

Bridging NSW



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June 2026



From the Chair: A stable, secure and resilient Bridge NSW

Hi everyone,

Last month we held our AGM, where our [2025 Annual Report](#) was presented and the new [Bridge NSW Council](#) was appointed. We are pleased to welcome Terry Simmons (Easts Bridge Club) to Council, and we farewell Lynleigh Evans, Noreen Grant, and Ted Popper. I thank all three for their voluntary service, with a special acknowledgment to Lynleigh as our inaugural Chair.

At the Council's first meeting the following week, Sharon Thompson was elected as Chair, and the Council re-appointed four board members, including me. You can read more about these appointments and a short explainer on the respective roles of the Council and the Board on **page 5**.

With the Annual Report now tabled, I want to assure you that Bridge NSW's financial position is stable, secure, and resilient. Since our establishment in mid-2024, the Board has taken a conservative approach, ensuring we can withstand any unexpected financial shocks. We are now well-positioned to sustainably deliver ongoing activities that strengthen our community and advance our long-term strategy. More details are on **pages 5 and 6**.

Following National Volunteers Week in May, I want to briefly reflect on the incredible people who underpin our game. From local clubs to statewide initiatives, our volunteers ensure bridge continues to flourish. Please see our dedicated feature on **page six** and consider whether you might be able to spare some time to assist this year.

Speaking of volunteers, this month we profile John McIlrath – someone whose commitment to the game spans forty years – many of it in voluntary roles, including as a current Bridge NSW Councillor and Chair of the Directing Committee. In the interview John reflects on some of his highlights from his fascinating bridge journey. In this issue you can also read a recap of John's "Hop, Skip and a Jump" directing tour in northern NSW in April.

This dedicated effort from our Council, volunteers, and leaders like John strengthens our foundation and allows us to pursue strategic initiatives that will grow our community. I want to remind you about two activities that support our growth agenda:

- **Online Supervised Sessions:** Every Sunday at 4pm, designed for new players to practice at a slower pace following beginner lessons.
- **Starter Congress:** Launched last month, this program offers a supported pathway for those eager to try tournament bridge but hesitant to take the first step.

I encourage you to share these activities with the newer players at your club.

Catherine Chaffey, Chair of Bridge NSW

People of Bridge



John McIlrath,
National Director
and Chair, Bridge
NSW Directing
Committee

This month, we profile **John McIlrath** – a highly respected figure in our community who has contributed decades of service as a player, club owner, teacher, national director, and dedicated volunteer. John shares his lifelong bridge journey in his own words.

How did your journey in the bridge community begin?

I first came across bridge in my teens while on a student exchange program in France. A couple of American students introduced us to the game, and the first challenge was that we had to learn it in French! I was drawn to it because of the tricks and trumps – an extension of 500, which we already knew – and especially because it involved partnership and teamwork. Not long afterwards, I found a copy of Alfred Sheinwold's *Five Weeks to Winning Bridge*, and that was the beginning of a lifelong journey.



Attendees at a directing workshop at Peninsula Bridge Club in 2025.

Having married young and started a family, social activities often revolved around inviting friends over for dinner and a game of "kitchen bridge." Those evenings planted the seeds for what would eventually become both my vocation and my hobby.

I did not even know bridge clubs existed until 1983, when I saw an advertisement in the North Shore Times for beginner lessons at Lindfield Bridge Club. Not knowing a single person, I nervously enrolled. Before long, I discovered bridge weekends away, where I met Greg Quittner – who would become a vital figure in my bridge life.



Leading a directing workshop at Toronto Bridge Club

You were involved in a major shift in club culture in the late 1980s. Tell us about that.

In 1988, Greg and I helped establish Sydney's first non-smoking bridge club. At the time, many people said, "It will never work." Back then, bridge rooms were filled with cigarette smoke, ashtrays sat on every table, and bins overflowed with butts. Today, it is difficult to find even a handful of bridge players who smoke, which shows just how much times have changed.

That year marked the real beginning of my involvement in managing clubs, teaching, and directing. I still remember how difficult it

felt giving that very first lesson! Looking back now, it is astonishing to realise this journey has spanned almost forty years.

Following my work with Greg, I joined Paul Marston at Grand Slam Bridge Centre in Mosman. Later, a new chapter began with the creation of Cammeray Bridge Club. I then became somewhat entrepreneurial, establishing two clubs—Bridge at Club Willoughby and Cove Bridge. Both became highly successful and eventually merged with Lindfield Bridge Club in 2007 to form the North Shore Bridge Club. I initially agreed to manage the club for five years; that arrangement lasted closer to nine. Upon retirement, I was honoured with Life Membership.

Directing and mentoring have also been huge parts of your career. What is your approach?



Mentoring Kelly Barber at the 2025 Spring Swiss Teams at Sydney Bridge Club

I have been a National Director for more than 25 years, directing at major events around Australia, including serving as Chief Tournament Director at Canberra in Bloom and the Barrier Reef Congress.

I was also privileged to serve as the ABF National Director Development Officer, travelling to many states helping develop and encourage new directors. Today, I serve as

Chair of the Directing Committee of Bridge NSW, conducting workshops for both aspiring directors and experienced “old hands.”

One achievement I am particularly proud of is my booklet, *Director Is Called*, which outlines the seven most common calls faced by club directors. Ironically, it began simply as an aide-mémoire for me during the early days of the non-smoking club. Today, many clubs around Australia have a copy.

My directing philosophy has always been simple: Conduct yourself so that players enjoy themselves and want to come back next week—otherwise, we won't have a game.



As non-playing captain with the victorious NSW Women's team at the 2024 Australian National Championship

What are some of your proudest moments representing the community?

Among the greatest honours of my bridge life came in 2013, while preparing to direct a country congress, when I received an unexpected phone call: “Would you like to be Non-Playing Captain of the Australian Seniors Team in Hong Kong?”

That team went on to win the Asia Pacific Bridge Championships that year. I take no credit for the victory—the six players performed magnificently—but it remains one of my proudest experiences. I was again honoured to serve as NPC of the Australian Seniors Team in 2023, travelling to both Hong

Kong and Marrakesh. In addition, I have had the privilege of captaining NSW teams to five national victories at the Australian National Championships, and this year, I have the honour of captaining the NSW Women's Team in Canberra.

Looking back, what advice do you have for players and clubs today?

People sometimes ask what advice I would give. Mine is simple: Smile—because no one knows what you are thinking. And perhaps even more importantly: Listen.

