

# **VicSport Report**

## **A Guide to Managing Major Events for Sport Organisations**

**January 2002**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 Aim

To develop case studies to assist SSA's and event managers when hosting major events, particularly with the management and training of volunteers and determining their level of involvement.

### 1.2 Case studies

Major events hosted by three State Sporting Associations and one National Sporting Organisation were investigated. The levels at which these events were staged varied between International, National and State events.

In Case Study one, *Netball Victoria's Association Championships* are presented. A new event, (first held in 2000) the tournament not only provides all affiliated associations with the opportunity to compete, but it supports Netball Victoria's development programs, (coaching, umpiring and talent identification) throughout the state.

Case Study two follows the staging of the *Australian Masters Softball Championships*. The event is managed by Softball Australia and hosted by a tendered State Association. Following the adoption of a positive strategy to lift the participation rate of Masters in their sport, the championships have become one of the most sought after on the softball calendar.

Case Study three details the Victorian Little Athletics Association's hosting of the *Australian Team and Multi-Event Championships*. Rotating around each state in an eight year cycle, the event discusses the importance of documenting event procedures and volunteer recruitment and training strategies.

In Case Study four, the *Sail Melbourne International Regatta* is discussed. Whilst managed separately from Yachting Victoria's main operations, extensive objectives are established in a detailed business plan enabling Yachting Victoria to leverage their "grass roots" activities off Australia's pinnacle sailing event. The volunteer training provided is of exceptional standard and certainly leaves the sport with lasting legacies.

### 1.3 Methodology

Following the identification of 4 events in Victoria of varying sizes (International, National and State), face-to-face interviews were conducted with a representative from the responsible sporting association.

The following areas were profiled;

- Size/type of event
- SSA's level of involvement in the event
- SSA's objective in involving itself initially
- An evaluation of whether objective was achieved
- Hours invested by paid staff
- Role of Volunteers
- Volunteer Training
- The relationships between event stakeholders
- Legacy for the sport

The analysis of the case studies and supporting material enabled the development of a section titled "Tips to Take Away", a list of recommendations to assist associations with their future hosting of major events.

## **2. CASE STUDY ONE**

### **Netball Victoria Association Championships**

#### **2.1 Size/Type of Event**

The event is open to all affiliated Associations in Victoria and is conducted in two stages,

1. Qualifying rounds conducted in zones, six in total.
2. Finals at the State Netball and Hockey Centre.

Since the first Association Championships in 2000, the event has gained popularity. In 2001 over 300 teams competed in the event, in excess of 3600 players.

Any association affiliated with Netball Victoria can submit an application to host a qualifying round for the championships.

#### **2.2 SSA's Level of Involvement in the event**

In the qualifying rounds Netball Victoria assists the various host associations where needed, rather than taking a hands-on role.

At least one Netball Victoria staff member is in attendance at each qualifying round. The staff member's main responsibility is to ensure that sponsorship obligations are fulfilled.

Each host association is provided with an allowance of \$2000 from Netball Victoria. In conducting the championships, the hosts retain all entry fees and money made through food stalls.

The host association is informed that further assistance with the day to day management of the event can be arranged if required.

The finals are conducted at the State Netball and Hockey Centre and are organised totally by event staff within Netball Victoria.

#### *Umpire, Player and coach development*

Netball Victoria has realised the fantastic opportunities that the qualifying championships present to assist them in implementing their umpire and player development programs in the regions. Within 6 zones of Victoria, Netball academy's have been established to provide further development for talented players and umpires. At both stages of this tournament, talent scouts identify potential academy members.

Netball Victoria takes responsibility for promotion of the event. Media releases are issued both prior to and after the event, which are specific to each locality. The host association is encouraged to contact Netball Victoria's media department should interesting facts or stories arise to assist in gaining coverage.

### **2.3 SSA's Objective in involvement**

For many years' Netball Victoria held a tournament titled "Country Championships". Numbers in this event were declining every year and it was at the stage when only have a handful of teams competed regularly.

