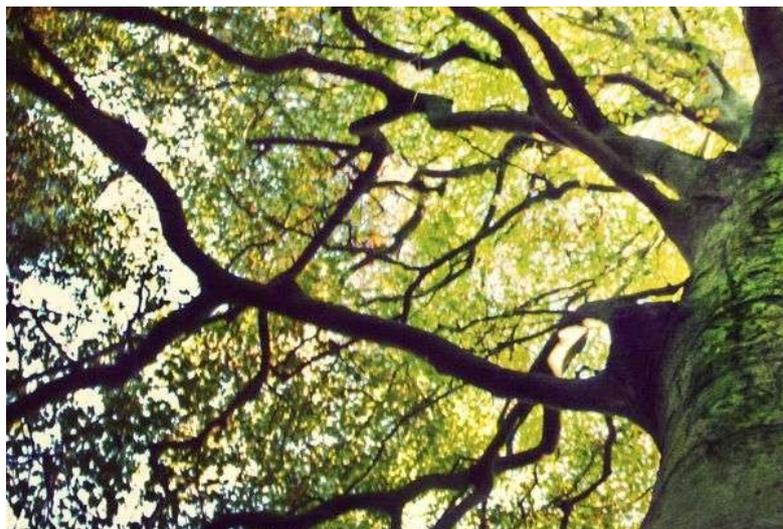
Last year, after paperwork was submitted by various clubs following their Qualifying Events for State Mixed Pairs and State Open Pairs Championships, it became apparent that clearer Masterpoint guidelines were needed. A team including NSWBA office staff, Julian Foster, Warren Lazer and Ronnie Ng has produced step by step guidelines with screenshots to facilitate the process for club administrators, using all the common scoring programs. These guidelines are now part of the Supplementary Regulations for each specific State event. Since the release of the guidelines, a big improvement in the quality and accuracy of submissions for the State Mixed Pairs Championship has already been noted. We will continue to provide support to our clubs in relation to this process.

Equipment Hire & Other Services

The NSWBA has 10 sets of 1-24 and 10 sets of 1-32 boards in boxes that can be hired for club congresses, provided that the clubs transport them and that they are returned correctly repackaged into the boxes. Sets can be hired for \$20 for one week.

We have also recently purchased another 20 Bridgemates and 2 suitable carrying cases. In total, NSWBA now owns 80 Bridgemates, which can be hired for \$5 each for a weekend, as well as a Bridgemate server which can be hired for \$10. Congress Organisers can add these equipment hire charges to the Congress Report Form and pay together with the Congress License Fee. Please contact the [NSWBA office](#) to arrange pickup.

The NSWBA can also print sets of address labels for all affiliated clubs, at \$15 per set (postage included). Please email [NSWBA office](#) to order, indicating the required number of sets and your postal address with your club and contact details. Or you can print your own by downloading the file of addresses of all affiliated clubs from the [NSWBA website](#). 



NSW State Affiliation Fees

The process for issuing 2018 State affiliation was invoiced slightly different to 2017 and it is clear there was some confusion. This article explains how the system works as well as outlining some changes for 2019.

How the fees are calculated

First let me explain how NSW State affiliation fees are calculated. The first key point to note is they are not the same as the ABF capitation fees which go out in April each year.

The NSW State fees apply for a CALENDAR year. **They are calculated based purely on how many home club members your club has at 31 October the previous year. Nothing else.** If you add new members after this date you do not have to pay anything for them (different to the ABF which invoices you each quarter for new registrations). Conversely if you lose members after this date you do not get a refund.

You do not need to tell the NSWBA how many home club members you have. The ABF masterpoint centre provides us a detailed report every 31 October listing every home club member of every NSW club. The invoice for the following year is based on this report. We are happy to provide that listing to a club if you disagree with the figures.

Why are they important?

