

# STRATEGIC FACILITY REVIEW OF BOWLS IN THE ACT

Released June 2021





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1.0

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

RSM recognise and respect that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the first people and traditional owners of this country. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal people.

We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region. We pay our respects to Elders both past, present, and future and extend that response to all Indigenous people of this land. We acknowledge the rich and diverse cultures and the long history of Indigenous Australia. We understand the important role of maintaining these rich cultures and the ongoing relationship with the land.

2.0

## ABOUT THIS PROJECT



## 2.0 ABOUT THIS PROJECT

This document is the final report of RSM's strategic facility review of lawn bowls in the ACT. The review combines financial analysis, membership analysis, and economic/market insights of ACT bowls clubs to provide in-depth recommendations for future sustainability and potential future directions for ACT bowls clubs.

## 2.1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RSM would like to thank and acknowledge the Bowls ACT community for their enthusiasm, interest, and support for this project. We would also like to acknowledge and recognise the volunteer representatives of associations and committees who provided significant insight, effort, and time communicating with their members, meeting with the RSM team, and providing additional feedback and insights to our questions.

Thank you to Bowls Australia for their insights, research, and contributions to this report. Images from the Local Legends Wanted Campaign are published with the permission of Bowls Australia.

Thank you to Pickering Place for providing insights and information that contributed to this report. Images of Pickering Place are published with the permission of Pickering Place Services Group Pty Ltd.

Thank you to Club Sapphire Merimbula for permission to publish images of Club Sapphire.





## 2.2 BACKGROUND

ACT Sport and Recreation is committed to improving the ACT Community's physical activity levels by increasing resident participation rates among various sports activities and sports-related social events. Roles and responsibilities of Sport and Recreation include the planning and provision of sports facilities, athlete supporting programs, and funding programs for local clubs and local communities. Sport and Recreation strives to continuously improve Canberrans' health and wellbeing, and to do so, they aim to review the current provision of sports facilities and plan future development.

The provision of lawn bowls facilities in the ACT has declined over the last decade, mainly due to the closure of many licensed bowls clubs in the ACT. Nevertheless, the traditional target market for bowls, which consists of those aged 65 years and over, is expected to grow, not just maintaining, but actually expanding opportunity for the existing bowls clubs. The population of those aged 65 years and over in the ACT is expected to grow by 15% from 2016 to 2020. In 2020, 13% of the ACT population will be aged 65 or over (Treasury, n.d.).

Nationally, 4% of older males and 2% of older females participate in lawn bowls. Lawn bowls is among the top ten activities for older males and among the top ten organised activities for older females. Lawn bowls experiences significant increase in participation rates, for both males and females in the 75+ range of older Australians (AusPlay, Focus: Older Australians Participation).



In addition, the target market for bowls is expanding with the newfound interest from younger Australians in Barefoot Bowls, social bowls and other similar bowls activities.

Currently, the ACT has a number of clubs that provide lawn bowls services in some form. The ACT bowls clubs are as follows:

- Belconnen Bowling Club
- Canberra City Bowling Club
- Yowani Country Club
- The Vikings Group affiliates the Tuggeranong Vikings Mens Bowls Club and the Tuggeranong Valley Women's Bowls Club
- Canberra Labor Club affiliates the Weston Creek Bowling Club and Weston Creek Bowling Club (Womens)
- The Canberra North Bowling and ACT Rugby Union Club, also known as "The RUC".

Throughout the ACT there are currently 20 bowling greens, 3 of which are synthetic. The remaining 17 bowls greens are all natural-grass greens.

ACT bowls clubs peak representative body is Bowls ACT – a state-wide overseeing body. Bowls ACT, as the overseeing body, is charged with management and organisation of lawn bowls related activities (in conjunction with member clubs) throughout the ACT – including pennants and other events.

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## 2.3 PROJECT SCOPE

The key objective of the project is to provide operational insights of ACT clubs with lawn bowls facilities, to deliver a report with financial sustainability analysis, club membership trend analysis, Bowls ACT membership model analysis, and current and future demand analysis for bowls greens. We note that at a summary level, the scope includes:

- Detailed annual cost and annual revenue of providing bowls greens (and associated amenities) for each lawn bowls facility in the ACT, compare benchmark cost recovery ratio among clubs and propose membership fees recommendation to support future maintenance of bowls greens.
- Conduct membership data analysis for ACT bowls clubs, identify membership trend, determine member travel time, and produce a membership fee comparison table for bowls club across the country.
- Forecast short and long-term future of existing bowls facilities in the ACT, analyse economic feasibility of each facility.
- Develop long-term strategy for bowls in the ACT, quantify the current and estimate future demands of lawn bowls greens in line with estimated population growth and changing demographics out to 2040.
- Detailed analysis of Bowls ACT, including its revenue model and effectiveness as a peak body.
- The scope excludes specific review of NSW member clubs within the broader region (Queanbeyan, Yass, Bungendore, Goulburn). However, RSM have also included some mention and discussion of these clubs as they relate to the scope of the report above. The member survey for example, included all Bowls ACT member clubs so that feedback and input could be included in this report.

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## 2.4 COMMUNITY AND CLUB INVOLVEMENT

This project has been developed with direct consultation and feedback from the Canberra bowls community. We would like to thank the ACT Bowls community for their overwhelming interest, engagement, and support of this project.

The project was governed by the Project Steering Group of which Bowls ACT's currently elected president and Executive Officer were members.

There were a number of pathways provided for the community to provide insights and feedback to the project team. We would like to acknowledge and thank Bowls ACT and the respective Canberra Club committees for their assistance with circulating communications and supporting our efforts to engage.

- An online survey link was distributed via Bowls ACT email distribution, individual club email distribution, online banners in Bowls ACT website and flyers posted on club premises.
- One on one interviews were conducted with Club committees and members.
- Written submissions were invited to be emailed or posted directly to RSM.
- All communication also included a separate online survey link to a form as a guided written submission.
- Clubs assisted RSM by providing detailed financial information where applicable.

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## 2.5 ABOUT RSM

RSM is a trusted Australian brand that has been in business in Australia for more than 90 years. We are Australia's largest professional services firm. We have worked with over fifteen government departments along with a large range of corporate and private businesses.

We have been a significant provider of professional services across the country with 29 offices and an unmatched local coverage in regional and rural areas, providing Business Advisory services. We have a strong track record in providing services to the not-for-profit, community, sport and recreation sectors.

Our experience gives the RSM team unique and relevant insights into how we can engage with the not-for-profit community. These insights are born in part from the experience of our team, but also through RSM's retained focus on working with small and medium businesses while also specialising in the large corporate and governmental sectors. This means that we are in touch with the cost, social, and other economic pressures and realities across Australia and help bring this interpretation to bear as part of the requested services.





## 2.6 FINANCIAL AND MEMBERSHIP DATA SOURCES

This report analyses and makes reference to a range of financial information.

- Bowls Club information was provided upon request by individual bowls clubs. This included the Club Association's annual financial statements, with additional information such as internal cost breakdowns and further analysis. Information such as fees and other charges were based on published information in April 2020.
- Bowls ACT provided Bowls ACT financial statements. Additional information such as fees and charges levied on clubs, members and players were also provided to RSM.
- Bowls ACT provided de-identified membership database information on behalf of all ACT Clubs for analysis purposes.
- The figures supplied for this analysis have been based on Club submissions as provided.
- While financial statements are audited, much of the cost breakdown information has not been independently verified or benchmarked, and represents the Club's calculation of costs according to agreed criteria.

## 2.7 SCOPE EXCLUSIONS

The findings and analysis presented in this report have been based on the information available to the public and provided by; ACT Government Sport and Recreation, Bowls ACT, the participating ACT Clubs and their members. As a result, RSM accepts no liability for any errors or omissions which have resulted from the scope of this assignment or the information provided to us. Whilst all care has been taken to obtain all relevant information which may impact upon the substance of this report, RSM reserves the right to amend this report, including the basis of any assumptions used and the resulting findings, should any information arise in the future which was not made available at the date of this report or is at variance with earlier provided information.

The report has been prepared for use by ACT Government Sport and Recreation and accordingly, RSM accepts no responsibility or liability to any other person in respect to the information contained herein (including any errors or omissions contained herein, however, caused).

Our review did not constitute an examination or audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards or assurance standards. Accordingly, we provide no opinion or other form of assurance with regard to our work or the information upon which our work was based. We did not audit or otherwise verify the information supplied to us in connection with this engagement, except to the extent specified in this report.

Liability Limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.

3.0

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

## 3.0 ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is divided into two main parts.

### Part 1: The Future of Bowls in the ACT: Findings and Recommendations

Our findings and recommendations are grouped from the perspective of the major stakeholder groups and the specific roles and responsibilities they have in relation to Lawn Bowls in the ACT.



Clubs



Members



Sport and Bowls ACT



Government

### Part 2: The Future of Bowls in the ACT: Observations and Analysis

#### Bowls Facilities– Operational and Maintenance Costs

- Cost to provide, operate and maintain bowling greens and associated amenities for each facility. Consider:
  - Government schemes such as Community Contribution Scheme.
  - Different surface types – natural grass and synthetic surfaces.
  - Scale of multiple greens per facility.

#### Bowls Facilities Financial Sustainability

- Understand the different revenue sources earned from various club activities eg. membership, greens fees, food and beverage, EGMs, promotions etc.
- Benchmark cost recovery ratio for each club.
- Consider alternate revenue streams or other strategies that could improve cost recovery ratio.

#### Membership Demographic Trends, Attitudes and Insights

- Breakdown by membership category, age, sex, annual membership fees paid and postcode.
- Membership trends (growth/decline in particular demographics).
- Map each club membership and consider the travel time based on proximity of home to club.
- Participation rates and usage.
- Breakdown into: gender, age, membership type, other demographic information if available.
- Membership Fees; comparison of fees paid in ACT and across jurisdictions.

#### Future Forecast

- How many facilities will be required out to 2040 in the future to service demand? Considering population growth, and local bowls membership trends.
- Produce a map that estimates the level of bowls facility provision across the Territory in 2018, and 2030 that consider population growth for Canberra and trends.

#### Bowls ACT

- Analysis of membership model and its effectiveness in generating sufficient revenue to support its activities as the peak body and the activities of each member bowls club.

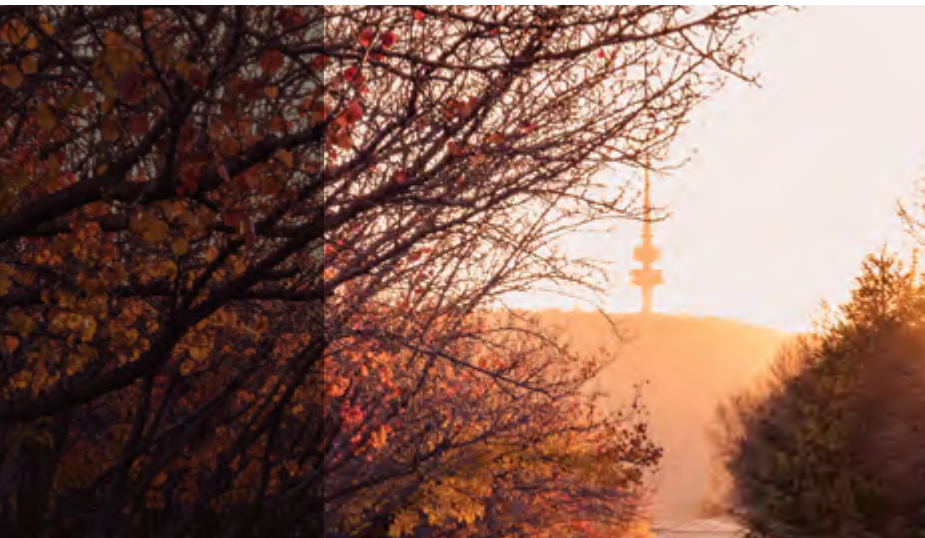
## 3.1 DEFINITIONS

This report discusses the complex arrangements between clubs in the ACT, and we make reference to several different club types.

The following table outlines the relationships and governance arrangements between Host Clubs or those entities that own and manage the facilities, and affiliated bowling clubs and

committees who access the facilities and provide bowls related member services. For the purpose of this report, in some cases we have grouped Tuggeranong Vikings Mens Bowls Club and Tuggeranong Valley Women's Bowls Club together. Similarly, we have grouped Weston Creek Bowling Club and Weston Creek Bowling Club (Womens) together.

	Bowling Facilities Owners	Bowling Clubs	Committees	Relationship / Context
Licensed Community Clubs	 Yowani Country Club	–	Yowani Bowling Club Committee	Standalone club with a Bowling committee who organises events and supports players. Members are Bowls Members of Yowani Country Club.
	 The Vikings Group	Tuggeranong Vikings Mens Bowls Club Tuggeranong Valley Women's Bowls Club	–	The mens and women's bowls clubs are affiliated clubs with The Vikings Group. Members are members of Vikings and members of the respective mens and women's clubs.
	 The Canberra Labor Club	 Weston Creek Bowling Club and Weston Creek Bowling Club (Womens)	–	The mens and women's bowls clubs are affiliated clubs with The Labor Club. Members are members of The Labor Club and members of the respective mens and women's clubs.
	 The Canberra North Bowling and ACT Rugby Union Club "The RUC"	–	 Bowling Management Committee	Merged club with a bowling management committee. Members are Bowls Members.
Licensed Bowls Clubs	 Belconnen Bowling Club	–	–	Standalone entity Members of the Belconnen Bowling Club
	 Canberra Bowling Club	–	–	Standalone entity Members of the Canberra Bowling Club



### Members and Players

There are a number of references made to different members and players in this report. The definitions are:

Player Type	Definition
<b>Bowls Member</b>	<p>A person who pays a membership fee to a Bowls Club for the purposes of playing bowls.</p> <p>In this report, we make reference to “elite” players, “competition” players and “social” players.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– An elite player plays representative level competitions.</li><li>– A competition player mostly plays pennant or club championships.(Although frequently plays socially as well)</li><li>– A social player usually plays socially or casually at the organised social games at the club. This is distinct from a “social member” who is a non-player.</li></ul>
<b>Social Member</b>	<p>A person who pays a membership fee to a bowls club to be a “social member” of the club. This is a non bowls playing club member.</p>
<b>Barefoot Player or “Barefooter”</b>	<p>A person who plays casually, usually at a special event where they pay a fee to play for that one event. They may also be required to be a “social member” of the club in order to play.</p>



4.0

## INDUSTRY RESPONSE TO THE REPORT (ADDENDUM)

## 4.0 INDUSTRY RESPONSE TO THE REPORT (ADDENDUM)

We shared the key points from the executive summary and the report full recommendations with all six facility owners prior to the release of the report.

We are pleased to note that all facility owners expressed general agreement and understanding of the themes, report findings and recommendations, while also acknowledging some concerns and challenges with implementation as pertained to their Club's situation.

Bowls ACT shared the full report with Bowls Australia, who provided the following endorsement:

"The published report is a very thorough report and Bowls Australia (BA) congratulates RSM on their detailed research and analysis. The report provides some of the best analysis on bowling Green's maintenance costs and some very good recommendations for building membership across the region. While there is limited focus on corporate/ barefoot bowls the report does provide some valuable insights into Bowls membership and facility development opportunities in the ACT region.

BA looks forward to working closely with Bowls ACT on the implementation of the recommendations and thanks the ACT Government and RSM for providing these insights for Bowls in the ACT region.

*Neil Dalrymple*  
Chief Executive Officer, Bowls Australia

The following facility owners were pleased to provide a formal response in December 2020 to our request for endorsement of the key recommendations outlined in the report.

"The board of the Belconnen Bowling Club whole heartedly endorses the findings and recommendations outlined in the report. We would be very keen to see all of the recommendations progressed, especially the promotion of bowls by BACT. We would also be very interested to assist in the implementation of an indoor / outdoor facility, should this be seen as the way ahead for bowls in the ACT."

*Leon Cornish*  
President, Belconnen Bowling Club

"On behalf of the Canberra Bowling Club I would like to express our endorsement of the RSM Strategic Facility Review of Bowls ACT Report, the report contains an accurate reference to the downward trend of both financial and participation rates of the sport of bowls in the ACT, we also agree with the recommendation that urgent action is needed to prevent the collapse of the sport."

*Geoff McKay*  
President, Canberra Bowling Club

"I have met with representatives of our Bowls management Committee and Association Board and there is general agreement with findings and executive summary, including regulatory pressures on Licensed Clubs, declining bowls membership, and the need for expansion or consolidation of the sport of lawn bowling. The RUC has already shifted focus to a deliberate strategy of targeting barefoot bowlers to help fund the maintenance costs of our three greens. It should also be noted that in the current environment, our club does not survive without poker machine revenue. Alternate sources of revenue are being investigated by the board, and this strategic approach from government and RSM will assist in that endeavour.

We welcome the approach of the report and recommendations and [are] keen to be involved and support growth objectives such as Jack Attack tournaments and or a consolidation of the industry if necessary. We would very much like to be involved in the overall reform strategy so that RUC can be included in decision making and prepare our own strategic direction to be ready for the future."

*Jeremy Wilcox*  
Secretary Manager, Canberra North Bowling and ACT Rugby Union Club

5.0

## THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE BOWLS SECTOR (ADDENDUM)

## 5.0 THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE BOWLS SECTOR (ADDENDUM)

As this report was being developed and finalised, widespread government measures were implemented to protect the Australian community from the spread of Coronavirus or the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the Public Health Act 1997, section 120 (Emergency actions and directions), ACT Health issued public directives to manage the health emergency. While enacted for public good to prevent the spread of COVID-19, these public directives have had significant impacts and consequences on the broader economy, individual businesses and licensed clubs.

The directives included requirements for “social distancing” and quarantine that resulted in the temporary closure of Bowling Clubs. The period of closure extended for months, and while restrictions have recently eased, the future remains uncertain. We anticipate that the economic impacts of this crisis will substantially increase the financial pressures on Clubs outlined in this report, and may shorten the timeframes available for response.

We would also highlight the economic stimulus packages outlined below, and we expect that Clubs will take advantage of these stimulus measures. Further stimulus may be required to address specific issues for licensed clubs, depending upon the length of the crisis and the impacts of withdrawing national stimulus measures such as the “jobkeeper payment”:

### Commonwealth Stimulus

- Enhanced instant asset write off
- Cash boost payments (refundable ATO credits)
- Apprentices wage subsidy (for greenkeepers apprentices where eligible)
- Consider SME Guarantee Scheme (unsecured loan)
- ATO Administrative concessions
- ASIC enabled 2 month extension on AGMs, and supports use of technology
- Restructuring measures to provide relief for financially distressed businesses
- Jobkeeper wage subsidy (\$1,500 fortnightly coronavirus payment for each employee)

### ACT Economic Stimulus

- Waive food and liquor licensing fees
- Provide a \$750 rebate to businesses via next electricity bill
- Provide a \$2,622 credit to commercial rates notices
- No increases to vehicle or public transport or parking fees
- Bring forward funding for clubs to retain staff
- Provide a \$7m package for NGO to meet increased demand for social services
- Defer payroll tax payments

### ACT Licensed Club Support

- \$3.3m is being distributed to licensed clubs through the Diversification and Sustainability Support Fund to support club staff
- Club contributions to the Diversification and Sustainability Support Fund have been suspended for 12 months
- Gaming machine tax for March 2020 or 1st quarter of 2020 (subject to eligibility) is being refunded/waived
- To support employment of staff, clubs are being offered \$15,000 per gaming machine authorisation surrendered
- Rebate of fixed water and sewerage charges for next two quarters
- Six month waiver of payroll tax if on prohibited activities list

6.0

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Lawn Bowls is a sport that has a long legacy in Canberra, with greens built as early as 1924 and many more facilities and clubs opening as the city grew and expanded. However, almost a century later, the sport is facing an uncertain future. There are substantial market pressures affecting all clubs namely rising costs, declining memberships and revenues, which impact the viability of individual clubs. The bowls "market" is undergoing a contraction and facilities and clubs are consolidating, a trend which is forecast to rapidly increase over the coming decade. Without intervention, we are likely to see more facilities and clubs close.

Yet, bowls is a sport that once "discovered", is loved by its players. The sport provides a competitive team experience for people who may no longer be fit or agile enough to play football or cricket, and is a valuable source of social connection for older people. Approximately three quarters of bowls players are male and bowls clubs are highly important to the social lives of these male players – with clubs often acting as "men's sheds" for retirees. While female players value the social experiences bowls provides, they are also highly motivated by the sporting and competitive nature of the game. The importance of what bowls provides to the Canberra community cannot be overstated, and there would be a significant detrimental impact on activity rates in older Canberrans if bowls was not taken up by, or made available to the next generation. To not have lawn bowls would severely diminish recreational and sporting opportunities in Canberra.

This report was commissioned by ACT Sport and Recreation to review the future of Lawn Bowls in the ACT, with the objectives of understanding the financial sustainability of Bowls Clubs, current and future demand for bowls, and reviewing the existing and future infrastructure and facility requirements. The scope of this report is from the perspective of ACT Sport and Recreation's jurisdiction, and focuses on the ACT bowls community and Clubs. However we acknowledge the geographic importance of NSW clubs within the broader region (Queanbeyan, Yass, Bungendore, Goulburn) and have included those club's input and perspective where possible.

This project consulted extensively with the ACT bowls community, and has examined in detail the financial pressures and dependencies on facilities management and club success. Our assessment is that there is a high risk of further facility closure in the coming years. It is important to understand that facilities will not be closed because players and members want to stop playing lawn bowls. They will be closed because of pragmatic business decisions made by facility owners who are unable to justify continued financial losses resulting partly from insufficient revenues coming from those who utilise the lawn bowls facilities.

This report outlines the major issues from the perspective of each stakeholder – Clubs, Members and Players, and the governing/representative body of the sport, Bowls ACT. There is no "magic bullet" solution to solving the issues that bowls faces. No one stakeholder will be able to achieve it on their own – it will require an industry wide collaborative effort. With the right strategies and changes many clubs will be able to navigate through these challenges. It will require strong leadership and a dedicated and enthusiastic effort from members and players to change the face of their clubs and the sport to adapt to and welcome the next generation.

The average age of a bowls member in the ACT is 69, with 58% of members having played for more than 11 years. Clubs have a small window of less than five years before memberships drastically decline as long term members exit the sport due to advancing age and declining physical capability. How bowls clubs are able to to navigate, survive, and thrive for the future will depend largely upon the club's and the sport's ability to do two things. First, evolve to attract younger players and members, and second, resolve fundamental issues in the underlying business model to enable sustainable revenue sources which can fund the maintenance of bowls facilities and activities.

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The following outlines some of the core challenges faced by the bowls community.

The club industry is facing a combination of financial pressures impacting their business models, driven by a changing market environment and changing consumer participation in services and activities. This impacts both short and long term viability and sustainability. Smaller clubs have less scale and capability to halt the decline.

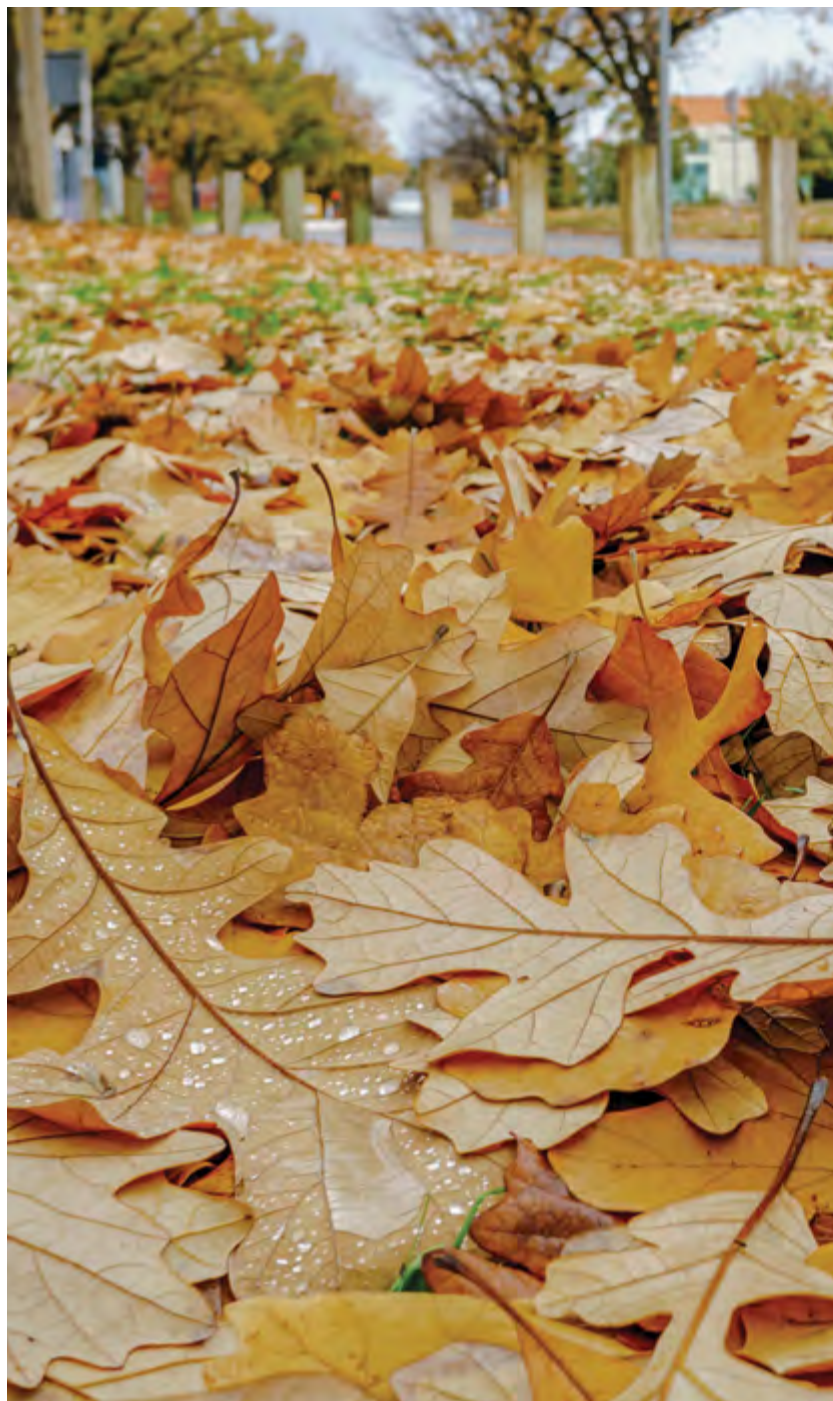
- Bowls Clubs are facing increasing competition and increased pressure on revenues and overhead costs. Many ACT clubs are affected by a long term decline in EGM revenue, which previously underwrote facilities maintenance costs.
- Licensed bowls clubs, with fewer than 20 EGMs, are no longer able to rely on EGM for revenue as a sustainable, or reliable income to underwrite facilities. These smaller scale clubs are impacted by a combination of factors compounded by the small size and scale of their operations. There is a significant shift in consumer preferences for different styles of game play or completely away from electronic gaming due to increased awareness of gambling harm. Also contributing to declines in EGM revenue is a decline in club membership numbers and a lack of consistent reinvestment to modernise the EGM fleets. Moreover, the ACT Government has reduced the number of machines authorised in the ACT, and while Clubs with smaller numbers of machine authorisations were exempt from requirements to surrender machines, some have still availed themselves of the opportunity to raise capital through accessing Government incentives for the surrender of gaming machine authorisations, further reducing the number of EGMs.
- For larger Community Licensed Clubs, such as The Vikings Group or The Labor Club, the ACT Community Contributions scheme is largely driving the spend on facility maintenance for facilities owned by these larger "host" clubs. The Community Contributions Scheme is used to underwrite the costs of facilities maintenance for their respective bowls facilities. The amount that can be used to invest in maintenance is calculated on a proportion of EGM revenue, which has declined to a point that is significantly below the costs of facilities maintenance at a site level. The recent clarification and amendments to the rules governing the ACT Community Contributions Scheme is of concern to all clubs and has provided important clarification to the implementation of the scheme. However, the changes hide a more significant underlying issue – that the scheme has acted largely as a proxy for subsidising bowls facility maintenance. As the amounts claimable under Community Contributions decline, the larger community clubs are finding it challenging to continue to justify to their broader membership costs to maintain an asset that is not used by the majority of the broader membership. Using the scheme as the core justification for funding facility maintenance has left bowls facilities being considered generally unprofitable and unable to generate revenue in their own right by either The Vikings Group or The Labor Club. We recommend that the financial arrangements between the host club and the affiliated bowls club/s need to be re-negotiated with the purpose of developing the bowls facility into a revenue generating and profitable asset for both clubs.
- Where clubs have merged with larger entities, the difference in purpose between a bowls club and the broader community club (facility owner) will continue to create challenges, and place facilities at risk of closure. The governance and structural working arrangements between host club or facility owner (eg. Vikings or Labor Club) and the affiliated bowls clubs (eg. Tuggeranong or Weston Creek Bowls Club) create barriers to the organising and management of the sport as a business opportunity, developing bowls as a sport, and building membership and participation in the sport. The facility owner incurs the costs for facility maintenance while the affiliated bowls clubs earn the revenue from players.
- Revenue streams that have previously underwritten facilities maintenance are in decline, while maintenance costs have continued to increase with inflation. In addition to EGM revenues, the key sources of revenue for bowls clubs is membership and greens fees. The decline in lawn bowls memberships have resulted in less membership and greens revenue to fund maintenance costs. Remaining members are facing increasing pressure to increase fees and payments. This places facility maintenance front and centre as a significant cost burden for clubs.
- Clubs reported that that they are constrained by limited assets and capital, combined with a strict regulatory environment to develop diversified commercial revenue opportunities on their existing sites. Concessional leases, and the lease variation charges levied when trying to develop commercial opportunities, do not provide the flexibility for Clubs to independently develop new commercial opportunities that would enable them to completely shed their reliance on traditional club revenues such as gaming and alcohol. At present, Clubs are unable to source sufficient capital to independently redevelop their sites and must engage land developers or larger clubs who are not vested in bowls facilities. In recent times, every small Bowls Club's engagement with a land developer, and most engagements with larger licensed community clubs, has resulted in the closure of the bowls facilities and the club. Clubs should remain responsible to the community for the advantages that a concessional lease provides, but future planning strategies should consider how to enable diversification away from gaming and alcohol businesses and develop innovative, alternative, community-based approaches to commercial revenue raising. An example would be the Enoggera development in Brisbane, which is a mix of commercial and community recreational activities within the one site.



Bowls Clubs are facing a significant decline in membership and players. This is the most significant and immediate problem that Bowls Clubs face and must be addressed if the sport is to survive and thrive. Declining memberships are driving declining revenues and diminishing clubs' capability to adapt to the changes required to attract new members.

As of 2019, 0.36% of ACT people play bowls. This is compared with a national rate of 3.16%. Facilities are under-utilised, with the benchmark member to green ratio of 90/1 sitting at 63/1. Increasing membership rates will improve individual clubs' ability to fund facility maintenance out of existing fees and reduce the pressure to increase fees for members.

Without a strategy to grow participant numbers the sport will continue to decline and is likely to halve again in the next 5-10 yrs as current members age out of the sport. The average and median age of players across ACT Clubs is between 68 and 72 years of age.



"Bowls needs a change of image, despite all I have said about its benefits for older players. Rather than be seen as just a staging post to a retirement home, bowls should be presented as a vibrant and enjoyable sport for people of all ages. It can be family friendly. It does not need to be associated with alcohol consumption and gambling. It can be recommended as a recreation that encourages good physical and mental health."

*Bowls Player, Community Submission*

The key driver of these two issues is a generational shift in the population (between "Baby Boomers" / "Generation X" / "Generation Y") which is both a club engagement problem and a sport engagement problem. This represents both significant barriers and very real opportunities for change.

- Broader trends in sporting engagement indicate that shorter games, less time commitments, and more flexible, casual play is preferred. While this has to be balanced with the role that elite level, national and international pennant, and championship competition plays in the sport, the legacy of structured club competitions and long form traditional games needs to make room for current trends by adding shorter competition formats such as "Jack Attack" to the mix of activities offered by clubs.

- Family dynamics are changing, which leads to fewer people with the available time to play the long form game. Historically, members started playing bowls in their 40s and 50s. The potential players who are in their 40s today are at a different lifestage. The previous generation had children in their early 20's and by the time they started playing, their kids had grown up and left home. The average age of women having children in Australia is 32, which means potential new players in their 40s and 50s have teenage children and consequently family responsibilities and less available time to bowl.
- Both parents are more likely to work, limiting the time available to play lengthy games.
- Older people are retiring later or continuing to work part-time or look after grandchildren.
- "Barefoot Bowls" is a group based, casual activity played intermittently, not regularly, and relies on a corporate market to book groups for events. Our broad and very rough estimate is that the market potential is upwards of 15,000 participants p.a. in the ACT, with The RUC having a market share in excess of 70%, largely due to its central location. There are significant numbers of individuals engaging in barefoot bowls, but the conversion of barefoot bowls to ongoing and full playing members is negligible. There is a clear distinction between a "barefoot" casual game and a shorter form tournament or competition such as Jack Attack.
- All clubs are managing the organising of the sport with volunteers using predominantly paper based systems – technology that supports the online booking and scheduling of games is essential.
- Consumer marketing campaigns, such as the "Local Legends Wanted" campaign launched by Bowls

Australia, require higher intensity coverage in Canberra, and reposition the brand of bowls to be younger and more engaging. Clubs need to support this campaign with cultural change inside the club, with members genuinely welcoming new members into the club and actively marketing to recruit new members.

- Clubs need to build cultural and gender diversity into their memberships. Some clubs are still divided along gender lines which is seen by younger demographics as an anachronism. With a couple of exceptions, most Canberra clubs are heavily skewed towards older, traditional males.
- Using the language of marketing – communicating using online bookings and promoting events using social media platforms.
- Providing coaching and entry experiences that welcome, educate, and engage members.
- The average bowls player pays \$1,555.63 per annum or \$29.69 per week to play, which increases to \$2,040.50 per annum including travel costs. This is based on the average frequency of play of 2.5 times per week over 48 weeks per year. Overall, members pay amounts to play bowls that are significantly higher than is generally acknowledged or considered by clubs, who often focus on the low average membership fee of \$130.63 and the individual greens and competitions fees that range from \$8 to \$15 per game, rather than the sum of the whole. The amounts paid by players are consistent with (lower cost) golf clubs and higher than tennis fees.
- When comparing to golf, we need to consider the broad range in costs across clubs of memberships and fees. The base membership fees are a capitation fee that across the 11 ACT golf clubs range from \$825 to \$5,200 per annum, with an average of \$1,700 per club. When we add to this the greens fees (average \$5 per game per club)

and the competition fees (\$12.50 average per club) and multiply this by the average frequency of play (55 x per annum) we reach an average annualised spend of \$2,315.33 per golf player. We also need to consider the volume, with fee paying memberships for golf of 8,169 members vs bowls with 1,060 members. We also note that golf has similar and significant pressures with funding facility maintenance due to increasing labour, water and rates costs that are substantially higher than bowls.

- When comparing to tennis, there is also a broad range of fees, and based on an average player who plays 42 times per year, a tennis player is paying \$963.28 for their annual membership fee, court hire and travel.
- The cost of a new set of bowls is around \$600, which is a significant entry cost for a sport. Second hand bowls can cost around \$140 per set. Clubs usually offer second hand sets to new players to use at the club upon request.
- Club members are highly price sensitive, and are often reluctant to vote for regular increases for CPI and wages increases. It is important in a sport with such high cost pressures, that increases are built into members payments.
- Competition Entry is often returned completely to players as cash prizes, used for trophies, prizes, or other variable expenses incurred on competition day. This represents a lost opportunity for clubs to retain significant revenue. Rather than clubs providing these funds entirely as variable expenses, this is an opportunity to retain profit and deploy into the business moving more to a fixed fee model. This would ensure that greens maintenance costs are met and clubs are sustainable. Prizes can be negotiated as in kind from sponsorships or food and beverage vouchers from the host club.