The Association Championships have effectively replaced the Country Championships. Their objectives in staging this event are:

- To strengthen connections with their associations across the state
- To provide a platform for players within these associations to compete at a high standard
- To provide an avenue to implement their player and umpire development programs
- To assist host associations to develop event management skills

### **2.4 Evaluation whether objectives were achieved**

Regional tournaments used to be quite frequent events, however due to increased costs (eg transportation and accommodation) and parental time constraints, they are not held as regularly. The qualifying rounds of Netball Victoria's Association Championships were able to bring the atmosphere of tournaments back to the regions.

The associations who have hosted the qualifying stage, did so as they saw the tournament as a great way to promote Netball in their region whilst providing their players with the opportunity to compete at a high standard. In many areas the local newspapers and radios are able to provide the association with promotional opportunities before and during the event.

The regional host associations were also able to show off their towns great sporting facilities and tourist attractions. Although the event is only held over a single day, it may evoke interest from participants to return for an extended time.

It was also commented from the associations involved, after staging a qualifying round their relationship with Netball Victoria was further developed. This extended to the Sport and Recreation department of the Local Government Authority in their region.

Ten umpire coaches were in attendance at each event to provide guidance and feedback. An opportunity is also available for umpires wishing to be tested for their next accreditation level.

Just as the best teams make their way through to the finals at the State Netball Centre, the umpire coaches select those who have performed well to umpire at the finals.

Umpire coaching workshops were also staged during the championships. These workshops were deemed very helpful as the regional areas find such training hard to access.

## **2.5 Hours invested by paid staff**

Netball Victoria's Events Manager receives the application forms from the prospective host associations and allocates the tournaments to the most appropriate venues.

Most of the work done by Netball Victoria occurs at the finals stage. In the 5-6 weeks leading up to the event the Event Manager would spend approximately 5 hours a week organising the final day and in the 2 weeks prior, spends close to 75% of time on this event.

## **2.6 Volunteers**

### *2.6.1 Role of Volunteers*

Volunteers are integral to staging the qualifying rounds of the championships as the majority of committee members of the host associations are volunteers.

These host associations are responsible for the general administration and management of the event and comprise of volunteer committees of management. Their tasks include;

- Venue hire
- Processing of entry forms
- Draws
- First aid
- Catering
- Umpire allocation/management
- Trophies

Additional volunteers were required in assisting with the catering for the event and setting up the courts before the start of play.

During the finals series, volunteers only play a small role in organising the event, however most coaches are volunteers, as well as some of the team umpires.

### *2.6.2 Volunteer Training*

No official training for the volunteers was provided as most of the associations had been involved in staging similar events in the past. However all host associations were provided with a comprehensive event manual.

In the manual, Netball Victoria encourage all host associations to develop duty statements for each volunteer role and stress the importance of updating volunteers with the correct information, particularly if conditions change, (due to bad weather for example).

Other information in this manual includes:

- Relevant Netball Victoria contact details
- Clear responsibilities of the host association and Netball Victoria
- Procedures for invited guests
- Competition structure (draw, match numbers/length, finals' structure)
- Important time lines (entry dates etc)
- Clothing order forms
- Healthy canteen information (sponsor is VicHealth)
- A Sample booklet to go to all teams covering; sponsor acknowledgement, rules, player eligibility, blood rules, maps, score card collection procedures and finals information.

## **2.7 Event Relationships**

For the event to be successful, Netball Victoria is required to work closely with the various host associations. A number of departments within Netball Victoria are involved in the event. Obviously the Event Management team plays a supervisory role and is willing to assist the host association when necessary. The Umpire Development and Elite Development (Talent Identification) areas are also involved to co-ordinate their programs.

As the event is sponsored by the Heart Foundation with funds provided by VicHealth there are a number of sponsorship requirements that associations and Netball Victoria must meet. This includes ensuring the venue is SmokeFree and that healthy food choices are available.

## **2.8 Legacy for Netball**

As Netball Victoria's Association Championships are an avenue through which their many development programs (coaching, umpiring and talent identification) are run, the event leaves many legacies in not only the regions which host a tournament, but right across the state.

Through their participation in this event, players and umpires have the opportunity to be selected into the zone academies and coaches can participate in courses to further their skills in this area.

The host associations certainly notice an increase in attention netball receives in the local media and players not yet at association level standard realise the pathways that exist for them to take their sport further.

