

Board Bulletin – June 2023

I am pleased to share this update following the June meeting of the World Bowls Board. Please contact me if you have any queries or comments about any of the information herein.

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Vale Helen Stallard; the Board formally noted the recent sad passing of Helen Stallard of Bowls NZ who previously served as a member of the WB Laws Committee and was a staff member of Bowls NZ.

Farewell Gary Smith who officially concluded his role with WB on 12 May 2023. There was an opportunity to formally recognise Gary's service at the recent World Indoor Championships at Warilla (NSW) and a presentation was made to Gary by President Darryl Clout on behalf of the Board. At the June meeting the Board commended not only Gary's service over more than 2 decades but also his professionalism and diligence in ensuring a smooth hand over the past couple of last months.

Board Decisions and Announcements

2023 Council Meeting and Forum

- A Council Meeting and MNA forum will be held to coincide with the 2023 World Championships on the Gold Coast, Australia. MNAs are invited to save the date of Monday 4 September 2023.
- The venue for the meeting and forum is to be Club Robina on the Gold Coast. More details will be circulated to MNAs by email separately including an EOI for content for the forum.
- The World Bowls Board noted the formal agenda for the Council Meeting will include formally adopting the 2022 Financial Statements and the appointment of an auditor.
- As part of the forum, World Bowls will provide an update on activities since the 2021 Review.

Constitution

- The World Bowls Board has retained legal services in order to prepare a new Constitution for circulation and formal consideration by MNAs at the Council Meeting and Forum in September.

MNA Affiliation Fees for 2024

- The Board discussed fees for 2024 and voted unanimously to increase fees by 10%.
- The Board noted fees have not increased during the last 3 years, indeed considerable fee relief has been offered during the period of the COVID Pandemic.
- The Board noted that MNAs will be invoiced for the 2024 fees in November 2023.

New Coaching Advisory Committee

- The Board approved the Terms of Reference for a new Coaching Advisory Committee and approved convening of the Committee.
- An EOI process for membership of this committee will follow.

CGA Technical Delegate for the Commonwealth Games, 2026

- The Board approved the nomination of Mark Cowan as the Technical Delegate for the 2026 Commonwealth Games.

CEO Report

Since February the key focus areas have been:

- Preparation of a Budget for 2024.
- Meetings with a range of stakeholders in March, April and May including: Commonwealth Games Australia and key contacts in Bendigo Victoria (location for the Lawn Bowls event in 2026), members of the World Short Mat Bowls Council, MNA CEOs, organising committees for the World Championships and Champion of Champions and, of course, time spent at the World Indoor Championships at Warilla Bowls in May.
- Assisting in the preparation of a new Constitution.
- Travel - attending the World Indoor Championships in Warilla NSW – an extremely valuable opportunity to meet with many players both local and from across the world. Planning for meetings on a forthcoming trip to the UK and Europe in July is shaping well. This will be a chance to hold a number of important meetings in the UK (with CGF, Bowls England, Bowls Scotland, Bowls Wales, Bowls Europe, Drakes Pride, Taylor Bowls, Dales Sport, Greengauge) and with the IOC and other international sporting bodies in Lausanne (Switzerland).
- Laws Committee - following adoption of the new TOR in March 2023 the Laws Advisory Group has met twice and is working well. At their last meeting, agreement was reached to rescind the 2 laws - 37.1.3 and 37.1.5.3 and this has now been communicated with the MNAs and on WB social media and the new website.

Building Value

- World Bowls Championships 2023. Preparations are progressing well (specific player entry details were due by 31 May and most have now been received), Mark Cowan (Technical Delegate) and John Roberts (CTO) have been appointed for the 2023 event after consultation with Alan Thornhill (Chair – LAG).
- World Bowls Championships 2025. Negotiations with Bowls Hong Kong China are underway for the 2025 event. A budget and organising committee will be created soon and I plan to attend the Hong Kong Classic in November to undertake a review of the greens and other operational matters and meet with Bowls HK officials. Representatives of Bowls Hong Kong China will be attending the World Championships on the Gold Coast.
- An invitation for MNAs to apply to host 2027 will be issued soon.
- Champion of Champions - 2023 will be at Club Robina on the Gold Coast immediately following the World Championships. All MNAs advised of the change of venue. Current entries at time of writing are 27 Women and 31 Men. An EOI process was launched earlier in the year for the hosting the 2024 and 2025 events.
- World Bowls Premier League & World Bowls Tour – Martin Hirons and his team from Solucio provided a general update to the Board at the June meeting. A summary document has been shared with all MNAs and other groups consulted with on the creation of these new commercial initiatives. An EOI for the WBPL teams has recently been distributed.

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- Commonwealth Games 2026 and 2030 - the 2026 organising committee have recognised the poor infrastructure at the proposed venue in Bendigo, there is a lot of work to be done to get this up to the necessary standard and two new greens are likely to be built. Another CGF forum is to be held in mid-June. Recent advice received is that Canada will bid for the 2030 Games and Bowls will be included as a sport.
- Game Format - for Commonwealth Games and any other new events, 3 sets of 5 ends (with a one end tie-break at the end of the match if tied on sets) has received a positive response from most stakeholders.

