

## WIHA 2023 AGM - Presidents Update

Overall, 2023 has been an enormous year for WIHA and I am extremely grateful to everybody for all their hard work in making this year a success! As is always the case whenever I sit down to reflect, there is far more to say than there are hours in the day. I do however want to touch briefly on a few key points:

- WIHA Financial Headlines
- Review of the General Manager Role
- Club Operations
- Growth of Youth Hockey
- Growth of Women's Hockey
- Collaboration with Daytona
- Engagement with NZIHF

### WIHA Financial Headlines

To begin with, it is important to acknowledge that this year has not been easy financially for the club or our members. We hired a GM, which was a huge risk for the club, and we have seen our rink fees increase by 17% to cover increased running costs. Alongside this, due to the rise in the cost of living our members have had tighter household budgets, which makes playing fees even more of a stretch.

You may recall that in the August newsletter, we were projecting a 10 - 15k loss for the financial year. This was not unexpected as it takes time to grow revenue. However, I am pleased to announce that through a combination of grants and strong youth numbers, we have broken even. This is an extraordinary achievement given it is our first year of employing a full-time staff member, and bodes really well for the future of our club.

A huge thanks goes to a number of key board members who have really helped to ensure our cash flow has kept heading in the right direction. Most notable in this regard have been Matt, our Treasurer, with frequent updates on our financial picture which has enabled us to take preemptive action early, and Shelley our VP of Women's, who has been applying for funding throughout the year, helping us to raise \$30,000 in grant funding.

Once again, it has been a huge achievement to break even on the first year of bringing on a full-time staff member, so congratulations to everyone for making that happen.

## First Year of the General Manager

12 months ago, it was with considerable trepidation that I asked the association to take a huge risk in making our first full-time hire. This was an essential but risky move, as we started to see some of the challenges that come with an entirely volunteer-led organisation and making it viable to operationally support people to continue to play ice hockey in the long term.

When I made the recommendation to the association, I was uncertain of how it would work and knew it came with some financial risks. Caleb has worked extremely hard this year, and you can see in Appendix A a breakdown of how that time has been spent. As we move into 2024, I am excited we have a General Manager who knows the job, knows our members and is able to help us get a jump start on the coming year.

## Club Operations

As I said when we hired Caleb, and have reiterated throughout the year, making the commitment to have a General Manager means the club overall needs more volunteer help, not less. This may still feel counterintuitive, but the reason is quite simple: growth. WIHA is still in its infancy and is rapidly developing new programming with the goal of cementing the future of ice hockey in Wellington. To achieve this, it takes the hard work of all of us to build the culture and capabilities needed to support getting feet in skates and sticks in hands.

There are so many people who have gone above and beyond this year, but in particular, I want to call out Andrew Wall, our VP of Adult Hockey. With an enormous portfolio which serves our largest (and at times most fickle) membership group, the adult role is a challenging task. When I first joined the board that was the role I had, and it was too hard so I became president instead. While the future of the club, much like the future of the world, is in our youth, it is very important that we provide a top-quality experience for our members participating in adult programming. Andrew has gone above and beyond this year to do his very best to make that happen.

I am so proud to see the number of volunteers growing dramatically over the past year. The excellent volunteer network within our club helps your experience as a member be seamless and easy, from receiving updates on the club through the newsletter (thanks Matt Jarry), clarifying the roles of the board (thanks Hannah) to being able to find the right-sized gear in a tidy locker

(thanks Lena, Danielle & team), having a well stocked first aid kit (thanks Heidi) to having refs to officiate your game (thanks Tania), or coaches at practice (thanks Evan, Connor, and so many more) this all helps the club run smoothly.

I also want to acknowledge the hard work that Paul Edlin has put in ever since founding the club. Paul is a jack of all trades, and this year has served as both our VP of Communications and raffle maestro, among other roles, and continues to break ground on new ways to help the club grow and flourish.

## Growth of Youth Hockey

It is hard not to overstate how quickly our youth programme has grown over the past 18 months. In April 2022, we had 30 youth training and playing hockey on a regular basis. Last year we added our U12 Learn to Play programme, and then this year we added our U12 superleague, both of which have been huge successes. All-in-all we're now up to nearly 100 U18 players on the ice every week!

As a result, WIHA has been able to participate in a number of U12 tournaments, with 2 teams going last year, and 3 teams having gone down to Christchurch in 2023.

## Growth of Women's Hockey

Another area which has seen a huge increase in activity has been Women's hockey. Under the leadership of Shelley the women's committee has been doing a huge amount of work to build our women's programme and they are also some of our most active volunteers: supporting the club through fundraisers, organising the gear and locker and much much more.

## Collaboration with Daytona

Some of the most marked changes this year have happened at the rink itself. A huge investment was made by Daytona to dramatically improve the quality of the ice rink and the surrounding area. Bryn has also been extremely supportive of the new initiatives we have undertaken this year and we are very grateful for the efforts the Daytona team continue to make, to make it a great place to play hockey!