Under the ABF structure a club’s primary affiliation is to its State body NOT to the ABF. If a club fails to pay its State affiliation fees, we are obliged to inform the ABF and the club will then be disaffiliated. Disaffiliation has dire consequences both for the club and its members. All the home-club members of that club will cease being active members of the ABF masterpoint scheme and consequently become ineligible to enter any ABF event (e.g. GNOT, Gold Coast Congress, etc.). The club is no longer able to issue masterpoints or take advantage of other benefits of affiliation (e.g. access to State tournaments and National insurance policies).

Invoicing by email

Next let us consider the procedure for billing clubs. Last year invoices



Affiliation & Capitation Fees

The tree-like affiliation structure can be complicated. Julian Foster, the 2018 Treasurer, explains how the affiliation fee is calculated and charged.

went out in December 2017 and a discounted rate applied if paid before 31 January 2018. Until 2017 we had generated these invoices manually using Word which was time consuming and inefficient. In 2018 we generated the invoices “properly” in our accounting system and automatically emailed them from there.

Emailing the invoices has given rise to two issues:

1. Some clubs indicated to us they did not receive the original invoice. This is possible because we had some technical issues with our system. We solved that with a temporary fix but it meant that the emails appeared to come from a rather lengthy Outlook email address instead of our regular email addresses office@nswba.com.au or accounts@nswba.com.au. As a result it is entirely possible that some were automatically diverted to Spam folders. We are making some changes in the office to avoid that problem in future.
2. It is possible we do not have the right email address for your club. All the invoices were sent to the email contact that clubs have previously provided to the NSWBA and which are shown in the “Find a Club” facility on the NSWBA website [HERE](#). **PLEASE check the email contact for your club on this listing and advise the office if it is out of date.** If you have a different email account to which invoices should be sent (e.g. a club treasurer), please also let us know. Our database can accommodate that information without displaying it to a public user.

How much to pay?

In 2018 there were two rates thanks to a discount being available for paying prior to 31 January. However this gave rise to a lot of confusion.

We had:

- ◆ Clubs who paid the discounted amount after 31 January
- ◆ Clubs who paid the full amount before 31 January and therefore paid too much

- ◆ Clubs who didn't pay at all (these have all now been chased and resolved)

29 clubs paid too much. We contacted all of them seeking bank details to give them a refund. About half have provided this and been refunded. We are still chasing the others – but if we do not get a response we will either post a cheque or make an adjustment to the 2019 invoice.

To avoid all this confusion in 2019 and, to reflect the fact that State affiliation fees have remained unchanged since 2014, the NSWBA Council has decided to simplify the system to a single rate.

Therefore in 2019 the rate for State affiliation fees will simply be \$10 per home club member as at 31 October 2018. More details are available [HERE](#).

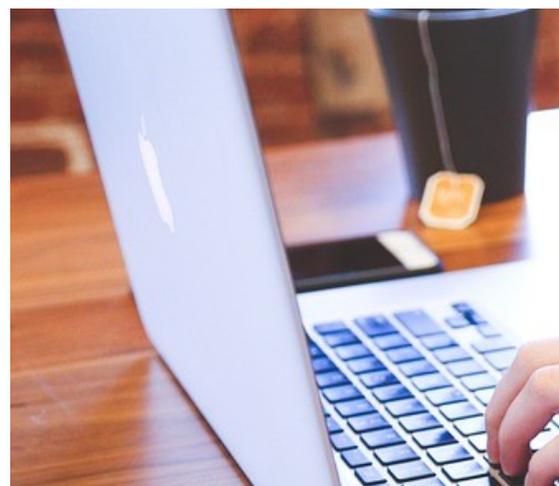
Invoices will go out in November and will be due for payment by 31 January 2019.

What can clubs do to help?

1. Please carefully read any email and/or invoice you receive.
2. Please advise us if your club email address is wrong or if you want financial related matters to be sent to a separate Treasurer email address. (This is important because we are already using the same system to send invoices for clubs taking part in State events like the State Open and Mixed Pairs and the Under 100MP events).

