



NEWCASTLEBRIDGE

The Newcastle Bridge Club Incorporated ABN 16 405 302 022

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

For meeting held Tuesday 13/08/2024



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COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Location:	Newcastle Bridge Club	Date:	13 August 2024
Chair:	Jeff Biddlecombe	Time:	1:30pm

1. Apologies: Angela Jeffs, Ken Wilks

2. Minutes of previous meeting dated 11 June 2024

3. Correspondence

- 3.1. Email from Tomaree Bridge Club re Congress on 7-8 September
- 3.2.

4. Financials

- 4.1. Treasurer's report
- 4.2. P & L

5. Business arising from correspondence and previous minutes

- 5.1. Potluck Partners
- 5.2. June Congress – report (Vincia)
- 5.3. Beginners lessons – report (Jeff)

6. New Business

- 6.1. Suggestion box contents
- 6.2. ABF – expected cost increases (refer email from Ken)
- 6.3. Refreshments – request for special items (GF biscuits, herbal teas)
- 6.4. AGM – date?
- 6.5. Private use of club (request)
- 6.6. GNOTs – feedback?
- 6.7. Congresses 2025 (including date for Novice / Restricted Congress)
- 6.8. Christmas party?

7. General Business

- 7.1.

8. Notes for future meeting agendas

- 8.1. Honour Boards – update after Club Pairs (3/11)

9. Next meeting: Tuesday, 10 September at 1:30pm



The Newcastle Bridge Club Incorporated ABN 16 405 302 022

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES: August 2024

Location:	Newcastle Bridge Club	Date:	13/08/2024
Chair:	Jeff Biddlecombe	Time:	1:30 pm
Attendees:	Jeff Biddlecombe, Les Brien, Julie Butel (minute taker), Caroline Carey, Christine Chandler, Ailsa Kearney, Vincia Martin, Peter Peterson.		

AGENDA ITEM

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Jeff opened the meeting at 1:30 pm.

Apology: Angela Jeffs, Ken Wilks

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (11/06/2024)

Vincia moved that the minutes of the previous meeting be accepted and Ailsa seconded the motion. Jeff then signed the minutes as a true record of the meeting.

3. CORRESPONDENCE:

3.1. Email from Tomaree Bridge Club re Congress on 7-8th September.

Action: Congress brochure has been posted on the noticeboard.

4. FINANCIALS (Les)

4.1. P & L and Treasurer's Report (to end of July) – see attached

Les tabled the P & L for the period ending July 2024.

The YTD result is a profit of \$505 compared \$128 for last year.

An average of \$800 per month is being earned in interest on our 2 term deposits over their current terms. The actual amounts will be brought to account when the deposits mature.

Council rates are \$10863.09 this year compared to \$10367.06 last year. However, the amount is still lower than for 2022 which was \$11097.06.

Yet another change in electricity providers has been made due to a substantial increase. The current provider is Pacific Blue.

The yearly information is now with Lambourne Partners to prepare the 2024 financials.

Peter moved that the reports be accepted which was seconded by Christine.

4.2. P & L and Treasurer's Report (to end of June) – see attached

Les had prepared a report and P & L for the July meeting which was cancelled.

The P & L showed a loss of \$2732 for the year ended 30 June 2024 compared to a loss of \$676 in the previous year. A number of factors impacted the bottom line.

AGENDA ITEM

5. BUSINESS ARISING FROM CORRESPONDENCE / PREVIOUS MINUTES

5.1. Potluck Partners

The first session was held on July and attended by 18 members. Approximately half of the attendees were experienced players who participated as mentors. Most participants gave positive feedback and indicated they would come again. The next session is scheduled for Sunday 25th August.

It is proposed that the event be held approximately every 3 months. However, the level of interest will be gauged at the August session.

5.2. June Congress

The 2025 Open Congress has been booked for 14-15 June, with Ronnie Ng confirmed as director.

Vincia reported that the 2024 was breakeven.

