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## **PETANQUE AUSTRALIA LTD**

### **Final Report of the Organisational Review**

**Prepared by Landrow Logistics**

**29 November 2005**

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## Executive Summary

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- The organisational structure of the Board of Petanque Australia Ltd is appropriate but can be enhanced (see attachment 6).
- The Board is under-resourced and still has to build capacity in terms of delivering its objectives and timelines and this has caused frustrations and dislocation at times.
- The Board should always operate with the maximum permitted number of directors.
- The concept, and related practice, of portfolios for directors, together with high expectations in relation to responsibility and accountability for portfolio performance, should be reinforced.
- The relationship between State Leagues and the Board, and roles for and expectations of State Leagues, requires consideration in building the Petanque community, developing leadership, and for broadening the education and training base.
- Achievements of the Board of Petanque Australia Ltd over the past four years have been substantial, at a high level, progressive, future focused and underpinned by high standards of governance, including planning, organisation and documentation.
- Volunteer support is critical to the growth and development of the sport but will not be enough to deliver objectives against timelines without the emergence of paid support and this needs to be a focus of Board attention.
- Recognition of volunteer contribution to the development, maturing and sustainability of Petanque needs to be built in to its culture.
- There is a need for an overall communication strategy, including communication protocols, to accommodate all levels and stakeholders.
- There is evidence, at times, of a gap between the Board's aspirations for Petanque in Australia and those of elements of its constituency and the reduction of this gap needs to be the focus of planned attention.
- The Commissions concept is an appropriate delegation but Board action is required to foster its potential.
- An audit of Petanque Australia by-laws is required to ensure they meet the needs associated with the conduct, organisation and management of the sport.
- The objectives of appropriate recognition of Petanque as a sport should be pursued in the context of growing engagement of, and with, the broader Petanque community.

## Context

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The brief for this review (attachment 1) was developed out of concern of the directors of Petanque Australia Ltd (PA) to effectively and efficiently address and manage the multiple responsibilities it has under its charter as expressed in the constitution of PA and the range of documents, including planning and policy documents, that both define and guide the directions and operations of the sport in Australia, and set performance standards.

In broad terms, the context setting provided to this reviewer was one of a board finding it increasingly challenging to define its role and the role of directors and related Commissions and committees, and their chairs, in a significantly changing environment which needed more resources but relied very much on the volunteer model. The context was also recognised as one that set sound performance targets, in substance and in achievement timeframe, for the Board to meet.

## Progress

The sense of action, achievement and innovation of the PA board over the past four years is noteworthy, and especially so in its volunteer context. Another exercise, for another time, would be to quantify and dollar value this contribution. The experience of this reviewer would suggest that considering the scale and scope, and diversity, of the Petanque community in Australia, the result of such an exercise would be extraordinarily positive and reflect the extent of the commitment and contribution of the Board.

The President's Report 2003 - 2004 summarised an impressive list of achievements and initiatives which, when added to those of the previous two years, confirmed a sport on the move with a strong development, quality governance and operational improvement focus. There has been much achieved.

The President's Report also reflected the excitement for future prospects and gave immediate priority to challenges in sponsorship and the merger project but also emphasised a focus on enhanced communication between stakeholders which was, in the observation of this review, appropriate in recognising an emerging issue. It also, in a sense, put succinctly the contested nature of the Board's responsibilities, challenges and success:

*My report this year will focus on the progress of the Board in its efforts to manage this organisation's business to achieve our Business Plan. You will all remember the challenging goals that we, as a Board, set ourselves in 2003/2004. I have noticed that our work has caused some anxiety for some members with the amount of change. Always remember that the sport must move its image to that of a professionally organised operation if it is to attract the critical support needed for sustainability.*

*I feel proud of the way my fellow directors have worked to achieve this result. I am, however, frustrated by not having achieved our full plan. I hope to improve that performance in the coming year.*

## Governance

Clearly the Board in recent years has not been afraid of hard work and challenge, especially challenge in the interests of Petanque in Australia moving to a more professional footing as it expands involvement and progresses the goal of recognition as a sport. A scan of important policy, governance and practice documents - for example, the Business Plan, the Constitution of PA (February 2002), the Report on Organisation and Strategies (February 2002), the Petanque Australia Ltd Board Charter, the Strategic

Plan 2005-2009 (March 2005), and the introduction of Technical, Coaching and Umpires Commissions – reflects the capacity building intent, and success, of the Board as it confronts the challenges and implements the initiatives to do the job it set.

