



CIRCULAR

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No: 09/2015
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To: Clubs, Districts and Zones
Re: INFORMATION REGARDING 2015/16 MEMBERSHIP FEE INCREASE

In response to a number of enquiries regarding the recent increase in Bowls NSW Membership Fees, please find below a detailed summary of the reasons for the increase and how the increase will be used for the benefit of all affiliated Clubs and to increase the promotion and marketing of the sport in NSW

WHAT IS THE REASON FOR THE INCREASE?

Deciding on the cost of the membership fees and establishing the annual budget is a process which the Bowls NSW Board gives significant consideration during the February/March period. It is a priority and a responsibility of the Board to ensure that there is sufficient revenue to effectively provide a professional level of service and to conduct a wide range of activities to meet the various needs of all clubs and members; however it is also essential that the Association operates in the most cost effective manner and in the best interests of the sport and its members.

With this in mind, the decision to increase membership fees is not one which is taken lightly and is only made out of necessity. Due consideration is given by the Board to the effect that any increase will have on individuals and clubs, regardless of the amount.

Whilst this latest annual fee increase is relatively greater than it has been in the past, the \$14 increase for a Full Member equates to just 27c extra per week and the total fee \$60 per full member for a Club to affiliate with the Association just \$1.15 per week.

Since 2009, Bowls NSW fees have been increased on just 3 occasions, by \$5 in 2010, by \$3 in 2012 and \$3 in 2014. These increases have been necessary to offset the decline in operating revenue, caused by the decline in registered membership numbers and increase in fees paid to Bowls Australia, which have risen almost 10% annually for the past 6 years.

As you can see from the table below, the % of operational revenue retained by Bowls NSW per member did not significantly increase between 2009 and 2015, therefore the capacity for the Association to allocate funds into improving services and support for club or to increase promotion and marketing has been limited. In effect these smaller fee increases have only acted to balance the budget.

Breakdown of Full Membership Fee Amount 2009 - 2015

	Fee	Bowls NSW Operating Revenue		Bowls Australia Fee		GST	
	\$	\$	%	\$	%	\$	%
2009/2010	35.00	24.57	70%	7.28	21%	3.15	9%
2010/2011	40.00	28.72	72%	7.64	19%	3.64	9%
2011/2012	40.00	27.84	70%	8.52	21%	3.64	9%
2012/2013	43.00	29.88	69%	9.21	21%	3.91	9%
2013/2014	43.00	29.09	68%	10.00	23%	3.91	9%
2014/2015	46.00	30.92	67%	10.90	24%	4.18	9%
2015/2016	60.00	42.70	71%	11.90	20%	5.40	9%

During this time, more substantial fee increases for members have been avoided by the Board implementing cost cutting measures to reduce major expenditure on areas such as the Bowls NSW magazine, the annual supply of membership cards and replacing hard copy mail-outs with electronic communications.

It is the Board's intention to ensure that Bowls NSW is able to significantly increase the level of marketing and promotion of the sport to the public, and improve the quality and range of services, events and support that we provide to all Clubs and members. Therefore the increase of \$14 is aimed at providing Bowls NSW with a level of funds which can achieve a more beneficial outcome than simply a balanced budget at the end of the financial year.

MEMBERSHIP FEES GENERATE 85% OF BOWLS NSW'S TOTAL REVENUE

There has been some conjecture from members, who perceive that the fees paid to Bowls NSW (and their District and Zone Associations) is disproportional to the fees paid to their Club, and that as a result the Association is 'taking money away from their club'.

Income from membership fees generally make up less than 5% of Clubs total revenue and the bulk of their operating revenue which is used to maintain the club facilities and greens for the benefit of members is generated through daily gaming and bar trade. In addition, Clubs also have the ability to generate regular income by charging green fees for bowlers to play bowls on their greens. (For e.g. A Club who charges \$10 green fees, generates \$520 over the course of a year from a member who plays once a week)

In contrast however, Bowls NSW does not have the luxury of generating additional revenue from gaming, bar trade or green fees and approximately 85% total revenue is funded through the \$60 'one-off' annual payments from registered members. As a result, the extent to which the Association can fund activities which promote and market the sport or provide support and services to all Clubs, is almost solely reliant on the fees collected from the registration of Bowling Members.

WE ALL HAVE A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY TO INVEST IN AND GROW THE SPORT

A significant factor which continues to place pressure on the operating revenue of the Association is Clubs not fulfilling their obligation to register all Bowling Members as required by the Bowls NSW Constitution.

Clubs who actively do not register all Bowling Members or who implement a category of bowling membership which entitles a member to participate in structured gala or social bowls without being registered with Bowls NSW are not only risking penalties, including disaffiliation and/or the removal of entitlements for any member registered at their Club to enter Association events, but their actions have a wider detrimental impact on the sport which affects all other members and Clubs within the Association.

