

Congress Organiser's Guide

This document outlines the basic guidelines and requirements for running a congress & full day congress events (pairs or teams) in Victoria.

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It is important to note that the club is responsible for all aspects of organising the congress.

In this document, all forms & contacts have been created as hotlinks to make it easier for you to find information.

1. MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

There are a small number of mandatory requirements that every club running a congress in Victoria must meet. These are:

- a. Your congress date must be approved by Bridge Victoria. There is an annual schedule published by the Match and Tournament Committee showing approved congress dates for all clubs.
- b. Your congress flyer/entry form must be approved by Bridge Victoria to ensure the proposed format and any specific rules you wish to impose on players comply with state/national guidelines.
- c. You must use an approved Congress level director on the day. A list of [approved congress directors](#) is available on the Bridge Victoria website on the “Resources for Clubs” page.
- d. If prizes are listed on the entry form these must be adhered to when been presented after the event.
- e. You must submit a report at the conclusion of the congress to Bridge Victoria that includes a separate Director's report on the congress. The report forms for [Tournament Organiser and Tournament Director](#) can be found under the Documents section found in the “Resources for Clubs” page of the Bridge Victoria website. Please note that the Tournament Organiser’s report is optional.
- f. You must submit a complete list of results for all events conducted during the congress within 5 working days of the conclusion of the congress to Bridge Victoria. This may be attached to the Directors Report.
- g. Masterpoints must be submitted within 30 days of the conclusion of the congress. The ABF will impose a financial penalty on clubs which do not submit points within the specified time limit.

More details on these and other items to consider when running your congress are detailed in this document. Apart from the mandatory items mentioned above, all the other material in this document is intended to provide clubs with a broad base of information to help with running a successful congress in your club.

2. EVENT STAFF CONSIDERATIONS

2.1. Appoint an organiser for the event

The tournament organiser (TO), or convenor, has a broad range of duties and is responsible for ensuring the tournament runs smoothly. It is suggested that the TO identify one or two other club members to help with pre-event organisation.

2.2. Appoint a director & determine a fee for directing.

A list of [qualified congress directors](#) is available on the Bridge Victoria website on the “Resources for Clubs” page. If you need help identifying a suitable director for your event, you can contact the State Director: Laurie Kelso.

BOOK YOUR CONGRESS DIRECTOR EARLY. The state's congress directors are very busy and it is important you book the director early to ensure you have a qualified director available for your event.

For congresses with over 30 tables, two directors are recommended. We encourage clubs to consider utilising a trainee director as the second director. For 35+ tables a senior director and trainee/junior director is mandatory.

The director will generally prepare scorebooks for players to use during the event. The director may also be able to manage the board dealing for your congress.

2.3. Appoint a caddy and determine a fee for caddying.

With very small congresses less than 15 tables, a caddy may not be necessary, however it is usually helpful for the smooth running of the day. If you have 15 tables or more, then a caddy is necessary to help the day run smoothly. The director can often help with appointing caddies. Otherwise ask in your club if any

members want to help on the day, or if they have suitable children/grandchildren who might like to help. Some experience with caddying is helpful but not essential.

2.4. Appoint a recorder for the event

Recorders are there for players to consult with regarding concerns that arise at the bridge table which did not involve a director call, or which involved a director call, but which the player may still feel they wish to discuss with someone. These issues may include “psyching”, player behaviour, explanations of bids, or a range of other concerns that might arise. As such the recorder should be an experienced and approachable player. A detailed guideline for recorder responsibilities is available on the ABF website at the link below. <http://www.abf.com.au/about-abf/abf-policies-and-handbooks/recorder-guidelines/>

