



MEETING NOTES

Title: World Bowls 2023 COUNCIL FORUM

Location: Club Robina, 263 Ron Penhaligon Way, Robina, Queensland 4226, Australia

Date: Monday 4 September 2023

Attending: President - Darryl Clout, Board - Brett O'Riley, Claudius Lam, Hazel Wilson
CEO - Neil Dalrymple, CTO and Laws Committee - Mark Cowan, Paul Brown (IBD).

Guest Speakers: Martin Hirons and Iggy Jovanovic (Solucio).

In attendance Bronwyn White (EA), Irene Attard (Communications and Marketing), Sporting Highlights - Steve Watson.

Notified Apologies: Gerry Baker (Board), Sue Beatt (Board), Betty Collins OAM (Life Member), Ian Howard (Board).

Member Nation Delegates – as notified as attending in person:

ARGENTINA, AUSTRALIA, BOTSWANA, CANADA, FALKLAND ISLANDS, FIJI, HONG KONG CHINA, INDIA, IRELAND, ISRAEL, JAPAN, JERSEY, KENYA, MACAO CHINA, MALAYSIA, MALTA, NAMIBIA, NEW ZEALAND, NIUE, PHILLIPINES, SCOTLAND, SINGAPORE, SOUTH AFRICA, THAILAND, TURKIYE, USA, ZIMBABWE

Member Nation Delegates – as notified as attending online:

ENGLAND, EUROPE, GUERNSEY, IRAN, JAMAICA, NIGERIA, PHILLIPINES, SINGAPORE, SPAIN, USA.

9.24 am AEST

1. Meeting opened.

2. World Bowls (WB) CEO Neil Dalrymple noted the Minutes of the 2022 Council Meeting - held to coincide with the Commonwealth Games in Leamington Spa - had been previously circulated.

He asked for any matters arising (not covered in today's agenda).

There being no matters arising, Neil proposed the Minutes be accepted.

All in favour.

Adopted.

3. WB President's address

Darryl Clout noted it was wonderful to be able to have Members meet all together and in person.

Darryl noted developments following the Review in 2021 including the new Board and a new CEO and spoke of the importance of communication. It is a Board priority - the Board is eager to establish good, constructive two-way communication.

Darryl spoke about the World Bowls guiding principle – that all bowls is bowls principle; World Bowls is looking to unify the various areas of our sport to help build strength for our sport.

Darryl thanked Members for their interest and dedication.

4. Update on progress – WB 2021 review, new Strategic Plan, Budget for 2024.

Neil Dalrymple introduced new WB staff: Irene Attard looking after communications and marketing and Bronwyn White assisting the CEO and looking after finance.

Neil honoured departed WB CEO and COO Gary Smith's more than twenty-year contribution to World Bowls and welcomed his continuing support for the sport.

Neil extended congratulations and thanks to the President and CEO of Bowls Australia (both in attendance) for the highly successful staging of the 2023 World Championships.

Neil spoke to his Presentation as shared on screen and circulated post meeting.

Neil noted the key areas of focus for WB highlighted in 2021 review were:

- Governance,
- Operations,
- Game Expansion and Development,
- Commercial and,
- Events.

He noted that many of the recommendations from the Review have been implemented or were in progress.

Neil spoke of the priorities in 2023:

- To establish operations in Australia and manage the transition from Scotland.
- Creation of the new Strategic Plan 2023 – 2025 to include many of the key focus areas from the Review together with other priority areas.
- The update of the WB Constitution.
- New staff appointed to support WB operations in Australia.
- Engagement with IBD, PBA, IIBC, WSMBC to explore opportunities to collaborate and potentially unify.
- To work towards achieving IOC and IPC recognition and membership.

Neil spoke about the work being done to achieve IOC recognition in more detail noting meetings with the World Pétanque and Bowls Federation to explore options for WB to join the Federation as an affiliate as a potential avenue to unlocking IOC recognition for WB given the Federation has IOC recognition.