5.3. Beginners' Lessons

The next set of Beginners' lessons will commence 5th September (details are on the website). At this stage, there are 12 names for the day session, but only 4 for the evening session (which is insufficient for the session to run).

Jeff reported that the numbers are similar to those for the lessons earlier in the year, with approximately 6 of those continuing to attend the supervised play session.

The lessons continue to be a good way to introduce new players to the club and Jeff's continuing commitment to this initiative was acknowledged.

Caroline agreed to post the details of the next lessons on Facebook.

6. NEW BUSINESS

6.1. Suggestion box

No suggestions were received since the last meeting.

6.2. ABF Newsletter – cost increases (extract attached)

The latest ABF Newsletter detailed cost increases that we can expect in the next 3 years for capitation and Masterpoint fees. This follows the significant increases received in the last 12 months from the ABF and NSWBA (which means that our subscription fees are no longer sufficient to cover these costs).

It was agreed to increase membership subscription fees for Home members from \$35 to \$40, effective when subscriptions fall due at the end of 2024. At this stage, it is not proposed to increase the fees for Pensioner or Associate members.

The reasons for the increase will be tabled at the AGM in September by the Treasurer.

6.3. Refreshments – request for non-standard items

Some members have requested that the Club provide additional refreshment items to those currently available (e.g. gluten free biscuits, herbal teas). After discussion it was agreed that the Club will provide refreshments that meet the requirements of the majority of members. However, those with special dietary needs or preferences should bring their own.

6.4. AGM – date

It was agreed to hold the 2025 AGM on Saturday 28th September.

Action: Julie to draft an agenda and notice for Committee approval

AGENDA ITEM

6.5. Member request for private use of Club

A request was received from a member to use the Club facilities for a private function. The member who made the request has since made alternative arrangements. The issue was discussed with no consensus being reached. However, it was agreed not to rule out private use of the Club but that it would be considered by the Committee if a request was made subject to there not being any issues with our insurance.

6.6. GNOTs

It was agreed that it had been good to run the **qualifying events** on the Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning sessions as it enabled more members to be involved in the event.

The Regional Final hosted by Newcastle Bridge Club was well attended (24 tables). Most feedback received was favourable. However, comments were received that the fold up chairs were uncomfortable for any length of time.

Action: It was agreed to purchase 8 more chairs (Ken Wilks)

Catering at the end of the event went well. However, because all tables were in use for card play, there was nowhere suitable to set up the drinks.

Action: Julie to research a trolley that would be suitable for drinks

The Club is having difficulty getting teams to play in the Final because it is an online event over 3 days.

Action: Provide this feedback to the ABF (Ken Wilks)

6.7. 2025 Novice/Restricted Congress

Vincia proposed that the event be held on Sunday 6th April. This date avoids school holidays, Anzac Day and other congresses on the 2025 draft calendar.

Action: Ken Wilks to request the date.

6.8. Christmas Party

It was agreed to aim to hold the event on Saturday 7th December. The event will follow the same format used in 2024 (menu, etc). Subcommittees will be set up to plan the catering and entertainment.

7. GENERAL BUSINESS: No general business was raised.

8. NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 3rd September at 1:30pm

9. MEETING CLOSE: The meeting concluded at 3:10pm

CONFIRMED TO BE A TRUE RECORD OF THE MEETING

Moved by:	VINCIA MARTIN
Seconded by:	AUSA KADAMU
Signed by:	GF Redbank
Date:	3.9.24

Newcastle Bridge Club – Treasurer's Report for August 2024 meeting

P & L for month of July 2024 shows a result of \$505 profit compared to a profit of \$128 last year. See excel file P&L months of 25 year, sheet JULY 24. An estimate has been made for depreciation at the rate of \$500 per month. The actual amount will be processed by the Accountants at year end. Please note that interest is being earned on the term deposits of approximately \$950 per month, at least up until 31st December 2024. Note that one of the deposits is for 12 months and the other is for 6 months – see below. The actual amounts will be brought to account when the deposits mature. The NCC rates this year are \$10863.09 compared to last year's amount of \$10367.42; a rise of 4.8%. However, this year is still lower than the amount in 2022 of \$11097.06. Yet another change in electricity providers because of a substantial increase in rates; from Sumo to Pacific Blue.