## 3.0 CASE STUDY TWO

### Australian Masters Softball Championships

#### 3.1 Size/Type of Event

Following on from the success of Softball at the 1994 World Masters and 1995 Australian Masters Games, Softball Australia realised an exciting opportunity was present to continue this success through the staging of their own masters competition.

Although there has never been designated masters competitions on a weekly basis, there has always been a fairly large following of the sport by those over 30, due to the family atmosphere the sport encourages and the low impact, non contact nature of the game.

Softball Australia received a seeding grant from the Australian Sports Commission to set up the inaugural event and they were also provided with the participant databases from both the World Masters and Australian Masters Games. This enabled them to market their event directly to interested people.

The Australian Masters Softball Championships attracted 45 teams in 2000, and between 600-700 participants. The games are held across the Easter weekend at over 3-4 days and allow competitors to combine their holiday with the enjoyment of playing softball.

#### 3.2 Level of Involvement

This event is Softball Australia's most economically viable tournament and for this reason it is moved from state to state each year to share the benefits.

The interested State Associations put in a tender to host the event, together with one of their affiliated associations. There are generally no shortages of prospective hosts.

Softball Australia strongly encourages its State Associations to allocate the championships fairly over different venues as it can really help the sport throughout the region.

"...There is nothing better that can help a sporting association flourish than enabling them to host a national event", *Neil Dalrymple, CEO Softball Australia.*

Softball Australia is responsible for the entries, draws, programs, booklets and everything involved in running the actual game. The host association is responsible for all aspects of the facility, including the provision of food and beverages. Money earned remains with

the host association. (A recent event netted the host association \$15,000 from merchandise and bar facilities).

Local councils are generally very supportive of the event and are happy to assist with extra facilities and ground maintenance, as the benefits of the event are felt throughout the town's economy.

Softball Australia works closely with the host association to ensure participants expectations are met. This is important as participants in masters events generally seek many more benefits rather than just good competition. These include opportunities for socialising and also sightseeing and relaxing.

As the tournament is held over the Easter Break, players are seeking an enjoyable holiday within the event package. The state and host associations provide all participants with information about tourist activities in the region and work to schedule matches to ensure adequate breaks occur throughout the three days.

### **3.3 Objective of involvement**

In setting up its own Softball Masters, there were a number of objectives Softball Australia were looking to achieve;

- To encourage participants to remain members of their affiliated associations
- To increase membership throughout all states
- To further develop and promote the benefits of softball as a lifelong sport
- To economically benefit the host softball club and state association

Whilst the Australian Masters Championships invite participants from everywhere to compete, all participants in the Softball Australia Masters Championships must be registered members of an affiliated association.

### **3.4 Evaluation whether objectives were achieved**

Since the development of the Softball Australia Masters Championships, softball clubs throughout Australia have noticed they have a higher retention rate of older athletes. The tournament is evidence that their sport is actively encouraging them to remain players, rather than take on non-active roles.

Through Softball Australia's close relationship with multi-sport masters games they have been able to increase the number of new members by directly marketing their annual event to non-members.

The staging of a masters event also provides unique opportunities to encourage juniors who have travelled to watch their parents, to take an interest in the sport. Softball

Australia often invites International and Australian softball players to conduct clinics for children at this event. This results in greater enthusiasm for their parents participation and often interest to try the sport themselves.

As Masters Competitions are generally few and far between, the event has generated good publicity through the media. The local papers are always interested in running articles and in recent years a competing masters softball team won a National Sport Team's Award from the Confederation of Australian Sport (Now SIA).

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The tournament is an attractive event to host, due to the high disposable incomes of players and the number of participants and their families it attracts. The event also helps strengthen the relationships between the host association and their local council and tourism agencies, especially when held in rural areas.

### **3.5 Hours invested by paid staff**

One staff member from Softball Australia was working on the event full time for 3 months.

### **3.6 Volunteers**

Softball Australia encourages the host associations to have the assistance of a core team of dedicated volunteers who are not involved in participating, which can be complemented by extra participating volunteers.

#### **3.6.1 Role of Volunteers**

Unlike junior events where the service of parents can be called upon, often Masters competitions can find it quite difficult to recruit volunteers as most are keen to participate.