**Bowls ACT provides leadership in driving change in the Canberra bowls community, however has insufficient resources and will require additional revenue support in order to deliver the recommendations outlined and provide the leadership required to drive the changes outlined in this report.**

All club committees expressed concern about the lack of resources in the ACT to support the game. The current paid executive officer and elected volunteer president were acknowledged and recognised by clubs and members for the enormous amount of additional time they invested in supporting Bowls competitions. Despite this recognition and acknowledgement, Bowls ACT faces ongoing and sustained reluctance and price sensitivity from members and clubs when setting appropriate membership or capitation fees to resource the sport at all levels appropriately.

- Driving memberships as a core priority, as more members will increase the overall revenue to Bowls ACT.
- Introducing shorter game formats by establishing, marketing, and running Jack Attack competitions across clubs. Investing the same effort towards new playing formats as towards Pennant and Championships.
- Providing material support such as facilitating training across clubs, providing a booking system for all clubs to adopt.

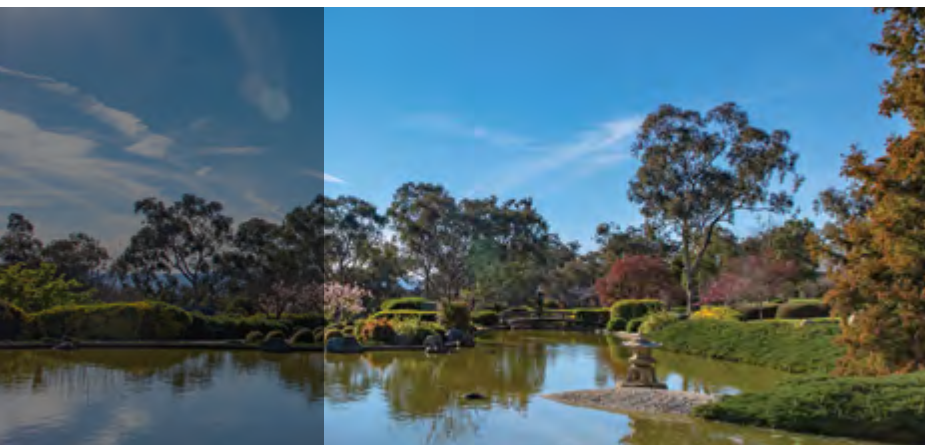
**Greenkeepers ACT currently provide an unofficial and unrecognised support network for greens facilities maintenance and repair in the ACT. This organisational knowledge, capability and experience will be diminished and lost to the ACT if the number of natural grass greens continues to decrease and the number of employed greenkeepers is reduced.**

The Greenkeepers Association already invests in purchases of infrequently used equipment to share amongst clubs. We see an opportunity to build this service for purchase of all equipment, as a means to reduce and manage costs for equipment purchases for all clubs.



7.0

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS



## 7.1 INCREASE MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION RATES TO NATIONAL AVERAGE.

The membership base of bowls needs to be rebuilt across all clubs to substantially increase bowling participation rates across the ACT. It is critical to attract the next generation of players into the sport by modernising clubs, facilities, and the game.

**1.** Prioritise the growth of memberships and players to increase the ACT participation rates to the national average benchmark. This represents an increase from 1,067 members or 0.36% of the ACT population to 9,365 members or 3.16% of the population. The current capacity of ACT greens is 65%, meaning that more facilities would be required if this growth could be achieved.

**2.** Clubs must focus on building their membership base in order to rebuild income streams from more players. Increasing the total number of club members will reduce the pressure on a diminishing membership base to increase fees to fund facility maintenance.

**3.** Clubs will need to drive cultural change and adapt to attract and welcome the next generation of players. Clubs need to provide a clear pathway for members to participate in the sport. This involves adapting and evolving the club's ethos to embrace younger generations and actively pursuing marketing strategies that will build membership. Investing time and effort in supporting changes to shorter game formats to attract players with less time available.

- Promoting diversity (especially gender and ethnicity) and engagement with specific demographics e.g. Families
- Improve club capability to organise the game using online tools to facilitate access for members
- Evolve the bowls club culture to genuinely welcome, include, and coach new players.

**4.** Build on the Bowls Australia consumer marketing campaign by seeking opportunities to support clubs to modernise by leading and coordinating shared services such as:

– Develop membership “CRM” (customer relationship management) resources eg. “membership drive” pack to encourage improvement in membership acquisition practices and processes, collection and retention of shared data resources.

– Invest in systems and technology development to facilitate player engagement with the game and competitions so that the organising of the game can be modernised. A membership platform that can be adopted across all clubs will facilitate up-take and support the organising of the game.

**5.** Modernise game formats to attract the next generation of players. Add a third stream to existing Pennant and Championships competitions organised by Bowls ACT – Implement “Jack Attack” to establish and embed shorter game formats in clubs.





## 7.2 RESTRUCTURE AND DIVERSIFY CLUB BUSINESS MODELS AWAY FROM TRADITIONAL CLUB REVENUES.

The underlying club business model will require restructuring and diversification away from traditional club revenues. Bowling facility maintenance can no longer rely on EGM revenues to sustain maintenance costs. Alternative and innovative ways of raising revenue will be required. Restructuring fee arrangements with members will improve reliability of revenue (without leaving players out of pocket) and cost benefits can be achieved through equipment shared services.

**1.** Clubs should redefine and adopt new business models that do not rely on EGM revenues and the Community Contributions Scheme to fund facilities maintenance. Facilities owners will need to refocus effort on making the bowling facility more self-sustaining. At the same time, increasing bowling participation amongst all club members will improve the perception and value of these facilities to the broader club membership. Host clubs and affiliated bowls clubs can redefine their relationships so that revenues and costs can be shared between both entities. Smaller standalone clubs can reduce their reliance on EGM revenue.

**2.** Clubs should prioritise facilities maintenance in the disbursement of fees. Fees for all forms of the game should contribute to greens maintenance. Where bowls clubs are affiliated with larger community clubs, an appropriate portion of fees for greens maintenance should be disbursed to the facility owner.

All asset owners should be maintaining sinking funds for reinvestment into facilities maintenance and renewal. Clubs should also implement consistent processes to apply fee increases consistent with economic inflation such as applying annual CPI to membership fees and wage price index to greens fees.

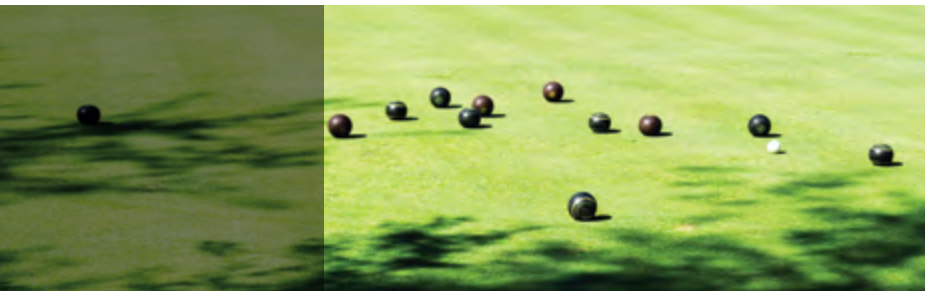
**3.** Clubs should restructure fees to build more stable revenue, while facilitating payment terms that support new and ongoing members. The average player pays across membership, greens fees, and competitions fees in excess of \$1,500 per annum to play, excluding travel expenses. Changing the fee structure to golf fee model – claiming the majority of these expenses through membership fees, with fortnightly small direct debit payments, and correspondingly reducing greens fees to minimal levels would mean that revenue could be better managed and deployed to fund greens maintenance.

– Fees for all forms of the game should contribute to greens maintenance. A tiered structure would continue to provide low fee options for pensioners, and may provide limited use options eg. “barefoot” bowl style membership for social players.

– Where bowls clubs are affiliated with larger community clubs, an appropriate portion of fees for greens maintenance should be disbursed to the facility owner.

– All asset owners should be maintaining sinking funds for reinvestment into facilities maintenance and renewal.

**4.** The ACT Government provide equipment maintenance funding support to enable Greenkeepers to establish an equipment rental service across all clubs, where key machinery and equipment is purchased by a central body, and then rented to all clubs. This would assist with reducing maintenance costs across all clubs.



### 7.3 ASSESS FEASIBILITY TO ESTABLISH TWO INDOOR FACILITIES (ONE NORTH AND ONE SOUTH) TO SUPPORT MARKET CONSOLIDATION OR GROWTH.

With current facilities under capacity, strategic asset consolidation will be required to manage contraction (or potential expansion if membership trends can be reversed) of bowls facilities and preserve high quality facilities in the ACT.

1. A new bowling club and facility in Gungahlin is unlikely to be viable or sustainable until Club memberships and capacity increases significantly in nearby regions.

Bowls ACT, Bowling Clubs, and Members review the feasibility to establish two covered indoor/outdoor facilities (one North and one South) that would increase participation through enabling night play, winter play and reducing the impact of adverse weather. Feasibility should be considered under two scenarios – market growth and market consolidation. Under market growth, additional facilities would be required to meet the capacity requirements of new players. Under a market consolidation, these facilities would enable multiple clubs to flourish and share facilities. They would be funded under merger plans to allow multiple clubs to be hosted and play at the facilities, while maintaining close ties and community relationships with their respective, local affiliated community clubs in Canberra.

### 7.4 INDEPENDENT AND SMALLER CLUBS REQUIRE FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL SUPPORT TO DEVELOP ASSETS AND FACILITIES.

Smaller, independent, licensed bowls clubs should leverage existing grant opportunities, such as the Diversification and Sustainability Support Fund or capital grants, to build executive and organisational capability to strategically steer and fund diversification and re-development opportunities.

The focus should be on building long term, sustainable, commercial club revenue streams, rather than divesting parcels of land for capital raising initiatives. The ACT Government should encourage innovation in the diversification and re-development of bowls facilities and investment in the development of multi-use and multi-purpose sporting and recreational precincts, with consideration for balancing commercial viability and community purpose.

### 7.5 CLUBS MUST SUPPORT BOWLS ACT TO REBUILD ITS REVENUE BASE THROUGH GROWING MEMBERSHIPS ACROSS THE ACT.

Bowls ACT must develop, grow and diversify its revenue base. Revenue is based on club memberships, and with a declining number of members, the underlying foundations and capability of Bowls ACT to provide peak body services to clubs will continue to erode.

Opportunities include incentivising club membership growth, diversified competitions, cross sector partnerships. Industry level sponsorships may provide limited incremental revenue. Clubs must actively embrace and support Bowls ACT in these initiatives, investing club resources and effort to achieve collective success.





# PART 1 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.0

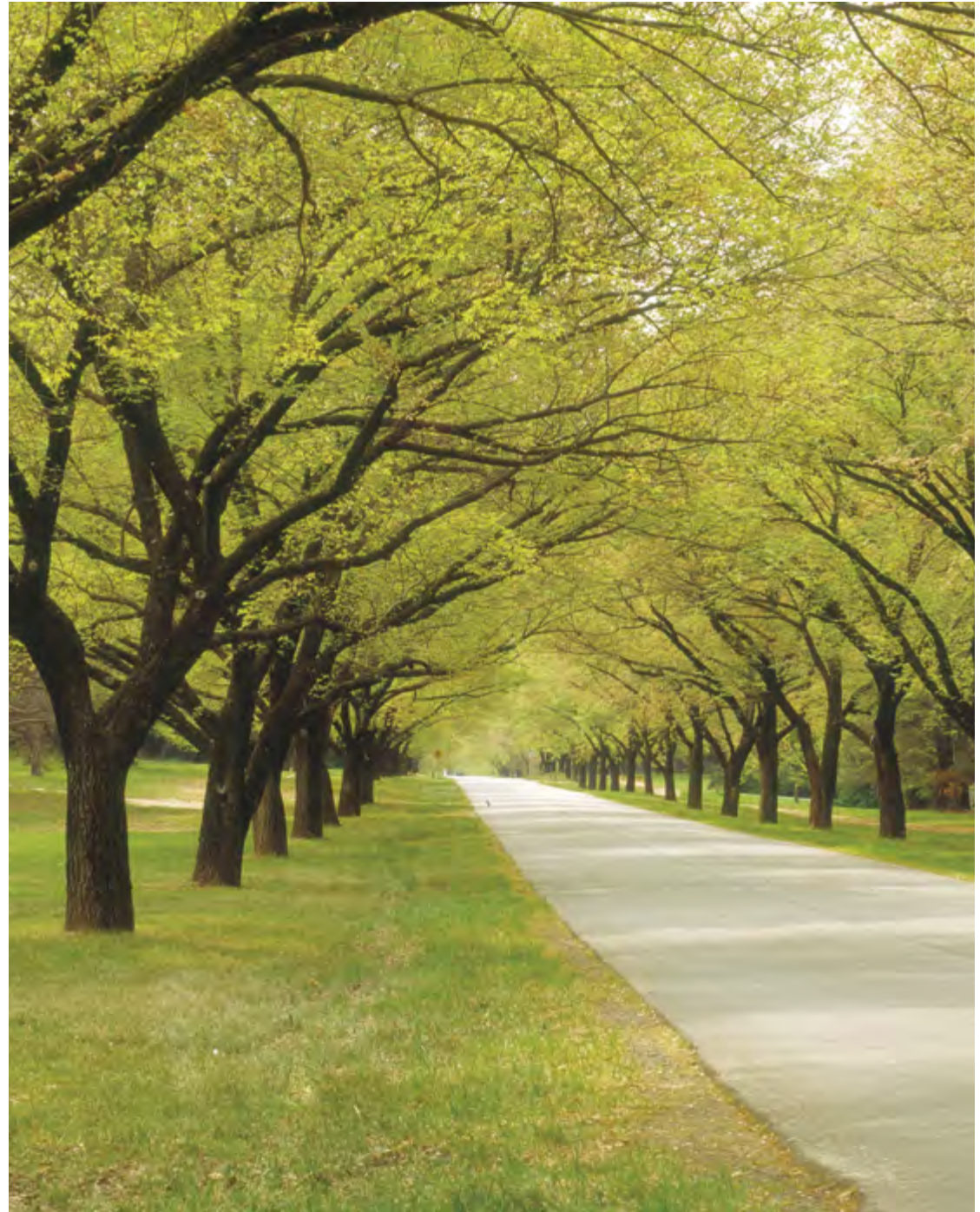
# THE BOWLS MARKET LANDSCAPE

## 8.1 SUPPORTING MARKET CONSOLIDATION OF FACILITIES AND ASSETS

**Findings:** Without a significant ACT wide, whole of industry intervention, the sport of bowls will continue to decline in participation due to the aging cohort of members. The ACT is likely to see a continued attrition in facilities, which may rapidly increase as members collectively age out of the sport in the next ten years.

**Recommendation:** Prioritise the growth of memberships and players to increase the ACT participation rates to the national average benchmark. This represents an increase from 1,067 members or 0.36% of the ACT population to 9,365 members or 3.16% of the population. The current capacity of ACT greens is 65%, meaning that more facilities would be required if this growth could be achieved.

**Recommendation:** Bowls ACT, Bowling Clubs, and Members review the feasibility to establish two covered indoor/outdoor facilities (one North and one South) that would increase participation through enabling night play, winter play and reducing the impact of adverse weather. Feasibility should be considered under two scenarios – market growth and market consolidation. Under market growth, additional facilities would be required to meet the capacity requirements of new players. Under a market consolidation, these facilities would enable multiple clubs to flourish and share facilities. They would be funded under merger plans to allow multiple clubs to be hosted and play at the facilities, while maintaining close ties and community relationships with their respective, local affiliated community clubs in Canberra.



When considered as a whole, future outlook for bowls in the ACT appears uncertain. The ACT bowls market is experiencing long term attrition and decline in the number of clubs, membership numbers, and assets/ facilities. This is symptomatic of a number of structural and systemic factors that are affecting bowls participation and the underlying funding of the sport.

- Current market analysis indicates nearly all facilities are at risk of relocation or redevelopment. Assessing the feedback and responses to this review from community clubs indicates that all but one club facility is at risk of being re-located or re-developed.
- This is of concern as the two clubs that recently closed in the ACT failed in their attempts to re-locate facilities. In both cases, it was failure to develop the proposed new greens after merging with a major club group that led to the club's closure. It is worth emphasising that the bowls clubs did not wish to close or stop playing. Bowls ACT membership analysis indicates that approximately 80% of members moved to other clubs to continue playing.
- West Deakin Hellenic Bowling Club closed in 2014, after being sold to developers. The Hellenic Club purchased the land in 2000 and subsequently sold the site to developers rather than continuing to operate a bowling facility. The club could not reach agreement to continue operating or successfully relocate leading to its closure.
- Canberra City Bowling Club closed in 2015. The Ainslie Group stated publicly that the club was losing between \$100,000 to \$150,000 per year. On the closure of the bowling club, the Ainslie Group had intended to build new greens on the Gunghalin club site however the cost of establishing greens and ongoing losses meant this was not feasible.
- **Figure 1** opposite illustrates the market consolidation, and plots a timeline showing the bowls associations and clubs merging and closing since the early 90's. The number of greens in the ACT has reduced from 28 in 2009 to a current level of 20 in 2020.

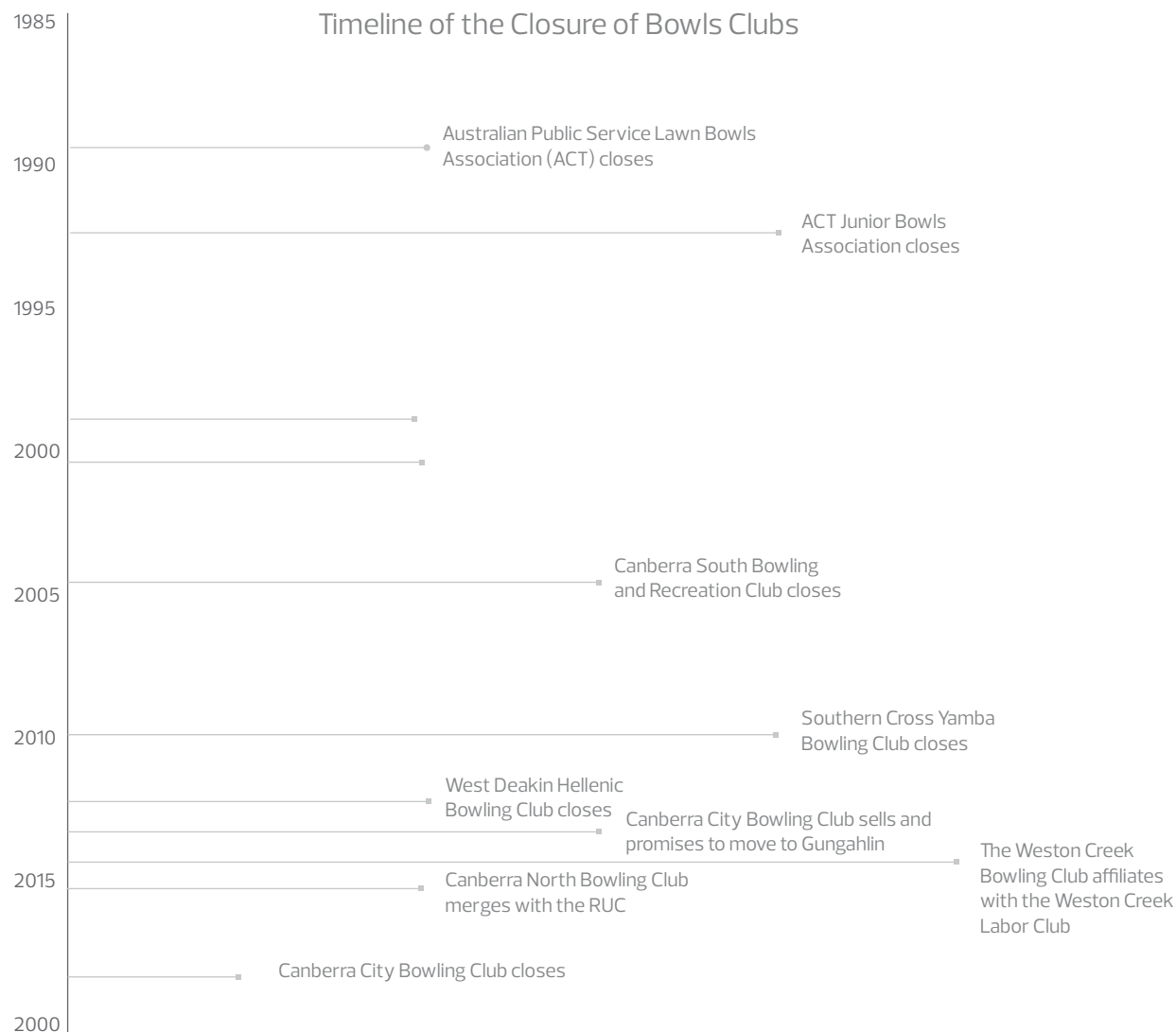


Figure 1: Timeline of Bowls Clubs / Associations Mergers and Closures in the ACT since 1990  
Source: ACT Associations Public Register (Access Canberra)

Please note, the timeline dates have been sourced from the ACT Associations Public Register.



- Bows participation is in decline. **Figure 2** illustrates the historical decline in memberships. The continued decline in membership numbers is having a significant impact on club revenues and financial performance. The overall decline in participation has been driven by both club closures and lack of recruitment of new players into the sport. Evidence for this can be observed in the decline in average club memberships over time and the increase in average and median ages of members. While Canberra North and Canberra Bowling Club have reversed the trend with membership increases, examination of transfer data can attribute much of this increase to the closure of other clubs in the surrounding areas.



Figure 2: Membership Trends By Club 2009 vs 2013-2019.  
 Source: Bowls ACT Facility Plan 4 August 2009 and Bowls ACT Membership Data



- In Figure 3 below, we forecast membership scenarios (expanded upon in Section 18, Future Demand) and future demand for bowling facilities.
- Since 2009, the rate of total bowls memberships in the ACT has declined at the average rate of around 100 bowls members per year. In member numbers, this is a decline from 1,649 members to 1,067 members in 2019. As a proportion of total members, this is an average decline of 6.74% p.a.

- The participation rate of bowls members, compared to the total ACT population is 0.25%, with the decline representing 0.03% of the total population p.a. on average. This is a dramatic decline and is in opposition to the rising population.
- This clearly illustrates the role that participation rates play in the future viability of the sport. The sport's participation rate is currently declining at an average of 0.03% per annum. If the decline continues at the same rate then the outlook is bleak, with no demand for facilities within seven years. However, if the participation rate can be maintained to 0.25% of the population, then population growth will drive a natural increase in the volume of players and demand.

### Bowls Membership Forecasting 2020–2040

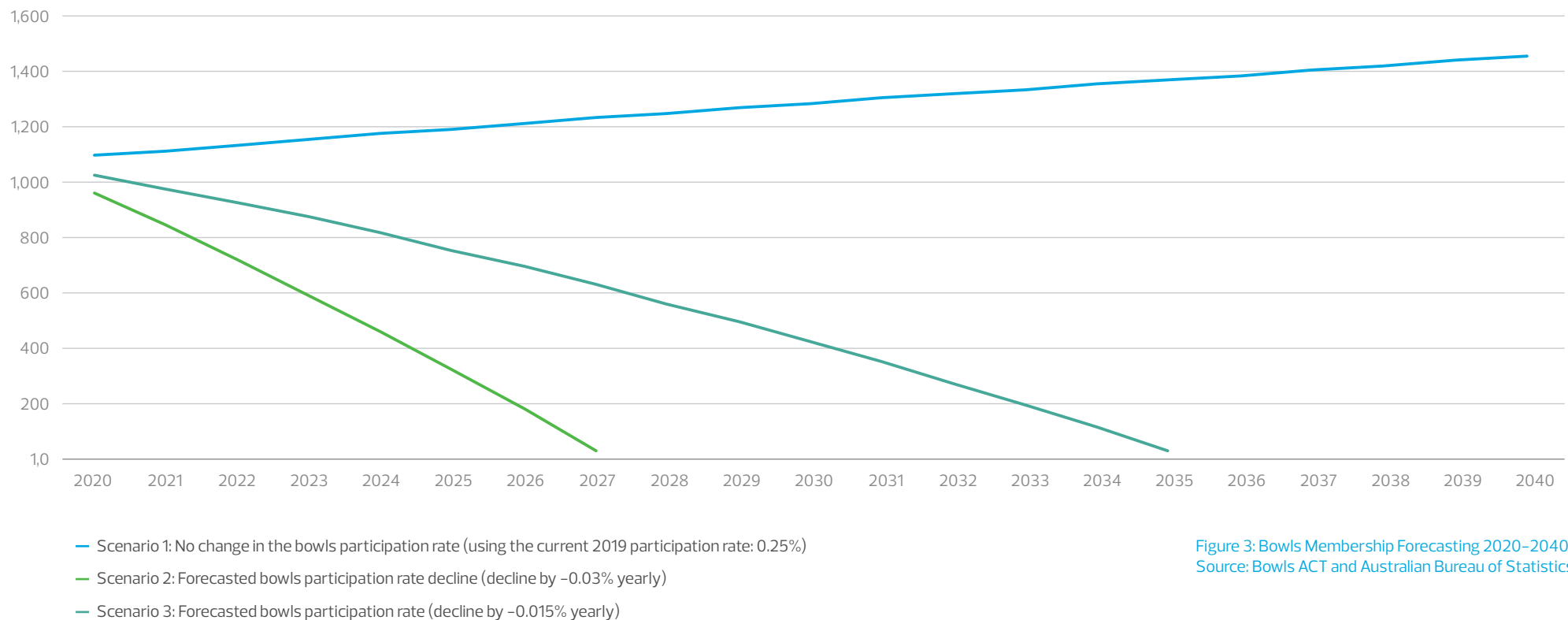


Figure 3: Bowls Membership Forecasting 2020–2040  
Source: Bowls ACT and Australian Bureau of Statistics

- The median and average club member age in the ACT is 70. Considering that player participation drops off rapidly after the age of 75, this signals a major issue if younger people cannot be recruited into the sport.
- Perception of Bowls as an “aging” sport: Bowls is considered an aging sport, played predominantly by older people. Despite the advantages and benefits that it offers to all ages, as the generations shift, the younger generations (“baby boomers” and “generation X”) are not taking up the sport, due to lack of interest, changing

family dynamics, and other barriers. Individual clubs are limited in their capability or capacity to address over-riding brand issues with the sport or drive the generational shift in the game that will be required without industry level support.

- Significant majority of respondents have been participating in Bowls for over 11 years
- New bowls participants are the lowest number of participants, illustrating that new players are difficult to attract.

### How many years have you been playing bowls?

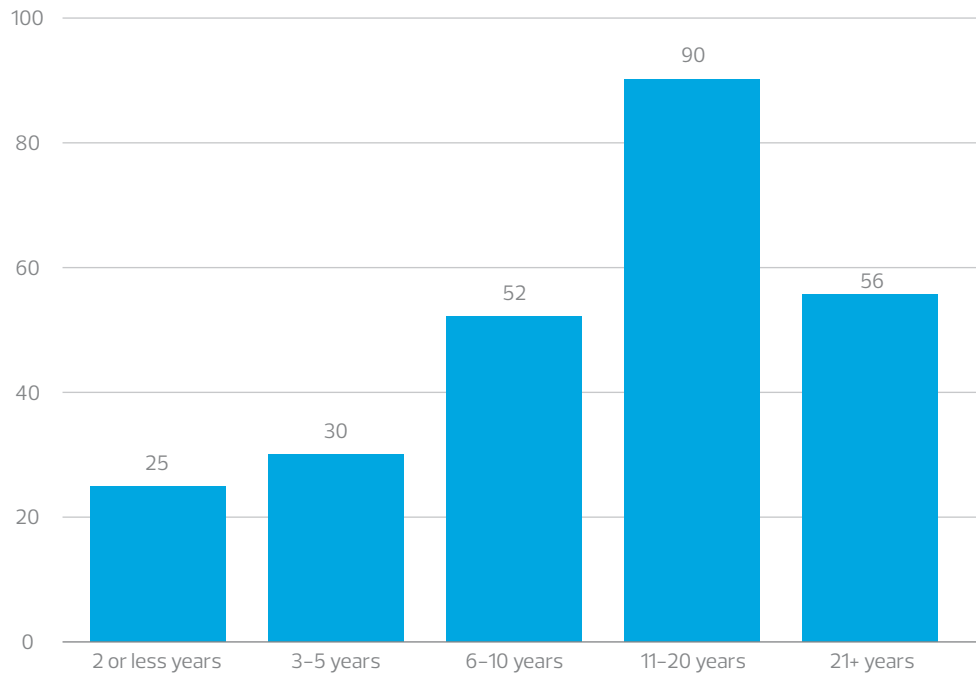


Figure 4: Number of Years Playing Bowls  
Source: ACT Bowls Survey 2019

### Age Profile compared to Mean and Median Age, by Club

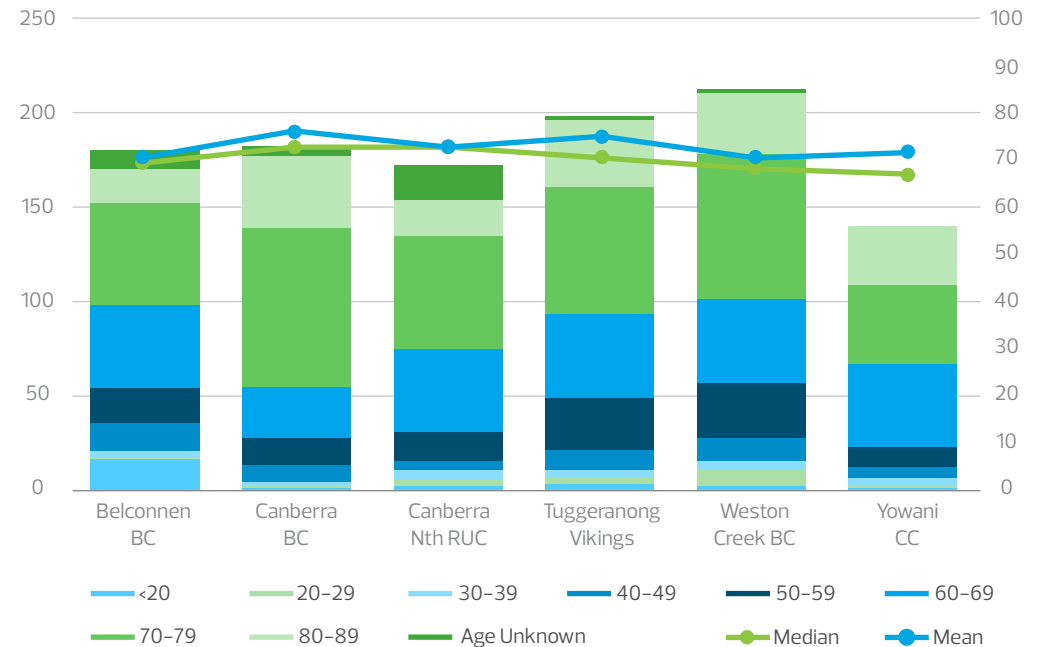


Figure 5: Average Age and Median Age compared to Age profile, by Club  
Source: Bowls ACT Membership Data



- Bowls is most frequently viewed by non-players as being played by people in their retirement, and participation in the ACT is aging significantly, with the majority of players aged 65–74 years. After age 85, most players cease playing due to ill health or death.
- To maintain a strong player population, new players need to start playing the sport. The older groups of players are likely to cease playing in less than ten years. Memberships are heading for an increasing rate of attrition that will see club numbers reduce significantly and dramatically.
- **Bowls is a vitally important sport to older age groups.** When we review the broader activity profile of people in older age groups, there are few other organised sporting activities that people participate in. The AusPlay Report Focus Older Australians outlines that for "People aged 55+" other activities in the ACT include:
  - 22% participate in swimming
  - 21% participate in gym activities
  - Golf and Bowls are competitive sports where most individuals are participating 2–3 times per week, with once a week the next most common. (AusPlay, State of Play Report – Golf, 2019)
- **Financial viability and sustainability of smaller, independent, bowls clubs is increasingly challenged:** Bowls is unique as a sport, in that the costs of playing, and managing and maintaining facilities are subsidised by a "licensed club" business model. The profits from bar, catering, EGMs, and other club activities are usually used to directly fund the costs of maintaining bowling greens, however the reduction in members is driving a diminishing return on all revenue sources.
- The business management, marketing and advertising, and other key capabilities of volunteers in clubs and associations varies widely. Overall, smaller bowling clubs require additional support to build their capacity to make investment and business planning decisions. Clubs who are affiliated with larger host clubs do not appear to access the larger host club's expertise and capability.
- **Our financial analysis shows that the costs of maintaining facilities is not met by membership fees.** This is despite the average member expending approximately \$2,040.13 per annum to play the sport including travel.





## 8.2 BOWLS FACILITIES IN GUNGHALIN

Finding: Several attempts have been made in recent years to build a “local” bowls facility in Gunghalin. Gunghalin is well represented by Bowls members from a range of clubs, despite the lack of a “local facility”. The player participation rates are already strong, considering the younger profile of the Gunghalin population, indicating that the lack of a local facility has not resulted in a significant “untapped” market. Players in Gunghalin do not spend (on average) significantly longer than other players to travel to their club. Adding a new facility in Gunghalin would create additional competition, adding player capacity in the north of Canberra, when existing clubs are under capacity. Potential membership shifts on Belconnen Bowling Club and Yowani Bowling Club would affect these clubs’ ongoing viability and sustainability.

Recommendation: A new bowling club and facility in Gunghalin is unlikely to be viable or sustainable until Club memberships and capacity increases significantly in nearby regions.



The figure below illustrates the percentage of bowls members who live in Gunghalin, compared to the population of each regional area. We index this against the total and people aged 65+ populations.

	Percentage of Bowls Members	Percentage Total Population	Index	Population All People Aged 65+	Index
Gunghalin	8.9	20.3	44	9.1	98
Woden/ Weston	25.3	16.4	154	26.4	96
Tuggeranong	26.4	24.2	109	23.9	110
North Canberra	8.9	15.1	59	13.7	65
South Canberra	4.7	7.7	61	10.6	44
Belconnen	25.7	16.3	158	16.3	158

Figure 6: Comparison and Index of Population and Bowls Members by ACT Region  
Source: Bowls ACT Membership Data and ABS

- Gunghalin has a very young population profile, with high numbers of families with young children. Considering the overall profile, there is a strong representation (on par with population) of people aged 65+ playing bowls.
- Further analysis later in this document, also outlines the heavy reliance that Yowani and Belconnen Clubs have on members who live in Gunghalin. Given the broader competitive landscape at present, adding a facility in Gunghalin would severely impact clubs located in the North of Canberra, drawing away members from all clubs.
- Travel times for players who live in Gunghalin are on par with other players around Canberra, in regards to the amount of time by car and public transport they live from the club.
- The map on the oppsite outlines the distribution of membership by club. While southern Canberra is very geographically centred, the north of Canberra shows a broader distribution of members.