3. EVENT PROMOTION

- 3.1. Create a congress entry form/flyer and seek Bridge Victoria approval for the form. Bridge Victoria can ensure your flyer complies with any tournament regulations and other requirements. It is mandatory to have your flyer approved annually before you distribute it to clubs. Email a copy to the state director Laurie Kelso.
- 3.2. Consider whether a sponsor can be obtained for your event. Local businesses, restaurants, and even club members may be able to help with sponsorship for your event. Items that are ideal for sponsoring are prizes, bidding pads, pens and score books
- 3.3. Provide updated content for the Bridge Victoria website for promotion for your event (see congress details on the Bridge Victoria website for your club from the previous year. If this is your first congress, use one of the other congress pages as a guide to help with identifying the required details.)
- 3.4. Request listing of your congress on the relevant entry website (e.g. Bridgeunlimited, your own club's website, other website). The Congress list on the Bridge Victoria website will link to this entry website, so please inform Bridge Victoria at info@bridgevictoria.au when you decide which website you will use.
- 3.5. Distribute entry form to clubs (Bridge Victoria will send entry forms out electronically to all clubs. If you want to distribute paper forms, a mailing list will be provided to you). Give some to members who are attending other congresses and ask them to distribute them for you (make sure they check with the club before doing this).
- 3.6. Monitor online entries & inquiries; consider emailing people who have played in previous years (if you have their email addresses) to invite them to come again.
- 3.7. Consider collecting email addresses from players at this year's event to use for promotion in the following year.
- 3.8. Assist with arrangements for partners/team-mates for players upon request.

4. ENTRY FORM / FLYER

The following items are the minimum recommended for inclusion:

- Venue (with map if necessary)
- Date
- Time (it should be highlighted if the normal 10am start time is not used)
- Entry fees
- Prizes (at least the first prize should be noted)
- Organiser's name, address & contact phone no, fax, email
- Director's name
- Where to enter (e.g. MyABF, Bridgeunlimited, Laikel, etc). Bridge Victoria encourages the use of MyABF for consistency for players and ease of entry/payment
- Any limit in numbers

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- Closing date for entries
- System restrictions
- Sponsor information
- List of nearby accommodation and restaurants
- Whether lunch is included in the entry fee. If you are providing lunch include a note for players to advise any special dietary requirements.

A copy of the final entry form should be sent to Bridge Victoria via info@bridgevictoria.au so that it can be uploaded against your congress name.

5. GENERAL ORGANISATION

Below are some other items that you will need to ensure are considered for the day. A Congress checklist for both Organiser and Director can be accessed under the [Documents](#) section found in the "Resources for Clubs" page of the Bridge Victoria website.

5.1. Pre-event:

- Is your clubroom large enough for a congress or do you need to consider hiring a local hall/other venue? Does the venue you plan to use have enough tables, table covers, chairs, lighting and other requirements?
- Do you have enough bridgemates for scoring? If not, some directors or larger clubs can supply extra bridgemates for the day.
- Will the director supply dealt boards for your event? If not, some large clubs (VBC, Waverley, etc) can provide securely dealt boards and printed hand records for a fee.
- All-day snacks: most club members are happy to bring a plate at no charge for morning or afternoon tea. Appointing someone to co-ordinate this effort is a good way of managing this and getting the whole club involved in the day.
- If you are serving lunch, consider how long before the lunch break the kitchen needs to know when players will be ready.
- Consider organising cleaning of the clubrooms prior to the congress.
- Ensure you have a few spare tablecovers to deal with accidents.
- Ensure you have a large supply of rubbish bags for cleanup.
- Flowers: a florist in your area might want to take advantage of your Congress to display their skills and versatility; give them some free publicity in return for doing some flower arrangements.
- Room space - tournament regulations recommend a minimum space requirement of 2.5m² x 2.5m² per table. Some clubs have managed with slightly less than this, however you need to consider leaving sufficient space for directors/caddies/players to move between tables during play, and for changeovers at the end of each session.
- Microphone: is recommended for the director and for any speeches/prize giving.
- Arrange for the room to be set up the day before the event. If you are planning to do it on the morning of the event you need to have everything in place one hour before play is due to start.

5.2. On the day(s)

- Ensure the clubrooms can be cleaned between sessions. Have someone picking up used bidding slips, empty cups and so on. Make sure the toilets have enough paper and hand wash. Consider some fresh flowers.
- If you are using a hired venue like an RSL club, then negotiate with the venue regarding cleaning arrangements on the day

6. CATERING

Catering will need to manage three different tasks:

- Continuous supply of water, coffee, tea, milk, snacks, juice, etc., throughout the day. It is recommended that you have some refreshments available when players arrive.
- Lunch - if you opt to provide it. You need to decide if you will provide a plate/lunchbox per table, or have players order lunch in advance. Consider players with special food requirements (e.g. vegetarian, gluten free, etc.)
- After play refreshments - consider wine, cheese, biscuits or other nibbles.

