

WORLDSKILLS NEW ZEALAND 2009 AGM

REPORT FROM REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

As the newly appointed Regional Representative I present my second report to the Board which doubles as my first Annual General Meeting report.

With eight WorldSkills regions in New Zealand I have kept in contact with the various Regional Chairpersons by email, although with little feedback. Sally has provided me with an updated email contact list for the 2009 – 2010 year.

All current Regional Chairpersons were provided with a copy of the excerpts from my draft Team Leaders Report which related directly to, or may require involvement from, the regional volunteers to peruse prior to my providing a full Team Leaders report to the CEO, Events Coordinator and my fellow Team Leader, Rick Anderson. This report was discussed at a Team Leaders briefing in October which included the aforementioned people.

The excerpts which my fellow Regional Chairperson's were invited and encouraged to comment on are documented in Appendix One. No feedback has been received so I must assume that all are in agreement.

Glenys McKenzie
Regional Representative
28 October 2009
Otago Southland

Appendix One

Selection of Competitors

Having as many competitors as the facilities will allow at the National Competition, provided they do meet a qualifying skills standard, is good as it provides a greater range of competitors to select from. I am increasingly of the belief that the top 2 – 3 in each category should be shortlisted then an evaluation process is undertaken. This process should include outlining in very clear terms to all candidates the requirements of being a Tool Black including funding, training, media, etc and allowing those who are not really committed to withdraw.

We need the best possible all round candidates as they do go into a skills training programme to enhance their practical skills in preparation for the international competition. Having people with the right attitude and commitment is more important as these skills are harder to instil. Candidates should be interviewed by a panel (including the team leader(s)), and some form of personality testing should be considered. Regional committee members may have useful information about the suitability of various candidates.

Within three weeks of the National Competition those candidates shortlisted for the 2011 team should be contacted and provided with an information pack on what WorldSkills is all about, what being a Tool Black involves, and the commitment to training and funding required. A similar pack should be sent to their next of kin and employer so that they are also clearly aware of the requirements. It has proven year after year extremely important that competitors have the full support of their family and employer.

A team camp (or two – north and south) should be organised prior to Christmas to undertake the selection process with the final selection being notified prior to Christmas if at all practically possible.

Selection of Team Leader and Technical Delegate

There needs to be a role description and a process for selecting team leader(s) and technical delegate(s). It is most desirable that the team leader be actively involved in the selection of the competitors for whom they are responsible and likewise that the chosen technical delegate be actively involved in the selection of the experts for whom they are responsible.

They also need to make a commitment to training and fund raising.

Selection of Experts

Again, there needs to be a role description and a robust process for selecting experts.

Selection of Competition Categories

As the person responsible for the fundraising for the Otago Southland team members I was able to use the New Zealand team's ranking from the Japan International to good effect. Being able to report that New Zealand had been placed 14th overall was brilliant given that 51 countries were to compete in Calgary. We looked like creditable medallists.

We need, therefore, to consider carefully not just the selection of team members but also the categories we compete in if we are to regain our 14th placing.

There are a variety of methods used to select Tool Black candidates including regional competitions feeding into a national competition, WelTec tutors short listing prospective bricklayers for the national competition, joinery running a competition as part of a block course for which people may or may not be eligible to attend, etc.

Collaboration between the region chairpersons and technical committee members would benefit these processes, as both would have valuable input into what scope and capacity the regions have to run a specific competition and whether there are likely to be the numbers eligible in the region to make it viable to run the category.

Funding

A clear statement of all the costs involved needs to be provided to competitors and their families, along with a copy to their Regional Committee Chairperson.

Regional Committees are the ones who should be coordinating the fund raising for the competitors from within their regions. Linking the funding to be sought as a team cost for both competitor and expert is also important as without one the other would not normally attend. This will mean the various regional chairpersons will need to be in contact with their regional colleagues. Doing it this way would, I think, be of enormous assistance to the Event Coordinator who would then deal directly with eight regional chairpersons regarding funding. The regions would be responsible for coordinating the fundraising efforts, outside of those agreed upon and undertaken by the CEO.