Bridge clubs succeed because of people. Make your club somewhere others enjoy coming to. Most importantly, be a volunteer. Your bridge club needs you. Do not assume someone else will do the work when you can help. You may not always be thanked, but your contribution is always appreciated.

And finally, codes of conduct matter. Just remember: Be nice. After all, we need four people at the table for a game of bridge.



An example of John's recent work – using AI to support his directing training.

Learn more about the great people in our community at our Facebook page

Bridge NSW has a Facebook page where you can find out the latest results and happenings in the community, and the latest news about Bridge NSW. It is also a great way to engage with the community.

To follow us, simply log in and head to our [**Facebook page**](#) and click the "Like" button.

You can also use the QR code below to go straight to our Facebook page:



Council and Board appointed following AGM

The Bridge NSW Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2026 was held on 12 May, where the [2025 Annual Report](#) was presented and the Bridge NSW Council was confirmed. Three councillors – Lynleigh Evans, Noreen Grant and Ted Popper – concluded their one-year terms. A new member, Terry Simmons, President of Easts Bridge Club, was appointed to the Council for a two-year term.

The following week, the new Council met for the first time and appointed Sharon Thompson from North Shore Bridge Club as Council Chair. The Council also re-appointed four members of the Bridge NSW Board: Catherine Chaffey (Chair), Jake Andrew, Frank Hardiman and Glenda Parmenter. Helen Lavings and Michael Green continue in their roles as current Board members.

Understanding the role of the Bridge NSW Council?

The Council is the **voice of member clubs across NSW**. It elects the Board, approves the By-Laws and gives input on behalf of member clubs – but it does not govern or manage operations.

The Board governs the organisation. The Council represents the membership and confers legitimacy. Their roles are complementary, not competing, each serving distinct governance purposes.

WHAT COUNCIL DOES

- Acts as the voice of member clubs across NSW
- Appoints the directors and the Board Chair
- Approves the By-Laws (proposed by the Board) and modification
- Reviews the Board's annual update on strategy, budget and results
- Provides input on issues affecting members

WHAT COUNCIL DOES NOT DO

- Run day-to-day operations
- Direct staff, volunteers, or the Board's actions
- Duplicate or override the Board or Sub-Committees
- Require the Board to take particular actions
- Operate as a "parallel Board"

A financial update from the Bridge NSW Board

Following the recent AGM and the publication of the [2025 Annual Report](#), the Board is pleased to provide an update on the financial health of Bridge NSW as we progress through our second full year of operation.

When Bridge NSW was established in mid-2024, our immediate priority was financial prudence. As a brand-new organisation navigating some financial uncertainty, the Board deliberately adopted a conservative

approach. Our initial focus was to build a balance sheet capable of withstanding unexpected financial shocks, ensuring we could overcome a modest setback without impacting our clubs and community support or sustainability.

We are very pleased to report that a suitable financial foundation has been achieved. The Bridge NSW board now feels it is **financially stable, secure, and resilient**.

Furthermore, with a full year of operational history, we now have better understanding of, and confidence in our ongoing annual income and expenses.

Moving forward, we budget to achieve an operating surplus of approximately 5-10% a year. This is standard best practice for community organisations of our size, ensuring long-term sustainability.

Our focus is now shifting from building a buffer and income confidence, to reliable delivery of existing activities and exploring selected investments. The board intends to use its financial resources to strengthen the bridge community and advance our long-term strategy. This includes activities that grow the game, make the community more sustainable, build club and community capabilities, and provide support to the volunteers who keep our clubs, community and key events running.

While the Board is confident in our financial security and looks forward to exploring investment in community initiatives, we will remain cautious. We have constraints, particularly the limited number of suitable volunteers to help with management of operational execution. We also have a wide range of different club needs, and we want to

ensure our investments support clubs and other service providers, rather than competing with or undermining them.

We will continue to exercise care with expenses, focussing on sustainable initiatives that deliver genuine value and impact for our clubs and their member players.

Volunteers: the driving force of our community



National Volunteer Week last month was a timely opportunity to acknowledge the incredible network of volunteers whose dedication ensures our game continues to flourish across the state.

Our game is built upon a culture of voluntary service. From grassroots local clubs to statewide initiatives through Bridge NSW, volunteers are the driving force of our community. This year's theme, **"Your Year to Volunteer"**, offers a chance to think about contributing in some way – big or small.

How to contribute at your club

It all starts at your local club. The weekly sessions, social events, and annual congresses you enjoy are all delivered by fellow members donating their time. There are many ways to help – all you need to do is ask!

It might be as simple as helping set up an event, contributing a dish for a social gathering, or driving a fellow player to the club. If you have more time, consider joining the committee, helping organise the annual congress, or driving a new initiative.

Help with statewide initiatives

The Bridge NSW team is predominantly made up of volunteers who bring diverse skills and a passion for the game to support clubs and players across the state.

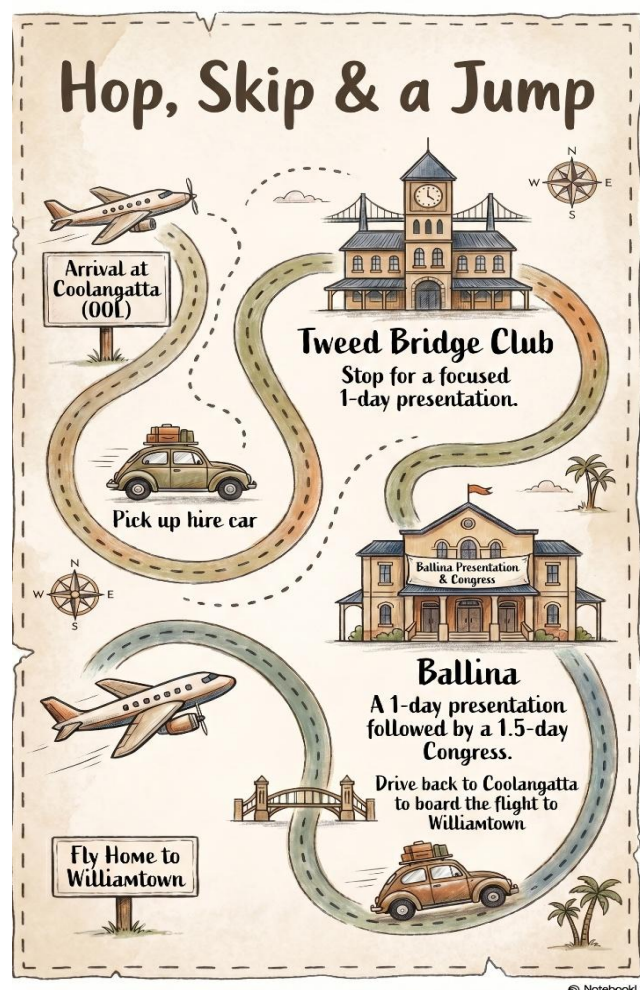
New volunteers are always welcome, and it doesn't require a massive time commitment. Opportunities range from casual, one-off project work at state events to joining one of five volunteer committees.

