



GROWING PAINTBALL WITHIN AUSTRALIA

www.AustralianPaintball.org



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Australian Paintball Industry Association
Email: info@AustralianPaintball.org

Postal Address:
A.P.I.A.
C/O- PO Box 3065
Rouse Hill, NSW 2155

Dear Paintball Industry Member,

I am writing to you in relation to the prospect of your paintball business joining The Australian Paintball Industry Association (A.P.I.A.) The Australian Paintball Industry Association (A.P.I.A.) is a group of paintball businesses that joined together to represent the Australian Paintball Industry on a national level when dealing with all government agencies and the general public.

The association aims to provide detailed and correct information to all various Government agencies when required, for the purpose of improving the legal standing of paintball equipment and the running of paintball games Australia wide.

The association objectives are:

- (1) To facilitate a greater understanding of the paintball industry in Australia.
- (2) To standardize the industry rules and regulations throughout Australia.
- (3) To help promote growth in the paintball industry in Australia.

The A.P.I.A. also seeks to work in conjunction with existing state bodies and to encourage the establishment of state industry bodies in those states that do not have one. Now there are already several "Paintball Associations" in Australia all claiming to represent our industry, but to be honest in all my dealings over the last 20 years, I am yet to see one of these actually doing anything to help our laws, nor have I seen any one of these other so called "associations" in any one of the many meetings I have had with all the different Government Departments.

Now as some of you may already know, I have personally been at the forefront of fighting to get our laws improved ever since 1991. I was directly involved in the legalization of paintball in NSW. Several years later, when I was asked by the Western Australian Police for assistance in policy for WA paintball laws, I happily provided them with several policy papers. Six months later, I was asked to come over as the "legal" field operator for the WA police paintball meeting with the local paintball industry for which I was happy to do at my own cost. I was asked to attend as the paintball field representative as paintball was still illegal in WA at the time, and as such, all the local field operators were technically running illegal games. The final outcome for this meeting was, as we all know now for Western Australian Paintball, a total success.

Now I have been working with Government at all levels in different states for the advancement of Australian paintball and I have also been constantly involved in the promotion of paintball and assorted paintball events all over the country for the past 20 years. Personally and with the help of my partners from Action Paintball Games we spent a lot of time and money working on the rescinding of the unjust banning of semi auto paintball guns for importation into Australia. Action Paintball Games was instrumental in the rescinding of the unjust ban on the importation of semi auto paintball guns.

The sad thing is that whilst we were doing this, there were actually other companies in our paintball industry that were actively campaigning against this ban being lifted and against what the rest of us, the paintball industry majority, wanted. I suppose they had their reasons to see this ban stay in place, but I for one could not. So, despite the fact that the majority of us want the same thing; the Government would listen to all of us as equals. This in essence has always been our problem; we are such a disorganized rabble, and because of this, the Government would

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dismiss us all in the same boat. There is no future for us if we are to continue in a country that is actively looking at ways to reduce the amount of firearms nationwide. We need to be united; we need to be strong, with one voice.

It is with this same passion and devotion that made me ask some of my good friends in the Australian Paintball Industry to help me start the A.P.I.A. for the advancement of Australian Paintball. I was lucky that these friends were also respected and well know paintball identities who owned or successful Australian Paintball Companies and that they agreed with what I wanted to do. Heartbreak Ridge Paintball, Paintball Pete's, Hunter Valley Paintball, Fortworth Laser and Skirmish, Lithgow Paintball, Newcastle Paintball, Skirmish Down Under, Predator Paintball and Extreme Paintball all wanted the same thing as myself and could see that working together we had a better chance of success.

So united together, we started the Australian Paintball Industry Association... We did not form this association to run tournaments, tell players what to do or anything else, we did it to work on improving our paintball laws and try to work with our governments rather than against them and hopefully give us all a better chance to grow. Now since its inception more than 5 years ago, we have made great inroads into getting better legislation through clear communication with relevant Governments across Australia, although, so far, the majority of our successes have been NSW based, with the most significant wins being for private ownership of paintball guns in NSW as well as the original age reduction to 16 for paintball participants in NSW and hopefully soon, the future reduction in age to 12 for NSW paintball participants.