### **Capacity Building**

It is appropriate at this time to recognise the importance of *capacity building*. Organisations do not grow and flourish, in the medium and longer term (as opposed to short term gains), without building their capacity to harvest and apply resources, to develop communication media and standards, to acquire the skills and knowledge to create, plan, manage, implement and self-evaluate, to educate and to expand leadership. Building its own capacity, and capacity across member clubs, is clearly reflected in the documents and the practice. Examples of success, on various scales, are plentiful. There remains much to be done.

The 2004 - 2005 President's Report, while less expansive than that of 2003 - 2004, provided a strong sense of continued success and growth in various dimensions of Petanque, including the work of the Board and the Commissions. In his report the President observed that *the biggest challenge for Petanque Australia is the recognition of Petanque as a sport by our federal Government and finalising our association with Lawn Bowls, Bocce and Raffa*. In this context, the significance of the Strategic Plan 2005 – 2009 cannot be understated and any short term challenges to the plan, in terms of divergence or weakening, must be averted through appropriate communication, including education.

On a comparative basis there is evidence that there has been some slowing of board productivity in 2005 compared with the several preceding years. It is relative, of course, but noticeable.

### **Challenges**

That more remains to be done, as expressed above in the extract from the 2003 - 2004 President's Report, should not surprise and frustration about not achieving all that was planned needs to be seen against:

- the challenges set;
- the volunteer resource base;
- the priority attached to recognition as a sport;
- the range of views on just what status Petanque in Australia should have (the contested view of game v sport);
- the capacity of members to take on change and the different perceptions of the need for change and particularly the appropriate rate of change; and
- the capacity to educate members, the Petanque community and the broader community in the context of competing demands for initiatives.

These issues are, essentially, management and planning tasks that will be increasingly addressed and minimised as elements of the mix of Petanque governance and management in Australia develop and mature, and the benefits of effort to date come on line and are seen and used in the every day practical life of Petanque. This will happen, in time, but not without continued capacity building.

**In summary**, this review operated against a backdrop of:

- impressive Board achievements 2002 through 2005;
- impressive initiatives in improving governance and positioning Petanque in terms of its quest for recognition as a sport;
- considerable success in building capacity for improvement in systems, including communication, documentation, policy setting, planning, and management; and
- some slowing in Board activity in the latter part of 2005 compared to the preceding two or three years;
- an under resourced Board that set itself a very busy schedule with a future focus in which change was a given; and
- some challenge to the Board's change focus.

## **Methodology**

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The informing sources for this review included:

- interviews/conversations with persons nominated by PA (attachment 2)
- document scans (attachment 3)
- website scans

The total of interviews was 17 and of these four were face to face. The interviewees included Board directors, Commission Chairs, State League Presidents and others.

The Draft of the Review Report was the subject of a PA Board meeting 12 November 2005.

## **The Board of Petanque Australia Ltd**

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The outline brief for this review suggested that the role definition for the Board of PA could be inadequate. The review does not support this suggestion, at least on the documented evidence. Indeed, between the Constitution, the Report on Organisation and Strategies for Petanque Australia, the Petanque Australia Ltd Board Charter, and the stated purpose, vision and mission set out in the Strategic Plan 2005 – 2009, the role and responsibilities of the Board cannot be misunderstood.

Some interviewees expressed confusion about the role of the Board and whilst this is acknowledged, this is more a matter of communication (Board problem) and/or inadequate efforts made by some to reach an understanding of this role (not a Board problem). It is certainly not a notable deficiency of the operation of the Board itself and clarity about the role of the Board is something that can be immediately addressed. It is, after all, a published role, and a collective role.