Telling our Story

- New World Bowls branded corporate apparel has been supplied by ACEIT for Directors, staff and key volunteers.
- The new World Bowls website was recently launched and the relevant content from the old site has been transferred across.

With the launch of the new World Bowls website, MNAs are encouraged to ensure all contact details are correct. MNAs are invited to visit the relevant page on the World Bowls site - <https://www.worldbowls.com/member-nations/>

MNAs are urged to advise of any changes or additions to marketing@worldbowls.com

- Our 3rd electronic newsletter was recently distributed and our social media platforms continue to grow:
 - Facebook followers have increased from 3,600 in December '22 to 6,387 in May '23
 - Instagram followers have increased from 1,398 in December '22 to 1,520 in May '23
 - Twitter followers have increased from 2,631 in December '22 to 2,877 in May '23

Grow the Sport

- A very encouraging meeting with representatives of the World Short Mat Bowls Council was held recently. Of particular interest is that four of their member countries: Belgium, Denmark, Norway and Sweden are not members of World Bowls, but do play Bowls.
- Growing our membership is a focus and recent interest has been received from Italy, Poland, Dubai and Russia. Finalising the new membership structure and application form is an immediate focus.
- Coaching & Umpiring - I recently met with Bowls Scotland about their coaching courses and how potentially we could utilise some of these courses and content for smaller countries. Establishing a National Coaching Advisory Group is the first step towards developing coaching services for MNAs who are interested.
- World Bowls Census - I am creating a mechanism to collect participation statistics from around the World. Our current membership numbers are limited to just our MNAs but there are many more people playing the sport whether it be Short Mat, Indoors or Crown Green. Having numbers that better reflect actual participation is very important for a range of reasons – including Olympic/Para recognition and commercial reasons.

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- Starter Bowls Kit - an approach has been made to key Bowls manufacturers to see whether they would sponsor or supply FOC this kit.

Regional Updates

Americas (Ian Howard)

- It is anticipated that the Falkland Islands will formally request to transfer to Europe this month and the Board has agreed in principle to grant this request.

Africa (Gerry Baker)

- At the time of the meeting the focus was on the build up to the 2023 Africa States Tournament to be held in Namibia at the end of June.
- WB funding has been provided for an Umpires/Coaching course to be run concurrent to the event; around 40 to 45 people are anticipated to attend for a 2-day session.
- Gerry Baker will attend for part of the Tournament and will Chair a Zone 6 meeting.

Europe (Hazel Wilson and Sue Beatt)

- Productive World Bowls European Nations meeting held in April; positive feedback from participants who are eager to see the meeting become a regular quarterly occurrence; the meeting was also attended by the WB CEO.
- The meeting learnt more about the European Bowls Union becoming Bowls Europe with a new constitution.
- Bowls Scotland has been delivering coaching Qualifications in Guernsey as well as in Scotland last year; is able to train tutors or send tutors to countries.
 - The qualifications that are available are: Introduction to Bowls Coaching; Level 1 Coaching award and Level 2 Coaching Award (Advanced Level Coaching).
- It was noted there is great demand for coaching development across the region – and beyond.

Oceania (Brett O'Riley)

- The Inaugural Digicel Oceania Challenge successfully held in New Zealand in April; very positive feedback from participating teams and all other stakeholders; the next Challenge event is proposed for November 2024.
- Meetings held with Oceania MNA reps in relation to the final establishment of Bowls Oceania, to be incorporated in Australia. Strong interest based on the previous work undertaken with World Bowls, and the precedent of Asian Federation.
- Demonstrated short mat (thanks to Greengauge) to participating MNAs at the Digicel Oceania Challenge. Strong interest in the Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Tokelau - an alternative to natural surfaces and for schools' programs.
- Continuing to progress government aid funding opportunities to enable additional game development in each MNA. Priorities including building administrative, coaching, and playing capability, and funding for infrastructure including artificial greens and covering/canopies for outdoor greens; developing a bowls set reuse scheme for sourcing sets for Pacific Island countries, Bowls NZ are particularly assisting with initial small size sets.
- Feedback noted regarding the ongoing cost of attending events; a real strain for smaller countries – at the June meeting the WB Board discussed the cost challenges for participation in international events and qualification for the World Championships and work being done to source funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to build capacity in the region.

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Asia (Claudius Lam)

- Lawn bowls to feature in the 2023 Asian Para Games in October, to be held in Hangzhou.
- Work continuing to have lawn bowls included in the World Games 2025, which will be held in Chengdu in April or May 2025.
- The Hong Kong International Bowls Classic is scheduled for November 2023.
- Thailand is developing plans to stage the Asian Championships and the Asian U25 Championships in March 2024, in Pattaya.
- Ongoing engagement with bowls organization in Cambodia, Nepal, Taiwan, UAE, Sri Lanka, Vietnam and Iran.

