

Head Judge Report 2021-2022

Kia ora e te whānau

It is with pleasure I present this report to the national body.

National Championships

National Competitions weren't held for this past AGM year due to the ongoing pandemic, and very few local competitions were able to be held prior to the full country lock down in August 2021.

I would like to thank the judges who formed the panels for the nationals, joined meetings when they could, and kept communication up with dancers and clubs around them. Even though the nationals were cancelled, the judges stayed engaged and flexible right up until the last moment. Many judges were also assessing dancers until cancellation, prior to lockdown, but still an unsure time to be gathering as groups – thank you so very much to those judges and their dedication to our dancers.

Workshops and Meetings

Regional meetings were held last August in Christchurch, Wellington and Hamilton (with a catchup in Invercargill for judges who couldn't attend Christchurch). We had hoped to hold additional face to face regional meetings in late February, March this year, however the pandemic lockdowns resulted in cancellation. Topics for discussion were ratification of a sideline judging process, judging live with an extended calibration/moderation session, and working as a community. These will now be included in the November combined meeting.

We also held combined zoom meetings for all judges. Topics for discussion included:

- Distance assessment (including trials with the platforms and devices)
- Calibration and moderation of our judging to
 - check in that assessment is fair, valid and reliable with judging criteria applied consistently; and
 - check on the shared understanding that judges have of our guidelines and our associations expectations.
- Mentoring and training – the conversations have begun to focus on what we expect of our trainees and mentors, and what a training system can involve. This has not progressed as much as I would have liked due to pandemic restrictions but will be a focus now that competitions start up again. Some solutions during this time have been:
 - “sideline judging”. At competitions there is a set amount of official judges and armchairs, however, it was recognised that judges would like to practice their judging even when not official. This is to “get their eye in and calibrate” or “general practice to keep the skills well oiled”. For this reason, the judges may request a copy of sheets for a competition (if available) or make their own as they judge from the sidelines. These sheets can then be submitted to the head judge along with the sheets from the competition both as proof of judging for the year and feedback if required. Depending on spare space available, and the agreement with of the competition head judge, the judge may stand to do the judging though not impede the view of others.
 - a number of trainees attended assessments and other get togethers with judges so that they could practice and get feedback. This is very much a local solution put in

place by some mentors as the pandemic levels and colours allowed. Thank you to those mentors who were in areas that could do this.

- Supporting the leadership of our people. Particularly in these years of pandemic, as judges how do we support our communities?
- Perception of judges as national judges – independent of clubs, regions, friends and whanau. Competitors and supporters need to feel confident that they are competing on a level playing field and perception of judge behaviour affects this. It included discussions on how we can involve dancers in this conversation so that they know their views are heard.
- Best Dressed Male at Junior Nationals.
Consensus that age doesn't matter however, the size of the suit does. Ill fitting gear can often be the problem for all junior ages and some of our junior males are not getting size right even though the suit itself might be awesome (comment from judges is that this can be an artform itself). It is harder for 5 years olds as they can't fit off the rack clothing. Judges acknowledge that we do need a consistent approach to judging the best dressed so that competitors feel confidence putting themselves out there. This is a matter arising from 2021 AGM which can be addressed further at AGM.
- Wording of potential AGM judging remits and then discussions once all remits were sent out.

Remits related to judging

There are a number of remits relating to judging at this years AGM which is indicative of the focus we have had on how we do things. One in particular, changing from bi-annual to annual combined workshop I would like to particularly advocate for. Whilst zoom, email and phone are great mediums for communication, there is no beating the face to face meetings that are our Berocca.

The 2022 meeting is in November (changed to a spring month due to winter travel difficulties) and will include a judging session with live dancers. This session assists the judges with compliance to judging expectations. We will also concentrate on coming back together as a body. The isolation and inability for judges to get in the room together affects us. We often have conflicting views that need open discussion without barriers caused by communication channels which only reach some. It also helps to remind us that we're all here to do the best for our community, our dancers and each other – something that can be lost in translation when there is no ability to have open conversation that includes everyone.

Future

We are currently involved in a funding application that would support development of an electronic solution for judges sheets (digital sheets sent directly to scrutineers – no paper). The aim is to reduce the resource and time required for sheets and sheet collection from the dance floor.

Thank you for your time reading this report. On the whole it was a good year and I believe we have a fantastic judging body of kind souls who love Rock n Roll dancing and give their best to the wonderful competitors that wow us.

he aha te mea nui o te ao? Māku e kī atu, he tangata, he tangata, he tangata' What is the most important thing in this world? **It is people, it is people, it is people**

Tyree