The significant majority of interviewees made it clear that the Board has done an excellent job with its limited resources, far greater than in previous administrations. Few, if any, doubted the commitment of Board members or the generosity of their time. In particular there was widespread recognition and acknowledgement of the extensive, and some would assess as outstanding, support made available through the office of the PA Secretary. There was qualification about the productivity of the Board in recent months.

The more evident criticism of the Board was associated with:

- policies that changed the nature of the game with the emphasis on a more professional approach;
- the rate of change;
- the insurance issue;
- the structure of the Board;
- the roles of directors (as opposed to the role and responsibilities of the Board);
- a view that a mass of electronic communication did not mean good communication; and
- dissatisfaction with the nature and operation of the Commissions.

The first three points above may be the subject of additional communication but they are givens in the sense that the Board has clearly stated and communicated its views on moving to a more professional basis for the sport; if it doesn't move in this direction it would be quite irresponsible in the context of its stated goals and objectives and what it has laid before its members. The final two points will be considered later in this report.

In relation to the structure of the Board it is noted that the Constitution provides for six directors. For a number of years the Board has, in fact, operated with four members, each of them Victorian based. There are a number of reasons why this should not continue:

- there is too much expected of few;
- by not having the maximum number of directors opportunities for leadership development and succession are not be maximised;
- the breadth and, perhaps, depth of debate and discussion is less expansive than it might be; and
- representation is not national.

The public expectations of roles and responsibilities for directors are set out in the Annual Reports; that is, the published roles (attachment 4). The roles of directors are substantial with two directors having multiple portfolios. This situation is not sustainable both from a shared responsibility point of view, and workload.

With a Constitution providing for six directors, and in the context of an ambitious development program, the capacity of the Board has been understated; it should be at full numerical strength – now.

The resource base the Board currently operates, in the assessment of this reviewer, enjoys the benefit of the generous contribution of the Secretary of PA through use of his office facilities and systems, and staff. This in no way diminishes the personal and other contributions of other Board members. But it does need to be recognised that a significant part of the building of organisational capacity in PA over the past four years has been attributable to access to the organisational capacity of the PA Secretary's work office. This is, of course, a benefit to PA and Petanque generally. But it is not a sustainable situation and the Board of PA has a responsibility to address this matter.

There was no evidence of Board self-evaluation.

## Communication

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An important element in the success of any organisation is the quality of its communication, particularly with the key stakeholders. There can be no doubt that communication is taken seriously by the PA Board and the evidence shows the necessary day-to-day governance and promotional communication is attended to diligently and purposefully with the application of considerable resources. There is a lot of communication.

The review did, however, identify two common issues constituents had with PA communication:

- it was prolific, perhaps in the extreme, in both occurrence and volume; and
- it was often perceived that there did not seem to be a priority in what was forwarded; that is, the amount of communication was often described as 'overwhelming' with no guidance as to the relative importance of material.

In this sense, for many, PA electronic communication was less than enthusiastically embraced and, in fact, created the opposite response. This view of communication was across the constituency, not isolated, to the point that a continuance of the current approach would be detrimental to the communication strategy and alienate PA from some of its constituency.

One element of communication of concern to this reviewer, as suggested by interviewees, was what seemed to be a break down in protocol associated with use of electronic communication. This occurred in at least three ways:

- the on-forwarding of emails from recipients to those whom the author may not have had any intention, or desire, to share the information;
- the on-forwarding of emails to those who should not have access to the particular information or discussion regardless of author indifference or permission; and
- the use of language, position and style in emails that would not be considered appropriate in any circles.

There is a clear need for a communication strategy to be developed by PA and modeled to the clubs and others. Communication should be looked at in its widest meaning to encompass communication between key stakeholders and promotion.

## State Leagues

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The Report on Organisation and Strategies for PA in 2002 attributed a significant role to State Leagues in the management and development of Petanque. At the time, and perhaps now, the attributed role might have exceeded League capacity but, nevertheless, the Report seemed to be on the mark.

This review heard from a number of interviewees that the State Leagues were, in effect, on the margin and were on the 'outside looking in' with no real role. This may be the case in some States, and there may be some basis for feeling disenfranchised given that State Leagues are not mentioned in the Constitution. But to suggest that there is not an important role for the Leagues does not stand up.