I have taken the yearly information to Lambourne Partners to prepare the 2024 financials, and I will advise when they are ready for the Committee to consider and adopt.

Also see **Table Fees** exercise showing table fees to end of the month; a weekly average; and an estimate for the year.

Funds at end of July:

Cheque account: \$13604

Online saver account: \$10471

Greater Bank Term Deposits:

\$69997 for 12 months at 5.10% pa (matures 10th January 2025)

\$88825 for 6 months at 5.05% pa (matures 29th December 2024)

Newcastle Bridge Club

12 Young Road
Broadmeadow 2292

Profit & Loss [With Last Year]

July 2024

	This Year		Last Year	TY - LY
	TY		LY	
Income				
Competitions				
Weekend Club Events	\$120.00		\$184.00	-\$ 64.00
Memberships				
Subscriptions	\$35.00		\$50.00	-\$ 15.00
Table Fees				
Monday Supervised Play	\$904.00		\$610.00	\$ 294.00
Monday Afternoon	\$1,042.00		\$1,004.00	\$ 38.00
Tuesday Morning	\$2,054.00		\$1,808.00	\$ 246.00
Tuesday Night	\$858.00		\$652.00	\$ 206.00
Wednesday	\$680.00		\$512.00	\$ 168.00
Thursday Morning	\$1,922.00		\$1,494.00	\$ 428.00
Friday	\$1,138.00		\$820.00	\$ 318.00
Saturday	\$906.00		\$496.00	\$ 410.00
Total Table Fees	\$9,504.00		\$7,396.00	\$2,108.00
Board Dealing	\$228.00		\$154.50	\$ 73.50
Total Income	\$9,887.00		\$7,784.50	\$2,102.50
Expenses				
Card Dealing	\$136.00		\$88.00	\$ 48.00
Cleaning	\$1,155.00		\$1,443.75	-\$ 288.75
Consumables	\$413.86		\$109.89	\$ 303.97
Printing, Stationery & Postage	\$74.08		\$37.05	\$ 37.03
Prize Money	\$528.00		\$112.00	\$ 416.00
Refreshments	\$226.59		\$209.73	\$ 16.86
Socials	\$0.00		\$209.25	-\$ 209.25
Competitions				
Congress	\$110.86		\$0.00	\$ 110.86
Other Competitions	\$98.25		\$0.00	\$ 98.25
Employment Expenses				
Wages				
Office Staff	\$979.16		\$799.00	\$ 180.16
Non Playing Director	\$1,050.00		\$840.00	\$ 210.00
Fees & Levies				
Masterpoints	\$99.64		\$48.79	\$ 50.85
Repairs & Mtce				
R&M Equipment	\$158.00		\$0.00	\$ 158.00
R&M Grounds	\$33.00		\$33.00	\$ -
Utilities				

July 2024				
	This Year		Last Year	TY - LY
	TY		LY	
Rates - Land / Water	\$3,701.26		\$3,114.80	\$ 586.46
Telecommunications	\$117.19		\$112.20	\$ 4.99
Computer Systems				
MYOB Eentials	\$12.00		\$10.00	\$ 2.00
Depreciation	\$500.00		\$500.00	\$ -
Total Expenses	\$9,392.89		\$7,667.46	\$1,725.43
Operating Profit/ (Loss)	\$494.11		\$117.04	\$377.07
Other Income				
Interest Income	\$11.79		\$11.84	-\$ 0.05
Total Other Income	\$11.79		\$11.84	-\$ 0.05
Net Profit/(Loss)	\$505.90		\$128.88	\$377.02

