



## MINUTES OF BIENNIAL GENERAL MEETING

Gloucester Park, Perth, Western Australia, Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2015

1. The Chairman, Elie Dangoor, called the meeting to order at 6.25 p.m.
2. The meeting voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the 2013 BGM held at Andel's Hotel in Prague on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2013.
3. It was noted that Matters Arising from the previous BGM related almost entirely to the ongoing 2015 WESPA Championship ("WESPAC").
4. Elie Dangoor then delivered the Chairman's Report. It had been an eventful year leading up to the current event and he complimented the Australian hosts for a brilliant job of organisation. Coverage was improving and games were being annotated and analysed by Quackle. The Chair noted that he had expended much personal time and effort overseeing the updates to software for the new CSW2015 word list whereupon the meeting applauded warmly.
5. The Chairman, noting that the present WESPA ratings system underrated young players and also fast-improving players, called on Chris Lipe, the recently appointed head of WESPA's Tournaments and Ratings Committee ("TRC") to brief the meeting.
6. Chris Lipe advised that testing and simulations were currently being carried out. He was considering adoption of a Glicko system, which better accommodates uncertainty, and allows inaccurately-rated players to adjust faster. The TRC was also examining the precedent of Norway's ratings system. He noted that Norway suffered from the same "enclave problem". He was of the opinion that spread could be a useful factor; the Chairman raised the concern that wins should be of primary importance.
7. Chairman advised that the WESPA accounts for the previous two financial years were viewable on the WESPA website. He thanked the Treasurer, Andrew Fisher and the honorary auditor, Mpakaboari Jack. WESPA was not rich, with net income of about USD 2,000 a year; WESPA had contributed AUD 1,000 sponsorship for the 2015WESPA Championship. The meeting accepted the accounts for the two financial years, 2013 and 2014, since the previous BGM.
8. Chairman advised that those nominated for the 2015-2017 committee would be returned unopposed. The nominees were:
  - Elie Dangoor (Great Britain), chairman
  - Andrew Fisher (Australia), treasurer
  - Cheah Siu Hean (Singapore), secretary
  - Tony Leah (NASPA-Canada)

- Steve Polatnick (NASPA – United States),
  - Karen Richards (Australia)
  - Evan Cohen (Israel)
  - Craig Beevers (Great Britain)
  - Trevor Hovelmeier (South Africa)
  - Toke Aka (Nigeria)
  - Nikhil Soneja (Dubai)
9. The meeting agreed to appointed Mpakaboari Jack (Nigeria) for a further two-year term as Honorary Auditor to WESPA and thanked him for his previous service.

#### ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10. Paul Kalumba (Zambia) raised the point that it was hard for Nigerians to obtain travel visas. He requested that future such events be held in venues which would allow for ease of travel and asked if consideration could be given to affordable accommodation. He noted that players made sacrifices to participate. Meals could be included. Elie Dangoor observed that the Nigerian contingent had applied late for their visas, and had only registered their 6 WESPAC qualifiers players on the website. Tony Leah agreed that the visa problem should be an important consideration when selecting a venue; he had obtained an Australian e-visa with no trouble due to a fortunate circumstance of nationality. Andrew Fisher estimated that providing lunch every day during the Championship would have increased costs by about AUD 100 per head.
11. Gitonga Nderitu (Kenya) advised that Kenya had previously submitted a bid to Mattel, copied to WESPA, to host a 2013 World Scrabble Championship (“WSC”). The Kenyan Government had committed USD 100,000 with a USD 50,000 prize fund. Kenya already hosted two UN bodies and was capable of hosting a WSC. No reply had ever been received from Mattel. He nevertheless expressed his happiness at being hosted by Australia. The Kenyan Government would guarantee a USD 50,000 prize fund in the event Kenya was selected for the 2017 event. Wilma Vialle (Australia) expressed her willingness to direct a Championship held in Kenya.
12. Carson Ip (Hong Kong) advised the meeting that the Hong Kong Scrabble Players’ Association would also be interested in hosting the 2017 Championship.
13. Duncan Keet (South Africa) advised the meeting of South Africa’s interest in bidding to host a 2019 WESPAC.
14. Mohamed Kamara (Sierra Leone) expressed appreciation to Karen Richards for her support for his country’s participation in the 2015 WESPAC. He further commented that South Africa had arranged for bulk discounts for accommodation, and appointed an accommodation coordinator when it hosted the Pan African Championships.
15. Valerie Mills (New Zealand) asked how the Last Chance Qualifier (“LCQ”) would affect the WSC allocation formula. Tony Leah, who had overseen the application of the allocation formula for the current Championship, advised that were a country to field extra representatives entering through the LCQ, the formula would use only the highest finishers, including those from the LCQ, from that country up to the number allocation.

