

Gippsland Bowls Region amalgamation

Overview

During 2019 and 2020, Bowls Victoria (BV) undertook a comprehensive review of bowls administration and operations to examine ways of improving governance in the sport. It appointed a boundary review committee to undertake this important work, with support from four regional bowls managers. Input was sought from clubs.

Among other things, the review concluded that:

- there were too many layers of governance and often blurred lines of responsibility
- some positions on boards and committees could not be filled
- there was increasing difficulty in securing the number of volunteers required to administer and manage bowls operations effectively.

As a result, BV decided to implement a regional restructure by retaining the same number of regions (16) but altering some boundaries and removing existing divisions within regions.

This is expected not only to achieve uniformity in administration, but also to significantly reduce the number of volunteers required.

The deadline for the restructure is 30 June 2021.

What this means for Gippsland

The Gippsland regional boundary will remain the same.

There will be two 'playing areas' – North and East – based on existing geographic areas in which pennant competition, state events and regional championships will be held.

The big change relates to governance. BV has directed the Gippsland Region Board to amalgamate the existing two divisions – North and East Gippsland – which currently administer bowls independently of each other.

In coming months, each division will be dissolved as required by Consumer Affairs Victoria.

From 1 July 2021, the Region Board will assume responsibility for the administration of bowls in Gippsland.

The amalgamation process

The Board has established two steering committees:

- Governance (new Constitution and Regulations), chaired by Board Secretary/Treasurer Bronwyn Thwaites. Members are Chris Sherrin and Jeff Amos (North) and Nigel Plunkett and Peter Huntley (East)
- Rules and Conditions of Play for Pennant and Competitions, chaired by Board Chairperson Jan Morton. Members are Peter Leslie and Pam Carter (North) and Peter Hardy and Brad Lancaster (East).

Governance

The new Region Constitution is the legal framework under which the Board will operate. It has been approved by the Board and reviewed and signed off by BV.

Delegates will be asked to approve and adopt it at a Special General Meeting to be held on Monday 22 February. Once adopted, the Constitution will be submitted to Consumer Affairs Victoria.

Work on the Regulations is under way with the aim of submitting them to BV for review in April, subject to Board approval.

Among other things, the Regulations will provide a high level of detail about:

- the Region structure
- the Board director election process
- the number of committees, their responsibilities, and the nomination/selection process
- delegated officer/coordinator positions
- region policies.

Rules and Conditions of Play (CoP) for Pennant and Competitions

There has been considerable progress on the Rules and CoP which when completed, will be submitted to the Board for consideration and ratification. The Board has the authority to make amendments if and when required.

Both the Steering Committee and the Board are taking account of the overarching BV Rules and CoP, as well as views expressed by regional clubs.

The Board has already made two key decisions to give clubs time to prepare for the 2021/22 season, specifically:

- open gender competition for both Saturday and Midweek Pennant
- 21 ends for Saturday and Midweek pennant.

New logo

The Board has appointed Gippsport to develop a new logo to replace all existing logos – Region, NGBD and EGBD. The new logo will:

- visually represent the Region's geographic diversity, e.g., mountains to the sea
- reflect the Region as a progressive organisation
- recognise the heritage of the two separate divisions
- be suitable for many uses, including stationery, uniforms, signs, trophies, flags, websites, and social media, e.g., Facebook
- comply with Bowls Victoria rules.

Communications

During times of change it is vitally important to ensure there is a high level of communications and to eliminate as far as possible the opportunity for disinformation.

To date, the following has been undertaken:

- distribution of a Board summary after each meeting to all secretaries for wide dissemination within their clubs; the summaries are also posted on the Region's Facebook page and the Region website [Documents - Gippsland Bowls Region](#)
- an information session for delegates, club secretaries and presidents on 30 November 2020 at which progress reports were provided (written summaries distributed to secretaries)
- responses to enquiries from clubs on different aspects of the amalgamation
- attendance at club meetings to seek input
- briefings of club members on request.

The next communications opportunity will be after the Special General Meeting on 22 February, when the Steering Committee Chairpersons will provide progress reports to delegates. Copies of the updates will be distributed to all clubs.