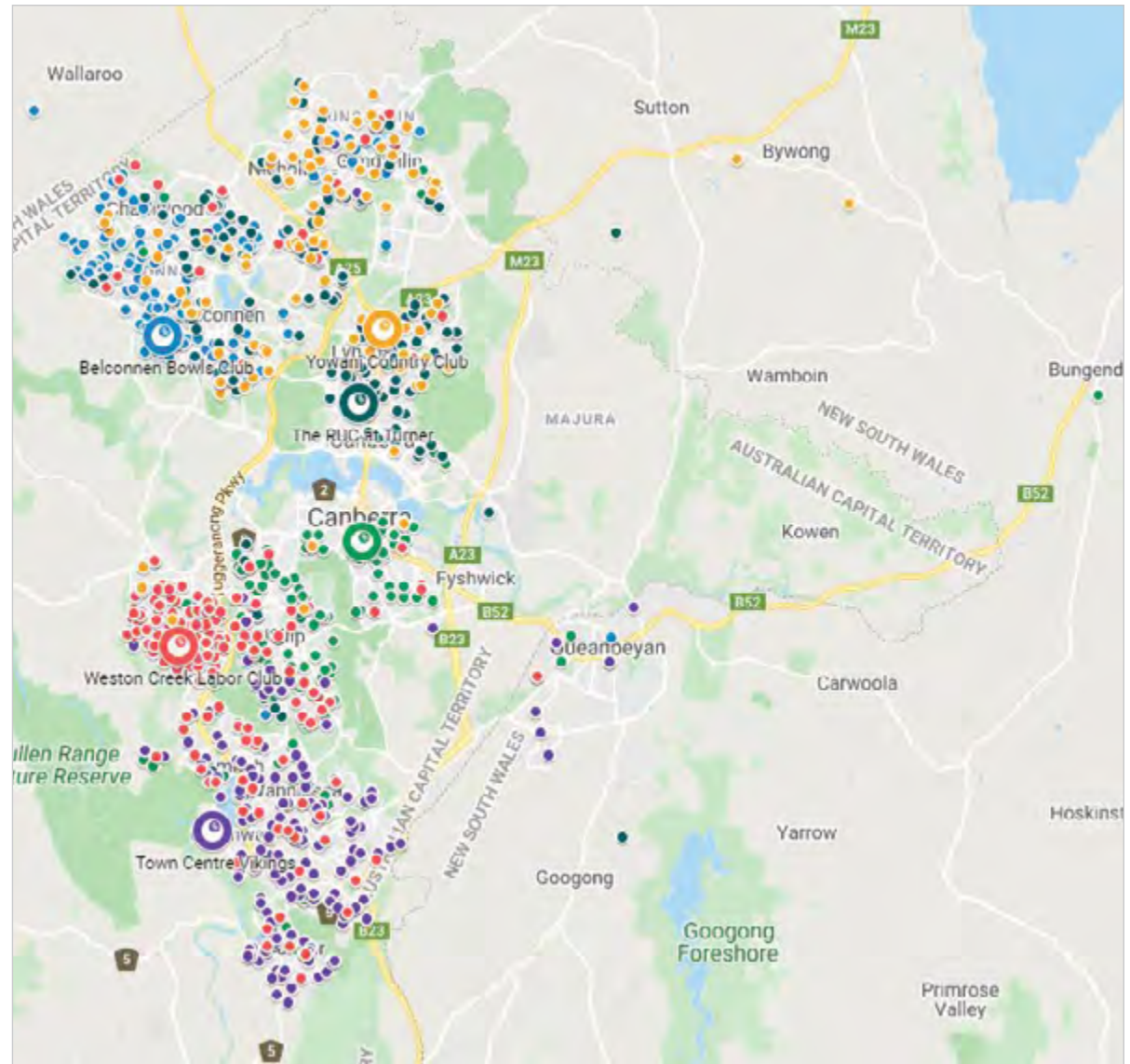


Figure 7: Maps of Bowls ACT Members.  
Source: Google Map



## 8.3 THE CASE FOR STRATEGIC MARKET CONSOLIDATION

Retaining the current level of bowls facilities would be a significant advantage to the ACT community. Bowls is almost unique in its ability to provide a combination of health and wellbeing benefits to older Australians, especially men. Players place enormous value on the sport, relating how it keeps them connected with friends and the community, and provides a means of maintaining interest in a competitive sport that keeps them engaged with activity and life in general. Bowls is a sport that people gravitate to who wish to continue being active and participating in team sport, but who require a low impact activity.

However, facilities are managed predominantly by community clubs, and there are structural and significant financial pressures across the industry that will continue to place pressure on clubs to reduce costs. Fundamentally the business model that relies on gaming revenue to subsidise and underwrite the costs of bowls is no longer sustainable. The business models that underpin bowls need to change, and include commercial and sustainable sources of revenue.

2019 membership data indicates a total of 1,067 participants in the sport of bowls. This is across 6 clubs, who have a total capacity (based on greens utilisation) for 1,620 members. Current capacity utilisation is currently 65.8%. We anticipate that cost pressures will drive consolidation and reduction in this excess capacity.

Well planned consolidation will ultimately benefit the sport as it will lead to a consolidation of resources and spread fixed costs across a greater number of players:

- The investment required to cover and replace greens with synthetic grass is in excess of \$1 million per facility (depending upon existing infrastructure, club house facilities etc). In our consultations, many clubs have investigated or are aware of the costs, but are not pursuing any upgrades to existing facilities. Clubs are choosing not to commit to upgrading their facilities because of the low levels of available capital from within the organisations to invest, and/or the inability to raise capital through investment or sale of land assets, with the Clubs considering that the fees to vary concessional leases a significant barrier. Ultimately, community clubs are constrained by limited capital and reluctant investors when considering the broader issues required to improve and develop facilities.
- Based on our analysis of travel times, consolidation will not have an adverse impact on accessibility, assuming there are facilities located in both north and south Canberra.
- The health and wellbeing benefits from bowls for older Canberrans leads to a case for government support. However, the effectiveness of this support is limited by a relatively small membership spread over 6 clubs. The effectiveness of the support would be enhanced by concentrating it on fewer centres with higher membership and better sustainability.
- Capacity utilisation would be increased to 79% by a reduction of 3 greens or consolidation from 6 to 5 clubs. Ultimately the consolidation plan should lead towards establishment of covered synthetic bowling facilities that will facilitate and encourage night-time play, as well as improving player comfort in winter and summer. An indoor capacity will have a higher capacity allowing for expansion of the sport with the comparable facilities maintenance costs.
- Ideally, any indoor facility should be centrally located and affiliated with a club to ensure that the social, as well as physical benefits of the sport are achieved. ACT Government can provide support for this facility through existing Sports and Recreation grants such as Capital Assistance Program.

Attracting new and younger members will require adapting and modernising the game for new players. This will take time and require an evolution in club capability. Facilities development will encourage community interest and promote engagement in the sport.



### 8.3.1 INTERSTATE EXAMPLES OF BOWLS CLUBS AND MULTI-SITE DEVELOPMENTS

- Observations from interstate clubs illustrate that high quality facilities rejuvenate interest and participation in bowls. Examples such as [Merimbula](#) and [Deer Park](#) demonstrate how providing a quality, covered sporting facility turns around a club in decline. Additionally, co-locating bowls with other sporting and recreational opportunities assists with costs and facility management. [Brighton Bowling Club](#) and [Traralgon](#) are examples of indoor bowls facilities which provide indoor play, all weather, and all year round.
- These clubs employ dedicated (paid) bowls coordinators to organise games and events.
- Greens appear to have high utilisation with daily, weekly, and nightly events, making full use of greens.
- Strong emphasis on online marketing for coaching clinics.



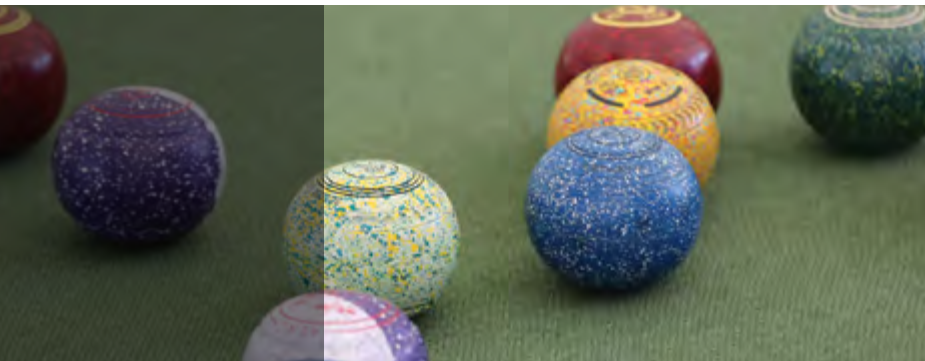
Image: Club Sapphire Merimbula, Covered synthetic green.



Image: Club Sapphire Merimbula Indoor Carpet Bowls

- Club Sapphire in Merimbula is a rejuvenation of the traditional community club, but has signaled intentions in their latest annual report to diversify their income into other residential and commercial opportunities. Club Sapphire offers –
  - Lawn Bowls, Barefoot Bowls, Indoor Carpet Bowls, Bowls Academy (coaching program)
  - Three restaurants, four bars and several lounge facilities
  - Auditorium and Functions room tailored to weddings and events
  - Gymnasium
- The financial performance of the club since renovations has been strong. The CEO notes in the [Annual Report](#) for 2017-18 that while the Club's market share of gaming revenue has increased, overall in Merimubula revenue has dropped by a further 2% across all clubs in the area, consistent with a 22% decline over the past 10 years. He states ;  
“The negative trends in gaming continue to reinforce the need for your club to reduce reliance on poker machines and to diversify further. In line with this, planning and feasibility work continued throughout the year on our land development initiatives... The types of development being investigated include tourist accommodation, residential and commercial.”





[Pickering Place](#) in Enoggera, Brisbane, is a \$12 million initiative that represents a significant departure from the traditional “club” model of bowls facilities, with no gaming machines located on site. The original bowls club has been redeveloped into a mixed-use recreation and retail centre, offering dining/cafe facilities for visitors and bowlers as well as health services, recreation and community activities, and retail shops.

[The history of Pickering Place](#) tracks the development of the club from its origins in 1939 to the new development today.

- The club redeveloped the site using a different approach which includes a mix of commercial, recreational, and community facilities that feature:
  - Two story sportscentre faces two undercover international standard bowling greens.
  - A combination of sports and recreation facilities are co-located on site, including the Enoggera Bowls Club, 9 Degrees Brisbane (bouldering), X Golf, My First Gym (movement and fitness for young children), and Healthy Connections Plus (Pilates studio)
  - The area also includes indoor and al fresco dining at “Café 63”
  - Tradelink and Beaumont Tiles provide retail outlets on site.
  - Bowls Queensland [BQ] [peak body in Queensland for lawn bowls] is also located on site.

- We note that Pickering Place opened in 2019, and is as yet unproven as an ongoing and sustainable business model, however this is a good example of an innovative approach to combining commercial and community facilities. Pickering Place reports that thus far there are many hundreds of visitors to the site each week and operations in the sportscentre have now returned to ‘pre-COVID’ levels of engagement with the community. Many of these visitors are very interested to see the bowls facilities and interest in use of the greens for social bowls is expanding as more people experience the quality of the facilities.



Image Pickering Place, Enoggera Brisbane

Image Pickering Place, bowling green and Café 63

- Pickering Place Services Group Pty Ltd provided some background information on how the project was developed.
- The bowls club used its ownership of the site to underwrite the project.
- No substantial government funding was obtained for the project.
- Financiers were not inclined to underwrite the project unless there was evidence of commercial leases.
- The bowls club uses the Cafe to provide all of its food and dining requirements and this is working out extremely well, as it provides the club with a regular rent return and avoids club members being involved in the management and delivery of food and beverage services.
- The involvement of people and families including the very young as well as mums, dads, and grandparents has created a wonderful atmosphere that is safe, friendly, and inviting.
- The activity at the venue demonstrates that there are many members of the community – particularly parents with young children, who are happy to visit a bowls club because it does not fit the usual mould.
- The bowls club members focus on the game of bowls and the club has established a very small in house property management capacity to deal with the day to day management and administration of the facility. This property management group is fully owned and controlled by the club. The value of this is that 'bowlers' are not being asked to get involved in everyday property management and the related commercial arrangements.



Pickering Place Covered Bowling Green



## 8.4 BOWLS FACILITIES RISK PROFILE

The following chart outlines the risk profile for each facility in the ACT. The chart outlines the current facilities, location, and amenities, the fees charged by the local club and cost to play, financial performance, club performance, membership trends, and considers the feedback from facility owners on future plans.

Facility Location	Yowani	Weston Creek	Tuggeranong Bowling Club	The RUC	Belconnen Bowling Club	Canberra Bowling Club
Current Facilities	3 natural grass (couch) greens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 natural grass (tifdwarf) greens</li> <li>• 1 outdoor carpet green</li> </ul>	3 natural grass greens	3 natural grass greens	3 natural grass greens	2 synthetic greens
Greens Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lights</li> <li>• Sun shading on two greens</li> <li>• Seating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lights</li> <li>• Sun shading</li> <li>• Seating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun shading</li> <li>• Seating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun shading</li> <li>• Seating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun shading</li> <li>• Seating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun shading</li> <li>• Seating</li> </ul>
Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free Parking</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Catering</li> <li>• Beverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free Parking</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Catering</li> <li>• Beverage</li> <li>• EGM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free Parking</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Catering</li> <li>• Beverage</li> <li>• EGM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free Parking</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Catering</li> <li>• Beverage</li> <li>• EGM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free Parking</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Catering</li> <li>• Limited EGM</li> <li>• Limited catering</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free Parking</li> <li>• Accessibility</li> <li>• Catering</li> <li>• Limited EGM</li> <li>• Limited catering</li> </ul>
# EGM's (2019)	21	44	188	40	11	11
Gross Revenue per EGM (2019)	\$8,669	\$36,879	\$41,693	\$15,717	\$6,223	\$1,878
Fees – Bowls Membership	\$190	\$150	\$110	\$90	\$150	\$95
Fees – Greens Fees	\$10	\$10	\$15	\$10	\$15	\$14
Cost to Play* Members per week	\$26.73	\$35.19	\$25.19	\$24.81	\$37.50	\$29.52
Barefoot per event	\$28.69	\$19.56	M \$24.06 / W \$27.08	\$32.60	\$37.95	\$38.28

Facility Location	Yowani	Weston Creek	Tuggeranong Bowling Club	The RUC	Belconnen Bowling Club	Canberra Bowling Club
Travel Time (Minutes) /average distance to travel for members	Bus 38.5 / Car 10.9	Bus 43.5 / Car 10.9	Bus 32.4 / Car 9.4	Bus 37.0 / Car 10.7	Bus 33.0 / Car 7.9	Bus 34.0 / Car 10.7
Number of members	120	213	206	178	166	177
Greens Capacity (90)	270	270	270	270	270	270
Number of members per green	40	71	69	59	55	59
Redevelopment, relocation or closure plans	Proposed relocation on site, plans developed and in negotiation with stakeholders	No plans to relocate or redevelop at this point but have signalled greens maintenance costs are unsustainable.	In discussions and early planning for current site redevelopment including relocating greens.	Considering expanding to four greens.	Committee is actively searching to merge with another club. Is open to relocating if necessary.	Club has approved motion to relocate. Exploring options.
Number Members	120	206	213	170	178	180
Market Share	11%	19%	20%	16%	17%	17%
Host Clubs or Management Intent/ Support to continue bowls	Board is 100% committed to having both golf and bowls.	Support bowls, but concerned over the cost of maintenance and increasing impacts on Labor Club community contributions.	Committed to maintaining bowls. Concerned regarding increasing costs and sustainability.	100% Committed	100% Committed	100% Committed
Rick of facility closure (not club closure)	Low-Medium Risk	High Risk	Low-Medium Risk	Low Risk	High Risk (Many dependences on finding successful partner)	Medium Risk (Many dependencies on successfully relocating)



## 8.5 COMMUNITY PURPOSE LEASES AND LEASE VARIATION CHARGES

**Finding:** Bowls facilities are built on land that is governed under a community purpose lease which includes provisions that limit the commercial development of the land outside of the “club” model. Smaller bowling clubs have limited assets and capacity to fund alternative options when considering redevelopment of the sites.

The cost of Lease Variation Charges (LVC) to support re-development and consolidation of assets and facilities often results in Bowling Clubs working with developers or larger entities who's core purpose is not to support the sport of bowls. These relationships have resulted in many bowls facilities not being relocated or closed permanently.

**Recommendation:** Smaller, independent licensed bowls clubs should leverage existing grant opportunities, such as the Diversification and Sustainability Support Fund or capital grants, to build executive and organisational capability to strategically steer and fund diversification and re-development opportunities. The focus should be on building long term, sustainable, commercial club revenue streams, rather than divesting parcels of land for capital raising initiatives. The ACT Government should encourage innovation in the diversification and re-development of bowls facilities and investment in the development of multi-use and multi-purpose sporting and recreational precincts, with consideration for balancing commercial viability and community purpose.

It should be noted that land use is a significant ACT Government policy area that is outside of the scope of this project, and the subject of other reviews. However, the “high” costs of lease variation charges and deconcessionalising leases is blamed directly by bowls’ clubs for playing a significant role in club closures. Therefore, these recommendations pertain specifically to solving this issue with bowls facilities, and do not take into consideration the broader perspectives on land use issues in the ACT.

- In order to offset the costs of facilities maintenance, Bowls clubs need to develop alternative income streams. The current Community Facility Zone Code severely curtails the scope for a club to develop commercial revenue opportunities – as this is the purpose of this zone. For clubs to develop commercial diversification opportunities, they must deconcessionalise their lease and sell assets (eg. EGM authorisations or land).
- Most clubs are investigating re-development opportunities to address future needs. Larger clubs report ongoing frustration with navigating bureaucratic planning regulation and restrictions and prolonged engagement with planning processes.
- Smaller Clubs do not necessarily have the board or executive capability to independently steer a re-development of their own site. These Clubs feel very constrained by the perceived high cost of varying lease clauses, and do not have the capital available to pay the lease variation charges to redevelop independently. This inability to relocate, merge, or explore flexible alternatives hinders the opportunities to develop, modernise, or seek external investment to support the clubs' evolution or diversification. Clubs expressed a high level of fear and worry about these arrangements, given the history and experience of club closures in the ACT.
- This compounds the legacy of lack of reinvestment in bowls facility assets in the smaller community clubs.
- Overall, this limits partner or investor interest and further restricts the opportunities available to clubs to innovate or pursue solutions independently. Clubs look to larger club entities or land development companies for financial support. These arrangements have all resulted in the closure of greens facilities in recent years.





Community facilities concessional leases stipulate that the land has been granted for less than its market value to the economic user. As such, these leases encourage users to assist in providing core community and social facilities that benefit the local community. Lease Purpose Clauses specify the permissible use for that site, and are usually specific to the club and bowls eg. "purpose only of a bowling club conducted in accordance with the Articles of Association of the (Specific Bowling Club) Incorporated." The Territory Plan permits a range of land uses with the Community Facility Zones. Usually, if a club wishes to change the purpose of this clause, to build commercial or residential facilities for example, a Lease Variation Charge (LVC) is imposed if the variation will result in an improvement in the land value. Additionally, a club will be required to pay an amount determined by the government equivalent to the unpaid market value of the lease and associated administrative fees and charges.

Clubs are directly impacted by lease arrangements, as the purpose clauses restrict the opportunities to develop the site without selling land. There are limited options for capital raising, and smaller clubs reported that they feel they have no alternative but to sell land in order to afford the Lease Variation Charges or deconcessionalise.

The scenario for the club is that in attempts to redevelop the existing site or relocate, they are required to sell land to another entity such as a community club or developer, in order to fund LVCs or deconcessionalise the lease. This has two negative effects on the club. Firstly, it forces the sale of the land with no ongoing return or ability to earn income. Secondly, it has in practice, placed control of the rebuilding of greens facilities into the hands of entities who are not bowls clubs. This has resulted in decisions to not rebuild facilities, for example West Deakin Hellenic Club and Canberra City Bowling Club. A bowls club's core purpose is to bowl. A large community club evaluating bowls facilities is doing so in the context of a wider membership and is less likely to build a sport facility that has high ongoing maintenance and upkeep costs for a very small portion of their membership base.

Under the Territory Plan, The Community Facility Zone Development code (Counsel, May 2018) permits development use for the following services:

- Ancillary Use
- business agency (non-profit)
- child care centre
- community activity centre
- community theatre
- consolidation
- cultural facility
- demolition
- educational establishment
- emergency services facility
- health facility
- hospital
- indoor recreation facility
- lease variation
- minor use
- office (small scale, non commercial)
- outdoor recreation facility
- parkland
- place of worship
- public agency
- religious associated use
- residential care accommodation
- retirement village
- sign
- subdivision
- supportive housing
- temporary use

## 8.6 ACT GOVERNMENT FUNDING SUPPORT

In 2019, the ACT Government set up the Diversification and Sustainability Support Fund to assist clubs to diversify their income to sources other than gaming machines. Additionally the fund supports initiatives for club sustainability and provides funding for training and skills development for club workers, executives, and members of club management facilities and boards.

### **This fund should be utilised by Bowls Clubs to:**

- Build the capability and skill set of board and executive members to effectively steer redevelopment plans.
- Develop sites beyond the scope of replacing natural grass greens with synthetic, but considering broader community development opportunities that will diversify the Club's revenue streams.

Also in 2019, the ACT Government introduced the LVC Deferral scheme. Clubs can access this scheme providing they can demonstrate a public benefit through the development and / or use of the land. Subject to the LVC, the deferral can be arranged at market interest rate only.



9.0

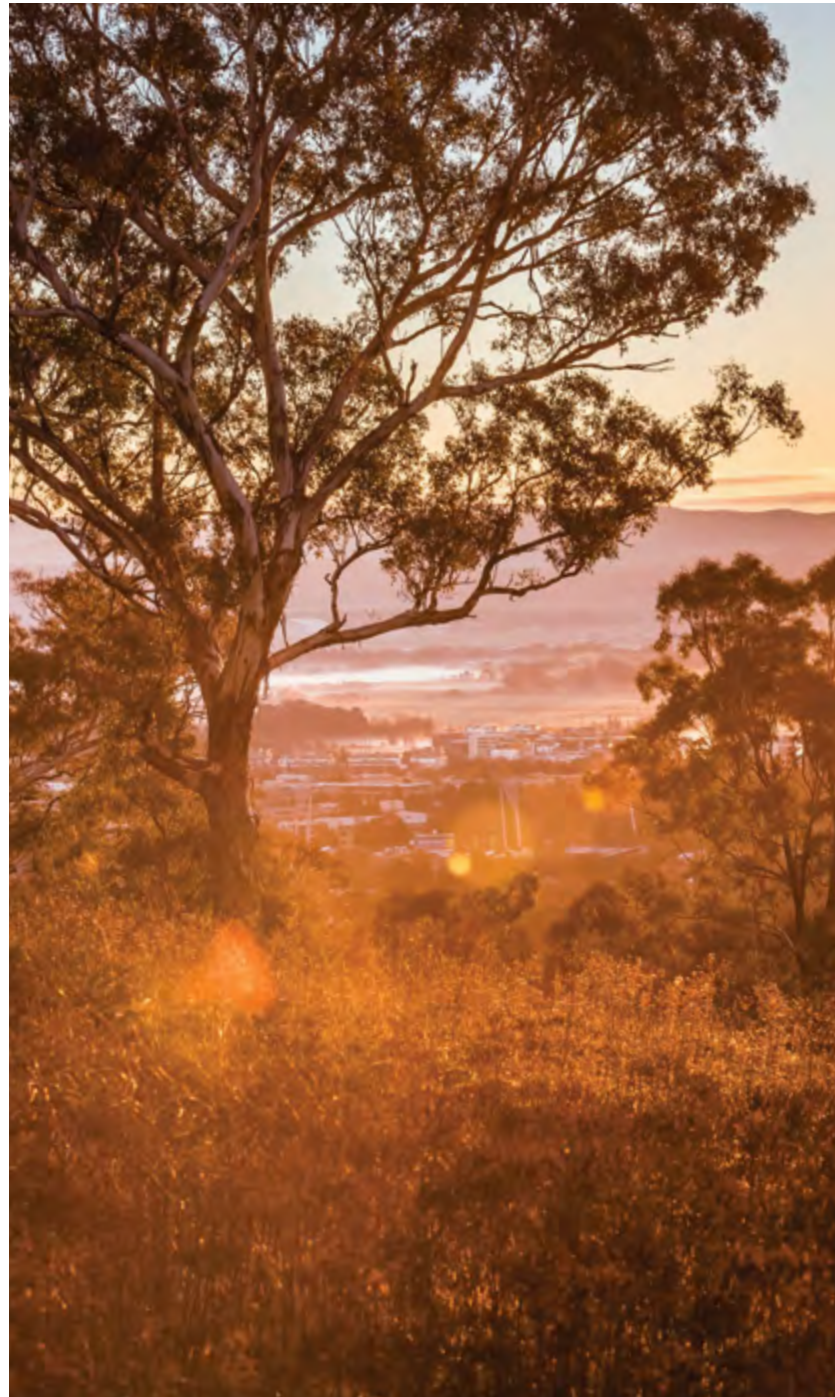
CLUBS



## 9.1 BUILDING SCALE BACK INTO THE MEMBERSHIP BASE AND GROWING PLAYER POPULATION

**Recommendation:** As a priority, clubs must focus on building their membership base in order to rebuild income streams from more players. Increasing the total number of club members will reduce the pressure on a diminishing membership base to increase fees to fund facility maintenance.

**Finding:** Club's declining revenue base is being driven by the decline in memberships. The lack of scale is significantly impacting revenue and sustainability. Club members already pay a relatively high amount of fees, green fees, and sundry expenses in order to play, commensurate with (lower cost) golf and tennis clubs.



Currently, the business models club's employ to cover the cost of greens facility maintenance are not sustainable. The margins from club activities, e.g., bar, gaming, etc., are less able to cover the cost of maintaining greens, and the fees collected for playing the sport in itself is not able to cover the cost. This further implies that currently the sport of bowls is not providing enough income to support itself.

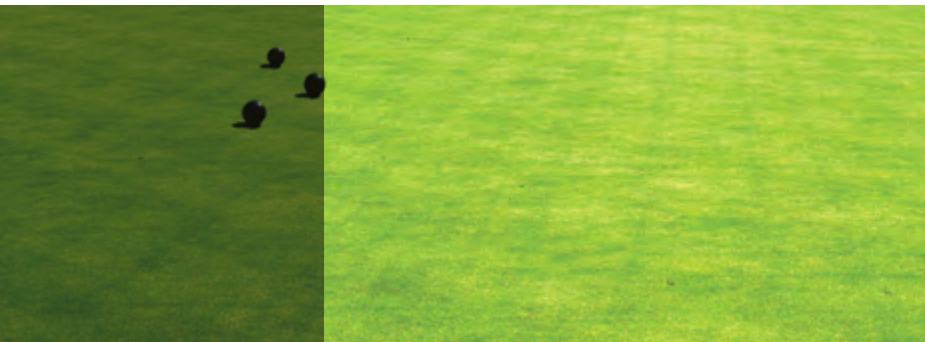
*In order to understand the impact of players contributions towards the maintenance of assets, we have calculated estimated fees based on costs to play / number of members for each club.*

In the table over page, we have compared our estimate of total member fees to play bowls to greens maintenance costs, expressed as a ratio. Further, we have compared the number of members in each club to greens capacity. The results tells us how many more members are needed to 'break-even' or cover the costs of assest maintenance.

Depending upon the club, between an additional 40 to 89 players are needed in every club in order to fund facilities maintenance alone.

This does not include:

- Promotions, raffles, and other funds that are retained by the club and given back to players as prizes.
- Bowls ACT affiliation fees.

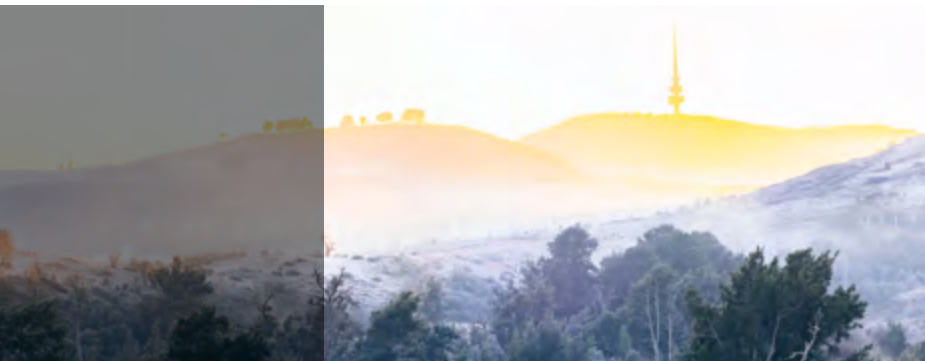


Facility Location	Yowani	Weston Creek	Tuggeranong Bowling Club	The RUC	Belconnen Bowling Club	Canberra Bowling Club
Surface Type	3 natural grass	2 natural grass 1 synthetic green	3 natural grass	3 natural grass	3 natural grass	2 synthetic greens
Cost to maintain greens	\$75,385	\$2,700,001	\$210,051	\$131,721	\$152,791	\$180,001
Number of members	120	206	213	166	177	178
Average cost per member to maintain greens	\$628	\$1,311	\$986	\$793	\$863	\$101 <sup>[1]</sup>
Number of members per green	40	69	71	55	59	89

Figure 8: Cost to Maintain Greens

<sup>[1]</sup> WC cost to maintain greens was a verbal estimate provided during consultation / CBC and WC is the greens maintenance cost, and does not include any funds being put aside for future replacement of surface





## 9.2 THE IMPACT OF LOW DEMAND ON COST RECOVERY & MEMBERSHIP / GREENS FEES

The cost recovery analysis indicates that without alternative sources of revenue, clubs are not sustainable. This illustrates that the current membership and green fees received by bowls clubs are unlikely to fully cover the expenses incurred for maintaining the lawn bowls greens.

The break-even model for Clubs illustrates that Bowls have a demand problem – ie. Insufficient members to drive cost recovery when compared to the costs of greens and revenue raised.

- Members already pay (overall) fees to play the sport that are consistent with the most expensive sports to play. Members are highly price sensitive, and unwilling to pay more. Some members are pensioners with fixed incomes and unable to pay more.
- Given the under-utilisation of the greens assets, the key business solution is either:
  - Increase the number of members and players per club significantly, potentially through consolidation of clubs; or
  - Diversify income to seek alternate revenue opportunities to offset costs. Note that EGMs has served this purpose but are no longer providing solutions.

This figure illustrates a break even analysis for a 3 greens bowls facility. As the number of memberships and player participation increases, the fixed costs remain the same, but variable costs increase. Revenue increases at a higher rate. The “break-even” point is the minimum number of members and participation required, in order to earn enough revenue to cover costs.

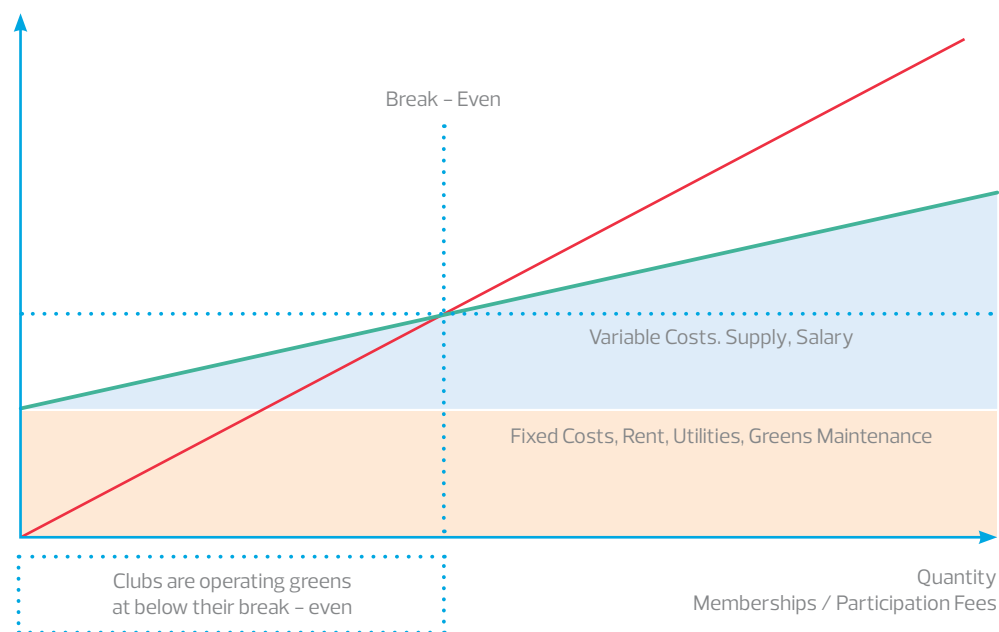


Figure 9: Break-even model for Clubs

### 9.3 MODERNISATION AND REINVENTION TO ATTRACT NEXT GENERATION OF PLAYERS

Recommendation: Clubs will need to drive cultural change and adapt to attract and welcome the next generation of players. Clubs need to provide a clear pathway for members to participate in the sport. This involves adapting and evolving the club's ethos to embrace younger generations and actively pursuing marketing strategies that will build membership.

- Investing time and effort in supporting changes to shorter game formats to attract players with less time available.
- Promoting diversity (especially gender and ethnicity) and engagement with specific demographics eg. Families
- Improve club capability to organise the game using online tools to facilitate access for members
- Evolve the bowls club culture to genuinely welcome, include and coach new players.

Findings: A Club's function is primarily for the benefit of it's members. Bowls Clubs play a vital role in our Canberra community of social connection with friends and peers, especially for older men. Bowls provides physical and mental activity that a skilled team sport offers those participating. It is one of the only opportunities to play competitive team sports

in the older age groups. However, members are aging, with the average and median age of members at nearly 70 years of age. To have a strong future, clubs must attract younger members to continue the legacy. The next generation have different attitudes and engagement towards bowls and sport.

Players overwhelmingly love the sport of bowls. One of the clearest, universal messages from our community consultations was how much every member valued bowls and advocated for bowls to survive and thrive. Many clubs also expressed concerns about the public perception or branding of bowls clubs. "We don't wear whites any more!"



Figure 10: Strengths and Weaknesses of Bowls Clubs

Source: Sweeney Sports Bowls Australia – Building Participation in Lawn Bowls 2006

<sup>1</sup>Note that this is based on 2006 research, the situation is different now, with an online presence for most clubs. However our observation is that online and social media are poorly utilised by most clubs.



### 9.3.1 DRIVERS OF DEMAND – WHY IS BOWLS A GREAT SPORT?

We have used multiple sources of information, including our ACT Bowls Survey of members, and available background research, notably “Building an Evidence Base to Increase Participation in Lawn Bowls” conducted by La Trobe University commissioned for Bowls Australia, to investigate bowling participation, club participation, and understand the players motivation for engaging with the sport.

Members and players state that the most common reasons for playing bowls are:

- Seeking to play a competitive sport
- A particular interest in the skill-based nature of bowls
- The sense of camaraderie and belonging to a team
- The social connections bowls provides
- The perceptions that playing bowls offers mental health benefits
- The capacity to engage in social drinking within a club environment (La Trobe University)

### 9.3.2 SOCIAL CONNECTION

- Bowls provides significant opportunities for social connections and friendships to develop that contribute to wellbeing (La Trobe University).
- Participation in bowls gives a sense of camaraderie (“men's shed”) and belonging from being part of a team sport.
- Bowls facilitates long lasting friendships that are often a central feature of the social support network for older people who may have lost their partner.



“Bowls plays a key role in the social life and well-being of an aging population. It is specifically the intellectual and coordination skills required which promote the health and mental sharpness of players. It is important that encouragement, support, and coaching programs are available to encourage younger members to participate.”