The tournament convenor from the host association is responsible for the recruitment and placement of volunteers for the event. The main areas requiring volunteer services are ground management (setting up the fields) and the service of food and beverages.

In this event the hassles of finding volunteers are off set by the fact the association keeps all money generated from the sale of food and beverages. It is therefore in their best interest to have enough assistance at the facilities and often committee members will forgo the opportunity to play to assist their club maximise their earning potential.

#### **3.6.2 Volunteer Training**

A detailed event manual is provided by Softball Australia to the host association, however no other formal training is provided.

The volunteers are mostly "masters", they therefore have a greater understanding of the expectations of the participants and the issues surrounding their involvement in the tournament.

### **3.7 Event Relationships**

All organisational levels within Softball in Australia are involved in staging this event, however it is rather unique in that in the lead up to the championships most of the communication occurs between the National body and host club. Softball Australia coordinates all aspects involving the actual competition and they assist the host club with the venue requirements.

The State body assists in the tendering process and allocates the venue to a host club within their state. When the tournament is held in a state outside where the National Body is located, the State body plays a much more "hands on" role.

Softball Australia has developed strong relationships with Masters Games organisations, such as the World Masters and Australian Masters organising groups. (see section 1.1) They have been able to undertake effective marketing activities associated with these events to not only make players aware of this annual championships but to encourage them to join their local club.

### **3.8 Legacy for Softball**

As mentioned earlier, Softball has really flourished through the staging of this tournament. Retention rates have really increased, as to have numbers of new participants.

Whilst there are many stories of major events draining sporting organisations financial resources, the Australian Masters Softball Championships are quite the opposite. Significant financial gains are felt in the host association's pocket.

## **4.0 CASE STUDY THREE**

### **Australian Little Athletics Team and Multi-Event Championships**

#### **4.1 Size/Type of Event**

These National Championships are held annually for the best competitors in Little Athletics in the U/13 and U/15 Age groups. Approximately 250 Competitors are involved. The competition is held over a single day.

The National body set an event budget of \$22,000.

The event was held at Duncan McKinnon Reserve. It was originally intended to use Olympic Park, however self-catering facilities were not available at this venue and the costs of using the contracted canteen were too expensive for the participants.

The Championships rotate around each state in an seven year cycle. They are the pinnacle event for Little Athletics participants and enjoy a high profile within the sport. Spectators are usually minimal, aside from parents of competitors.

Although children are able to compete in Little Athletics from U6's, by keeping these championships for only the U13 and U15 age groups it has enabled the event to develop an elite profile within the sport. It also encourages children to keep up sport in these age groups known to have the highest drop out rates.

#### **4.2 SSA's Level of Involvement**

In hosting the event, the VLAA were required to co-ordinate everything from registrations, venue, officials and volunteers, accommodation, transport and uniforms. The event was a major undertaking for the office, as it was held one month following the State Titles.

Planning for the event commenced 3 years prior to the competition. A committee of management was established and it was envisaged they would take control of separate event management portfolios. However throughout the three years many changes occurred within the committee severely affecting its ability to support the staff.

Funding was not available to employ an additional staff member. This would have been ideal, as the "core business" (administering the state competition) still needed attention. Several students completing field placements were utilised effectively in the lead up to the event.

The demands of the event required 2 staff members and several students to work full time from one month prior to the championships. A feeling of guilt was present among the office - as only 30 of a 27,000 strong membership base were going to benefit from this work.

The level of involvement required was not anticipated in the beginning. Although having been present at the championships the year before, the Executive Officer and staff of the VLAA had not been involved in staging the event previously.

Much of the unexpected workload was due to the different competition rules used by the national board. At the time of the VLAA's hosting of the event, the National constitution had not been updated to incorporate electronic timing systems into the event.

This issue caused much frustration within the office (which uses electronic timing for every event). Not only were stop watches required to be purchased for the single day event but they had to ensure officials controlling them on the day were properly trained.

The non-competition aspects of hosting the event caused the largest problems, due to the VLAA's lack of expertise in these areas. This included the organisation of accommodation, rental cars, buses and entertainment for the athletes.