Note that if you hold your congress in a licensed club, the club will usually manage all the catering, and you need to decide how much you want to spend. If you choose not to provide lunch, then talk to local restaurants to find out which ones will be open, whether they want to provide a lunch special for players, and whether they want to be promoted at your club in exchange for some support for your event.

If you organise your own catering, ensure you meet any food handling requirements.

7. FINANCIALS

- What is the budget for the event (consider prizes/prize money; entry fee; food; venue cost; masterpoints; director/caddy fee; board dealing; hand record printing; brochure printing). If this is your first congress, ask one of our congress mentors listed at the end of this document for some guidance.
- Allocation of prize money - as a general rule many clubs offer a minimum of 30% of revenue as prize money, but some clubs prefer to give prizes other than cash. It is good for your congress entry numbers if you don't acquire a reputation of being "mean" with prizes.
- If you plan to provide lunch, then the entry form should note that lunch is included, and the entry fee will be higher than for congresses which don't provide food.
- Alcohol: If you intend to provide alcohol with lunch or after bridge, please ensure any licensing requirements are met.
- Early bird discounts: Enticing participants to enter and pay by a specific date can lead to increased entries and removes the need to collect and store money on the day.

8. TECHNICAL MATTERS

The director will be the main source of information on technical matters associated with your congress and most of the decisions should be undertaken in consultation with him/her.

8.1 Entries, processing, dealing with late or incomplete entries

- Entries should be collated and processed by one person only.
- The recommended way of collecting money is to have envelopes on each table at the start of the day. A table slip with the table number and space for each player to write their name and the amount of money paid/change required should be included. Someone needs to be appointed to collect the envelopes, count and collate the money and provide change where necessary.
- Table slips should be provided to the director so that any changes to the original entries which may not have been notified can be made.
- If you are going to collect the entry fee as the players arrive for the day (you will need a complete player list sorted alphabetically), you need a table near the entry for players to pay their fees. Ensure any changes in player names are noted and passed to the director before the start of play.

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- MyABF and Bridgeunlimited have facilities for online entries to be made if your club does not have this capability. MyABF also takes care of payment.
- If you run a Swiss pairs event, you must provide a standby pair. It is also useful in the event a pair falls ill or can't make it for any reason. If you have both an open & restricted field in your event, then you must have two stand-by pairs with appropriate ranking. It is also handy to have a spare floating player(s) in case some unforeseen circumstance befalls a player on the way to the event or during the event.
- If you run a Swiss teams event, consider having a house team available to avoid an odd number of entries and the dreaded triangle.

8.2. Supplementary Regulations

- A copy of the Bridge Victoria Regulations should be available to the players on the day. Note that any system restrictions should be advertised on the entry form and repeated on the notice board. The committee should determine the procedure for awarding prizes in the event of a tie and advise the director accordingly.

8.3. Appeals Committee

- Some players (3 - 5) should be approached and asked if they would accept being part of an appeals committee. This should be done early enough so that the names of the members of this committee can be displayed on the notice board. Consult with the Director on the appointments for this committee. The existence of the appeals committee should be mentioned in the announcements before the start of play.

8.4. Cards & boards, bidding pads or boxes

- The decision on the number of boards (and the number of sets) will depend on the movement and table numbers. Allow 2 boards per table. Divide by the number of boards per match and round up. If more than 30 tables, add another set.
- If you decide to use bidding boxes, ensure you have some spares available so boxes knocked over by players can be replaced. If you use bidding pads, a handy idea is to have a set of boxes available for players with visual or writing difficulties.

8.5. Pre-dealt hands, hand records, security

- If you are using pre-dealt boards, you need to ensure boards are securely locked away so no players can access the boards prior to play.
- If you are dealing your own boards, the players involved in the board dealing are not permitted to play. A playing TO should avoid the board dealing room.
- The director will need one copy of the hand records, and the arrangements for photocopying of hand records for players will depend on the availability of a copier on site. The director may need a digital copy of the dealing file so as to post results with hand records on the web. Think about using a sponsor, whose name will be acknowledged in a header or footer) to carry the cost of this copying. Allow for one hand record per player plus a few extras. Use different colour sheets for the different sections/stages.