- **To volunteer with Bridge NSW:** Please [contact us via email](#).
- **To contribute locally:** Chat with your club's committee members. Every bit of support makes a difference.

"Hop, Skip and a Jump" Northern Rivers Tour

The Northern Rivers bridge community recently welcomed John McIlrath, National Director and Chair of the Bridge NSW Directing Committee, for the highly anticipated "**Hop, Skip & a Jump**" tour. Blending high-level technical education with premier

competition across Tweed and Ballina, the initiative successfully linked theoretical training with real-world application.



"Basics" Directing Seminar: Tweed Bridge Club

The education component kicked off at the **Tweed Bridge Club** on Thursday, 16 April with a "Basics" seminar for 23 beginner and aspiring directors. John covered three core pillars:

- Directing responsibilities in **managing movements**
- Setting up and managing masterpoints in **Compscore**.
- A robust, three-hour session on **the laws of the game**.

John also emphasised essential "soft skills" and professional conduct. Participant Andy B praised the discussion-heavy format as "useful, informative, and very entertaining."

"Advanced" Directing Workshop: Ballina Bridge Club

The training then advanced to the **Ballina Bridge Club**, attracting 30 attendees on Friday, 17 April. This session tackled complex areas of the law, including:

- **Insufficient bids** and comparable calls.
- **Dummy's rights** (specifically preventing irregularities and unintended errors).
- **Inadvertent bids** and bids out of turn.

Beyond the rules, discussions focused on cultivating a "good" director's profile – maintaining calmness under pressure and practicing an active, visible presence on the tournament floor. Attendees were also treated to a magnificent two-course lunch prepared by Jan Roberts and Club President Lorraine Bryant.

A Full House at the Ballina Swiss Pairs Congress

The tour culminated in the **Swiss Pairs Congress at Ballina** on Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 April, boasting a full house of 48 pairs. The field was divided into four divisions based on masterpoint rankings and drew players from as far as Perth, Canberra, Sydney, and numerous Queensland clubs.

John McIlrath provided expert direction, practising the "active presence" he advocated in the workshops, while a dedicated team of volunteers ensured the event's success. Special thanks go to Marjorie Askew for player recruitment, Chris Fitzgerald for kitchen management, the Lennox Lions for

catering superb lunches, and the many volunteers who provided an endless supply of snacks to keep the players energised.

View the [congress results here](#).

Presidents' Day at Moruya

The Moruya Golf Club recently played host to the twelfth Bridge NSW Presidents' Day, drawing six representatives from clubs across the south coast region: Mollymook, Batemans Bay, Moruya and Sapphire Coast.

Glenda Parmenter, Chair of the Bridge NSW Clubs and Community Committee, led the session, providing an overview of current strategies and initiatives. Glenda also walked attendees through the organisation's website to highlight available support services.

The collaborative forum gave local clubs a voice to raise pressing operational and technical challenges which included:

- **Directing:** Attendees discussed whether the lack of new tournament directors may stem from players not wanting to sacrifice their own playing time. They also suggested that the Club Director (Level D) training is overly complex, suggesting it should focus on using the Law book effectively rather than memorizing rare scenarios.
- **Technology support:** Clubs expressed a strong need for practical, hands-on tutorials for MyABF, as well as step-by-step guidance on setting up online sessions using RealBridge.
- **Community Growth:** The group explored the benefits of partnering with other community groups, including with local

U3A (University of the Third Age) branches, to promote and teach bridge lessons to new players.



Attendees at Moruya Bridge Club President's Day

The day concluded with highly positive feedback, with all participants valuing the opportunity to network with their regional counterparts. The Clubs and Community Committee reported key recommendations to Bridge NSW to support clubs with the issues raised during the meeting.

Benefits of club membership

Bridge NSW provides a range of programs and services to support clubs and players throughout the state and to develop and grow the game.

These programs and services are mainly funded through annual affiliation fees that members pay to Bridge NSW via their club.

Benefits of club membership

The services and programs
Bridge NSW delivers to
support clubs and players

In the months ahead, these key service areas will be featured in the newsletter to demonstrate the value of club membership with Bridge NSW.

Helping to insure and protect clubs

To help protect clubs from financial liabilities, the Australian Bridge Federation (ABF) holds the following policies that Bridge NSW contributes to:

- **Management and Professional Liability Insurance** – protects directors and committee members of clubs
- **Public and Products Liability Insurance** – covers injury or damage at club events
- **Voluntary Workers Insurance** – safeguards voluntary workers, directors, and committee members.

You can read the full list of programs and services delivered by [Bridge NSW here](#).

Event results

Adelaide Autumn Nationals

29 April – 2 May 2026

There were some strong results for NSW players at the Adelaide Autumn Nationals. Here is a recap of the standout performances, with **NSW players highlighted in bold** below:

TBIB Open Swiss Teams

1st: Team Beeby – **Jane Beeby**, Leon Meier, Kate MacDonald and Heath Watkins

2nd: Team Yoshka – Joel Geeske, **Liam Milne, James Coutts, Shane Harrison**

3rd: Team Trev – Ashley Bach, Mike Doecke, Andrew Spooner, **Tony Nunn, Paul Dalley**



Winners (L-R): Kate MacDonald, Heath Watkins, Lachlan Kennedy (TBIB), Jane Beeby, Leon Meier

Under Grand Master Swiss Teams

2nd: Team Andrew – **Michael Young, Mary Poynten, Tony White, Jake Andrew**

Blue Ribbon Open Pairs

1st: Justin Williams and **David Beauchamp**



Winners (L-R): Justin Williams and David Beauchamp

Blue Ribbon Under Grand Master Pairs (PLATE)

1st Place: **Richard Carter** and **Jay Novak**



Winners (L-R): Jay Novak and Richard Carter

Blue Ribbon Under Life Masters Pairs

1st: **Michael Jackson** and **Lucy D'Ambrosio**



Winners (L-R): Michael Jackson and Lucy D'Ambrosio

Mixed Pairs State Championship Final

17 May 2026

1st: Andrew Peake and Giselle Mundell

2nd: Wei Zhang and William Zhang

3rd: Sherlock Shao and Catherine Zhang



Winners (L-R): Andrew Peake and Giselle Mundell

Country Mixed Pairs Final

17 May 2026

1st: Larry Bryant and Dorothy Berzins.



