



# Fencing New Zealand

(Fencing New Zealand Incorporated)

## President's Report 2019

Again, it has been a busy year on and off the piste and as with most years there have been some highs and some lows.

This past year has seen us lose two wonderful figures of fencing in New Zealand. Firstly, Linda Faye Boyd, past secretary and treasurer of Fencing North, and an avid supporter of not just her daughter Alice, but the development of women's fencing in general. Linda was always totally focused on the athletes rather than herself. She will be greatly missed.

We also lost someone who many considered the matriarch of Fencing North and the Auckland Swords Club – Gaylene Ongley. Gaylene's passion and energy for the sport she loved is going to be hard to replace and she leaves a big hole not just in Auckland fencing, but fencing New Zealand-wide.

Looking at our achievements on the piste, I cannot remember a year where New Zealand has picked up as many medals internationally.

We had podium finishes in Australian AFF events and National Championships, from William Bishop in Men's Epee, Anna Chalton in Women's Open Epee and Mary Black in Women's Veterans Epee.

Our younger fencers also achieved outstanding results and I would like to acknowledge the achievements of Lena Jacob who won the Australian Women's Foil AFF2 Open Championship, the Junior and Under 23 titles and finished 8<sup>th</sup> in the European Cadet Circuit event in Poland. In addition, cadet fencer Chantelle May picked up a bronze in the Australian Under 23 Championships.

It is great to see these results continue in 2020 with Lena retaining her Australian Junior title and Charlie Bioletti and Matthew Valkenburg taking out silver and bronze in the Junior Men's Epee.

Of course, none of these results would have been possible without the coaches. I would like to thank not just the coaches of the above-mentioned athletes, but all the coaches across New Zealand for your hard work and dedication over the past year.

It was great to see the standard of our domestic events continue to improve and it was good to see entry numbers in the Sabre and men's Epee events increasing.

The high standard of organisation is also worthy of mention as this has been a key focus area for the FeNZ Board and Officiating Commission.

One of the challenges for future years however is going to be maintaining this high standard. If we are to continue to provide high quality safe events, with good venues and good quality referees and officials, we will need to increase revenue to cover the increased costs.

The development of the FeNZ Commissions was a key activity of the Board and it is pleasing to see the results of this from the other commissions, Selection, Coaching and the newly formed Athletes Commission starting to flow through.

The Board and Commission heads worked on the 2019 / 2020 Strategic Priorities early last year and whilst progress has been slower than I would have liked in some areas, we have ticked off a few important things including the long overdue refresh of our web site.

Good work has been on-going, and you will see some of this in the areas of referee and coach accreditation and development very soon.

We were very lucky to receive financial assistance from the FIE and Oceania Fencing Federation in the form of equipment grants and funding to assist athletes attend World and Zonal events and enable FeNZ to send Hamish Clarke and Leasa Ogilvie to referee and DT development courses in Taiwan.

Funding is and will continue to be a barrier to the development of our sport locally and developing alternative funding streams is going to be a focus area for the Board in 2020.

I would like to personally thank the board and commission members for the work they have put in over the past year, all of which has been in their own time. Also, to the regional boards and volunteers who again put in their own time to develop the sport of fencing locally.

Special thanks need to go to Amanda Hopkins who has not only performed the Secretary General role but also filled the Treasurer position.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Vicci Lamb, past Secretary General, who has stood down as Central President and therefore her position on the FeNZ board.

At the time of writing this report, the World is facing challenges with Covid-19. It has already had an impact on our sport Internationally and I suspect it will do very soon on our activities locally.

We are most likely going to have to make some tough decisions soon on our domestic events and we have already postponed the Oceania Under 20's. Please be assured we will

be following the advice of the Government and Ministry of Health and any decisions made will be done so with one thing objective, the health and safety of our members.

It just leaves me to wish you all the best for the 2020 Fencing year and am looking forward to working with all of you on growing and developing the sport we all love.



**Mark Rance**

**President – Fencing New Zealand**

**13<sup>th</sup> March 2020**