A significant financial commitment was also required from VLAA to successfully stage the event. The budget of \$22,000 set from the National Body is the same regardless of the host state's different financial climate, causing quite significant blow-outs in states such as NSW and Victoria. The real costs of the event were closer to \$35,000.

### **4.3 Objective in involvement**

The event is not sought voluntarily, however works on a rotation system throughout the state offices.

The objective in the VLAA's involvement was to:

- Allow Victoria's elite athletes to compete against the best in the country.
- Promote championships as an incentive to remain in the sport
- Promote officiating in their sport - increase their pool of officials for their state championships
- Increase the profile of Little Athletics in Victoria.

### **4.4 Evaluation whether objective was achieved**

The Victorian little athletes who competed gained a real sense of achievement, not only from making the team, but in performing against athletes from across the country.

The VLAA were successful in generating enthusiasm amongst their officials in the years leading up to the championships, especially for the state championships. Their promotions of the National championships even encouraged a number of past little athletes to return to officiate so they could be part of the Nationals.

The event attracted outside interest in the sport through a double page spread of photos in the Herald Sun. The Minister of Sport and Recreation attended the opening ceremony.

#### **4.5 Hours invested by paid staff**

Planning began 3 years prior and during the lead up, 2 paid VLAA staff members were working full-time on the event.

Several university students were also utilised in the office before the event.

#### **4.6 Volunteers**

##### **4.6.1 Role of Volunteers**

Leading up to the event university students studying sports administration were recruited to work in the office. These students were of great assistance to the staff and event.

All 250 officials required at the championships were volunteers. The number required was set from the National Body. At the State Championships only 150 officials are required so the VLAA took many steps to ensure that an extra 100 would be available on the day.

As the championships only come to Victoria every seven years they had to market the event quite extensively to the officials and educate them what they were about. The fact that the officials were also going to have to pay \$150 for their uniform made this even more important.

The VLAA began calling for expressions of interest 3 years out from the event, and at all events leading up to the championships they handed brochures out to the officials. These also included details of the financial contribution required. During the year leading up to the event, 6-7 letters were sent to constantly remind them of the day.

As the officials were from venues right across the state they made sure that they had the uniforms early enough for them to try on at lead-up events.

The volunteers were provided with recognition throughout the event, beginning with the opening ceremony where they all marched on with the athletes.

#### 4.6.2 Volunteer Training

All officials wanting to volunteer at the National Championships were required to officiate in the same positions at the State Championships, which were used as training run.

Meetings were also held prior to the event to brief officials of the different national rulings. At these meetings all officials were provided with a detailed folder describing their role on the day and further information about the event.

Information in this folder included; differences in rule changes...

Officials undertaking timing roles were specially trained to use the stop watches and where possible, officials were sourced from country venues who still use this timing method.

#### 4.7 Event Relationships

The VLAA was required to report to the National board and implement their requirements as directed. Although the board is present at all National Championships they have never directly hosted the event, therefore they lacked an understanding of the problems some of their requirements posed.

#### 4.8 Legacy for Little Athletics

One of the most helpful legacies from the championships, which will assist the future running of the event, was the creation of a manual containing copies of all letters sent, etc which was handed to each other state. As a State only hosts the event every eight years, often new personnel will be responsible each time.

## **5.0 CASE STUDY FOUR**

### **Sail Melbourne International Regatta**

#### **5.1 Size/Type of Event**

The Sail Melbourne International Regatta comprises eight Core Events plus a number of support National and State Championships. The events are held at various host club venues on Port Phillip, Westernport and around Regional Victoria over a three week period.

This event is conducted annually from December 27 to January 20. It attracts approximately 900 entries, 1800 competitors and with coaches, officials and supporters, numbers exceeding 3000 people.

A five year agreement between Yachting Victoria and the State Government has seen the event receive significant financial support. This is reflected in the events ability to deliver an estimated \$5-7 million economic benefit to Victoria.

#### **5.2 SSA's Level of Involvement**

Yachting Victoria owns the event and has underwritten the financial liability. A separate Sail Melbourne Management Committee representing stakeholders has been formed to oversee the delivery of the event. (see organisation structure).

The Management Committee is comprised of Government, Club and Yachting Victoria representatives.

