



Australian Rogaining Association Inc.

President's Annual Report

2023-24

Presented to AGM 19th August 2024

I am pleased to deliver my first President's report, having stepped into the role at the last AGM in September 2023. I would like to thank David Rowlands as the Immediate Past President, for his very substantial contribution to the administration of the association and the development of the sport over many decades, and for his continuing support on the ARA Executive. Thanks also to Mike Aylott (who stepped down from the Treasurer job last September) for his many years of dedicated service and for continuing to support the new Treasurer Peter Blyton throughout the last year.

Reports from each of the eight State/Territory Associations

I am constantly amazed by the dedication and skills of our many volunteers that keep our sport alive throughout Australia. I have asked each of the state/territory association Presidents to give a short summary of the highlights of the year and the challenges they are facing, to give us an overview of what's been happening across the country.

SARA

Three events have been held so far this year with numbers slightly down on the previous 2 years, however we have received an excellent entry number for our upcoming 24-hour State Championship event to be held on the 20/21 July.

Highlights for the association would include the "Dream Team" (the George sisters and Meredith Norman) successfully retaining their World Women's U23 title at the 2023WRC. Also having the support from the SARA committee and other State associations to bid for the 2027 WRC.

The usual challenges consist of land access and volunteer support for our events. SARA representatives made a presentation to a State Parliament committee regarding rather draconic access issues when using ForestrySA land and we are hopeful for an improved relationship. In regards to volunteers, we have made enquires with our local 4WD clubs to see if any of their members would be interested in attending our remote located events and assisting with our Safety Patrols which usually requires a 4WD vehicle (less of our members have a suitable vehicle for this type of activity or a willingness to have their vehicle used on what can sometimes be challenging tracks). For our upcoming State Championship event we will have the services of at least one couple from the local SA Adventurers 4WD club. Will see how this goes and can report back at the AGM.

The committee over the last couple of years has been working on "Risk Management" issues which were identified at an internal workshop in January 2023 and re-visited in January 2024. Most of our local councils and government bodies require detailed Risk Management Plans for a Public event to be held within their area of responsibility.

Since Covid we have dropped or significantly reduced providing food at our shorter events. For our two bush events (15hr roving & State Championships) SARA has been doing a mass cook-up at a local school kitchen and storing the food buckets (food grade quality) in an industrial deep freeze unit, until needed at an event where they are heated and served by our own volunteers or a local community group. Not sure how long we will be able to maintain this practice.

RTas

Highlights: Ran the postponed (flooded-out during 2022) Midlands Muster 24-hr event; will run 4 events in 2024. Launceston Metrogaine (last one was in 2008), Hobart Metrogaine, Bush/Farm 12-hr and a highlands lakes Paddlegaine. Entries remain high.

Initiatives: We are looking at formalising our roles (both committee and event-based) and will be developing procedures and duties based on these roles.

Issues: Still thin on expertise. Key volunteers tend to be people who have done it before. We are vulnerable with Navlight, mostly because we normally use it once a year. We have sufficient mappers, we scrape by on admin staff, we normally outsource catering (which is tasty and organisationally advantageous, but more costly), and we are having problems finding new recruits for overall event coordinators.

Thanks to the ARA for the funding towards the battery and inverter system.

NSWRA

Highlights in the past year:

- Developed a new **Strategic Plan** for the next 5 years, with a goal of continuing to build and deliver stimulating and challenging rogaines to our members. Some of the key initiatives are to tap into the expertise of our members by setting up sub-committees for Events and for Marketing (previously the domain of individual Committee members), broadening our relationships with like-minded groups and commercial entities, plan for a changing rogaing demographic as our experienced hands get older and our newcomers need to connect in new and different ways.
- We ran **9 events** over the past 12 months and total competitors are back to better than pre-covid levels (about 10% up). Mix of events was 5 bush (of which 3 were off-track), 4 urban and 1 mixed.
- Our **biggest challenge** is finding event coordinators. We're addressing this by lessening the effort required to manage events through role sharing, training and mentoring. It's hard to sell something resembling hard work to people who just want to rogaing! The new Events Subcommittee will plan further ahead and identify where we need critical resources.
- The highlight of the year was a **Navigation Workshop** that was held the day before the annual Paddy Pallin Rogaine. It was well attended and aside from having a great showground venue and superb rogaing countryside, offered attendees direct access to about 15 of the most experienced rogaing in NSW as coaches. The opportunity to take a mentor out on the course on a real event (non-competitively) was invaluable and is something that we will try to incorporate into future events. The training day facilitated social connections that don't normally happen at regular events – this is a key driver for retention of new members.