Table fees to -	Weeks to	Wkly Avge Est for Yr
July	9,504.00	5 1901 98842
August		
September		
October		
November		
December		
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		

Membership at		April 2024	April 2023	2022
Home members	1	255	247	253
Alternate members		38	28	?
Total		293	275	

1 April 2024 includes 6 life members

Newcastle Bridge Club – Treasurer's Report for July 2024 meeting

P & L for 12 months to June 2024 shows a loss of \$2732 compared to a loss last year of \$676. Please note that a provision has been made for Long service leave for Ken of \$4000 – details shown in the P&L. Excluding that charge shows an operating profit of \$1268.

See excel file "P&L months of 24 year", sheet June 24.

An estimate has been made for depreciation at the rate of \$500 per month. The actual amount will be processed by the Accountants at year end. Variations for cleaning, ;insurance, socials, affiliation, r&m building, rates and web site mentioned in January and February reports.

The term deposit that matured on 29/6/24 was rolled over together with the interest income of \$3825 for 6 months at 5.05% pa and will mature on 29/12/24.

Also see **Table Fees** exercise showing table fees to end of recent months which shows a weekly average, that has steadily improved over recent months.

I should be in a position in a few weeks time to provide the Accountants with the information for them to prepare the financial statements for the year ended 30th June 2024

Funds at end of June:

Cheque account \$11081

Online saver account \$10459

Greater Bank Deposit \$69997.50 for 12 months at 5.10% pa - matures 10th January 2025

Greater Bank Deposit \$88825.00 for 6 months at 5.05% pa - matures 29th December 2024.

Newcastle Bridge Club

12 Young Road
Broadmeadow 2292

Profit & Loss [With Last Year]

July 2023 To June 2024

	This Year	Last Year	TY - LY
	TY	LY	
Income			
Competitions			
Congress	\$6,053.60	\$8,260.00	(\$2,206.40)
Weekend Club Events	\$1,260.00	\$606.00	\$654.00
Hosting Events	\$1,652.00	\$1,164.59	\$487.41
Memberships			
Subscriptions	\$10,030.00	\$9,780.00	\$250.00
Table Fees			
Monday Supervised Play	\$6,890.00	\$5,064.00	\$1,826.00
Monday Afternoon	\$11,038.00	\$11,532.00	(\$494.00)
Tuesday Morning	\$23,394.00	\$21,098.00	\$2,296.00
Tuesday Night	\$7,592.00	\$8,610.00	(\$1,018.00)
Wednesday	\$5,844.00	\$6,184.00	(\$340.00)
Thursday Supervised Play	\$598.00	\$230.00	\$368.00
Thursday Morning	\$20,284.00	\$17,570.00	\$2,714.00
Friday	\$11,622.00	\$10,390.00	\$1,232.00
Saturday	\$8,666.00	\$6,332.00	\$2,334.00
Total Table Fees	\$95,928.00	\$87,010.00	\$8,918.00
Board Dealing	\$1,992.00	\$2,227.80	(\$235.80)
Hall Hire	\$140.00	\$120.00	\$20.00
Lessons	\$514.85	\$1,082.40	(\$567.55)
Sundry Receipts	\$40.00	\$20.00	\$20.00
Gain on Disposal of Assets	\$10.00	\$0.00	\$10.00
Total Income	\$117,620.45	\$110,270.79	\$7,349.66
Expenses			
Accounting Fees	\$2,200.00	\$2,200.00	\$0.00
Card Dealing	\$1,505.00	\$1,216.00	\$289.00
Cleaning	\$15,848.50	\$14,863.75	\$984.75
Consumables	\$6,645.88	\$5,263.65	\$1,382.23
Insurance	\$6,996.17	\$5,467.00	\$1,529.17
General Expense	\$296.00	\$54.95	\$241.05
Printing, Stationery & Postage	\$5,169.34	\$4,993.20	\$176.14
Prize Money	\$4,970.00	\$5,046.00	(\$76.00)
Refreshments	\$4,272.37	\$3,232.69	\$1,039.68
Socials	\$3,078.90	\$1,044.81	\$2,034.09
Subscriptions / Membership	\$0.00	\$50.00	(\$50.00)
Competitions			
Congress	\$4,730.31	\$6,723.54	(\$1,993.23)
Other Competitions	\$2,171.61	\$1,645.35	\$526.26
Employment Expenses			
Wages			
Office Staff	\$10,991.50	\$10,185.63	\$805.87
Superannuation	\$2,289.14	\$2,025.04	\$264.10
Non Playing Director	\$9,940.00	\$10,780.00	(\$840.00)

