



Questions leading into AGM from Bowls NSW Members

Please note: Responses to these questions have been edited to suit the means in which they are being presented below and identifiable data such as names, references to past history which may identify people and Zone / District names have been edited / amended.

Please also note that Bowls NSW responded to every questions raised in advance of the AGM – below is a history of these questions and answers.

Q1. Can the board please explain why it is maintaining the financial year calendar for bowls? Nobody I've spoken to likes this situation. It means the middle of our bowling year is now December and January - when it's hot, people want to go on holidays and greenkeepers take out their greens. It upsets presentation night plans and adds engraving costs and is confusing. I've yet to meet anyone who thinks it's a good idea. And it does not align with any of the other states.

A1. The decision to align our calendar with a financial year was done so on an operational basis. Larger changes such as calendar changes take time to come into effect, for ways of working to be adopted and for the positives and negatives of these changes to be made clear.

With the above said, I am very much open to changing how we operate. Obviously, we don't want to do this based off every piece of feedback we receive otherwise we would be chopping and changing all the time however, we have heard this comment several times now and it is obviously a theme that is consistent with some of our members. Like everything at present, with a strong lack of process previously in place, we have brought in an event review process which looks to obtain member feedback, staff feedback and key stakeholder feedback on how we deliver our events, and we must use this to guide our future decision making.

Q2. Will Bowls NSW ever consider moving the year back to 1st January to 31st December. (XXXX) are part of Zone 8, and our 10 round pennant season starts on 13th January and has 7 rounds in the heat of summer where our temperatures can get around and above the 38C threshold. Impacts our greens renovations as well, which we have 3 of. We have members pull out of pennants because of the summer heat.

A2. The short answer to your question is yes. We are open to any sort of change into the future. The longer answer is that it is a challenging decision for us to make at this point in time as it would mean that we haven't given enough time to pass for the original calendar changes to take full effect and it would seem pre-emptive of us to go back on this decision until such a point.

We now have a full sport and event review process in place in relation to the delivery of our annual event calendar and we are open to commentary in relation to how we deliver and when we deliver events into the future. Your commentary is noted and appreciated & it'd be



great to understand your challenges in more detail so we can take this into consideration for our future decision making.

Q3. At a Zone meeting earlier this year I asked why the Champion of Champions were no longer being played at a Zone level and then the winners progressing to the State playoffs. This system had worked well with the club winners playing against the other winners in their Zone and then the best local bowlers hopefully being competitive in the State playoffs and the cost subsidised by the Zone, TAG, and possibly the player's club (if financial enough). The new system involved bowlers from all clubs having to travel to Wollongong for possibly 4 days for singles or pairs, or 8 days if they had won both club championships, if they wanted to represent their club. This involved either taking some of their holidays or leave if they worked and having to pay most of the costs themselves, unless you belonged to a wealthy club. The response was that the change was made to bring the Men's COC into line with the Ladies. I was sure that our Club's Ladies still had District playoffs before they progressed any further and certainly didn't go straight to State but thought I must be mistaken given the response. Our Club has just hosted this year's District Ladies COC, so they still don't go straight to State. My question is why was that response given to our Zone meeting if it clearly wasn't true. Why were the Men's COC changed? It has meant that a lot of Club COC won't get to represent their club. Will Clubs be given the breakdown on which clubs were represented at the State COC? Does Bowls NSW consider the State COC was successful in attracting COC from regional clubs to enter?

A3. Champion of Club Champions Format

Prior to unification of RNSWBA and WBNSW, the Champion of Club Champions State Finals for Men and for Women were played under different formats.

The Women's Champion of Club Champions Singles and Pairs were played as Club Champions enter directly with the State body. Some Districts may have conducted District Champion of Champions events; however these events did not form part of the State event and there was no State recognition of District winners from these events.

The Men's Champion of Club Champions Singles and Pairs had a State Finals Series where Zones conducted a qualifying event, and the Zone winners then qualified to compete at the State Finals Series.

Taking into account a number of factors, it was determined that the model of all Club Champions being eligible to enter the State Champion of Club Champions would be adopted by the unified Bowls NSW.

Considered was:

- Feedback that there was a large number of weekend dates committed to State/Zone/District events, having direct entry to State meant that up to 6 weekends of Zone Champion of Champions matches were not required.



- Having direct entry to State meant that entry dates for club champions to be found and submit their entry were later. Under the current calendar, Champion of Club Champions entries close on 18 March. Using the same dates, Zone (& Region for Women) Winners would need to have been found and advised to Bowls NSW on this date, requiring club championships to be completed in time to enter the Zone (or Region) event well in advance of this date, and also creating added calendar pressure in the early part of the year when most Zones are looking to commence their Open State Pennant Competitions.
- There was no current structure in place for the Women to conduct their Champion of Champions at District and then Regional Level, Regional Administration is a cooperation of District Administrations, and no Regional Committees exist.