VRA

2023 was a busy and successful year for the Victorian Rogaining Association. We ran 8 events for 2689 participants, including 6 bush events, a CBD-gaine and a Metrogaine. The April bush rogaine was cancelled due to uncertainty around planned burns. A new approach to training included a suite of introductory and upskilling opportunities for a range of skill levels. Five online sessions attracted 161 participants. We have 27 coaches available for on-course training events, and the regular training table set up near Admin. at each event has been popular with less experienced or rusty rogainers. The Committee focused on ensuring the sustainability of rogaining as a sport. Our scaled down and partly outsourced catering model has reduced the amount of equipment and number of volunteers needed. We reviewed our governance against best practice guidelines and found our governance is robust and sustainable. We will trial a new model of event team management in 2025, where a complete organising team is formed months ahead to plan and run a specific rogaine, supported by the Competition subcommittee and mentors.

Key challenges and opportunities:

- the increasing difficulties of gaining land access and permits. We aim to explore simplifying the permit application process and getting better information about planned burns, as we have had problems around this again this year (2024).
- Volunteers for both one-off and longer-term management roles. Our strategy is to develop better training and mentoring, to encourage members to step into these roles; to give stronger recognition/rewards to volunteers; and to maintain the training program to build rogainers' confidence and enjoyment in the sport, hopefully leading to longer-term engagement including volunteering.

WARA

- Aside from hosting the ARC, WARA has had a busy year with an update to our online registration system to the Cognito Forms system that Paul has produced, plus the adoption of the Navlight scoring system after a year of research for a new system. Both systems are performing well and we are very happy with them. An update of our website is the next item planned, plus further work on improving our Volunteer database and associated processes.
- WARA has benefitted from state government funding in the form of \$40,000 for the second year in a row, plus we were successful in getting a grant for hosting a national championship as well. With ARA not being a "sporting body" as defined by Government, we will need to explore other funding models. Interested in exploring the ARA idea of collaborating on an application for the next round of the PlayWell grants which do not require Australian Sports Council recognition.
- With regards to volunteers, we tried giving free entry to vols (in 2021-2022) but found it too onerous to administer and have started this year to award a \$30 gift voucher to each vol at the event which is working well, although we want to continue improving in this area as it is still a big sink of energy for us.
- Finding land to hold events, particularly with ability to camp is proving to be increasingly difficult. The main issue with camping is a relatively recent blanket ban on camping in all WA State forests by the regulatory agency DBCA, a significant increase of rolling planned burns, disease risk areas (dieback) and water catchment area issues. Our plan is to create a working group to lobby for increased access.

ACTRA

The twelve months since last year’s AGM have seen somewhat mixed fortunes for ACTRA. We continue to benefit enormously from our participation numbers being bolstered by ANU students, who use many of our events as training and selection for their ‘Inward Bound’ (IB) navigation competition.

Unfortunately this rarely translates into InterVarsity success as the IB event often coincides with the AusChamps rogaine (editor’s note: ANU is still the most successful university at the InterVarsity champs), but the students bring a welcome buzz of enthusiasm to our Hash House – not to mention stiff competition in the Mixed, Youth and U30 ‘Z’ classes. They will hopefully be the future of our sport in their graduate years, as this swelling of our junior ranks also puts the declining numbers at the more experienced end of the spectrum into sharp relief, with MU and WU often now seeing only one or two participants (at most) – see attached table for 2023.

