

Report to 2022 AGM from the President

Michael Smith "Gandalf" 29 September 2022

Hi All,

Well, this is it, my final report as your President of the Waikato Lacrosse Association and I would like to reflect upon the year that has been.

The year started off well with the AGM being called, the outgoing executive committee stepped down at the end of their team as per-normal, and after years of service they decided to not stand for re-election and I would like to thank them for their time. The election process started as normal, and then "normal lifted the building".

There were no nominations to fill the now vacant positions.

The WLA now faced a constitutional crisis, with no executive committee the WLA could not exist and we faced extinction. Calls to New Zealand lacrosse "NZL" confirmed, without an executive committee the WLA would no longer be part of NZL and under our constitution, all assets would be sold and profits given to charity. A situation no organization wants to find itself in.

A special general meeting "SGM" was then called, and this is where I and my fellow executive committee members came into the picture, and after our first meeting it was very clear that with the collective skills and passions that sat around that table we were here to do more than "just keep the lights on". The job of running the WLA or for that matter any business or organization can be quite complex and when you try to hit the ground running and the ground is moving faster than your legs, you will sometimes stumble and fall and skin your knees, and over this year we had to put on a few sticking plasters.

Our first big challenge was the covid-19 virus and the lockdown that followed.

Navigating the ever-changing regulations and how they applied to life was challenging enough, but with trying to balance that with our sport and personal freedoms was a bigger challenge, and I like to thank you all for helping our lacrosse community through that difficult time.

The core business of the WLA is "sticks in hands and boots on grass", which seem a simple task, but to achieve this you need three things: knowledge, finance, and people power. Over the year we have been working hard on all three. We found there was a wealth of knowledge, but that knowledge was sometimes hard to find. When it came to financing, the executive went through the double the normal process of an audit, having to do two years' worth.

And finely people power, our tireless volunteers. The WLA could not run without you, you are the backbone of this organization. We could always do with more volunteers, as most of you wear multiple hats. To this end with the introduction of “friendly manager” and “Xero accounting” we expect this will free up a lot of time for our hard-working volunteers.

How let us talk about our core business, wow what a great year of lacrosse. Not only have we managed to get “sticks in hands and boots on grass”, our boys and girls, young men and women have excelled not only on the local, national but also the international stage of lacrosse, and as I have said before I look forward to watching the next generation of New Zealand representative’s on the world stage.

I believe the future is looking bright for lacrosse in the Waikato, but we do face challenges, and some of these are beyond your control. With the economic Fallout of covert and war in Ukraine that new lacrosse ball will cost more, and so will the drive to the game, which will have an impact on the bank of Mum and Dad. The answers to that could be as simple as the old-fashioned fundraising sausage sizzle and carpooling or as complex as corporate sponsorship and ubers.

Recruiting “people power” will be yet another challenge we will have to face, innovation will be the key. It could be as forward thinking as Club run initiative as with Te Awamutu Marist and Suburbs clubs, and their 3v3 competition and open days. Or as simple as going to a park and throwing a ball around and just saying to bystanders “do you want to have a go”. It’s a tried and true technique for recruiting players, and players bring helpers.

I would like to close by saying a massive thank you to my fellow committee members, you have gone above and beyond that initial call to duty, and I have valued your wisdom and friendship over this last year. We have achieved so much more than “just keeping the light on “and I am proud of what we have accomplished.

Michael Smith “Gandalf”
President WLA “retired”