

Bendigo Orienteers Inc.

2025 Annual General Meeting

No7 Reserve, February 9, 2025, 10:15am

Minutes

Attendance: John Wilkinson, Jenny Ball, Neil Barr, Julie Flynn, Sue Davison, Peter Galvin, Peter Searle, Dianne Searle, Bridget Slater, Anne Robinson, Colin Walker, Louise Hall, Tim Turnbull, Michael Loughnan, Alicia Martin, Craig Feuerherdt, Charles Brownridge, Desiree Pettit, Prue Dobbin, Patrick Symes, Jessica Symes, Ross Slater (Minutes)

Apologies: Heather Jones, David Jones, David Brownridge

Minutes of previous meeting: Minutes were distributed to members prior to the meeting.

Matters Arising: None

Financial Report, Membership & Event fees

The Financial Report for 2024 was distributed to members prior to the meeting.

Motion: That the 2024 Financial Report as distributed be accepted.

Moved: Craig Feruerherdt

Seconded: Ross Slater

Passed

Motion: That the membership fees for 2025 be approved:

Adult Member	\$35
Junior Member	\$6
Bendigo Club Life Member	\$25
OV and Bendigo Club Life Member	\$0

Moved: Ross Slater

Seconded: Neil Barr

Passed

Motion: That the entry fees for 2025 be approved. They are:

Adult EOD (member or casual)	\$20
Adult Member via Eventor	\$12
Casual via Eventor	\$17
Junior	\$5
Course 5	free

Moved: Julie Flynn

Seconded: John Wilkinson

Passed

Presidents Report:

What we achieved last season

Organised 20 events. Average of 50 entrants. This is the main reason for the club's existence. Events emerge through a pipeline of activity behind the scenes.

- Fixture development (President)
- Permit application (Peter Forbes)
- Events on eventor (Secretary)
- Irregular map updating (Neil)
- Coordinating the volunteer course setting effort via dropbox folders (Secretary).
- Promoting the events (Anne on social media)
- Event file building (Jim - remunerated)
- Printing of maps (Jim – remunerated)
- Computer set up and operation (various but few)
- Organiser/setter delivers courses.
- Control collection team (On the day volunteers)
- Income from events distributed to where it needs to go (club accounts, levies, reimbursements - Treasurer)

Other background tasks to name a few:

- WWCCs
- Maintaining the eventor database
- Managing equipment and buying replacements.
- Attendance at State (and national) meetings
- Promoting the sport of orienteering.

The club published a book of walks around Bendigo based upon the clubs maps (and a few new ones). The effort was a new approach to promoting orienteering aimed at an audience interested in exploring the local Bendigo bush. Over 600copies have been sold so far. In 2025 we discover if this effort attracts anyone to the sport.

The work to deliver events is getting more complicated and more onerous due to two major pressures.

- Rising compliance burden

I have a sense of history on this – my first time as President was in 2001. Back then the fixture was a blank sheet at the end of year event, it was filled in on the day and that was it. Then permits came – and they seem to become increasingly onerous. Permit negotiations for this year started with an initial requirement for toilets and a traffic management plan for each local event.

Through dialogue with Parks Vic, including creating a statistical indicator of the need for toilets and creating examples of simple traffic management plans, a compromise was reached. In 2025 we avoid the need to supply toilets at most events, but need to have simple traffic and toilet plans for each assembly area we use and to use these to give instructions to competitors. Course setters will be required to use assembly areas approved by Parks, and we need to get this approval before each event. Examples can be seen at

<https://sites.google.com/view/bendigo-orienteeing-maps/home/realorienteeing-maps/one-tree-hill>

There is a risk that at some point in the future we may be required to provide toilets at each event. I fear this would be a nail in the coffin for most weekly local events. I think the club needs to develop a form of event that does not need permitting as a fall back position – MapRun type technology with start windows open over a whole weekend, with no entry fee.

Shrinking volunteer base

It seems that it's harder to lure people into involvement in club support. We have an average attendance at our event of 50, significantly higher than 25 years ago. Yet the management falls to a small few. Last year the club had 100 members, but less than 1 in 5 attended the AGM. I see a rise in disconnected participation. This is consistent with the research literature on volunteerism across most sports. I looked back over the club workers at a state event 20 years ago – 30.

At a similar recent event the number was 13, and most of those 13 were on the 20-year-old list. A demographic transition looms.