Every two years we try to hold a remote first aid course and a navigation workshop. 2024 was such a year, but unfortunately this year both had to be cancelled at the last minute – the former due to presenter illness and the latter following failure to obtain permission from the nature park landholder. Our Winter 4 Hour event was similarly cancelled when park ranger permission was not forthcoming. Our sport continues to grapple with the frustration of senior government officials welcoming our use of our fantastic bushland surrounds (ie taking a ‘Parks & Rec’ approach), with local parks officials taking a less positive approach based on supposed ecological elements (‘Parks & Cons’). We will continue to negotiate with the powers that be...

In the last year ACTRA members have competed impressively on the national and international stage, and we were pleased to share overall championship honours with NSWRA at the AusChamps in Goobang in September. As with so many sports, the shorter faster format rogaines continue to gain in popularity at the expense of longer, more distant events. Our perennial favourite Metrogaine and the now annual COVID-inspired Virtualgaine – both run around the suburban streets and fringes of Canberra – proved particularly popular, but numbers were down for the ACT Champs and Spring rogaines.

And finally of course a big thankyou to all our volunteers. This year their efforts have included a huge contribution to event catering after we lost the support of Hartley Lifecare following 19 years of involvement. Another work in progress...

2023 ACTRA Rogaines by class

Event	Duration	Teams	M	MJ	MV	MS	MU	W	WJ	WV	WS	WU	X	XJ	XV	XS	XU	F	MY	WY	XY	MZ	WZ	XZ
Twilight	3	63	15	2	6	2	1	10	1	5	2	1	37	0	6	1	0	8	4	1	3	-	-	-
Paddy Pallin	6	100	35	-	11	5	2	5	-	2	0	0	58	-	13	6	3	9	8	2	14	-	-	-
ACT Champs	8	39	8	-	1	1	0	4	-	2	0	0	24	-	4	0	1	5	1	1	4	6	2	9
	24	40	16	-	7	4	2	7	-	2	1	0	17	-	7	3	2	2	2	3	2	7	4	3
Virtual gaine	4	274																						
Metro gaine	6	163	67	2	19	11	4	45	1	9	1	0	51	1	11	3	0	9	29	26	19	-	-	-
W4H	4	75	20	-	2	1	1	14	-	7	1	1	41	-	8	1	0	13	3	5	0	-	-	-
Night/ Day	6	57	12	-	2	1	0	9	-	2	1	1	35	-	7	0	0	5	5	3	12	-	-	-
	5	65	18	-	3	1	0	9	-	2	1	0	36	-	2	0	0	2	12	7	21	-	-	-
Spring	8	50	11	-	3	2	0	7	-	3	1	0	32	-	6	2	1	9	1	2	5	-	-	-
	12	20	7	-	1	1	0	1	-	1	0	0	12	-	5	0	0	1	2	0	1			

QRA

As of August 12 QRA has held 5 competitive events in SEQ in 2024 plus a further 2 in FNQ.

The SEQ events consisted of a 4 hour Paddlegaine, 3 Hour mini/traingaine held the day after our annual training event for newer members, a 3/6 hour Metrogaine and separate 8 and 6/12 hour foot events. We are also holding our 15/24 hour QRA Championships on the weekend of 17/18 August and have a 3/6 hour Cyclegaine and an 8 hour UpsideDown scheduled for later this year in the SE and a 3/6 spur foot and 3/6 hour foot/Paddlegaine in FNQ.

As usual we find the shorter events to be better patronised with the longer events mostly being enjoyed by a smaller group of die hards. We have raised our entry fees this year to better ensure long term financial sustainability, and have invested in Garmin InReach devices to enhance communications between volunteer teams during events. We also held successful workshops on rogaing organisation and on map making for rogaining using QGIS.

