

# Board Bulletin – December 2023

I am delighted to wish you all a very Happy New Year and share this update following the December meeting of the World Bowls Board.

Please contact me if you have any queries or comments about any of the information herein.

The coming year is looking very exciting for World Bowls and our members, as several initiatives that we have been working with you all on come to fruition, many emanating from our Strategic Review in 2022.

Thanks again for your input and support.

Regards,

**Neil Dalrymple**

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## **Board Announcements**

### **Vale Garry Tyrrell**

The Bowls acknowledges the sad news of the passing of Garry Tyrrell (Falkland Islands).

### **Congratulations Hazel Wilson**

The Board congratulates Hazel on her recent appointment to the Bowls Europe Board.

## **Committees**

### **Welcome Jeanette Williams**

The Board welcomes the appointment of Jeanette Williams (South Africa) to the Laws Advisory Group (LAG).

### **Welcome Rita Shek and Simon Botha**

The Board welcomes the appointments of Rita Shek (Hong Kong China) and Simon Botha (South Africa) to the Coaching Advisory Group (CAG).

### **Welcome Veronica Sum and Kareena Cuthbert**

The Board welcomes Veronica (President, Bowls USA) and Kareena (Head of High Performance, Bowls Scotland) have joined the Bowls Olympic Advisory Group (BOAG) group.

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## **Board Decisions**

### **New Members**

The Board approved requests for membership received from:

- International Blind Bowls Association (IBBA)
- World Short Mat Bowls Council (WSMBC)

# Board Bulletin – December 2023

World Bowls is delighted to welcome these new Members, joining International Bowls for the Disabled, the International Deaf Bowls Federation and the International Indoor Bowls Council as Associate Members of World Bowls.

## **Constitution**

Noting one of the key recommendations from the comprehensive review of World Bowls' operations, the Board approved the final draft of a proposed new Constitution for World Bowls. This was circulated to MNAs on 14 December 2023.

The Board meeting also noted and approved with the following proposed timeframe for review and voting on the proposed new Constitution:

- Circulation to MNAs for review and comment – mid December 2023.
- MNA feedback to be received on or before 31 January 2024.
- WB to call a General Meeting for April/May 2024 (allowing for required periods of notice and circulation of papers).
- General Meeting timing will also take into consideration the time period required ahead of MNA voting in June.
- MNAs vote in elections for WB Directors – June 2024.
- New World Bowls Board of Directors in place for 1 July 2024 (new financial year in Australia).

## **Events**

The Board meeting discussed the results of the survey conducted post the 2023 World Championships on the Gold Coast and the future of World Bowls events: Formats, schedules, locations, and broadcast in detail. The Board approved a Discussion Paper for circulation to MNAs for comment. This Paper was circulated on 20 December 2023 and feedback is to be received on or before 15 February 2024.

We continue to explore opportunities to generate more revenue from World Bowls events, so we can expand our development activities alongside member nations and look at prizemoney for players where appropriate.

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## **CEO Report**

Since September the key focus areas have been:

- The Budget for 2024, including calculation of the 2024 membership fees and preparation of invoices issued in December 2023.
- Ongoing work to identify the steps to formally close WB operations in the UK and the winding up of the UK Company. Also identifying regulatory requirements for the Australian Company with respect to annual reporting to the ATO, ASIC and other regulatory bodies. Preparing and issuing invoices for manufacturers, license holders and testers and certificates following payment of licensing fees.
- Insurance – organising policies with a local broker in Australia for liability packages, personal accident, and travel insurance; the policies previously issued in the UK are no longer in effect.
- Meetings with a range of stakeholders in September, October, November and early December including: a number of one on one meetings with MNA CEOs and/or Presidents (Scotland, England, Australia, USA, and

# Board Bulletin – December 2023

New Zealand), Bowls International (for monthly column), Spring Media (for OTT platform), Aceit (for E-store), Bocce Australia (to understand relationship with WPBF), World Indoors organising committee (monthly meetings), WADA (regular engagement with our Liaison), IBBA (meeting with President Graham Ward), CGF seminar, The Bowls Club (UK based company specialising in bowls events).

