

OCEANIA REPORT 2014/15

MEMBERS

As of 1 September 2015 the OPF has as members the following nations –

Australia
Fiji
Nauru
New Zealand
Niue
New Caledonia
Papua New Guinea
Samoa
Tahiti
Kiribati
Tuvalu (Provisional)
Solomon Islands (Provisional)

Over the last year –

- i. Kiribati has advanced from Provisional to full membership
- ii. Solomon Islands has entered as new, Provisional, member
- iii. New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea have experienced internal difficulties and at the present time are under the administration of their respective National Olympic Committees; however both nations have strong athlete involvement and will surely soon emerge as independent federations again

ADMINISTRATION

The December 2015 General Meeting of the OPF held in Melbourne, Australia set the OPF office bearers as:

President & IPF Board Member
Vice President
Secretary

Robert Wilks
Julian Perry
Pam Cutjar

Treasurer
Committee
Recordkeeper
Referees Director
WebMaster

Steve Lousich
Jason Wharton, Aitken Fruen
John Myers
Pam Cutjar
Aitken Fruen

EVENTS

There has been a relatively high level of international competition in the Oceania Region from 2014 to 2015 –

- i. the first combined Asia/Oceania Championships were held in Melbourne in December 2014 with some 486 lifters, being c. 90% Raw and c. 15 nations taking part
- ii. on July 9 and 10th the Powerlifting event in the Pacific Games, was held, with some 70 lifters from 9 nations taking part – Australia, New Zealand and also the Philippines and Singapore provided officials and support. The Games are the premiere sports event in the region and a complex process of preparation was required to make the Powerlifting event a success. Ultimately, though, the Powerlifting competition was presented well and overall the Games were the largest and most successful yet
- iii. in 2015 four Pacific Invitational events were, or will be, held at the Australian Fitness and Health Expos in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth and Brisbane. Those involve select fields of international lifters competing in front of up to 30,000 attendees at each of the large trade shows. Australia and indeed the Oceania region have come to focus on those events as showcases for recruitment and also as necessities to retain our premiere position amongst the many “federations” now in our area.

FUTURE EVENTS

Development continues apace in the Oceania Region and in 2015 to 2016 we look forward to –

- i. December 2015 the combined Asia/Oceania Championships to be held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. This is our premiere event now and the combination of Championships has had an interactive effect in fostering participation and interest. A number of nations are bidding for 2016 and beyond and the future of this event is secure

- ii. also in December 2015 the Commonwealth Championships will be held in Vancouver, Canada. The overlap with the Asia/Oceania event is unfortunate but was unavoidable; however in future years the various calendars should be rationalized
- iii. in 2016 the Fitness & Health Expos and thus Pacific Invitationals will be contained to three cities. Although critical for our Region's development the Expos require great financial and organizational commitment and this efficiency will be appreciated.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Oceania region, particularly in Australia and New Zealand, has grown enormously in terms of lifter participation in the last very few years. This has been due to Raw Powerlifting opening up the sport, whilst at the same time Crossfit and other factors have increased interest in weights sports. This **greater participation** has produced challenges in terms of federations remaining financially viable in the face of accelerating cashflow demands, meeting the standards of professionalism expected from members coming from the larger fitness industry and the mushrooming of **competitor "Federations" and events** seeking a share of the burgeoning market.

However the number of nations in Oceania has not grown greatly and ultimately cannot, as there are **relatively few nations** of any size in our sparse, far-flung Region. Development for the future will come from growth within currently small-to-medium federations such as Nauru, Samoa and Papua New Guinea.

Distance remains the inevitable challenge in Oceania. Aside from simply an incredible geographic spread of Oceania nations, small Pacific nations have only limited, expensive options for travel; some have only a single flight per week off their island and of course no option for land travel. This impacts lifters' and officials' participation, not only in World Championships but even in Oceania events. Distance, cost and time have particularly limited Referee development, although some 6-8 Category Referees have been recruited or promoted in Oceania in the last year.

Anti-doping is an issue in Oceania as it is in Powerlifting and in all sports. Australia and New Zealand have reasonable government anti-doping programmes, but purchased testing is necessary for international and strategic testing. Education has seen the frequent supplement-caused positive cases reduce in frequency to near nil; Australia was afflicted with its first anabolic agent case for some years in late 2014.



Robert Wilks
PRESIDENT OPF

The Oceania RADO conducted testing at the Pacific Games in July, but efforts to persuade them to conduct OCT in the Pacific Island nations have continued to be unsuccessful. Nevertheless, overall the doping issue in Oceania has been controlled at least as well as in other IPF Regions.

Robert Wilks
OPF President

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