

6.1 Position Paper from Orienteering SA re OA Membership Recommendations

Summary: Orienteering SA considers that the existing membership structure as managed through Eventor already constitutes a national database. Given the strain on OA finances described in the paper “Orienteering Australia’s Future Financial situation” OA would be better advised to focus any available finances towards the further enhancement of the functionality of Eventor. While good progress has been made in this respect there are still areas requiring attention. We would be happy to provide a detailed list.

Objectives and Outcomes of the Proposal

Based on the introduction, the objectives of this proposal are not entirely clear. Are they either, or both of

- OBJ1 – have a national membership database
- OBJ2 – all persons who are members of an orienteering body in Australia are required to become members of OA

As in the summary above, OSA believes, and this is further expanded on below, that OBJ1 is already achieved. Eventor is currently providing a national membership database. We do not see the benefits of the latter. In the ASC Governance Reform In Sport paper June 2016 – Attachment A, the item “Digital and IT” refers to an “Integrated national database of all sport participants”. As referred to above this is achieved with membership and is progressively being achieved with respect to participation (results of all SA events run by the metropolitan clubs are in Eventor).

And similarly what are the expected outcomes, OSA has interpreted these as including:

- Ability to verify membership numbers to the ASC if requested
- Have a membership system as a shared service
- Shift some of the probably largely volunteers’ workload from the current 7 state and territory associations to Orienteering Australia

OSA also considers that having the first objective already achieved means the first 2 outcomes are also likewise already achieved. With regard to the third, we do not believe this is necessary or desirable considering OA’s current financial circumstances and unlikely capability to resource managing membership with volunteers.

The role and nature of members will also need to be considered if the proposal to change OA to a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) proceeds. Such companies are required to have members who agree to guarantee a financial contribution (usually a nominal amount though) if the company is wound up. The current paper on this topics does not propose a membership structure for an OA CLG, although a comment that no change to the current voting structure is proposed suggests that State/Territory Associations would be voting members.

In summary OSA does not support this membership proposal because

1. The objective of a national membership database as a shared service has already been achieved
2. The proposal would require funding and OA resources, and OA currently has higher priority requests for additional funding from the state/territory associations in the HP area

Responses to some specific parts of the OA proposal are documented below.

Comments on some specific points raised in the OA Paper: *(comments in italics & red)*

- From the internal perspective, administering a single database as a shared service would relieve states of the need to do so themselves,*Not sure what this means. It is already a single database with the states and clubs as sub groups, and so already represents a "Shared Service". The system has various access roles*
 - *OA Administrator who has access to all data (based on comment in Media Paper that OA extracted all member email addresses)*
 - *State Administrator who can administer state data and functions*
 - *Club administrator who has access to club data and functions*
- at the national level, it makes it easier for Orienteering Australia to monitor national membership numbers and make reports as required; having easily verifiable membership numbers at a national level also potentially makes us more attractive to funders and to sponsors. This is especially important given that the Australian Sports Commission appears to be moving towards a more rigorous model of verifying membership numbers, which is likely to feed into ongoing funding decisions. It also allows Orienteering Australia to communicate more effectively with its members.

As mentioned above Eventor has an OA Administrator role and I would have expected that people with this role have access to all state data anyway and so should be able to generate the membership data to verify orienteering membership with the ASC if needed

Membership reporting to meet the various needs is essentially the issue that the states have had to face since Eventor started. When Statewide information is required (eg form1 membership info for OA, email lists, Sport Software archive) we take a snapshot excel export from Eventor and merge the contents using a series of macros. In the same way OA could combine the exports from each of the states to get national information. No doubt a more sophisticated way could be developed using the API interface. When Eventor was being proposed by OA in the first place the ability to derive this information was touted as one of the benefits which would relieve states of the need to put together form 1 each year. However this never happened and we still have to fill in the form 1 each year.

- At the state level, in addition to relieving states of some administrative workload. *It is not clear what workload is being referred to. The things that take time include manual intervention to assist members particularly new ones, rolling over membership types for the next year, generating email lists, extracting data to update Sport Software archive. States would still need to do this.*
States may currently manage their membership tasks differently – volunteer only, a mixture of volunteer and paid, or a paid service. OA currently is struggling to manage the tasks it is required to complete with the current board members and paid staff. Would they have the capability to take on the additional workload referred to. This is currently shared across 7 states, so centralising much of this to a single role again seems unnecessary without paying for the role (and OA is already asking for additional funds from states at this conference).
- the experience of some other sports is that a move to a national membership model has been viewed favourably in applications for state-level grants because of the message it sends about the way the sport is looking at its governance and organisational structures. *Eventor is already a national membership database administered by Orienteering Australia.*

- A national database would also allow remaining hard copies of the Australian Orienteer to be distributed centrally, removing another area of workload from State Associations. *The existing structure of Eventor would need to be changed to facilitate this. Within the present structure there is no simple tick box for those that wish to opt for the Australian Orienteer. However people with the Eventor OA Administrator role who access to all member details and so could generate mailing lists if required (but would need to be manipulated to report those who would receive the AO)*
- We do not believe a national membership platform would make any visible difference to existing members. However, a single national entry point is likely to be simpler for newcomers to orienteering, especially those unfamiliar with internal state/club structures. *There is already a single entry point ie Eventor. Most new members join due to events they attend at state level and through relationships they develop with other orienteers who are club members. Hence most new members join a state and club with which they have become familiar with.*
- *In fact requiring members to join OA adds a third level for members to select instead of the current 2*
 - *OA*
 - *State*
 - *Club*

In addition modification to Eventor to permit a tri-level membership entry would come at a cost. As referred to above, considering the current issue with OA finance the expectation for states to make an additional significant contribution to OA, this seems an unwanted expense at this time.

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