



ANNUAL REPORT 2005

AUSTRALIAN LITTLE ATHLETICS INC.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Executive

Marjorie McNamara	President
Brian Newton	Administration & Finance Director
Darryl Hunt	Public Relations Director
Michael Stubbs	Competition & Standards Director

Association Presidents

Dennis Goodwin	ACTLAA President
John Burne	LAANSW
Alison Quirke	QLAA President
Gary Mutton	SALAA President
Ross Burridge	TLAA President
Don Baker	VLAA President
Pieter Bergshoeff	WALA President

STAFF

Marita Somerford	Administration Executive
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LIFE MEMBERS

Trevor Billingham BEM*	Don Blyth
Alan Triscott	Mal Hastie
Keith Maughan	Peter Shinnick
Doug Hancy	George Harvey
C P (Paddy) Robinson*	David Cramer
Maxine Boyd	Anthony Libke
Grahame Searles	

AWARD OF MERIT

Alan Letcher	Brian Newton
R O (Dick) Healey *	Arnold Hunt
John Crouch	

MERIT CERTIFICATES

John McCarthy
Peter Shinnick
John Marsden

LITTLE ATHLETICS for FAMILYFUN....and FITNESS

OUR MISSION

Little Athletics aims to develop children of all abilities by promoting positive attitudes and a healthy lifestyle through family and community involvement in athletics activities

“BE YOUR BEST®”

SPONSORS

Australian Little Athletics acknowledges the important role played by sponsors in helping to deliver services and benefits to members and records its appreciation to the following for their sponsorship in 2005.



The major sponsor of Australian Little Athletics, adidas has been a long term supporter and recognizes and shares the Little Athletics vision of developing young athletes of all abilities to BE YOUR BEST . The commitment by adidas to Little Athletics benefits every family through their support of the Australian Little Athletics Championships, Achievement Book, Website and the Little Athletics range of footwear.

Through the support of The Athlete's Foot Australian Little Athletics has developed an outstanding outlet for the distribution of adidas products.



Australian Little Athletics has established a very strong relationship with Horsell International who has provided assistance and professional advice over many years in a wide range of Insurances including personal accident, public liability, equipment and professional indemnity.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

ANNUAL REPORT

The year 2005 has been one of endings and new beginnings. It has also been a year of ups and downs and through all of this we have tried to keep the focus on our athletes who are the reason that Little Athletics exists. The year began with the passing of Trevor Billingham, founding father of Little Athletics, on the 27th January 2005. Trevor and his family gave their all to follow a vision of providing an athletic activity for children with modified equipment. Over the past 41 years the activity has grown from a group of children in Geelong to an organisation with around 95000 athletes regularly competing at local centres/clubs all over Australia. This does not include the volunteers who work within the organisation in many different fields including officiating, coaching and administration.

In July Greg Monaghan, our administration executive officer, left our employment. This was a great loss to ALA because each of the volunteer executive members had become dependent on Greg's assistance to complete their duties in a timely manner. We were very fortunate to have the expertise of one of our life members, Maxine Boyd, who volunteered to assist while we searched for a new Administration Executive. We were extremely pleased to appoint Marita Somerford to the position. Marita lives in Perth which meant we had to move our office to Perth. This took time and we moved into the new office early in 2006. Marita has brought a vast knowledge of sports administration to the position and we look forward to some new initiatives in our administration procedures in the future.

In April, Grahame Searles, did not re-nominate for the position of Administration and Finance Director and the position remained vacant until a postal vote could be held and Brian Newton was voted into the position. Brian lives in Perth so it is very convenient for him with the office being located there.

I have been building a good working relationship with Athletics Australia. I have had several meetings with Athletics Australia including a joint meeting in July with Mark Peters, CEO of the Australian Sports Commission. Discussions were held on the ways that we can work cooperatively with Athletics Australia whilst maintaining our autonomy. To achieve this we must continue in an atmosphere of RESPECT, EQUITY AND OPEN COMMUNICATION. Without these principles we are only paying lip service to other people's desires. It was good to work jointly with Athletics Australia on the Telstra Equipment Grant Project which saw many Little Athletic Centres benefit with new equipment.