While this competition structure is in place for the 2023/2024 season, it will (like all other competitions) be subject to review for future editions.

The break-down of entries by Zone for the Men’s competitions was:

Zone	Singles	Pairs
1	7	10
2	11	12
3	7	6
4	9	6
5	10	10
6	6	7
7	11	8
8	5	4

Zone	Singles	Pairs
9	12	10
10	10	10
11	5	3
12	7	9
13	15	17
14	8	8
15	10	11
16	10	12
TOTAL	143	143

Q4.

What is happening with amalgamation of men and women bowls? Are clubs taking action to amalgamate at club level?

With regards to amalgamation of men’s and women’s bowls – please see below:

- State Level Unification – complete
 - o Earlier in 2023 there was an incredible amount of change management required for us to be operationally effective and we are still very much working through process (in and amongst the very busy delivery of our now



combined sport) – this has been really challenging but we are getting there with new processes and advanced planning. This will continue to be a work in progress from my perspective – we can always get better and adopt new ways of working.

- Zone and District Unification
 - This is in progress at present, and we are at stage 2 of 3 with regards to where we need to get to in order to streamline the Governance of our sport. There is a way to go in terms of establishing 16 new regional associations and winding up current Zone and District administrations however we are confident that we will reach this outcome by 1 July 2024 with these new entities operating from this period onward
 - You can find further information on this process in our newsroom here: <https://www.zonedistrictunification.com.au/news>
 - I have attached some recent announcements as well for your information.
- Club unification – whilst we don't have the authority to order clubs to unify, we have been encouraging this to occur and have been providing clubs with the resources needed to achieve this outcome.
 - These references can be found here: <https://bowlsnsw.com.au/club-unification/>
 - This has been a slow process to be honest, however, we are seeing more and more clubs take up this process and those that are doing it, are seeing value in it.

Q5.

What is Bowls NSW doing to modernise bowls to attract new members? For example, set play for pennants?

The need for us to overhaul the Governance systems of our sport has taken up an incredible amount of time these last few months when I know focus really needs to be on driving participation and modernising our sport.

In order for us to really modernise our sport, we need these frameworks to change, and change quickly hence why when I first commenced here, I fast tracked the conversation around Competition Boundaries and bundled it into the conversation pertaining to boundaries and Zone/District structures. It has meant double the work to get to an outcome, but we achieve it faster which is critical for us then to focus on the things that matter. We need to free up our sport, we need to make sure working individuals can compete within our competition structures, we need to shorten some of our formats to appeal to a time poor generation and we need to amplify these to drive awareness and therefore conversion.

We are always open to ideas and would welcome any you would like to us however noting that we are very much requiring to overhaul these Governance systems to reach these outcomes. We are revamping our juniors committee, investing in junior pathways and development; we have a dedicated media budget to invest back into our sport and which we hope will be triggered at some stage into 2024.



Response from sender:

Thanks for your response regarding the modernisation of our sport. We have a fairly young (less than 50) cohort of bowlers, and they have 2 distinct attributes (as opposed to us retired models). Firstly, they have families and secondly they mostly still work.

These men and women have grown up with modernised short versions of sports such as cricket, golf and football. They are also very competitive and wish to enter as many events as possible - including national championships. But they want shorter games or modified versions of the longer games.

Here are 2 examples of what they want.

Three bowl pairs over 18 ends instead of the current 4 bowls over 21 ends. A much quicker game.

Pennants played in sets rather than 21 ends.

At our club we have supported their needs by playing championships of an evening and playing entire events over a single weekend.

Perhaps Bowls NSW could get a group of interested parties together to look at some of these ideas. I'm happy to contribute.

Q6.

Given the fact that Club Coaches are the lifeblood for new bowlers, and having been a part of the State Coaching Committee I question why this committee no longer exists

A6. At the time of unification, Women's Bowls NSW did not have a State Coaching Committee and some trade-offs were made in the way in which the two organisations were brought together.

We currently have an internal resource who supports our coaching and officials' program. Given we have this full-time function and given the direction that we have been provided by Bowls Australia in reference to the coaching and officiating systems they are seeking to overhaul, it has not been deemed necessary to have a State Coaching Committee in place.

Q7.

Q1. Why is it taking so long to join the women and men bowls?

Q2. Why do we have to believe the women and men will be joined by 2024, when it has been put off so many times before.

