

I am very pleased to share this update with you following the September 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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## **Formal Votes of Thanks**

The Board recorded a formal acknowledgement, congratulations and thanks on behalf of World Bowls to Bowls Australia, its Directors and CEO, Event staff and the Media and Communications team and the entire BA team, the Host Clubs, and the countless volunteers for the successful staging of the 2023 World Championships.

The World Bowls President commended the tremendous amount of work undertaken by the BA team to make the Championships - as he said at the Closing Ceremony - the best ever.

The World Bowls Board acknowledged Event Manager, Andrew Howie, as deserving the highest praise for how well the event ran noting that Andrew is a tournament organizer par excellence who navigated the many challenges of staging such an event, both in the planning and the execution, with consummate skill, professionalism and, above all good humour.

The World Bowls Board also recorded a formal acknowledged, congratulations and thanks to John Roberts (CTO) and Mark Cowan (TD) and the team of 50 ITOs who officiated during the event.

## **Vale Margaret Fettes**

World Bowls recently learnt of the passing of former Board Director Margaret Fettes.

Margaret's passion was lawn bowling, where as a member of the Commonwealth Lawn Bowling Club she represented the province many times at national competitions, winning many medals. She played on the Canadian National team from 1992 to 1994, winning a gold medal at the Pacific Rim Championships and representing Canada at the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Victoria.

She also held many executive positions at the provincial and national level, including President of Lawn Bowls Canada and served as team manager at various events around the world.

Margaret was elected to the World Bowls Council in 2003 a position she held for over nine years and travelled the world promoting Lawn Bowls. She concluded her service on December 6, 2012.

On behalf of the World Board, staff and our members, we offer our deepest condolences to Margaret's family, friends, and all at Bowls Canada.

## **Board Decisions and Announcements**

### **Constitution**

- A draft of the new Constitution will be finalised before year's end and circulated for comment in anticipation of formal consideration by MNAs at the 2024 Council Meeting.
- The Board is supportive of a proposal to remove the Development Member category of membership under the new Constitution and to treat all Members as Full Members.

### **MNA Fees for 2024**

- MNAs will be invoiced for the 2024 fees in November 2023.

### **Falkland Islands**

- An application by the Falkland Islands to transfer from the Americas Region to the European Region was approved by the WB Board.

## **Coaching Advisory Group Chair appointed and new Members.**

- The new Coaching Advisory Group has been convened and Graham Rees from Bowls New Zealand has been appointed as Chair.
- WB also welcomes new Members Rita Shek (Hong Kong China) and Simon Botha (South Africa) to the Group.

## **CEO Report**

Since June the key focus areas have been:

Refinement of the 2024 Budget; now including the Board approved 10% membership fee increase; regional Development is the main expense item that has been increased; the Budget was presented to MNAs as part of the CEO presentation to the WB Council Forum in September.

Continuing to work towards formally closing WB operations in the UK and the winding up of the UK Company. Identifying regulatory requirements for the Australian Company with respect to annual reporting to the ATO, ASIC etc. and the engagement of a qualified accountant to provide any required independent review or audit of the 2022/23 accounts.

Meetings with a range of stakeholders in August and September including: the organizing committees for the World Championships and Champion of Champions, WADA and Sports Integrity Australia regarding testing at the 2023 World Championships, Tourism and Major Events Gold Coast representatives, Club Helensvale and Club Robina staff regarding the 2023 Champions of Champions event, Bowls Asia regarding the World Championships in 2025, International Disability Bowls and many MNA representatives and athletes during the 2023 World Championships and Champion of Champions.

Travel: Upcoming attendance at the Hong Kong Classic 2023 in November; the assistance of the Lawn Bowls Association of Hong Kong, China with respect to arranging accommodation for this visit is gratefully acknowledged.

Successful staging of the World Bowls Championships and 2023 Champions of Champions. Many great face-to-face meetings occurred, and relationships and contacts made. Opportunities identified for future events to stage forums for coaching, umpiring and development professional development sessions.

Successful Council Meeting and Forum: Staged to coincide with World Bowls Championships; 50 MNAs in attendance; positive feedback from all who attended.

World Bowls Championships 2025: Productive meetings with representatives of Bowls Hong Kong China with discussions around staging this event in 2027 – depending on the timing of any Commonwealth Games event and the possibility of staging alternative World event in Hong Kong in 2025.

Champion of Champions – 2024 and 2025: Potential locations and hosts are being considered.

Preparations continuing for World Under 25s (December 2023 in East Kilbride, Scotland) and World Indoors (April 2024 in Guernsey).

World Bowls Super League & World Bowls Tour: Martin Hiron and Iggy Jovanovic presented at the World Bowls Forum on 4 September; a more detailed information pack is set to be sent to all those who responded to the EOI.