Winners (L-R): Larry Bryant and Dorothy Berzins.

Autumn Swiss Pairs

17 May 2026

1st: Julie Guthrie and Mark Guthrie

2nd: Garry Viner and Nick Fahrer

3rd: Nerida Gillies and Paul Weaver



Winners (L-R): Mark and Julie Guthrie

Victorian Online Pairs Championship

Concluded 25 May 2026

NSW players joined this event as part of a [collaboration with Bridge Victoria](#).

1st: Pauline Gumby and Warren Lazer (NSW)

2nd: Simon Henbest and Kevin Chan (Vic)

3rd: Andrew Peake and Giselle Mundell (NSW)

The collaboration continues with NSW hosting the **Online Teams League – Season 2**, running for 4-weeks from Monday, 1 June. Results will be included in next month's newsletter.

Upcoming events

From 1 June: Online Teams League (OTL) – Season 2

A new 4-week version of the popular Online Teams League, specifically collaborating with Bridge Victoria and inviting their teams to join. [Learn more.](#)

From 7 June: Online Supervised Play

Designed to support new and developing players, focussing on reinforcing concepts learnt in beginner lessons. [Learn more.](#)

4 – 16 July: Australian National Championships

One of the premier events in the Australian bridge calendar with a range of gold and red point events as well interstate team finals. [Learn more.](#)

From 20 July: Winter OPL

Following record-breaking participation in the Autumn season, this fast and fun format continues – matching players against those of a similar level. [Learn more.](#)

From 27 July: OTL – Season 3

A round robin format with teams competing in divisions – a 24-board match each night in two 12 board half-matches. [Learn more.](#)

From 2 Aug: Online Supervised Play

Designed to support new and developing players, focussing on reinforcing concepts learnt in beginner lessons. [Learn more.](#)

9 Aug: Starter Pairs Congress

A full-day pairs event specifically for newer players who are interested in trying tournament bridge but might feel hesitant to take that first step. [Learn more.](#)

11-16 Aug: Coffs Coast Gold Congress

The second NSW gold point national event for 2026 held in Coffs Harbour. The event includes intermediate/restricted and open pairs and teams' events. [Learn more.](#)

22 Aug: GNOT Teams – Metropolitan Final

Qualifying teams will participate in the final for a chance to progress to the national qualifying stage of the Grand National Open Teams 2026. [Learn more.](#)

Clubs

Profile: Mudgee Bridge Club

With Elizabeth Powell, Secretary

Tucked away in the rolling wine country of the Cudgegong Valley, the Mudgee Bridge Club is one of regional New South Wales most welcoming and lively card-playing communities. Founded on 15 June 1981 by 26 keen locals, it began as a small, social group meeting at the Mudgee Golf Club. More than four decades later, the club has grown into a thriving community of around 110 members, ranging in age from their 30s to their 90s, all bound by a shared love of bridge and good conversation.



L-R: Jane Wynne-Reed, Treasurer; Cherie Edwards, President; Marelle Irving, Director; Libbet Powell, Secretary; Bill Bleechmore, Director

From those early days of rotating venues – the Golf Club, Bowling Club, Pioneer House, Soldiers Club and the Rugby Union Club-house – the members' dream of a permanent home finally came true when they moved into Building L at the Mudgee Showground. That milestone transformed the club, giving members a bright, comfortable space that feels like home.

The club hosts five regular sessions each week, catering to all interests and abilities:

- **Monday afternoons** – Open duplicate bridge, friendly but competitive.
- **Tuesday afternoons** – The popular Men's Bridge session, with plenty of humour and camaraderie.
- **Wednesday afternoons** – Beginner lessons and refresher workshops, ideal for newcomers building confidence.
- **Thursday afternoons** – Social bridge, relaxed and inclusive for all abilities.
- **Friday mornings** – Open duplicate for those chasing a challenge (and a few masterpoints).

The Mudgee Bridge Congress is the highlight of the club's year and one of the friendliest on the NSW bridge calendar. Each spring, the club welcomes up to 180 players for the Swiss Pairs on Saturday, and about the same again for the Swiss Teams on Sunday. The weekend is filled with lively play, local produce, and plenty of laughter – a perfect blend of country hospitality and bridge excellence.



Players in action at the annual club congress in 2025

The club also runs cherished local events such as the National Bank Club

Championship, the Sparkes Cup, and the Green Trophy, combining long-standing tradition with a friendly competitive spirit.

Mudgee Bridge Club prides itself on being more than a games club — it's a community contributor. Over the years, members have raised over \$26,000 for local charities, including a special donation to furnish a hospital bed at Mudgee Hospital.



L-R: Brian McCarney and Val Heferen, winners of the Sparkes Cup 2026

A welcoming culture underpins everything the club does. Beginners are guided with patience, and experienced players take pride in mentoring new members. It's a place where good cards matter — but good company matters more.

One of the club's proudest milestones was securing its permanent home at the Mudgee Showground. After decades of moving between venues, achieving a dedicated clubhouse symbolised both stability and community achievement — a true turning point in the club's story.

Today, Mudgee Bridge Club continues to thrive, combining country warmth with the timeless challenge of bridge — and proving that friendship, laughter, and a bit of strategy never go out of style.

CONTACT THE CLUB

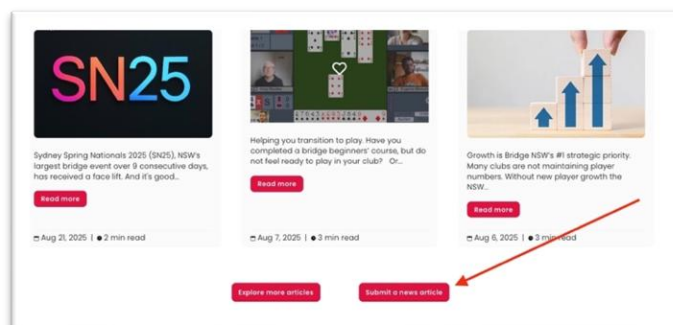
Phone (Secretary): 0427 771 397

Email: mudgeebridgeclub@gmail.com

Location: Building L, Mudgee Showground, Nicholson Street, Mudgee

Got a club story to share?

You can now [submit your club story](#) for the newsletter and more **on our website**. Go to the 'Latest bridge news' section on the homepage and under the articles you will see two red buttons. Click on the button on the right to submit your story or [click here](#). We'd love to hear from you!