The meeting discussed WB's activities in pursuit of IOC recognition in more detail including the process, the difficulty of establishing precise criteria and timeframes for the process; the better likelihood of securing IPC recognition; the prospects to secure the inclusion of bowls on the program for the 2032 Games in Brisbane, Australia, and the increasing importance of have attractive products for broadcast.

The meeting discussed the potential option to affiliate to the World Pétanque and Bowls Federation.

Members had questions concerning what benefits this membership might bring, what would the risks be to WB autonomy, the costs involved and whether such a membership would be detrimental to Bowls.

Neil concluded the discussion by noting his strong belief in the benefits the Bowls arising from raising the profile of the sport, whether inclusion on an Olympic program eventuates or not. He thanked Members for the feedback and valuable comments and undertook to keep Members updated on progress.

The meeting discussed support for Members, particularly those Members where Bowls is not so well developed as a sport.

The meeting discussed the proposed MNA buddy system which is to be established soon.

The meeting delved into the detail of what assistance is urgently needed to advance the sport in some Member nations, such as: attracting younger participants, regional events, and assistance to build greens – both indoor and outdoor and, the importance of bringing more viewers to broadcasts of the sport.

The meeting discussed specifics around the proposed buddy system and what some of the more developed might do to support other MNAs.

Specific feedback was noted with respect to lapsed WB Members.

Neil undertook to provide MNAs with more specific detail on the Buddy System as soon as possible.

The meeting discussed the Laws and Coaching Advisory Panels that have been established this year.

There was strong agreement from many delegates that more opportunities to hold coaching and umpire courses are needed urgently in many parts of the world.

Neil confirmed that WB through the new Advisory committees will be actively looking at ways to facilitate this.

Break

5. Update on World Bowls Series with Guest Presenters Martin Hiron and Iggy Jovanovic (Solucio)

Martin and Iggy spoke to the Solucio Presentation as shared on screen and circulated post meeting and took questions from the floor during their presentation.

They explained in more detail how the Rankings system will be set up noting examples from other sports such as tennis and spoke about the technology and online platforms that would support the Rankings system and about the integration of calendars and the development of an online portal for elite players to engage with the Rankings system.

6. Para Bowls Update with Keynote Guest Speaker Paul Brown (IBD Chair)

Neil noted that recent years have seen para bowls successfully integrate with open or able-bodied bowls – notably the 2018 and 2022 Commonwealth Games and now for the first time in 2023 at the World Championships.

Neil invited Paul Brown, Chair of International Bowls for the Disabled, to come forward to address the meeting.

Paul spoke about the work of International Bowls for the Disabled – which he has Chaired since 2020; he noted IBD covers physically and visually disabled bowlers; he spoke about events and the classification system – which operates under the auspices of the IPC – the Paralympics.

Paul spoke about the growth in para bowls – very noticeable since the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and noted IBD's interest in developing the area of bowls for athletes with a learning disability. He

noted that he still encounters many bowlers around the world who are unaware potential opportunities to play para bowls.

Paul took questions from the floor.

The meeting discussed – the challenges for para bowlers in participating in a crowded event calendar; the importance of balancing events for elite bowlers and the grassroots; the difficulties of ensuring effective communication with bowlers coming under different peak bodies; the opportunities for combining with World Bowls and building IBD capacity to support MNAs - as well as expanding para-bowls programs; the paralympic movement and the diversity of disabilities that can participate in bowls; the challenges of classification – trained and qualified volunteer intensive; visual classifiers in particular are challenging to find; the potential opportunities for classifications to be completed virtually and the many opportunities to attract para-athletes from other sports to also compete in bowls – accessible for all ages.

Commonwealth Games 2026 Update

Neil thanked Paul for addressing the forum.

Noting they would shortly break for lunch, Neil invited Darryl Clout to provide an update to the meeting on the current situation in the wake of the shock decision by Victoria (Australia) to withdraw from hosting the 2026 Games.

