

HEATHERDALE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 to 2023

1. OVERVIEW

The Heatherdale Recreation & Bowls Club is now at the crossroads as membership is falling , existing members are ageing and there is a degree of apathy from members towards getting involved and entering bowls events. With this in mind it is imperative that we establish a long term strategic plan to provide consistent direction for the Board Of Management. In the past these issues have been identified however no concrete plan have been established.

It is important that this strategic plan establish these concrete plans and that they be communicated throughout the club.

To Do Nothing Is Not An Option

The formation of a sub-committee to action the Strategic Plan is recommended.

This would enable better communication throughout the Club and cut down a lot of discussion at our management meetings and would spread the load a bit and involve more people who would report to the committee any problems or come and speak in person.

Current Strengths

We have a good greens and facilities with very good social events, this includes our smorgasboard.

Weaknesses

We are an ageing club and a number of members have sought clearances. We need to improve attracting and retaining members. We must improve communications and promote bowls events better.

The Strategic Plan Process

- engage all members to provide input
- board of Management , assisted by subcommittee to further develop and endorse the strategy
- communicate the strategy to all members.
- ensure that recommendations are actioned

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The basic principles guiding our actions and future directions are -

- Aim to be a vibrant, growing and successful club
- Friendly, inclusive and welcoming with a balance of bowls, social events and recreational activities.
- Aim to have all members of the club involved and volunteer towards the many aspects in running of the club
- To effectively manage the resources of the Club
- Promote lawn bowls as a healthy outdoor and desirable activity
- Build membership and increase the number of registered bowlers participating in pennant and social competitions and ensure new members are retained.
- Ensure the Club has a strong and effective communication network
- Develop and implement a realistic Strategic Plan , ensure actions are taken with continuous review and revision.

3. OUR POSITION TODAY (May 2018)

ISSUES FACING THE CLUB

- We are an ageing club and membership is dropping
- Participation in scheduled games is low and several events are being cancelled
- There is a large degree of apathy within club membership

CURRENT PROJECTS

- There are no major capital projects planned in the near future

MEMBERSHIP

We currently have about 180 members , with about 80 being social members. Social members are entitled to use the greens to practice, participate in twilight bowls and winter Wednesday social bowls.

Over the season we have had a number of numbers leave the club for a number of reasons. Although we have

signed up some new members they are predominantly social members only our full members numbers are falling,

The focus of our recruiting programs surrounds 'Try Bowls' and was extended to Sunday mornings and Thursday evenings in October. This approach has not proved to be very successful and we need to look at other avenues.

Our advertising strategy has been flyers, several billboard in strategic positions, local radio and press and shop and businesses . This types of advertising needs to be extended.

In addition to Try Bowls other clubs have adopted a model based on getting interested people to the club via U3A / Open days / Probus / Sporting Clubs etc. then into Twilight and then the whole club

A dedicated group, specifically devoted to obtaining members and trying new ideas needs to be established .

Need to have more coaches / mentors available to members and establish a buddy system for new members.

GREENS

Nick West. our recently appointed greens contractor has been steadily improving the quality of our greens. His Christmas maintenance strategy has been to close one green and leave the other open for member use. It is expected that this will continue however it will be monitored.

We need to continue to maintain changing the direction of play to enable rink rotation to spread wear.

COMMUNICATIONS

Our efforts in promoting events in a timely manner are inadequate.

We need to ensure flyers / emails are sent to other club well in advance.

At every opportunity we need to promote events to our members.

We need to get members to advertise our events

We need to establish and maintain a list of bowlers who have attended our events. Ideally this should be email addresses that will facilitate better communications.

Utilize and perhaps modernize our web site and face book facilities

GROUNDS & FACILITIES

We have a dedicated Monday morning crew who perform maintenance to our facilities and grounds. We need to continue to encourage members to join this group

FINANCES

At this point we are in a reasonable financial position even after replacing the flooring within the club rooms. This last year we were in a break even position in terms of income and expenditure, excluding the floor replacement . This included revenue from clubroom hiring, trading table income and a bequest from a deceased estate. Ever increasing costs with reduced membership and reduced green fees will make this an important issue to manage.