NTRA

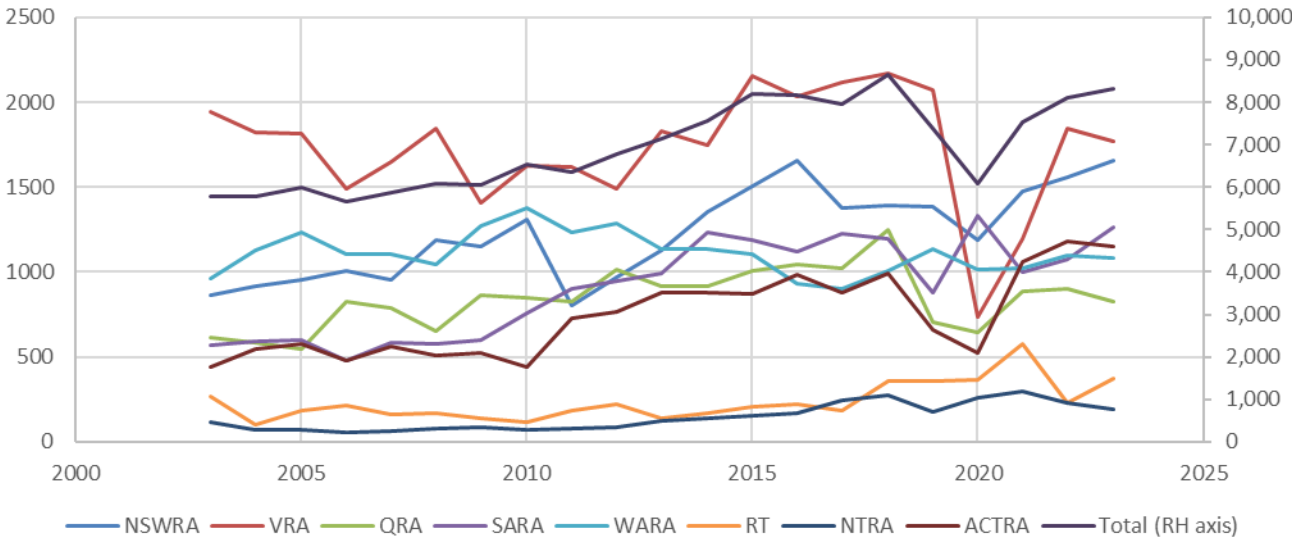
No report received.

Overall Calendar

The ARA’s 8 Member state and territory associations ran an extensive calendar of 24-hour rogaines, various shorter events, cycle rogaines, metrogaines and paddle events. Here is the national calendar of events held in 2023: [https://rogaine.asn.au/events/eventsbyyear/2023/-](https://rogaine.asn.au/events/eventsbyyear/2023/)

Membership

Membership/participation statistics collected by the ARA Treasurer indicate that total numbers in the sport increased slightly in 2023 to 8315. The graph below shows membership statistics since 2003. Post-covid growth appears to be slowing.



Finances

The Treasurer's Report for calendar year 2023 shows that the ARA's finances remain solid.

Since the 2022 AGM the Capitation fee has been reinstated at \$1 per head, due to the return of events and normalisation of Member income.

Insurance

The ARA continues to maintain public liability insurance, volunteer injury insurance and association insurance.

The Treasurer again negotiated competitive rates for renewal of our public liability insurance, which comes due in mid-December.

Our broker remains Arthur J. Gallagher & Co, with their contact details are on the ARA website:

<https://rogaine.asn.au/documents/insurance>

Technical Review of Accounts

Our former Treasurer Mike Aylott worked diligently for several years to collate documentation and review the finances ready for review.

The incoming Treasurer Peter Blyton has endeavoured to implement the recommendations of the review undertaken by John Gavens, as outlined in his report.

Australian and Australasian Championships

The 43rd Australian Rogaining Championship was organised by NSWRA on 30th Sep – 1st Oct in the Goobang National Park in central NSW. Organiser: Trevor Gollan Course Setters: David Williams, Ronny Taib

Rogaining NSW put on a very high quality event but it was tough going due to the hot conditions and sometimes difficult vegetation. It was a scenic course and the logistics, course setting and map were excellent.

David Baldwin and Julie Quinn successfully defended their overall Championship title ahead of Eric Lambers, Paul Monks and Tim Cochrane in second place and Keelan Birch, Tristan White and Ivan Koudashev in third.