*Respondent Feedback  
(RSM Bowls Survey, 2019)*

“Bowls is an important part of assisting an aging demographic to maintain some low impact fitness, maintaining and growing friendships with meeting of new people, and providing a support network.”

*Respondent Feedback  
(RSM Bowls Survey, 2019)*

“It is very social. You can play in a team or singles requiring different and like skills and knowledge. You can play all year round. It can be played inside or outside. Can be played at any age. Can cater for a lot of disabilities.”

*Respondent Feedback  
(RSM Bowls Survey, 2019)*

### 9.3.3 PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS

- Bowls provides a viable opportunity for individuals of different skill levels to fully participate and enjoy the experience (La Trobe University).
- Bowls offers players of varying physical ability the chance to compete with each other in an integrated sport participation opportunity.
- Participation assists in sustaining both physical and mental health.
- Our survey of ACT Members (see Figure 12) shows that over 60% of players have good hearing, vision, and mobility. 80% rate themselves as having "excellent" or "good" mobility.
- Physical and mental health status does not vary based on the degree of involvement, suggesting that any form of involvement in bowls is beneficial for both physical and mental health.
- Bowls provides an opportunity to concentrate for extended periods of time as well as offering the opportunity, particularly for older participants, to engage in a significant and regular social activity.
- Bowls is also identified as a safe social space for women.
- According to the RSM Bowls Survey, 39% of members recognise their hearing as Good, 51% recognize their vision / eyesight as Good, and 49% recognise their hearing as Good.
- Bowls has also been identified as a sport that can accommodate families in a friendly environment to participate.
- Further, the majority of members have partners who are members also.

#### ACT Bowls Survey: "Are any of your family members also bowling members of your club?"

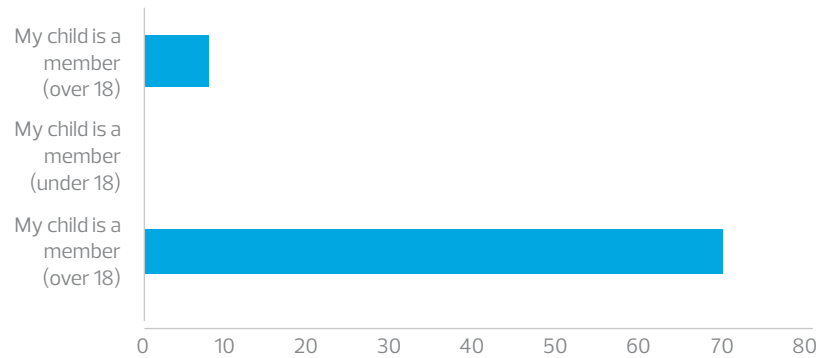


Figure 11: Members who have Family who are also Members.  
Source: RSM Bowls Survey 2019

#### ACT Bowls Survey: "How do you rate your usual sensory abilities?"

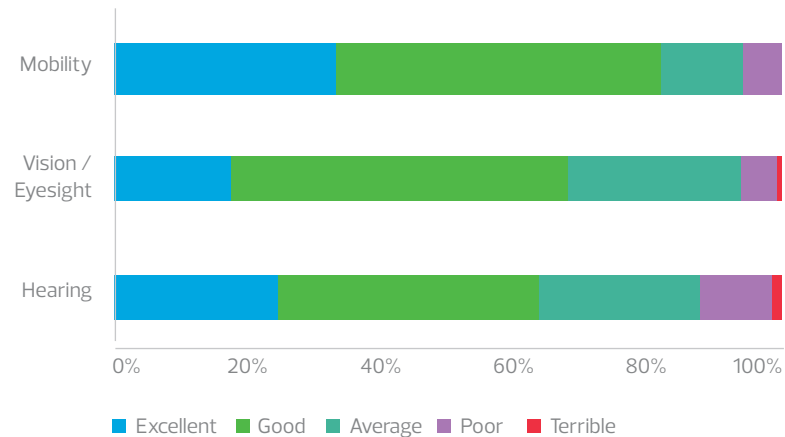


Figure 12: Bowls Members Sensory Abilities.  
Source: RSM Bowls Survey 2019

"Bowls is a non-contact - low impact sport for me. I can participate in bowls to a ripe old age - lots of other sports have to be given away when you get to a certain age. More should be done by Health Authorities to encourage older people to get involved in the sport of bowls - transport could be provided to take them to their nearest clubs - instead of them sitting at home. As long as you can bend, walk slowly - bowls is such a good sport - really social and age is no barrier."

*Respondent Feedback*  
(RSM Bowls Survey, 2019)

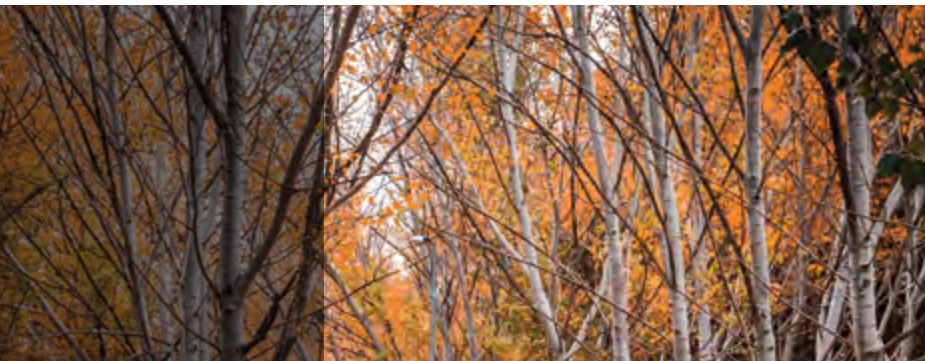
"Lawn Bowls is a great game because: You have personal responsibility for what you do and see the outcome of your efforts directly. It is physically safe game. Mentally challenging requiring - skills in technique, manage the environment and the game play and your emotions."

*Respondent Feedback*  
(RSM Bowls Survey, 2019)

"The value of bowls in relation to mental, emotional and physical well being of the elderly right through into their 90's. Members support and actively protect ageing citizens. It is a close knit community and care extends to any vulnerable members. To me it is the most important function of the club."

*Respondent Feedback*  
(RSM Bowls Survey, 2019)





### 9.3.4 COMPETITIVE SPORTING ASPECTS OF THE GAME

- Bowls gives players the opportunity to continue to play a competitive sport after perhaps playing more physically demanding sports such as football or tennis (La Trobe University).
- In our consultations, many older players reflected on how they moved from team sports such as cricket and football and that bowls provides them with a similar sense of competitiveness that they valued in those sports.

"Bowls gives the older generation an outlet for social, competitive and physical activity."

Survey Respondent Feedback  
(RSM Bowls Survey, 2019)

ACT Bowls Survey: "Are you interested in playing pennant competition bowls in the future?"



Figure 13: Interest in Playing Competition.  
Source: RSM Bowls Survey 2019

### 9.3.5 ATTRACTING MORE AND YOUNGER MEMBERS

- **Family dynamics are changing:** Historically, the age that people would start playing bowls was in their 40's and 50's, when their children had "grown up" and moved out of the family home. Families have changed, and now people in their 40's are more likely to have children aged under 10 years, and people in their 50's are more likely to have teenagers.
- In 2018 women are most likely to have children when aged between 30–34 years. 81% of those having children are over 30.
- This impacts the available time that prospective bowls players (both fathers and mothers) have to engage with the sport in its current form.
- The figure here illustrates that couples are getting married later.
- There are more women in 2019 having children between the ages of 35–39 than those having children in their 20's.

#### Proportion of Young Adults Who Were, or Had Been, Married

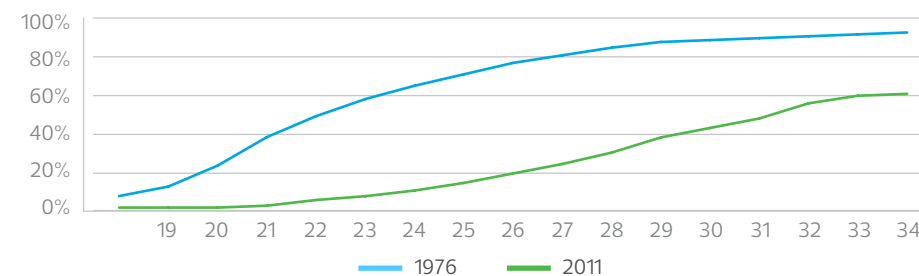


Figure 14: Proportion of Young Adults Who Were, or Had Been, Married.  
Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics



### Ages of Women Having Children in 1990 v 2018

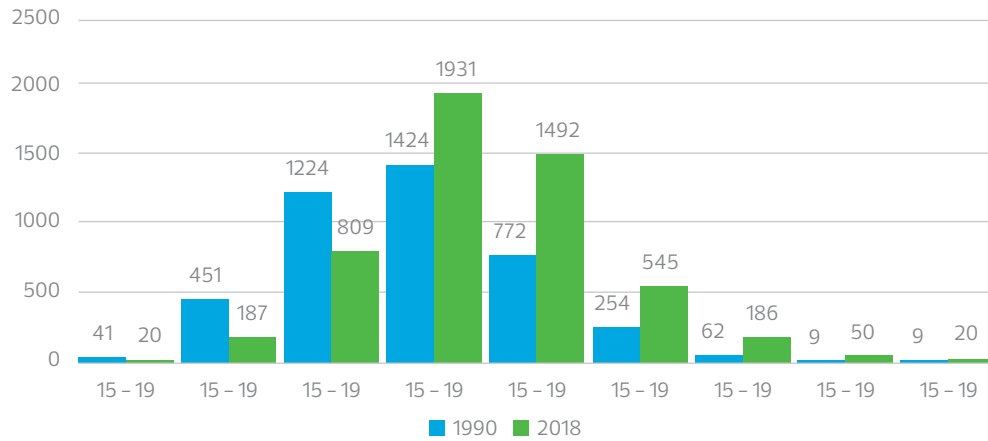


Figure 15: Ages of Women Having Children in 1990 v Ages of Women Having Children in 2018. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

- Increased time pressures on working hours for younger people.
- Almost twice as likely to be studying.

### Proportion of Young Adults Attending an Educational Institution

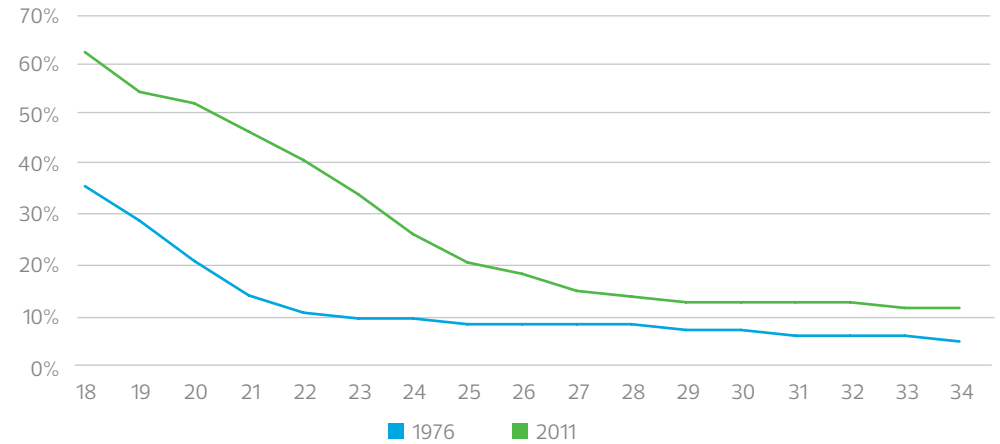


Figure 17: Proportion of Young Adults Attending an Educational Institution. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

- More likely to be working more than 40 hours per week (or in casual work while studying).

### Trends in Women Having Children Between Ages 20-29 and 30-39

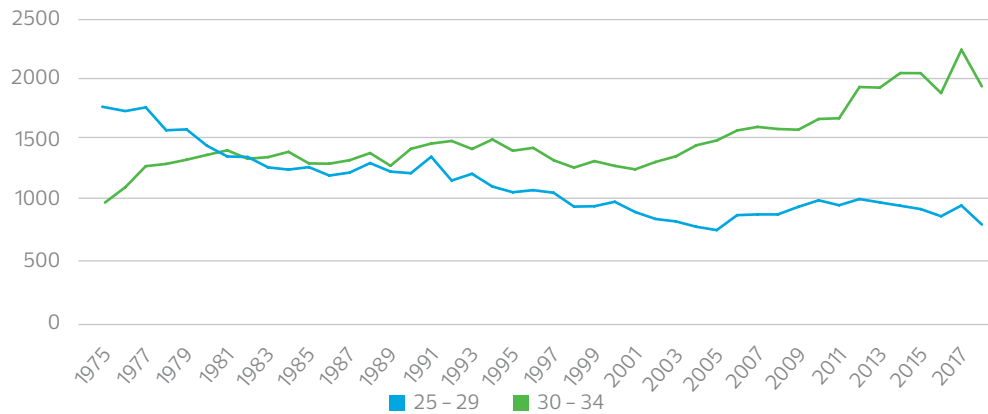


Figure 16: Trends in Women Having Children Between Ages 20-29 and 30-39. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

### Full-Time Employed Young Adults – Hours Worked per Week

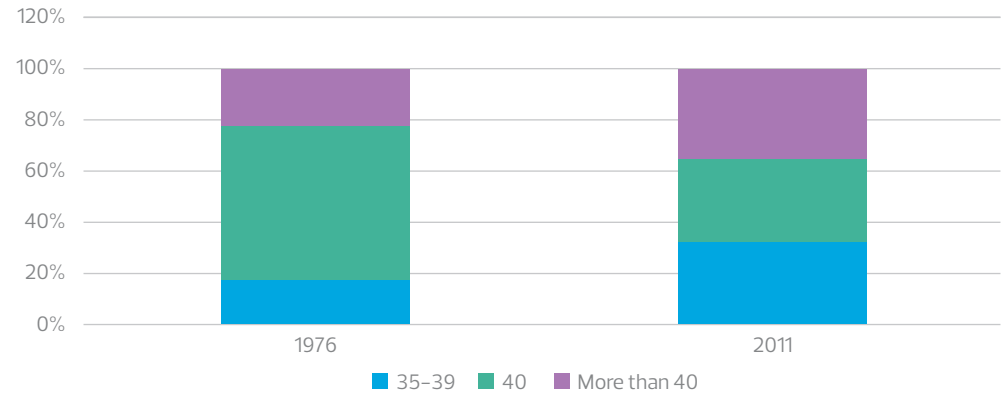


Figure 18: Full-Time Young Adults – Hours Worked per Week. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

## 9.4 ADDRESSING BRAND PERCEPTIONS OF THE SPORT

Bowls Australia, as the national peak body, supports the branding and awareness of Bowls with a national brand advertising campaign, national broadcasting of The Bowls Show on the Seven Network, Fox Sports and Kayo, in addition to annual event broadcasts, inclusive of 40-hours of Bowls Premier League and 10-hours of Australian Open coverage, and other irregular international events like the World Bowls Championships and World Bowls Challenge. At the grassroots Club level, Bowls Australia also invest in providing direct support to local clubs through employing a network of Regional Bowls Managers.

The "[Local Legends Wanted](#)" campaign was launched ahead of the 2019/20 summer period by Bowls Australia, and is aimed at increasing participation in the sport and improving club health by calling on individuals to join their local bowls club. Bowls Australia supported this campaign with above the line advertising investment across Australia, notably television, cinema and radio advertising, supported by online media. Local clubs can request campaign assets such as posters or social media advertising to be tailored to their specific club names, logos and call to action. It appears that no ACT clubs took up this offer to extend or expand the campaign locally within their Club in the ACT.

Bowls ACT should be supported and potentially funded to run these campaigns in the ACT region. This will build on the advertising contribution from Bowls Australia, to address the long term brand perception of bowls and encourage ACT residents to consider, trial, and play bowls.

This brand campaign ticks many of the boxes we have identified that are required to drive a change in general consumer perception, however is being run with little support from local Canberra clubs. Local clubs will need further logistical and material support to leverage the campaign to convert interest into members.



Figure 19: Local Legends Wanted National Marketing Campaign.  
Source: Bowls Australia

## 9.5 INVESTING TIME AND EFFORT IN SUPPORTING CHANGES TO GAME FORMATS TO ATTRACT PLAYERS WITH LESS TIME AVAILABLE.

Research conducted by Sweeney Sports on behalf of Bowls Australia identified that specific initiatives would have a positive impact on the appeal of bowls (Sweeney Sports; Martin Hirons, Anna Nguyen and George Camakaris, 2006). While this research was conducted in 2006, the findings are still relevant:

- Social competitions for friends to play together
- Club open days that have free clinics for beginners
- Relaxed dress standard; and
- Short games which go for no more than 2 hours.

It is worth noting that many clubs have relaxed dress standards, and have actively tried initiatives such as free coaching clinics, but have reported mixed experiences with the uptake and engagement from the broader community.

We observe that many of these initiatives have been conducted by clubs in isolation, both internally by individuals within the club and externally across the sport, and without a sustained broader strategy or marketing activity to promote and embed the changes effectively. As a result they have not achieved their aims.

Bowls Australia has developed Jack Attack, which is a shorter form, fast game designed to engage people with a competition form of bowls over a longer period of time. Jack Attack entails paying a nominal fee to Bowls Australia, and the club is provided with a "package" that includes instructions for recruiting volunteers, teams, and running the competition.

There has been a general reluctance and resistance in the ACT by clubs to trial Jack Attack as a format. Bowls ACT received a grant to establish a competition three years ago, however this was not successful due to several factors, including timing, recruitment, club engagement, and marketing. This is symptomatic of the over arching issues with driving new members and should be revisited as part of of an overall strategy.



Bowls Australia has provided some examples in our region where Jack Attack has been run successfully for clubs:

- **Bundanoon** – Club had been in serious financial difficulty and sought to reach out to the community with a Jack Attack tournament. The club saw ten teams across four Friday nights with the majority of players not being bowlers and many having not experienced the clubs facilities before. The club used Jack Attack to reconnect with the community and has seen increased profitability and membership increase to the point the club will be returning to pennant competition in 2020 after three years out.
- **Narooma** – The club had secured 14 teams for their first competition in late 2019. All 42 players were non-bowlers and the club saw benefits from increased bar, bistro and gaming revenue on each of the five Thursday nights at which the competition was hosted. The competition was deemed so successful the club will be hosting a second round with over 20 teams already committed to commence in Feb 2020.

- **Cooma** – Had hosted their own "Business Bowls" tournament and looked to refresh the competition with dwindling entries. Ten sides compete in the first season across four Friday nights. The club is looking to grow the competition with a second season starting February 2020.
- **Eden** – Used Jack Attack to reduce the workload on the volunteers with marketing materials, scorecards and training all made available. Players really enjoyed the format and the feedback was very positive. Club plans to host a second round in 2020.

## 9.6 PROMOTING DIVERSITY (ESPECIALLY GENDER AND ETHNICITY)

- Clubs would benefit from education and training on cultural and gender diversity.
- Gender diversity across clubs varies widely.
- We observed that the ethnic diversity in ACT clubs is very low. This represents a significant segment of the Canberra population that is being largely ignored by the sport and could be potentially significant membership opportunities. Our survey to bowls members indicated that:
  - 24% of bowls members were born or had parents born overseas, compared to 33% of ACT residents being born overseas.
  - 7% of bowls members in the ACT speak a language other than english at home, compared to 27.3% of ACT residents speaking a language other than english at home.





## 9.7 IMPROVE CLUB CAPABILITY TO ORGANISE THE GAME USING ONLINE TOOLS TO FACILITATE ACCESS FOR MEMBERS AND REDUCE VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATIVE WORKLOAD

Online booking systems have significantly changed many industries, such as the golf industry, making sports bookings easy and allowing for effective management of player information.

For the most part, bowls facilities in Canberra schedule games using manual systems organised and run by volunteers. Paper and telephone systems work effectively for many existing members, however it represents a barrier to new members, who are used to booking sport and events through online tools such as email, calendars, and other tools such as Facebook and social media.

Benefits for the club include :

- Reduces volunteer workload: The time taken to schedule rinks and games can be reduced significantly. Members can be notified automatically via email or text message of their booking and time, reducing phone calls and notifications, and reducing errors. Bookings can be organised and approved from anywhere.
- Attracts new customers: Online bookings for bowls is an example of a new way to attract customers because it efficiently helps players book reservations in their own time and space. If it is easy for players to do business with the clubs through their own mobile device, they may be more inclined to use the system more often and therefore increase business.
- Reduces no-shows: Online bookings can significantly reduce no shows. With a booking system in place, software can be set up to send reminders to both staff and players about their upcoming games. These notifications can help players to remember to show up on that day, or if they can no longer attend, a notification will help to remind them to either call in to cancel or just cancel on the booking form so that another person can book their spot.
- Immediate availability: Players are able to access online bookings 24/7 and whenever it is convenient for them. When a player books online they are able to get a response immediately rather than having to wait for the club to call back to know if the day is fully booked or not. Additionally, all the information they need is on the booking system.
- Faster payment: Online booking systems can require players to make payments immediately. Further, once players pay for their game, they are less inclined to cancel.

- Valuable insight about the business: Online booking systems can help determine what days are most popular and how to cater for the amount of players through the analytics that are provided.
- Marketing opportunities: Through online booking systems, clubs are able to see which players have stopped playing recently. If a player has not visited the club within the last three months, for example, the club could send them a promotional code to encourage them to start playing again.
- [Heidelberg Golf Club Victoria](#) is an example of an easy and efficient online booking system that players can access in their own time and space:
- Members simply choose their desired day to play, then they choose one of the available scheduled times.
- They are also able to book for more than one person, and they can see which rinks have other players in them.
- Further, since the player has chosen their rink and clicked 'Book Now', they are able to select additional 'add ons' such as making a reservation for dinner after the game, encouraging players to stay later at the club and use their facilities.



## 9.8 EVOLVE THE CULTURE TO GENUINELY WELCOME, INCLUDE, AND COACH NEW PLAYERS.

Section 17.6 of this report outlines how the lack of accessibility to quality coaching affects the number of members who participate in competitions and is a barrier to potential players.

One club provided an outline of their current efforts to coach new players, with a clearly established “pathway” that streamlined the process from phone call inquiry to on the green with a coaching team and then supporting new players on social days. This is good recruitment practice to convert interest into new members and players.

However, survey feedback indicates that coaching quality in some Canberra clubs could be improved significantly.

- Offering coaching to prospective players is an effective induction process to make them feel welcomed into both the club and the sport of bowls.
- Coaching provides guidance and technical expertise to help players improve both their attitude and performance.
- Coaches can help 'shepherd' new members into the club, encouraging them to start playing immediately and introducing them to other members to play with.
- Professional coaching can encourage players to participate more in bowls and, in particular, to step up into competitions.
- Advertising that a club has professional coaching can spark interest in prospective players to enquire about membership and playing at the club.



- Group coaching sessions or bowling 'clinics' can encourage players to attend the club and play more frequently, and is another opportunity for members to socialise.
- For example, a weekly women's bowling clinic – a six week package that includes one coaching session a week, followed by drinks and nibble catered by the club. This is an opportunity to increase revenue through the sport itself and its catering facilities, whilst encouraging members to participate in the sport more. This is also a way to attract new members as current members can encourage their friends outside of bowls to attend the clinic as a group activity.
- Other examples include private tuition packages (e.g. 6 x ½ hour sessions for \$60), private tuition playing lessons (e.g. playing a game of bowls with the coach), and group clinics.

"I would consider changing clubs to access a decent club coach to assist taking my game to another level."

"An important role of Bowls ACT in supporting the ACT bowls community is to foster the development / coaching of new bowlers."

"Bowls ACT could improve its services to stakeholders by providing more coaching / training sessions within clubs for those members not in ACT squads."

*Respondent Feedback  
(RSM Bowls Survey, 2019)*



## 9.9 FACILITIES COST MANAGEMENT AND RELIANCE ON EGM REVENUE AND COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS SCHEME

Recommendation: Clubs should redefine and adopt new business models that do not rely on EGM revenues and Community Contributions Scheme to fund facilities maintenance. Facilities owners will need to refocus effort on making the bowling facility more self-sustaining. At the same time, increasing bowling participation amongst all club members will improve the perception and value of these facilities to the broader club membership. Host clubs and affiliated bowls clubs can redefine their relationships so that revenues and costs can be shared between both entities. Smaller standalone clubs can reduce their reliance on EGM revenue.

Findings: Bowls Clubs have historically used "Club" revenues to offset facility management, maintenance and other costs. Club profit from other club activities, such as EGM or poker machine revenues, bar, and catering have all contributed towards the upkeep of facilities. Over time, margins from club activities are being eroded, while overall competition has increased, especially among bar and catering offerings.

The decline in bowls club membership, combined with declining participation in electronic gaming will result in an ever diminishing club revenue base in the coming years. Clubs will need to address membership numbers, diversify activities or seek other revenue sources. Membership and playing fees will be required to fund a significantly higher portion of asset and facility maintenance.

In larger community clubs, the role of the existing community contributions scheme adds an additional factor in this situation. The scheme has the purpose of returning EGM revenue to the community and has been integral to the upkeep and maintenance of these bowls facilities.

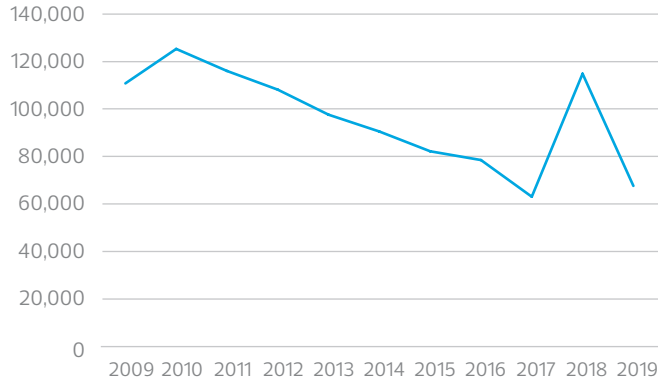
For bowls to be successful in a future of significantly reduced EGM revenue, it will need to reduce its reliance on EGM revenue and Community Contributions Scheme and adopt different cost recovery models to fund facilities. the sport of bowls.

The data on the following charts illustrates the publicly reported information for Community Contributions since 2009. It outlines Gross Gaming Machine Revenue.

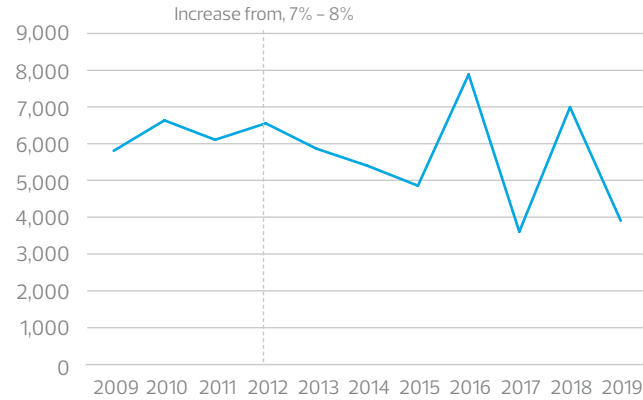
- Gross Gaming Machine Revenue illustrates the individual performance of gaming machines total revenue. Note that while there is a decline in revenue overall, some individual clubs have recorded increases based on improving their individual market share of EGM revenue.
- The Minimum Requirement value of community contributions illustrates the minimum amount required to invest in all community contributions. Note that the Scheme implemented two increases in the percentages of NGR that have been noted on the charts.
- The Eligible Contributions or the value of reported contributions within the club.

### Belconnen Bowling Club

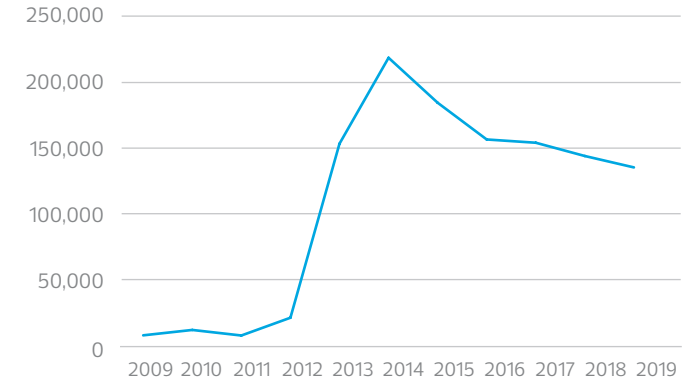
Gross Gaming Machine Revenue



Minimum Requirement

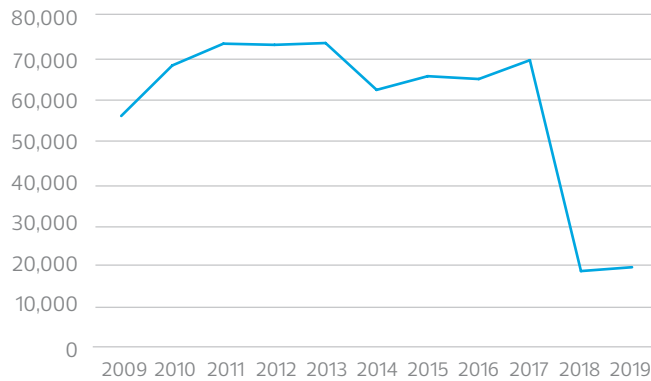


Eligible Contributions (\$)

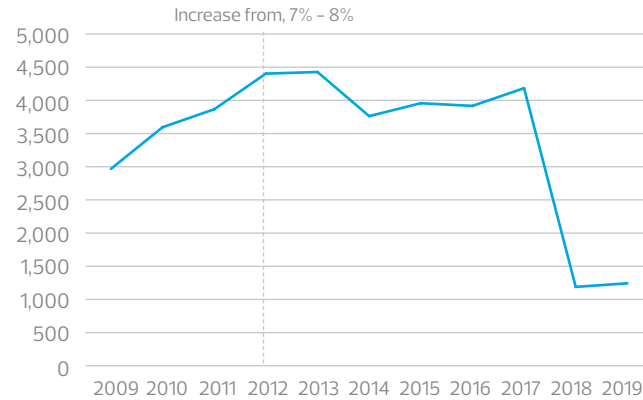


### Canberra Bowling Club

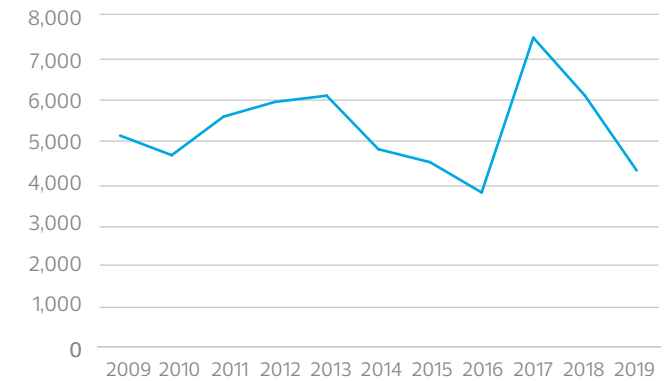
Gross Gaming Machine Revenue



Minimum Requirement

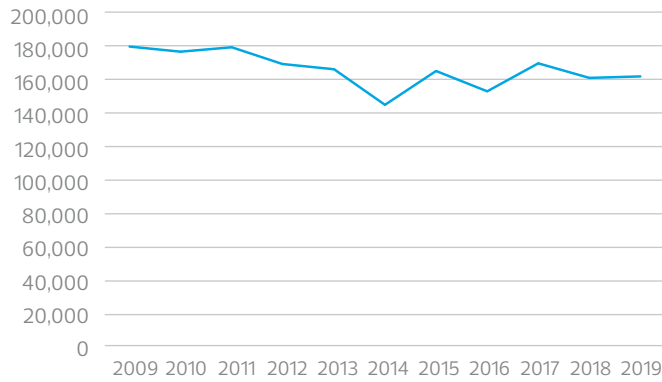


Eligible Contributions (\$)

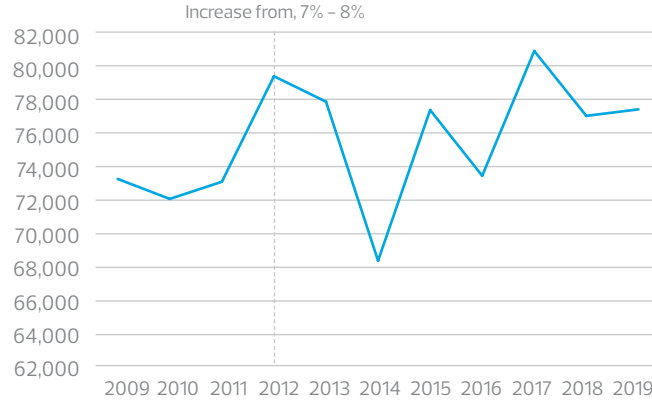


## Weston Bowling Club

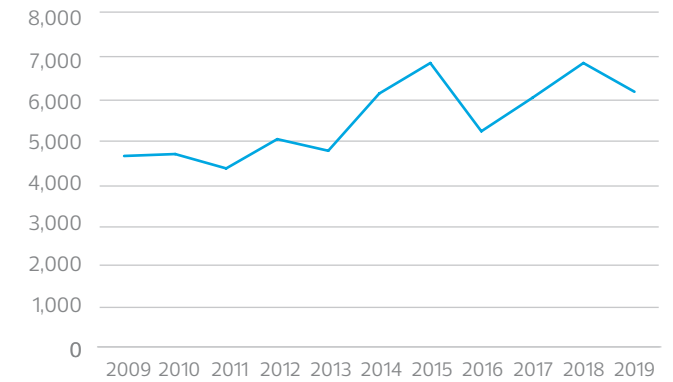
### Gross Gaming Machine Revenue



### Minimum Requirement

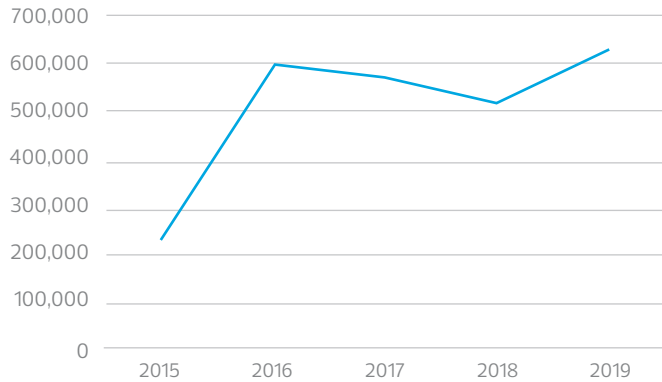


### Eligible Contributions (\$)

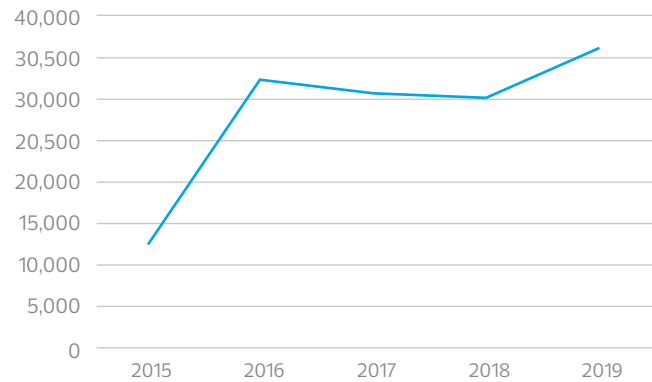


## The RUC

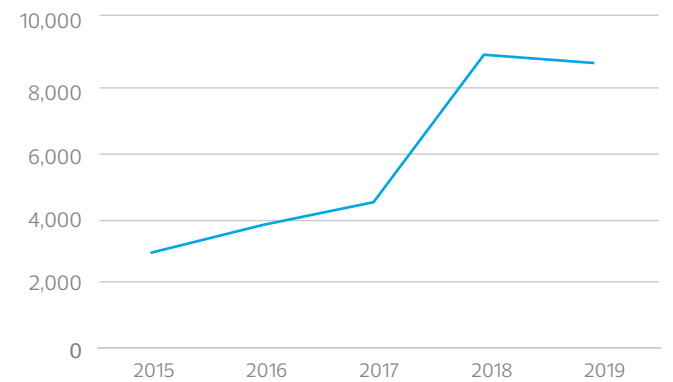
### Gross Gaming Machine Revenue



### Minimum Requirement



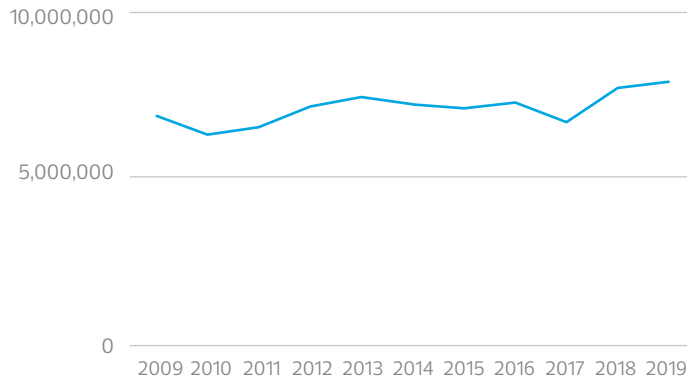
### Eligible Contributions (\$)