Sponsorship: Proposals sent to prospective partners including SportsBuild, SParms and Sporting Highlights. BOAG: Productive meetings with the IOC, IPC and some other International Federations in July. Feedback received to date from all bowls stakeholders and especially MNAs is that they are very supportive and

enthusiastic for World Bowls to pursue Olympic/Para recognition.

New World Bowls apparel supplied by ACEIT: Director's orders fulfilled; Bowls cloth, caps and polos distributed to ITOs and Volunteers at the World Championships and the Champion of Champions.

Our social media platforms continue to grow:

- Facebook followers have increased from 6,387 in May '23 to 7,948
- Instagram followers have increased from 1,520 in May '23 to 1,642
- X (Twitter) followers have increased from 2,667 in May '23 to 2,855

An encouraging meeting with the Chair of the World Short Mat Bowls Council Bowls; WB awaiting their feedback about how we can collaborate and potentially merge.

A positive meeting with International Bowls for the Disabled (IBD); Directors very positive about potentially merging with World Bowls and setting up a sub committee to oversee and drive Disability Bowls under the World Bowls banner. IBD to confirm whether World Bowls should progress an application for IPC membership.

Growing our membership remains a focus; interest has been received from Italy, Poland, UAE, Vietnam, Tonga and Tokelau and the International Deaf Bowling Federation.

The new Coaching Advisory Group has been formed; the following people have been appointed for a two (2) year period. Welcome Derek Dillon (Canada), Mal Evans (England), Allen Harvey (Cyprus), Adam Martin (Scotland), Karen Murphy (Australia), Graeme Rees (New Zealand) and Lachlan Tighe (Independent).

World Bowls Census: WB proposes to commence collecting participation statistics from around the World in the next few months. Current WB membership numbers are limited to 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 – including for Olympic/Para recognition.

## Regional Updates

### Americas (Ian Howard)

CEO Neil Dalrymple recently gave an in-depth interview to the Canadian Bowler Show podcast together with Ian Howard. To date 537 views have been recorded. This high number bodes well for interest in bowls in

### North America

Short Mat bowling season starts 15 October 2023; The Canadian Short Mat Association has been named the 2026 host nation for the Short Mat World Championships.

### Argentina

- 10 Bowlers recently participated in the Champions of Champions event in Australia.
- Inter-club competition is very important to all 5 clubs; they were recently postponed due to a number of players travelling to the Gold Coast.
- All 5 clubs (180 total members) work very hard to promote bowls and secure new members.
- Juan Sills met the CEO Neil Dalrymple while attending the Champions of Champions event.

### Canada

- Funding for amateur sport has significantly decreased, while at the same time compliance concerning governance and safety in sport is increasing. The two will impact programming in 2024.
- In 2024 a new model for national championships will be trialed. The emphasis will be on shorter, faster games. Also there will be a reduction in the number of unique events being run. More information is on the website.

# Board Bulletin – September 2023

- Held first national team selection for Para bowls. An announcement of the three (3) athletes heading to South Africa (May 2024) for the IBD para championships, will be made shortly.
- Terry Scott, after 6 years as Bowls Canada Head Coach is retiring October 15th. Terry is retiring on a high note as Canada recorded it's best results at a World Championships, (1- gold, 1- silver and 2 – bronze).
- Derek Dillion has been appointed Bowls Canada new Head Coach. Derek recently joined the WB Coaching Task Force.
- The new marketing strategy will be released soon. Focus is on shorter, faster games. The goal is that increasing the participation base will lead to an increase member base and competitor base.
- Board Chair Kathryn MacGregor is stepping down after 6 years on the Board, the last three as Board Chair. A new chair will be appointed during the first week of October 2023.
- CEO, Bowls Canada, Anna Mees is retiring October 5th, 2023. A recruiting task force has already been appointed.

## Falkland Islands

- Team Falkland Islands participated at the recent WB Champions of Champions.
- Recent Executive meeting set the club strategy as; improving club facilities and having a full commitment to begin immediately to be very well prepared for 2025 in Hong Kong.

## Jamaica

- Sent a team to the WB Indoor Championships last May. Martin Edwards represented Jamaica.
- Members of Bowls Jamaica executive recently attended Jamaica Olympic Association development lectures.
- Continue to promote Bowls in Jamaica to cruise ship line passengers as something to do while visiting Jamaica.

## United States of America

- Exciting news: Anne Nunes is the first woman and player to win the World Bowls Women's Singles World Champions of Champions for the USA.
- BUSA is still searching for sponsors to assist support the 2024 National Championships and the US Open.
- The 2023 US Open is being held October 7-14<sup>th</sup>; to date BUSA has been unable to find a host for the 2024 US Open.
- BUSA remains most interested in developing Short Mat playing clubs throughout all BUSA members.