Profit & Loss [With Last Year]

July 2023 To June 2024

	This Year		Last Year	TY - LY
	TY		LY	
Long Service Leave charge	\$4,000.00		\$0.00	\$4,000.00
Fees & Levies				
Affiliation (NSWBA)	\$5,200.00		\$2,850.00	\$2,350.00
Capitation (ABF)	\$5,278.20		\$4,316.80	\$961.40
Masterpoints	\$2,599.39		\$2,134.11	\$465.28
Repairs & Mtce				
R&M Air Conditioning	\$740.00		\$180.00	\$560.00
R&M Building	\$2,149.48		\$724.45	\$1,425.03
R&M Equipment	\$1,810.35		\$1,948.09	(\$137.74)
R&M Grounds	\$495.00		\$489.00	\$6.00
Utilities				
Electricity	\$2,289.63		\$2,008.61	\$281.02
Rates - Land / Water	\$11,870.69		\$13,296.42	(\$1,425.73)
Telecommunications	\$2,381.80		\$2,342.78	\$39.02
Computer Systems				
Events Calendar	\$271.83		\$170.50	\$101.33
Microsoft 365	\$139.00		\$129.00	\$10.00
MYOB Esentials	\$123.50		\$120.00	\$3.50
Pianola	\$600.00		\$600.00	\$0.00
Web Site	\$41.25		\$744.83	(\$703.58)
Depreciation	\$6,000.00		5550.00	\$450.00
Total Expenses	\$127,094.84		\$112,396.20	\$14,698.64
Operating Profit/(Loss)	\$9,474.39		\$2,125.41	\$7,348.98
Other Income				
Interest Income	\$6,732.00		\$191.09	\$6,540.91
Investment Income	\$10.31		\$1,258.59	(\$1,248.28)
Total Other Income	\$6,742.31		\$1,449.68	\$5,292.63
Net Profit/(Loss)	(\$2,732.08)		(\$675.73)	(\$2,056.35)

Table fees to -

		Weeks to	Wkly Avge	Est for Yr
July	7,396.00	4	1849	96148
August	15752.00	9	1750	91012
September	22766.00	13	1751	91064
October	29354.00	17	1727	89789
November	38412.00	22	1746	90792
December	43952.00	26	1690	87904
January	52980.00	31	1709	88870
February	60868.00	35	1739	90432
March	69826.00	39	1790	93101
April	79892.00	44	1816	94418
May	88478.00	48	1843	95851
June	95928.00	52	1845	95928

Membership at		April 2024	April 2023	2022
Home members	1	255	247	253
Alternate members		38	28	?
Total		293	275	

Investing in the Future

David Fryda

How the ABF is revolutionising bridge club management and player experience

Our Mission

The Australian Bridge Federation's (ABF) mission for 2022-2025 is to guide and promote bridge across Australia, ensuring our community not only survives but thrives, even in the face of global challenges like COVID-19. To achieve this, we have focused on three key areas: growing the game of bridge in Australia, supporting our community and its diverse needs, and future-proofing our infrastructure to stay ahead of technological advancements while mitigating risks associated with obsolete technologies and single-person dependencies.