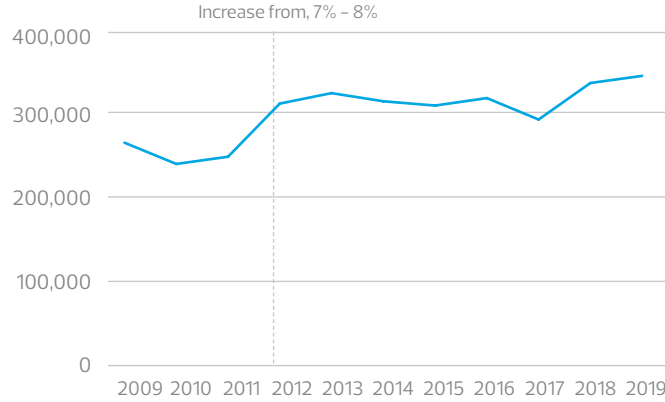


## Tuggeronang Town Centre Sports Club

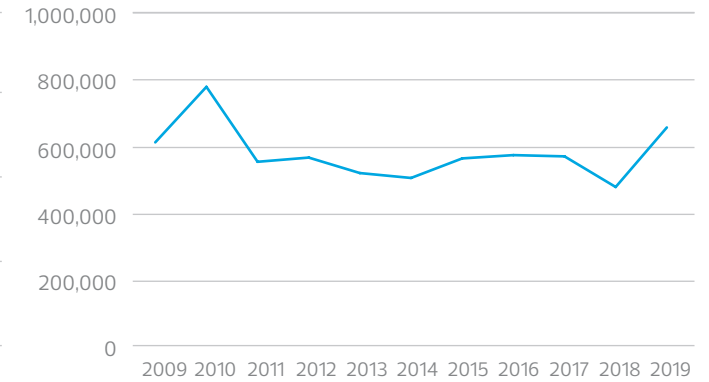
### Gross Gaming Machine Revenue



### Minimum Requirement

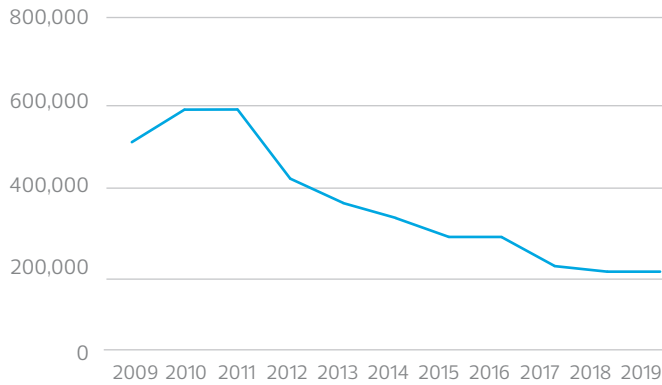


### Eligible Contributions (\$)

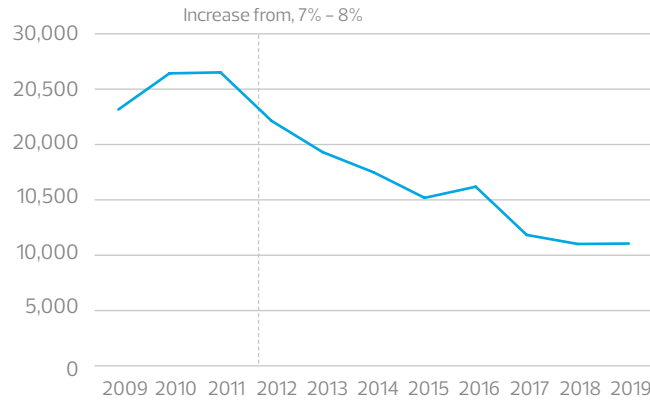


## Yowani Country Club

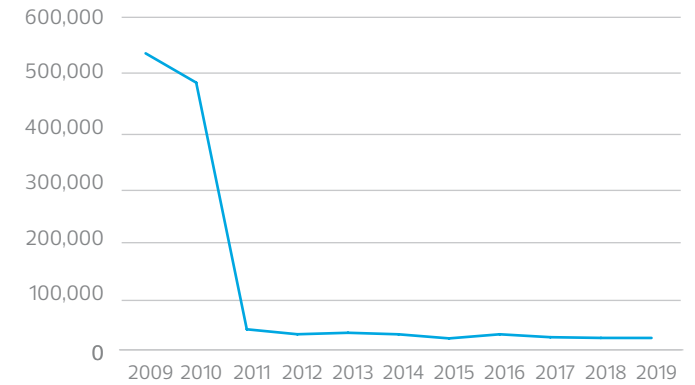
### Gross Gaming Machine Revenue



### Minimum Requirement



### Eligible Contributions (\$)



## 9.9.1 IMPACT OF THE COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS SCHEME ON FUNDING ONGOING MAINTENANCE OF BOWLING FACILITIES

With the exception of the RUC and Yowani, Host Clubs such as The Labor Club and Tuggeranong Vikings have used the community contributions scheme as the main reason for justifying continued financial support for the maintenance of bowls facilities, in spite of the lack of revenue and poor cost recovery earned from the greens themselves.

- The Vikings Group estimates that facilities cost \$210,000 to maintain, which offsets a significant amount of the \$350,000 in community contributions for the entire Tuggeranong site.
- The Labor Club estimates that the investment in greens facility maintenance is approximately \$200,000 which is substantially higher than the Community Contributions obligation to provide \$78,000 for Weston Creek.

All host clubs expressed a general good will and strong intent to support their affiliated bowls clubs, however most do not consider greens a revenue opportunity or a core business driver and raised the issues of high and increasing maintenance costs. While community contributions provide a means of justifying the support, it was clearly communicated to our consulting team that it was only community contributions that enabled the continued financial support and maintenance of greens facilities. Now that host clubs are facing broader economic and financial pressures, affiliated bowls club membership is declining, and contributions are declining in line with EGM revenue, the host club is finding it increasingly difficult to justify costs to the business. Simply, if the gap between facilities maintenance and community contributions continues to widen, then those host clubs are more likely to divest themselves of the greens facilities and assets in the future.

In the accounting for the community contributions scheme, any revenue from the bowling greens reduces the amount of community contribution claimable. While larger clubs treat community contributions spent on bowls maintenance as a useful means of meeting their obligations under the scheme, there has been no reason for host clubs to make bowls greens a profitable venture, because if the facilities were making a profit, there would be nothing to claim under the scheme, because revenue would exceed expenses. Hence, bowls facilities have always been viewed as a cost burden.

However, these arrangements have also disguised a fundamental business problem created by the host/ affiliate club relationship – that is the facility owner carries the costs for the maintenance of an asset – but the Bowls Club controls the majority of the revenue sourced from the facility.

## 9.9.2 ABOUT COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS SCHEME

ACT Clubs who operate EGMs are required under the Gaming Machine Act 2004 to make community contributions from the revenue earned from the use EGMs. Access Canberra regulates and monitors club compliance on behalf of the ACT Gambling and Racing Commission.

The minimum community contribution rate for clubs has been increased from 8% to 8.8% of net gaming machine revenue (NGMR) as of 1 July 2019. NGMR is calculated as gross gaming machine revenue less any amount of tax payable, and 24% less of the gross gaming machine revenue. Funding can be provided as “in-kind” or as monetary contributions, with restrictions on the level of in-kind support depending upon the size of the club and the type of in-kind support.

The objectives of the scheme are to ensure that Clubs provide a portion of their revenue from gaming machines back to the ACT community. Clubs are required to make community purpose contributions that assist the community in one or more of the following ways:

- Supporting a charitable cause
- Providing recreation opportunities
- Providing education opportunities
- Improving social inclusion, equality or cultural diversity
- Benefitting or increasing participation in community sport
- Preventing or mitigating harm caused by drug or alcohol misuse or dependence
- Benefitting or increasing participation in women's sport conducted in the ACT, or with participants mainly based in the ACT.
- Providing relief or assistance to people living in Australia following a natural disaster
- And, in response to COVID-19 impacts, providing relief or assistance to the community in relation to a COVID-19 emergency.

There are specific rules around the eligible expenditure that can be claimed against contributions that relate to sport, which include (but are not limited to):

- Professional and professional men's sport expenditure is excluded from the scheme.
- Women's sport is incentivised, with a claim of \$4 for every \$3 spent on eligible contributions supporting women's sport. (This includes women's bowls competitions.)
- All maintenance for sports facilities (such as bowling greens) can be claimed if the facility has “open community access”, less any revenue such as fees charged or collected by the club. Maintenance costs include water charges, staff wages, maintenance equipment and consumables.

### 9.9.3 IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS SCHEME TO ACT BOWLS FACILITIES

- All bowls facilities in the ACT are co-located with clubs who operate EGMs and all host clubs / facilities owners must meet the requirements of the scheme.
- The importance of the community contributions scheme to the ongoing support of bowls facilities cannot be understated. Community contributions have provided significant protection for natural grass greens facilities through enabling clubs to offset their increasing maintenance costs despite a declining market and revenue from the use of these facilities. However, the long term decline on gaming revenues and other associated impacts, such as increasing maintenance costs and declining participation, indicates that the scheme will not provide enough protection for the future, in light of host club decisions.
- During our consultation, all Clubs raised significant concerns with the scheme, and highlighted the challenges of investing community contribution amounts into bowls facilities, given declining gaming revenues: The Labor Club raised concerns that given the declining performance of NGMR on the Weston Creek site, the club was finding that eligible community contributions were too low to meet the full maintenance costs of the greens facilities. The Government has recently changed the scheme so that licensees with more than one venue must make community purpose contributions totalling 8% of NGMR across all their venues, rather than for each venue separately.

- Vikings responded to similar issues with declining NGMR by ceasing the paid employee "Bowls Coordinator" role, which has been largely replaced by volunteer support from the Bowls club and tightening parameters around Bowls club usage of facilities. They have also requested financial contributions from the respective bowling clubs in order to offset costs.
- Some clubs eg. Yowani and RUC, have moved away from reliance on gaming revenues, and consequently community contributions become less and less relevant to facilities as an incentive or opportunity to support the maintenance and management.
- In the context of large community clubs, the bowls members are only a declining and small portion of any club community and there are many demands for club resources. To a certain extent the disproportionate spend on bowls compared to spending on facilities for non-bowls members has been justified by the ability to offset community contribution obligations.

### 9.9.4 IMPORTANCE OF BOWLS COMMUNITY TO CLUBS

- While the cost of maintenance for facilities is largely viewed as a burden of cost for host clubs, bowls members are recognised for their economic and social contribution to the club.
- Visiting clubs frequently and multiple times per week, when comparing visitation, it can be observed that members are rarely attending the club without playing bowls.
- According to our Bowls Survey, the average bowls club member is also a member of 4 other local licensed community clubs. This suggests that bowls members may be considered the "frequent fliers" of community clubs, with high participation rates in clubs generally.

Club visit frequency vs Bowls Participation frequency

ACT Bowls Survey "How often do you visit your club?" and "How often do you play bowls?"

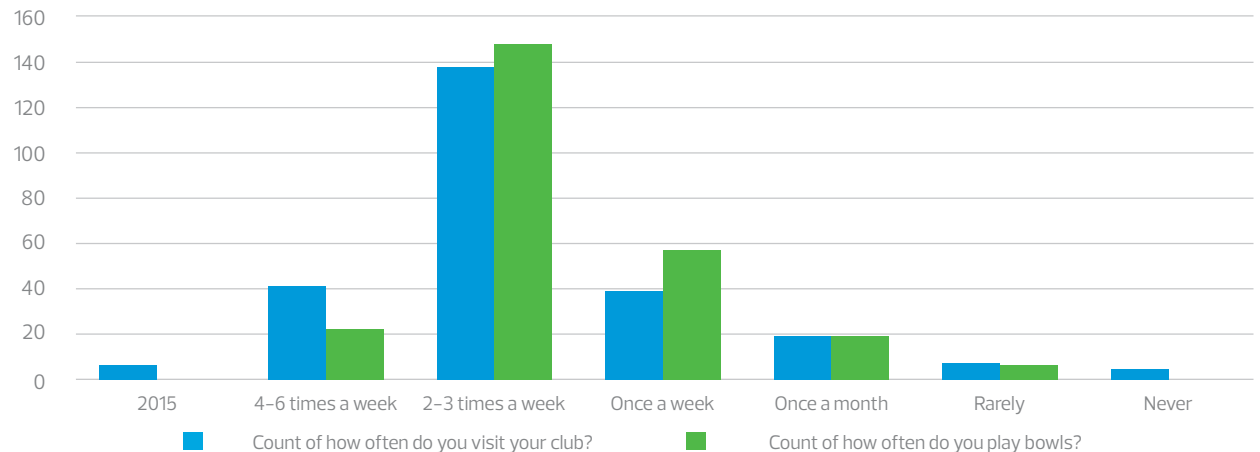


Figure 20: Comparison of Frequency of Club visits vs Bowls Participation  
Source: ACT Bowls Survey 2019

10.0

## MEMBERS AND PLAYERS



## 10.0 MEMBERS AND PLAYERS

Recommendation: Clubs should prioritise facilities maintenance in the disbursement of fees. Fees for all forms of the game should contribute to greens maintenance. Where bowls clubs are affiliated with larger community clubs, an appropriate portion of fees for greens maintenance should be disbursed to the facility owner.

All asset owners should be maintaining sinking funds for reinvestment into facilities maintenance and renewal. Clubs should also implement consistent processes to apply fee increases consistent with economic inflation such as applying annual CPI amount to membership fees and wage price index to greens fees.

Findings: Players and Members are investing commensurate amounts of personal funds to play that are consistent with costs to play comparative sports. The average player (who plays 2.5 times per week over 48 weeks) is spending \$1,555.63 per year or \$29.69 per week to play bowls. If we include travel costs to and from the club, this amounts to an investment of \$2,040.13 per annum to play bowls. On average, members already pay amounts consistent with (lower range in cost) golf fees and higher than tennis fees to play bowls

## 10.1 MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS – CURRENT COSTS TO PLAY BOWLS IN THE ACT

Clubs shared their fee structures and costs to play with RSM. We calculated the costs to play for an "average player" based on our survey results which indicated on average, players were most likely to play 2.5 times per week. The following information for December 2019:

- Clubs supplied or published fee information for memberships, greens, and other fees.
- Calculated average travel times based on individual

club membership and estimated costs for private and public transport. Private transport we used the Australian Tax Office travel rates and Public transport we used the Transport Canberra published bus and light rail rates.

- Bowls equipment was estimated based on advertised retail prices. Uniform prices were based on published or submitted club data.
- The RSM ACT Bowls Survey results for average frequency and rates of play were used to inform quantitative calculations. Note that we assumed that frequency of play is over 48 weeks per year, but figures have been "annualised" to 52 weeks per year.

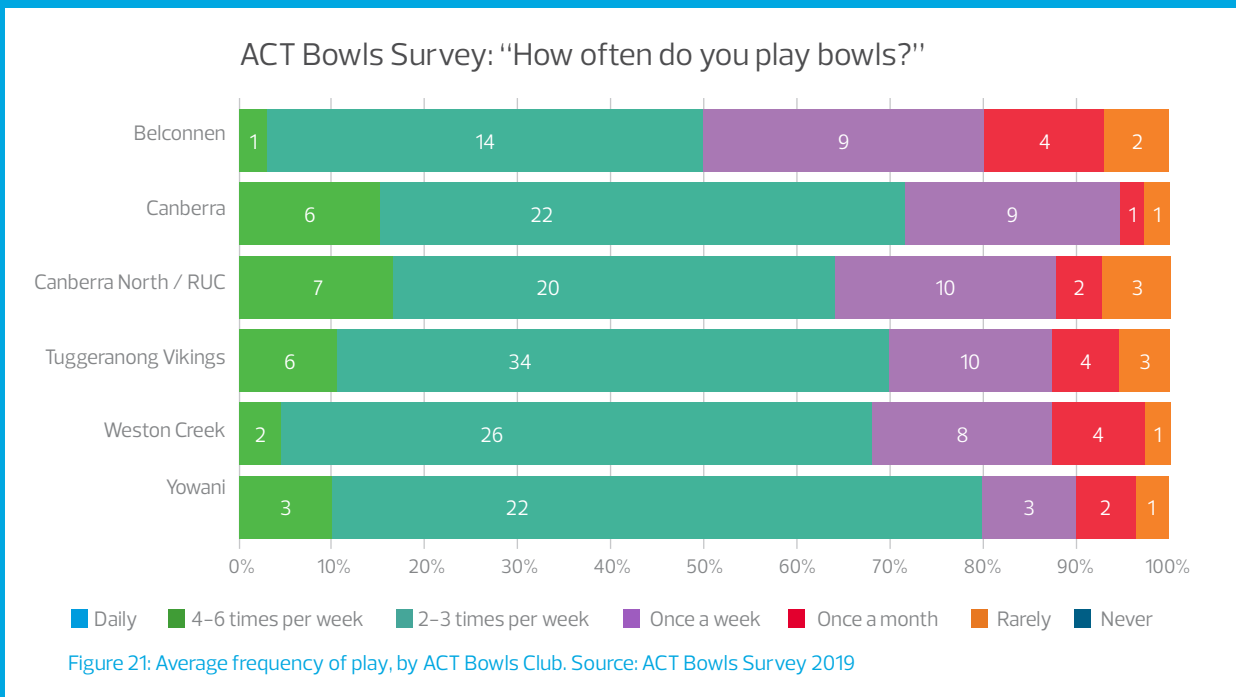


Figure 22 illustrates that the cost to play for a member is \$1,555.63 per annum. This is in addition to the start up costs including equipment and uniform purchases. The average cost as indicated by the clubs is \$614 as a result the first year of play can cost \$2,170. Travel adds an additional \$630 to the total.

Member Cost	Average \$ All Canberra Clubs
Average Green Fees Per Week	29.69
Average Annual Membership Fees	130.63
Total Average Annual Green Fees (48 wks play)	1,425.00
Annual Cost to Play Excluding Travel	1,555.63
Average Weekly Cost to Play Excluding Travel	29.92
Average Weekly Travel Costs	10.09
Annual Travel Costs	484.50
Total Annual Cost to Play including Travel	2,040.13

Figure 22: ACT Members Average Annualised Cost to Play Social Bowls  
Source: Club Committee submissions, published fee and uniform pricing information

## 10.2 COMPARISON OF COSTS TO PLAY WITH OTHER SPORTS

There is limited published research on the amounts that individuals pay to play sports. We selected two sports for comparison:

- Golf: Golf fees are set with a high annual membership fee in order to prioritise funds for the maintenance of the golf course and amenities. This ranges from \$875 up to \$5,200 per annum depending upon the golf club. This is a capitation fee which is paid whether or not the individual plays. A smaller green fee average of \$5.00 per game and competition entry average of \$12.50 is charged.
- Tennis: Tennis fees are set with a low annual membership fee which averages across ACT clubs as \$188 per annum. Court fees are charged at an average of \$8 per game.
- Notably, the frequency of play between bowls (120 x p.a), golf (55 x p.a.) and tennis (42 x p.a) and the subsequent setting of the green or court fees have a significant impact on the overall amounts paid to play these sports.

We have used two comparison points.

1. Published fees for ACT Golf and Tennis clubs were used to calculate an average price comparison based on similar criteria to bowls analysis. This is outlined in detail in section 17.1 later in this report. The ACT Comparison illustrates the differences in set up and weekly/ annual costs to play as follows:

Type of Sport	\$ Set Up Inc equipment, club uniform	\$ Cost to Play Per Week	\$ Cost to Play Per Year
		Inc Membership Greens/ Court Fees Competition Entry Fees Travel to venue	Inc Membership Greens/ Court Fees Competition Entry Fees Travel to venue
Bowls – average player	613.63	42.03	2,040.13
Tennis – organised	240	18.52	963.28
Golf	510	44.53	2,315.53

Note that tennis court hire has a wide variation on fees (from \$2 to \$18 per hire) and Golf membership fees have a wide variation between club fees (from \$825 to \$5,200 per annum). Frequency of play was calculated using Ausplay reported data and the ACT Bowls Survey.

2. A survey by the University of Western Sydney of 696 people, showed that current costs for organised sports participation included registration, club facility / fees, coaching and equipment range from \$342 for Rugby League through to \$1,641 for golf." (Parry, 2018)

- Bowls in NSW on average was costing \$1,380 per annum (including travel) to play.
- Respondents were paying over \$1,100 on average to play a sport... This excludes travel costs, which added \$450 to the total."

### Average Sport \$ Cost in NSW (August 2017/18)

(Includes registration, insurance, club/ facility fees, coaching, equipment. Travel costs average \$450 additional)

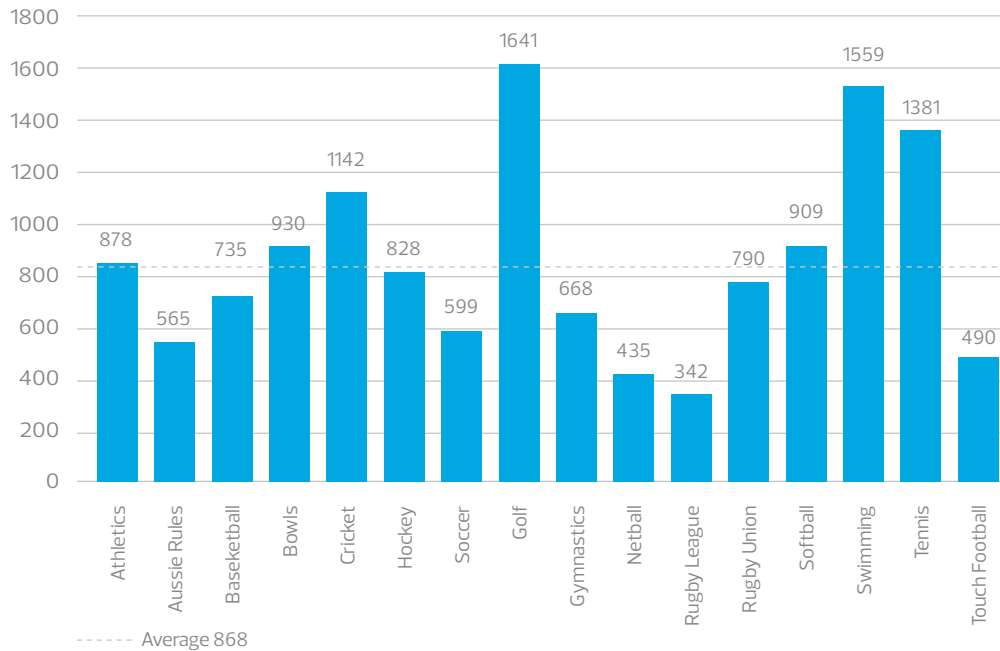


Figure 23: Comparison of Cost to play sport in NSW  
Source Westen Sydney University School of Business Survey Participation in Organised Sport September 2018.

## 10.2.1 VALUE OF MEMBERSHIPS TO MEMBERS.

- Over 90% of survey respondents said membership gives them value for money – RUC and Vikings have the highest satisfaction rates.

### Does your Bowling Club membership give you value for money?

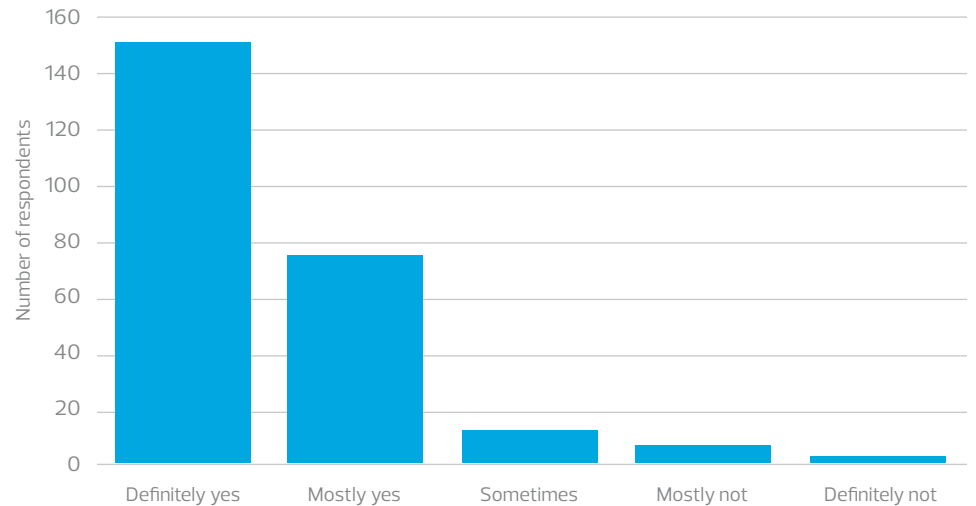


Figure 24: All Club Members Attitudes to Club Membership Value for Money  
Source: ACT Bowls Survey 2019

- In RSM's Bowls Survey, we asked members if they felt their bowls club membership gave them "value for money". Overwhelmingly members felt that yes, their club membership gave them value for money. When examining the data against player data, we observed that:
  - Satisfaction rate increases the more times per week that a player attends the club.
  - Of the small numbers (20%) that were not satisfied, they were more likely to be players who had been members of the club.

## ACT Bowls Survey: "Does your Bowling Club membership give you value for money?"

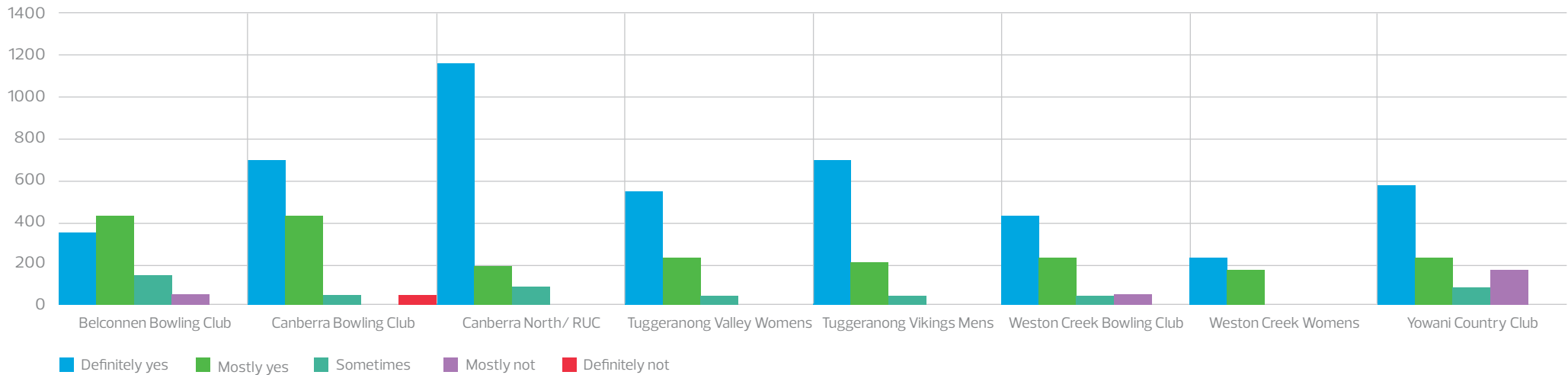


Figure 25: By Individual Club, Members Attitudes to Club Membership Value for Money  
Source: ACT Bowls Survey 2019

## ACT Bowls Survey: "What is your Total HH Income before Tax?"

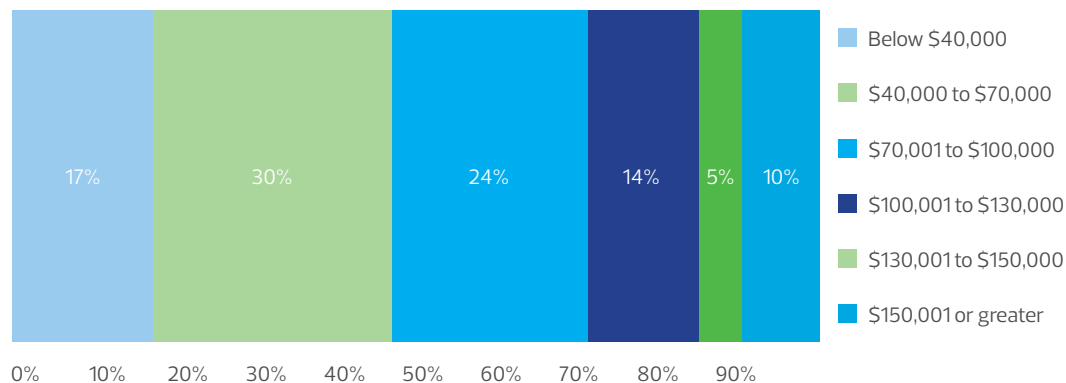


Figure 26: Household Income before Tax  
Source: ACT Bowls Survey 2019

The survey also collected information on household income and asked for attitudes towards the amount they paid in memberships and fees

- The survey indicated that generally, players do not have financial difficulty paying membership fees.
- Almost 50% of members are earning less than \$70,000 – over 80% of these individuals are retired and likely to be reliant on superannuation, retirement income or pensions.
- 89% do not find it difficult to pay membership fees
- 0% would not change clubs if a more cost-effective option became available
- 16% referenced fees being too expensive as a reason to move clubs, while only 2% have moved for membership fee reasons
- If prices were to increase – players would expect more focus on better greens and facilities



## 10.3 MEMBERSHIP CAPACITY TO PAY VS WILLINGNESS TO PAY TO PLAY THE SPORT

**Recommendation:** Clubs should restructure fees to build more stable revenue, while facilitating payment terms that support new and ongoing members. The average player pays across membership, greens fees, and competitions fees in excess of \$1,500 per annum to play, excluding travel expenses. Changing the fee structure to golf fee model – claiming the majority of these expenses through membership fees, with fortnightly small direct debit payments, and correspondingly reducing greens fees to minimal levels would mean that revenue could be better managed and deployed to fund greens maintenance. A tiered structure would continue to provide low fee options for pensioners, and may provide limited use options eg. “barefoot” bowl style membership for social players.

**Findings:** Membership fees and greens fees are charged separately by bowls clubs in the ACT. Most of the club members pay membership fees annually, in a lump sum, whereas greens fees and competition fees are paid as per each green and events entry. Therefore, compared to membership fees, greens fees are less stable and less consistent from a revenue perspective, being more subject to weather conditions, events scheduling, and other factors.

A key insight from the analysis of golf is that memberships are structured with a high membership fee and a low participation rate or greens fee. This is done to ensure a more consistent revenue base from players. Maintenance costs are a relatively fixed for a golf course, so fees are charged on a consistent basis, and not tied so directly to usage.

Any proposed changes in fees would need to:

- Be applied universally and fairly to all players.
  - Seek to make minimal increases in overall total fees for players.
  - Be structured so as to protect low fee options for pensioners and disadvantaged groups.
  - Offer flexible payment terms, eg. Weekly, fortnightly or monthly payment terms to minimise the impact on fixed income budgets.
  - Recognise that the average bowler expends \$2,040.13 per year including travel. There is limited scope to increase the cost of play, however we recommend that the fixed component of this expenditure is increased and the variable reduced.
- The average cost to maintain 3 greens across the clubs surveyed is \$167,990. This cost per member based on the average number of members of each club of 176 is \$954. Ideally fixed fees per member should be set at a level that covers the cost of maintenance. They should be charged weekly or fortnightly for the period of membership.
  - The reduction in greens fees will need to be offset with a lower variable expenditure. Increased fixed fees will enhance the sustainability of clubs as they should meet the cost of maintenance while variable costs can be met by community contributions.

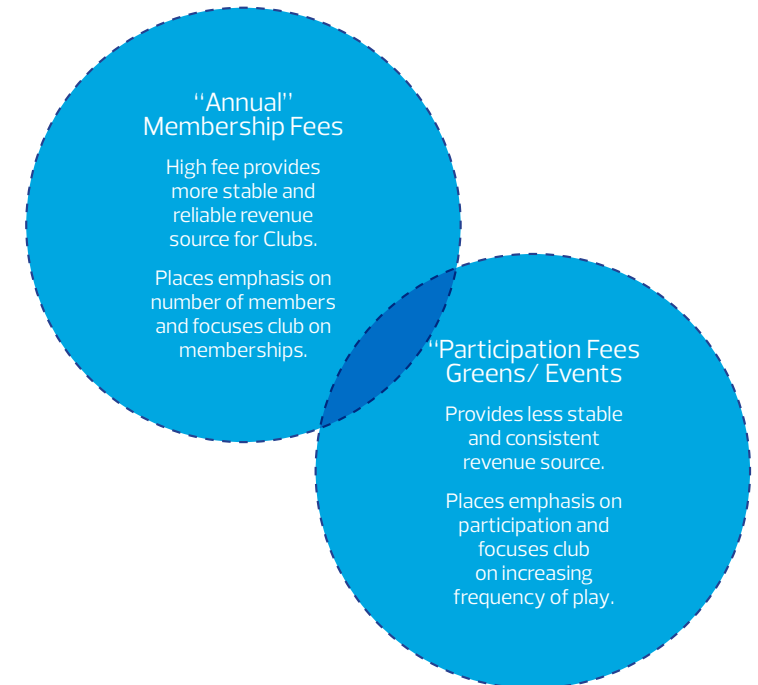


Figure 27: Illustration of Fee Attributes Membership and Participation Fees



## 10.4 DISBURSEMENT OF FEES TOWARDS ASSET MAINTENANCE COSTS

Our analysis indicates that a significant portion of the fees players are paying to play is not being disbursed to facility maintenance. Instead, it is being directed towards funding competition organisation, promotions, prize money, catering, and other activities.

A base of 108 members paying the average cost to play would fund an average club's full maintenance costs for 3 natural grass greens.

(Total cost to maintain greens)

(Minimum number of members required to fund greens maintenance)

(Average Cost to play per member)



$$\text{\$167,990} / \text{\$1,555.63} = 108$$

Clubs should review the fees collected for playing the game, and prioritise maintenance over other costs of organising the game.

