

**2023-24**  
**Annual Report**



## Report from the President

The past year has been another highly successful year for our Region with impressive results on and off the green. Let me recall some highlights.

- Record entries in our state events.
- 2 Victorian Country team representatives Leonie Flynn and Brad Lancaster
- 1 State team representative, with Victoria winning gold at Nationals.
- 1 Australian indoor qualifier - Leonie Flynn
- Numerous section winners in the Vic Open
- 1 quarter finalist Vic Open.
- Silver medal to Jo Martin, Marge Nathan and Julie Simpson at Vic Open Triples
- 2 semi-finalists in State finals - Jack Sharman, Michael Better Phil Manning and David Tong in the fours and Andrew Bell in Champion of Champion singles.
- Silver medal to Alan Watts and Gail McKenzie in the mixed pairs at state final.
- 2 juniors selected to try out for state under 18 side. Ayla Romain and Ella Kiss
- Metung installed a new synthetic green.
- Several clubs undertaking significant building and green renovations which will improve our bowling experience when completed.
- Lakes Entrance midweek needed just one more win to make state final again this year.
- Breaking news that Paynesville have received funding for a new synthetic green.

As the smallest region in Victoria, Gippsland is achieving outstanding results. We should be proud and to those who have represented GBR this past year, thank you and congratulations on your achievements.

I would like to thank:

- my Board and committees for all the work they do, most of which is rarely seen until it comes together on the day
- those clubs and individuals that support the region financially, especially the junior program
- Paynesville BC and all the volunteers who have set up an outstanding junior program that is now reaping results
- Nigel Plunkett, our junior bowls coordinator, and the volunteers who work with the Gippsland Geckos junior squad
- I also thank Nigel for his support and loyalty to me while vice president on the board these past four years
- our secretary Bronwyn Thwaites who is the engine room of the region
- Brad Lancaster the guru of BowlsLink, thanks for an excellent job again.

Between us, Bronwyn and I have attended all BVRR meetings by Zoom this past year at which the Bowls Victoria management team provide updates on what is happening at the state level.

At the most recent meeting, there was an important presentation from Deakin University about the findings of a joint research project with Bowls Vic about women in bowls. The purpose of the survey was to understand the declining rate of women's participation and to develop a strategy to address issues.

The survey's key findings are concerning but perhaps not surprising:

- that women do not feel safe, welcome or included
- they feel discriminated against in pennant
- social bowls is the 'glue' for women in bowls
- women are more likely to leave bowls than men.

Where to from here? Bowls Vic will work with Deakin and stakeholders to address these challenges and develop a strategy to make bowls a better experience for women. The strategy will be rolled out to Regions and clubs in due course.

My workload and commitments off the green have caused me some angst this past year. In particular, the newsletter and website have suffered due to not enough hours in the day. I am hopeful that in the coming year I will have more time to work on these as they are important elements of our communications to members.

We are still having issues with incorrect email addresses in BowlsLink and would ask that clubs get a form out to all members to check their details and update BowlsLink as required.

Finally, thank you all for attending, we know it is mother's day, but the new over 60s carnival took away our preferred dates.

Jan Morton  
President

## Report from the Treasurer

I present the financial report for the Gippsland Bowls Region - Financial Year (FY) ending 30 April 2024.

Club capitation fees paid by our 19 member clubs for this FY totalled \$12,410 (1,241 active bowlers @ \$10 each). Individual club payments ranged from \$1700 down to \$120 for our smallest club.

Entry fee income for State and GBR Championships totalled \$5,900. With \$4,750 paid out as hosting fees to clubs and cash prizes to championship winners and runners up. The move to a new format for the annual Bowls Victoria (BV) Region Sides Competition meant that as a once off, two competitions, one in May 2023 and the other in January 2024, would be held in the same year.