## Engagement with NZIHF

The final big change to report on is our relationship with the NZIHF. WIHA has always been a member of the federation, but in the last few years, our

relationship has really started to transform, and we increasingly look to them for best practice advice, such as how to drive programming for the association.

This year, we have begun to build relationships through the youth development camps, which open doors for tournaments and collaboration in the future, including plans to host a camp in Wellington in 2024!

We expect our relationship with the NZIHF to continue to solidify in the coming years as we become an increasingly trusted partner to help grow the sport we all love in Wellington and New Zealand.

## Plan for 2024

As we look ahead to next year it is worth bearing in mind just how far we have come in the last 12 months. It is because of this that I believe we can continue to be ambitious, in our hopes and dreams for growing ice hockey in Wellington.

To begin with, there are 3 key objectives for which planning is already underway:

1. **Hosting a Youth Development Camp in Wellington in 2024** - This will be our first opportunity to host an official NZIHF event, and it should put us in good stead for hosting more events, tournaments, and programmes in the future.
2. **Entering a U15 team in the National Competition** - In order to support this, we will need to create a U15 league next year. Seeing the passion, dedication and talent of our young players, I feel we owe it to them to make this happen.
3. **Training national league development squads** - To create pathways for ice hockey to continue to grow in Wellington, we need to start training mixed and women's teams for future competitions at the national level.

If we can achieve these objectives, ice hockey in Wellington will flourish to a level beyond what I could have imagined a couple of years ago.

## Dreams of a full-sized ice rink

This brings me to the most exciting and scary bit of what I want to share with you. As you may be aware, it has been a long-held dream to have a full-sized ice rink in Wellington and over the past year, some people have been exploring how to make this a reality.

I have spoken many times with Bryn about whether this could be done at Daytona as that would be the ideal place to achieve this. Unfortunately, this is not possible, but he understands the need for a full-sized rink to support the growth of the sport and has indicated that he will support us in whatever way he can. It is only because of the immense support we have received from Bryn and the Daytona team that we're in a position to consider this avenue.

With a mutual understanding of the need to maintain a viable business for Daytona, and the desire to establish a full-sized rink to support the sport we love, it is incumbent on WIHA to grow the demand for ice hockey, so that the facilities providing ice are sustainable businesses. Through growth and increased visibility of ice hockey in Wellington, our expectation is that

demand for ice time will grow, which means continued demand for Daytona's services, as an important ice surface in the Wellington region. In order to achieve this we will need to work closely with other ice sports such as figure skating and curling, to create the demand for a full-sized rink.

It is important to reiterate that the objects of WIHA as per our constitution:

*2.1 The objects of the WIHA are:*

*2.1.1 To initiate, organise, conduct, foster and promote the sport of amateur ice hockey in the Wellington area, making it accessible to all ages and skill levels.*

*2.1.3 To initiate, organise and conduct programmes and competitions designed to develop the skills of its players, teams, coaches and officials.*

As a result, there is a motion on the table from the 2023 WIHA board, which proposes that a priority for 2024 be that WIHA engage with the newly formed Wellington Regional Ice Skating Trust, to scope and explore a new ice rink.

## Closing Remarks

All in all we find ourselves in a very exciting place as an association. This is thanks to the great love of ice hockey shown by every single one of you, as players, coaches, volunteers, and advocates for the sport.

I am reminded by the tournaments last weekend in Auckland and Wellington, and the launch of the summer league this week what a friendly, talented, and warm-hearted community we have. As we go forward into next year, growing our programmes and our membership, the most important thing for us all to remember is to continue to grow the fun had by all involved and our great community spirit. We're building something special together, and I'm glad to be part of it with you!

## Appendix A - Breakdown of General Manager's time

TITLE	DURATION	PERCENTAGE
U12	324:30:00	26.12%
Adult Hockey	138:00:00	11.11%
WIHA Club Administration	128:00:00	10.30%
Fundraising	127:25:00	10.25%
Rink Relations	108:35:00	8.74%
U18/U15	107:15:00	8.63%
Womens Hockey	50:45:00	4.08%
Finance	44:00:00	3.54%
NZIHf Relations	42:15:00	3.40%
School Visits	38:30:00	3.10%
Socials/Marketing	37:45:00	3.04%
Officials	30:00:00	2.41%
Gear Locker	25:30:00	2.05%
Leave	23:00:00	1.85%
Holiday Programme	17:00:00	1.37%

## Appendix B - Breakdown of grant funding

### WIHA Fundraising Database 2023

Application Status	Count
Not Started	1
Due Soon - Not Started	0
Application in Progress	0
Pending Decision	2
Successful	7
Unsuccessful	5
Amount applied for in Grants	\$165,131.09
Amount raised from Grants	\$30,818.48
Amount raised from Sponsorship	
Merchandise	
Donations	\$200.00
<b>Total Amount Raised</b>	<b>\$31,018.48</b>