We hope this helps explain how the system works. If you have further questions, please email [Julian Foster](#) and he will do his best to answer them. 

Effective from 1 April 2019, the ABF Capitation Fee will increase 4.9% to \$15.80 for a full year. In subsequent year fees will increase annually in line with the consumer price index. Masterpoint fees will also be increased by 4.9% and be indexed to inflation. Note that these increases are not from the NSWBA.



Membership lists, congress entry lists and local event booking forms collect a lot of data about a lot of players. What is the importance of such data to the business of running a club? One obvious example is if you are running a local event and want to drum up entries, you could use a mail/email list for promotion. What do you do with enquiries about beginners' courses? If you just supply details of your next course, you may lose a potential customer if the dates don't suit them. But if you have stored the caller's contact details, then you can easily promote future courses. So... are you collecting and using the available data effectively?

Membership

Your list of members should form your primary database. A number of bridge clubs are already using Pianola to manage their membership database. While Pianola is a useful database programme, it certainly isn't the only way. For clubs with minimal needs and resources, an Excel spreadsheet will do just fine: but make sure you have it regularly and properly backed up and ensure access is limited to authorised club administrators. Your club is the primary owner of your home club members' details and it is your responsibility to

- ◆ keep the information secure, and
- ◆ submit the relevant information to the ABF Masterpoint Centre.

It is important to keep your membership information on the ABF Masterpoint Centre up to date, as this determines your annual [affiliation fee to the NSWBA and the annual capitation fee to the ABF \(see explanation of this on page 2-3\)](#). Although you submit detailed members' information to the ABF Masterpoint Centre, you cannot download all of that information from the site, so it is imperative to maintain your own up to date database.

The NSWBA currently does not have access to your home club members' details. Peter Cox, the ABF National Marketing Officer, does have plans to extend the use of the ABF Masterpoint Centre's database of the bridge community, to allow both the ABF and state bodies to reach "end users". To enable this, it is now very important to enter each player's email address when you register a new player. While this is not yet a compulsory requirement, we do hope you will do so, to help us to help you and your members.

Congress Entry List

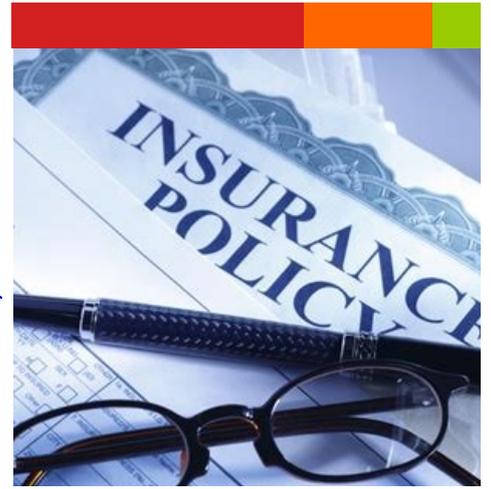
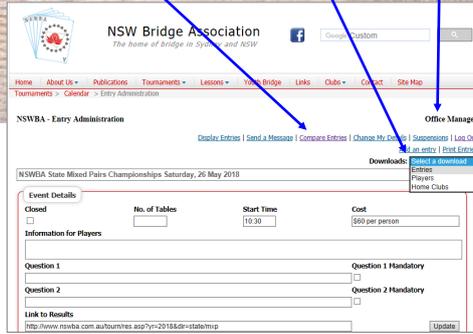
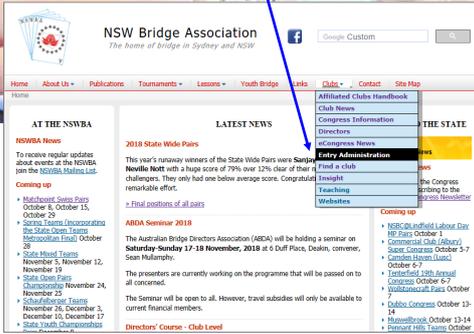
Congress entry lists are available from the Congress administration website - see the article on the right. The masterpoints of each player shown are actually up to date, i.e. accurate at time of download rather than at time of entry! Collecting this information each year will allow you to create a congress players' database, which in turn lets you identify players (including non-members) who have played in your congress in the past and may enter again if asked. Now think a little bit, have you made use of the previous year's entry to invite your past participants? 🇩🇪