- A concern with raffles and prizes is that many clubs pay out prizes as cash. This is a key income source that is not being retained by the club, and is largely being returned as cash to members who win.
- Bowls clubs should consider replacing the cash prizes with non-cash prizes such as club vouchers (e.g. dinner voucher, social bowls voucher) for raffle prizes, which would encourage member participations and increase member activity within the club. The prize will therefore impact the club margin, not the cash balance.

- The bowls committee of the RUC noted that although it was not an easy or welcome transition to replace cash prizes with "RUC bucks" (i.e. vouchers for members to spend in the club), however they recognised the financial value to the club and report that it has not negatively impacted long term on competition participation from their members.
- Other prize opportunities, such as tying in prizes to the broader customer relationship marketing strategies of the host club, or pursuing sponsorship "in kind" arrangements can also be explored.

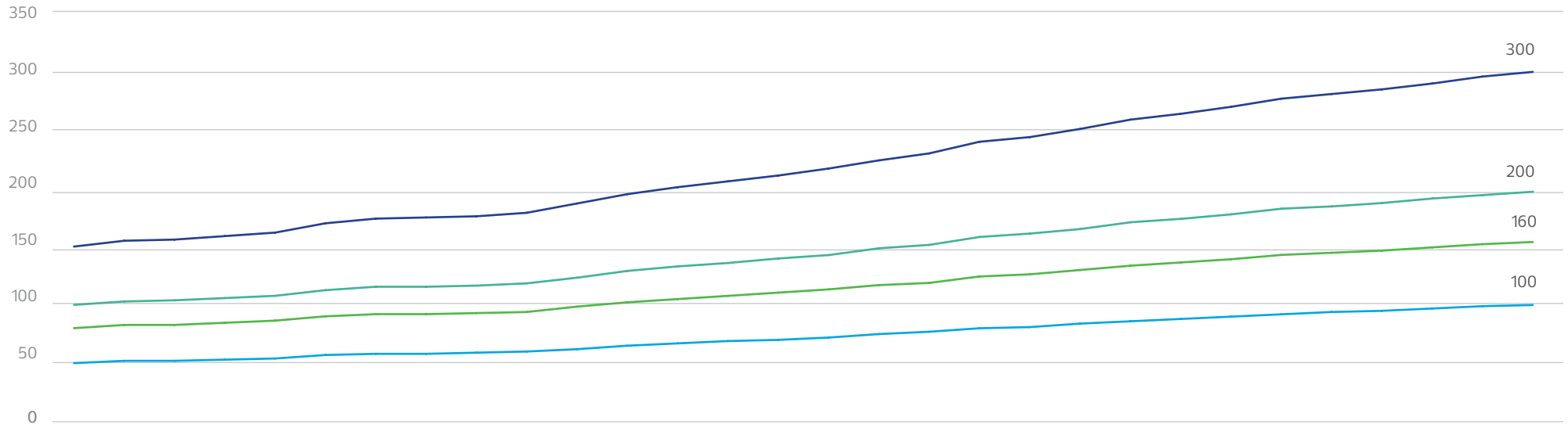
## 10.5 APPLYING ANNUAL FEE INCREASES CONSISTENTLY AND APPROPRIATELY TO CPI AND WAGE PRICE INDEX.

Anecdotally, it is recognised that Clubs do not have robust processes to apply annual inflation to membership and greens fees. There are examples in some individual clubs where members have voted consistently over many years for no increases to membership and greens fees.

The impact is simply that revenue continues to decline in real terms because income is not keeping up with inflation – either CPI or wages. Wages inflation is usually higher than CPI, so it's important to apply wages inflation to playing fees so as to adequately allow for increases in greenkeeper wages.

The following figures illustrate that since 1990, if membership and greens fees had been increased with CPI, today the fees would have doubled.

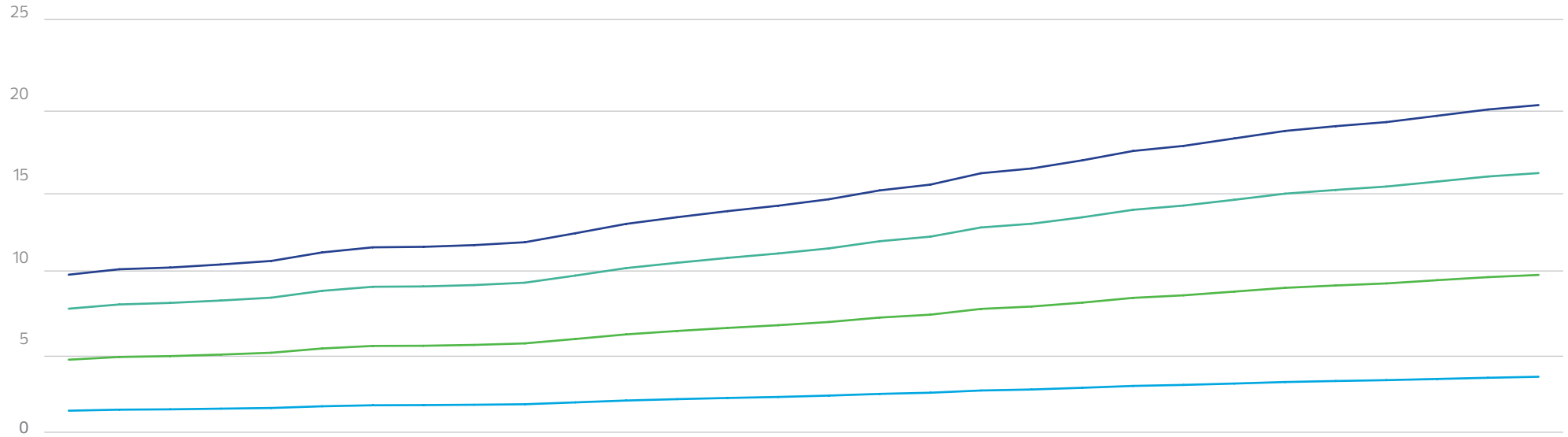
## Membership Fees CPI index



	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<b>\$50</b>	50	52	52	53	54	57	58	58	59	60	62	65	67	69	70	72	75	77	80	81	84	86	88	90	92	94	95	97	99	100
<b>\$80</b>	80	83	83	85	87	91	93	93	94	95	100	104	107	110	113	116	120	122	128	130	134	138	141	144	148	150	152	155	158	160
<b>\$100</b>	100	103	104	106	108	113	116	116	117	119	124	130	134	137	141	144	150	153	160	163	167	173	176	180	185	187	190	194	197	200
<b>\$150</b>	150	155	156	159	162	170	174	175	176	179	187	195	201	206	211	217	224	230	240	244	251	259	264	270	277	281	285	290	296	300

Figure 28: Modelling CPI increases to Membership Fees  
Source: ABS

### Green Fees CPI index



	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	
<b>\$2</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
<b>\$5</b>	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	9	9	9	9	9	9	10	10	10	
<b>\$8</b>	8	8	8	8	9	9	9	9	9	10	10	10	11	11	11	12	12	12	13	13	13	14	14	14	15	15	15	15	16	16	
<b>\$10</b>	10	10	10	11	11	11	12	12	12	12	12	13	13	14	14	14	15	15	16	16	17	17	18	18	18	19	19	19	20	20	

Figure 29: Modelling CPI increases to Greens Fees  
Source: ABS



### Green Fees WPI index

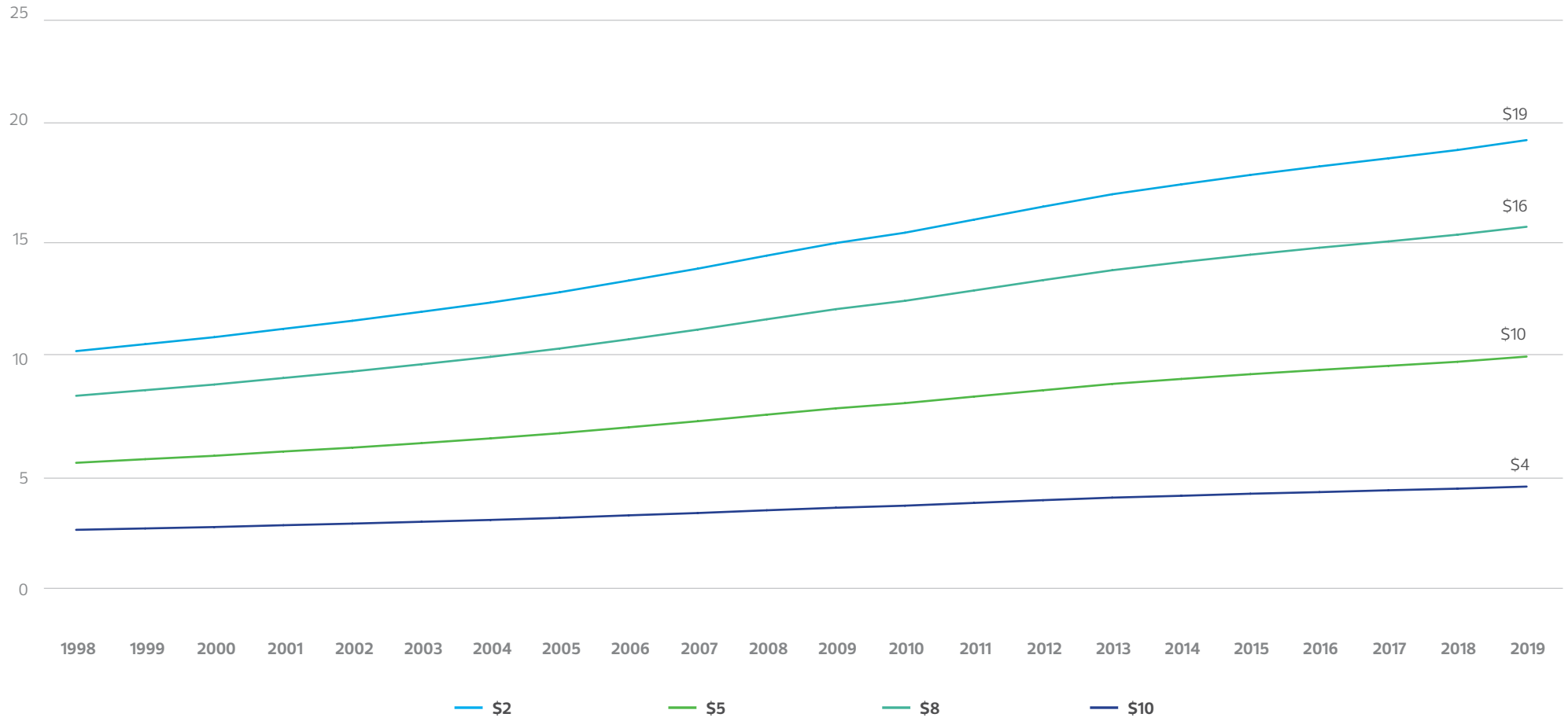


Figure 30: Modelling Wages Price Increases to Greens Fees  
Source: ABS

11.0

## THE SPORT – BOWLS AUSTRALIA / BOWLS ACT / GREENKEEPERS ACT

## 11.1 BOWLS ACT

The role of peak bodies for organising sports is usually focused on governance of the sport and driving elite representation. That is, managing standards and accreditation of rules, regulations, officiating, organising and running state and national competitions, and international player selection. The national peak body obviously has a national and international view, with the states representing the grassroots of the sport, supporting, advocating, and representing clubs and individual members.

Bowls Australia has commissioned a number of key pieces of research and compiled census reports, which have informed some of the analysis in this report. There are several initiatives that Bowls Australia has made available to Canberra clubs which address some of the branding and engagement issues with the current perceptions and ways of engaging with the game, including:

- **“Local Legends Wanted” National Consumer Marketing Campaign:** Aimed at increasing participation in the sport and improving club health, by rebranding the sport as younger, engaging, and energetic. The campaign targets men and women in their 30's to 50's. It appears that Clubs have not leveraged this campaign in a local context in Canberra.
- **The Development of “Jack Attack”:** A short form, modified version of the game that encourages engagement in a tournament style competition.
- **Launching a “Roll back the clock” program:** This program targets over 65's who have not engaged with bowls previously under the national “Find your 30 program”.

## 11.2 INCREASE THE NUMBER OF NEW PLAYERS AND BOWLS PARTICIPATION RATES

Recommendation: Build on the consumer marketing campaign by seeking opportunities to support clubs to modernise by leading and coordinating shared services such as:

- Develop membership “CRM” (customer relationship management) resources eg. “membership drive” pack to encourage improvement in membership acquisition practices and processes, collection, and retention of shared data resources.
- Invest in systems and technology development to facilitate player engagement with the game and competitions so that the organising of the game can be modernised. A membership platform that can be adopted across all clubs will facilitate up-take and support the organising of the game.

Findings: While Clubs are responsible for increasing their individual membership, the role of Bowls Australia and Bowls ACT is to build the brand of the sport and the game. Investing resources into consumer marketing, branding, and engagement is critical to changing consumer perceptions of the sport as only for “old people”. Bowls Australia and Bowls ACT have established some strong marketing platforms on which state bodies and local clubs can build, however there appears to be some fundamental gaps with translating these programs into increased memberships at the grassroots, club level. During our consultations with Clubs we discussed and observed a number of barriers when trying to implement and trial new game formats and initiatives. Peak bodies can provide additional material support to clubs to overcome these issues. We acknowledge the resourcing and staffing limitations of Bowls ACT and recognise that any initiatives recommended may require additional funding or need to be self funding in order to develop.



### 11.3 LEADERSHIP TO DRIVE EVOLUTION OF GAME FORMATS

**Recommendation:** Add a third stream to existing Pennant and Championships competitions organised by Bowls ACT – Implement “Jack Attack” to establish and embed shorter game formats in clubs.

Jack Attack has been attempted in some ways in Canberra, but has not been an overly successful model. Our observations are that this format has been tried in isolation by individual clubs. Bowls ACT invested funding to develop this format, however this was also unsuccessful. Feedback indicates this is largely due to cultural issues and resistance to changes by clubs who are unfamiliar, risk averse, and suspicious of a format that has been unproven in their environment. Additionally, offering a “one-off” event in isolation does not encourage new potential players to purchase a membership where the only option is to play longer format games.

The research behind the development of Jack Attack is strong, and the early successes from other clubs across Australia and NSW indicates that this format is the future of the sport. The format needs to be “championed” and developed by the peak body as a core competition game format with dedicated resourcing and expertise, with the following considerations:

Managed as a key stream with resourcing emphasis and effort akin to pennant and championships.

- Revenue generating for both the Club and Bowls ACT through shared fee arrangements. Primary goal of the competition is to drive new club memberships.
- Align launch of competition with marketing support at the club to educate and engage with existing members, support with coaching or roll up practice sessions etc.
- Clubs work together, collaborate, welcome new players and and break down encourage uptake and play of different formats across the club. It's important that after trialing Jack Attack, the the prospective member can continue to play that format in the club socially. ”.



## 11.4 BUILD DIVERSIFIED REVENUE STREAMS TO BUILD LONG TERM FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

**Recommendation:** As a priority, Bowls ACT must develop, grow and diversify its revenue base. Revenue is based on club memberships, and with a declining number of members, the underlying foundations and capability of Bowls ACT will continue to erode. Opportunities include incentivising club membership growth, diversifying competitions, and cross sector partnerships. Industry level sponsorships may provide limited incremental revenue. Clubs must actively embrace and support Bowls ACT in these initiatives, investing club resources and effort to achieve collective success.

Bowls ACT's current strategic plan is consistent with the thematic issues identified in this report. Bowls ACT draws revenue from ACT clubs as well as Queanbeyan, Goulburn, and Yass clubs and has been successful in offsetting losses in revenue from declining membership in ACT clubs by adding new interstate clubs into its representation groups.

This however, does not solve the underlying resourcing problem that Bowls ACT has with administering services to members. Staffing capacity within the organisation enables the management of day to day activities, but is not sufficient to enable any effort to be invested in building new revenue streams. We also note that staffing and resourcing relies on paid staff contributing substantial hours of unpaid overtime each week to assist with competition management.

### **Bowls ACT have previously tried or considered:**

- Operating a retail bowls shop, which was located at the Bowls ACT site, and enabled players to try and buy bowls and equipment. Bowls ACT tried various different operational models but eventually closed the shop due to poor financial performance, driven by low and declining sales, a need to invest in high stock levels, and increasing competitive pricing from online shops.
- Grant applications have provided some revenue in previous years, however this is mostly for investing in "new" ideas and is generally not available for basic operational activities.
- Fee proposals have generally met with constituent clubs rejections. This includes the rejection of a proposal that "barefoot bowlers" pay a nominal fee for using the intellectual property of the game and the rejection of the proposal to charge a nominal "user pays" fee "per game" for all players rather than per membership.
- General smaller fundraising activities have been successful when deployed for specific purposes eg. Travel costs for a team.

### **Recommended priorities for growing revenue:**

- Build individual club memberships and the membership base: Bowls ACT also provides peak body support to clubs who are located just over the border in Queanbeyan, Yass, Goulburn, Bungendore, and most recently Crookwell.
- Review fee arrangements with constituent clubs to incentivise their individual membership growth.
- Develop third Jack Attack competition stream with the intention that competition fees pays for both the coordinator's role for organising the events and the prizes.

- Explore opportunities with external organisations including education, disability services providers and aged care providers to develop competitions for specific groups such as students, National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and My Aged Care package recipients.
- Review competition fees to retain competition fee revenue and reduce cash component of prizes: At present the competition fees do not cover the costs of organising the events and are largely deployed into prizes.
- Review Sponsorship as a revenue opportunity for all bowls clubs in the ACT, with the intention of developing Bowls ACT sport-wide packages that share revenue with clubs: It is worth noting that sponsorships have not had any significant investment of personnel or resources in recent times, as there are significant barriers to developing sponsorship opportunities.
  - Substantial work on governance, policy, development and legalities would be required to establish a commercially viable sponsorship package.
  - Bowls ACT do not control many of the assets that sponsorship sells eg. venue or greens signage / frontage, uniform or equipment space (apart from a small group of representative players), and this would require negotiation and agreement with the clubs, venues and facilities.
  - Due to the complexities of asset ownership, sponsorships would be best managed centrally by Bowls ACT, with revenue shared between Bowls ACT and the individual clubs. Commercial representation from dedicated sports sponsorship agencies may provide assistance and support.



## 11.5 GREENKEEPERS

**Recommendation:** The ACT Government provide equipment maintenance funding support to enable Greenkeepers to establish an equipment rental service across all clubs, where key machinery and equipment is purchased by a central body, and then rented to all clubs. This would assist with reducing maintenance costs across all clubs.

If the business case supports the concept, then seed, chemicals, herbicides and other consumables could also be managed via a similar process.

Greenkeepers in the ACT and surrounds are all members of the ACT Greenkeepers Association. During our consultations we spoke with greenkeepers regarding their role and the challenges faced with working in the region.

Greenskeeping is a learned and specialised skill, that sits within the broader greenskeeping functions. A greenkeeper will do similar training to perform similar duties on a golf course and a bowling green, but both are specialisations requiring dedicated expertise and experience to manage effectively and efficiently. This is due to the types of grass and key differences in management to achieve a specific playing surface required by the specific sport.

Greenkeepers are acutely aware that their salary is driving the costs of greens maintenance, and have made significant efforts to provide additional value to clubs. The introductory base salary rates of greenkeepers under the Gardens and Maintenance Award is consistent with the current Australian Minimum Award Wage, although most greenkeepers are paid slightly above the award. It is not the salary that attracts greenkeepers to the profession, it is the attributes of the job that they find appealing.

### Greenkeepers noted that:

- They are all employed full time on salary, and are not paid overtime.
- They all work in an "on-call" capacity, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Most spend approximately 80% of time on greens and 20% of time on surrounds and grounds maintenance. In smaller clubs, as one of the few employees, they usually deal with club maintenance issues as well.
- Most have an apprentice working with them and take advantage of the Government incentives for apprentices. Apprentices will work up to 12 days on for 2 days off in growing season.
- When major green renovations or repairs are conducted, all the greenkeepers pitch in and assist each other in an unofficial "working bee" arrangement.
- The ACT Greenkeepers Association purchased some high cost equipment, that is infrequently used, to be shared amongst all clubs.

### 11.5.1 ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS IN GREENSKEEPING

- Greenkeepers assist with management of some regional clubs who have volunteers managing greens. They noted:
- There are many arduous tasks required in managing natural grass which have long term impacts on the quality of the playing surface but are not considered important by volunteers. The level of mowing is significant.
- To use the chemicals required, the individual needs to be licensed, which is rarely the case with volunteers.
- Not having an expert regularly monitor the surface results in serious problems such as pests and diseases arising and becoming more difficult to manage.
- Maintaining a consistent playing standard becomes increasingly difficult over time as the overall quality of the green erodes under volunteer management.



## 11.5.2 INSIGHTS INTO FACILITY MANAGEMENT

Greenkeepers noted some important insights into facilities management.

- Majority of greens are under-utilised in the ACT. "It won't cost the clubs any more on maintenance to double the number of members playing".
- Where there is high utilisation eg. The RUC, who have an estimated 15,000 barefoot bowlers and 6,000 bowlers p.a. using the 3 greens, daily maintenance is critical to keeping the playing surface to standard.
- Lights don't necessarily provide the extended length of evening play that they are expected to.
  - Natural grass greens need to be dry when playing, which as evening progresses becomes difficult after dew set at night.
  - In Summer when lights are used, usually one green is out for renovations.

## 11.5.3 THE FUTURE OF GREENKEEPERS IN THE ACT

- Given how closely ACT Greenkeepers work together, we raised a concept around potentially outsourcing greenskeeping to clubs, however to be successful and welcomed, any arrangement would need to preserve the relationships of the greenkeeper with their respective club greens. Fundamentally the quality of the green depends on the knowledge and understanding that the individual gains through the experience of working with that specific surface on a daily basis. This is also a key element in the quality and satisfaction of the job.
- The ACT benefits from the experience of a number of greenkeepers who have all worked with their respective greens for many years. The knowledge and experience each greenkeeper has amassed is significant, and they (and players/ members) are proud of the quality and player satisfaction with greens. The potential of moving natural grass greens to synthetic surfaces, clearly threatens their industry and livelihoods. Simply, if Clubs and facilities continue to be closed or all greens are transitioned to synthetic grass, greenkeepers will no longer be employed, and the skill set will be lost to the ACT. This will make any re-establishment of playing facilities very difficult. The preservation of greens keeping capability and skills should also be considered in relation to the needs of the ACT.
- Golf course maintenance provides a natural fit with bowls green maintenance and this should be considered when facilities are developed.





# PART 2 OBSERVATIONS AND ANALYSIS



12.0

## DATA SOURCES AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION



## 12.0 DATA SOURCES AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

RSM acknowledges and thanks all clubs for supporting the project by contributing relevant financial information, enabling RSM to conduct financial sustainability analyses for most ACT Bowls Clubs.

RSM endeavours to take all reasonable steps in order to comply with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) (the 'Act'), the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) and any applicable State or Territory privacy laws, and to otherwise protect the privacy of the information that the Firm collects and holds. In order to protect the commercial in confidence nature of some financial data, the information collected by RSM will not be disclosed in the public report. Therefore, information on specific financial details (eg. scales and charts) have been deliberately withheld in the following sections. The exception to this is greens maintenance costs, which provide additional details with permission.

### *Information Sources for this section.*

RSM has received audited financial statements from:

- Tuggeranong Vikings Mens Bowls Club
- Tuggeranong Valley Women's Bowls Club
- Canberra North Bowling Club/ The RUC
- Belconnen Bowling Club

Submissions specific to costs of bowls activities were provided by:

- Yowani Country Club
- The Vikings Group

The Labor Club had not provided financial information at the time of report writing, so costs pertaining to Labor Club are not included in this report.

13.0

## BOWLS FACILITIES – OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE COSTS

## 13.0 BOWLS FACILITIES – OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE COSTS

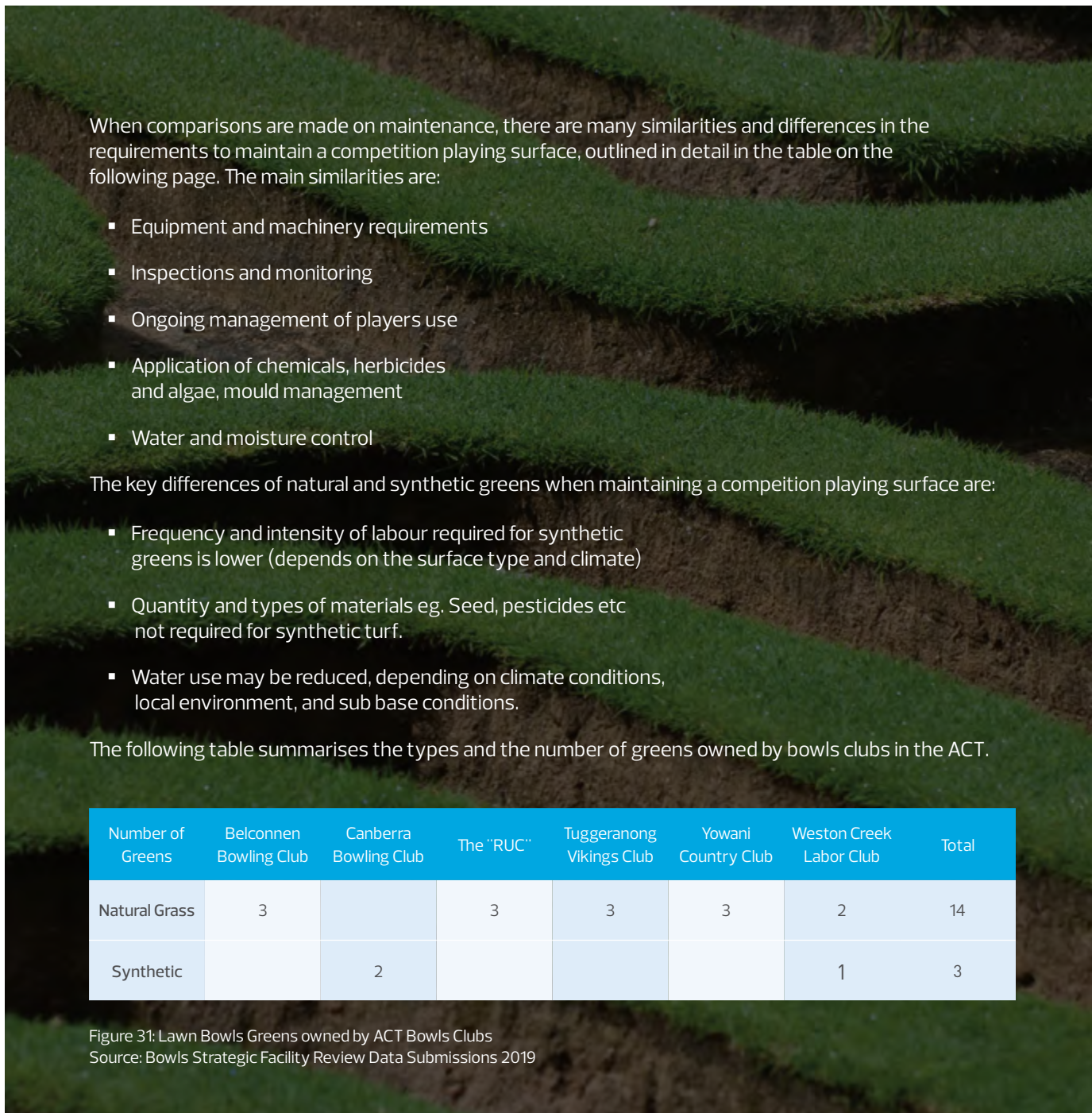
Purpose: Understand the Cost to provide, operate and maintain bowling greens and associated amenities for each facility. Consider:

- Different surface types – natural grass and synthetic surfaces.
- Scale of multiple greens per facility

### 13.1 DIFFERENT SURFACE TYPES – NATURAL GRASS AND SYNTHETIC SURFACES

There are two types of surfaces currently adopted by ACT Bowls Clubs. Maintenance requirements will differ depending on the type of turf surface used. At a basic level, maintaining national performance standards for greens means meeting strict requirements on specific criteria:

- Green speed range between 10–18 seconds
- Surface draw specifications
- Surface evenness undulations less than 6mm
- Size requirements
- Level surface variation less than 3mm
- Infiltration rate of water to requirements
- Ditch and Bank specifications



When comparisons are made on maintenance, there are many similarities and differences in the requirements to maintain a competition playing surface, outlined in detail in the table on the following page. The main similarities are:

- Equipment and machinery requirements
- Inspections and monitoring
- Ongoing management of players use
- Application of chemicals, herbicides and algae, mould management
- Water and moisture control

The key differences of natural and synthetic greens when maintaining a competition playing surface are:

- Frequency and intensity of labour required for synthetic greens is lower (depends on the surface type and climate)
- Quantity and types of materials eg. Seed, pesticides etc not required for synthetic turf.
- Water use may be reduced, depending on climate conditions, local environment, and sub base conditions.

The following table summarises the types and the number of greens owned by bowls clubs in the ACT.

Number of Greens	Belconnen Bowling Club	Canberra Bowling Club	The "RUC"	Tuggeranong Vikings Club	Yowani Country Club	Weston Creek Labor Club	Total
Natural Grass	3		3	3	3	2	14
Synthetic		2				1	3

Figure 31: Lawn Bowls Greens owned by ACT Bowls Clubs  
Source: Bowls Strategic Facility Review Data Submissions 2019



Type of Playing Surface	Natural Grass	Synthetic Grass – Tufted Carpet	Synthetic Grass – Woven and Needle punch carpet
Site Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Installation area free of total shade</li> <li>Plan appropriate drainage for heaviest possible rainfall so water does not seep onto the surface</li> <li>Bank area must be well grassed or paved/ matted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shade or temperature control to offset high surface heat in summer</li> </ul>	
Ongoing Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trained and knowledgeable staff engaged to maintain surface</li> <li>Changing rink numbers: similar for all surfaces to manage wear and tear</li> <li>Line Marking: different materials are required to line mark without damage to each specific surface</li> <li>The loose matter must be removed regularly</li> <li>Unnecessary traffic avoided, narrow wheeled implements banned</li> <li>Ban food or smoking</li> <li>Correct footwear</li> </ul>		
Ongoing maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mowing and edging, daily during warmer seasons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Settling in Period requires higher attention and monitoring with potential adjustments to monitor ball speed and drainage.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seasonally, there are different tasks including:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dumping bowls may result in minor cracking of the bonded surface. Player aids provided to avoid imperfections being created in the base layer.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Top dressing, de-compaction and aerating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stain removal requires prompt attention to prevent permanent damage.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overseeding and thatch control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Records should be maintained for insurance purposes.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sodding replacement and replanting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seam inspections and repair if required.</li> </ul>	
Chemical Applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fertilizer, spraying and growth regulators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wetting agents required to ensure water infiltrates.</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Herbicides, pesticides</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moss and algae must be controlled regularly with antibacterial sprays.</li> <li>Herbicides to manage weeds</li> <li>Chemicals must be specifically approved for use with synthetic turf</li> </ul>	
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Irrigation and watering in line with climate requirements, all year round.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The sub-grade surface cannot be allowed to dry out (for example in times of drought) as this will cause shrinkage and differential movement. Must be monitored and watered.</li> </ul>	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Watering is required to maintain green speed and consolidate the surface sand. The sand layer must not dry out during hot weather.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shampoo and clean half yearly (depending on manufacturers recommendation).</li> </ul>
Rolling/ Brushing/ Vacuuming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rolling regularly to prepare the surface for play.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly maintenance requires grooming or brushing with a converted reel mower, static brushes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require regular vacuuming with specific equipment</li> </ul>
All surfaces require different types of equipment.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plant matter and tree debris must be removed by hand or with mechanical equipment that will not blow the sand out of the surface.</li> </ul>	

Figure 32: Maintenance Requirements by Playing Surface. Sources: Bowls Australia Green Construction Guidelines 2011; Victoria Greenskeepers Association Lawn Bowls Surfaces Study and Turf Surface Guide for Lawn Bowls Clubs; Natural Grass vs Synthetic Turf Study Report Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, Western Australia

## 13.2 COST TO PROVIDE, OPERATE, AND MAINTAIN BOWLING GREENS

Using the annual green maintenance costs provided by the following clubs, the data analysis results suggest that on average, it costs approximately \$48,000 for a bowls club to maintain one natural green per year.

	Belconnen Bowling Club \$	The Vikings Group \$	Yowani Country Club \$	The Canberra North Bowling \$
2019	152,791	210,051	-	131,721
2018	152,091	224,210	63,500	128,900
2017	145,029	223,441	87,270	119,441
2016	131,192	239,282	80,391	135,632
2015	134,188		79,548	134,092
2014	155,134		78,093	
2013	142,731		82,388	
2012	157,899			
Annual Green Maintenance Costs on Average	\$146,382	\$224,246	\$78,532	\$129,957
Number of Natural Greens owned	3	3	3	3
Annual Maintenance Costs per Natural Grass Green	\$48,793.96	\$74,748.67	\$26,177.22	\$43,319.07
Annual Maintenance Costs on average per Natural Grass Green - On Average	\$48,259.73			

Figure 33: Annual Maintenance Cost for Natural Grass Green Source: Bowls Review Data Submissions 2019

Note: The figures supplied are based on financial reports provided by individual clubs in their submissions to RSM. In some cases this was based on audited financial reports. As such different cost allocation methodologies may have been used by different clubs. We note the following:

- Yowani is able to achieve efficiencies when it is combined with golf course maintenance, however cost allocation methodology has been applied to their calculations that may not be consistent with other clubs reporting.
- Greenkeeper wages and costs for "grounds maintenance" is included in Belconnen Bowling Club and Canberra North Bowling Club as this is required in order to sustain a full time greenkeeper position at the clubs. Estimates are that grounds maintenance is approximately 20-25% of costs.

### 13.2.1 COST TO MAINTAIN SYNTHETIC GREENS.

Canberra Bowling Club currently owns 2 synthetic greens. Using the data provided by Canberra Bowling Club, the resulting data analysis shows that the cost of operating and maintaining synthetic is \$10,703 per year on average. This does not include the funds that would need to be put aside for future replacement.

Synthetic greens were installed in 2016, the first in April, the second in November, so the FY 2015-16 include some costs for natural grass green maintenance.

	The Canberra North Bowling \$
2019	18,000
2018	20,280
2017	25,943
2016	53,236
2015	53,389
5 years Annual CBC Green Maintenance Costs on Average	\$34,170
3 years Synthetic Green Maintenance Costs Average (2017-19)	\$21,407
Number of Synthetic Greens owned	2
Annual Maintenance Costs on average per Synthetic Green - On Average	\$10,703

Figure 34: Annual Maintenance Cost for Synthetic Green Source: Bowls Review Data Submissions 2019

## 13.2 DETAILED CLUB BREAKDOWN OF EXPENSES FOR NATURAL GRASS GREENS

One of the Facility Owners provided RSM with their aggregated greens maintenance costs for operating 3 natural greens. Our discussions and information provided from all clubs indicate that these costs are reasonable and representative of the costs to operate and maintain greens across the Territory.