Q3. Why has Bowls NSW not taken the lead in managing Zone's/boundaries rather than leave it to the individual Zone's/ Boundaries to make their own decision/ direction.



Q7.1. Why is it taking so long to join the women and men bowls?

A7.1. Are you referring to Zone and District administrations. If so, our deadline is for this to come into effect as of 1 July 2024. There is an incredible amount of administration needed for us to reach this outcome including the wind-up of current Zone and District administrations, the transfer of their assets across into newly created entities and the establishment of these entities in the first place. We are nearing stage three of this process now which is the final stage as we have passed through establishing competition Boundaries with members feedback, we have determined the Governance structures that will be put in place with members feedback, and we are now moving into the implementation phase of making this happen.

Q7.2. Why do we have to believe the women and men will be joined by 2024, when it has been put off so many times before.

A7.2. Again, are you referring to the above Zone and District unification? If so, our deadline is 1 July, and we are sticking to this.

Q7.3. Why has Bowls NSW not taken the lead in managing Zone's/boundaries rather than leave it to the individual Zone's/ Boundaries to make their own decision/ direction.

A7.3. Bowls NSW led this process from start to finish and it was critical that we made these decisions with member Club, Zone and District feedback taken into consideration. Please refer to the announcements we made here - <https://www.zonedistrictunification.com.au/news/state-competition-playing-areas-for-2024-25> and We have attached an overview of the process as well for you for your reference.

Q8. X members would like to ask why has \$0 been spent in previous FY on promotion & marketing?

The members believe as per your Strategic Plan document that clearly has a pillar for promotion of the game that BNSW have wasted another 12 months in promoting the sport to people who are not (playing) members.

With the cash reserves BNSW has it is believed that promotion of the sport to attract new members is paramount and would like to ask the Board why has it not done anything in this area and does it plan to spend money on a strong marketing plan that clubs can utilise to increase membership going forward?

A8. This is a valid point. The last 12 months, have been a little bit tumultuous with the departure of CEOs, interim management of the organisation.

A finalised operational plan was presented to the board in July, which was approved, and which focuses on driving new initiatives through media. It also has a strong focus on youth, and we are soon to appoint a youth advisory group which will have representation from



Bowls Aus HP / Metro & Regional Clubs and volunteers aimed at re-designing our junior pathways, an academy model and a focus on school curriculum.

Further to the above, we need to review our formats of the sport and create shorter, more appealing formats for a younger/time-poor generation. In order for us to achieve this, something else needs to drop off as our calendar and bandwidth is very much stretched. We will not solve this one overnight but are keen to do so in partnership with people like yourself who are progressive and wanting to see our sport move ahead.

We can guarantee you we have ringfenced some funds to put towards amplifying the sport, seeking new audiences where we can and engaging them correctly. Along with engaging juniors and redefining our formats. Unfortunately, we do have some serious and significant Governance issues facing our sport which we also must refine and ensure they are right before we launch on the above and you'll note we have move and continue to move towards rectifying this situation.

Q9.1 General Questions 1. How many Clubs and unincorporated Clubs are currently Members of Bowls NSW Limited?

A9.1. We currently have 737 Clubs across NSW. These are inclusive of men's, women's and unified clubs.

Q9.2. How many Club and unincorporated Clubs were members as at the AGM in 2022?

A9.2 Due to the adoption of BowlsLink and its limited reporting capabilities (still to date) – it is tricky for me to run a retrospective Club listing from October 27 last year. I did however commence a reporting process from January this year and at this time there were roughly 790 odd clubs. So, your best bet of 27 October last year would've been close to the 800 Club mark, mainly driven by Club Unifications.

Q9.3. What were the trends in registered membership from 2022 to 2023?

A9.3 Roughly as outlined as a 5% reduction.

Q9.4. With a short-term objective to improve 'Communication and Marketing' – the expenditure for FY23 was \$0. Why?

A9.4. We have moved away from business unit allocations internally for staff salaries and overheads (as we don't believe it is the best way to report) and we would imagine a portion of this had previously been allocated to marketing and communications in the past, making this figure look inflated. You'll note we are investing in events and marketing now and have a dedicated budget now for media and amplification of our sport which is critical to driving engagement at the top of the funnel and through to preference/consideration of our sport and conversion at the end of the day. These are plans that take time to develop and implement and we are working on these at present.

Q9.5. What is the Board's plans for growth in the future, in particular female participation?