The Organisational Report identified these key roles for the State Leagues:

- support for PA's Business Plan
- adopting their own State Business Plan
- adopting the PA By-Laws
- coordinating, fostering and encouraging their Affiliate clubs
- communicating with PA
- electing office bearers mirroring those of PA
- liaising with state government, sports ministry and other bodies
- seeking sponsorship
- coordinating with PA a tournament plan
- promoting the sport to the public.

Since this time other responsibilities have been added to the role of the State Leagues so there is no question about their significance or the importance of their role in Petanque development if effectively developed and managed.

On occasions it was suggested to the review that the issue of the status of State Leagues would be enhanced if the State League Presidents were directors of PA. Further, it was suggested that the presence of State League Presidents on the Board of PA would enhance the performance of the PA Board.

Constitution aside, the review does not support these suggestions on the basis that:

- the evidence suggests that there is much work to be done in building capacity and ability in the State organizations, and developing some generic standards of acceptable performance, without diverting leadership to another task and level; and
- the functioning and servicing of the PA Board will not be enhanced by expanded numbers beyond six even if it were facilitated by a Constitutional change.

The review does support a higher level of engagement and direct contact between PA and the State Leagues, particularly in terms of assisting with the essential capacity building that must take place at the state and member club level. This engagement ought to also be seen as an opportunity to develop leadership at the State and member club level and to broaden the base for future national leadership. State Leagues must accept, and demonstrate through practice, the importance of their role in promoting the development of new affiliate clubs and in assisting to develop the capability and sustainability of affiliate clubs.

## Commissions

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The concept of the Commissions, particularly in relation to policy development, is sound and necessary. This does not mean the concept has not been without its trials. For a PA Board operating in a volunteer context with a massive work load, delegation in key areas - especially where essential, rather than generic, knowledge and skills are required - represents good management.

The review found that there was some dissatisfaction with elements of the operation of Commissions. In particular there were views about a lack of consultation within and between Commissions, and slippage in progressing papers put to the Board by Commission chairs.

There was some conjecture over the status, and the role, of the Technical Commission. The review, in scanning the documents, and particularly Policy No 1.1.0.0 (attachment 5) which gives very clear guidance on policy development, and the role of the Technical Commission, could find no basis for this conjecture. It is a Commission which is absolutely complementary to the aim of good governance and to the achievement of the aims associated with recognition as a sport and to the general development of appropriate systems and policies.

The Commissions have important, particular and delegated roles. There can be no confusion about these roles if the available material related to their roles is considered. There is clearly a need for the PA Board/President to take the initiative and bring together the Commission Chairs to progress the effectiveness of their contribution. Similarly, there is a need for the PA Board to have wider education/information about the Commissions in general, but especially so in relation to the Technical Commission.

On the subject of delegation, the theory of the present Board structure with the attributed roles and responsibilities for directors, Commissions and their Chairs, and sub-committees is sound and practical. The Board would be rendered less effective and focused too much on operational aspects without this delegation. That there might be issues about the effectiveness of this delegation in various contexts does not negate the appropriateness of the delegation. That is, other factors, for example individual capacity and level of support, may be the determinants of effectiveness rather than the delegation, or the Commission structure, itself.

This review strongly supports the notion of genuine delegation from the Board, particularly in operational matters.

## **Leadership, Resources, Education and Training**

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One of the challenges for sports organisations based almost exclusively on volunteer support is having in place the quality of leadership necessary to achieve aims and the aspirations. It is a challenge for the moment, but far more of a challenge in terms of future integrity and growth.

The Strategic Plan 2005 – 2009, aside from demonstrating higher level leadership, highlights some elements of the relationship between leadership, education and training as a sport moves to professional recognition. This relationship is a given and whilst some might see it as 'not for them', in the interests of the development of the sport the Board must move along this path. What will be very important in this is putting in place the accessible information and education to the broad Petanque constituency about purpose and benefit.