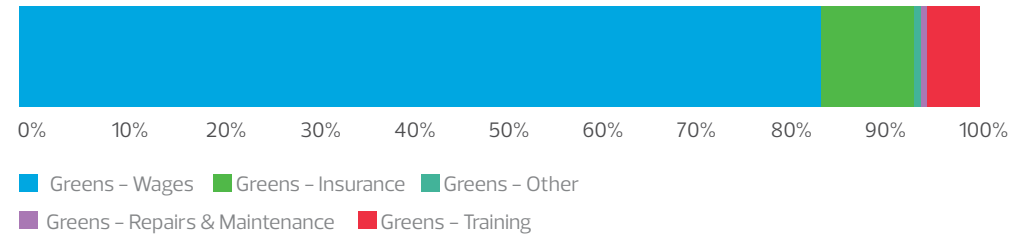
As indicated, wages and salaries is the most significant cost (83%) incurred for maintaining natural greens. It should be noted that the amounts of wages and salaries paid annually by clubs are subjected to the Wage Price Index, which is normally higher than the Consumer Price Index. This indicates that wages and salaries are more susceptible to the variations of the inflation factor and therefore can increase more significantly than other expense categories over the years.

Due to the limited market size of Canberra and its surrounding areas, there are no commercial service providers for greenkeeping. As such, the only viable way for the Clubs to maintain their existing greens is to employ a greenkeeper directly. Due to the high level of specialisation and qualifications required, it is generally considered impossible to hire a fully qualified greenkeeper on a part-time basis.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Greens Revenue	29,794	18,414	6,750	6,379
Greens - Wages	199,718	190,782	184,388	174,036
Greens - Repairs & Maintenance	27,636	16,211	22,196	22,270
Greens - Insurance	1,200	2,400	2,940	
Greens - Training	855	2,507	1,037	-
Greens - Other	9,874	11,540	13,649	13,745
Greens Expenses	239,282	223,441	224,210	210,051
Net Profit / (Loss)	(209,488)	(205,027)	(217,460)	(203,671)

Figure 35: Greens Expenses Breakdown – Club Example  
Source: Bowls Review Data Submissions 2019

### Greens Expenses Breakdown – Club Example



## 13.3 RELATIVE DIFFERENCES IN COSTS FOR GREENS MAINTENANCE ACROSS CLUBS

The trend for the cost incurred to provide, operate, and maintain greens in the ACT Bowls Clubs is demonstrated below. The expense highlighted in dark green represented the maintenance costs for synthetic greens, and it can be seen from the chart that the cost incurred for maintaining synthetic greens is significantly less compared to maintenance expenses incurred for natural greens. In sum, the trend analysis shows that the greens maintenance expense for each bowls club appears to be stable between 2016 and 2019.

Individual clubs have not been identified, however we wished to illustrate the range in costs for maintenance of facilities.

### Green Maintenance Expense 2016 – 2019 (\*Including 5 Clubs)

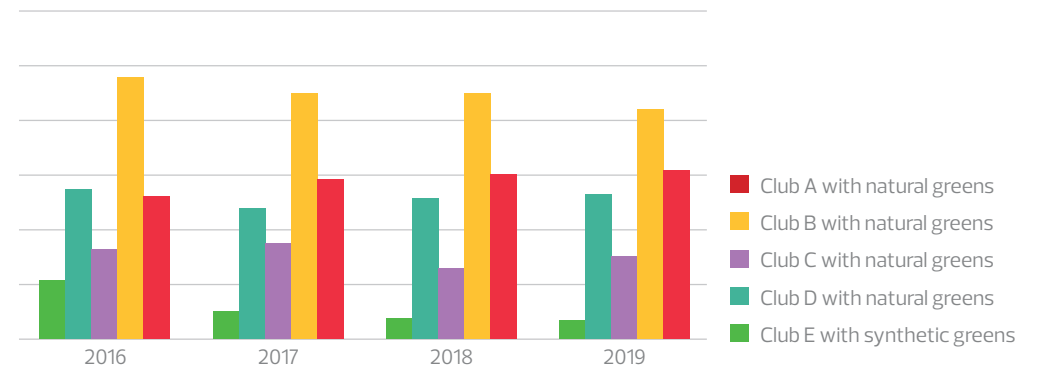


Figure 36: Greens Maintenance Expense 2016-2019 Source:  
Bowls Strategic Facility Review Data Submissions 2019

## 13.4 COMPARISON OF MAINTENANCE COSTS BETWEEN SYNTHETIC AND NATURAL GRASS SURFACES

If the ACT Bowls Clubs were to convert the existing natural grass greens to the proposed synthetic alternative, some cost savings can be realised as each green is easier to maintain and only two synthetic greens are required to replace the existing three.

It's extremely difficult to source reliable market estimates for the annual maintenance costs of both natural grass and synthetic turf. Depending on the source of information, the highest estimate for maintenance costs can be as much as ten times the lowest estimates. After reviewing the publicly available information, we excluded information sources that contained outlier estimates and selected two of the most credible sources as the basis of our analysis.

It can be seen from the table below that using the data submitted by ACT bowls clubs who own natural greens, the average maintenance cost they incurred per annum is approximately \$48,000. On the other hand, the average ongoing repairs and maintenance cost incurred by Canberra Bowling Club for its synthetic green is around \$10,703, which is slightly lower than the industry estimation (i.e. \$14,440).

Data Source[1]	Natural Turf	Synthetic Turf (Sand Filled) - CBC	Synthetic Turf (Sand Filled)	Synthetic Turf (Non-Sand Filled)
Bowls Strategic Facility Review Data Submissions 2019	\$48,260			
Canberra Bowling Club		\$10,703		
The Artificial Grass for Sports Guide Victoria State Government 2009			\$12,239	\$17,609
Sport and Cultural Industry – Natural Grass vs Synthetic Turf Study Report WA Department of Local Government 2011			\$16,642	\$16,642
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$48,260</b>	<b>\$10,703</b>	<b>\$14,440</b>	<b>\$17,063</b>

Figure 37: Annual Maintenance / Field (Lawn Bowls 40m x 40m) (Present Value@2018)

[1] The estimates have been adjusted for inflation at 2.5% p.a. from the source

We note the estimates listed in the table still have a significant variance. As such, any conclusion based on this must be treated with caution. Synthetic greens also require regular replacement, which is discussed below. Considering that insurance companies usually will set a limit of 7 years for the life of a green, this should be considered the benchmark.

While the saving in time and effort required to maintain synthetic grass surfaces can be readily realised in monetary value, this ignores the requirement for a sinking fund or building of a capital fund to replace synthetic greens as discussed below. This capital cost significantly impacts on the cost saving of operating a synthetic green.

In transitioning to a synthetic green, consideration must be given to the feasibility of re-employing a (synthetic) greenkeeper or groundskeeper on a part-time basis, or the ability to outsource maintenance functions to maintain the surface.

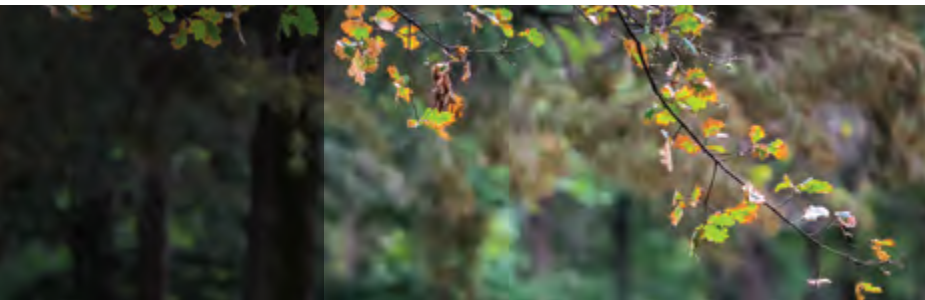
## 13.5 GROUNDS AND GARDENS MAINTENANCE COSTS

Our estimates are that approximately 20% of the greenkeeper and apprentice's time is spent on grounds and gardens maintenance. Hourly rates and contracts vary widely for this work, based on negotiation, travel requirements, total hours and quality requirements. Costs and rates can vary from \$30-\$60 an hour, depending upon the qualifications of the maintenance personnel and the requirements of the contract.

If the grounds and gardening maintenance was outsourced to a contractor, to maintain the high-quality standard that is currently provided, an outsourced annual cost for this work may be between \$23,400 to \$46,800.

This figure only calculates the paid time for the greenkeeper and apprentice, and does not include any volunteer hours. We assume any volunteer hours spent on grounds or garden maintenance would be retained.





## 13.6 ASSESSMENT OF COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH FUTURE REPLACEMENT OF THE SYNTHETIC SURFACE

The financial sustainability of the Club also depends on the estimated replacement cost of the synthetic surface. Usually, natural grass greens do not require replacement if well maintained, so this is a significant capital expense that requires long term planning. While both our reference data sources discuss replacement costs, only one provided a direct estimation of the replacement cost. This is listed below:

	Natural Turf	Synthetic Turf (Sand Filled)	Synthetic Turf (Non Sand Filled)
Replacement Cost / Green (present value at 2018)	\$18,733	\$146,866	\$112,897
Number of Greens	3	2	2
Replacement	\$56,199	\$293,733	\$225,794

Figure 38: Replacement Cost / Green (Present value at 2018)

Based on the replacement costs above, the table shows the minimum saving that is required for the Club to fund the replacement at the various replacement cycles.

The life in years of the synthetic surface also needs to be considered.

- Most estimates for bowling greens are calculated for a period of 8–12 years. It is unlikely for greens to last to a competition standard for that length of time, as the surface degrades over time. The lifetime of a synthetic surface is the subject of debate, and depends on weather conditions and ongoing maintenance of the surface.

- Most commercial warranties are provided for seven years.
- The type of base and materials used, type of synthetic grass installed, and the quality of maintenance all have a significant impact on the life of a green.

Notably, in relation to the synthetic greens in the ACT, Canberra Bowling Club currently owns 2 synthetic greens (sand filled), and Weston Creek Bowling Club currently owns 1 synthetic green (non-sand filled).

- Canberra Bowling Club has reported that the surface has performed well, and is outlasting the initially expected lifetime for synthetic greens.
- Weston Creek Bowling Club has experienced a few incidents in relation to synthetic green repair and maintenance. The green is generally performing well and has provided them more flexibility in coping with unexpected weather conditions.

Replacement Cycle (Year)	Natural Turf	Synthetic Turf (Sand Filled)	Synthetic Turf (Non Sand Filled)
8	\$7,565	\$39,538	\$30,393
9	\$6,769	\$35,379	\$27,196
10	\$6,132	\$32,051	\$24,638
11	\$5,611	\$29,326	\$22,543
12	\$5,176	\$27,054	\$20,796

Figure 38a: Minimum Annual Saving Required Per Year to Fund the Replacement Cost at Life End  
The estimates have been adjusted for inflation – interest rate 3.5%, inflation rate of 2.5%

14.0

# BOWLS FACILITIES FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

## 14.0 BOWLS FACILITIES – OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE COSTS

Purpose: Understand the different revenue sources earned from various club activities eg, membership, greens fees, food and beverage, EGMs, promotions etc.

Benchmark cost recovery ratio for each club

Consider alternate revenue streams or other strategies that could improve cost recovery ratio

### 14.1 REVENUE ANALYSIS

Financial statements and other relevant data were collected from ACT bowls clubs for conducting revenue analysis and understanding future feasibility of bowls clubs. Many bowls clubs in the ACT have suffered from declining revenue in bowls activities as well as other club activities in recent years.

- As illustrated by the chart (Figure 39) opposite, instead of bowls activities, bar sales and EGMs constitute the two primary sources of income for most bowls club in the ACT.
- This is followed by the green event income and green fees received by ACT Bowls Clubs, as demonstrated in Figure 39 opposite, green event income and green fees constitute the third and fourth largest revenue streams for Bowls Clubs in the ACT.



Average 5 Clubs Income Sources Breakdown

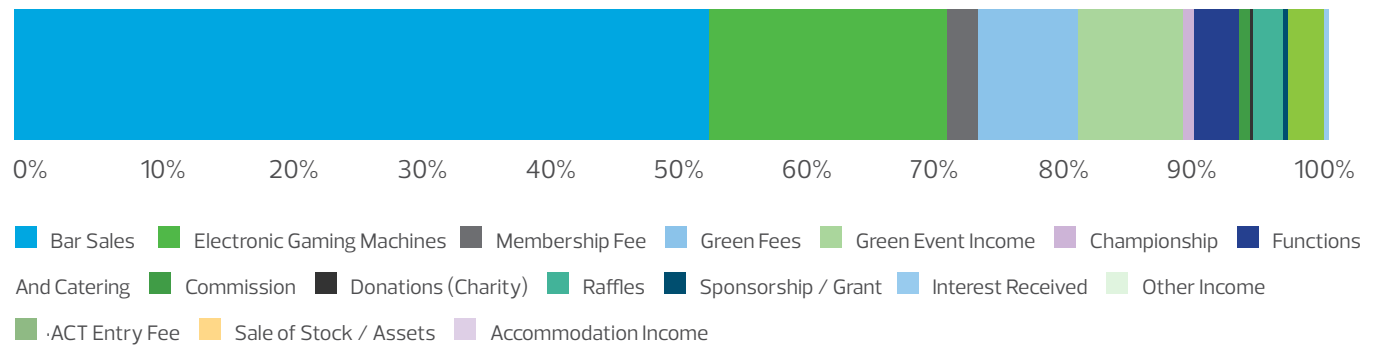


Figure 39: Income Sources Breakdown Source: Bowls Strategic Facility Review Data Submissions 2019



## 14.2 REVENUE ANALYSIS BASED ON MEMBER SPEND BY DIVISION

Figure 40 illustrates the performance of different revenue sources across bowls clubs, and compares them to the average of all community clubs.

- Bowls clubs rely very heavily on bar sales and revenue.
- Bowls clubs are not returning a surplus on catering and "green events" and fees.
- While gaming surplus is highly profitable, the overall spend is low.
- From a broader club perspective, the more time that a member spends in the club, the more they spend. Catering provides a key reason for attending and staying at the club. It is concerning that bowls clubs are not returning a surplus on catering. This may represent an opportunity to build better member engagement.
- For future planning, catering options will be essential to attract new members.

Figure 40 illustrates that for every \$100 spent by a member in a club, \$52 is spent on the bar, \$18 is spent on the gaming machines, \$15 is spent on the green events and green fees, and \$3 is spent on catering.

The surplus identifies the gross profit per division, as can be seen from the section below highlighted, bar and gaming machines are bowls clubs' most profitable sources of revenue. Although contributing a relatively small proportion of revenue streams, green events held and catering provided at bowls clubs ensure that ACT bowls clubs could continuously attract participants to spend time in the club, paying for the green fees, as well as spending money on the bar and gaming machines.



Figure 40: Club Spending Analysis Source: Bowls Strategic Facility Review Data Submissions 2019



## 14.2.1 REVENUE FOR BOWLS ACTIVITIES

There are various bowls activities held at each ACT bowls club. Championship is the club led competition held annually for club members that require an entry fee. All other bowls activities, such as social bowls, casual bowls events, and barefoot bowls are all classified as "green events". When summarizing the income received and expenses paid for running the events for all ACT bowls clubs, the cost recovery ratio is significantly higher for green events (457%), whereas for championship it is barely breaking even (123%).

### Green Events vs. Championship

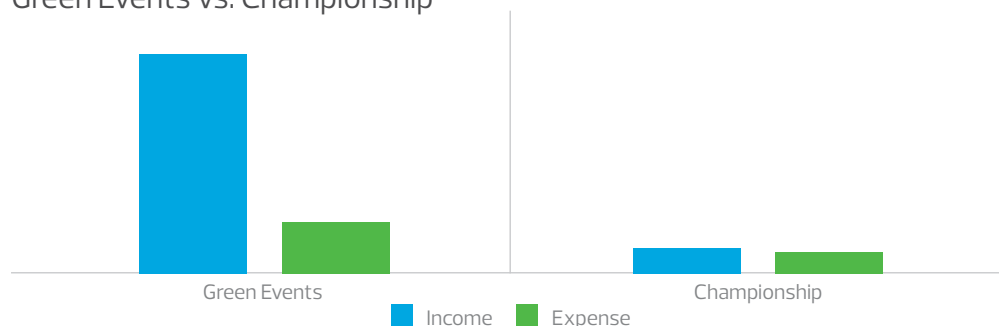


Figure 41: Green Events vs. Championship

Source: Bowls Strategic Facility Review Data Submissions 2019

The green maintenance costs are accounted for separately, therefore bowls activity expenses only include the amount incurred for holding the championship and running the green events.

The low cost recovery ratio for Championship is largely attributed to the fact that the championship fees received by bowls clubs have declined over the past few years as indicated. If the downward trend continues in the future, bowls clubs would be facing fiscal deficit for running championships yearly.

### Club Championship Fee 2015 – 2019 (\*Including 4 clubs)

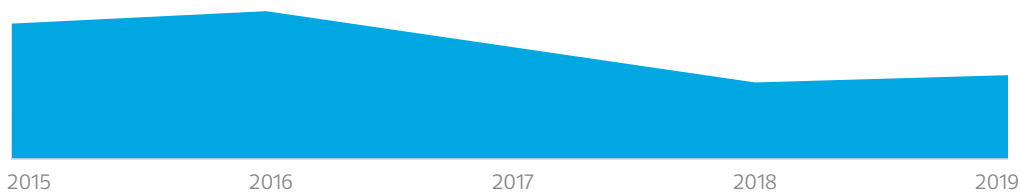


Figure 42: Club Championship Fee 2015–2019

Source: Bowls Strategic Facility Review Data Submissions 2019

The green maintenance costs are accounted for separately, therefore bowls activity expenses only include the amount incurred for holding the championship and running the green events.



## 14.2.2 ASSOCIATED REVENUE – SECONDARY SPENDING – MEALS AND DRINKS, EGMS, ETC.

The financial statements and operating results for ACT bowls clubs have been reviewed, this includes reviewing income and revenue sources and ongoing sustainability of bowls clubs in the ACT. As indicated by Figure 43 below, apart from the income received from green fees and green events, many bowls clubs in the ACT are heavily reliant on the clients' secondary spending on the bar, gaming machines, functions and catering events.

Income Sources % Analysis for ACT Bowls Clubs

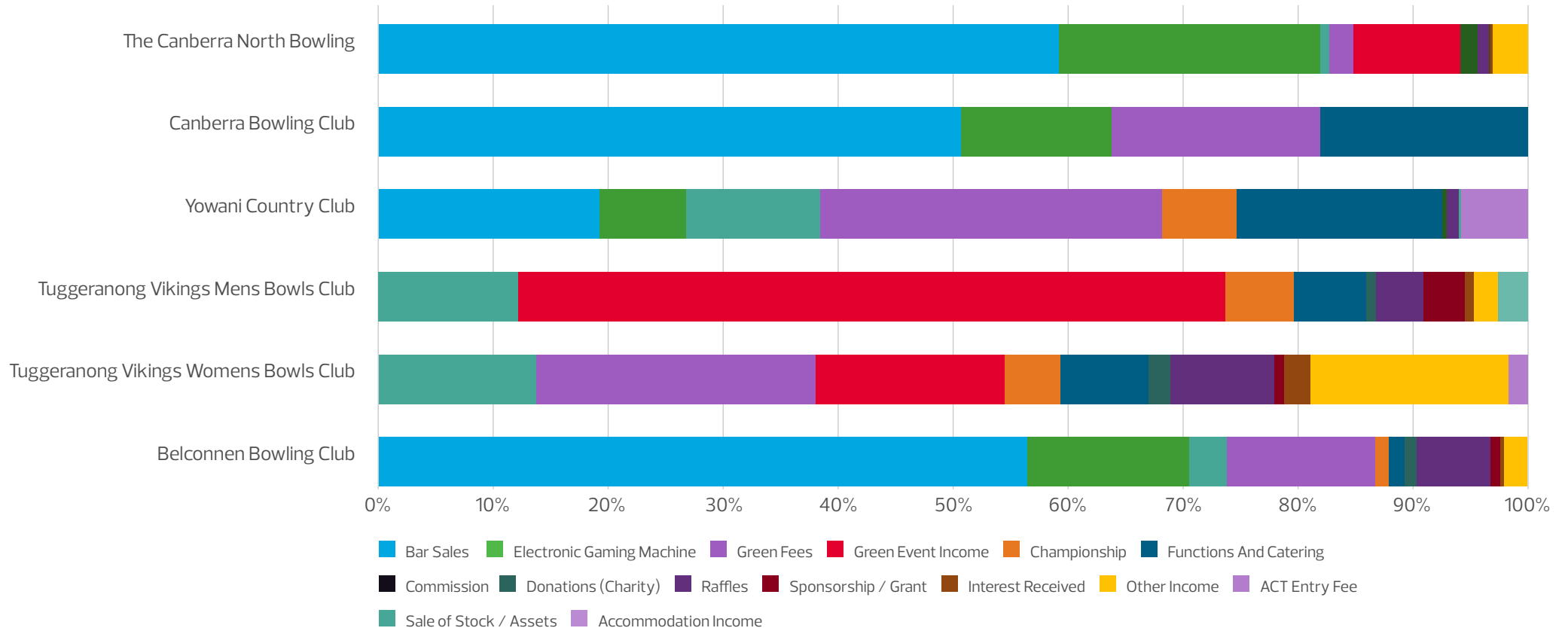


Figure 43: Income Sources % Analysis for ACT Bowls Clubs  
Source: Bowls Review Data Submissions 2019

Note: Tuggeranong Bowls Clubs is income reported by the affiliated bowls clubs, not Tuggeranong Vikings.

Clubs are vulnerable to changes in bar and gaming legislation as they are highly dependent on bar and gaming revenue.

Gaming machines generally produce a higher return per square metre of club floor space owing to the lower staffing requirements compared to other club divisions. Nevertheless, according to the Australian gambling statistics published by the Queensland Government Statistician's Office, real per capita revenue from gaming in the ACT experienced a significant decline since 2000, and the real per capita gaming revenue in 2017–2018 is \$50 lower than the real per capita gaming revenue back in 1992–1993.

The declining trend of gaming revenue could imply a potential threat to club sustainability if bowls clubs are significantly reliant on the gaming machine revenues and fail to develop an additional revenue stream to support the daily operations of clubs.

ACT Real Per Capita Revenue from Gaming

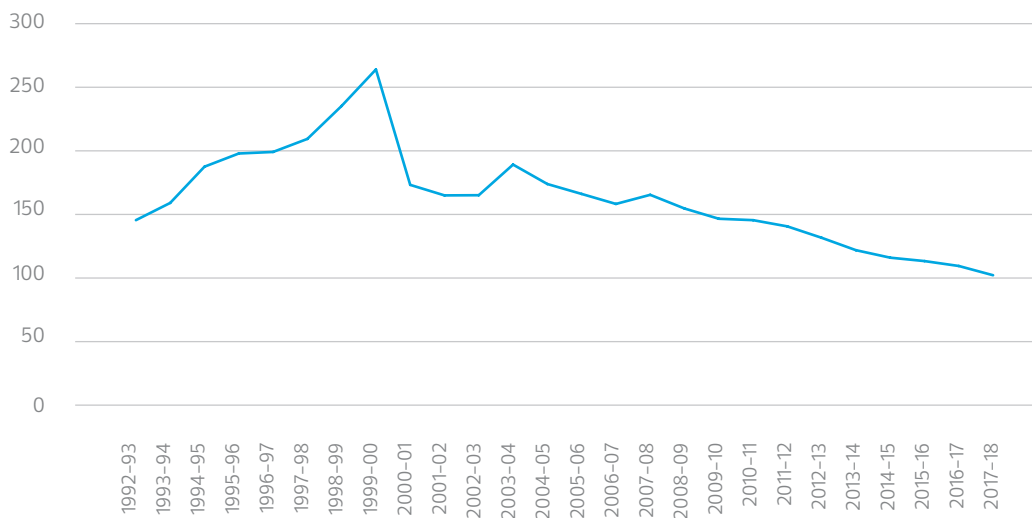


Figure 44: ACT Real per Capita Revenue from Gaming  
Source: Queensland Government Statistician's Office 2019

In relation to club functions and catering, most bowls clubs in the ACT provide food to members and hold functions and catering events occasionally. Ranked after the bar and gaming revenue, functions and catering is the third largest secondary revenue category in ACT bowls clubs. However, the trend analysis suggests that since 2015 there was a significant decline in the annual catering revenue received by ACT bowls clubs. The decline in club functions and catering revenue could be related to the declining bowls membership in the ACT.

Catering plays a critical role in the experience of the club for a member and directly impacts the length of time spent at the club. Without (good) catering members spend less time, and therefore less money, at a club. The shrinking participation population and the lack of interest from new players would likely result in less people participating in events and therefore less functions and catering events held annually in ACT bowls clubs.

Club Functions and Catering 2015 – 2019 (\*Including 4 clubs)

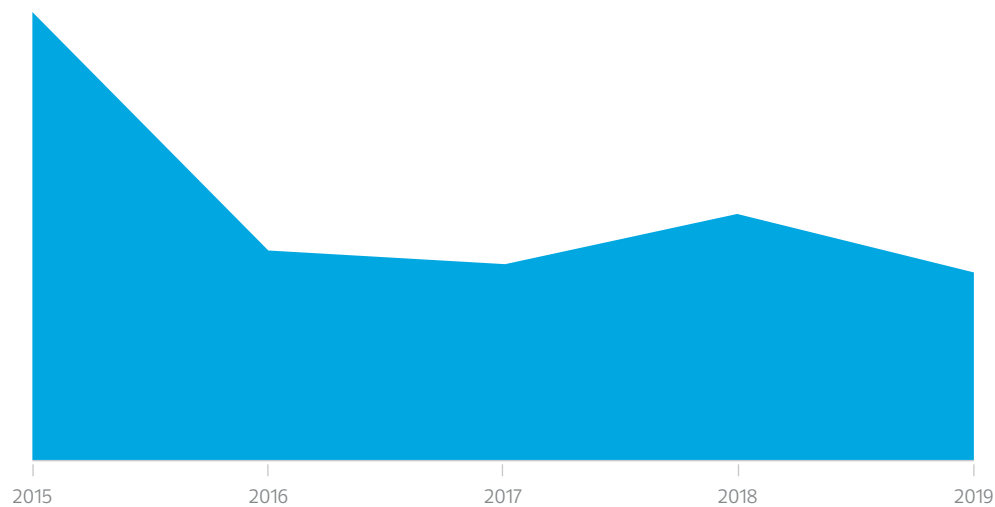


Figure 45: Club Functions and Catering 2015–2019  
Source: Bowls Strategic Facility Review Data Submissions 2019

## 14.3 COSTS ANALYSIS

Cost analyses were conducted for the following bowls clubs in the ACT:

- Belconnen Bowling Club
- Tuggeranong Valley Women's Bowls Club
- Tuggeranong Vikings Mens Bowls Club
- Yowani Country Club
- Canberra Bowling Club
- The Canberra North Bowling

For the purpose of ranking various expense categories across different bowls clubs, the average spending amounts over the past five years in different bowls clubs were calculated for comparing against other cost categories. The cost analysis results are shown in Figure 46 below.

- As set out in Figure 46, greens maintenance fees constitute the primary expense category (24%) for bowls clubs in the ACT, this includes the remuneration paid for greenkeepers, repairs, and maintenance associated with lawn bowls greens, insurance paid for lawn bowls greens, training expenses incurred, and any other greens maintenance associated expenses. Bowls clubs in the ACT have spent thousands of dollars in maintaining the lawn bowls greens in conditions that are suitable for professional competition as well as other bowls activities.
- This is followed by bar expenses, which constituted 14% of the total expenses of bowls clubs in the ACT. Considering that bar revenue is the primary income stream for many ACT bowls clubs, the net profit margin for the bar division is comparatively higher than other club divisions.
- The expenses incurred for holding fundraising events, getting sponsorships, and donations were also relatively significant (9%) mainly due to the reliance clubs have on this.

ACT Bowls Club Expense Categories Breakdown

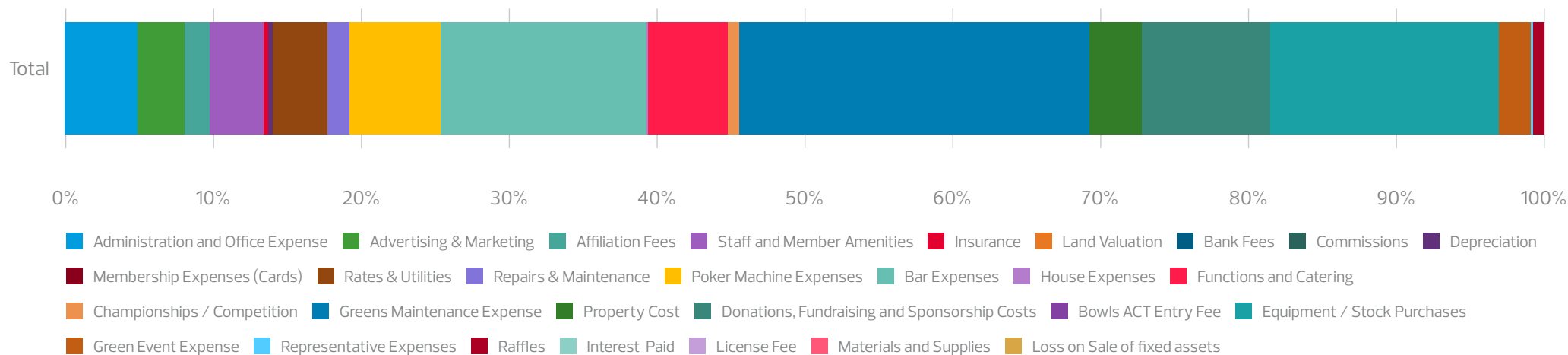


Figure 46: ACT Bowls Club Expense Categories Breakdown  
Source: Bowls Review Data Submissions 2019



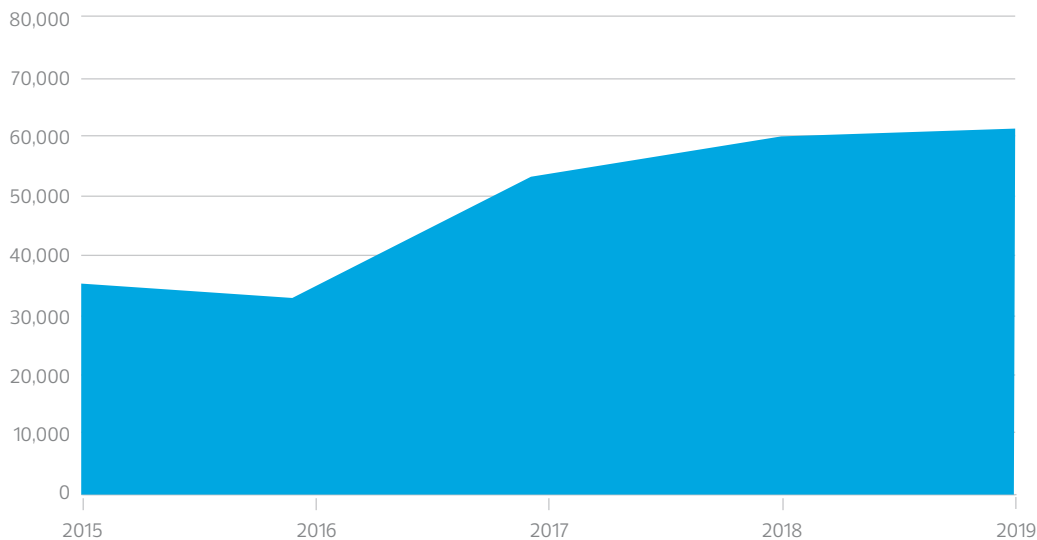


### 14.3.1 OPERATING COSTS OF BOWLS CLUBS

Bowls clubs in the ACT incur various kinds of operating costs to support their daily operations. For clubs who provide bar services, the cost for operating bars have increased from 2015 to 2019, in line with the increased revenue received from providing bar services.

On the other hand, the expenses incurred for operating and maintaining gaming machines were more significant than bar expenses. Moreover, depending on the wear and tear conditions of gaming machines, the maintenance expenses fluctuated year by year between 2015 and 2019 as indicated in the figure below.

Bar Expenses 2015 – 2019 (\*Including 4 clubs)



Gaming Machine Expenses 2015 – 2019 (\*Including 4 clubs)

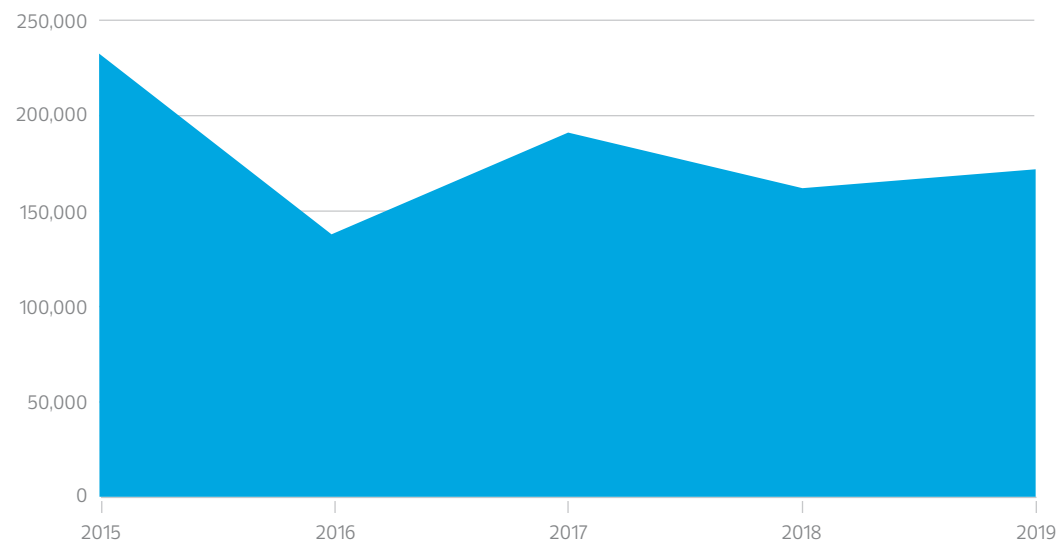


Figure 47: Bar and Poker Machine Expenses 2015 – 2019  
Source: Bowls Strategic Facility Review Data Submissions 2019

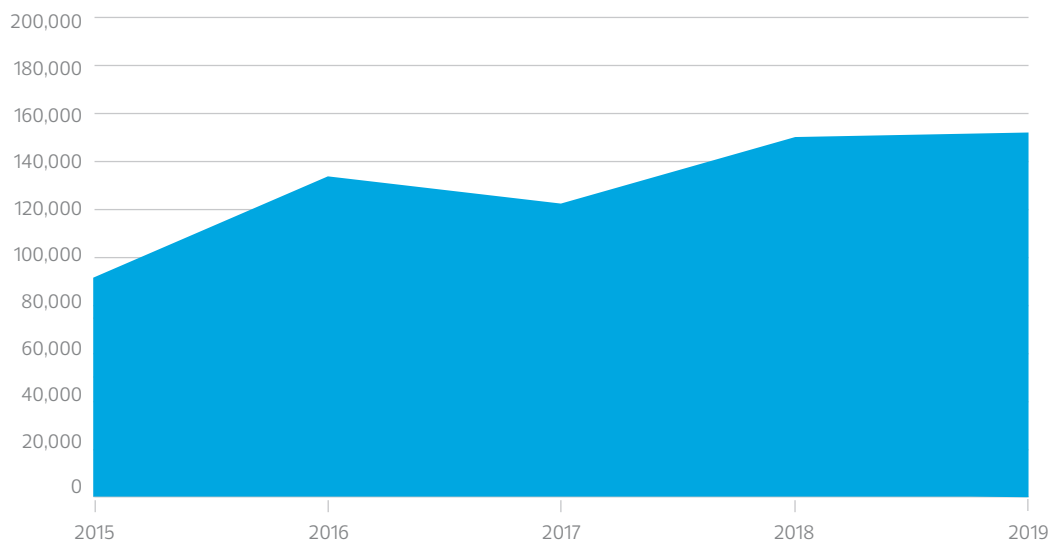


The following expenses have generally increased between 2015 to 2019 compared to other expense categories.