Congress Administration

Pauline Gumby fulfils two vital roles for the NSWBA; she maintains the NSWBA website and is the Congress and State Events Co-ordinator. As such, she has developed an on-line administration system to help organisers manage the entries for Congresses and State Events. Based on the applications received and approved when she is preparing the tournament calendar, all congress organisers are issued a username and password.

Using the on-line entry system has many advantages.

- ◆ The time organisers spend processing entries is reduced to a minimum as most players just enter on-line. By using the administration system to add entries taken by phone or at the club, organisers can ensure that ALL their entries are kept up-to-date and in a single location.
- ◆ It automatically records each player's ABF number and the email address of the person making the entry.
- ◆ All entries are listed on the website and visible to the bridge community. Players perceive congresses with large entries as successful and are more likely to enter.
- ◆ Players entering after the venue's capacity has been reached will be automatically wait-listed.
- ◆ Players suspended by the Congress Discipline and Ethics Committee are prevented from entering.



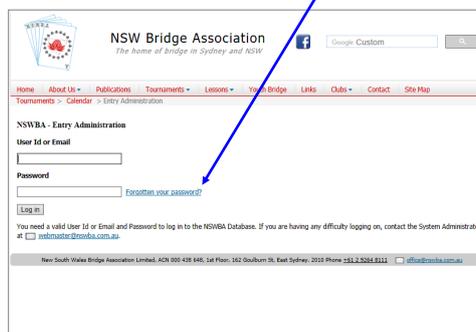
Additionally, congress organisers can log on via the administration system and perform the following tasks.

- ◆ Download the entry lists
- ◆ Set the entry fee
- ◆ Ask questions (mandatory or optional) of the entrants to collect information such as dietary restrictions
- ◆ Adjust the maximum number of tables the venue can accommodate
- ◆ Display additional information for the players on the entry page
- ◆ Open and close the entries. You control when you start to accept online entries. You can close entries if the congress fills up.
- ◆ Send an email to all entrants
- ◆ Compare the entry lists of 2 congresses. Compare your current entries with last year's to see who still hasn't entered. Or compare your entries with those of another congress to determine the likely impact of scheduling them both on the same weekend.
- ◆ Most importantly, download a list of all the entries including contact email addresses, ABF numbers and masterpoint holdings of all players as a CSV file. (The assigned Director can do this too.) The CSV file can subsequently be saved as an Excel spreadsheet.

There is some information that Pauline needs to check, so it cannot be changed by the organisers. This includes:

- ◆ The organiser's name.
- ◆ The name of the director.
- ◆ The congress flyer. The flyer needs to be emailed to [Pauline Gumby](mailto:Pauline.Gumby@nswba.com.au) and to the NSWBA Office. Pauline will double check all the details ensuring that it satisfies the Congress Conditions before uploading it to the website. The NSWBA Office will print out a few copies for notice board promotion, but it is the club's responsibility to mail/distribute sufficient copies of the flyer to other affiliated clubs.

