



## DELEGATES INFORMATION SESSION NOTES

The Gippsland Region Board held an information session for club delegates and observers at Heyfield Bowls Club on Monday 4 October.

President Jan Morton opened the meeting at 10am.

### **Present**

#### *Board members*

Jan Morton (President), Nigel Plunkett (Vice President), Bronwyn Thwaites (Secretary), Colin Smith (Treasurer), Peter Beesley and Marg Brandhoj (directors)

#### *Delegates and observers*

Kel Brandhoj (Lakes Entrance); John Crawford (Bairnsdale Golf); Chris Sherrin, Rosemary Molphy and Bert Middelhuis (Heyfield); Sue Jenkins and Judy Beesley (Paynesville); Ron Kyne (Stratford); Neil Hutchison (Bairnsdale); Chris Wain (Metung); Bruce Melrose, Keith Pritchard and Pam Carter (Sale); Graeme Hemming and Jeff Wheaton (Maffra); Shane Higgins (West Sale); Noel and Helen Evans (Loch Sport); Alison Harrower (Bruthen); Chris Kyle (Howitt Park); Karen Cheney and Sue Robinson (Orbost); Jeff Amos (Yarram)

### **Apologies**

Keren Blake (director), Deirdre Relph (Maffra), Nola Wheeler (Stratford), Sue Agnew (Tambo Valley), Dave Butterworth (Lakes Entrance)

### **Business**

#### *Covid update*

Colin Smith provided an explanation of the latest Covid information from the State Government in relation to the numbers permitted to bowl in regional Victoria. He noted that information posted by Bowls Victoria (BV) had been confusing, in some instances incorrect.

Colin referenced the latest version of the Restricted Activity Directions (RADs) released by DHHS on Wednesday 1 October for community sport. RADs are the legal underpinnings behind the Covid restrictions.

He advised that in relation to numbers permitted on the green, the RADs for community sport in an outdoor space included some exceptions to Covid rules, specifically:

- density quotients (number of people per square metre)
- capacity limit for outdoor spaces (30)
- group limit (10).

As such, these exceptions allow clubs to undertake bowls **training**, with the level of participation based on the numbers required for that training, regardless of density quotients, outdoor capacity limits and group limit.

Competition is still not permitted.

### **Vaccination**

Jan Morton (JM) advised that while the State Government had not yet mandated compulsory vaccination for community sport, 'the writing is on the wall'.

She read out a letter from the Mornington Peninsula Bowls Region Board (MPBR) to its member clubs about eligibility to play in pennant and region (state) championships, circulated with permission to all Regions by BV.

In part, the letter states that the MPBR Board has strongly endorsed the proposal to make MPBR events only open to players fully vaccinated against COVID-19. This decision was taken after discussion with the Equal Opportunity Board and the Human Rights Commission.

Accordingly, the MPBR Board is amending the Conditions of Play for its 2021/22 regional pennant and championships. The only exception will be on medical grounds.

JM said the Gippsland Region Board would discuss the issue at its meeting following the information session.

### **2021/22 season schedule**

JM reported that because of current restrictions, Midweek and Saturday Pennant, Novice Singles, 60+ Singles and possibly 60+ Pairs have been postponed.

BV has also advised it will push back Champions Week and State pennant finals; the Vic Open already has been cancelled.

A return to bowls competition is dependent upon 80 per cent of the community being double vaccinated against Covid. Assuming no other restrictions, there is a likelihood of a return in early November, in which case the 2021/22 season could be completed with some adjustments.

The Competitions Committee is waiting for further guidance and certainty; clubs will be kept informed of developments.

At the end of the 2021/22 season, the Board will conduct a comprehensive survey of all Region bowlers. The survey will be available online and in hard copy.

### **Conditions of Play**

JM advised that BV has released draft Conditions of Play for State events. The Men's, Ladies' and Mixed Pairs events will be 15 ends for sectional and knock out, and 18 ends for the final; over 60s will play 12 ends for sectional and 15 for knock out.

### **Junior development and coaching**

Nigel Plunkett circulated a paper outlining the Region's junior development program and coaching. Speaking to the paper he highlighted:

- the Board is solidly behind junior development
- it is vital that clubs through their coaches support the program
- the Region's under-18 squad will be called the Gippsland Geckos

- a meeting with club coaches will be held in October
- the Region will cover the course costs of any bowler who wants to become an accredited coach.

He urged those present to make the information widely available within their respective clubs.

### **Branding**

Peter Beesley reported that the Board was close to making a decision on the new Region shirt, with revised designs to be considered after the information session. The junior squad will wear the same shirt, except with a gecko motif.

Similarly, JM reported good progress on the design of the new Region flag and perpetual pennant banners to be presented to Region winners in each division.

### **Umpiring**

Margaret Brandhoj advised that the Board would like to see at least one umpire at every club. The Board will cover the accreditation costs for existing umpires and course costs for aspiring umpires. A total of 13 umpires were reaccredited last year, with a further seven to be done.

Umpiring Coordinator Keith Pritchard said the umpires course comprised three modules – marking, measuring and rules, each of which could be done as individual modules. The full course takes 12 hours to complete, with hopefully a course to be run after Christmas.

### **Questions**

#### *BowlsLink*

In response to a question from Shane Higgins, JM advised that Pennant Coordinator Brad Lancaster was developing a BowlsLink information session for clubs. In the meantime, bowlers could check out the BowlsLink webinars.

#### *Finance*

In response to a question from Graeme Hemming about what had happened to funds transferred from the former NGBD, Colin Smith reported that:

- the Region has received \$24.1k from the North and East Gippsland bowls divisions comprising
  - \$3.1k from NGBD and \$4.6k from EGBD, treated as capitation fees based on \$5 a head
  - \$9.8k (North) and \$6.6k (East) following the dissolution of the divisions
- the Region's current bank balance is \$33.6k
- the Region will receive an additional Covid grant of \$2.5k, to be paid automatically
- in response to Covid uncertainty, the Board has implemented a 60-day stay on capitation fees from clubs.

### **Close of meeting**

JM closed the meeting at 11.05, thanking Heyfield Bowling Club President Bert Middelhuis for hosting and for the club's hospitality.

### **Next meeting**

To be advised.