

TO	All Hockey Victoria Affiliates & Hockey Supporters
FROM	Rob Dalton, Chairman, Hockey Victoria
SUBJECT	2011 Year in Review & Key Challenges for 2012
DATE	Wednesday 21 December 2011

Dear Affiliates and all hockey players and supporters in Victoria,

As the end of the year approaches, and the end of my first year as Chairman, I thought I would communicate to you on where the Board and I believe we are as a sport in Victoria, and report on some of the key challenges and strategic projects that we have ahead in 2012.

Firstly, I would like to congratulate and thank everyone involved in Hockey this year for their tireless efforts in continuing to make this a wonderful sport. We have an amazing group of volunteers who administer, coach, umpire, develop and organise at every level of the game across the state, and the efforts are reflected in the continued success of Victorian Hockey, from Hookin2Hockey participation programs through to our veteran competitions.

This year, we have had a significant amount of dialogue with club Presidents regarding the challenges we have and working closely together to deal with these issues. One significant aspect was the Senior Competition Restructure. The competition review process conducted by the Board and Management was extremely thorough and the input of clubs and the Presidents was very constructive, and resulted in some modifications that made a lot of sense.

We have also discussed restructuring the fixturing to enable clubs to structure more home club days in a way that suits the clubs in enhancing the home game experience for all members and supporters. This is something the HV office has worked tirelessly on since season end for the 2012 season, and will continue to evolve over time. It is important to note that we do not have the resources, both in people and infrastructure to satisfy everyone and every team from a fixturing perspective, however we have a team that is on a journey to challenge what we do and how we do it, to make the game as enjoyable as we can.

I have also spoken at length at some of the Club Presidents meetings regarding the State Netball Hockey Centre (SNHC), and my concerns regarding the current financial arrangements that we have for the facility. I won't go into detail in this communication, as our CEO, Ben Hartung is currently in detailed discussions with a number of our stakeholders regarding our current and future arrangements, however I will add that currently we have an arrangement, with the State Sport Centres Trust (SSCT), which owns and operates the facility, that in the Boards view is not sustainably viable for Hockey Victoria, and may create some financial risk, as our non game utilisation of the facility has the potential to decline. This is purely as a result of clubs having and using their own grounds, as those grounds have come on line

around the state. This is completely understandable, however as a result, the financial model and the viability assumptions used to build the facility some time ago, are no longer valid. We need to restructure the model to make it more viable for us to use the facility for the long term, and assist us in trying to make the game more affordable.

I have mentioned previously, that one of the key issues we face is stagnant or declining participation in the game. Hockey is not a high publicity sport like AFL or soccer, and so our recruitment process has been very much left up to individuals who recruit their friends, or clubs who may according to the committee of the day, undertake some schools development. This process as a whole is ad-hoc across all clubs and very inconsistent. It also doesn't enable us to build up goodwill in schools, so that we get a fair opportunity ahead of the big sports to attract talent to play the game. Through the VicHealth project that Ben and his team were successful in earlier in the year, we have an opportunity to start to embed our presence in schools around our focus on girl's participation. This is really only the tip of the iceberg.

We need to create roles over the next few years for regional participation officers that partner with all our clubs consistently to liaise with schools and to facilitate the conduct of development programs to create a funnel for recruitment every year without fail. This will also ensure we can have a presence in the growth corridors that may presently not have hockey infrastructure. This is a massive exercise and one that Hockey Victoria does not have the ongoing funding for, so we have a big task in making this happen before we fall further behind all other sports. You may ask why do we have to grow our numbers? And that is a very relevant question. A number of Presidents I have spoken to, say their club is at capacity, both infrastructure wise and people to coach and administer. However there are many clubs that are not, and we need to assist to get those clubs to capacity to enable them to afford replacing their facilities, and even more importantly, to bring down the cost of the game. In 2012, we will be undertaking a Facilities Master Plan for the State, which is well overdue, so we can look at where our gaps are, and where we might be able to consolidate the use of school grounds to assist with growth. This will be an important project to enable us to control new facilities in conjunction with the State Government and local councils. Can I ask that over the break, every current hockey player in Victoria makes an effort to try to recruit a friend, an ex-player or someone new to the sport, senior, junior or veteran. This will give us a huge head-start on growing our numbers in 2012.

One glaring issue that needs to be addressed is the funding model for Hockey Victoria. This won't be a popular issue for most club Presidents however if we as a sport are going to remain to be relevant we must have the resources to support our volunteer network at our clubs. We currently do not have the resources to do what is necessary to ensure we continue to prosper and develop. This is not unique to Victoria, all states are struggling to fund the sport. Currently HV is funded through Affiliation fees and team entry fees. It is a model created when Hockey Victoria facilitated the operations of the game, and organised fixturing and umpiring rather than drove its development. At that time the game was cheap, it is now expensive because we have costly facilities that need to be replaced and in many cases are funded by debt. We must grow the game to pay for the facilities. We cannot cut corners at putting processes in place to ensure we grow our participation. To that end, we will urgently be looking at a funding model that has a component of individual membership of HV. As participation increases the

affiliate and team entry fees will reduce as the costs are spread across more people. This is a model used across most sports and must be implemented so we can move forward with getting on with the job. So as we consult regarding this issue I ask you to put away your micro club focus and think a little more strategically longer term.

There are many more issues that we need to deal with, but conceptually I'm sure you can gather that the theme is, we need to become more corporatized, professional and consistent in developing the game and ensure those key things that we need to happen to make the game prosper are done in partnership between HV and the clubs. We need to ensure:

- strong ties with those sources that enable us to consistently attract participants;
- systems to ensure we develop participants to enable enjoyment of the game;
- the game is affordable;
- all clubs prosper; and we
- continue to be first into growth corridors.

We will be conducting a review of our junior competition urgently, as this is something Club Presidents are very concerned about. Issues such as Friday night games, and the experience, junior age groups, school sport, VCE age groups, etc. We will again commence the consultation process to gain views far and wide to consider whether any changes are necessary.

I also wanted to briefly cover the performance of your Board. As you can see from some of the issues that I have discussed, we have an enormous job ahead. I am involved with many Boards, and this Board and its individual Directors have operated as effectively as any other I have been involved with. It has been an extremely intense year with many issues not at all pleasant, but with an enormous number of highlights. The amount of time and energy that every Director has contributed has been outstanding, and I thank them sincerely for their time and diligence in guiding our sport through some exciting challenges. The Directors, who are subject to retirement under the Constitution, have indicated with my strong support to re-stand for a further term. I would encourage all Affiliates to support me and those Directors for re-election as we seek to continue to develop our strategic plan for the next 3 years. I would like to make special mention to Tracey Drake, who was elected as a Director earlier this year. Tracey was involved in a very serious bicycle accident some months ago and is continuing rehabilitation in hospital. On behalf of all Victorian Hockey people I would like to wish Tracey a very speedy recovery. I also would like to acknowledge that during the year we lost a number of amazing hockey friends. All of our thoughts go out to those friends and family for those who have contributed so much to our game. We will acknowledge those people individually at our AGM.

I would like to acknowledge the wonderful effort of the Hockey Victoria team led by Ben Hartung, who have worked tirelessly all year to deliver an exceptionally successful season under great pressure. I look forward to working with the team for an even more successful year in 2012.

MEMORANDUM



Finally on behalf of the Board and Management I would like to wish everybody involved with Hockey all the very best for the festive season.

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "RD", enclosed within a light blue rectangular border.

Rob Dalton
Chairman

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