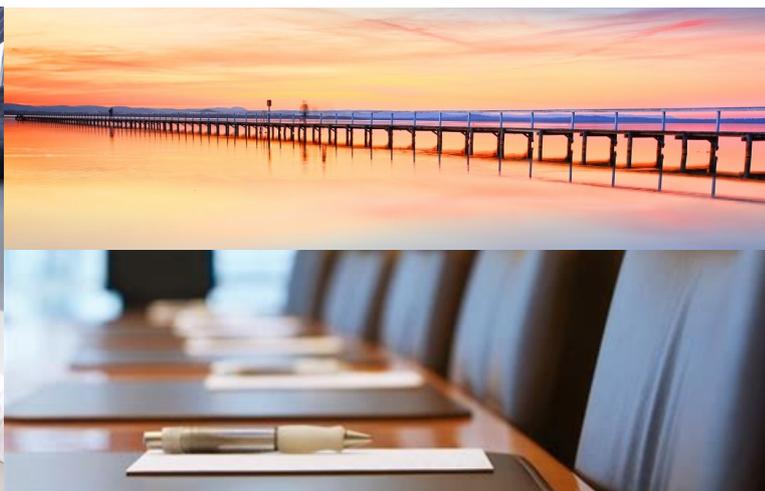
If you forget your password, you can simply go to [Entry Administration \(the login page\)](#) and click on the "Forgotten your password?" link. 



TBIB provides a full brokering service to the ABF, State Associations, Affiliated Clubs and members. Currently TBIB provides three main forms of insurance to the Association, and NSWBA affiliated bridge clubs are automatically covered under these policies. See the ABF website <http://www.abf.com.au/about-abf/insurances/> for full details. A quick summary of these policies follows.

Policy	What it covers and why it's important
Management Liability	This covers officers of the club from losses related to employment practices as well as corporate responsibility, management liability, etc.
Voluntary Workers Personal Accident	When volunteers are injured in the course of their work (or direct travel to and from work) for the club, the club is indemnified from loss and the worker is covered. Cover applies to all those hazards to which a covered person is exposed whilst actually engaged in voluntary work on behalf of the club.
Public Liability	The club is indemnified for paying damages if a member is injured or suffers a loss to their property while on the club's premises.

Affiliated clubs should ensure their committees, employees and volunteers are informed that these policies are in place. 



Reaching out to the regions

Instead of bringing the Regional Representatives to Sydney for a weekend, the NSWBA Council has decided to reach out to our clubs directly.

Zones and Regions

Administratively, NSW is divided into 4 zones (Metropolitan, Outer-Metropolitan, Northern and South/Western). Each zone elects a Zonal Councillor to represent them on the NSWBA Council, which meets in Sydney 9 times a year. To facilitate communication with our affiliated clubs, each zone is divided into 3-5 regions (there are 15 in total), each with its own Regional Representative. Because of considerations of time and distance, the [Regional Representatives](#) usually communicate via the Zonal Councillor, who reports at the Council Meeting. In the past, the NSWBA has also invited all Regional Representatives to join us annually in May or June in an attempt to create a more direct channel of communication. But is this the best way for the Council to communicate with the affiliated clubs? Can clubs express themselves effectively through the layers of the current structure? The Council felt a different approach would work better.

First Outreach Meeting

A group of NSWBA Councillors consisting of Richard Douglas, John McIlrath and Rob Ward was given the task of travelling to meetings with clubs, with the goal of improving communication at the regional level. Organised by the Outer Metropolitan Zonal Councillor, Alan Bustany, the first outreach meeting was held at the Central Coast Leagues Club Bridge Club (CCLCBC) on 18th April 2018. We were pleased to see 7 clubs sending a total of 10 representatives to attend the meeting. The Council has given careful attention to the topics being raised. While not claiming to have an answer to everything, the NSWBA will continue to consider these issues when making policies and supporting our clubs. What was discussed? Several clubs described facing similar challenges:

Attracting and Retaining Beginners & Players

- ◆ How can we attract and retain beginners?
- ◆ How do we help new players progress from supervised play to open competition?
- ◆ Will a “handicap” system work for beginners?
- ◆ Table numbers are going down, is there anything we can do?