BV gave an undertaking to review the level of funding for Sides Travel Allowance. The GBR allowance was increased from \$2,800 to \$3,200 for the Sides Competition that was held at Ballarat in January 2024. The costings incurred for each of the two Sides competitions is detailed below:

### May 26-28, 2023 – Region Sides Moama

Accommodation: Meninya Palms Moama:	\$5,532
Lunches: 2 days (invoiced by BV):	<u>\$1,227</u>
Total:	\$6,759.

Less BV Travel Allowance (\$2,800) & Govt Travel Grant (\$2,000).

**Nett Expense - \$1,959**

### January 13-14, 2024 – Region Sides Ballarat

Accommodation: Miner's Retreat Motel:	\$4,290
Lunches: 1 day (invoiced by BV):	<u>\$ 420:</u>
Total:	\$4,710.

Less BV Travel Allowance \$3,200.

**Nett Expense: \$1,510**

The Board approved an encouragement grant of 3 X \$500 to three of our juniors in recognition of their development, successes, and commitment to the sport of bowls. Bairnsdale BC approved a grant of \$1,000 towards equipment purchases for the Gecko Junior Program. This was topped up to \$1,584 by the GBR to enable the purchase of 4 sets of Aero Junior Bowls.

Other major expenditure items this FY included:

- \$2771 for Small Flags, Medallions & Engraving
- \$2,516 apparel purchase for Hoodies, GBR Sides Shirts, Caps and Beanies. Apparel sales to date total \$1750 with another order in progress for the new season.

<b>Cash at Bank beginning of FY:</b>	<b>\$14,099</b>
<b>Total Operating Income:</b>	<b>\$28,829</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$42,928</u></b>
<b><u>Less</u> Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>-\$25,397</u></b>
<b>Cash at Bank 1 May 2024:</b>	<b>\$17,531</b>
<b>Cash at Bank 12 May 2024:</b>	<b>\$14,989</b>

Colin Smith  
Treasurer

## Competitions Committee Report 2023/24

The Competitions Committee had the task of setting up the new Region 1 weekend pennant competition. This involved 14 teams.

The committee will note to the incoming committee that Division 1 Region weekend and midweek should remain.

Weekend needs to be streamlined, the first step being an 8-side per division competition in the North playing area. pennant moving to 8 side divisions and midweek across the board. We are also looking to 8 side divisions in Midweek, although there may still be a six-side competition in the lower divisions subject to entries received from clubs.

Thank you to the clubs that put their hands up to host State and region finals. Pennant final hosts were outstanding, and it was great to see new clubs involved. State event entries were at record levels as noted below.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
State Singles	19	45
State Pairs	36/18	66/33
State Triples	27/9	54/18
State Fours	40/10	52/13
Mixed Pairs	40/20	
Champion of Champions Singles	9	11
GBR Champion Pairs	14/7	26/13
GBR Champion Fours	28/7	36/12

The entries for the GBR Championship events – Pairs and Fours - were disappointing and these events are under review. Clubs have until 15 July to submit comments.

Congratulations to our pennant champions for 2023/24:

<b>Weekend</b>	
Division 1	Bairnsdale
Division 2	Lakes Entrance
Division 3	Paynesville
Division 4	Yarram

<b>Midweek</b>	
Division 1	Lakes Entrance
Division 2	Sale
Division 3	Maffra
Division 4	Sale

Bowls Victoria is producing statewide Pennant Conditions of Play, meaning all regions will be playing under one set of CoP.

We will have the opportunity to include Region specific matters including inclement weather, promotion/relegation, and finals format.

The timeframe is as follows:

- Bowls Vic will distribute the CoP template to regions in early June providing us with the opportunity for feedback.
- the final version will be produced in early July.
- GBR to submit region specific content to Bowls Vic by 2 August.

Dates for region events will be determined once Bowls Vic finalises its calendar. We will get all dates to club in a timely manner to enable you to sort out dates for your championships and tournaments.

Jan Morton  
Chair  
Competitions Committee

## **Bowls Victoria Region Sides 2023/24**

The new format sides competition for 2024 was introduced by Bowls Victoria at short notice in 2023. The dates for the new competition were Saturday/Sunday 13-14 January 2024. This provided limited opportunity for the GBR to book accommodation.