It needs to be clearly understood that funding deadlines must be met if the trade team (competitor and expert) are to continue progressing through to the international competition. The national organisation does not have nor should it be expected to make up shortfalls in funding. It is already required to fund the CEO in attending the International Competition.

It is easier to raise funding for competitors than experts hence the need to link them together as a package. It is more difficult to raise funds for team leader(s) and technical delegate(s) so work needs to be done here.

Funders are giving the clear message that they expect the monies raised to be spent on the items/activities approved, and a clear audit trail with invoices and back statements are required. National funding agencies have expressed their requirement that they expect to see in the region financial statements to the national body where their funding has been spent and for it to be clearly shown in the organisations fully audited account. We need to tidy up these 'loose ends'.

I would recommend that a funding policy be put in place in that the CEO (or his representative) be responsible for fundraising from national agencies such as the various gaming trusts (Pub Charity, Lion Foundation, Southern Trust, Mazda foundation etc), and the various Industry Training Organisations represented, Master Trade Associations' (MTA, Master Builders, ECANZ) along with identified national suppliers.

At the regional level fundraising approaches could be made to local Community Trusts and any smaller regionally based gaming trusts (Mataura Licensing Trust), to the various Lions and Rotary Clubs, and fundraising activities undertaken (funny money evening, film evening, sale of scratchie boards, product laundering, etc).

Team Camps

Competitors and experts need to have their roles confirmed as soon as practically possible so that they can be advised well in advance of the dates for the Team Camps and it be clearly advised that attendance is not optional.

Having a live in camp is best and works well at being a team. Having all team members arrive before 7.30 pm is better as it allows for some team meet and greet. The 2009 Tool Blacks requested

that more 'free time' be included in the team camp programme to enable them to get to know each other and their respective experts along with the team leaders.

Current experience would suggest that 'dry' team camps, setting the tone for the international competition is best, and that all team members (competitors and experts) need to comply.

The first team camp, held prior to Christmas, should be devoted to the final selection of team members and could be held as a north and south island camp if needs be.

The second team camp, held early in the new year (February – March) is the first gathering of the selected competitors and experts. The competitors at this camp need to be put into their training regime.

The third team camp, held in July August (International competition is in October) is the fine tuning of the team. Uniforms are given out, haka perfected, strategies confirmed, etc.

The experts will have been in regular contact with their competitor as they work through their respective training programmes, the team leader will have been in regular contact with the competitors, and the technical delegate, team leader and event coordinator also in regular contact.

Mock Competitions

As most of our competitors have historically been chosen to represent New Zealand after only one, one day competition and one, three day competition the more competitive experience they get the better. While those who participated in the Australian Four Day Mock Competition did not perform as well as might have been expected this is nevertheless an excellent opportunity to 'blood' them.

It helps to bind them into a team, exposes them to the realities of travel, accommodation, meals, and competition in a different country, assists the team leaders in their role, and gives experts a barometer of the effectiveness of their training regime.

If at all possible I would recommend that all competitors attend, assuming of course that they have secured the funding for this.

Training

It would appear that some apprentices did not receive the training required to compete to their potential. It is, therefore, important that if the expert is not geographically or otherwise able to train the competitor that suitable trainer substitutes are found quickly. Competitors who have little, if any, experience in preparing for a competition are unlikely to know whether or not they are receiving the appropriate training so they cannot be relied upon to raise issues. Monitoring of their training by a person not their trainer needs to happen on a regular basis.

In addition to skills training competitors need assistance in media training and the psychological preparedness that give winners the edge, along with the physical training needed.

Travel

Given that the New Zealand team must normally travel to the northern hemisphere and often cross the date line sending the competitors across on the Saturday and expecting them after over 24 hours travelling to overcome their jet lag, lack of sleep and readjust their body clocks in time for the competition is unrealistic. We observed that a significant number of teams broke their travel enroute or in the case of the Australian team the competitors travelled with the experts allowing them a couple of days to adjust. It is false economy to invest the money sending the team and not to

spend the small amount extra to ensure that they are in good competition form on the first day of competition.

It would be greatly appreciated if team members flights to Auckland were arranged to enable them to arrive in time, but not excessively so, for the international flight. Many of the 2009 team had at least five hours spare in Auckland. This simply added to the travel burden.