- Staffing: World Bowls staff, Irene Attard (Media/PR/Sponsorship) and Bron White (EA) continue to work well as a team and meet at least monthly as a group (face to face) as well as regular contact outside of that session. Key volunteers such as Allan Thornhill, Lachie Tighe, Mark Cowan, and Graeme Rees continue to make a very valuable contribution to World Bowls.
- New Constitution: Finalisation of the draft for the Board to approve for circulation to MNAs.
- Travel: Attendance at the Hong Kong International Classic 2023. A very successful visit and World Bowls greatly appreciates the fact that accommodation and on-ground costs for the CEO were covered by the Lawn Bowls Association of Hong Kong, China. Notes on this visit have been provided to the Board. It was also good to interact with players and technical officials – congratulations to the winners.....
- Committees: A work in progress. Consideration is being given to convening other WB committees to support the Board and CEO in certain key areas such as: Athletes, Growth & Development, Finance, Audit & Risk, Nominations and so on.
- World Bowls Series: preparation of calendar for 2024, distribution of sanctioning agreements to prospective hosts, preparations for launch.
- Coaching Committee: the inaugural meeting took place on 12 October 2023 and a second meeting was held on 7 December.
- BOAG: An application for membership to International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has been submitted and acknowledged.
- WB social media platforms continue to grow:
  - Facebook followers have increased from 6,387 in May '23 to 8,342 in Nov '23
  - Instagram followers have increased from 1,520 in May '23 to 1,672 in Nov '23
  - X (Twitter) followers have increased from 2,667 in May '23 to 2,723 in Nov '23
  - YouTube subscribers have increased from 16 in May '23 to 202 in Nov '23.
- There has been ongoing and very positive engagement with the World Short Mat Bowls Council, the International Blind Bowls Association and International Bowls for the Disabled discussing ways to collaborate more closely.
- Growing World Bowls membership remains a focus and recent months have seen positive engagement with Bowls Asia and the creation of the West Asia & Central Asia development centre with prospective countries being Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Oman, Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, Qatar, and Palestine.
- World Bowls Census: As part of the annual return to be completed by MNAs when the fees for 2024 are remitted, a question has been included regarding the number of social bowlers as well.
- The MNA Buddy system for smaller World Bowls member nations and an equipment support program has commenced. Allocations of buddies based on feedback to date will be finalised soon.

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## Regional Updates

### Americas (Ian Howard)

- Americas region MNA's are continuing to discuss the first ever Americas Bowls Challenge event.
- There are several site locations under consideration including Sun City Florida and clubs located in

# Board Bulletin – December 2023

Ontario, Canada.

- The Canadian Short Mat Association will host the 2026 Short Mat World Championships.

## Argentina

- Ten bowlers recently participated in the Champions of Champions event in Australia.
- All returning bowlers are actively promoting bowls within the 5 clubs with a view to attracting new members.
- The Interclub competition held its season final on December 16 (the event has been held for 45 years).

## Brazil

- Inside Bowls recently featured news about the Sao Paulo Athletic Club (SPAC) and its 100th Interstate title match against Paissandu Athletic Club (PAC). The event may have been one of the oldest “battles” between bowling clubs in the world. SPAC got the best of PAC however by all accounts the contest was most enjoyable for all. Inside Bowls provided a wonderful report of the event; the feature also included great photographs of all the players.

## Canada

- Britany Gordon will be joining as Chief Executive Officer starting January 8th, 2024 (as announced by Bowls Canada on 21 Dec 2023)
- 2024 will feature a new model for national championships. The emphasis will be on shorter, faster games.
- Three para-athletes are heading to South Africa (May 2024) for the IBD Para Championship.

## Jamaica

- At the recent AGM members elected Dr. Coretta Johnson, General Secretary and Camille Wellesley was elected to join the Executive Team.