A Regatta Manager and Administrator have been employed and they are responsible for the overall management of the event. The Regatta Manager reports to the Management Committee and liaises directly with the Organisation.

#### **5.3 Objective in Involvement**

Whilst the regatta has specific objectives outlined in its Business Plan, the management team have realised that this event presents a great opportunity through which Yachting Victoria can leverage activities to achieve mutual objectives. The regatta has outlined an extensive list of objectives for the 2002 event in their Business Plan. These have been reproduced below;

- To provide to Yachting Victoria an increased public of sailing and of the suitability of Port Phillip as a world class sailing venue.
- To conduct the highest standard international sailing regatta in the world, having regard at all times to the financial impact upon Yachting Victoria.
- To ensure compliance with the Funding Agreement in the best interests of the principal stakeholders, SGV and Yachting Victoria.
- Maximise the economic benefit to the State of Victoria in both the short and longer term.
- To foster the participation of all Sail Melbourne stakeholders including the Government and Corporate sectors as well as the local and international sailing community, the media and general public.
- To conduct a sailing regatta in the safest possible manner taking into account all potential hazards and safety concerns via the implementation of a comprehensive risk management plan.
- To approach and complete every task of the event management process with integrity and commitment to the success of the Sail Melbourne International Regatta.
- To deliver a sailing regatta which will be a benchmark in the professional delivery and conduct of world sailing events.
- To implement quality systems to facilitate excellence in event management of sailing.
- To foster a high degree of co-operation between event managers, race officials, competitors, media representatives, volunteers and corporate supporters so that each participant may derive the maximum level of satisfaction from their involvement in the event.
- To enhance the impact of technological advances on the management of sailing regattas, via the implementation of Internet based systems.
- To enhance the development of clubs through access to infrastructure development opportunities wherever possible.

#### **5.4 Evaluation of objectives**

A comprehensive list of reporting procedures required for each regatta has been provided by the Department of State Development in the Funding and Service Agreement. This agreement stipulates

Extensive evaluations have been established by Sail Melbourne to ensure quality feedback is received from the event which can assist its improvement in years to come. Individual de-briefing sessions were held with all stakeholders, including the local councils, all clubs, sponsors (corporate and government). All material was noted and included in the final report.

Following the individual session, a larger information session was held in which the plans for 2002 were announced.

## **5.5 Hours invested by paid staff**

As mentioned earlier, two staff members are employed full time throughout the year to work on this event, A Regatta Manager and Administrator.

## **5.6 Volunteers**

### **5.6.1 Role of Volunteers**

Volunteers are what make this event so successful and are relied upon in many diverse roles, from the Chairman of both the management and organising committees to the many officials required on the water for each event.

The majority of volunteers are recruited from the various host clubs to make up the race management teams as well as with the assistance of activities off the water.

A race management team is required for each race, comprising between 5-60 officers depending on the event's size. For the major events (Olympic and Invited Classes), 3 courses are running simultaneously with each course requiring a race officer who oversees the event, a principle race officer (on the shore) and a team of 15 race assistant officers. Race assistants are responsible for tasks such as setting marks, starting the race, clearing the boats over the line, and driving rescue boats.

Other roles away from the water undertaken by volunteers include co-ordinating the results centre, operating the computer system (eg updating the internet), making lunches and managing the boat traffic on the trolleys before and at the conclusion of each event.

### **5.6.2 Recruiting volunteers**

As the Sail Melbourne Regatta is recognised as a grade one event, (the best in the southern hemisphere) sailing enthusiasts are very keen to be involved. The event provides opportunities for officials who are looking to improve their current ranking, as race officers need to have been involved with 3 grade one events to gain International standard. Certain points are allocated to the event.

To assist in the recruitment of officials and to improve the standard of officials for the coming year's event, Yachting Victoria held an intensive weekend race management workshop. Presenters included international race officers and the Sail Melbourne patron, Mark Turnbull. Following the workshop, all participants were personally asked to be involved in the event.

### 5.6.3 Volunteer Recognition

As mentioned above, race officers receive official recognition of their involvement with this grade one event, by earning a certain number of points to assist them with their advancement.

Volunteers are all provided with a Sail Melbourne polo shirt, which from all accounts is highly valued, as it is not made available through any other means. A large family party is also held at the end of the two weeks to thank all volunteers for their efforts.

