

Who pays the price?

And at what cost to the sport?

By Barry Trewin

It is great to come across people who are open-minded and trying different ideas to help promote the sport of pigeon racing in today's ever-busier world. Yes, they do exist, but it's not an easy existence especially when we continually hear the old chestnuts such as "We are losing members". "Can't get new members as there are too many other sports and options these days." "Kids these days just aren't interested" and "This is the way we have been doing things for years"!

At what point do you throw up your hands in defeat and walk away from the sport? A sport that you are quite passionate about. Fanciers are becoming disillusioned with organisations that either don't or won't listen or assist them. I will mention some broad examples and let you think about the direction the sport is heading.

Some members are continually discriminated against for one reason or another. Remember the saying "we are losing members", yet we discourage people from competing. Club and federation boundaries are a prime example. We will always lose people through natural attrition but if we place limitations on how or if someone can compete we haven't any way of replacing those flyers. How stupid is this? We need fanciers to enter our sport and stay, not be pushed out before they even get a chance to get the birds in their blood. In some instances we manage to get their membership fees for a couple of years, only to see them fade away, disillusioned with the sport.

Some of the people running these organisations should have a good look at themselves, ah, yes they have been involved in the running of things for quite a number of years and they are hard workers. Then there are always the good old times, the way it used to be, but now times have changed, computers can process information quickly, help with professional promotional material and so forth. It is time people looked at what they are doing to and for the sport and not at the glory they have placed upon themselves for the long number of years of involvement. How will they be remembered, when they are gone as no one lives forever, I'll leave this for them to ponder! Yes they have been around for a number of years, but the sport won't if fanciers don't change their way of thinking. Common sense tells us that we need all the participants in the sport we can get and we need to be more professional in the way the sport is projected to the general public.

Laws have changed dramatically over the past couple of decades, but yet organisations have still never brought the rules or constitutions up to date. Each member of an organisation must be allowed to have an individual vote at AGM's, thus stopping dictatorships taking hold. Equal opportunity acts and discrimination acts are also more enforced these days, as the world is changing the sport of pigeon racing must also adapt or it will diminish and then be gone. How much do you want to pay for transporting your birds, the more members we lose the more costs will increase! Why put limits on the amount of birds that can be raced each week? Allow the fancier with 200 birds or more to compete, but make another section for which they have to select 10,20 or 30 birds, therefore you are satisfying both parties not just one! The more birds on the transporter the cheaper.

Then comes the point that fanciers with larger numbers have advantages, in the norm, pigeon racing is not a fair sport, overfly, terrain and weather can play a big part in results. Yet some fanciers will still try to find ways to benefit themselves and not the whole picture. Unfortunately people have become blinded by their own importance and have not been able to adapt to the changing world around them, so they continually stop any progress in the sport just so they can be in their own safety net. For the sport to go ahead we need to encourage participation and new members, not hang onto old out of date thoughts and processes, which have got a grip on the throat of our sport and are strangling it to death. It is also said that the executive positions in the organisation is a thankless job, yes, it may be the case, but once again did you apply to be put on a pedestal or to do a job? Yes hard decisions need to be made, but do it for the right reasons and common sense will prevail. You will not make everyone happy, but again I say be fair in your actions and decisions!

So now I ask "Who pays the price and at what cost to the sport"? Do something positive for the sport and be remembered for being open minded, not just a photo on the wall of the club rooms covered in dust after you are long gone. Maybe others may stand up for the rights of others and make a point of doing what is right, not what is in the out dated rules.

REMEMBER IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT PIGEON RACING!

**IN ORDER TO GO FORWARD WE ALL NEED TO REGULARLY
RE-ASSESS OUR LIVES, OUR PROGRESS AND OUR GOALS.**

**PIGEON RACING IS A REFLECTION ON LIFE.
YOU ONLY GET BACK WHAT YOU PUT IN!**