A9.5. Firstly, under previous administrations, Bowls membership had been in a significant state of decline for the past 15 years. The Board had to make some difficult decisions to address these challenges in terms of a change in administration and these changes were made. Bowls NSW now has a dedicated Operational plan aimed at key issues that the Sport is facing and participation, along with female participation are both items within the operational plan. A female participation strategy is being developed and funding is being requested through the Office of Sport to underpin this strategy. We are increasing the number of junior females we are engaging in the sport and seeking ways to get them involved in advocacy ways within Bowls NSW. We have appointed a youth advisory group aimed at strategically supporting these ways of thinking. We are looking into shorter formats of our sport to appeal to time-poor generations. We are introducing the Platinum Pennant which is a gold label event aimed at increasing the hype and awareness of the sport. We are developing corporate partnerships to drive member benefits, therefore increasing the appeal of being a member. We are also seeking out media relationships to amplify a stronger Bowls message and reach new audiences – this forms part of our marketing strategy.

Q9.6. What is the reason for the change of auditor?

A9.6 The reasons for change are twofold: PKF have been involved in the audit of Bowls NSW and/or the Royal for several years and it is good governance to change auditors after this period of time. We have been able to secure a new audit partner for less than 50% of what we were paying previously meaning more funds to go back into the sport. (This item was also addressed at the Bowls NSW AGM)

Q9.7. The minutes of the 2022 AGM were requested on two occasions prior to our meeting. What is the reason that these minutes were not made available at the time of notice or in time prior to these questions being submitted?

A9.7 We had stated that minutes were to be available one week from the AGM. I see you are registered for the AGM, and these will be sent to you next Friday. There is no reason given – this was our planned method of communicating these minutes from the outset.

Q9.8 Regulations were amended in December 2022 with the addition of the words "However the Board may, at their discretion, appoint a member without the above Qualifications." under Selection Committee qualifications. What was the rationale behind this amendment? What is the Board's policy in advising Members of amendments to Regulations in the future? Was the appointment of all State Selectors at the 2022 AGM in accordance with the Regulations in place at the time?

A9.8 This was added to allow the board to select an outstanding person onto the committee who may not hold all of the outlined qualifications. The Board have indicated that there is nothing currently within our regulations or constitution determining how these changes are to be communicated. The communication of these was vested with the interim CEO at the time (October 2022), and any further changes to the regulations and their announcement



rests with the new CEO's authority moving forward. If there is any commentary in relation to this and how you would like to see these communicated into the future outside of being published for everyone on our website, please do let Bowls NSW know.

Q9.9 Board Expenses have increased from \$43,103 in 2022 and \$66,820 in 2023 (+\$23,717) Event Expenses have increased from \$112,919 to \$297,130 (+\$184,211) Office and Admin Expenses have increased from \$248,466 to \$312,967 (+64,501) Can these costs be explained and are there policies in place to ensure the Board and administration expenditure is reasonably contained?

A9.9 The reason for the increase in expenditure would simply be for Bowls NSW coming out of the COVID period and the delivery of multiple events across a very short period of time i.e. playing catch up from COVID. We had to normalise for the abnormal across this period. Board costs would've increased due to the need for the board to meet more regularly across a time when there were no CEO's within the organisation and also due to the increased in events delivered and the requirements for board attendance at these various events. Office administrative costs would've followed the same reasoning in terms of event delivery and increased overheads as a result.

Q9.10 A total of \$1M profit has been achieved in the past 2 financial years since unification with significant cash assets. What is the rationale behind increasing Member Fees for FY24?

A9.10 FY24 will be another incredibly busy period for Bowls NSW and we set fees based off expected company expenditure. With the need for us to deliver two major State Championships events for the 2023-2024 financial year (one delivered in July and one upcoming in March), fees were increased by a small percentage (half CPI at the time) to cover these anticipated costs.

Questions for the Auditor

Q9.11. In note 2 of the FY23 Financial Statements – Revenue and Other Income there has been an adjustment made to FY22 audited figures in Sponsorship (\$48403) and Membership (\$50,278) being moved to 'Other Income'? What is the reason for these adjustments and what is the breakdown of 'Other Income'?

A9.11 The reclassification was required in order for the prior year to be consistent with the current year and provide more meaningful comparison to the user of the accounts (which is allowed under the accounting standards)

Q9.12 Can the auditor please explain the purpose of Note 18 relating to Parent Entity? What does the \$6.6M liability mean in this case?

A9.12 The purpose of parent entity disclosure is to ensure that financial statements accurately represent the consolidated financial position and performance of the entire group of companies under common control. It helps stakeholders, such as investors and regulators, understand the intercompany transactions and relationships within the group. The \$6.6m



was a result of the merger between the men and women's associations in 2021 whereby a new head entity (the parent entity) was also created above these entities, which then became subsidiaries – operating assets and liabilities were then transferred from these subsidiaries into the parent entity through the inter-company accounts which resulted in a \$6.6m liability arising in the parent company. The subsidiaries have the corresponding asset balances which would both then eliminate on consolidation.

