



## DELEGATES INFORMATION SESSION NOTES

The Gippsland Region Board held an information session for club delegates and observers at Maffra Bowls Club on Monday 20 February 2023.

President Jan Morton opened the meeting at 10am.

### **Present**

#### *Board members*

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

#### *Delegates and observers*

Don Cameron (Bruthen); Chris Kyle (Howitt Park); Jeff Amos (Yarram); Leigh Bryant (Sale); Bert Middelhuis (Heyfield); Nanette Hamilton (Bairnsdale); Kerry Binotto and Shane Higgins (West Sale); Marg Robbins and Kathy Hiscock (Stratford); Kel Brandhoj (Lakes Entrance); John Crawford (Bairnsdale Golf); Chris Wain (Metung); Jenny Blair and Alan McDonald (Loch Sport).

### **Apologies**

There were no apologies

### **Report from the President**

#### *Pennant*

Jan Morton (JM) reported Weekend Pennant finals were concluded at Sale on Saturday 18 February, with Lakes Entrance winning back-to-back flags in Division 1 and Sale winning flags in each of Divisions 2, 3 and 4. Lakes will represent the Region at the State pennant finals.

#### *State events*

State events conclude on Saturday 25 February at Bairnsdale BC; Champ of Champs Day 2 to be held the following day at Sale BC.

#### *Region Sides restructure*

JM advised that Bowls Victoria (BV) had restructured the format of the Region Sides Championships, with no prior consultation, creating a two-tier competition based on results of the past few years. Under the new structure, regions are allocated to gold or silver divisions, with most of the country regions including Gippsland in silver.

She noted:

- there seems to be a greater emphasis on metro at the Regions' expense
- despite BV claims there was meaningful consultation on the restructure, there is no evidence to support this
- the restructure was announced at a Zoom briefing of Sides selectors, before Region Boards were advised
- the BV rationale for the decision is to boost the Sides championships as a pathway event
- BV is also concerned about the selection process adopted by some Regions and wants to impose a uniform process
- the GBR used a process like that required by BV, with selectors working very hard to get the right mix of players
- there may be a push to get the bottom two sides in Gold tier dropped the following year and the top two in Silver promoted.

JM said the Region Board had submitted a formal objection to Bowls Victoria, along with other regions. The matter will be discussed at the BVRR meeting on 8 March.

### **Finance**

Colin Smith circulated the finance report from 1 May 2022 to 20 February 2023, highlighting:

- expenses of \$16.7k including catering (Region sides, information sessions), trophies, uniforms, prize payments, professional indemnity insurance through BV
- bank balance of \$15.2k.

### **Junior development**

Nigel Plunkett (NP) reported that the junior development program continues to be highly successful after a slow start, with 10 juniors regularly attending training sessions, one of which was held at Sale before the Weekend Pennant Grand Finals. He again stressed the importance of getting more clubs on board and to spread the word about the program, requesting that each club nominate a junior representative. He highlighted:

- the State schools competition will be on again at Bairnsdale BC in March, however was unlikely to be held in north due to a number of factors
- a Come and Try day may be organised for Sale
- the Geckos travelled to Sunbury and Daylesford for Under 18 events and gained much experience against older competitors
- three juniors are competing in women's events at the Vic Open
- Bairnsdale and Lakes Entrance bowls clubs each have donated \$1k to the Geckos and individuals have donated equipment including bowls and bowls bags.

#### *Junior championship*

NP briefed the meeting about a junior championship to be held at Bairnsdale BC during the April school holidays. The event comprising Open Pairs and Singles will be open to any under 18 bowler in Victoria; Gippsland Geckos are expected to compete.

### **Coaching**

NP said he was hoping to run a coaching session on Sunday 30 April, venue to be determined.

### **Umpiring**

Margaret Brandhoj (MB) said the backlog of umpires needing accreditation or reaccreditation remained an issue. International umpire Lorraine Dowson from Wonthaggi had offered to assist and she will follow up.

## **Other business**

### *Survey*

JM reported on the pennant survey run through the GBR e-newsletter, advising that of the 762 individuals who opened the newsletter, 287 completed the survey – 168 from the east playing area and 118 from the north; 232 weekend pennant players and 179 midweek. In response to a query from Leigh Bryant (Sale) about why the survey wasn't sent to clubs instead of players, JM said it was important to get players' views particularly given that clubs did not always match them.

### *Greens inspector*

JM advised that Pam Carter (Sale) is now a level 2 inspector with authority to inspect new greens and any green which has undergone extensive renovation, including plinth replacement.

### *Communications*

JM reported that on average about 750 people were opening the e-newsletter which has a distribution list of 1121 email addresses taken from BowlsLink. The Mailchimp software is no longer free however and will cost the GBR \$300 a year for unlimited emails. Supporting the e-newsletter, Chris Wain (Metung) suggested sponsorship could be sought to cover the cost.

## **Matters raised from the floor**

- *Break:* Kel Brandhoj (Lakes Entrance) queried the Weekend Pennant break rule. JM advised that the existing rule will be discussed by the Competitions Committee taking into account BV Conditions of Play for regions.
- *Inclement weather:* Kel sought clarification on the inclement weather rule. Acknowledging there was some confusion about its applications, JM advised that if play is stopped, the periods of time off the green are not cumulative. Lightning is a totally separate matter and cannot be included in decisions about heat. In regard to rain, if the green is unplayable, play stops.
- *Neutral venues:* Chris Wain asked if neutral venues could be selected for lead up pennant finals. In response JM said clubs are asked to be considered for hosting and the best available greens are selected. However, only a small number of clubs are either capable and/or willing to host these events. It is also important that the finals are played at one venue in each playing area respectively to create the 'carnival' of bowls finals atmosphere. Nanette Hamilton (Bairnsdale) said the club was happy to host events with support from the Region, which it received this year.
- *Promotion and relegation:* Jeff Amos (Yarram) suggested the wording of the rule be reviewed to improve clarity, perhaps by removing the word 'should'. Chris Kyle (Howitt Park) asked how the promotion and relegation rule works, ie will an area final winner automatically be promoted. JM advised the Competitions Committee will call for pennant entries from clubs, asking that promotion and relegation be taken into account.

## **Close of meeting**

JM closed the meeting at 11.38am, thanking Maffra for hosting and for the club's hospitality.