



## Secretary's Report, 2008 Annual General Meeting

The NSW Fencing Executive met on a monthly basis throughout 2008 with sub-committees focusing on fundraising, school competitions, squad development etc. Two Council meetings were held during the year, with two cancelled due to lack of a quorum.

Communication and dissemination of information to members has improved with nearly all members receiving the monthly newsletter and special announcements by email and with members able to make enquiries by return email. Communication by telephone, fax and mail remains important to the association, with the Yellow Pages still being a vital advertising tool, generating several enquiries each week.

However, our main communication and operation tool remains the NSW Fencing website which is meticulously maintained by Harriet Jordan on a voluntary basis. Harriet first built the website in 2001, which she has continuously improved and maintained since then. The site not only imparts current information, but is an access point to all rules and regulations of the sport and provides a current and historical record of NSW competition and ranking results – all accessible by members from their home. Many thanks to Harriet for her dedication and continued high quality work.

Praise also to Richard Emmerick who is doing fantastic things digging up ancient and fairly recent historical fencing records from NSW and other states. I can assure you though, we will not be reinstating bayonet competitions. Many thanks Richard for performing this important task before the details are lost forever.

Richard's thesis topic is The Development of Competitive Fencing in Australia 1948 - 2008. It was in this period the sport developed. Richard is also working on the period prior to this and can so far demonstrate that the debate on whether the Swords or Sydney Fencing Club were first in NSW is untrue for both and that there was at least one club operating by 1851. He is currently preparing a paper on this for publication in *Sporting Traditions* - the journal of the Australian Association of Sports History. Unfortunately the records of the NSW Fencing Association in the pre-war period are lost, as are the FIE pre-war records, but National and NSW records are available from 1948. The other available resource is the knowledge of our older coaches and competitors which Richard is pursuing.

Our Schools Championships and Schools League competitions continue to be an attractive part of the NSWFA program, continually introducing a new generation to fencing. The number of participating schools and children remains fairly static and an effort needs to be made to bring on more schools.

Membership of the NSWFA also continues to remain fairly static. There was a slight improvement in 2008 with a total of 641 affiliated or registered members. However, there is a large pool of social fencers out there who we would like to better involve in the sport. A significant amount of interest in the sport has come from patrons of the new competition venue at Marrickville which is encouraging. The Executive will be investigating ways to promote the sport and spread the fencing footprint in 2009.

I wish the new NSW FA Executive well in what looks to be an exciting and challenging year ahead.

Regards,  
Pamela Zopf  
Secretary, NSW Fencing