And don't forget to join our [Facebook page](#), if you haven't already. Simply **click the 'Like' button to follow us**.

Teaching & Education

Online Supervised Play – for newer players

Our latest series of Online Supervised Play continues – to help newer players reinforce concepts learnt in beginner classes. Up-coming sessions are:

7 June – Overcalls

14 June – Takeout Doubles

21 June – Responding to INT

28 June – Responding to INT vs Opening INT

5 July – Opening Leads

12 July – Defence Basics

19 July – Preempts

26 July – Strong Hands

[Join any session](#), any Sunday at 4pm.

More resources for newer players

- **Build on the basics:** Work your way through the designated topics in our [curriculum](#) by completing [improver lessons here](#). These modules help you develop essential skills in declarer play and defence and offer several hands you can play online. You can also practice online at [bridge-training.com](#).
- **Request pre-session talks:** Encourage your club to host short, 10-to-15-minute talks by experienced players before regular sessions. Our [Mini Lessons](#) are a fantastic, ready-made resource designed exactly for this purpose.
- **Explore [Bridge Base Online](#):** The *Just Declare* and *Bridge Master* sections are particularly helpful for development.

- **Host a "Kitchen Bridge" game:** Use a [set of hands](#) from our website, then compare your results against the official hand analysis.
- **Seek a mentor:** Ask your club if there are mentoring opportunities available. Often, a senior player is happy to review challenging hands with you after a session.

Material for clubs and teachers

Clubs and teachers are welcome to use the themed material from Sunday Online Supervised Play for club supervised sessions.

To support improver lessons, new materials have been added to the website focusing on Declarer and Defence Play, as well as four popular Intermediate Conventions.

Find these [resources here](#).

Teach the teacher webinars

We are planning a new webinar series in October/November to help develop and support our teachers. If there are specific topics you would like to see included, [please let us know](#).

Join the Bridge NSW teaching community

The Bridge NSW WhatsApp Teaching Community is active and a great place to ask questions, share ideas, and find answers. [Click here](#) to join the group.

Please contact us at education@bridge-nsw.com.au with any ideas or enquiries.

Player Development

Kate's Way #10

By Kate McCallum

CHOICE-OF-GAMES COMES BEFORE SLAM-BIDDING

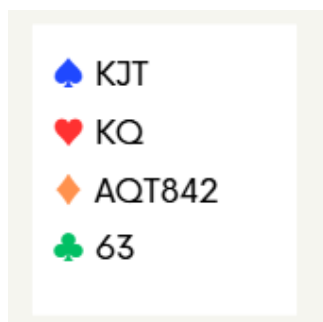
We don't make slam tries when the correct strain for game is still in doubt. Choice-of-Games always has the first priority, particularly when we're below 3NT.

In practical terms, what this means is that, in our constructive auctions, we make no cue-bids below 3NT.

Bids below 3NT are designed to get to the best game, or to the right game from the right side of the table.

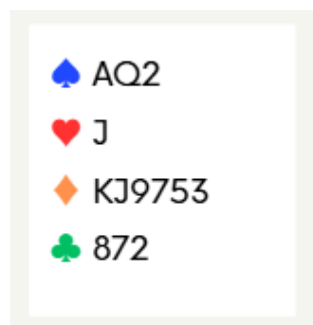
Thus, they show values in the suit bid, not controls. Bids below 3NT are NOT cue-bids.

In first seat at IMP scoring, you hold this hand:

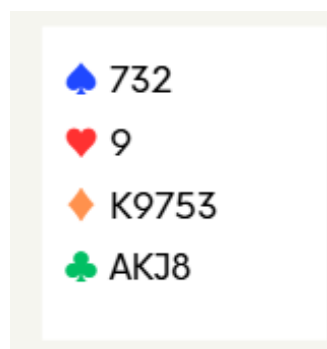


You open 1D and partner bids 3H, which you've agreed is a splinter bid showing a diamond fit and heart shortness. That doesn't improve your hand much and you wisely decide to settle for game. Should you just bid 3NT since you have a heart stopper (ignoring your club weakness), and hope there are 9 tricks? Perhaps...

But, if partner holds something like this, you won't be happy.



3NT is hopeless unless the opponents make a mistake. But, if you bid 4D because of your uncertainty and find partner with:



You've missed a SOLID 3NT and 5D is too high.

Do you just have to guess? No, of course not. (I wouldn't be writing this article, would I?) The solution is to bring partner into the picture. Bid 3S to show spade values and leave it up to partner to choose the right contract.

Are you concerned that partner will think you want to play in spades? He's already denied four spades when he bid 3H, so he knows that the only time you are likely to belong in spades is when you have five. That's such an unlikely scenario (impossible in many partnerships) that it's nothing to be

concerned about. If partner does raise 3S to 4S it will be because he can't bid 3NT and is hedging, on his way to 5D – probably hoping to play a 4-3 spade fit if you have four. Or perhaps a 5-3 if you happen to have five.

Are you perhaps worried that partner will think you are making a control-bid slam-try when you bid 3S? He won't if he's playing sensible methods:

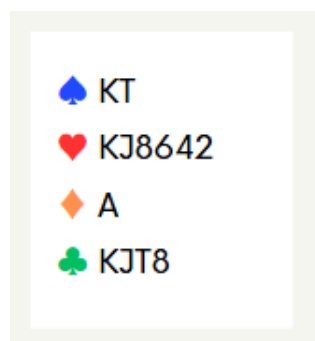
NO CUE-BIDS BELOW 3NT.

As an aside, we do make one exception to the rule: If we've clearly agreed hearts below 3NT, AND we are known to have at least nine hearts between us, then 3S is a cue-bid (control-bid) suggesting a slam in hearts.

Cue-bids above 3NT

Cue-bids above 3NT are nearly always slam tries, but there are occasional exceptions to the rule. When you're probing for the right game, a cue-bid may be the best route.

Suppose you hold this hand in first seat Both Vul (Pairs scoring).



You open 1H and hear:

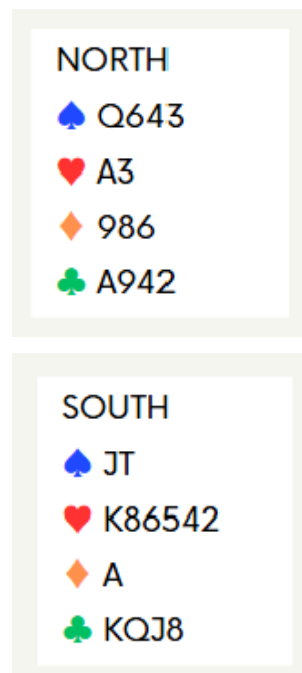
1H (3D) DbI (P); ?