The World Bowls Board Meeting on 24 September formally noted the USA's Anne Nunes historic achievement in winning the Women's Singles at the 2023 Champion of Champions – an unprecedented success for the USA.

## **Europe (Hazel Wilson and Sue Beatt)**

### Wales

A very successful visit to Wales by the WB CEO; feedback from the clubs was very informative and they welcomed the visit; it has given them a link to World Bowls and plans going forward. There were also meetings with both the Welsh Women's Bowling Association and Welsh Bowling Association, together with Bowls Wales and Sport Wales - again extremely valuable and gave an insight into plans going forward and also challenges involved. Also, a meeting with Ceris Hewlings Editor Bowls International. Plans going forward for Bowls International are very positive.

### England

Bowls England Aviva National Finals – WB Directors attended this event on 22nd August; met with Jon Cockcroft (CEO), David Tucker (Board Chair) and Mal Evans - a member of World Bowls new coaching panel - and Marianne (Warwick Council). It was a very informative day in terms of how Bowls England are running their Aviva National Finals. Bowls England are keen to host the World Championships in 2027; Hazel Wilson and Sue Beatt have offered their support.

## Scotland

Productive meetings recently held with the WB CEO and Bowls Scotland.

## Bowls Europe

Hazel and Sue recently staged a meeting of all Member Countries in Europe and feedback was received on recent World Champs and Champion of Champions. There is an opportunity for one of the UK based WB Directors to join the BE board, enhancing ties with World Bowls; Hazel Wilson will be attending their virtual AGM in October.

## **Oceania (Brett O’Riley)**

- Strong performances from Australia (5 golds) and New Zealand (2 golds) in the World Bowls Championships winning the Leonard Trophy and Taylor Trophy respectively. Both Norfolk Island (women’s pairs) and Cook Islands (men’s fours) made a quarter final, but Fiji, Niue and Samoa were well behind the qualifying threshold.
- Next Digicel Oceania Challenge confirmed for Auckland Tamaki Makaurau, New Zealand in November 2024.
- The establishment of Oceania Lawn Bowls has been completed, which will be an unincorporated organisation based in Australia operating under the auspices of World Bowls. Phil Jones from Norfolk Island is the first President with Jason Lindsay (Cook Islands), Radhika Prasad (Fiji), and Des Hipa (Niue) also on the Board along with the Regional Director Oceania.
- Working on introducing short mat bowls (thanks to Greengauge) to the Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, and Tokelau as an alternative to natural surfaces and for use in their school’s programs.
- Development of Pacific Bowls Hub with Bowls NZ and Bowls Auckland to now be finalised.
- Continuing to progress government aid funding opportunities to enable additional game development in each MNA. Priorities include 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 with Bowls NZ and Bowls Australia for sourcing sets for Pacific Island countries, along with mats, jacks and other equipment.
- Looking at potential Pacific sponsors including Air New Zealand, Carnival Cruises, and Taylor Bowls.
- Continued tensions around nations fielding diaspora players but it is growing the game and participation.
- Working with Bowls Australia on funding application opportunities with Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade to aid Pacific Island MNA development including high performance.

## Cook Islands

Finalising potential sites for an artificial surface on Rarotonga. Working on short mat opportunities for Cook Island outer islands and schools. Assisted with the recruitment of their National Coach Jamie Hill and National Team Manager Sandra Zittersteijn. Both performed well at World Bowls.

## Fiji

Supporting Fiji with development plans.

## New Zealand

Finalised with Steve Beel at Bowls NZ the design of a new hybrid artificial green which could be used for lawn bowls and netball in opposite directions, for use in Tonga and the Cook Islands initially. Awaiting a response from the Sports Ministry.

## PNG

Potential assistance from Bowls Australia to help “buddy” the new association.

## Niue

Strong engagement from Niue in the formation of Bowls Oceania.



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## Samoa

Strong interest in buying a short mat for international preparation and schools' program.

## Tonga

Auckland Tonga Bowls Club established with strong interest; the region will continue to work with the administration team and the Tongan government on establishing a sustainable model, including investment in greens on Tonga.

## Tokelau

Tokelau is in the process of completing their affiliation to World Bowls as a Development Member, awaiting final approval from the territorial authority.

Exploring opportunities for other countries and territories including Vanuatu, Tuvalu, Nauru, and Pitcairn Island.

## **Africa (Gerry Baker)**

- Coaching and Umpiring Courses held, assisting Namibia and other African Countries to upgrade the Coaching and Technical Officials status.
- Botswana will be hosting the AST event in 2024 when another course will be staged; hoping to facilitate as many African Countries as possible to attend the course in Botswana next year.

## **Asia (Claudius Lam)**

- 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.