The format for the new competition involved splitting the 16 Region teams into two sections of eight – A Gold Section and a Silver Section. The makeup of each section was based on performance results under the previous format. The two sections were then further divided into two sections of four sides with GBR allocated the Silver Section 2 for both the Women's and Men's competitions. The four sides in each section played each other over 3 games of 15 ends on the Saturday with the section winners playing a Finals Series on the Sunday.

### **Women's Team**

The team combined well and although ultimately unsuccessful, improved during the competition.

The team lost the first match against Ballarat Highlands going down on all 3 rinks. In the second match we lost to Metro West in a much tighter contest winning one rink by 2 shots, losing the other two rinks by 2 shots and 8 shots respectively. The third match against Goulburn Murray was even tighter. GBR won the match overall by 2 shots, winning two rinks by 1 shot and 4 shots and losing one rink by 3 shots.

The games were played in good spirit against quality opposition.

### **Men's Team**

The first match against Ballarat Highlands resulted in a draw with GBR winning two rinks by 1 shot and 7 shots losing the other by 8 shots. In the second match against a strong Geelong side despite winning one rink by 15 shots we lost the other two rinks by 16 and 12 shots respectively in a contest that was tighter than the final score suggests. In the third match we went down to Yarra in another tight contest losing all three rinks by 1 shot, 3 shots and 22 shots.

The men's side were highly competitive and were unlucky on several occasions. We are clearly improving.

### **Accommodation**

Bowls Victoria gave the Regions short notice about the dates for the 2024 championships making it difficult to secure accommodation for the men's and women's teams at the same venue.

While our accommodation was clean and presentable, it was not without issues with many team members having to share a room with two others.

The Board agreed that in future, there will be a maximum of two per room. We already have booked the accommodation venue for 2025, having had nearly a year's notice with the dates.

The total cost of accommodation is largely subsidised by Bowls Victoria. It was increased from \$2,800 to \$3,200 this year.



**Live scoring**

For the first time, Sides Managers were required by Bowls Victoria to live score each match. While there were a few technical issues with reconciling the scores with BowlsLink, this initiative was well received by our members who wanted to keep up to date with games in progress.

**Format 2025**

Following a survey of 2024 participants, Bowls Victoria proposes to change the format in 2025 so that three games are played over two days and all games to be 21 ends rather than 15 ends.

As yet, we have not been advised about the final format, however GBR's stated preference as communicated to BV is two games on Saturday, one on Sunday followed by the final. The GBR strongly supports the move to 21 ends per game.

Colin Smith  
Men's Side Manager

Bronwyn Thwaites  
Women's Side Manager

## **GBR Junior Development Squad (JDS) and Gippsland Geckos Report**

The JDS has trained, weather and other events permitting, regularly over the past 12 months on the first and third Saturdays of the month at Bairnsdale BC. The hour and a half provides (I hope) plenty of fun and the opportunity to learn more skills.

Yesterday (11 May) we had 10 bowlers attend the JDS training with three others absent. We are gradually building and the future looks good.

I need to thank Wendy Campbell and James McCausland for their coaching assistance throughout the year. Unfortunately, James along with his children Macy Rose and Seth have left the Region and are currently playing at Traralgon BC but I am delighted and relieved that they are committed to driving over for squad training. The Region would welcome other coaches to help with squad training. Thanks again to the parents for their commitment in transporting their children regularly to and from training and on the occasional trips to Sunbury, Bendigo and Sebastapol for U18 tournaments and championships. Now add Barham to the mix!! The latest U18 tournament to be listed, around a 7-hour drive.

Thank you very much to greenkeeper Darren Martin, President Bob Tonissen and others at the club for their support, providing the facilities on a regular basis. The greens are always rolled in time for the 9am start.

