



STEPBRIDGE AUSTRALIA BRIDGE CLUB Inc.

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ANNUAL REPORT - PRESIDENT for Financial Year Ending June 2025

StepBridge continues to experience new players and returning players joining and rejoining our club and enjoying our style of online bridge. We currently have 2077 paid up members, of which 283 are Home Club Members, participating in the 47 regularly scheduled tournaments every week. Among our members we have 25 who are aged 90 years and older with VIP Status and 31 who are Youth Players.

This year we continued to host two clubs in our Virtual Club rooms to enable them to a mix of face-to-face and online sessions in their Club Programmes. One Virtual Club runs all-year round and the other runs in the winter months.

We held our first Club GNOT Heat this year. This was possible due to the collaboration with the SABF to obtain permission from the ABF to hold a Heat. This should continue in our yearly calendar for years to come.

We continue to regularly hold Audio-Video sessions with our Sunday Afternoon All Around Australia Red Masterpoint Session, Monday evening Teams session, our all-day Congresses & GNOT Heat, as well as any other special events such as Melbourne Cup Day & the SABF State-Wide Pairs.

A new completely redesigned version of our StepBridge playing platform is currently available and is running alongside the older familiar version that has been in existence for many years. Enhancements and improvements continue to be released, eventually leading to a complete transition to the new platform. The introduction of SABI, our AI bridge robot, is a popular addition to your StepBridge experience

The Committee over the last year has developed a Player Code of Conduct Policy & Procedures and a 2025-2030 Strategic Plan. We are also in the process of developing a bridge education program with lessons. Watch this space!

DIRECTORS

Thank you to our StepBridge Tournament Director Team, looked after by our Head TD Sarah Zoral, for their contribution and support to our players over the past 12 months. This year we have welcomed three Tournament Directors to the team, to share the load. The Tournament Director Team have looked after our regular sessions as well as the Congresses hosted by StepBridge, which has involved 108,780 players. This is slight decrease of 5,302 players from 114,082 players in 2023-2024 Financial Year.

ONLINE CONGRESSES / ALL-DAY EVENTS

StepBridge hosted and conducted the following Online Congresses in 2024-2025. One of these congresses were for Grafton Bridge Club, which uses our Virtual Club Facility.

- Saturday 3 August 2024: StepBridge Australia Bridge Club [Swiss Butler Pairs Congress]
- Sunday 4 August 2024: StepBridge Australia Bridge Club [Swiss Teams Congress]
- Saturday 14 December 2024: StepBridge Australia Bridge Club [Swiss Butler Pairs Congress]
- Saturday 15 February 2025: Grafton Bridge Club [Swiss Butler Pairs Congress]
- Saturday 31 May 2025: StepBridge Australia Bridge Club [Swiss Butler Pairs Congress]

At the start of the 2025-2026 Financial Year, on Saturday 2 August, we also held our first GNOT Heat.

BRIDGE SPONSORSHIP

Over the last year, StepBridge sponsored the following events:

- February 2025 – Gold Coast Congress Open Teams
- May 2025 – Autumn Nationals Under Grand & Under Life Pairs and Teams
- July 2025 – Australian National Championships

In 2026 we will continue to sponsor the Autumn Nationals, due to our relationship with South Australia as our state-based affiliation. This event will see some changes the introduction of the Australian Blue Ribbon Pairs. I would encourage you to consider playing in the 2026 Autumn Nationals.

We have also sponsored players to represent StepBridge in the 2024 ABF Club Teams Knockout. Our Under 50 Team won their division and our Under 300 Team were runners-up.

Additionally, at the start of the 2025-2026 Financial Year, we sent a team from our GNOT Heat to represent at the SABF Regional & Under 1500 Final and teams to represent StepBridge in the 2025 ABF Club Teams Knockout

NEWSLETTER

The newsletter has continued to be a great source of communication and useful information.

Thank you to Greg McCarron who assisted during the 2024-2025 year as co-editor of the newsletter as well as those members who regularly contribute to the newsletter.

Looking ahead into 2025-2026, we would like to enhance the newsletter with members providing contributions, engaging in some expert commentary, and ensuring that there are updates from the committee to foster a stronger sense of community.

COMMITTEE & ADMIN TEAM

Thank you to the Management Committee of 2024-2025 for the work they have done over the last year.

My thanks goes to the Committee of Suzi Ledger, Cassandra Mitchell, Greg McCarron, Antonina Hayles and Larry Bryant for their support and contribution to the Committee over the past year.

As I write this report, Suzi Ledger (Treasurer), Cassandra Mitchell (Committee Members) and myself (President) are renominating for the 2025-2026 Committee. I also welcome Bronwyn Shimmin-Clarke

(Secretary) and Sue Shadbolt (Committee Member) who are nominating for positions on the 2025-2026 Committee.

I also acknowledge and thank those who assist StepBridge in the background, including Sarah Zoral (Head Tournament Director & Chief Technical Officer) Mark Hetherington (Technical), Rattan Saini (Bookkeeper) and Antonina Hayles (Masterpoint Secretary).

Special thanks and acknowledgement also to Epko Steinmetz and his team at StepBridge International (SBI) for their ongoing improvements and enhancements to our platform.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025-2026 AND BEYOND

It is important that StepBridge secures a talented capable team to undertake the administration of the club, with an emphasis on administration and technical abilities, and to also provide support to our membership.

Without members who are willing to serve on the committee or take on volunteer roles, there is no club. The strength and success of our club depend entirely on the time, energy, and commitment of those who step forward to help. Every role, whether large or small, contributes to the smooth running of activities, the welcoming atmosphere we enjoy, and the continued existence of the club itself. Therefore if you are able to offer any time to assist, please contact us.

In addition, we now have a Strategic Plan for 2025-2030 in place. This will guide and assist us with our direction over the next 5 years.

It has been a privilege to be President of StepBridge Australia over this last year. I will be re-nominating for a third term as President. Due to our Constitution, this will be my final year I am currently able to nominate as President.

We have a wonderful club made up of loyal members who have formed great bonds and friendships with their partners from all around Australia. That is something unique for our bridge club of StepBridge Australia.

Chris Larter

President, StepBridge Australia