Full results and detailed analysis are available here:

<https://rogaine-results.com/event/results/2023/australian-champs/24hr>

Additional photos and results are here:

<https://nswrogaining.org/2023-aus-champs/>

The 2023 Australasian Championships were hosted by NZRA near Tekapo on the South Island on 16-17 December. Australian rogainers well represented across age categories. Teams on the podium were Julie Quinn and David Baldwin (1st mixed open and veteran, 4th overall), Jeannie and Peggy Douglass (1st women's ultravets, 2nd supervets), Bella Lilford, Chloe Woodburn and Abby Kidson (1st women's youth), Richard Robinson and Viv Prince (2nd mixed ultravets, 3rd supervets), Paul Guard and Sally Lochhead (3rd mixed veterans), Sue Clarke and Walter Kelemen (3rd mixed ultravets) and E Wen Wong

and Thomas James (3rd mixed youth). A good number of other teams made the trip across the Tasman for the event.

Full results: <https://rogaine-results.com/event/results/2023/australasian-rogaine-champs/24hr>

WARA is organising the next Australasian Championship near Donnybrook, 3 hours South of Perth, on 7/8th September 2024.

The hosts for the following Australian Rogaining Championships and Intervarsity (according to the rotation schedule) are planned to be:

- 2025 – ACTRA – proposed date 15-16 March. Location: Snowy Mountains.
- 2026 – QRA – possible date 29-30 August. Location: Probably near Kingaroy, NW of Brisbane
- 2027 – RTas

There is also provision for NTRA to hold the Australian Championship at any time in the future when suitable. ARA Council has a standing offer in support of NTRA to facilitate this opportunity, such as via event underwriting and coordination of volunteers.

Technical Sub-Committee

Chairman: David Baldwin

At the 2023 AGM, two alterations to the Technical Regulations, as proposed by the Technical Committee, were passed:

- Age is now calculated by year of birth, rather than date of birth.
- The Veteran category was changed from age 40-55 to age 45-55.

These amendments ensured that the ARA regulations remain aligned with the IRF Rules of Rogaining.

Full rules: <https://rogaine.asn.au/documents/rules-and-standards/rules-of-rogaining-and-technical-regulations-2023>

A proposal is being presented at this year's AGM to tighten up the wording of R7 to make it clear that GPS watches are forbidden. There is also a discussion item on setting mapping standards for the ARC.

State Grants

The ARA Grants Policy enables the ARA Executive to allocate up to 40% of annual capitation income to grants to support the sport through Member projects and capital expenditure. These are relatively low value grants, best suited to assisting the smaller associations.

Grant monies were distributed to QRA as a 50% contribution towards purchasing debrillators and to RTas as a 50% contribution towards a new battery system.

Grant applications are encouraged before the deadline of 30 November each year. The ARA's grant policy is on the website: <https://rogaine.asn.au/documents/policy/grant-policy>

2027 World Rogaining Championships awarded to Australia

Australia has been awarded the 2027 World Rogaining Championships with a unanimous vote. Congratulations to the bid team, and especially Craig Colwell who put a lot of effort in to get us to this point. The proposal is for the event to be delivered by a team drawn from all of the state/territory associations, led by Craig and the SARA crew.

We look forward to welcoming the world to the Flinders Ranges in September 2027!

Here is the winning bid document:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1zuC9atgBhNQGY092Re35iL5PfoS0_93J/view?usp=sharing

The Australian WRCs to date have been:

- 1992 Beechworth, Victoria (VRA)
- 1996 Mt Singleton, Western Australia (WARA)
- 2006 Coonabarabran, New South Wales (NSWRA)
- 2016 Alice Springs, Northern Territory (ARA/NTRA)

International Rogaining and the IRF

The ARA is formally represented on the International Rogaining Federation (IRF) by President Paul Guard and delegate David Baldwin.

International Development Fund (IDF)

Convenor: ARA Treasurer Peter Blyton.

There has been no further activity by the IDF Committee this year. The International Development Fund provides an opportunity for ARA to leverage its skills and resources to assist the growth of rogaining internationally. Members are encouraged to suggest projects or initiatives that could benefit from funding. Support guidelines are on the ARA website:

<https://rogaine.asn.au/documents/policy/international-development-fund>

World Rogaining Championships 2025

The World Championship will be reverting to a biennial cycle, with the next WRC in 2025. The IRF has formally awarded the event to the Spanish Rogaining Association (IbeRogaine), to be held near Madrid on 5/6th July 2025. The WRC will comprise hilly, mostly forested terrain at altitude from 1000 to 2000 metres.