### 5.6.4 Volunteer Training

Sail Melbourne recognises the important role Victoria's yachting clubs and club members have in ensuring the event is successful. To assist all the host clubs, further workshops were conducted on relevant topics including; how to deal with VIP's and sponsors, website and software support and also public relations. A professional publicist conducted this final session and skilled the clubs on how to attract support from their local paper.

This final topic was of particular importance, as in the analysis of the previous years regatta, Sail Melbourne spent a large amount of money producing their own news grab and delivered this as a complete package to all television and radio stations. This was a large investment for only a small return, so now greater emphasis is placed on generating local interest, which is more time and cost effective.

As well as extensive workshops, all host clubs received a detailed event manual, which is updated each year. Designed in a folder system, it allows volunteers to receive the section they are responsible for, without needing additional copies of the entire resource.

## 5.7 Event relationships

As this is the largest sailing event in Australia, (and the Southern Hemisphere), the Sail Melbourne management team are required to work closely with a number of other organisations. These groups include the International and Australian Yachting Federations, State Government Departments, including Sport and Recreation Victoria and Tourism Victoria and Local Government Authorities.

Liaison with the Australian Yachting Federation is essential, and is generally regarding event scheduling. The Sail Melbourne regatta is part of a bigger "Sail Downunder" series which is designed to encourage competitors to travel around Australia and New Zealand to compete.

Representatives from both Sport and Recreation Victoria and Tourism Victoria are involved in the event's Management Committee. Whilst the standard of the event attracts "die hard" sailors, the majority of competitors plan their holidays around the various class championships. For this reason, selling Melbourne and Victoria as a great tourist destination becomes more important to the overall numbers of entries, as well as the events economic impact on the state. To assist in this promotion, Tourism Victoria's resources are used and links are formed with travel operators via the website.

From an Event Manager's perspective, the relationships involved are quite complex, as there are two boards to report to; the Committee of Management and the board of Yachting Victoria.

## **5.8 Legacy for Yachting Victoria**

The management and organising committee's of the Sail Melbourne International Regatta realise that an ideal opportunity exists for the development of sailing and introduction of the sport to the wider community.

To assist in this development the event supports the VYC's Go Sailing weekend which is held at approximately 50 affiliated yacht clubs throughout Victoria in mid-November. Sail Melbourne ambassadors visit a number of venues to encourage the young people into the sport and provide valuable community exposure.

By attending the event management workshops, yachting clubs throughout Melbourne have improved their skills in a number of areas. These skills are designed to assist them in not only the Sail Melbourne regatta, but also in years to come.

## **6.0 Tips to take-away!**

### **6.1 Set Clear Objectives**

Before launching into any detailed planning ask yourself:

Why are you doing it?

If your organisation doesn't have clear goals from the start, then the event is more likely to be unsuccessful and irrelevant to other aspects of the organisations functions.

The relevancy and benefit of major events can be greatly enhanced if they are used as a platform through which to run associated programs, (such as talent identification programs and coaching workshops). Brainstorm all the activities your sport undertakes for the year, such as membership drives, umpiring/coaching workshops and see how these could fit into your event.

The Australian Masters Softball Championships did this by inviting Australian players to hold clinics for the children of parents participating. They had an active target market and were able to generate great interest in the sport through this initiative.

### **6.2 Event manuals**

Providing host associations with as much information as possible is important and will not only reduce the calls and work from the State associations end, but will give greater empowerment to the host association whilst minimising the chance of errors occurring.

Document information about the successful and unsuccessful aspects of the event for future years and encourage other state bodies to do the same to assist the event's growth and to ensure it remains relevant to its target market. This is especially important when the event rotates around each state as it may be up to eight years before the organisation plays host again. In this situation, significant staff/committee changeovers are likely to have occurred, reducing the ability to rely on past experiences of the organisational team.

Your event manual is your number one risk management tool as it is in this that all possible risks, along with the actions to reduce the likelihood of these occurring, should be detailed.

### **6.3 Be flexible**

Often events which have been staged for many years continue to be held, despite reducing trends in entry numbers. This is likely to occur in organisations who don't properly document the strengths and weaknesses of their annual events and fail to receive reliable feedback from participants.