Darryl informed the meeting about CGA/CGF progress on finding a new host for the 2026 event and his view of what might happen with respect to the 2026 Games, noting that the situation remained unresolved at the present time (being 4 September 2023).

Lunch

7. Discussion and update on future structure of Events

Neil briefed the meeting on WB events both the current events in place and prospects for the future.

- World Championships – held every 2 years.
- World Champion of Champions – held annually.
- World Bowls Indoor Championships – held annually *
- World Under 25s – held annually *
- 5 x regional events: Oceania Challenge, Americas Challenge, African States, European Championships, Asian Lawn Bowls Championship.

* Staged in partnership with International Indoor Bowls Council (IIBC) and events currently rotated between northern and southern hemisphere.

New: World Bowls Series (includes all WB sanctioned events with allocated ranking points)

Proposed future calendar - Annual events:

- Champion of Champions (sets), Indoors and Under 25s (to be combined) (sets), Regional Championships (traditional).
- Every four (4) years: Commonwealth Games (sets) and World Championships (traditional)
- Other international competitions/events to be considered: multi-sport Games such as the World Games, Pan American, Asian Games, European Championships together with new Bowls events: World Bowls Super League, World Cup.
- Regional events become qualifiers for the World Championships (in the year prior).
- Sets play is 3 sets of 5 ends with 1 end tie break. Traditional remain same format as played at World Champs.

- All events to be part of new World Bowls Series and accrue ranking points.

The meeting discussed preferences for the World Championships being held every two years versus every four and noted that some MNAs are not able to participate in the Commonwealth Games – four years between world championships is a long time to wait. It was also noted that for nations that do participate in the Commonwealth Games, moving to a World Championship every two years might be too burdensome for some MNAs with smaller operating budgets – where costs fall more onto the individual team members.

8. General Business

Namibia:

The delegates from Namibia spoke of their concerns regarding the insistence that participants at the World Championships and other WB events must use the red and blue bowls.

The meeting discussed the matter in more detail including: the costs involved; options for bowls to be loaned to nations participating at events; and the example of from the Potters event.

Botswana:

The delegates from Botswana praised the livestreaming technology and equipment on display at these World Championships and asked whether the knowledge of how to do livestreaming successfully – best practice, equipment, training, etc. could be shared with MNAs.

Neil noted that Bowls Australia and Gold Coast Tweed District (Queensland, Australia) as well as Bowls NZ have a great deal of expertise in the livestreaming space. He was confident these organisations would be happy to share their knowledge and expertise and undertook for WB to facilitate this where possible and as necessary.

The delegates from Botswana noted the difficulty some MNAs faced in trying to obtain visas for travel to Australia.

The meeting discussed ways in which WB can assist these processes with the relevant government departments.

It was noted that WB has received feedback that one possible reason for an application being rejected is that important information required to process the application is missing.

Darryl agreed that this is an area in which WB is seeking to assist MNAs and teams.

Jersey:

The delegates from Jersey shared their concerns regarding the mandated use of the red and blue bowls noting the cost took half the budget – not a good return on investment; not always getting on the broadcast. They also noted issues with the bowls manufacturers – another impediment.

The meeting discussed the matter further; the experience of some with loaned bowls – i.e. Bowls Fiji.

Niue:

The delegates from Niue expressed their support for the work of WB and the Plan.

10. Meeting Close

Darryl Clout thanked the delegates for their participation in the Forum and confirmed that he and the other WB representatives had been listening and would take all the constructive feedback from today on board.

He urged MNAs to continue to proffer feedback to WB on these matters and not to consider these meetings as the only opportunity to do so.

Darryl thanked the day's Guest Speakers – Martin, Iggy and Paul; he thanked the WB Directors who attended today and thanked Neil; he thanked Irene and Bronwyn for their work today and also the venue staff and the Myles AV staff for assisting with Zoom for those delegates attending remotely.

Forum Close - 1.48 pm AEST