

Bush Orienteering Committee report – June 2012

In general, the bush programme appears to have gone well so far this year (although for various reasons I haven't experienced many events in person). Most State Series events have had attendances (less interstate people) in the upper 100s, towards the top end of what has been typical over the last 15 years. There has also been a pleasing number of relative newcomers with numbers on the moderate and easy courses (7, 8, 9) the highest for at least a decade.

The Melbourne BushO series has also got off to a good start, with about 130 present at the Eaglemont event. Again many of these were regular newcomers.

The challenge is always to develop a program which will satisfy the more experienced people while being attractive to newcomers. The Melbourne BushO concept, and having a window where the weekend program concentrates on it, is good, but a break of more than two months in State Series-level events is perhaps a bit too long.

Issues which will need to be considered in the near future include:

2013 Fixtures

Our main challenge will be to find clubs willing to organise State Series level events in a year when we are organising Easter, particularly earlier in the season. That said, I think we should aim at a State Series program of similar strength to this year, aiming at around 7 events plus the championships. This would require most clubs to organise one event at this level, with perhaps one or two of the larger clubs doing two (or 1 1/2, with one being shared with another club). I imagine clubs will be keenest to organise events in the second half of the year once Easter is over. However, I think we need to have a State Series event before Easter, to be a 'test event' for Easter for both competitors and organisers, and would want one (perhaps two) more before the end of May.

Most urgently, we need to find venues and organisers for the three Victorian Championships. I would suggest that, as in 2012, we should organise two events on a weekend in September (either the Middle and Long, or Sprint and Long). There is no reason why Easter maps could not be used for this – this is regularly done in other states (alternatively, if it is thought that a 5-month break is too short, it could be done in 2014). Another existing map whose future use will have to be thought about (if it is as good as the advance publicity suggests it is) is the new area being used by AW in November (perhaps a Vic Champs, or NOL/WOC trials in 2014?). BK had previously indicated some interest in the 2013 Vic Long Championships but I am not certain whether this interest remains (I understand the area they had in mind has been heavily logged).

SA have indicated that they are likely to organise SA Championships in 2013 on the Queen's Birthday weekend in Broken Hill, and will be actively seeking interstate involvement. If this happens we should be cautious what we schedule against it. We would also want to place a 'remote' weekend somewhere in the calendar, either at Kooyoora/Korong or in NE Victoria (in the past we had an informal policy of using these areas in alternate years).

State Series courses

With the increased numbers of competitors in the oldest age groups, there has been increasing comment this year that course 6 is too long (and sometimes too physical – in particular, they have trouble with erosion gully scrambling) for those age groups. There does seem to be demand for a shorter course than currently exists on the program – whether as an extra course or with some reshuffling elsewhere to keep the existing number of courses. A more detailed proposal will be developed during the year for implementation in 2013.

The Committee (always loosely defined) has not met in 2012 so far. An in-person meeting is always useful to give issues fuller discussion than is possible by e-mail; the Victorian Championships weekend seems a good opportunity for one.

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