Central to this mission is the myABF development project, which aims to revolutionise bridge club management and enhance the overall player experience through comprehensive, integrated technology solutions. As we move forward, it is essential to address the financial requirements needed to support this ambitious initiative while also covering the group's increasing operating costs and adjusting for inflation. This is why, at the ABF's annual general meeting (AGM) in May, the council voted in favour of some small but necessary rolling increases in our fees over the next three years to ensure the sustainability and continued growth of our beloved game.

ABF Financial History

Over many years, the ABF built a very healthy balance sheet and had sufficient cash reserves to cover the small operating deficits that became the norm for several years. The COVID years resulted in a couple of small surpluses for the ABF, but we have since returned to operating at a deficit again.

There is a broad range of reasons for these deficits, including the rising cost of operations in an inflationary environment. Staff and infrastructure costs have continued to increase, as have the costs of insurance, running the Masterpoint Centre, maintaining our websites and sending representative teams to world championships.

myABF Investment Proposal

In addition, the ABF has been investing heavily in technology for the past five years. In 2018, the ABF

Board resolved to invest over half a million dollars in myABF, a technology platform designed to:

- Support all Australian clubs and players by simplifying the administration of clubs and bridge events
- Make systems more user-friendly, easy to use, and accessible for players, improving their experience
- Reduce the many hours of effort needed by employees and volunteers to manage clubs, members, masterpoints, and scoring
- Address critical issues in the bridge community's technology infrastructure, such as single-person dependencies, obsolete technologies, and a lack of strategic direction
- Ensure systems function without interruption, meeting the high expectations of bridge players for reliable technology
- Streamline membership management, payment processing, and event entries, significantly reducing administrative burdens and providing more accurate reporting
- Provide an easy-to-use, all-in-one leading bridge technology solution for clubs and associations across Australia, enhancing the experience of bridge players at all levels
- Deliver a single integrated platform running on reliable IT infrastructure (in the cloud), available to all affiliated bridge clubs and players throughout Australia

At the time myABF was proposed it was thought it could be delivered within three years and that the ABF had sufficient cash reserves to fund the development without charging clubs or players.

However, like many technology projects, the time and cost were underestimated due to unexpected challenges such as COVID-19, significant increases in inflation, additional club needs, and changes in personnel.

Since its inception in 2019, though managed by a single project manager and just one or two developers supported by a group of volunteers on a steering committee, the project has successfully transformed bridge event management across Australia and become the envy of many clubs worldwide. Nearly all bridge events nationwide now use myABF as the portal, providing players with the information they require and the ability to enter and pay their fees seamlessly. More recently, several bridge clubs have transitioned to using myABF for their club manage-

ment, allowing their members to pay their table fees through their myABF account.

myABF Current State

By the end of 2024, the total investment in myABF will be approximately \$900,000. The impact on the ABF's cash reserves has been far greater than originally anticipated.

Operating myABF, in addition to its development, is also contributing to the ABF's rising costs. For example, when we pass event money that we have collected on behalf of clubs back to them we attempt to recover the transaction costs that Stripe have charged us. Although we aim to "break even," we have in fact incurred more costs than we have recovered. These operating expenses and additional behind-the-scenes administrative costs are covered from the ABF's general funds.

myABF Future

Whilst myABF is already offering significant savings and benefits to clubs and is admired worldwide, we still have more work to do to complete the development of myABF. There are three core elements still to be done:

- Complete club membership module to enable clubs to retire existing systems
- Integrate masterpoint centre (MPC) with myABF as MPC software is running on outdated software that is no longer supported
- Integrate a scoring program with myABF to reduce errors and overheads

To complete this development and cover the costs of the ongoing operation and support of the software, as well as address the deficits the ABF is incurring from their general operations, we estimate we will need to raise an additional one million dollars over the next three years.

Funding Our Future

The ABF has two main sources of income: capitation fees, a charge paid by all clubs based on their number of members, and masterpoint fees, which vary based on the colour (green, red, and gold) and grade of competition. Clubs and event organisers need to cover the cost of masterpoints in the fees they charge players each time they play.

