
*Greetings from
President*

Mick Crane

Good day members and friends,

Wow, who can believe it is 2017 already?? If you're like me, you would still be wondering where 2016 went! Of course, 2016 was a huge year for BFGA, from being successful with 2 government grants, running 2 major events for the year and having our first club member attend the Olympics in Aislin Jones. All the while continuing our important conservation works in East Gippsland's numerous wetlands and supporting the national office in its fight against Animals Australia and the anti-hunting establishment. It truly was a busy, wonderful and hugely successful year for the club. This is further acknowledged by our Gippsland Club of the Year Award in August.

It was my honour to take over the helm from our past president, Mr Karl Hales, who did a magnificent job in his 18 months of presidency, while also acting as a shoot coordinator for the club. Trying to fill his shoes is a mammoth job and I thank Karl and the committee and members for their continued commitment to the club and their efforts in supporting me over my first 6 months in the role. I look forward to 2017 and completing the many projects that the club has on the go...

Shooting Sports Facility Grant –Round 1(Club House)

Most of you would be aware by now that the club was successful in obtaining a \$100,000 grant to assist in updating the club's facilities. This important program was originally established by the Napthine coalition government, and to its credit, has been continued under our current Andrews Labor Government.

Many of you would have enjoyed the journey with myself, excitedly watching the new clubhouse rise from the ground. As I write the facility is nearing lock up stage, with an expected completion sometime in March.

The clubhouse build has been supported by many local member's and businesses who have helped with keeping the build costs to an absolute minimum. It is the committees plan to honour those businesses at a special opening function sometime in the future with suitable recognition of their generosity and efforts for the club. While I am reluctant to single out just one organisation, at this point I do need to make special mention to Chris Banks and the team at CM & HM Banks Construction for the donation of the portal frame for the clubhouse. This gesture has saved the club many thousands of dollars of expenditure and I want to thank Chris for his generosity.

With expenditure in mind, the club does anticipate a shortfall in funds due to the GST component that is encountered on all bills. It is the committee's intent to launch a series of

fundraising initiatives over the coming months to meet the GST costs of the build. I should point out that the club does have a financial facility available for access, however we will only choose to use this when urgently required.

I encourage you, as a member, to support these initiatives as they come to light and help assist in leaving a legacy for our next generation of field and game members.

*Club house
in progress*



Shooting Sports Facility Grant – Round 2 (All Abilities & Junior Shoot Ground Development)

After the success in the round 1 program for the club house facility update, it is fair to say that few at committee level would have expected success in the round 2 program. I can honestly say that when Dave Jones (Vice President), Reg Biggs (Treasurer) and I sat down to review the final submission before closing, it was more of a future wish list rather than a here and now need.

So, you can imagine my surprise when I opened the letter from the department awarding the club close to \$80,000 to assist in developing an All Abilities Access and Junior Development shoot ground.

This exciting project will see two new skeet & DTL grounds developed to the south of the property adjacent to the open field. Once completed the grounds will allow the club to fully market itself as a one stop shop for shot gun activities by having, simulated, sporting, skeet and DTL capability. This will also complement the newly formed Gippsland Sports Academy Junior Development Program, which has recently been developed to assist junior shooters in pursuing the sport. More on the GSA later.

Speaking in round numbers, the entire build cost for these grounds project is around \$125,000. Taking into account the \$80,000 grant, along with over \$20,000 of donations and in kind support for this project, which leaves around \$20 to \$25 k that the club will need to fund. This will likely come from a mix of working capital in account, the financial facility mentioned earlier, along with further donations or member debentures.

The importance of this project for the club cannot be understated as it will position the club as the only facility east of Frankston that can offer all four shotgun disciplines at the

one ground. It will also enable the ongoing use of the skeet ground on shoot days, where we would have needed to close our current ground due to broken clays falling in on the southern side of the club house. On the junior development side of the equation, no more will East Gippsland juniors be punished with the burden of travel to larger metropolitan grounds to be coached or train, when we can bring the state's best coaches to a first-class facility in the East Gippsland region.

Duck Season

You would be aware that the Victorian duck season was finally announced and will open on 18th March 2017 until 12th June 2017.

At committee level, we were lucky enough to have David McNabb and Daryl Snowden attend a meeting in November and outline the challenges that FGA were facing at that time around the assessment for a duck season and the frustration around the government processes. I think a lot of the committee took heart in the passion that these two gentlemen share for our sport and organisation. It was great to see their hard work pay off with the announcement.

I encourage members to get out in the field and chase some duck over the upcoming season with family, friends, and of course a retriever or two....

Please keep yourself abreast with the season requirements and duck numbers and types per day, the antiestablishment will, as always, be looking for some headlines. If you require further information on bag limits, WIT or a clarification on season details feel free to contact the club's conservation officer David Young on 0427 357 229

Details of 2017 duck season here. <http://www.gma.vic.gov.au/hunting/hunting-seasons>

FGA Fighting Fund

In recognition of our organisations fight against Animals Australia to save our sport, the committee voted in 2016 to donate back to head office all member rebates. This donation was close to 5000 and was greatly appreciated by head office as it continues the campaign against the anti-hunters. Many clubs chose this approach to support the fighting fund and the committee believed it was important that we also do our share in this important and crucial fight against the left ideologues.

At the recent council meeting in November the club delegates passed a motion to donate 50% of all member rebates back to FGA to be used in the fighting fund. This will be reviewed in 2 years as the fight continues against those organisations that try to infringe on our sport.

