

Chairman's Report - December 2021

After another challenging year dealing with the impacts and constraints caused by COVID-19 I would like to thank all our members for your support of the Club. I would also like to extend an apology for not issuing a report earlier to keep you advised of the issues and plans being dealt with by the Board during the year. It has certainly been a challenging year for everyone.

Outlined below is an update on a number of matters important to all our members

One of the matters raised recently was the decision of the Board to offer a "Summer Special of \$110" for new members. Firstly, let me explain the reasons for this decision.

At the last AGM, Members voted to convert greens 2 and 3 from grass to synthetic surfaces. It was indicated that the approximate cost of this project would be \$500,000. This cost which would include greens surrounds, will provide surfaces similar to green 1 but would be laid on a base which would prevent surface damage caused by dumping and dropping of bowls. Drainage would be improved to the extent it could handle a downpour of rain and be immediately playable when the rain stopped and future replacement costs of the synthetic surfaces would be minimised.

For the Board to go ahead with this project we would have to show the Mornington Council (who will be required to guarantee the loan) and the Bank that we have the ability to repay any loan that we will require. Our estimates show that it will take 7 to 10 years to repay this loan.

It is a fact that Lawn Bowling membership numbers throughout Australia and Victoria have been in decline over the past five to ten years. At our club we also see this decline. Our membership numbers over the last 4 years have been:-

April 2010	199
May 2019	212
Dec. 2020	165
August 2021	168

The concern of the Board is that if this trend continues we may face serious financial issues in coming years.

Given this problem, it was decided that we should make this discounted offer over the barefoot bowls season to try and get new members which to date is showing success.

We are not alone with these discounted offers. Mt Martha is offering new members first year \$160 which includes a Club shirt. Mornington Civic is offering first year bowlers \$173 including a Club shirt. We recently played at Rye and they had a \$100 offer (I don't know what this included). It must be remembered the figure of \$110 DOES NOT include a club shirt which if included in our offer, would cost a new bowler \$175. So our offer, albeit for a slightly longer period, is very similar to our

neighbouring clubs. Our treasurer, Martin Cheeseman, has estimated that on average, every new member will spend \$800 per year on playing fees and over the bar so every new member is valuable now and for our future. Not only this, we need new members to assist with the many voluntary jobs required to run our Club.

Last August, The Victorian State Government announced a Community Sports Infrastructure Loans Scheme where Sporting organisations could apply for low interest loans for sports projects. We have lodged a loan application for \$500,000 at 0.62% interest over 7 years. We will not know the outcome of our application until June 2022. It has been a huge effort by Martin Cheeseman, Leigh Hale and others to gather the information required to accompany and to complete this application. We are hoping our application will be successful but if not, the information required by our Bank and the Council has now been done. The only issue will be the increased cost of repayments and the confidence that our Club has the ability to comfortably repay the loan.

During lockdown our Treasurer has been very busy trying to get any financial assistance that that has been available, from the Government . The Board is delighted that we have received a total of \$43,000 GST free since June 2021 .

Our current bank balance is \$160,00 compared with the balance at the conclusion of the last financial year of \$121,000.

During the last bout of violent winds, we suffered damage (and destruction) of some of our shade units. Following our insurance claim, we have received \$4,868 for 3 new shades. We are currently awaiting delivery of the components so we can replace/repair the damage.

We have installed a KIOSK QR sign-in system at the front desk for members and visitors who do not have compliant smart phones. This eliminates the need for paper records and ensures the sign-in time is correct.

An online booking system has been installed for barefoot bowls which requires a deposit to be paid up front. This should deter the large groups who book but cancel at the last minute and in the meantime, we have turned away people who would otherwise have filled our rinks.

The external water cooler which failed has been replaced.

A new 75" Smart TV near the bar has been installed.

14 Sets of small size Dreamline XG bowls have been purchased for barefoot bowls to cater for females who need smaller sized bowls and then hopefully, may join our Club.

Following the passing of our dear friend Bill McGuire, we have been lucky enough to have Leigh Hale join the Board as Vice-Chairman. No one can replace Bill - his experience and background cannot be challenged. From my experience in the Green 1 replacement project, I know Leigh will bring equal, but different skills to the Club - this is already evident in his role of Covid Marshall and his invaluable input to the Board in our State Government Loan Application.

To our many volunteers - a huge thank you. Without volunteers our Club would cease to exist.

To all MBC members, families and friends may I wish you a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year.

Chairman Robin Growse