Now what?

You want to get to game but you don't know which game. 3NT could be right but the chances are quite good that you belong in 4H or 5C. And 4C is not a forcing bid.

4D will do the job. A cue-bid of the opponents' suit. Responder, not having raised hearts on the previous round, will usually bid 4H with Hx and you can pass. Lacking that, he will probably bid 4S and you can correct to 5C.

You try 4D, a choice-of-games cue-since no trump suit has been found, and partner obliges with 4H. When you see dummy, you will be pleased not to be in 3NT.



Well done!

In a nutshell then:

NO SLAM TRIES BELOW 3NT. NO SLAM-TRY CUE-BIDS ABOVE 3NT WHEN NO TRUMP SUIT HAS BEEN FOUND.

Monthly bidding contest

By Philip Glover

Courtesy of RealBridge, the following hand is offered for your consideration in this month's challenge.

Hand 6 from March 2025

None Vul. Dealer North. IMPs.				
	West	North	East	South
♠ Q 5		2♥	2♠	3♥
♥ 8 4 2	Pass	Pass	X	Pass
♦ J 9 6 5 2	?			
♣ A Q 5	2♥ = weak/5+♥			

Some thinking issues:

- What is Partner's shape /strength?
- How many spades are in partner's hand?
- How many Hearts does P hold?
- Is the double of 3H for penalties?
- Is this a part score, game or slam going hand?

Having given some thought to these issues, what is your bid?

ACTION	MARKS	PANEL VOTES	Competitors' Entries (%)
4♥	10	14	7
4♠	8	9	24
5♦	6	1	6
Pass	6	1	11
4♦	4	1	21
3♠	3	0	30
3NT	0	0	1

Competition Entrant Average Score: 5.38

Larry Cohen summarises the case for 4H

LARRY COHEN: 4♥. I have too much to bid only 4♦, but I don't want to bury partner with 5♦. He will know I can't have three spades from my failure to bid 3♠ earlier (and to now

have enough for this). This suggests a doubleton spade and one or both minors and gives him a choice.

Interestingly, out of 26 experts, only 1 was prepared to play in a partscore (4D), none chose the bid of 3S, and only 1 chose to pass for penalties.

You can join the [RealBridge challenge here](#).

That's it for this month. Bid with judgement and bid thoughtfully!

Upcoming events

The following pages are flyers for forthcoming events and courses. The deadline for flyers to be received is the **second last Friday of each month**. Flyers must be a single A4 page and should be for events and courses in the following two months. To have your flyer included in the next issue, please send it to bridging@bridgensw.com.au.



DIRECTORS WORKSHOP

with Ian Lisle

Date: Friday 5th June 2026
Time: 9.30am – 3.00pm
Venue: Level 1, 162 Goulburn Street, Surry Hills
Parking available at Secure Parking (101 Goulburn Street) at \$17 whole day
Cost: FREE!

It will be free to attend and participants are welcome from anyone in the Bridge community who is considering becoming a director in future.

Free tea and instant coffee throughout the day. Participants are welcome to order lunch from Rush Cafe on the ground floor before the session, it will be delivered to them in the club room during the training.

Please register via **MyABF**:

<https://myabf.com.au/events/congress/view/4260>



• Sydney Bridge Club • (02) 9264 6884 • www.sydneybridgecentre.com



Especially for players with fewer than 100 & 300 masterpoints

SBC Novice & Restricted Pairs

Saturday 6th June 2026

at the SBC clubrooms on Level 1, 162 Goulburn Street, Surry Hills

Entry fee: \$65 (lunch included)

Director: John McIlrath • Organiser: Wing Roberts

RED Masterpoints

Programmes

A special Pairs event for Novice and Restricted players! Compete with players who are of similar level – Novice (fewer than 100 masterpoints) and Restricted (fewer than 300 masterpoints). Play commences at 10.00am sharp on Saturday 6th June for two sessions. There is a break for lunch between sessions and refreshment at the conclusion of congress.

Entries are restricted to ONLY Novice and Restricted players. Please sign up in advance via MyABF. Both players in the pair must have fewer than 100 masterpoints / 300 masterpoints as at 1st April 2026 to compete in the Novice / Restricted field.

Prize money will depend on the number of entries.

RED masterpoints awarded.

Conducted under the auspices of Bridge NSW. All players are subject to the BNSW's Congress Disciplinary Regulations. The congress qualifies for the issue of red masterpoints at level B4.



Organiser: Wing Roberts

- Phone: (02) 9264 6884 / 0487 350 160 • Email: office@sydneybridgeclub.org.au •
- Website: www.sydneybridgecentre.com •

INTRODUCTION TO BRIDGE

FACE TO FACE LESSONS

- Course starts Sat 6th June 2026,
- Book your place at www.learnbridgeinsydney.com.au
- 2 hour lessons held at East Lindfield Bowling Club.
- Weekly practice session available
- Course notes for you to revise.
- No partner needed, just give it a go!
- Free tea and coffee



Only
\$150

**6 week
course**

**2hr lessons
full of fun
and a
workout for
your brain**

If you enjoy learning the game, further lessons and play will be available in the same time slot following on from the course.

WHAT OUR PAST PARTICIPANTS HAVE SAID....

"Thank you for being such a good teacher, you have made the lessons so interesting and entertaining, it has all made sense."

"I have very much enjoyed these classes and I have been so impressed with the professionalism and supportive, welcoming culture."

"The course and our teacher, Liz were amazing!! It was a great first step into the world of bridge"

"This 6 week course is exceptional"

"I have played with some lovely people, we have lots of laughs and real catch-ups over a coffee."





SWISS PAIRS - SWISS TEAMS

Maximum of 24 Tables - 12 Tables Minimum

ENTRIES CLOSE: Friday 05 June, 2026

VENUE - NEWCASTLE BRIDGE CLUB

12 Young Road, Broadmeadow, NSW, 2292

Director:	Ronnie Ng
Convenor :	Ailsa Kearney
Enquiries :	0400 062 19 amkearney01@gmail.com

Programme

Registration 9.00am for 9.30am
start both days

Combined field -
Open/Restricted/Novice

Saturday 13 June: Swiss Pairs \$35 per player

Sunday 14 June: Swiss Teams \$35 per player

Total master points are to be <300 per player Restricted
or <100 per player Novice as of 31 March 2026.