During my term as President of ALA I have tried to lead the organisation with the vision of FAMILY, FUN AND FITNESS and encouraging participants to be their best always keeping in mind that Australian Little Athletics is the body that represents its affiliated associations at a national level.

The national equipment insurance policy has been a resounding success in that all Little Athletic Centres and Clubs now have insurance cover. We have maintained a comprehensive suite of insurance policies with a high level of cover including personal accident and public liability.

We continue to look for funding to maintain the Schools Development Program throughout Australia. ALA has been able to provide an amount of \$100000.00 to the state and territory associations from its own funds to keep the Program running in a scaled down format. This has ensured the program was delivered into schools during the year.

We have been fortunate to maintain our sponsorship with adidas and to renew our association and sponsorship with The Athlete's Foot. It is difficult for the ALA to attract sponsorship because of the many and varied sponsors associated with our affiliated states and territories and the limited range of items we are able to offer to prospective sponsors.

I have now completed 6 years as ALA President and as our Constitution demands I will step down at the end of the ALAC in Canberra. Six years is a long time to devote to the Presidency and I now look forward to some new challenges in my life. I must state that I have thoroughly enjoyed the majority of the time and have met some wonderful people and made some very good friends all over Australia. I thank everyone I have been associated with during my time with Little Athletics for their support and encouragement.

My dream for Little Athletics is that it continues to grow and prosper and maintain its good image in the Community, with Governments and with the business world. My best wishes go to those who will lead the organisation in the future.

Marjorie McNamara
President

COMPETITION and STANDARDS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The past twelve months have been very challenging for all involved with Australian Little Athletics, especially myself. I have at times become very frustrated due to the lack of progress in achieving any results in many areas, despite the many hours given by all the Board to try and make some progress. For the continued success of our wonderful organisation we must all strive to put aside any personal agenda's and work together as one to facilitate the trust that the Little Athletic stake holders have placed in us. Australian Little Athletics have been challenged in many way's from both outside and from within our organisation. The positive publicity and respect that little athletics has gained during the recent Commonwealth Games, particularly through the performances and words of two ex little athletes in Jana Pittman and John Steffensen, has I believe shown the Australian public what a great organisation we are.

During the year I attend quite a few meetings with representatives of Athletics Australia and privately the message is very positive, yet publicly the message is not quite the same. I believe it is about time that Little Athletics is given both the recognition and support by the government and senior athletic bodies that we deserve. I can see that track and field will continue on its upward spiral, following the performance of our team at the Commonwealth games which contained many former little athletes.

I would like to thank and congratulate Garry House and Rhonda O'Sign and their Tasmanian team on providing our organisation with a very successful and well planned championship in Hobart last April. The work done by the conveying committee and the Tasmanian Board in preparing and running the ALACs made it a relative stress event for all participants, especially myself, and certainly made me feel proud to be a Tasmanian. I would like to congratulate New South Wales on their success in winning the Billingham and Triscott Trophies and to Tasmania on winning the Dick Healy Trophy.

I congratulate all recipients of Australian Best performances over the past 12 months and thank all Associations for getting the paperwork in on time (usually) for me to present them to the Board in time to take advantage of the new rule which enables the early ratification of these records and therefore the certificates being forwarded on to the successful athletes in the current season.

The 2005 ALAC's in Hobart was the first to use electronic timing. It did uncover some inadequacies in our systems that hopefully have now been rectified; the event also saw the introduction of a new handicap formula for the Triscott trophy. I look forward to seeing where these changes take us in the future.

During the past few months I have worked closely with the members of the ACT ALAC Committee to prepare for this years event. This included two visits to Canberra to attend meetings and inspect facilities. I would like to especially thank Neil Andres, Brian McCormack and Dennis Goodwin for their hospitality and help. This years conveying committee is unique in having their convenor Warren Davy based in Adelaide, but I am sure that with the commitment shown by all the committee which has been led by Brian McCormack in times that Warren has been unavailable, will provide us with another highly successful event. Much work has been done on the ALAC computer program by Dirk Nankervis and it is hoped that after this years championships we will have a program that will adequately fill our needs for the foreseeable future.