A key issue to be faced by PA, particularly in terms of resources to carry forward its intentions, is the extent to which it will continue to rely on volunteerism in the progress of its own work. Notwithstanding the contribution of the current Board members, and in particular the Secretary, sustainability in the medium to longer term will be a product of some element of paid support, perhaps in the form of an Executive Officer. Initial reactions might be that this is something that cannot be funded. The exercise needs to be done, in a planned way, to evaluate how such support might be funded, including self funding. It will most likely also be linked to increased priority to obtain significant sponsorship for Petanque.

Paid support would change the quality, nature and direction of Board and director's work, promote the growth and recognition of the sport, enhance communication and action, facilitate the development of broader leadership in Petanque and generally provide a positive environment. Its significance should not be understated.

### **State Leagues and clubs**

Reference has been made elsewhere in this report (11) to the importance of State Leagues developing their own management capacity, including skills, and the priority that should be attached to this work. One aspect of this priority which must be firmly at the forefront of the State Leagues leadership is developing and implementing plans to educate, encourage and support clubs in terms of building their capacity to mirror preferred practice evident at State League level.

State Leagues have a clear obligation to in various ways nurture their affiliate clubs and PA is entitled to apply performance criteria in this regard when making its own assessment of the contribution of State Leagues to the sustainability and growth of the sport in Australia.

## Recognition

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Petanque is developing largely on the basis of volunteers. In some ways it retains an element of 'cottage industry' and aspects of this ought never be lost in the overall continuing portrait of Petanque. The sport is comparatively in its infancy in Australia which does provide a good opportunity for a system of volunteer recognition to be planned and introduced and this ought to be on the basis of consultation between PA and the State Leagues. There is an opportunity to not only provide recognition, but to build collegiality through a recognition system.

## Recommendations

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### In relation to the PA Board

- 1 That the Board, as a matter of priority, extends the number of directors to the maximum allowed under the Constitution.
- 2 That the composition of directors reflects, as far as is possible, the fact that it is a Board representing a national constituency.
- 3 That the principle of directors, whilst being members of a team, having designated, clear portfolios for which they accept both accountability and responsibility is affirmed by the Board.
- 4 That given 3 (above) and the volunteer context, the whole Board does not meet on a face-to-face basis as frequently and reduces its operational role and gears up its governance, development and policy functions.
- 5 That the Board defines itself as a leadership team, demonstrating and modeling the leadership qualities associated with successful organisations, and building the capacity for higher level leadership.
- 6 That the Board clearly defines and then applies its communication protocols between directors, and between it and its constituents.
- 7 That the organisational structure attached to this report informs the development of director's roles and responsibilities.
- 8 That a process of formal self evaluation be included in the Board's annual activities.
- 9 That a priority, with related planning, be established to develop and implement support through an employed executive officer.
- 10 That the PA By-Laws are reviewed to ensure they are appropriate and current.
- 11 That the Petanque Australia Ltd Board Charter be adopted.

### In relation to State Leagues

- 12 That the Board confirms the role of State Leagues and appraises the capacity of State Leagues to meet their identified key roles with a view to assisting in the building of that capacity over time.
- 13 That a PA Board Advisory Group of State League Presidents or nominees, chaired by the PA Vice President be established.
- 14 That State Leagues attach a priority to building leadership teams at state and member club levels and are assisted, within its resources, by PA in this endeavour.

### **In relation to Commissions**

- 15 That the three Commissions be retained and the Chairs of these Commissions be known as the National Directors of the relevant Commission.
- 16 That the roles of, and the relationship and communication between, the Commissions be affirmed by the PA Board following a consultation process with, and between, the Commission Chairs and the PA board or its representative.
- 17 That Commissions, through their Chairs, relate to a director, or directors, as determined by the Board.

### **In relation to Communication**

- 18 That a communication strategy be developed to service member clubs that provides them with options in relation to the amount of information they receive electronically without reducing their ability to access information.
- 19 That an electronic communication protocol be established for the Petanque community that is accepted as modeling appropriate use of the media and that this be built into by-laws.
- 20 That the Board looks to providing promotional and other templates to the State Leagues for advancing their own capabilities and those of their affiliated clubs.