Payment Options

via ABF Credits, Cash on the day,
Direct deposit to Newcastle Bridge Club

Online Entries

via ABF, or BridgeNSW until 05 June

Mail Entries

The Congress Convenor - Newcastle Bridge Club,
PO Box 257 Hamilton, NSW 2303

Tea, coffee and light refreshments are provided on
both days; Snack and drinks at the conclusion of play
on both days.

PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN LUNCH

Thanks to our sponsor



TONY BEMROSE
INSURANCE BROKERS

INAUGURAL CENTRAL COAST SCHOOLS **BRIDGE CHALLENGE**

free beginner lessons for
contestants

SUNDAY 14 JUNE 2026

win **\$500**
cash for **YOU**
AND \$500
for **your**
SCHOOL

PAIRS can be 2 students; student/teacher
student/parent; student/grandparent
Enter as many pairs as you like
Entries close Friday 5th June
Enquiries:
Sue Woodbury: 0409881770
Peter Greening: 0406810371
ccbridgeclub@gmail.com





COMMERCIAL CLUB (Albury) Bridge Club

41ST INTERSTATE BRIDGE CONGRESS

Generous Prizemoney* in 3 Sections! \$4,000+ (*Subject to Entries)

20/21 June 2026

This Congress is conducted under the auspices of Bridge NSW

Players are subject to all Bridge NSW Congress & Tournament Regulations

This Congress qualifies for issue of Red Masterpoints at B4 Level

Director: Daryl Whitfield

System Cards mandatory – Yellow systems not permitted

Congress held at Commercial Club Albury

Free Parking – via Elizabeth/Stanley St

Saturday 20th June Commercial Club Swiss Pairs

Entry - \$55 per Player
(\$50 local Club Members)

Morning Tea on arrival
Play Commences 10:00am

Light Lunch tea/coffee provided
(pls email Dietary requirements)

Prizemoney in 3 Sections!

Sunday 21st June Commercial Club Swiss Teams

Entry - \$55 per Player
(\$50 local Club Members)

9:00am for 9:15am Start

Light Lunch tea/coffee provided
(pls email Dietary requirements)

Prizemoney in 3 Sections!

Entries via MyABF – or EFT

BSB: 062500 Acc: 0091 0894

Tag with Surname/ABF – No Cash!

Organiser – Sue Pemberton

0427 143 240 or 0413 010 478

bridge@commercialclubalbury.com.au

NSBC Festival *of Bridge*

Friday
19
June

Two Men and a Truck
Rookie/Restricted/Intermediate Teams



Sunday
21
June

Two Men and a Truck
Rookie/Restricted/Intermediate Pairs



Thursday
25
June

Fixed Income Solutions Festival Thursday
Open Matchpoint Swiss Pairs



Thursday
25
June

Fixed Income Solutions Festival Thursday
Rookie/Restricted/Intermediate MP Swiss Pairs



Friday
26
June

Watermark Festival Swiss Pairs
Rookie → Intermediate & Open Sections



Saturday
27
June

Fixed Income Solutions
Open Festival Saturday Swiss Teams



Saturday
27
June

Fixed Income Solutions Festival Saturday
Rookie/Restricted/Intermediate Swiss Teams



Sunday
28
June

TBIB Festival Swiss Teams



Conducted under the auspices of the NSWBA.

The ABF has approved the issue of red masterpoints at level B4c.

All players are subject to the NSWBA's Disciplinary Regulations





**FIXED INCOME
SOLUTIONS**

Festival Saturday

Swiss Teams

**Rookie, Restricted or
Intermediate + Open Sections**



JUNE
Saturday
27
10am

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Featuring the AustralianCountryChampionships

CANBERRA 4to 16 July 2026

All players welcome

Join us for
the ANC Presentation Dinner

Canberra Labor Club/Mercure Hotel,
Belconnen Town Centre

Just a short
walk to accommodation,
restaurants & shopping.

Sat 4 July	Sun 5 July	Mon 6 July	Tue 7 July	Wed 8 July	Thu 9 July	Fri 10 July
	INTERSTATE CAPTAINS MTG	INTERSTATE TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP (Final rounds start on Thu evening)				
AUSTRALIAN BRIDGE MAGAZINE WELCOME SWISS PAIRS		SEAN MULLAMPHY COUNTRY CLUB TEAMS CHAMPIONSHIP			AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY PAIRS CHAMPIONSHIP	
ROOKIE PAIRS	NOVICE PAIRS	CANBERRA BRIDGE CLUB THREE DAY TEAMS			MONARO & SOUTH CANBERRA BRIDGE CLUBS GRADED PAIRS	INTERSTATE PAIRS CH'SHIP
		SWISS PAIRS I	SWISS PAIRS II	SWISS PAIRS III		PRESENTATION DINNER

Sat 11 July	Sun 12 July	Mon 13 July	Tue 14 July	Wed 15 July	Thu 16 July
OPEN BUTLER STAGE 1		OPEN BUTLER STAGE 2		OPEN BUTLER STAGE 3	
RESTRICTED BUTLER		MIXED BUTLER STAGE 1		MIXED BUTLER STAGE 2	
INTRO TO IMP SCORING	MATCHPOINT PAIRS	SWISS PAIRS A		SWISS PAIRS B	
					PRESENTATION DRINKS

More details in MyABF

Entries now open

Early bird discount until 3 June 2026

You'll also find out how to get there, where to stay and eat, and other things to do. There is so much to choose from close to the venue!

Convenors: Lyn Carter 0402-077958
Cathy Nichols 0448-778863
anc@abf.com.au





Learn to Play Bridge



Beginners' Course

*Bridge is the most fascinating card game in the world.
It is a very social activity, while being constantly
mentally stimulating.*



6 Monday Mornings @ City

July 20th – August 24th, 10.00am – 12.30pm

6 Tuesday Evenings @ City

July 21st – August 25th, 7.00pm – 9.30pm

City, Level 1, 162 Goulburn St, Surry Hills

Parking Available

6 Thursday Mornings @ Polish Club Ashfield

July 23rd – August 27th, 10.30am – 12.45pm

Polish Club Ashfield, 182 Liverpool Road, Ashfield

Free Parking onsite



\$159 for the full course (notes included). Free for those who have done our Beginners Course before. You will have the option to continue your journey in Improvers I and II plus supervised sessions in both venues.

To enrol in this course, or for more information, please call office on (02) 9264 6884 or email at office@SydneyBridgeClub.org.au.



What is contract Bridge?