16. Trevor Hovelmeier (South Africa) expressed the opinion that coffee should be available during playing hours.
17. Jason Keller (United States) asked if a standard pairing method should be used for a WSC. Wilma Vialle noted that the 2015 pairing method had been posted in advance.
18. Chris Lipe expressed his opinion that the event had been superbly run and that this was the first time it had been so organized. He noted that social media presence was important, and was a branding opportunity. Local media coverage had been good. Inasmuch as MSI was good at promotions, WESPA should try to work together with MSI.
19. Elie Dangoor requested a show of hands to determine who would be planning to play at MSI's Lille event and noted that a slight majority of those present hoped to go. He noted that WESPA serves players globally and observed that Dave Brannan of MSI had been sometimes discussing with individual members of their World Mind Sports Federation rather than with the WMSF as a whole. The success of the 2015 WESPAC demonstrated that it was best for MSI to work with WESPA.
20. Femi Awowade (Nigeria) requested information about WESPA's public relations. Cheah SH advised that Tariq Pervez (Pakistan) was currently heading the PR committee. Femi Awowade gave his opinion that there was a lacuna in WESPA's promotional efforts, leaving gaps for others to take advantage. PR was important in obtaining sponsorship. Elie Dangoor pointed out that sponsors always asked "what was in it for them"; he himself had contributed AUD 10,000. Howard Warner (New Zealand) agreed with Femi Awowade and said that WESPA was hamstrung by MSI. Other sporting activities were able to get sponsors. Elie Dangoor said that he was aware of these concerns and requested volunteers to help with PR; he made the point that no one had supplied Tariq with publicity materials despite repeated calls.
21. Steve Perry (England) reminded the meeting that the British Masters would be held a week before MSI 2016. Thereupon Valerie Mills advised the meeting of the 2016 Senior World Championship to be held in New Zealand, and Michael Tang (Malaysia) likewise the 2016 Causeway Challenge in Johor Bahru.
22. Trevor Hovelmeier pointed out Mattel and Hasbro were obvious sponsors. Elie Dangoor advised the meeting that Mattel had sponsored 35 new deluxe sets. It was always a problem to demonstrate a return to sponsors for their contribution.
23. Femi Awowade expressed appreciation for the hard work of the WESPA committees.
24. The meeting concluded at 7.30 p.m. with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

Cheah SH, Secretary

Approved by Elie Dangoor, Chairman.

Appendix 1. List of attendees at WESPA BGM 2015

(Please advise if you have been included/excluded in error. Free challenge for misspelt names.)

WESPA committee members and other officers: Elie Dangoor, Chris Lipe, Andrew Fisher, Karen Richards, Cheah SH, Trevor Hovelmeier, Steve Polatnick, Tony Leah, Evan Cohen, Craig Beevers, Tariq Pervez

A Abdullah Abassi  
Albert Martono  
Andrew Golding  
Andy Goodwin  
Andy Kurnia  
Anlaug Frydenlund  
Anne Ashmore  
Bob Jackman  
Bob Linn  
Carson Ip  
Daniel Piechnick  
Dave Wiegand  
Douglas Tsang  
Duncan Keet  
Femi Awowade  
Gitonga Nderitu  
Graham Bell  
Hamed Hadi Khan  
Howard Warner  
Jackie McLeod  
Jarrod Page  
Jason Keller  
Jason Keller  
Jeremy Khoo  
Jyoti Chandna  
Lakshan Wanniarachchi  
John Ashmore  
Larry Serrano  
Leslie Charles  
Lewis Mackay  
Liew Kian Boon  
Liz Fagerlund  
Maj Langley  
Mariam Arif

Mark Smith  
Marlon Prudencio  
Michael Tang  
Mohamed Kamara  
Moiz Ullah Baig  
Naomi Landau  
Neil Scott  
Omri Rosencrantz  
Pam Morris  
Pat John  
Paul Kalumba  
Rod Talbot  
Shakir Reshamwalla  
Steve Perry  
Tony Sim  
Trevor Halsall  
Val Mills  
Wayne Kelly  
Wilma Vialle  
Yeo Kien Hung  
Yong Jian Rong