Even though Bairnsdale is the squad's homebase, we would enjoy receiving invitations from clubs in the Region to train and workshop on their greens. The Region is committed to promoting junior bowls and the squad is there to support clubs in their endeavor to establish their own junior program.

I hope I have not missed anyone, but I know that Paynesville, Lindenow, Bairnsdale Golf, Stratford, Heyfield, Maffra, Metung, Lakes and Orbost have been assisting their local primary schools in running a program. They all need to be applauded for this commitment to the future of bowls in our region and their club.

It is difficult because it involves a change of direction within the club's community with juniors and their parents being around. Clubs must embrace change in order to facilitate junior and family memberships. I know some of the clubs are offering free membership for juniors and reduced uniform purchase costs to attract juniors and families. This has been successful.

We have had some financial support from Bairnsdale and Lakes bowls clubs. With Bairnsdale's donation we were able to purchase three sets of triple zero bowls. Lakes helped with uniform purchases.

Sponsorship is needed as much of the squad costs are borne by the Region. I have been and will continue to work on getting a major U18 tournament east of Melbourne. It is likely to happen in the valley as we don't have a club in our region with a roof – a BV prerequisite. The Barham U18 tournament mentioned earlier is providing over \$3000 prizemoney

The best and most satisfying aspect of coaching the squad is watching the escalation of excitement, improvement, and confidence of the young bowlers over the months. This has been evident with the tournament and championships results of the young bowlers.

Due to the way they performed and behaved at the recent BV U18 Championships at Sunbury Ayla Romanin and Ella Kiss have been selected to train with the BV U18 Squad in June. This means they are in line to represent Victoria BV U18 team.

This is momentous for the girls and the GBR JDS and Gippsland Geckos. They achieved this through commitment to the game, excellent attitude, the ability to listen and of course, the support of their parents. Their club coaches also played a big part.

How about this: two BV Squad reps from a JDS squad of 10 bowlers compared to squads west of Melbourne with over 20 or more members. I think some people in the BV might be asking who are these Gippsland Geckos?

Keep a look out for Lacey Kiss as well. She and her partner reached the semi-finals of the State U18 Mixed Pairs Championship. I would suggest that she is at this stage too young for the squad. Lacey also beat Ayla in the final of the GBR Singles to win the Championship. It was a great game to watch with both regularly bowling touchers and with the shot changing hands regularly. High quality game. I also witnessed the semi-final where Lacey beat her elder sister Ella 21/20 by drawing shot on the last end.

Ayla Romanin and Sylah Coull-Barnes (also from Paynesville BC) won the 2023/24 GBR Pairs Championship. A great game defeating the Kiss sisters after an extra end had to be played.

Finally, thanks to the GBR for their continued support and commitment to junior bowls. I believe this support will be rewarded with more involvement in our sport of younger members of the community. This can only be achieved with the support and involvement of the Region's clubs.

Nigel Plunkett  
Junior Development Coordinator

## **Umpire Coordinator Report**

The Region currently has 28 registered umpires, three marker/measurers and three umpires with pending registration. Two members have completed the online component of marker/measurer training, and two members have completed the National Umpire online component. These members are waiting for an on-green assessment by a registered Presenter/Assessor.

Our Region has 3 members waiting for the Presenter/Assessor training, so that new umpires and those renewing their registration, can have their on-green assessment undertaken locally. Along with me, members are Pam Carter (Sale) and Angela Boyd (Bairnsdale Golf). We are hopeful that by providing prospective umpires with three assessors, covering all of the Region, members will have access to a local, convenient location to finalise their registration.

At the recent BVRR meeting, Bronwyn Thwaites was advised the presenter and assessor training has commenced throughout Victoria, a new course booklet is being produced, and a calendar of online courses will be distributed.

All State and Championship events, Victorian Open, and pennant finals were covered by a registered umpire, our thanks to those who volunteer their time.

We look forward to the new season with three assessors able to sign off new and renewing umpire registrations and conduct instruction days for markers/measurers at your club's facilities.

Chris Sherrin  
Umpiring Co-ordinator