To be fair, it is true that the A.P.I.A. has mostly concentrated on NSW laws, after all, the majority of our current members are currently located in NSW. But we are hopeful that with the more interstate membership and with consultation from these new interstate members; we can all work together to improve our paintball laws in all states to the point where we finally have uniformed, sensible and fair paintball laws across Australia for all players and our members.

I do believe that for this association to work properly, in the near future we will need to create state based sub committees with their own president, vice president etc. This is how we get better paintball laws for us all.

Whilst I am currently serving as the A.P.I.A. President and have been since its inception, I will go on the record now that I have absolutely no problem at all, with me stepping down for another individual to take over as President if the membership wishes for and then vote for it. I just want the association to reach all the goals it can and for our industry to be able to run as normal businesses and not worry about any possible new laws that in the future could come out hamper or even hurt our industry in the future.

In relation to our constitution and any other parts of our association, the existing members are all open to any changes if they are deemed necessary to improve the A.P.I.A. by its membership. In fact all parts of our association are up for suggestions of change. I must stress that the A.P.I.A. belongs to its members and not Action Paintball Games P/L or me personally.

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Now despite all our wins, we still have such a long way to go in relation to Australian Paintball laws in their entirety. The truth is there are still individuals in Local, State and Federal Government that do not like paintball and further do not want our industry to even exist. So unfortunately, we do have a fight on our hands for our very existence. There are still moves in our Government to push through more unfair law changes on our industry including the possibility of making more types of paintball guns illegal such as ALL BLACK models. It is argued by some in government that these can be mistaken for real weapons and used in possible crimes as well as harsher licensing laws and the other policy some want is to go back to the removal of private ownership altogether.

This is why we need to work together as an industry and strive for uniformed rules across the whole country. Not only should it be legal to play Paintball in all states and territories of Australia, but issues such as the age of play as well as private ownership must be identical as well. Even simple things such as the use of paintball guns licensed to one approved field being able to be used at another approved field in the event of say, a big campaign game, which is difficult to do in NSW.

The association must also be there to help its members in the event of malicious or unfounded bad publicity or overzealous and uninformed local authorities. There is nothing worse for us than when any publicity is negative, and then the press talks to us all individually and we all give different opinions. This makes the Australian Paintball Industry look unorganized, unprofessional, like a bunch of amateurs, or worse, cowboys...hardly something that one of the biggest groups of gun owners in the country should be doing. It is simply not in our best interests as an industry. It is hoped through a national, united front the paintball industry can work to give all of us a long future in the sport and industry we all love.

Last week the A.P.I.A. sent a full proposal to the Department of Premier and Cabinet, The NSW Firearms Registry and the NSW office of the Australian Customs Service NSW suggesting many positive recommendations in relation to both the importation laws, lowering of age (again) and many others. This was done at their request. There are nine different recommendations in this latest proposal. We are extremely confident that many of these recommendations will be accepted. If and when this happens, paintball laws in NSW will become the best in Australia. I am happy to send a copy of this to any association members who have not yet received a copy. Now the Department of Premier and Cabinet wants to talk to us and get our opinion on what changes we think are necessary to improve the sport. If we can make big positive changes for NSW, we are confident that we can get a lot of these changes to follow up in other states. Obviously as an association, we want these positive changes to happen in all states and territories of Australia. Uniformed paintball laws will only help us all in the paintball industry. Basically, we all win!

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What does it cost to join the APIA?

To join the APIA costs a total of \$100 for per year. There is no Joining fee, just an Annual membership fee of \$100.00. We have deliberately made it cheap so everyone can join. Action Paintball Games donated all the funds required to start the association as well as all the stationary costs. So at this stage all funds raised by membership so far are still sitting in the A.P.I.A bank account, (less the \$27 charged so far by the bank in fees since it was opened 5 years ago).

What is the APIA membership money for?

The membership fees will be used by the association for any other costs such as advertising and any other promotional work or anything else that the association committee deems it requires.

Who is on the committee now?

The committee is currently made up of:

President: Michael Whybrew – Action Paintball Games

Vice President: Peter Russell – Paintball Pete's

Committee members:

Manny Kargas - Heartbreak Ridge Paintball.