A handicap system relies on all bridge clubs scoring every session by computer. All player’s scores are collated and used to rate every player in the Masterpoint system. That rating is used to generate a handicap which is applied to every pair’s raw score. A British system took 5 years to develop and the Council has decided to put this on hold for the moment. It may be considered in the future, probably in consultation with the ABF.

Decreasing table numbers and retaining players seem to be universal challenges for all bridge clubs. We hope the previous article about databases will suggest some new methods for you to attract new players and communicate better with your current ones.

Social vs Competitive Players

- ◆ Are these two markets pushing each other out?
- ◆ How should we handle these different clientele?

These two groups of players have very different attitudes towards the game, e.g. social players think the competitive players are too serious and no fun, while the competitive players regard their social opponents as too noisy and distracting. Balancing the needs of these two groups can be a problem. Some clubs mentioned that titles like “Grand National Open Teams” seem to put novice players off, and have come up with the idea of beautifying the titles e.g. “Future Champions” instead of “Novice & Restricted”.

Council will give some consideration to these idea and also welcomes any relevant input you may have.



Player Behaviour

- ◆ Slow play, bad table manners, problem players who ignore requests for changes in behaviour are also shared concerns.

The Council implemented the Congress Disciplinary Regulations at the beginning of the year, details of which are explained in our next article [“Discipline & Ethics”](#) on page 8. However these regulations only cover Congresses and like events, not club sessions. Club issues need to be dealt with by the club, with careful regard to its Constitution and the principles of natural justice. It’s a problem that must not be ignored - one obnoxious player can abuse half of your players on a single night. Players can accept bad scores, but they won’t come back if they have an unpleasant experience.

Premises

Some clubs that have acquired their own premises reported a strong sense of ownership and responsibility in their members. These clubs have shared their experiences with other clubs who are considering buying premises. Both the ABF and the NSWBA Councils understand that government support will be important for us to address issues like this. The ABF appointed David Wawn to be the Government Relations Officer late last year. The ABF provides low interest loans via the [James O’Sullivan Foundation](#) to clubs purchasing premises.

The Masterpoints Scheme

The Masterpoint scheme seems to be a “dark art” - too complicated and too difficult for many club MP secretaries, with the ABF’s Masterpoint Manual especially daunting to those who are new to the job. Educational Councillor Carol Sheldrake has taken on the project to create a simpler guide: “Masterpointing for Dummies”. This will not only explain the essentials of the Scheme, it will deal with setting up the right parameters in the various scoring programs. Carol has empathy for all club

masterpoints secretaries as she has been one herself.

Training of Directors and Teachers

Directing is much more than just movements; people skills are of paramount importance and scoring technology is constantly evolving. Tony Howes (NSWBA’s head of State Director Accreditation) and John McIlrath (the ABF’s National Director Development Officer) both run Director Training sessions in regional areas in NSW. These are best organised in consultation with your Zonal Councillor. See the [“Taking it to the Region”](#) article on page 8.

Running beginners’ courses is the most effective way of attracting new members to your club, so your teachers are some of your club’s most important assets. As the ABF’s National Teaching Coordinator, Joan Butts has been running Teacher Training Workshops around NSW for a number of years; the first was held in Taree in 2012. They are jointly funded by the ABF and the NSWBA, so talk to your Zonal Councillor if you want one in your region. The NSWBA Council is also considering how we can help the development of teachers in other ways, decreasing our reliance on Joan and ABF support.

The Outreach meeting was thought to be more productive and constructive than the Regional Representatives meeting previously held at the NSWBA. Clubs in the Outer Metropolitan Zone would like the NSWBA to have a meeting like this annually. The Council is pleased to see we are heading in the right direction and the task group is liaising with other regions to organise further meetings. 🇨🇦



Taking it to the region

Alan Bustany, the Zonal Councillor for Outer Metropolitan, invited John McIlrath, the National Director Development Officer, to conduct a Directors' Seminar on Wednesday 30th May 2018. 34 attendees were sent by clubs in the area.

