

<b>TO</b>	Hockey Victoria Affiliates
<b>FROM</b>	Ben Hartung, Chief Executive Officer, Hockey Victoria
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>2012 Masters (Veterans) Competitions &amp; New Open-Age Competitions</b>
<b>DATE</b>	Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> February, 2012

Dear Affiliates,

One of the commitments I provided in the updated Competition Structure Information Guide released to all Affiliates on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011 was that Hockey Victoria (HV) would conduct a survey of our Masters (Veterans) community to obtain valuable feedback on a number of proposed initiatives that were contained in the original Competition Structure Information Guide published on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2011.

In late October 2011, HV posted an online survey to obtain feedback on the proposed changes and on the competitions available to Masters players in general. We received a fantastic response to this survey with in excess of 750 responses and I would like to sincerely thank the Masters Hockey community for the constructive feedback.

The survey was broken into three age groups (Over 35, Over 45 & Over 55) and a summary of each of these surveys is attached for your review and information. There are some interesting results!

The Masters competition has been very successful and experienced positive growth over a number of years and HV wants to ensure that this growth continues. We want to provide the best opportunity for existing players to transition from the Open-Age (Senior) competitions into the Masters competition as well as providing suitable levels of competition to attract new or returning participants to our sport. There is no doubt that we currently have a gap in our offering. HV does not currently provide opportunities in the Masters competition for Men who are under 40 years or Women who are under 35 years who are unable or not interested in playing in the Open-Age (Senior) competitions on a weekend for a variety of reasons (work, family commitments, etc.). We are making several changes to attempt to address these deficiencies however a phased approach will need to be implemented.

The following information provides a summary of the changes that will be implemented for the **2012** season:

### Women's Masters Competition

- The Women's Masters competition will remain on a **Monday** night for 2012, however HV will be consulting with the Women's Master community and venue owners/managers during the 2012 season to accurately identify all of the advantages and disadvantages of potentially moving the Women's Masters competition in 2013 to a Wednesday night. If a change is to be made then clubs will require adequate notification to alter their existing ground usage models. All Women Masters players will be sent a direct email in the next few months with access to survey questions relating to this proposal and it will be critical that we capture a high return rate from all clubs currently participating in the Masters competition so that we can critically evaluate the data as part of our decision making process.
- The entry age for the Women's Masters competition will remain unchanged at **35** years of age for the 2012 season, however HV will be consulting with the Women's Master community during the 2012 season to confirm the strength of support to lower this entry age to 30 years of age. If this change was strongly supported by Affiliates, HV would investigate operating future Women's Masters competitions in three groups, for example, Over 30, Over 35, Over 45.
- The Women's Masters B grade competition will be split two divisions: Masters B North West and Master B South East. This will result in slightly less travel for teams and hopefully with the growth of Women's Masters we could expand to three or four divisions in the future and further 'regionalise' these competitions.

### Men's Masters Competition

- The Men's Masters Over 40 competition will remain on a **Monday** night and the Men's Masters Over 50 (Super Masters) competition will remain on a **Wednesday** night for 2012.
- The entry age for the Men's Masters competition will remain unchanged at **40** years of age for the 2012 season, however a provision in the HV Rules will be made to allow up to **three (3)** players aged between 35 and 39 in the year of the competition to participate per match.

*Note: The current provision is for up to two (2) players who will turn 40 in the year of the competition to participate and the original Competition Structure Information Guide proposed the introduction of four (4) players aged between 35 and 39.*

- For safety reasons, a local rule will be introduced to ban the use of the 'tomahawk' in the Men's Masters C, D and E grades. The 'tomahawk' will still be permitted in the Men's Masters A & B grades.

- During the 2012 season, HV will be consulting with the Men's Master community to agree on an appropriate timeline to implement the change of entry age to 35 years of age. There was very strong support for this change in the Masters Survey (Over 35's - 72.7%, Over 45's – 77.0% & Over 55's – 82.3%).
- In 2013, HV will be structuring the Men's Masters competition as outlined in the Competition Structure Information Guide:
  - Masters A
  - Masters B North West & Masters B South East
  - Masters C North West & Masters C South East
  - Masters D North, West, South & East

We believe that this will assist in attracting new players and umpires by reducing travelling times.

### **New Open-Age Competitions: Expressions of Interest to Host and Participate**

In an effort to address the deficiencies highlighted earlier, HV will be offering the opportunity for several new competitions in 2012.

HV are calling for expressions of interest from metropolitan clubs who wish to host and/or participate in a new Wednesday night Open-Age Men's and Women's competition.

Details of the new Open-Age competition are as follows:

- The competitions would be held at club venues (not the State Netball Centre Hockey) on a **Wednesday** night in following three timeslots: 7.00pm, 8.00pm & 9.00pm.
- One venue will be selected from the North/West area and the second venue will be selected from the South/East area for each of the Men's and Women's competitions (a total of 4 venues), however final venue selection this depend on the level of interest from clubs willing to participate.
- The competition would consist of **six (6) teams** and be played over a **15 week season** with one (1) finals week (1v2, 3v4 and 5v6).
- Games will be played in accordance with Masters Rules with **25 minute halves**.
- The intention is to create a more **social** hockey experience. There will be no relegation and promotion.
- The competition would commence in **May 2012**.

- The cost of entering a team in the competition would be **\$1,000** (GST inclusive) which is a reduced rate from the standard \$1,240 for Over-Age (Masters) team given that there are only 15 rounds. In addition to the Team Entry cost, teams would be responsible for paying 50% of the pitch hire costs which equates to \$44 (GST inclusive) per match.

HV understands that demand for ground usage within a club for training (juniors and seniors) on a Wednesday night may prevent many clubs from being able to host this opportunity in 2012, however we believe there will still be capacity within the facility network to accommodate these competitions.

**What do you need to do if you are interested in hosting or participating in the new competition?**

If you are interested in hosting or entering a team in one of the new Wednesday night Open-Age competitions, please complete the following Expression of Interest Form by the close of business on **Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2012**.

HV will then liaise directly with all clubs that have expressed an interest to confirm details.

<http://hosting3.sportingpulse.com/www.hockeyvictoria.org.au/index.php?id=493>

**Summary**

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the Masters Hockey community for their input into the 2011 Masters Survey and the HV team look forward to further engaging with the Masters community in 2012 to ensure that we have a better understanding of their needs and that we are working collaboratively to structure future Masters competitions in order to maximum participation opportunities.

I wish you all the best for a successful year.

If you have any queries in relation to the information above, please do not hesitate to contact the Hockey Victoria office on 8379 4288.

Kind regards,



**Ben Hartung**  
Chief Executive Officer