Scott Secombe - Extreme Paintball.

Tim Miller - Hunter Valley Paintball.

Michael Worthing - Fortworth Laser and Skirmish.

Trevor Long - Skirmish Down Under.

Mark Jefferies – Fireball Paintball.

Since the industry's inception, I have been the President and Peter Russell has served in the role of Vice President of the APIA. The committee has not changed either since the start of the A.P.I.A. in 2006.

I would suggest that maybe it is time for others to become involved in our association. We, the existing members would welcome such additions and changes to our ranks. With the current climate of change, now is the time for a strong united industry. The Australian Paintball Industry Association can be the effective tool needed to ensure the voice of the paintball industry in Australia is heard at all levels. But your voice is needed to ensure this happens. There are other serious potential financial benefits to joining our association. Several of our suppliers have already expressed interest in tendering to our members.

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What are the benefits to your company for joining the Association?

- A greater chance of better laws in relation to paintball in every state of Australia.
- A larger presence with all levels governments for positive reforms.
- Assistance and professional advice from a large group of very experienced paintball operators with more than 100 years combined experience in Australian Paintball.
- Your say in relation to all aspects of paintball laws put forward the association.
- First knowledge of activities and proposals given to government by the association.
- Supermarket pricing for all of our members from Pepsi if we get up to 40 paintball businesses/fields to join.
- A discounted Public Liability Insurance Policy Program for members from Milne Alexander Insurance Brokers exclusively for our members if we get more than 30 businesses/fields.
- A more secure future for all of us knowing that paintball will still be around in another 20 years and not banned.

I am sure that given time, we will be able to get even more benefits and bonuses as members of the A.P.I.A. Now membership is not only for paintball fields, but shops, stores, manufacturers, tournament promoters as well. We are not seeking membership from the players themselves as there are already several paintball player associations in Australia, none of whom so far, seem to actually do anything.

I have attached a copy of the articles of association and membership form for your perusal. I sincerely hope you can see the positives in joining the Australian Paintball Industry Association and help us make paintball better in Australia for everyone. For companies with more than one location, I respectfully ask that you join once for each location you own and/or run. The situation is simple, the more business we have as members the better our voice will be heard.

We must acknowledge that there will be Australian Paintball companies for whatever strange reason will want to fight or discredit us for their own agenda. We only have to look at the last meeting we had with the NSW Government over the dropping of the age to 16 in NSW where we had three Sydney based paintball fields try to fight us and actually stop the law change going through. It was lucky for us on the day that we were able to show that the vast majority of paintball fields wanted the law change as so it was able to go through. The irony is that although these three fields did not want the change, and fought with the rest of us all day in the meeting, they all now happily take bookings with 16+ aged participants and did so since the inception of the law change itself. You can make of that what you want. I know that in another state in Australia paintball fields are trying to get this law change through now, but a being thwarted by division in its own industry. Our association, the APIA could fix this once and for all, if given the opportunity.

The reason is simple. The governments all over Australia want to deal with our industry as an industry, not 200 separate businesses. They are asking for it, so we should rise to the occasion and give them what they want. Then they will be able to give us what we want in return. So instead of waiting to be told of legislation changes in relation to our industry that we may or may not like after they have already been implemented, let us work with these governments and give them all the information they need so we can have better paintball laws now....

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I have attached details of the Associations bank account details below for Membership payments.

Name: Australian Paintball Industry Association

Bank: Bendigo Bank Branch: Galston

BSB: 633 000

Account Number: 1288 18002

I ask that since this is a volunteer association and to help us reduce the work load of those in it, that all new members please attach a copy of the deposit for membership with a copy of the completed membership form.

Then fax it to A.P.I.A. on (02) 9679 0689. Also, if you could please make sure you put your name on any bank deposit you make, again just to make things a little easier for us.

If you need any further information please feel free to call me personally on 0414 789 889 or email me directly at Mike@actionpaintball.com any time. Please help us make a better future for all Paintballers in Australia.

Regards,

Michael Whybrew

President

Australian Paintball Industry Association

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