

Communications and Marketing Officer Report – September 2013

Orienteering Victoria Board Meeting

2014 BushO Fixtures Guide

I have continued production work on an 8 page A5 full-colour booklet - 2014 BushO Fixtures Guide. I have received dates from Laurie Niven for all 2014 Championship, State Series, MelBushO, Schools and Sprint Series events, while chasing details for relevant Bendigo, Eureka and Albury/Wodonga events. I am aiming for a December publication date, to coincide with the OA/OV magazine mailout. I will also add information on OV membership and OV/Club contact details. Peter Cusworth is away in Europe for the month of October, but we hope to have a skeleton format worked out before then, which can be completed in November as details are finalised.

Weekly Bulletin

The weekly email bulletin distribution list is now nearly 950. About a third are opened and, of those, a third are clicked on. It's never the same third! 300 active recipients is probably all we can reasonably expect at this stage.

OV Membership

I have prepared a promotional document outlining the benefits of Orienteering Victoria membership, in particular the entry discounts applicable to members (\$70 off bush events and \$80 off park/street events).

Making Events Family Friendly

Back in December, I outlined my recruitment strategy, suggesting that **families with young children** should be our primary target. However, we need to provide the right type of event for them if membership numbers are to grow. A regular supply of **come-and-try-it events**, such as MelBushO, will provide clubs with new members, and those new members can be looked to for assistance with events in the years ahead. Orienteering must be unique among sports in that all organisers are themselves competitors, and most competitors provide help with event organisation.

However, we are missing a trick by not making our major events as inclusive as possible. Events of State Series level and above can still provide for newcomers, especially on price. Even Championship events should have **low-cost, easy non-competitive courses** for family members. No extra work need be incurred by clubs to offer this. Our sport can provide for all ages and abilities at the same time. Easter 2013 had four popular EOD courses at \$10 per head and a free string course (Belinda Dale reports that there were more string course entries than in any other class!) The Scottish 6 Day 2013 had a similar arrangement and attracted 350 extra competitors. The JK 2013 event in England did likewise for the same price and had 250 more people. Many of these entries were from people who were accompanying more competitive family members, who may not otherwise have attended at all.

Timing, location and price are all important to families. Weekend, daytime events within a reasonable distance and at reasonable cost will always be popular. Clubs should bear this in mind when outlining their annual programmes. The MelBushO series in 2014, extended to 9 events and staged every two weeks between May and August, will help us retain newcomers. That way there is always another introductory event coming up. These events, as staged so successfully in 2013, provide four courses at low-cost, with easy access and basic organisation requirements for clubs.

Staging Events

How to encourage more helpers from within your club ranks? Well, I nearly joined a second Melbourne club the other day when I noticed they were giving event helpers a **free run**. Club membership is much cheaper than event entry! Clubs can experiment with free run or half price offers to those members who assist in the staging of events. Give members a good reason to volunteer!

Dennis Mews
Communications and Marketing Officer
17th September 2013