We (the sport of orienteeing) have been making it harder. Once upon a time it was 4 courses, hanging controls and self-timing and the car boot rule. Today its five courses, more equipment on those courses (stands, locks, SI boxes). Once upon a time every control went out on Saturday morning. Only the fittest can manage that these days.

My unpopular conclusion is that the sport has made a strategic mistake in chasing participation rather than involvement.

Making the 2025 fixture happen

Fixture of 18 local events (+ 3 reserves). Once again, the objective is to ensure there is orienteeing within a reasonable drive throughout the season. Based on the survey of members, there are 14 names notionally allocated as organisers of 17 events. This is a much better starting point than last year. See the noticeboard and confirm. If more volunteers turn up, we have at least one vacant event and those three reserve events. If we don't have a volunteer organiser for an event, I will be encouraging the club to cancel.

Finally, the Australian Easter Orienteering Carnival is being held in Loddon Shire over Easter and the following Anzac Day weekend. Seven events in 10 days. It's an Orienteering Victoria production, but our club will be deeply involved. The main organisers are Ted, Margi, Julie and Chris Norwood. The amount of work this group has undertaken is quite incredible. They deserve our support.

Many of the major players have long connections with the club.

- Good Friday – Prologue jointly organised by Bendigo and CHOC
- Saturday the course setter is Clare Brownridge (I am controller) and organised by Nillumbik Club and Melbourne Forest Racers.
- Sunday at The Granites organised by Yarra Valley Orienteering Club.

- Monday at Tarnagulla the setter is James Robertson and the event is organised by Bayside Kangaroos.
- The following Friday, Jim is setting a two race event near Dunolly, helped by Bayside Kangaroos.
- The Saturday Vic Middle Champs is at Wehla Hill organised by Mebourne Forest Racers.
- Sunday of the Victorian Long Championships at a new full map of Mt Korong. I am course setter. Dandenong Ranges OC and Bendigo are sharing organizational responsibilities.

I know I am biased, but I think this is potentially the best collection of terrains ever assembled for an Australian orienteering carnival. At the end of it our club will own the maps. I am donating them to the club.

Future Vision

Twenty-six people entered our Fowl and Fizz event and most stayed for the AGM. Seven of those present were members of other orienteering clubs, but all of those seven are regional residents. I can think of quite a few more residents of central Victoria who are members of Melbourne clubs. There is a gradual migration of Melbourne orienteers towards Kyneton, Castlemaine and Bendigo.

The Bendigo fixture normally provides between 60 and 70 per cent of the Victorian bush orienteering fixture. Our region is home to the most extensive collection of quality bush maps in the state. It's important to me and I expect to you that we maintain a quality fixture of events.

In the future I would prefer to think in terms of a Central Victorian orienteering network rather than in terms of clubs. If you live in the region and attend events regularly, you are part of this network, no matter what club you belong to. Help us keep this going. We can use the Bendigo fixture as a framework to broaden the opportunities to organise and set events on our extensive collection of maps.

On to elections

To make all this work, we really need a solid effort from club members. We need:

- Workers for the major events – Good Friday, Anzac Day and Anzac weekend Sunday.
- Organisers for our local events
- Fill all the committee positions for the year.

I foresee at some point in the relatively near future the club will not have enough people willing to take on the roles of club management. When that happens, it is interesting to consider what happens to the club and its fixture.

- A smaller team tries to run the club, burns themselves out and leaves the sport (we have seen this in limited cases already)

- Put all events on hold and wait and see. Maybe someone puts his or her hand up – Me in 2023.
- Revert to local training days
- Fewer more expensive events delivered by commercial arrangements
- Disband the club

The latter isn't an idle possibility. The Bendigo Bushwalking club (I think once part of Bendigo Orienteers) came within a whisker of folding last year. It was saved by new younger faces taking on the task of resurrecting the club. I hear it's a different club to what it was. New generations will take a different direction and the older generation isn't happy. If you aren't involved you can't complain.

Election of 2025 Office Bearers

All positions were declared vacant and Peter Searle presided over the election of Office Bearers.

President: Vacant

Nominated: -

Seconded: -

Vice President: John Wilkinson

Nominated: John Wilkinson

Seconded: Julie Flynn

Secretary: Prue Dobbin

Nominated: Prue Dobbin

Seconded: Dianne Searle

Treasurer: Craig Feuerherdt

Nominated: Neil Barr

Seconded: Ross Slater

General Committee Members: Nola Juniper, Julie Flynn

Meeting Closed at 10:45am.