Conservation Grant

In conjunction with a lot of hard work by our conservation officer, David Young and his team, the club was able to secure a conservation grant of over \$6000 through East Gippsland Catchment Management to be spent in the Jones Bay State Game Reserve. These works will involve track works, fencing, tree planting and weed control to manage and promote the game reserve for hunters and the general public alike.

This grant will complement the hard work completed last year in the reserve by the team in planting a number of native trees, along with their continued work in the nest box arena. I implore you to get behind our conservation team and assist where required on this exciting project. Working bee details for this conservation project will be circulated later in the year as dates are confirmed.

Junior Success/GSA

The club has been spoilt over the past few years to have a great stable of junior shooters that compete in clay target competitions. Lead of course by Aislin Jones, with her national success and Olympic selection, the juniors continue to go from strength to strength.

The recent Gippsland Sports Academy shotgun team tryouts resulted in a number of BFGA and greater east Gippsland field and game members being offered places in this new academy. Of the 12 places offered (6 in each discipline) Successful juniors were as follows:

DTL Squad

Aaron Barling – BFGA

Emily Marshall – SFGA

Skeet Squad

Ben Burchell – BFGA

Conner Crane – BFGA

Jordyn Perkins – Orbost F&G

I commend the successful juniors and their high standard of scores over the 4 try out days. Watching these juniors compete hard is truly nail biting. I would also like to thank our Vice President, Dave Jones, along with daughter Aislin, for the work that they have put in with the Gippsland Sports Academy over many months in ensuring the success of this new program. Well done guys!!

January was a busy month for our juniors. Ben Burchell has been training with Aislin on a weekly basis for several months, and in mid-January he headed for Perth with Aislin for the ACTA ISSF National Championships. They were joined by Aislin's international guest, Esmée Van Der Veen, who with her father Paul visited the club to shoot our January event while training in Bairnsdale with Aislin. Paul & Esmée flew out from The Netherlands at Aislin's invitation for the National Championships. We are uniquely situated here to provide a good climate and facilities, particularly in skeet, to attract Europeans who are otherwise forced to train in several feet of snow.

The trip to Perth produced great results for our juniors. Aislin defended her Open Women's Commonwealth Championship, and this year took the Overall High Gun for the two days with an Australian record 141/150. Esmée and Aislin tied on 71/75 in qualifying for the National Championship before Esmée bested Aislin by a single target shooting 51/60 in the final to Aislin's 50/60. Hopefully she'll be back to defend her title next year.

Ben shot well both days to take the Junior Commonwealth Championship, Junior National Championship and Junior Overall High Gun. Narrowly missing out on the finals in both events Ben shot very well in qualifying.

On return from Perth they weren't home for long before joining Conner Crane at the VCTA American Skeet State Championships in Lilydale at Melbourne Gun Club.

The three juniors from Bairnsdale acquitted themselves very well with Conner taking out the C grade overall high gun on 275/300, along with C grade 1st in the 20-gauge event and the 100-target 12 – gauge state championship, in addition to a silver in the Skeet Doubles. Conner shot well in the 20 gauge shoot off to claim that event from Peter McWilliam of McWilliam wines. These successful results enabled Conner to make the Victorian Postal and State Teams.

Aislin had an outstanding weekend, taking not only the Junior and A Grade Overall High Gun with 290/300, but also bringing home 10 gold medals, and an overall second place silver medal for the State Handicap Championship, dropping only 3 targets in her 165/168 to Leigh Roberts from Bendigo who took gold – a fair effort for a AA grader. Aislin finished the weekend regraded to AA grade, and may be the only junior in the country to have achieved both ISSF and American Skeet AA Grade at 16.



FGA National Scoring System

Many of you may have heard that FGA is transitioning to an online national scoring system. This system will eventually ensure handicap cards are obsolete as all competitors' information will be kept on line and updated as scores are entered.

BFGA has asked FGA for an early trial of this program with a 2017 go live roll out. While not all IT projects are seamless, the system has been well trialed by other FGA clubs and we look forward to a trouble-free transition at our club. Patience may be required...see how we go with that one!!

FGA Magazine

You should have been receiving copies of the new look magazine by now. Please contact head office if you have not. The editor of the Magazine, Darren Linton, encourages all members to send photos, comments, articles for inclusion in the magazine.

It would be great to see some stories submitted by our BFGA members regaling their travels and exploits this duck season, or simply chasing some fox.

February Shoot- Riviera Classic

Once again we look forward to our 2-day major shoot, the Riviera classic, which is now just around the corner. Expectations are high this year for a larger event as we have changed the prize format to hopefully attract more competitors. Time will tell if our new strategy is successful.

We thank Bairnsdale Mazda & Hyundai who have returned as Event naming sponsors for the third year in a row, along with our suit of support sponsors, Robert Trewin Mortgage Broking, GB Corsivia, Dahlsens, Crowe Howarth and Cranes Asphaltting.

We look forward to seeing as many members as possible turn out for this major event of the BFGA calendar. Full details are available on our Facebook page or website.

As you can see there is a lot of work being done behind the scenes by the committee as we work through these important projects for the benefit of the club. We are all volunteers, doing the best we can with our limited time, however we are more than happy for extra helpers so feel free to contact myself or a committee member should you wish to be involved in any of the above projects or programs.

Yours in hunting.....

Michael Crane

President

0402 005 533

president@bairnsdalefieldandgame.org.au