

# PROJECT PROPOSAL

## Canopy over Bowling Green to enable Year-Round Bowling



**GISBORNE AND DISTRICT BOWLING CLUB**

## WHO WE ARE

Gisborne and District Bowling Club Inc. is centrally located in Gisborne at 1 Kilmore Road, a few minutes' walk from Gisborne's main shopping area and surrounded by attractive parkland next to Jacksons Creek

The Club was first formed in 1962 when the clubhouse consisted of a small bark rotunda. The rotunda was eventually replaced with a weatherboard clubhouse which, after surviving three major floods, was destroyed by fire in 1994. Members were then accommodated for the following two years in relocatable huts with portable toilets until a decision was made to purchase Macedon House across the road and this property served as the clubhouse for the next three years.

A new clubhouse was constructed on the original site and the move into the current building took place in 1999. A new synthetic green was constructed in 2015 funded by \$100,000 from the State Government and \$250,000 from Club members (which the Club was repaying \$50,000 per annum). The amount funded by members was fully repaid by 31 March 2020, in just five years.

A second new synthetic green was constructed in 2024, funded by \$245,000 from the State Government, \$55,000 from Macedon Ranges Shire Council, and \$68,000 from the Club. The Club also funded a \$100,000 worth of enhancements around the new green. Further, an expanded carpark was constructed 2023 at a cost of \$145,000.



In 2014, prior to the construction of the first synthetic green, the Club had a total of 80 members. Since that time the Club's membership has grown to 90 members (32 women and 58 men) and 120 "barefoot bowler" members. It is expected that membership numbers (especially women) will continue to grow with enhanced facilities and the fact that Gisborne is in a growth area.

The Club has a cross section of members. In fact, one of our members is the former State Junior Champion, while the Club also has a number of members aged in his 80's still playing pennant bowls.

The Club has achieved recent success. The Club was Premiers in the Central Highlands Division in 1st Division in 2016/17 and 2017/18, and in 2nd Division 2017/18. In addition, the Club was Premiers in Midweek 1st Division in 2020/21, with that team winning the Central Victorian Championship and finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> in the State Championship.

In 2021/22, the Club was premiers in the new Highlands Playing Area in 3<sup>rd</sup> Division and Midweek 1<sup>st</sup> Division. The latter went on to win the Ballarat Highlands Bowls Region Championship and the ultimate – the Victorian State Midweek Pennant Championship.

In 2023/24 the Club was premiers in Midweek 1<sup>st</sup> Division and went on to win the Ballarat Highlands Bowls Region Championship. The Club will play in the Victorian State Midweek Pennant Championship in May 2024.



The Club has enhanced its corporate governance which includes implementing: new constitution; board charter; board committee charters; directors' skill mix (which includes the aim to have an appropriate gender balance – the Board currently consists of 4 females and 5 males); and a board and board committee code of conduct. Further, a formal lease of the Crown Land on which the Club is situated has been entered into. The lease retains the leasehold improvements in the ownership of the Club.

A range of policies have also been developed, covering among other things, fair play, player and spectator codes of conduct, health and safety, and child safety. In addition, a strategic plan and a risk management plan have been developed by the Club.



## WHAT WE WANT TO DO

The Gisborne and District Bowling Club wants to construct a canopy over the synthetic bowling green to provide year-round bowling. Currently the majority of bowling only occurs for 7 months of the year.

Such a development will give virtually complete protection and would enable the Club and its members, and visiting players to keep playing bowls come wind, rain, hail or shine, whatever the time of the day or night, and whatever season of the year come winter or summer.

The canopies are a solid and dependable structure with a life expectancy of over 35 years.



This regionally significant development would provide significant physical and mental health, social, economic, and environmental benefits to the community of Gisborne and the region, and increase female participation in the game of bowls.



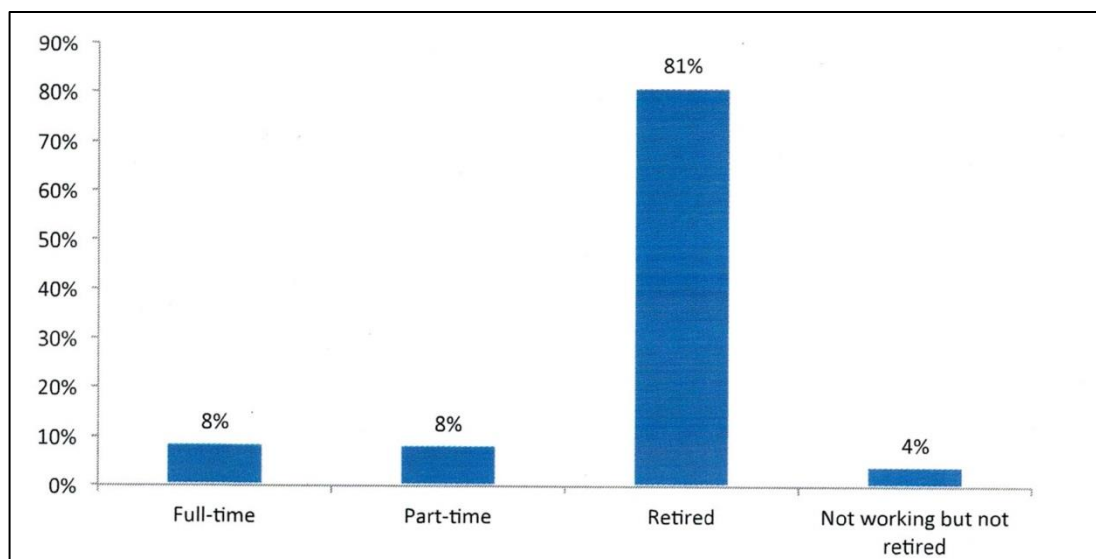
The construction of a canopy at Gisborne is in line with Bowls Victoria's strategic intent for covering of greens across the State (Refer Appendix 1). Bowls Victoria has advised that the Hume and Macedon Ranges area does not have sufficient covered greens to cater for demand, particularly when compared to similar growth corridors elsewhere in Greater Melbourne.