### **In relation to Leadership, Resources, Education and Training**

- 21 That PA, working with member clubs and State Leagues, builds an environment which has a focus on building leadership capacity.
- 22 That PA applies resources to investigating the feasibility of introducing a paid officer to assist PA in managing its work load and in achieving its objectives.
- 23 That PA develop and implement a stakeholder communication plan in relation to any future major change initiatives.

### **In relation to Recognition**

- 24 That PA, in consultation with member clubs and the State Leagues, develops an appropriate recognition program to recognise contributions to the development and support of Petanque in Australia.

### **In relation to implementing recommendations**

- 25 That a facilitated whole day workshop be conducted for the post-review PA Board to prioritise and plan the implementation of adopted recommendations.

**Review Brief**

## Petanque Australia Review 2005

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### The brief

The work of this review is to assess, and to make improvement recommendations about, the definition, effectiveness, efficiency and clarity of:

- the organisational structure of the board, commissions and sub-committees of Petanque Australia, including roles, relationships, responsibilities and accountability; and
- the communication processes to and between the stakeholders, including the aforementioned and State Leagues and members.

### Intended outcomes

Recommendations to the board of PA of changes in organisational structure, key roles, responsibilities and communication processes that will enhance clarity of purpose, process, accountability and cohesiveness and accelerate the capacity of the organisation to be recognised as a sport and to expand the sport.

### Process

The review process includes:

- a series of face to face (as appropriate), telephone, and electronic or mail interviews/research (perhaps multiple interviews with some), with key stakeholders, including board members, commission chairs, a sample of club and State League presidents, to gain a comprehensive view of the range of thinking about the issues;
- review of written material, including that already made available and other material the might emerge as potentially useful in assisting the review process;
- facilitated half day workshop with key stakeholders as determined in conjunction with the board to 'test' some of the emerging issues and ideas and work towards some consensus;
- draft of an interim report for the consideration of the board; and
- final report with recommendations, including implementation strategies.

### Timeline

This work should be completed by mid October provided the stakeholders are available.

### Exclusions

The review process **will not** include any review of the PA Constitution.

**Interview List**

## **Interviewees**

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Attachment 2 has been deleted for Privacy reasons.

## Document Scans

## **Document Scans**

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Petanque Australia Ltd Board Charter

Petanque Australia Ltd Constitution

Petanque Australia Ltd Business Plan

Petanque Australia Ltd By-Laws

Petanque Australia Ltd Annual Reports 2003-2004, 2004-2005

Petanque Australia Ltd Strategic Plan 2005 -2009

Petanque Australia Report on Organisation & Strategies 2002

Petanque Australia Ltd Coaching, Umpires and Technical Commissions Overviews

Petanque Australia Ltd Policy Development Policy 2005

Federation Internationale de Petanque et Jeu Provençal – Internal Regulations (By-Laws)

Website scan

## Board Structure

**PETANQUE AUSTRALIA LTD**  
**BOARD STRUCTURE AND PORTFOLIOS**

**PRESIDENT/CHAIRMAN**

*Ken Field*

Meeting protocol and conduct  
 Meeting agenda  
 National Harmony  
 Leadership Capacity Building  
 Education and Training  
 Government, Peak Body Liaison  
 Funding and Sponsorship  
 Growth of Sport  
 Ambassadorial  
 FIPJP

**Director Administration**

*Iris Murray*

Governance  
 Administration  
 Communication  
 Agenda and Minutes  
 Notices  
 Executive Support

**Director Finance**

*Judith Armstrong*

Membership  
 Financial Records/Systems  
 Financial Reports  
 Budgets and Forecasting  
 Statutory Compliance  
 Fees and Levies

Audit Sub Committee

**Vice President**

*Chinka Steel*

Club Development  
 State Leagues AG  
 Leadership Capacity Building  
 Sponsorship  
 Marketing  
 Growth of Sport  
 Dispute Resolution

**Director Policy and Development**

*Warren Sowter*

Education and Training  
 Policy Development  
 Policy Documentation  
 Sport Recognition  
 Policy Implementation  
 Technical Commission

Risk Management Sub Committee

**Director Operations**

*Vacant*

Delivery of the Sport  
 Tournaments  
 Player Development  
 Umpire Commission  
 Coaching Commission