Following the success of the Directors' Workshop at Dubbo on 29th June, Kaye Hart, the Zonal Councillor for South/Western, organised 2 more workshops for the directors in the area. These workshops were conducted by Tony Howes, the Head of NSW Director Accreditation, to acquaint new and experienced directors with the new laws as well as addressing other directing challenges. They were held in Albury in July and Wagga Wagga in August.

Any club can invite Tony Howes to conduct a directors' course. He charges \$350 for a one day course plus the cost of travel – either \$0.30 per km or the cost of an airfare. The NSWBA highly recommends you liaise with your [Regional Representative / Zonal Councillor](#) who can help you to bring several clubs together in the area.

Participation is encouraged for all directors in the area.

The NSWBA will provide financial support to the organising club as well as \$60 to attendees travelling over 100km to attend the workshop.

Detailed information on these subsidies and the relevant forms can all be found [here](#).

Please complete the Grant claim form - non-ABF Sponsored Programs form and return it to office@nswba.com.au. Collect up [individual travel subsidy claim forms](#) from attendees at the event and provide those to us also. 🇺🇸

Discipline & Ethics

The NSWBA's [Congress Disciplinary Regulations](#) came into force at the beginning of the year. They now allow the NSWBA to deal with both behavioural and ethical issues that occur at congresses run under its auspices, i.e. your congresses. If there is an incident at your congress, make sure it is reported officially to the NSWBA within 7 days, in accordance with Section 2 of the Regulations. Under the Clubs tab, follow the links to Congress Information, then Player Behaviour (at the bottom of the web-page). Stamping out unacceptable behaviour at the table is everybody's responsibility.

Reported breaches of acceptable behaviour are investigated and dealt with by a committee drawn from a [panel](#) representing each region in the state.

[The Congress Disciplinary and Ethics Committee](#) consists of up to 15 members, with a target composition of 2 from Sydney and 1 from every non-metropolitan region. The [current 2018 Committee](#) chaired by George Finikiotis was appointed by the NSWBA. Thereafter, nominations will be taken once every 3 years, beginning in 2018. If there is more than one nomination from a region, a poll will be held at the same time and in a manner similar to the election of NSWBA Zonal Councillors.

The State Wide Pairs

The State Wide Pairs is a one-session matchpoint pairs event that runs in your club during the first week of August. Red masterpoints at level B4s are awarded and paid for by the NSWBA. Dealing files and hands records are provided and there's a booklet providing a brief commentary on each deal. The event is scored across all participating clubs to determine the overall winners. There are many prizes (cash, Bridge Shop gift vouchers, certificates) and special prizes for players in Under-25, Under-50 and Under-100 masterpoint categories. Entry fee is only \$8 per pair. Results for the 2018 SWP are now available at <http://www.nswba.com.au/tourn/state/se.asp?Y=2018&E=swp>.

The SWP will be held from 29th July to 4th August next year. Why not schedule it for one of your regular sessions that week in 2019?

The Under 100 Masterpoint Pairs

This event has already started, but it's not too late to take part. See the documentation available at <http://www.nswba.com.au/tourn/state/se.asp?Y=2018&E=uhmp> for full details. Any regular club session in October can be converted into a UHMP session, but obviously one with a high number of <100 MP partnerships would be best. Or maybe convert a supervised duplicate into a UHMP session - half the field will get red masterpoints instead of blue. Club sessions require little extra effort from clubs.

There's also time to organise a local final. Feedback from clubs has suggested that limiting these events to 2 sessions on a Sunday caused problems. Many clubs could not easily access premises on a Sunday and many of the potential participants found 2 sessions too gruelling. So the big change in 2018 is to reduce the Finals to a single session and allow it to be played at any time during the week November 26 to December 2.

If you want to hold a club session and/or a Local Final, submit the appropriate form available on the UHMP website. Click the URL above. 🇺🇸