

WORLD DEAF RUGBY EXECUTIVE UPDATE NO. 3

August 2020

This is the third quarterly ***WDR Executive Update*** to keep you informed about what is happening, what we are working on and what we might need from you.

Covid-19 Pandemic

We continue to be challenged by *Covid-19* in our personal, work and recreational pursuits. And the situation remains very unstable, with many countries still battling the first wave of the virus and other countries now having to contend with a second wave.

Most aspects of our lives remain on hold as we focus on keeping ourselves, our families and our friends safe, looking after our local communities and struggling with the financial impacts of it all. It is very difficult to make plans for the future.

But the *WDR Executive* has used this time to work in the background and progress things like updating the *Constitution*, dealing with additional Member-suggested amendments, calling for nominations for the new *WDR Executive Officer* positions and initiating discussions with Members on trying to plan future *WDR* events. And we very much appreciate the active involvement of *WDR Members* in all these activities.

WDR CONSTITUTION

Major Constitution Update

Earlier this year we started working on making some editorial changes and other amendments to various parts of the *WDR Constitution* to better reflect the current and possible future activities of our organisation and make sure our *Constitution* covers all the things we will need in the future.

A draft revised "*For Consultation*" *Constitution* was developed and sent out to Members for feedback and comments. We received suggestions from several Member countries and made some changes to address these. The updated *Constitution* was then sent out to the General Committee for a formal vote.

At the close of the voting period we had received sixteen (16) votes - *i.e.* *New Zealand, Fiji, PNG, Wales, Argentina, Japan, South Africa, Uganda, Ghana, Kenya, Togo, Portugal, Italy, Australia, Hong Kong & Samoa*. Fifteen of the sixteen Member countries voted in favour of adopting the updated *Constitution*.

Hence the revised *Constitution (WDR Constitution July 2020)* has now been formally adopted and uploaded to the *WDR Website*.

Additional Member-suggested Amendments

During the voting process, a few Members suggested some **additional** amendments. These were received relatively late in the voting process after we had already received many votes, so the *Executive Committee* felt it was not appropriate to consider them at that time.

Because the suggested/proposed additional amendments were expected to attract some interest and discussion from Members, we decided to conduct a further consultation process on these as required under the *Constitution*. This attracted a few relatively minor edits and the final suggested/proposed amendments were sent to Members for a formal vote on 1 August 2020 (*recently extended to 14 September 2020*).

We are currently awaiting the outcome of that further voting process, with votes due by 31 August 2020.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS (*Additional Executive Officer Positions*)

The updated *WDR Constitution* which was formally approved and adopted on 1 July 2020 expands the number of *Executive Committee Officers* from three (*Chairman, Vice-Chairman & Secretary*) to seven - *the new positions are:*

- **TREASURER** responsible for ***Finances & Sponsorship (or only Finance - see NOTE below)***
- **PROJECT OFFICERS (3)** each responsible for progressing specific issues of particular importance to World Deaf Rugby. The Projects that we require *Project Officers* to work on over the next 18 months are ***Deaflympics, National Deaf Rugby Database, WDR Championship Guideline*** and ***Marketing (or Sponsorship & Marketing - see NOTE below)***

NOTE: *Since sending out the "Call for Nominations" it has been suggested that it might make more sense to combine the Sponsorship & Marketing functions under one Project Officer given how closely related Sponsorship and Marketing are. This is currently being considered as it has merit, and would leave the Treasurer with the Finance function as is normally the case in most organisations.*

On 2 August 2020 we put out a call for nominations for the above four new *Executive Committee Officer* positions, noting that only the official WDR delegate of each National Deaf Rugby Union could submit nominations for these positions - *i.e. individuals cannot self-nominate directly to WDR, with all nominations having to be via the National Deaf Rugby Union of each country.*

We have asked that all nominations include:

- The **name** and **skills/experience** of the person being nominated
- The **position** for which the person is being nominated

- If the person is being nominated for a ***Project Officer*** position, **which of the above project areas the person wishes to work on**

Nominations are due by 30 September 2020.

DISCUSSION ON FUTURE EVENTS

In late May 2020 we wrote to Members to start a discussion about planning future WDR & Regional Deaf Rugby events and we received some replies about what was tentatively planned depending on the *Covid-19* situation. Clearly everyone is keen to move to the next steps of making more concrete plans, but uncertainties re *Covid-19* and its ongoing impacts continue to make this very difficult.

Given the escalation of *Covid-19* in many countries between May 2020 and July 2020, we again wrote to Members in July 2020 to resume the discussion in light of updated information on the pandemic and its inevitable impacts on donations, sponsorship and international travel.

Covid-19 is hugely impacting individuals and businesses, and hence National Deaf Rugby Unions/Teams will undoubtedly face greater challenges in raising funds through donations and sponsorship. There also continues to be huge uncertainties as to when international travel will again be possible (*and affordable*), and what border restrictions various countries will continue to impose.

Covid-19 is far from over and will inevitably continue to impact the possibility of *International Tests, WDR Sevens Championships & Regional Tournaments*. It is also suspected that the uncertain *Covid-19* situation and associated economic conditions together with fundraising challenges will make it increasingly difficult for National Deaf Rugby Unions/Teams to commit to travelling or attending events.

International Tests & WDR Championships

Though the above may seem very pessimistic, it needs to be borne in mind in trying to make plans for the future and assessing what might and might not be realistically viable. Whilst we all know that events previously scheduled for 2020 are unable to go ahead, there are probably also doubts about 2021 events. And depending on how the world and *Covid-19* evolves, it could possibly even impact participation in the planned *April/May 2022 WDR Sevens Championship* in Argentina in terms of teams being able to raise funds, get sponsorship, afford airline tickets and accommodation, and deal with border issues.

Regional Tournaments

The impact on possible *Regional Tournaments* may be less severe, as teams wishing to participate are likely to be in closer geographic proximity to each other potentially making travel cost cheaper and, possibly, simplifying border issues. This may make such events more viable, as more teams might be able to participate.

Hence *Regional Tournaments* may be able to take place earlier than international events - *e.g. Pacific-Rim Deaf Rugby Unions Sevens; African Deaf Rugby Sevens; etc.*

Whilst we all desperately want to be able to have more certainty and confirmed dates for future *WDR* and *Regional* events, it is still very difficult at this time to know what will happen in various countries over the next year or two re *Covid-19* and, therefore, what will be realistically possible. Hopefully we can have more concrete plans by the end of this year, and we will continue to work towards that.

We will remain in touch via email and social media, and look forward to future opportunities to again meet face-to-face.

Please stay safe - *you are in our thoughts.*

Michael Oosthuyzen
WDR Chair

Tim Stones
WDR Vice-Chair

Johanna Plante
WDR Secretary