I would like to thank Marjorie, Brian, Darryl and Greg and Marita for the co-operation and support over the past 12 months. I could not have hoped to have a better group of people to work with. I would especially like to thank and congratulate our outgoing President Marjorie for her tireless and at times thankless efforts over my time on the Board. Marjorie has always shown total commitment to our organisation no matter what has been happening around her and will be sadly missed. I truly believe that under Marjorie's leadership, the ALA is well set up and primed for a great future.

I would like to thank all Board members as well as Association Administration teams and wish all a successful 2006.

Michael Stubbs
Competition and Standards Director

PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

It has been a challenging 12 months for the Public Relations portfolio, both with the responsibilities and the pressures of work. In comparison to previous years it has not been possible to replicate the levels of involvement in Little Athletics, and the Public Relations Portfolio in particular. At present it is unlikely that the work pressures will change, so I will have to review my commitments during 2006.

During 2005 Australian Little Athletics was able to extend our partnership with adidas with a new agreement being put in place for the next 3 years. On behalf of Associations and the larger Little Athletics family I would like to thank adidas for their support and loyalty for their continued support of Little Athletics for over nine years now.

It has been pleasing to welcome the Athlete's Foot back to Little Athletics as our "retail partner". Their infrastructure and support will be welcomed by Associations, and the benefits will be evident at point of sale amongst Little Athlete's and their families. I look forward to reviewing this relationship and building upon the strengths and forging a strong partnership.

Activities and achievements for the year included:

ACHIEVEMENT BOOK

Our flagship publication continues its appeal amongst the membership.

Feedback received through formal and informal channels leads to the improvements to ensure its relevance within Little Athletics.

WEBSITE

The website developments have been only minor in 2005.

The changes implemented at the commencement of the 2004/2005 season were significant and sufficient to ensure it remains robust and strategic Australian Little Athletics and Associations. It continues to provide an important communication vehicle for all levels of Little Athletics.

The appeal of the website to constantly and to continually engage Little Athletes, remains a disappointment despite its continual adaptation to try and achieve this. I am sure this elusive formula to attain this engagement can be found but will be difficult to attain without additional sponsorship specifically for the website.

ATHLETICS IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM

The energy attained in the first year of the Athletics in Schools Program carried through into 2005.

Pending the securing of a national sponsor of the program, the Australian Little Athletics devised a program to provide continuity of the funding for the Associations.

Legal issues have necessitated the aborting of the use of JumpStart. It is hoped this “naming rights” component will be an attraction to potential sponsors.

Whilst several proposals to secure sponsorship were developed in 2005, we have yet to receive the corporate recognition of the Athletics in Schools Program.

SPONSORSHIP

Sponsors for 2005 included:

- adidas
- The Athletes Foot
- Horsell

As mentioned earlier in this report the continued commitment of adidas to Little Athletics is to be applauded. The continued support by:

- Naming rights of the Australian Little Athletics Championships
- Provision of the Australian Little Athletics Championship uniforms
- Royalties from the Little Athletics Shoe range (Supernova, Attune, Lite Tech, Multi Tech and revised Esoteric brands)
- Website Contribution
- Advertising in the Achievement Book
- Options for joint branding opportunities



Elements of the new agreement have been linked to performance so we can be rewarded for our efforts in working the relationship to new levels than experienced in the past.

At some levels I can see how sponsors may see us, a little fragmented, not necessarily a “seamless” organisation, but we have a proven record with adidas of mutual benefit.

The Athletes Foot have been welcomed back to Little Athletics with a national agreement that:

Confers Retail Rights

- Sets up a structure for corporate and franchise owners to access Associations and Centres/Clubs
- Member/Family discount cards

Horsell continue their involvement as an ALA sponsor by:

Providing a discounted commission to the ALA on all insurances written throughout all Associations, Centres and Clubs of Little Athletics

THE FUTURE

Whilst we are pleased by the relationships we have retained and secured, on balance, Little Athletics underachieves on the sponsorship and corporate support and recognition front. It is a continual source of frustration to me that we cannot engage sponsorships to the levels expected by such a “pristine”, “family orientated” and “feel good” brand.