Although it is not widely acknowledged, it must be appreciated that everyone involved in bowls, even those who only play at club level, are active participants within an international organised sporting structure. These structures are headed by World Bowls Limited, who controls and maintains the sport's Intellectual Property ('IP') including Bowls standards and the Laws which enable matches to be conducted under consistent and fair rules across all countries which are affiliated as national authorities.

When a Club pays its affiliation fees to Bowls NSW it in turn affiliates the Club and its registered members with Bowls Australia as well as World Bowls. This entitles the affiliated Club with the right to conduct bowls on their greens in accordance with the Laws of the Sport, and to receive a fee from participants for the privilege.

Apart from providing services and assistance to Clubs, Bowls NSW and Bowls Australia has a role in lobbying State and Federal Government to support Bowling Associations and affiliated Clubs with funding and access to grants to ensure that adequate resources, facilities and greens are able to be maintained and the sport can remain viable into the future. The strength of the sport's argument when lobbying Government and the level of funding that a sport can expect to receive towards future develop is largely determined by a sport's ability to produce objective and measurable participation data and membership statistics which indicate that it is a viable long term investment.

Therefore by actively not registering all bowling members with Bowls NSW, Clubs may be saving some of their members a few dollars in membership fees, but as a consequence they are also disadvantaging themselves, their own members and all other affiliated Clubs by reducing the level of operational revenue and resources available to assist them directly and preventing the sport from being able to accurately measure and report on the number of participants, which dramatically reduces the chances of securing financial investment and support from Government to maintain bowls facilities.

HOW WILL THE INCREASE BE USED TO MARKET AND PROMOTE THE SPORT?

As stated in Circular 04/15, *"Bowls NSW seeks to substantially increase its investment in the promotion of the sport across the State and to improve the level of direct marketing assistance to all member clubs across the state"*.

Bowls NSW has wasted no time in setting out to achieve this goal, already undertaking two new promotional and marketing initiatives, which will not only directly benefit members and clubs, but will also, provide a great opportunity to increase the exposure of the sport to the general public;

1. Live Streaming – The New Media Frontier for Bowls in NSW

Bowls NSW is excited to announce that this year's NSW State Championships and NSW Rookies Finals, will be streamed live online via the Bowls NSW website.

The online broadcast will provide viewers with four full days of non-stop bowls coverage, including both days of the NSW Rookies Singles and Pairs State Finals from Raymond Terrace BC on October 17th and 18th, as well as two days of the State Championships from Ettalong Memorial BC on October 29th and 30th featuring all the action from both the Open State Singles and Senior Singles Championships.

Anyone with an internet connection will have unlimited access to view the live stream between 9am and 5pm on each day of play via their home computer, laptop, tablet or smart phone (including iPhone and android devices).

The Bowls NSW Board believes that this initiative, a first for bowls in NSW, has the potential to revolutionise the way in which the sport is exposed to the wider public audience, effectively filling the void left by the cancellation of ABC's television weekly bowls coverage.

The decision to cover the Rookies Singles and Pairs events, as well as the Open and Senior Singles provides a great opportunity for Bowls NSW to showcase the diversity of the sport with players of all ages, abilities and experience in the spotlight, rather than just focusing on the 'elite'.

Any Club with in-house AV systems or TV screens with internet connectivity will have the opportunity to broadcast matches live at no cost, and are encouraged to promote the live streaming to attract members and guests into the Club to watch the coverage.

Bowls NSW has partnered with the expert team at Power Productions led by Managing Director David Tapp to provide the online streaming for both events. Since first working with Bowls NSW to cover the 2009 Premier League Finals, Power Productions has become a market leader in bowls broadcasting

producing television coverage of major events including the Tweed Heads Golden Nugget and the International PBA Challenge.

2. Club Marketing Resource Kits

The Bowls NSW Communications and Marketing Department has developed a Marketing Resource Kit to encourage and assist Clubs across NSW to work in partnership with Bowls NSW to take a leading role in marketing the sport using the new key message of *'Love what you Play. Its More than a Game'*

The aim of the Marketing Resource Kit is to;

- Encourage Bowls Club Administrator's to actively promote their Club and the sport of Bowls.
- Provide access to practical marketing ideas, tools and resources that will assist Clubs to use the Sport to attract and engage new patrons, participants and potential new members.
- Encourage all Clubs to collectively establish and promote a modern and consistent public image for the Sport of Bowls in NSW.

Marketing Kits will be delivered to all Clubs and will include a number of resources ready to be used and details of how further marketing resources can be ordered through Bowls NSW and personalised for your Club's recruitment and retention activities.

A short video has been produced as part of the new marketing approach of Bowls NSW to give further insight into the *'Love what you play. It's more than a game'* marketing message. It can be found on YouTube by searching for Bowls NSW or by clicking <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WPKL0oJQ-c>