Q9.13 As a Member Club of Bowls NSW, it is noted that communication has been directed to Zone and District Executives on the matter of boundaries and changes forthcoming. How is the Bowls NSW Board consulting with its Member Clubs on this matter?

A9.13 The Boundaries consultation process was an extremely large stakeholder engagement process which involved the collation of information from hundreds of individual members, clubs and Zone and District representatives. Initially, members were asked if they wanted us to proceed in the Direction of Zone and District unification in conjunction with establishing new competition boundaries and the overwhelming response (89+% of respondents from over 2,000 survey respondents) was yes. From there, we published draft boundaries on our website and communicated multiple times to Clubs, Zones, Districts and members with regards to obtaining feedback in relation to these. We hosted an online members forum earlier this year in March where we provided an update on this process and we responded to every single piece of feedback we received on our website from members in relation to Boundaries. We then adjusted boundaries and opened up feedback for another period of time until we close the feedback portal and sat to discuss the best approach to setting boundaries across the State. Our Zone and District unification committee were vested with the task of calling all current Zone and District secretaries which they did, to discuss the forthcoming change and obtain their feedback on these. Options for adjusting boundaries were then collated and tabled to the board for their review and a decision was made from the board and communicated to the membership in relation to this process (document attached) back in August this year. Each impacted club were contacted individually in advance of any of these announcements by either myself or my committee.

Q9.14 Is it expected that our Zone and District Executives should be updating us? As they are also stating that they are not receiving any information themselves and are being told not to take further action.

A9.14 Yes – if they had not been updating you with the above communications then this is an issue and another good reason why we need to be consolidating these entities from 56 down to 16 so we can improve our communication channels into the future and so that you receive the information that you need.

Q9.15 Is it expected that our Zone and District Executives should be updating us? As they are also stating that they are not receiving any information themselves and are being told not to take further action.



A9.15 We are unsure what you mean here, if they are not receiving information, what is the information that is telling them not to take further action? If you are referring to the attached Circular sent last week (Circular re. Governance Structures), this is as much information as we can share at this stage and we feel it is better than not saying anything at all at this stage. There will be more information coming in the coming week or two as we finalise this process. I trust you understand the volume and complexities of such an exercise but we also hope and trust you understand we are moving in a positive direction here for the future of our sport.

*Note: Various attachments were shared here outlining a number of key announcements that were made to Zone & District Committee members and the Bowls NSW General membership. Please refer to the Zone & District unification website for further detail.

Q10. At our recent Delegates meeting the question was posed as to why or could Bowls NSW give consideration to members when holding the AGM/meetings/training sessions.

It is well noted that the venue is not on a transport line. Many from (Regional NSW) no longer drive in Sydney, so are prohibited from attending.

Our Members would be more involved if even the lower end of the X area was considered.

A10. Cabra-Vale Diggers was chosen as the location of the Bowls NSW Awards night, member conference and AGM due to a number of reasons – please see below:

- Accessibility – Public Transport – the club is located 5 mins walk from the Cabramatta Train Station making it easily accessible by rail from most directions
- Accessibility – rest of State – we needed to make sure we selected a venue that was accessible not only for people South of Sydney such as X or further South, but for those coming in from North of Sydney and West of Sydney
- Facilities – we require a club that can seat up to 300+ people for the awards night and member conference, with multiple break out rooms for our conference, there are not many Bowls clubs that can accommodate these requirements – refer below
- The fact it is a Bowling Club – in previous years, Bowls Clubs were not always used to host these sorts of events and we wanted to make sure we hosted it at a club and were seen to be giving back to our Bowls clubs
- Proximity to our offices – we require to host this event within close(Ish) proximity to our head office in Sydney given the size and scale of this event and the many moving parts and moving staff, committee and board members – hosting this event further away from Sydney would significantly increase our costs

It is unlikely would host this combined event in the X region given the above reasons however into the future, if we were to break this event up and deliver it at different times of the year i.e. hold a standalone AGM, we could look to host this in more regional areas into the future and your feedback is taken on board.



Questions Raised after the AGM

Q11: Why were Club delegates denied the opportunity to DEBATE items on behalf of their Club at the Annual General Meeting?

This is a right of being a Member of Bowls NSW Limited.

A.11 What items on the agenda did you wish to debate? As per the agenda, and now normal meeting practice, questions were sought on the meeting business from members prior to the meeting including several questions raised and responded to from your club. All questions raised in advance of the AGM were answered and will be de-identified / published on our website shortly.