Keep a spare key to the room / area you are locking boards and hand records in.

8.6. Scoring & Grading

The director will generally manage this for you. You need to specify how many sections you want to have in your field.

Many congresses will have A (grand master and above); B (Life master to Grand Master) and C (Below Life Master) categories, but these categories are optional and very much depend on entry numbers.

9. RUNNING THE EVENT

9.1. The day before

Go through the checklist for the cleaners, the catering team, the boards and their storage or delivery, the hand records, the caddies, call the director and ask if there are any last minute requirements, confirm the number of entries, check the playing rooms. Also check with the treasurer that all cheques have cleared properly and that the envelopes for prizes are ready.

9.2. Registration

On the day, if registration is to take place at or near the front door; a list of entries will be made available to the person in charge of the front desk. A list of delayed or missing players has to be given to the Director as soon as the information is available.

9.3. Before the start

When the Director arrives, go once again through the checklist, take the boards out of storage, check that the microphone is working properly.

9.4. Start

Welcoming speech (KEEP IT SHORT), acknowledge any sponsors, announce any catering or other arrangements, the location of the toilets and introduce the Director.

9.5. Collecting envelopes or table slips.

Organise someone to collect envelopes or table slips. If there is money to be counted and numbers to be reconciled, it may be better if an organising committee member is in charge of this task. In any case, the envelopes or table slips need to be given to the director at some stage to process any changes from the original entries and to organise any special category prizes. The director must be made aware beforehand whether his/her responsibilities extend to money collecting.

The collector will need a bank bag, rubber bands, recapitulative sheet and either a cash box or access to a safe or to a bank night safe envelope.

9.6. Conclusion

- At the conclusion of play, try to arrange the prize-giving as quickly as possible to ensure maximum attendance: bridge players have a habit of leaving early or of getting impatient.
- Arrange for a photograph of the winners. When announcing the winners, try to get the full names and their clubs. Check the pronunciation of unfamiliar names.
- Thank all the players for coming and invite all of them back next year.

10. POST EVENT REVIEW

10.1. Congress Report

The TO may submit a brief report to Bridge Victoria on the congress. A form for this report can be found within <https://bridgevictoria.au/documents/match-tournament/> As a minimum this report should include:

- Player numbers
- Director Performance
- Board Issues
- Timeliness of event
- Player amenity/suitability of venue

If there are any player issues experienced, a report on this may be submitted separately to the chair Statewide Disciplinary & Ethics Committee via the VBA Secretary (secretary@vba.asn.au).

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Details on the process can be found in the [Congress Disciplinary & Ethic Regulations](#) document.

It is advisable to rebook your timeslot for the next year soon after this year's congress is completed.

There is an optional Congress Organiser's report that can be completed. This form along with all others can be accessed under the [Documents](#) section found in the "Resources for Clubs" page of the Bridge Victoria website.

10.2. Masterpoints

Masterpoints are to be sent to the State Masterpoint Secretary (mpsecretary@vba.asn.au) – usually done by the Director. You need to include a statement on the movements employed as well as a copy of the final results.

10.3. Results

- Immediately send links to the Bridge Victoria Webmaster (info@bridgevictoria.au) for uploading the results to the website. Also send the photo of the winners.
- Consider sending results to your local paper.

10.4. Other

- Return all equipment hired or borrowed, including the boards.
- If you succeeded in getting some press coverage, send a cutting to all players mentioned and another one to their clubs.
- Update your database with all the details of the participating players and write your Organiser report for the Club's committee (and for next year's Organiser) after consultation with all the members of the organising committee.
- Send thank you letters to all your sponsors and inform them of the number of people who were exposed to their advertising

11. FURTHER INFORMATION

Questions about running a congress may be directed to one of our congress mentors, all of whom have extensive experience running their own club's congresses. Contact details are listed below:

Andrew Macready-Bryan (VBC Club Manager) 0417 543 076

Geoff Schaller (Tournament Organiser) 0418 559 343

12. OTHER RESOURCES

- The Masterpoint Manual is available for download from the ABF Masterpoint Centre