

# **POTENTIAL FUTURE SAHPA RACING CONCEPT**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Pigeon racing in South Australia is at a cross point and the membership needs to recognize where we are currently and consider what are the best options for going forward. This paper outlines the current status and it provides a vision of what the SAHPA Committee considers the best strategy for future racing. The SAHPA constitution limits what the SAHPA Management Committee can do to effect change and accordingly the membership will have to determine if it wants change and what that change will be.

## **CURRENT APPROACH**

Currently we run a two race line program with lines of flight set by members at a Special General Meeting. Lines of flight are set for three years and the SAHPA Management Committee set a race program in accordance with the set lines of flight. Effectively the association races a North/Northwest line and a Hills line. The current Hills line is East. The Hills line is a harder line than the North/Northwest and does not get the same level of support from the membership (there is a lower level of support in terms of members participating and in birdage). Income from the North/Northwest line plays a significant part in balancing the operating costs of running the SAHPA including the race program.

The current race program is based on 10 club races and 10 to 12 association races.

## **SAHPA REVENUE STREAMS**

There are six main revenue streams:

- Membership fees
- Race nomination fees
- Life Ring Sales and Transfers
- Interest on Capital Investment
- Return from Tossing programs using Hino and Ford SAHPA units.
- Rent from car parking on SAHPA premises.

The first three are the principal sources of revenue. The income from Race Nominations is critical in balancing the SAHPA operating costs.

While the SAHPA is a not for profit organization, members need to understand the charter does not mean that the SAHPA must not make a profit. It means that any profit the SAHPA makes must be used for the benefit of maintaining the SAHPA. Profit the SAHPA makes is used in repairs and maintenance of SAHPA buildings and property, training and race units, new equipment etc. If we don't make a profit then necessary monies must come out of SAHPA capital funds. Reducing Capital funds will lead to an associated reduction in interest revenue.

## **SAHPA EXPENSE STREAMS**

The major expense streams are:

- Repairs and Maintenance (Vehicles, Property & Equipment)
- Electricity
- Water
- Insurances (vehicles, Property, Workcover, Public Liability, etc)
- Rates & Taxes
- Race Freight Charges
- Honorariums
- Tossing Unit operational costs

These expenses are ongoing and are not expected to fall. Accordingly as revenue income falls then the challenge of balancing the SAHPA financials becomes an even greater challenge.

## **CHALLENGE FOR THE SAHPA**

The SAHPA membership is aging rapidly and there is a regular decline in race program participation in terms of flyers participating and birdage. In addition rising living expenses and the health of many of the older flyers is contributing to some leaving the sport. While there is always some level of new flyer participation it should be expected that a decline in membership will continue and that strategies need to be employed which keep the existing flyer base in the sport for as long as possible. (Have a look around you in your club and envisage who you think will still be participating in 10 years. It's quite sobering).

Assuming the Committee is right in forecasting membership is on a declining path then the focus must be on raising revenue to offset the gap between revenue and operating costs. The race freight charges are a major part of operating costs and the Management Committee have started to address this with modifying the Hino unit to use it more as the Hills line race unit and using a new transport company to pull the main unit. A new race unit that does not require the use of a prime mover may further reduce freight charges but this will need a major investment of the SAHPA's capital funds which will in turn impact on the revenue stream from the interest we receive.

## **BIRDAGE & MEMBER PARTICIPATION**

The following table provides an outline of participation over the race seasons 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014.

2010 59651 birds competed. Traditional 2 line model.

2011 Racing abandoned due to PMV in VIC.

2012 74204 birds competed. North & West lines.

2013 64580 birds competed. Traditional 2 line model.

2014 54676 birds competed. Traditional 2 line model and Verco Series.

In 2012 the PMV outbreak forced us to fly a North/Northwest/West race program. Member participation was the highest the SAHPA achieved for some time. The following season we returned to the traditional two line model. Participation rates fell back immediately and revenue income was reduced.

Under the traditional two line model two thirds of total birdage occurs on the north race line. When compared to north line races the number of members flying falls around a third on Hills line races.

### **COMMITTEE PROPOSAL**

The strategy is based on maximizing the financial benefits of the North/North West line while still keeping a Hills line.

The Committee proposes a race program with perhaps 15 races on the North/North West line and say 10 races on the East line. (It is clear from the low bird numbers for the last few East line races during 2014 that it is not viable to run 15 races on the East line). The first 3 races on each line Club Races with all other races Association Races. The Committee also proposes that each line have a 3 man Race Committee to draft a race program for their line with Number of Races, Race Dates, Race Points, Freight Charges and a tossing program to support the racing. These race and toss programs and freight charges are submitted to the Management Committee for final approval.

Effectively the model allows for North line racing for 15 consecutive weeks and for the Hills line to start at some later date and for it then to run for 10 consecutive weeks. Assuming the Hills line started in week 6 of the North line program members would have 5 weeks where there is a two race program in operation.

The North line program could be called the North Road. It should have a North Road points winner. The existing large unit should be used for transporting all birds on the North Road. If the SAHPA plans to obtain a new unit the focus should be to acquire a unit that meets the North Road requirements.

Again there should be a Hills Road points winner but the current overall SAHPA champion flyer will no longer exist. The HINO unit is capable of holding 2000 birds under race conditions and should be suitable for supporting this program. The blue unit can hold a further 600 birds and based on current birdage figures it is doubtful that the unit capacity would be exceeded.

If members support this proposal we could get it operational for next season (2015). We are in a good position to try it and measure its success (or failure) while we have the two existing units.

### **SOME PROS & CONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- We could involve comeback racing on both lines
- Birds can be flown more often on selected lines (may reduce training expenses)
- Opportunity to introduce prepaid nominations on each line
- Should increase income for SAHPA
- Gives flyers wanting to fly one line more opportunity to race
- No need to race beyond 20 weeks
- Start date for Hills Road program can be delayed
- Second Driver and Convoyer required.
- Extra Loading Steward required.
- Some risk of birds being sent to the wrong race.
- With more races extra costs involved for both members and the SAHPA.
- Target must be for each line to be self funding. May need minor assistance from North line income.
- Opportunity for separate race committee for each line.
- Long distance racing can still operate by SAHPA LDC and this model may make it easier to introduce more long distance racing.