Action : monitor membership fees and greens fees. Increased reliance on clubroom hiring and barefoot bowls

LEASES

Although not ratified the club has a lease agreement with the Whitehorse Council. Under the agreement we need to involve the Council in maintenance and management of the Club. Areas of responsibility are yet to be clarified

SPONSORSHIP

- Income for this year is around \$10000 , plus vouchers
- Our aim is to retain our existing sponsors base and where the opportunity arises grow new sponsors.
- Our members are encouraged to support our sponsors and to tell them they are from Heatherdale.
- We have been running a sponsors night near the end of season. This enables us to build the relationship and ensure continuity.
- Members should be alert for potential new sponsors and have the sponsorship committee follow up leads.
- Establish a pack for perspective new sponsors

FUND RAISING PROJECTS

Over recent years we had a number of raffles during the year. This has been changed to have 1 major raffle. We should look at other opportunities for fund raising.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

We currently have a low community profile and need to progressively improve.

- ✓ 'Try Bowls' outside signage has been provided by O'Loughlin Real Estate, with Council permits obtained by the club for September & October. These signs are clearly visible, however have not attracted many people.
- ✓ We have made some usage of articles in local newspapers and limited radio coverage.
- ✓ We have a Facebook presence but its reach cannot be determined
- ✓ The Website reach is good and has attracted some potential members and groups wishing to hire our facilities.
- ✓ Flyers have been distributed with limited success
- ✓ We need to establish and maintain a strong relationships with Whitehorse Council, State and Federal members.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Organise and run social bowls events / tournaments and social events, developing a yearly schedule of events and dates.

We have been very successful at these bowls events with our Smorgasbord and Chicken & Bubbly days.

Our non bowling social events (cup eve , music night and crazy whist) are also well attended. These have been run on a no-profit basis, however with increased pressure on costs this will need constant review

CATERING

With reduced numbers for rosters and increased pressure on our internal caterers we need to review what we do to reduce the workload

Use placemats in lieu of tablecloths

Have members get cutlery when getting meals (ie similar to Warragul)

Streamline tea and coffee service

More effective communications to members

PENNANT & CHAMPIONSHIP

- Over recent year we have reduced the number of pennant sides that we have be able to field. It is vital that we attract new players and in the first instance stabalize the number of sides with the longer term aim to increase. This in turn will help increase income.
- Participation in Championship games has significantly declined and we need to develop plans to increase it._
- Coaching / Umpiring & Skill Development– plans for whole of Club.
- Selection

To continue to select all teams on ability

- Saturday – currently 4 teams x 16 = 80 p.w.
- Midweek – currently 3 teams x 12 – 72 p.w.
- Night Pennant – 1 team x 12 .
- Club Championships – grow entries each year

We need to retain these teams and look at the potential to grow them.

TWILIGHT SOCIAL BOWLS

We currently have 7 twilight bowls events on Thursdays. Attendance has been steadily declining to the point where it was cancelled several times this year.

- It should be viewed as a strategic event to re-invigorate as it is a stepping stone for new bowlers into the club, It is essential to keep twilight going.
- We need a dedicated person to push the evening
- Is it being run on the right night?
- Should the format be revamped?
- Do we advertise and push it to all members particularly the newer members and social membership
- Do we remove prize money and simply draw a number similar to jackpot to determine the winner?.
- Do we abandon the meal and simply have pizza's

Twilight Bowls is a strategic direction for many clubs to engage and attract new members.

WE NEED OUR MEMBERS TO –

- ✓ Introduce potential new members to “Try Bowls Days / Twilight Bowls
- ✓ Support our sponsors so they can be retained

- ✓ Support our programs / fund raising / working bees / rosters etc.
 - ✓ Be proud of and promote our club
 - *Remember –what you say about your club is what other people hear and get their impressions on our club*
 - *If you have an issue tell a committee member, just beefing about it will not fix it*
4. **WHAT WE WANT TO BE 2018 – 2022**

We need to get existing members involved in bowls events

Initially reverse the trend of members leaving the club and aggressively look at obtaining members.

We need to provide opportunities for social members to try bowls with the view of them becoming bowling members

Improve our promotions and communications , internally and externally

Major projects and tasks to be undertaken in this 5-year plan are -

1. Work towards changing the mindset of members from apathy
2. Set realistic membership targets for the years 2018/19 ??? - 2019/20 ??? - 2020/21 ??? & 2021/22 ???.
3. Consider adequacy of current programs to cater for our members

Leverage off what has been successful for other clubs

Before their strategic plan , Donvale had under 70 members. With enthusiasm they have turned that around into being a successful and vibrant club

FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS.