As sporting organisations members change, so too must the events to reflect these different needs. Netball Victoria's pro-active move towards staging Association Championships, rather than continuing with their Country Championships, is a successful example of how event flexibility doesn't have to jeopardise tradition.

#### **6.4 Recruiting Volunteers**

If the event isn't a regular occurrence on the association's calendar it may need to be marketed quite extensively to generate interest from officials and volunteers. This is particularly important when you require volunteers to make cost sacrifices (eg uniforms) and large numbers are required.

The training which you intend to provide volunteers can be used as an incentive provided these skills are transferable to their daily club operations (as in the Sail Melbourne example).

Many university and TAFE courses require students to undertake a field placement of varying lengths for successful completion of their course. Events provide a wide scope for these placements and if the tasks are well designated, students can contribute greatly to their co-ordination.

#### **6.5 Volunteer Training**

The level of volunteer training required will obviously depend on the size of the event and the tasks required to be undertaken by volunteers. Whilst it is not practical for event organisers to have the same expectations of a volunteer as a staff member, the relationship should be similar.

Although smaller scale events may not have formal training procedures in place, volunteers should receive a Volunteer Kit or Manual.

The contents should include information about the following;

- The Event Objectives
- The Event structure - staff, board and volunteers
- The roles, expectations and responsibilities of Volunteers
- Event procedures - eg in case of evacuation/emergency
- Important contact details
- Volunteer benefits - clothing, meals, parking/travel allowances etc.

Lead-up events are a great way to train officials and volunteers and get increased support for these smaller events. The Victorian Little Athletics Association did this successfully, by requiring all volunteers interested in being involved with the National Championships to assist with the State Championships earlier in the year.

## **6.6 Share non-competition responsibilities**

If your organisation does not have the expertise or resources to co-ordinate extensive off-field arrangements, encourage the participants to take on greater responsibility for these areas. This could include the arranging of travel and accommodation, car hire and possibly entertainment. Providing a detailed list of appropriate contacts will encourage this.

For large events expecting many spectators, forming links with travel companies is highly recommended.

## **6.7 Budget negotiations**

When required to work to a budget set from the National Body, it is important that the differences in costs incurred between states are taken into account. The amount designated for accommodation for example will be a lot different from year to year, depending on the events location.

Where appropriate, this distinction needs to be made at the time the National Body is budgeting their activities for the year as it is unlikely additional funds will be able to be allocated following this period.

## **6.8 Committees**

Assign committee members with specific roles and job descriptions well prior to the event. This encourages committee members to take ownership of their designated area and enables the reporting process at meetings to be more effective.

In the situation of committee members leaving close to the event, their position will be easier to pick up by someone else if such procedures are in place.

## **6.9 Event Relationships**

Events provide great opportunities to develop new relationships as well as strengthen existing ones with various stakeholders.

Clearly define roles as early as possible for all parties assisting with the event, such as sponsors, venue managers, local and state government authorities.

Meeting and exceeding sponsorship expectations is essential. Providing host associations with relevant training and information concerning this is a good idea, as in the Sail Melbourne case study.

Debriefing sessions with all event stakeholders is highly recommended, provided the recommendations are supported by proper documentation for the following year.

### **6.10 Partnership development with multi-sport festivals**

Multi-sport festivals draw large participant numbers and spectators and are great ways to leverage individual sporting events. However it is unrealistic to assume that participants in these events are going to convert to your sport on a regular basis without developing and implementing a marketing strategy to attract such people.

Individual sports have a lot to offer multi-sport festivals, such as their technical expertise, facilities and volunteer base. All of these assets can be strategically used when developing a partnership arrangement.

### **6.11 The time and place**

Although there are benefits in keeping major events at the same venue, moving the tournament around to various regions allows different areas to gain long term benefits from the event.

If a tendering system is in place, then it's important that the decision made is equitable and looked upon with the view of really improving the sport in that particular area.

By holding an annual major event the same time each year, such as the Easter Break, there is the opportunity for participants to build up tradition with the event. Although the Softball Masters Championships are fairly new, many participants keep returning as it as a great way to catch up with friends, play softball and take a holiday at the same time.