## WHY WE WANT TO DO IT

A canopy over the synthetic bowling green will:

- promote **physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits** by enabling:
  1. the fostering of increased participation of females in the game of bowls due to the enhanced bowling conditions;
  2. the fostering of connections between team and club members all year round, which clearly extends beyond the green, including a safe social space for women to participate in bowls and other associated activities, especially if they no longer have a partner;
  3. those who are retired (that make up a large proportion of those that play bowls) to remain active all year round. The physical and mental health benefits are derived from participating in the game of bowls into older age, and from the strategic thinking required to play the game;
  4. those that work, a greater opportunity to play either socially or in competitions all year round, including at night after work;
  5. those that are at school/university (there is a growing number of younger players) would be provided a greater opportunity to participate in the game of bowls via school sports/learner bowls programs and in competitions with guaranteed facilities in all weather conditions;
  6. those with a disability a more suitable facility to enable physical activity by playing bowls;
  7. those linked with businesses to undertake corporate bowls events (competitive or social) and utilise the Club's function room;
  8. the venue to be rain and wind proof, and sun-safe, and therefore enable bowls to be played in all weather conditions (rain and extreme heat). Further, the canopy reduces the heat effect radiating from the synthetic playing surface; and

**Employment profile of bowlers<sup>1</sup>**

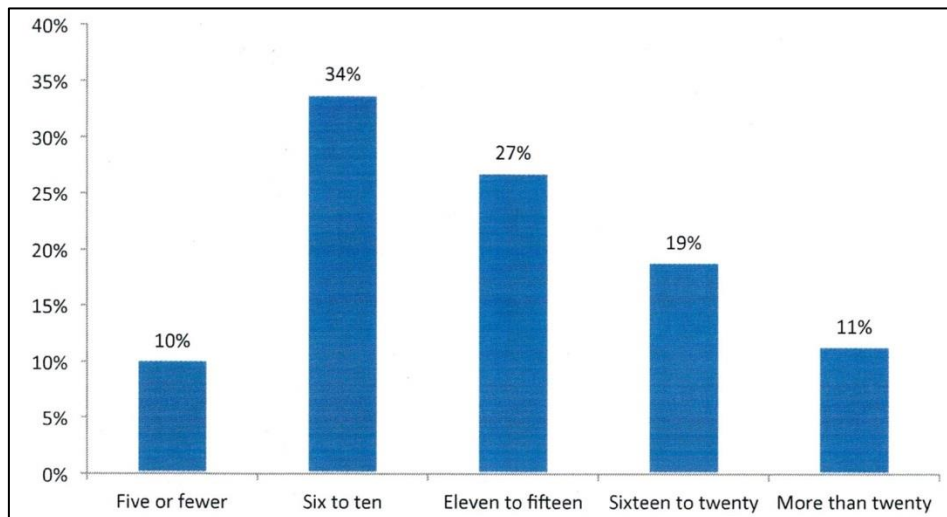


<sup>1</sup> La Trobe University Centre for Sport and Social Impact – *Building an evidence base to increase participation in Lawn Bowls, Final Report for Bowls Australia*, Pg 31

- provide a **social benefit** in a major growing community as it will enable bowls to also be played during the winter months and at night and enhance the opportunity for greater community participation, especially women, in the game of bowls. With a greater opportunity for participation, research has disclosed that bowling clubs facilitate long lasting friendships that are often a central feature of the social network for older people.

People with a disability and students by playing bowls not only provides an avenue for physical activity but, equally important, another avenue for social connection.

**Hours per week spent on club activities<sup>2</sup>**



With the installation of a canopy over the synthetic green, participation levels are anticipated to increase by approximately 30 per cent.

