Chairmans Report 2021-22

The newly created Region of the Ballarat District Bowls Division and Central Highlands Bows Division formed in September 2021 at a time where both Divisions and indeed Victoria was once again in the middle of Covid restrictions for the second time in two years. Our Region Ballarat Highlands Bowls Region was born, one of 16 Regions in Victoria.

The Covid Pandemic once again thwarted our attempts to start the season on time with four rounds delayed in Ballarat with the Highlands season commencing some two weeks later than scheduled.

The delay caused a ripple effect on the running of our state events and with it the need to have the Women’s events conducted as a Region whilst the men’s events were conducted separately, not the situation that we would have ideally liked. From next season all state events will be conducted as a Region which is by far a fairer competition and one that we are seeking everyone to embrace.

Our Board strives to have equality of sexes on board and to that end I cannot reiterate enough the need to have more women actively seeking nomination for the Region Board. It is essential for our sport to survive in our Region that we have both genders represented on our Board to achieve success and improvement in the programs we wish to operate.

Can I acknowledge the support of the current Board that was given to me as Chairman of the Region this year. Helene Stenning as Deputy Chair provide the Ballarat playing area with the fixtures for the season which is a tremendous effort with 24 clubs and up to nine sections to co-ordinate. Helene was also responsible in organising dates for state events to ensure that we met the time lines set by Bowls Victoria.

Helene chose to leave the board in February this year following years of organizing the Ballarat calendar, on your behalf we thank her for all her efforts.

To the various committees that have the support of volunteers we also say thanks, be it the Match Committee, Umpires, Junior Development, Greens or Representative sides their support and hard work is appreciated and we look forward to working with them again next season.

To the Board, they undertook their responsibilities diligently working as liaison officers with our committees, they were able to report back to the Board on a regular basis on the progress of the committees and their needs.

I would also like to thank Wayne Morgan our hard -working Secretary who works with all clubs across the Region and answers their queries to the best of his ability. Wayne has been able to keep the board apprised of all issues that require clarification or response.

The decision to not have promotion and relegation in Ballarat this year has seen some predictable results in regards to premiers across all divisions as well as showing that some clubs are finding it difficult to be competitive, to this end we would be happy to receive submissions from clubs should they believe that they should be promoted and likewise should they wish to drop back a division. I urge clubs to do so urgently as we begin working on the 2022-23 program.

The future of bowls in our Regions is one that seeks urgent action, Highlands already has embraced a 14 - week season which ensures that 14 full rounds are conducted without the need to start early in October when the weather historically is not good nor the greens ready for action. This is an issue that we will seek feedback from Ballarat clubs over the next 12 months. Whilst loss of income for clubs is cited when we talk 14 weeks instead of the usual 18-week season, we believe that a four-week round robin competition leading into the season across all divisions would assist clubs in meeting any shortcomings in perceived loss of income.

Other matters we intend to review is the inclement weather rule ,use of the word “Premier” across Saturday and Mid-week Pennant, 75% of ends constituting a match, removal of ”wash -out” conditions ,introduction of a State Events committee to run these events instead of having match committee run them, improved publicity across all divisions no just the top divisions, returning the Ballarat top division Grand Final to a Sunday afternoon, improvement of the Country Week events, improving Bowlslink entry and results across clubs.

Our other improvement will be to our Representative Sides teams, we want the best players in our Region being available to play for us. We know that there are players who don’t make themselves available to play for whatever reason and we want to understand why. It is indeed an honour to represent the Region and we want the best team that we can to play in our events every time we go out to play.

I look forward to leading you in the next 12 months and to progress the issues raised above.

Always remember that we will do what is best for bowls not what is easy.

Yours in Bowls

Ian Guymer

Chairman

Ballarat Highlands Bowls Region