



# Fencing New Zealand

(Fencing New Zealand Incorporated)

## President's Report 2020

Normally I would start by saying something like "it has been a busy year on and off the piste" but unfortunately this year this statement is only half correct.

About the only positive thing to come out of Covid-19 is this report is somewhat shorter than it would have been!

Unfortunately, as we all know fencing activities in 2020 were significantly impacted in New Zealand and internationally due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Whilst most of our National events were cancelled last year, compared with the rest of the world we did more fencing than almost any other country, continuing with club activities in between lock downs and holding several regional events.

In fact, the number of entries at the regional events held across the country on what would have been the National Championship weekend were exceptional, we even had people competing in different cities on the same weekend. These events were a real credit to all involved.

Another positive for me was the increase in female entries and entries in the Sabre events, which have been lower than we would like for a while now.

One major disappointment from the year for me was the impact on the proposed high-performance programme, but I am pleased to report work is now back underway to get this launched soon so watch this space.

We were incredibly lucky to receive Covid-19 related financial support from the FIE and Sport New Zealand, some of which will be tagged to this important programme this coming year.

Good progress has been made in coach development working with the Oceania Federation and the other member countries and I am incredibly pleased the FeNZ coach accreditation is now in place.

New Zealand has also been highly active in referee development, with Nicola Shackleton taking a lead role in the development and delivery of the OFC virtual referee courses which are currently being held.

The on-going development of the four FeNZ Commissions is critical in my opinion if we are to deliver on the potential which is obviously there. I would like to thank the commission heads, Kyle, Dave, Hamish and Anna and their respective teams for all their hard work in 2020.

Funding is and will continue to be a barrier to the development of our sport locally and I am pleased to say some good preparation work was completed on a funding strategy last year which I am hopeful will result in the development of alternative funding streams in 2021.

I would like to personally thank my fellow board members, Vanda, Nicole, Alice, David, Richard, Ross and Steve for the hard work and time they put into their roles. Giving up regular Sunday evenings for board meetings and at other times through the year when I know they would rather be spending time with their families or perhaps even fencing!

A special thanks needs to go to Amanda Hopkins who has again this year not only performed the Secretary General role but also filled the Treasurer position. Thank you for all your support Amanda.

I would also like to acknowledge Vicci Lamb who represents FeNZ on the board of the Commonwealth Fencing Federation and Ken Claridge, who stood down last year after years of service, representing FeNZ on the Oceania Board, most recently as Vice President.

At the time of writing this report, the New Zealand and the World still faces on-going challenges with Covid-19. Things are starting to show signs of progress though with vaccine programmes moving on now with some haste.

It is still too early to say if full international fencing will return this year, but we need to keep focussed on the two Oceania events, the Junior and Open Championships, that we are due to hold this year.

We are, however, likely to have to make some tough decisions going forward. Just recently the Board made the decision to not send a team to the World Cadet and Junior Championships. When making these decisions, the Board does so with the health and safety of all involved as its main priority. In addition, the ability to currently obtain Managed Isolation spots on return continues to be a factor.

It just leaves me to wish you all a successful and above all safe 2021 fencing year and I am looking forward to working with all of you on growing and developing the sport we all love.



Mark Rance

**President – Fencing New Zealand**

**10<sup>th</sup> March 2021**