- provide an **economic benefit** as it would enable:
  - 1) more bowling events to be played and accordingly an increased number of visitors to the area and increased patronage of local businesses. We believe this will increase awareness of the region as a travel and tourism destination;
  - 2) the Clubs associated with the Highlands Playing Area to play competitions all year round and bring revenue to the district. The Gisborne and District Bowling Club is part of the Highlands Playing Area which also consists of clubs from Kyneton, Kyneton Golf, Woodend, Trentham, Diggers Rest, Macedon, Romsey, Lancefield, Kilmore, and Broadford;
  - 3) with increased bowling events during the day and at night (at the Club - social and competition, regional and State level) and guaranteed game scheduling in winter and summer with a waterproof and UV block-out canopy, the Club to generate increased social and full membership fees and general revenue;

<sup>2</sup> La Trobe University Centre for Sport and Social Impact – *Building an evidence base to increase participation in Lawn Bowls, Final Report for Bowls Australia*, Pg 35

- 4) high profile Bowls Tournament opportunities, such as a major regional and/or State female and/or male bowling events to be played during the winter months using the combined resources of Gisborne and Sunbury. The area would be a major attraction for such events due to not only the bowling facility but also the close proximity to the airport and Melbourne via rail and the freeway; and
  - 5) bowlers from the Loddon Mallee region to play in the winter months. There is no Bowling facility in the Loddon Mallee region that has a cover over their bowling green.
- provide **environmental benefit** by:
- 1) catching water run-off, via full guttering around the canopy, which can be stored in rainwater tanks for use at the bowling club);
  - 2) the canopy extends the life span of the synthetic playing surface;
  - 3) the fabric is UV stabilised and will not deteriorate under sun exposure, and has the required tensile strength to resist severe storm events;
  - 4) the fabric does not mould, resulting in lower maintenance costs;
  - 5) the LED lights having lower running costs compared with over metal halide lights. Further, the LED lights reflect off the fabric roof which results in shadow-free bowling at night; and
  - 6) the PVC translucent fabric does not need to run lights during sunny days, resulting in lower running costs.

## HOW WE WANT TO DO IT

The indicative cost to construct a canopy over the Club's synthetic green is \$975,000. (Light Weight Structures Architectural Solutions in March 2024 provided an indicative price range of \$945,000 to \$975,000 to construct this canopy. The Club has adopted the top end of the range in calculating the indicative cost as a contingency and cost escalation sum has not been included).

That price excludes costs associated with stormwater connection and Council fees associated with the development application documentation.

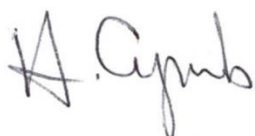
While the structure does not need lighting to play bowls during the day, the total cost of LED lighting, including all associated electrical work, to enable bowls to be played at night is \$54,000 which is included in the above indicative cost.

Similar facilities have been constructed in Victoria at Sebastopol, Deer Park, Dandenong, Sunbury, Morwell, Shepparton, Warrnambool, Colac, Karingal, Geelong, Traralgon, and Berwick. The majority of these Clubs have poker machines which have been used as the source of funding to construct their facilities.

The Gisborne and District Bowling Club is a socially responsible poker machine-free community Club. Accordingly, the **Club is seeking funds to the value of \$750,000 to construct a cover over the Gisborne and District Bowling Club synthetic bowling green** which would be a great benefit for the region and the wider Victorian community.

The Gisborne and District Bowling Club will contribute \$225,000, mainly via borrowings from a range of sources, including from members. The Club will seek local community grants of up to \$100,000 as a means of further reducing the exposure to debt financing by the Club. Based on recent debt repayment history it is expected that this amount will be repaid within five years.

Your support of this project proposal and the associated funding request would be greatly appreciated.



Helena Cyrulo  
**Secretary**



Russell A Walker OAM  
**Chairman**  
Phone: 0419 318 615





Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2021

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### **Re: Covering of Bowling Greens across the State**

Bowls Victoria see covered greens as vital to enabling all year-round play. Our strategic intent for the covering of bowling greens has a focus on both Greater Melbourne and key regional cities.

Our intent is to have covered greens in the 10 largest regional cities: Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Mildura, Shepparton, Wangaratta, Warrnambool and Wodonga.

For Greater Melbourne, the strategic intent is to have covered bowling greens at major bowls centres with additional importance placed on growth areas. This will:

1. facilitate year-round participation and use
2. enhance the image of the sport
3. provide a more inclusive environment, particularly for persons with a disability
4. enable broader community health outcomes
5. increase social connectedness
6. provide economic benefits to the area/region
7. encourage new participants (social and traditional) and increase participation numbers
8. keep older Australians (e.g. over 60 years) active all year round
9. increase female participation in the sport
10. facilitate bowls being played as part of school sport programs in all weather conditions
11. meet increased demand in areas encountering significant population growth.

We currently have covered greens in most areas, with more either under construction or in the planning phase. One area that does not have sufficient covered greens to cater for demand is the Hume and Macedon Ranges area, particularly when compared to similar growth corridors e.g. Casey and the South East corridor, which has five undercover facilities and more planned.

The Gisborne and District Bowling Club's project which seeks funding to construct a year-round bowling facility is timely with the significant population growth in the Gisborne area which would result in a major community asset providing significant benefits to the Macedon Ranges.

We congratulate Gisborne and District Bowls Club on their initiative in undertaking this project and wish them every success with the application.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony Sherwill".

**Tony Sherwill**  
Chief Executive Officer