Information Systems

The entry system developed by QRA has been successfully adopted by WARA, ACTRA, NSWRA, QRA and VRA.

The ARA Executive maintains the National Calendar on the ARA website, together with the archive of ARC results, Council policies and major news.

The Executive established an 'Aus-Rogaining' Google Group and circulates rogaining news via the group and the ARA website roughly once every 2 months. The Executive also promotes rogaining news on ARA's Facebook page.

Google Groups have also been established for discussions on the use of Maprun for rogaining and on map making for rogaining. New resources for using QGIS for rogaine map making have been developed and will be shared more widely.

The ARA's website is www.rogaine.asn.au and Facebook page www.facebook.com/ausrogaining.

Navlight Developments

ARA Secretary Stephen Gray has put in a lot of effort to rewrite the Navlight system software, and has done a wonderful job. It is already making the lives of rogaine administrators much easier. Peter Squires continues to work tirelessly on improvements to the hardware, and a new

generation of yellow punches are now being deployed to our member associations. A new financial arrangement will be put forward to support maintenance of the system going forward.

Rogaining in the News

An article by freelance journalist Vicki Milliken, featuring the 48-year champion rogaining partnership between our own Rod Gray and Geoff Lawford, came out in the Guardian on Sunday 11 February. Please share among your family and friends!

<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2024/feb/11/rogaine-world-champion-friendship-geoff-lawford-rod-gray>

Executive Roles

The ARA Executive has continued to hold regular Executive Meetings via Skype, at approximately six-week intervals throughout the year. A Position Description document has now been prepared for the Executive roles.

I would like to thank the Executive team: Secretary Stephen Gray, Treasurer Peter Blyton (with assistance from Mike Aylott), Past President David Rowlands, and Technical Committee Chairman David Baldwin, for all your work on behalf of ARA throughout the past year.

Vision, Mission and Values of the Australian Rogaining Association

I invite members of the ARA Council to reflect on the past achievements and current activities of the ARA and think about what we should or could be doing differently. As an initial step we could collectively consider the Vision, Mission and Values of the Association. I have developed the wording below as a starting point and a prompt for others to contribute their suggestions:

Vision

We will build the rogaining community in Australia, ensuring that the sport is accessible to all, provides safe and fair competition, and values our volunteers.

Mission

We promote, develop, and sustain the sport of rogaining across Australia, maintaining a community that delivers high quality rogaining events at low cost while effectively managing risks. We enable people of all ages and abilities to develop new skills and explore the natural environment through rogaining, in an inclusive and supportive environment.

Values

- Community Engagement: We value the role of rogaining in building strong, connected communities and encourage active participation and volunteerism at every level. We

acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we traverse and highly value the generosity of private landholders who provide access to their land.

- Teamwork and Collaboration: We believe in the value of teamwork, building camaraderie and mutual respect among participants, volunteers, and organisers.
- Adventure and Exploration: We celebrate the spirit of adventure, encouraging participants to explore Australia's diverse landscapes while challenging themselves to develop new navigation and strategy skills.
- Inclusivity and Accessibility: We are committed to making rogaining accessible to people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities, ensuring everyone can participate and enjoy the sport.
- Environmental Stewardship: We are dedicated to protecting and preserving the natural environment, promoting sustainable practices in all our activities.
- Integrity and Fair Play: We uphold high standards of integrity, fairness, and sportsmanship.
- Continuous Improvement: We are committed to continually improving our events, resources, and governance to better serve our participants and the broader community.

Conclusion

I think we should all be very proud of the wonderful community that we are constantly building and renewing across Australia as we come together to organise our rogaining events. I would like to give a special thank you to each of the Council delegates, state committees and rogaining volunteers across Australia for your work at the grass roots which ensures successful and well-run events, participant safety and continued growth for our sport.

Paul Guard
President