As one might anticipate, both capitation and masterpoint fees have gradually increased over the years in alignment with rising operating costs. Recognising the financial strains brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, we halved the capitation fees for a year to alleviate some of the financial pressures experienced by our members during this challenging time. This

was in addition to funnelling over one million dollars in table fees from online games back to the clubs between May 2020 and September 2021.

Some alternative methods of raising the required funds were considered, but they all would result in even more costs to administer, so it was agreed that raising the capitation and masterpoint fees would be the best approach. Rather than solely burdening competition players with these additional costs, the ABF Council agreed at its AGM that, since the benefits of the ABF's operations and myABF will be enjoyed by all, and are essential for the sustainability and growth of our bridge community, it is appropriate that the increases be shared by everyone.

Impact On Players

As a result, we will be increasing the annual capitation fee and masterpoints fees by less than \$4 a year for the next three years. This reflects our commitment to keeping bridge as an affordable pastime whilst providing huge benefits to players across the country.

Capitation Fee Increases for 2025, 2026, and 2027

Year	Capitation Fee Increase	New Total
2025	\$3.30	\$23.30
2026	\$3.30	\$26.60
2027	\$3.30	\$29.90

Masterpoint Fee Increases for 2025

In April next year the cost of masterpoints will increase as follows:

Colour	Current	April 2025
Green	\$2.02	\$2.53
Club Red	\$1.62	\$2.03
Congress Red	\$2.14	\$2.68
State Red & Gold	\$1.39	\$1.74

To put these increases in context, the following table illustrates the impact on some example sessions:

Session Type	Increase	Or Cost Per Player
12-table duplicate	\$1.20	5 cents
Red point event run over four sessions	\$20	\$1.50
Gold point event run over four days	\$350	70 cents per day

In 2026 and 2027, masterpoint fees will increase by three percent per year in line with inflation.

These increases have been calculated to raise the one million dollars required to cover the ABF's costs in 2025, 2026, and 2027. The \$900,000 investment already made by the ABF in myABF is not being recovered. We expect our cash reserves to remain at or near the level they will be at the end of 2024 throughout the next three years.

We expect the vast majority of Australian bridge players will accept that these increases have been well considered and scrutinised by the ABF's management, Board, finance committee, and councillors, and therefore are being made with players' best interests in mind. However, there are, without doubt, some players who feel the increases are not justified or that the benefits will not flow back to them. None of us like it when costs increase, but we all value the continued prosperity of our bridge community and the reduced workload for our hardworking volunteers, making it easier for everyone to enjoy both playing and managing the game. Even with these increases the ABF's charges remain low in comparison with other nationally supported bodies.

The small team involved in the running of myABF will be supporting clubs across the country as they implement myABF so the benefits can be enjoyed as soon as possible.

ABF Technology Fund

At the AGM in May, the Council also resolved to establish an ABF Technology Fund and to redirect some historical ABF payments to the states and territories into this fund. The fund's objective will be to reduce the impact of the costs to deliver and support the myABF platform into the future. We will be seeking donations into this fund from players and sponsors, and at the 2025 AGM, the Council will consider, based on the success of the fund-raising, ways to pass the benefits back to players. This may come in the form of targeted relief to players with financial constraints or may even result in delays or reductions in the implementation of the planned increases in 2026 and 2027.

In Conclusion

Hopefully, this article helps you to understand why these increases are being implemented. If you have unanswered questions, we plan on distributing more information over the coming weeks to address them. Additionally, ABF management and Board members will be available at upcoming events for Q&A sessions, and if there is sufficient demand, we will run webinars to answer your questions.

In the meantime, I welcome comments and suggestions from members and I will try to respond within time constraints.

Canberra in Bloom 2024

4th-7th October, Canberra Bridge Club

Novice, Restricted & Open Pairs and Teams events

Gold Masterpoints and Prizes

Held in Conjunction with Floriade, Australia's largest Spring Festival

For more information, visit www.myabf.com.au
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