♠♥ **FREE Intro Seminar** ♦♣

Are you looking for a mental challenge that's fun and social? Have you heard about Bridge, but not known what it's about or how to learn it? This one-hour, free seminar will give you an insight into the fascinating world of bridge:

City | Tuesday 7th July, 6.00pm – 7.00pm

City | Monday 13th July, 9.00am – 10.00am

Level 1, 162 Goulburn Street, Surry Hills

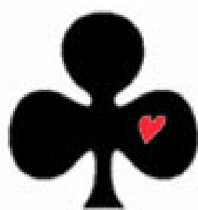
Ashfield | Thursday 9th July, 11.00am – 12.00nn

Polish Club, 182 Liverpool Road, Ashfield



To enrol in this seminar, or for more information, please call office on (02) 9264 6884 or email at office@sydneybridgeclub.org.au.

For more details you can check out our website: www.sydneybridgecentre.com



The Club with a Heart

BRISBANE WATER BRIDGE CLUB ANNUAL CONGRESS

Saturday 18th July 9.30 am- Swiss Pairs

Sunday 19th July 9.30 am- Swiss Teams

**Venue : Ettalong 50+ Leisure and Learning Centre
corner of Broken Bay Rd and Karingi St, Ettalong**

- Director – Peter Hume.
- Enquiries to the Conveners – David Bowerman 0420 295 758, or Chris Hasemore 0490 191 741
- Entry PER EVENT - \$40 per person. Enter on MyABF
- Please BYO lunch. Tea and coffee available all day, plus home-made cakes and slices.
- Separate fields for Novice / Restricted players dependent on number of entries.
- Table limit – 32 tables
- For Restricted Pairs or Teams, masterpoints for each player must be < 300 at 30th June 2026
- For Novice Pairs or Teams, masterpoints for each player must be < 100 at 30th June 2026
- Yellow systems not permitted



Saturday:

SWISS PAIRS

- o 2 Sessions, starting 9:30 am
- o Best Pair – 1st \$300
- o Best Restricted Pair - \$250.
- o Best Novice Pair - \$200.
- o Prizes for 2nd and 3rd placings depending on number of entries. (Prize money may be adjusted if entries are low.)



Sunday:

SWISS TEAMS

- o 2 Sessions, starting 9:30 am
- o Best Team – 1st \$600
- o Best Restricted Team - \$500.
- o Best Novice Team - \$400.
- o Prizes for 2nd and 3rd placings depending on number of entries. (Prize money may be adjusted if entries are low.)

*Conducted under the auspices of Bridge NSW. The Australian Bridge Federation has approved the issue of red masterpoints at level B4.
All players are subject to Bridge NSW's Congress Disciplinary Regulations.*

IMPROVE YOUR DEFENCE!



- IMPROVE YOUR LEADS.
- WHEN TO LEAD SINGLETONS / DOUBLETONS, AND WHEN NOT TO.
- IMPROVE YOUR SIGNALS.
- KNOW WHICH SUIT YOUR PARTNER WANTS, OR DOESN'T WANT
- COUNTING. COUNT DECLARER'S POINTS AND TRICKS.



SCAN ME



- At East Lindfield
- 10am to 3:30pm
- Incl Lunch & tea
- \$60 pp
- Visitors Welcome

with Will Jenner-O'Shea

Convenor

Host

Supporting Clubs



Starter Pairs Congress 2026

Designed for players with limited or no congress experience

 **Peninsula Bridge Club**, 4 Jacksons Rd, Warriewood

**Sunday
9 August
9.30am-4pm**



A fun, friendly and supportive day of learning and development



Tailored for players with less than two years experience



Build confidence and skills for regular club play and club congresses



Helpful guidance: Pre-event Q&A, a relaxed pace of play and "Go-to" volunteers to support players throughout the day.



A social day: Meet players from other clubs over lunch and post game refreshments.



Great venue: Brand new club house, convenient location with ample free parking and B-line bus stop out the front.

\$55 per player (inc. lunch, snacks and post-game drinks)



Register now at MyABF



JOHN MCILRATH TROPHY

GOLD POINT SWISS PAIRS

SCAN



GNOT METRO QUALIFIER

Sunday



\$60 PER PLAYER
INCLUDES LUNCH AND SNACKS

NORTH SHORE
since 1962
BRIDGE CLUB





Tweed Heads Birthday Congress 2026 August 22-23rd 2026

**Come and help us celebrate our 61st birthday
Playing 2 days of Swiss pairs at
Tweed Heads Bridge Club
Unit 1/6 Park Street Tweed Heads NSW 2485**

**64 pairs maximum. Entries close 8th August 2026 6pm.
Red Masterpoints
Generous prizes in various levels depending on entries**

**To facilitate those travelling play will be
Saturday 10am – approx 5.30pm,
Sunday 9.30am – approx 3pm.**

**Delicious all day grazing, including birthday cake.
Drinks and snacks at the end of the day**

**Close to Coolangatta airport
Lots of accommodation in Coolangatta as well as Tweed Heads
Saturday dinner for those interested at a local restaurant**

**Cost \$100 per person for 2 days
Entries via MyABF. Payment by credit card/Bridge Credits
or Direct Deposit BSB: 062-682 Account: 2800-2835
Please include surname and Congress with direct deposits**

Sponsored by TBIB Insurance



**Director: Ed Roggeveen
Organiser: Jenni Cover**

Further information: jenni.cover@gmail.com or 0409560008

**All systems except yellow. Systems cards must be available
All players subject to BNSW's Congress Disciplinary Regulations**



- ATTENTION BRIDGE DIRECTORS -

Sydney Bridge Club invites qualified Bridge Directors to join our pool of **fill-in Directors**, providing cover for occasional absences of our regular directing team.

Paid work • Paid training available • Potential for regular future work

ABOUT THE ROLE

Direct duplicate sessions as required • Apply laws and rulings clearly, calmly and consistently • Support smooth movements, scoring and session logistics • Help maintain a welcoming, professional club atmosphere

ABOUT YOU

Recognised Bridge Director qualification/accreditation, or equivalent experience • Confident knowledge of laws and procedures • Clear communicator with professional table presence • Reliable, organised and flexible in availability

ABOUT US

Sydney Bridge Club is one of Sydney's largest and most established Bridge clubs. We are a community based, not for profit club located in central Sydney.

HOW TO APPLY

To find out more, please contact Jeff Newton by email at ***operations@sydneybridgeclub.org.au***



Sydney Spring Nationals

**Saturday 17 – Sunday 25
October 2026**



Early bird
pricing until
31 Aug



**Canterbury Park
Racecourse**

A national gold masterpoint event – **The Sydney Spring Nationals** return in 2026 with all your favourite events and some fresh surprises.

With 18 events across 9 days, there is something for every player – whatever your level of experience.



Register now at MyABF