Almost everyone knows or has been touched by the brand, yet it has been a struggle to turn this energy, awareness and understanding into corporate or sponsorship dollars.

It is more important than ever that we fully support the existing sponsors and encourage their continued and perhaps expanded association/involvement in Little Athletics.

It is extremely disappointing and frustrating to spend several months and several thousand of Associations money for a nil outcome.

Whilst it evident that some of the apprehension of some sponsors to commit to Little Athletics is linked to our structures, we need a fresh look at this, and redefine expectations, as it is an established fact that the structure of Little Athletics will not be changing in the short to medium term to overcome sponsors hesitancies.

On a more positive note, Little Athletics has to take the success of the Commonwealth Games and translate and incorporate into our marketing and promotion. The quotes by Jon Steffensen, Scott Martin, Jane Saville, Nathan Deakes etc., with the glowing comments of the role Little Athletics played in their achievements need to be developed to their fullest potential.

PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

Again there was participation by several Associations in the development of joint promotional material for Little Athletics. It is hoped the quality and advantage with the scale of economy benefits the participating Associations.

Planning has already commenced for season 2006-2007, so there will be requests for feedback and input in the coming months.

I would like to apologise to South Australia for an error in grammar in their material.

PATHWAYS

As you know this is one of my crusades within Little Athletics.

I have been pleased with some of the developments emanating from Athletics Australia and Senior Athletics organisations in the States. The pace of change is still too low for my liking, but I am satisfied there is an environment where change can occur.

There is still a lack of respect of the role and responsibility of Little Athletics within Australia, particularly by the Australian Sports Commission.

In declaring a pecuniary interest, I am also Secretary of a Senior Athletics Club in Victoria and I have been well satisfied with being a part of the team that has taken the membership from 40 to over 100 in one year, be strengthening the relationship with a Little Athletics Centre and actually put in a process to engage junior athletes by carrying the philosophies and values of Little Athletics into this new environment. This surely is the "blueprint" or "template" for others to follow to assist in the resurrection of the sport of athletics, acknowledging the significant role Little Athletics does play and contribute.

Respect, recognition, desire, pathways, commitment are words that automatically come to mind that go into the mix of solving this problem.

MELBOURNE COMMONWEALTH GAMES 2006

M2006, The Commonwealth Games Organising Committee, are to be thanked for providing a unique prize for our competition in the Achievement Book. Maryanne Harley and her family were appreciative winners of the competition that enabled them to attend the last day of the athletics and closing ceremony of the Commonwealth Games. By special arrangement with adidas we were able to facilitate Maryanne meeting Lauren Hewitt, the athlete in her entry.

CONCLUSION

The future of the Public Relations portfolio still needs to be considered in the context of the environment we are in and the aim and future aims of the Australian Little Athletics in the constitution.

This is being acknowledging in our present, slow, development of Strategic Plan and constituent components thereto.

It is of strategic importance that:

- develop more sophisticated communication methods to all involved in Little Athletics
- the website be developed to its fullest potential
- national sponsors are procured and secured on the theme “national exposure, local delivery/servicing/benefits”
- development of pathways for athletes
- contribute to the promotion of athletics as a highly desirable, “must do” activity of children aged 4 – 15 (and beyond)

The challenges are many and never easy.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I need to thank fellow Board Members for their support and understanding for the past 12 months. The lively debate at Executive Meetings is something that doesn't get reflected in précis etc. The dynamics of the Executive has changed with the election of Brian Newton, and will change again with the departure of Marjorie.

In addition, I also wish to thank the various Association staff for the direct help they have provided me, and their support for the Australian Little Athletics sponsors.

Finally I would like to thank Greg Monaghan for tireless support to the Australian Little Athletics and to myself. The time taken to fill his position, highlighted, magnified the important role this position has in supporting Australian Little Athletics structures and the Little Athletics organization.

So a big welcome to Marita Somerford into the Administrative Executive role with Australian Little Athletics.

DARRYL HUNT
PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR

FAMILY FUN AND FITNESS

ADMINISTRATION and FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



AUSTRALIAN LITTLE ATHLETICS



FAMILY FUN AND FITNESS









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