## United States of America

- Anne Nunes is the first USA woman player to win the World Bowls Women’s Singles World Champions of Champions.
- BUSA is sourcing sponsors to support the 2024 National Championships and the US Open.
- The December 2023 edition of Inside Bowls has a glowing report about the recent US Open event which saw former World Bowls CEO/COO Gary Smith and also Lorna Smith winning Gold in the Men’s Fours and Women’s Singles respectively.
- BUSA remains most interested in developing Short Mat playing clubs throughout all BUSA members. This format will receive more attention in 2024.

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

- Attendance at the WB/IIBC Under 25s competition held in East Kilbride, Scotland from 3 to 8 December 2023 including the Opening Ceremony and finals day on Friday 8th December. A very positive atmosphere with 17 countries attending, and some fantastic bowls played.
- Ongoing meetings with Bowls Scotland and Bowls England.
- Attendance at the Bowls Europe AGM.
- Attendance at the joint unification meeting in Wales on 14 December.

# Board Bulletin – December 2023

## **Africa (Gerry Baker)**

- Meeting with new CEO of Bowls South Africa (Bobby Donnelly); membership numbers and general public interest in bowls in South Africa are both increasing.

## **Asia (Claudius Lam)**

- A region-wide ITO assessment will be conducted on February 28-29, 2024 at Pattaya. Mark Cowan will be the assessor.
- A strategic plan to help develop bowls in West and Middle Asia region was accepted by Bowls Asia. A meeting was held to discuss the promotion of bowls in these countries.

## Brunei

- All lawn bowls activities resumed to normal after the government lifted the suspension to the Brunei Darussalam Lawn Bowls Association.
- A new Deputy President and Secretary General were elected.

## China

- Lawn bowls competition was organized as part of the Asian Para Games at October 21-27, 2023 in Hangzhou.
- Working for inclusion of lawn bowls into the Chinese National Games 2025, which will be co-hosted in Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Macau in 2025.

## Hong Kong

- The Hong Kong International Bowls Classic completed in November 11-19, 2023.
- ITO assessment was organized in Hong Kong with nine participants; four qualified.

## Japan

- WB received official organizing committee rejection on the inclusion of lawn bowls into the Asian Games in 2026 in Nagoya, Japan.

## Malaysia

- A number of coach and umpire training courses have been conducted.

## Singapore

- The Lion City Cup is scheduled for July 21-28, 2024.

## Thailand

- The Asian Championship and Asian U25 Championship is scheduled for March 3-10, 2024, at Pattaya.

## **Oceania (Brett O'Riley)**

- Dates are being finalized in November 2024 for the Digicel Oceania Challenge, again to be held in Auckland Tamaki Makaurau, Aotearoa New Zealand. This will be immediately before the World Champion of Champion Singles also being held in Auckland.
- The new Oceania Confederation is set for its first meeting in 2024, under inaugural chair Phil Jones from Norfolk Island, where it will set its strategic priorities.
- Concerns continue over the future of the Commonwealth Games in 2026, and beyond, and the impact on the sports programmes of smaller nations.
- It was noted that Chris Jenkins from Wales is the new President of the Commonwealth Games Federation, who is well known to World Bowls. Hugh Graham from the Cook Islands was elected as a Vice President, and Australia's Craig Phillips elected as a Regional Vice President.
- There has been strong regional media coverage and profiles on the recent winners and medalists from the World Bowls on the Gold Coast.
- The trend towards artificial surfaces, many of them covered, is continuing apace in Australia and New

## Board Bulletin – December 2023

Zealand. Some of the factors driving this are climate change, water shortages, the harmful effects of climate and sun damage, and the opportunity for year-round play. Hybrid designs enabling other sports to use the artificial surface have also been developed to maximise the utilisation in smaller nations.

- Bowls New Zealand's new televised Twilight Bowls has been very successful in raising the profile for the game, highlighting short form game format opportunities.
- We continue to talk to cruise ship companies about the opportunity to incorporate bowls activity in the Pacific into their shore excursion options.
- Sports funding cuts in individual countries are continuing to impact the ability of Oceania nations and their players to participate in international events, exacerbated by high airfare prices.