- As shown in Figure 48, over the past five years, it cost ACT Bowls Clubs more to pay for the staff and member amenities, as well as rates and utilities incurred for

the building occupancy. With the effects of inflation in the future, ACT Bowls Clubs need to develop additional revenue streams in order to cope with the increasing operational costs for running the clubs to maintain quality of support and services for their staff and members.

Staff and Member Amenities 2015 – 2019 (\*Including 3 clubs)



Rates and Utilities (\*Including 3 clubs)

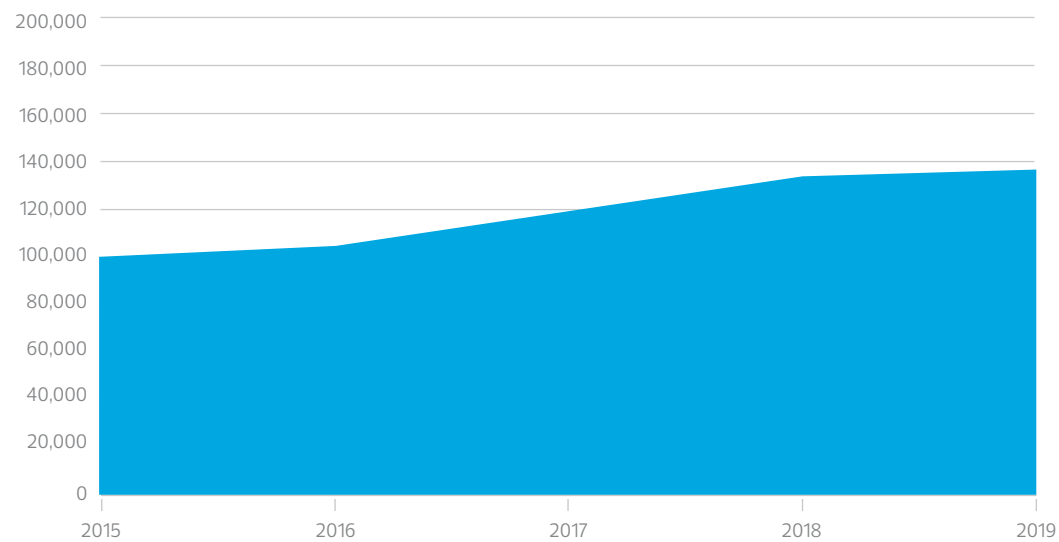


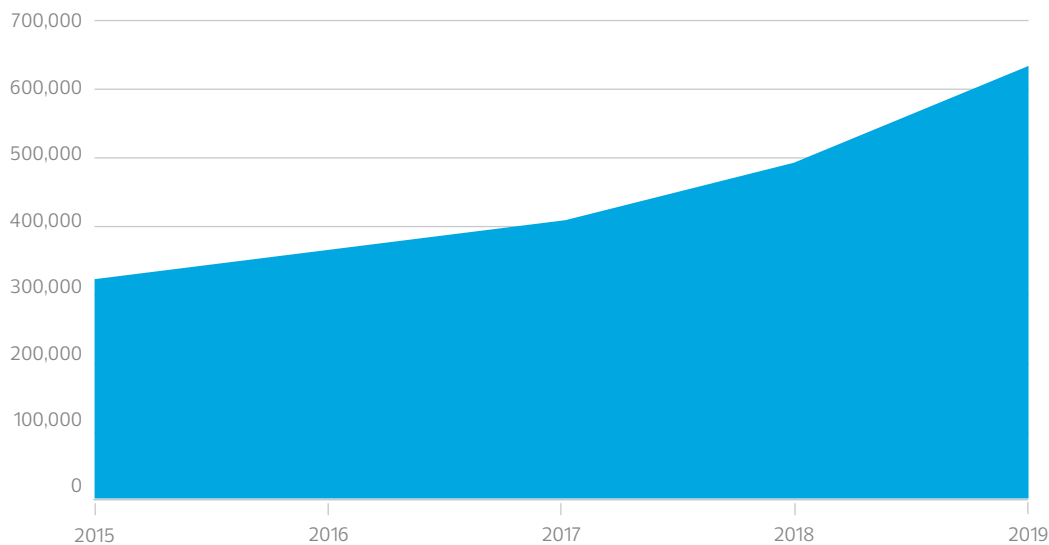
Figure 48: Staff and Member Amenities, Rates and Utilities 2015 – 2019  
Source: Bowls Review Data Submissions 2019



- In relation to the greens events expense, the additional expenses incurred were in line with the increased greens events income received by bowls clubs (Figure 49). Based on the trend analysis results, it could be inferred that more green events, such

as casual bowls, social bowls, and corporate bowls events were held in bowls clubs to create additional revenue streams to support club operations.

Equipment / Stock Purchases 2015 – 2019 (\*Including 3 clubs)



Green Event Expense 2015 – 2019 (\*Including 3 clubs)

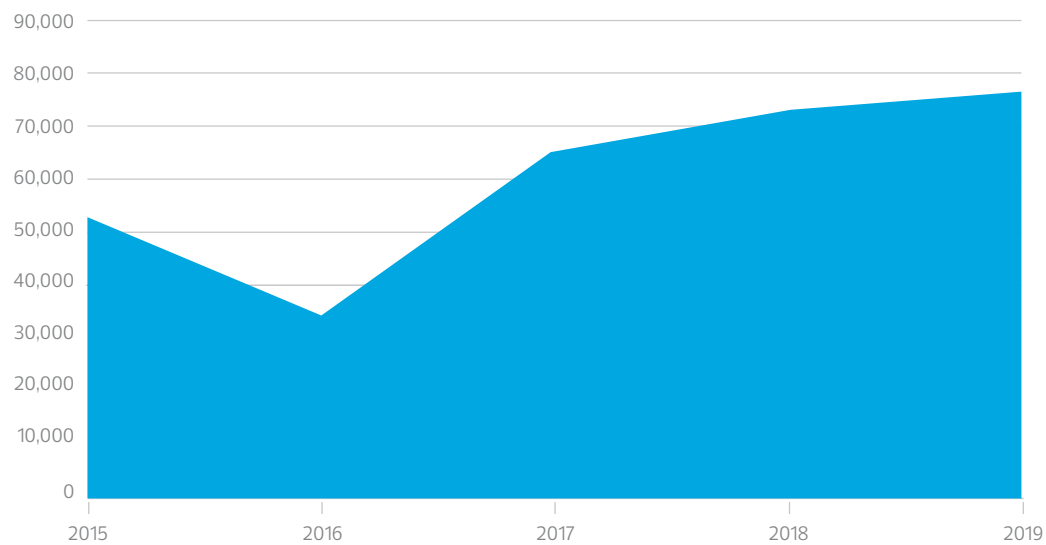


Figure 49: Equipment / Stock Purchases, Green Events Expense 2015 – 2019  
Source: Bowls Review Data Submissions 2019

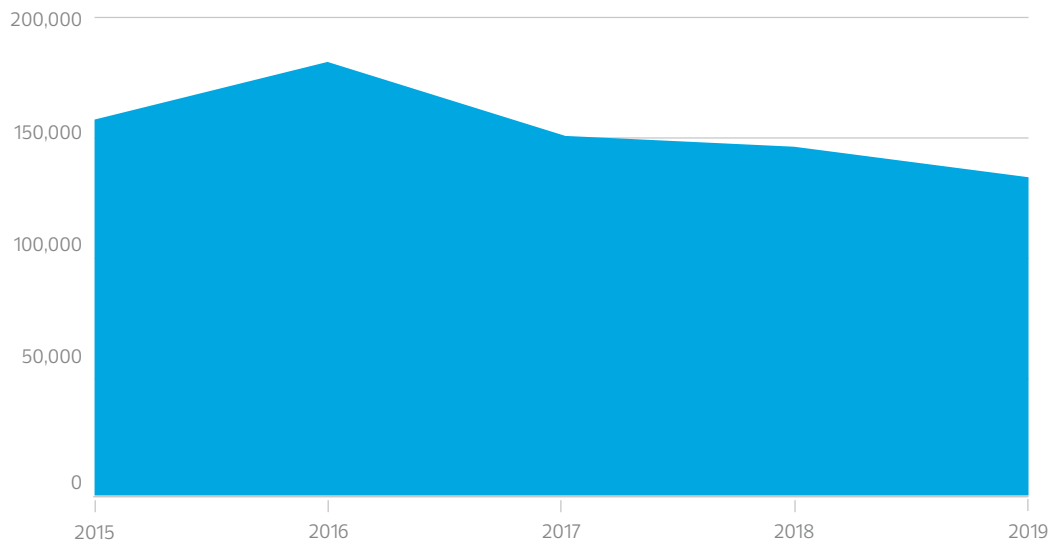
On the other hand, bowls clubs in the ACT have generally spent less on the following expense categories.

- The decreased functions and catering expenses could be attributed to the declined number of functions and catering events held annually as illustrated previously in the revenue analysis.
- As shown in the figure below, the decreased expense associated with championships is in line with the reduced championship revenue received, which was heavily impacted by the declining bowls membership and participation over the past five years.
- In relation to the raffles expenses, normally bowls clubs paid the raffles expenses from the championship entry fees that they received, however, as discussed previously, over the last few years bowls clubs received less championship fees.

This is most likely due to changes in the Lotteries Act 1964 which commenced at the end of 2015 to make raffles with a prize value of \$2,500 or less an “exempt lottery”, which did not require a permit. Some organisations responded to the changes by reducing the total prize value to meet this benchmark, rather than obtain a permit for a higher value raffle. As a result, with less participants and less championship income, bowls clubs spend less in raffles prizes.

- Over the past few years, bowls clubs appear to invest more in advertising and marketing in response to the declining bowls membership in the ACT.

Functions and Catering 2015 – 2019 (\*Including 5 Clubs)



Championship / Competition 2015 – 2019 (\*Including 4 clubs)

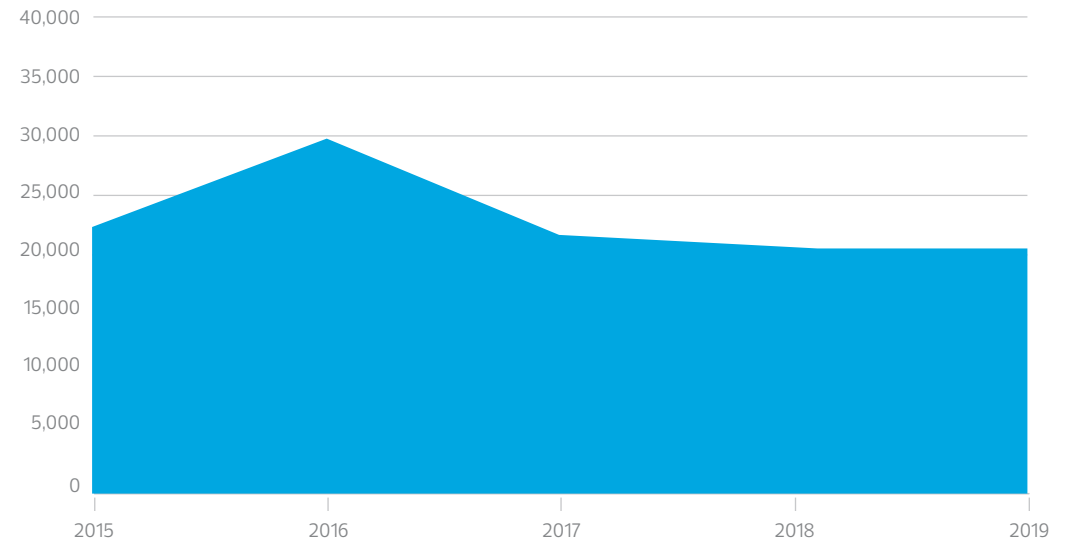
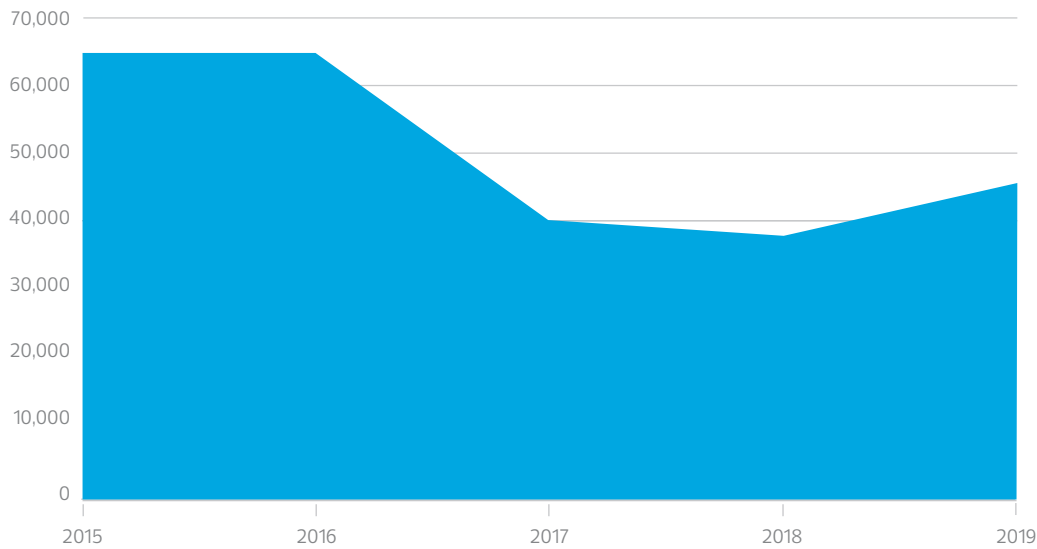


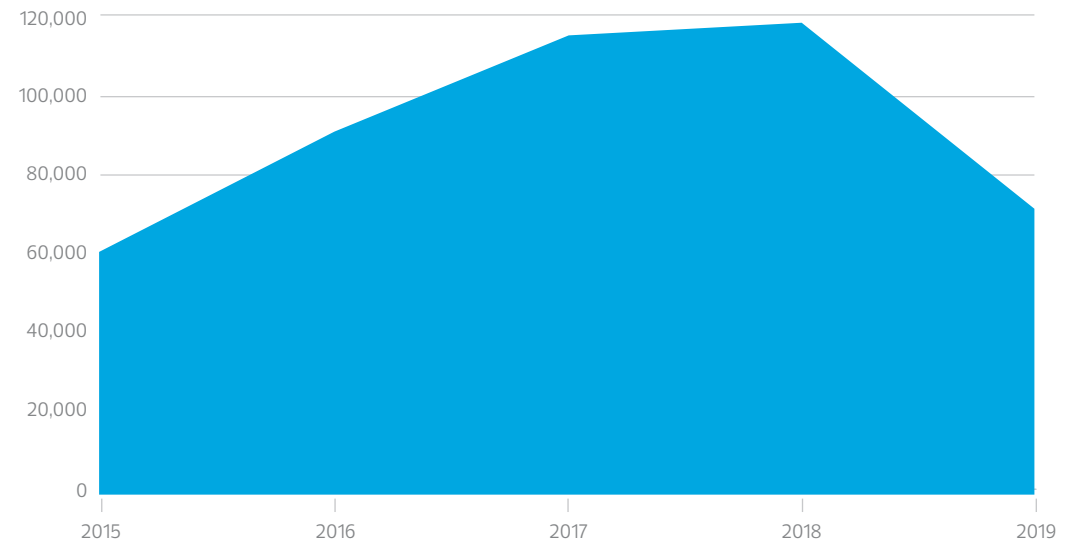
Figure 50: Functions and Catering, Championship / Competition, Raffles, Advertising and Marketing 2015–2019  
Source: Bowls Strategic Facility Review Data Submissions 2019



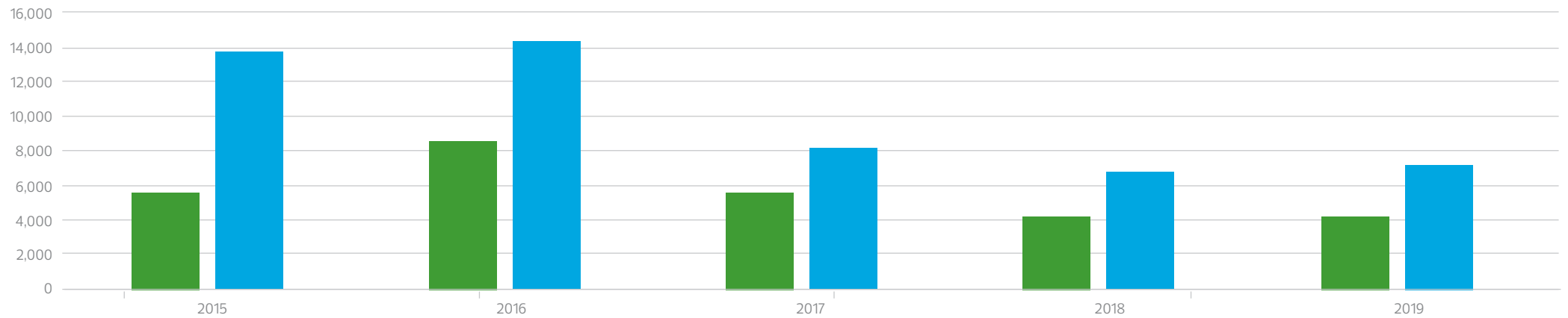
Raffles 2015 – 2019 (\*Including 5 Clubs)



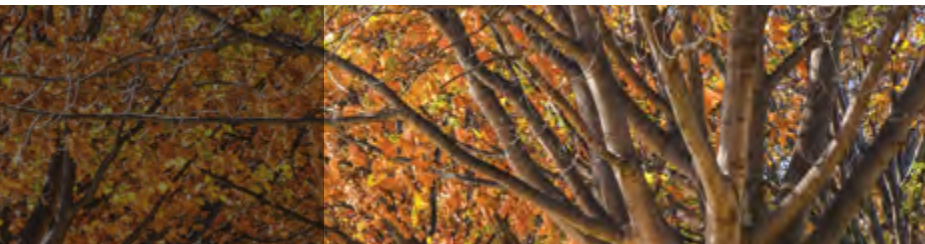
Advertising and Marketing Expense 2015 – 2019 (\*Including 2 clubs)



Raffle Expenses vs. Championships Income 2015 – 2019 (on Average)



Continued. Figure 50: Functions and Catering, Championship / Competition, Raffles, Advertising and Marketing 2015–2019 Source: Bowls Strategic Facility Review Data Submissions 2019

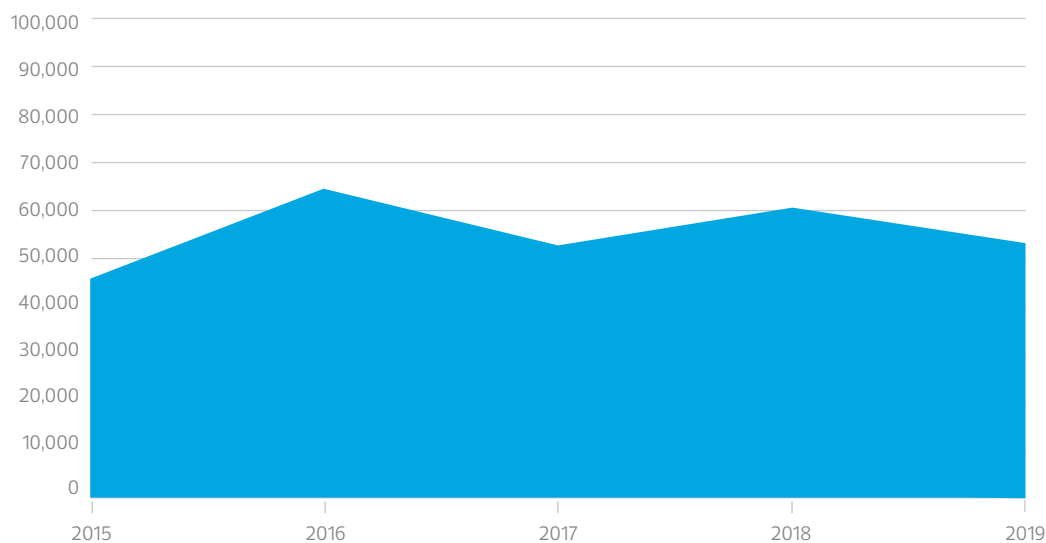


The annual spending of ACT Bowls Clubs on the following expense categories fluctuated over the past five years:

- Affiliation fees paid to Bowls ACT fluctuated between 2015 to 2019 as the affiliation fees paid is largely associated with the number of bowls memberships and bowls participants, and there have been some changes to the calculation of affiliation fees from Bowls Australia/ Bowls ACT. With the declining bowls membership and participation, it is highly likely that in the future Bowls ACT will receive fewer affiliation fees from Bowls Clubs in the ACT if the affiliation fees are still charged by the number of registered members in clubs.

- With regard to repairs and maintenance expenses, the higher amount incurred in 2016 and 2018 might be attributed to the fact that equipment requires more comprehensive examination, repairs and maintenance every two years.

Affiliation Fees Paid 2015 – 2019 (\*Including 6 Clubs)



Repairs and Maintenance 2015 – 2019 (\*Including 3 Clubs)

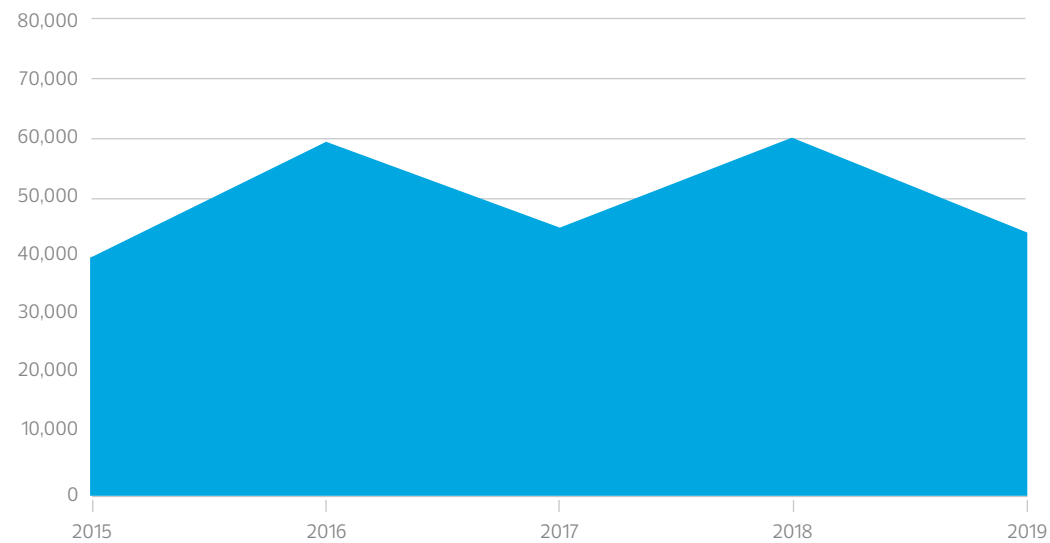


Figure 51: Affiliation Fees Paid, Repairs and Maintenance 2015–2019  
Source: Bowls Review Data Submissions 2019

15.0

## MEMBERSHIP DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, ATTITUDES AND INSIGHTS

## 15.0 MEMBERSHIP DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS, ATTITUDES AND INSIGHTS

Purpose: Understand the trends in memberships and participation in bowls.

- Breakdown by membership category, age, gender, annual membership fees paid and postcode.
- Membership trends (growth/decline in particular demographics)
- Map each club membership and consider the travel time for members based on proximity.
- Participation rates and usage
- Membership Fees; comparison of fees paid in ACT and across jurisdictions.
- Desktop comparison of the costs to participate in bowls in the ACT, with two sports.

## 15.1 MEMBERSHIP DATA ANALYSIS PAST FIVE YEARS (DATA FROM CLUBS)

Membership and Participation in bowls in the ACT is in steep decline.

Since 2010, the number of total participants has declined significantly and the number of playing members has

decreased by 30%. Long term, in the ACT, the sport of bowls has experienced significant challenges such as the closure of clubs and the decline in interest from younger demographics, contributing to the overall decline in participation and memberships.

Since 2015, the rate of participation in the ACT has declined by 16% and is forecasted to continue this trend (National Bowls Census). This is a significant contrast to the increases in participation rates in other states.

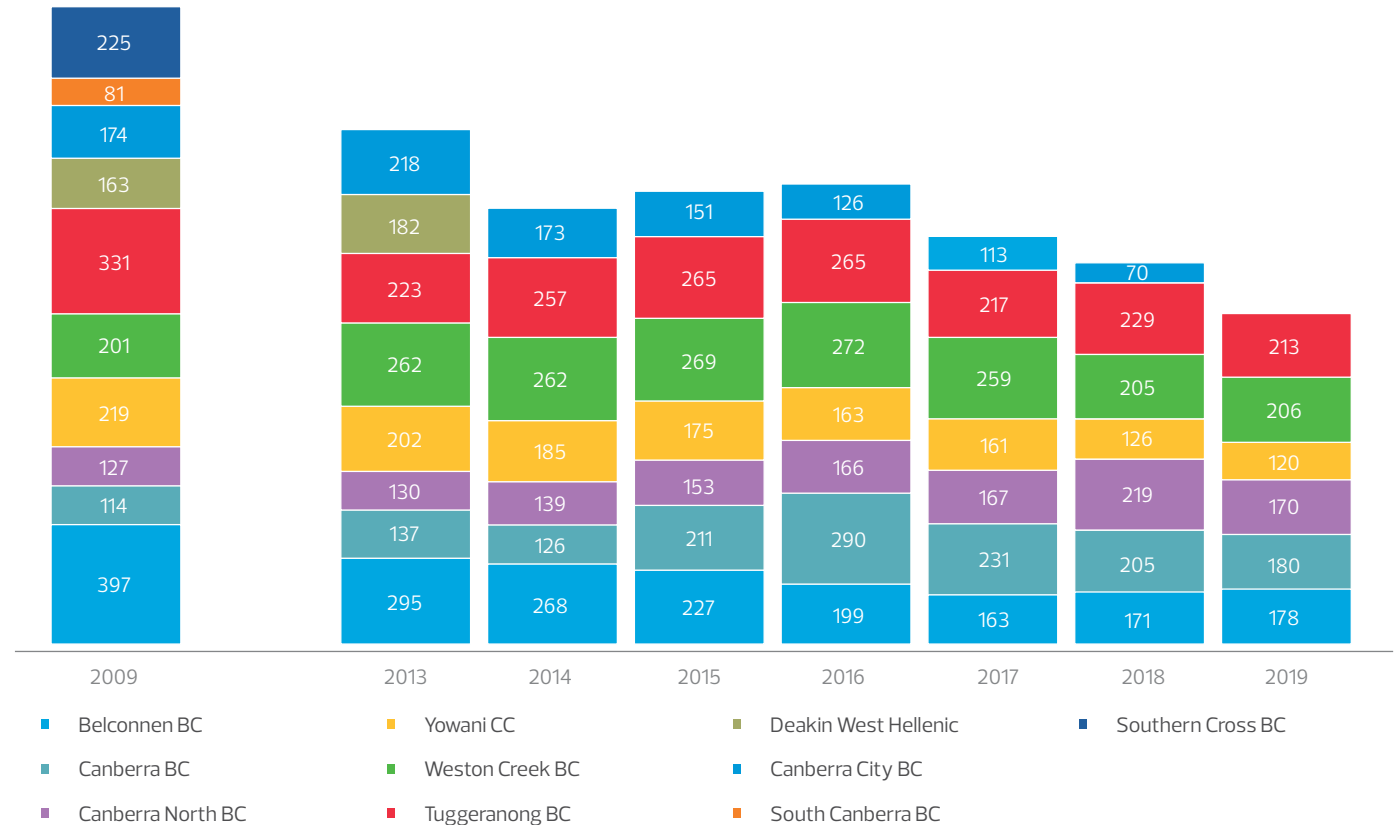


Figure 52: Membership Trends By Club 2009 vs 2013–2019.  
Source: Bowls ACT Facility Plan 4 August 2009 and Bowls ACT Membership Data



## 15.2 AGE OF MEMBERS

As of 2019, only 0.36% of the ACT adult population play bowls.

- Figure 53 illustrates the demographic issue in the sport of bowls – there is a large ‘gap’ between younger players and older players. Participation within the sport is exceptionally low for individuals aged 55 and below, with peak participation rates around ages 65 and above.
- 86% of members are over the age of 55, 37% of are aged between 75 to 84.
- Participation rates across all demographics in the ACT are significantly lower than national averages.



Age of Members

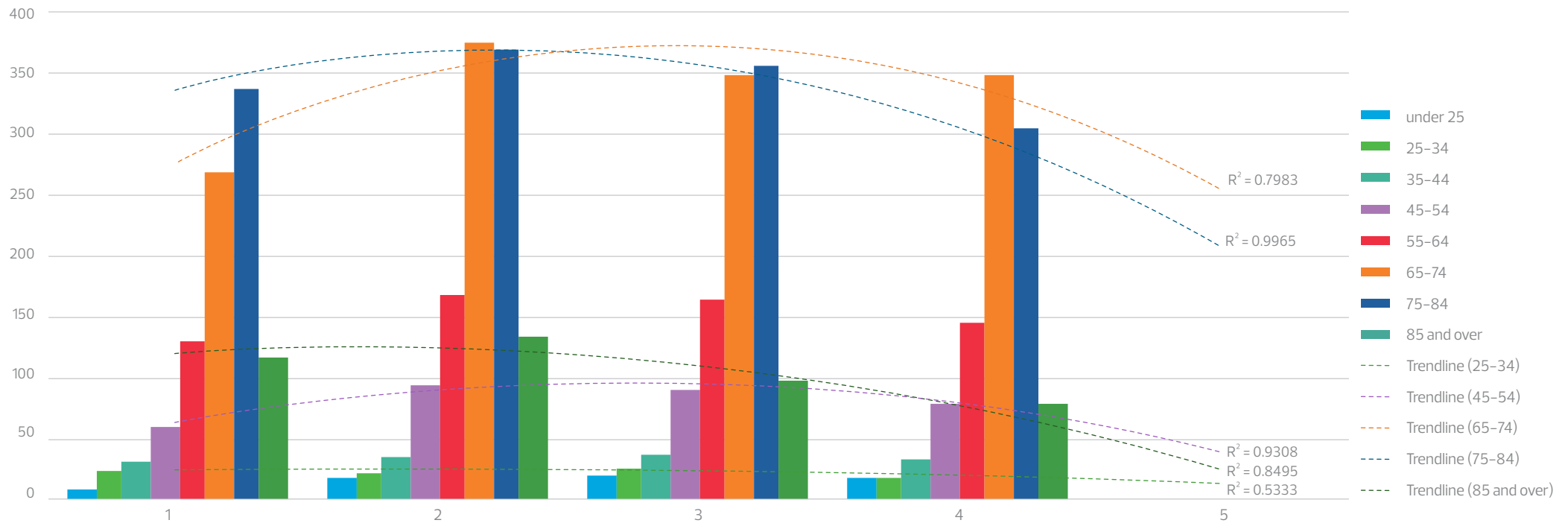


Figure 53: Age of Members. Source: ACT Bowls Membership Data 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019

- Figure 54 shows that the age of members in 2019 is heavily left skewed towards the older demographic of 65 and above. Again, member participation is significantly lower for individuals who are under the age of 50.
- Nationally, the total bowls participants to population rate is 3.16%. Participation is the highest in the 60–74 years age group, which is 9.52%, and the lowest in the 8–39 years age group, which is 0.87% (National Bowls Census).
- Out of all the states, the ACT has the lowest total participants to population rate of 0.36%. When this is broken down into the different age demographics, again, the ACT has the lowest rates.

- The participants to population rate for individuals under the age of 40 in the ACT is 0.45%. For individuals between 40 to 59 years of age the rate is 0.67%. For individuals between 60 to 74 years of age the rate is 2.03%, and for individuals over the age of 75 the rate is 1.53%.
- In the 60 to 74 years age demographic, the ACT's participants to population rate is the lowest by far. For example, the Northern Territory's rate is 15.65%, despite having a significantly lower population in that particular age demographic.

### Age of Members In 2019

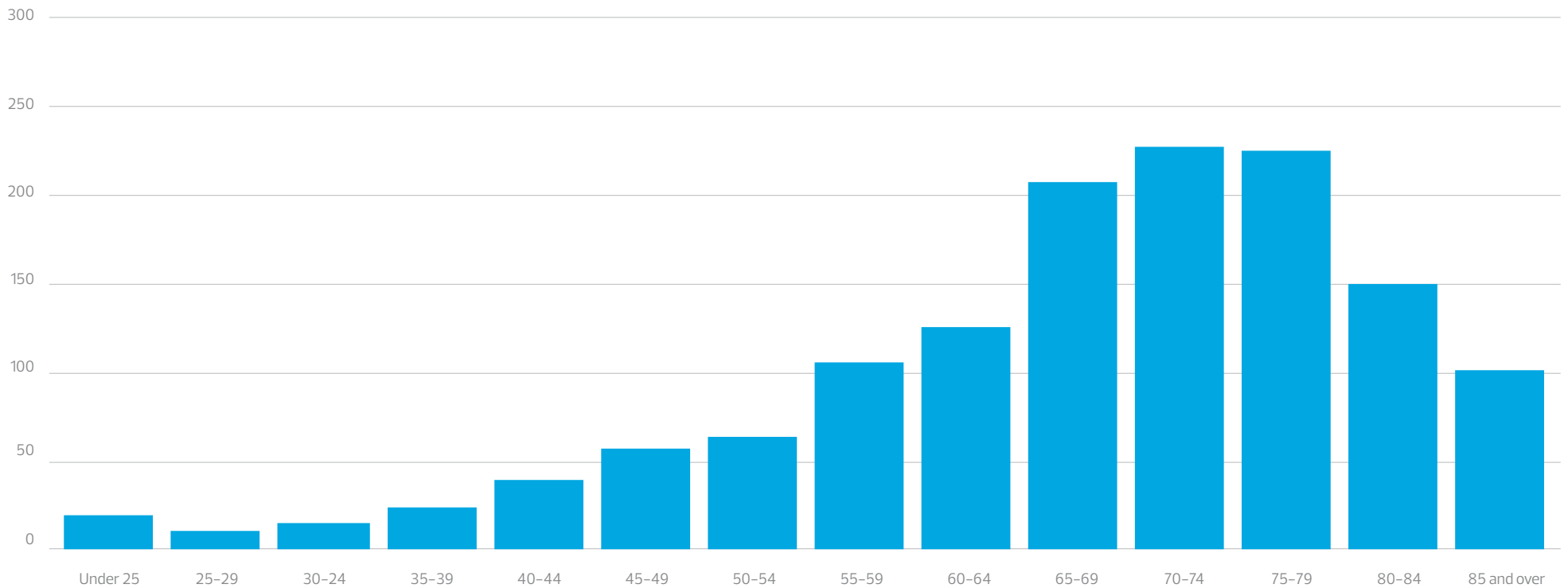


Figure 54: Age of Members for All ACT Bowls Clubs in 2019. Source: Bowls ACT Membership Data

Figure 55 illustrates the age distribution of members in each ACT club. For each club, most members from each club are between the ages of 70–79.

- 46% of members at Canberra Bowling Club are aged between 70–79, which is the largest percentage out of all the clubs.
- Canberra Bowling Club only has 7% of members under the age of 50.

- 82% of Yowani members are over the age of 60.
- Belconnen Bowling Club has the highest percentage of members under the age of 50, however this is only 20%.

The figures on the following page outline the comparison between the change in population vs the change in club membership and the average age of club members by Club

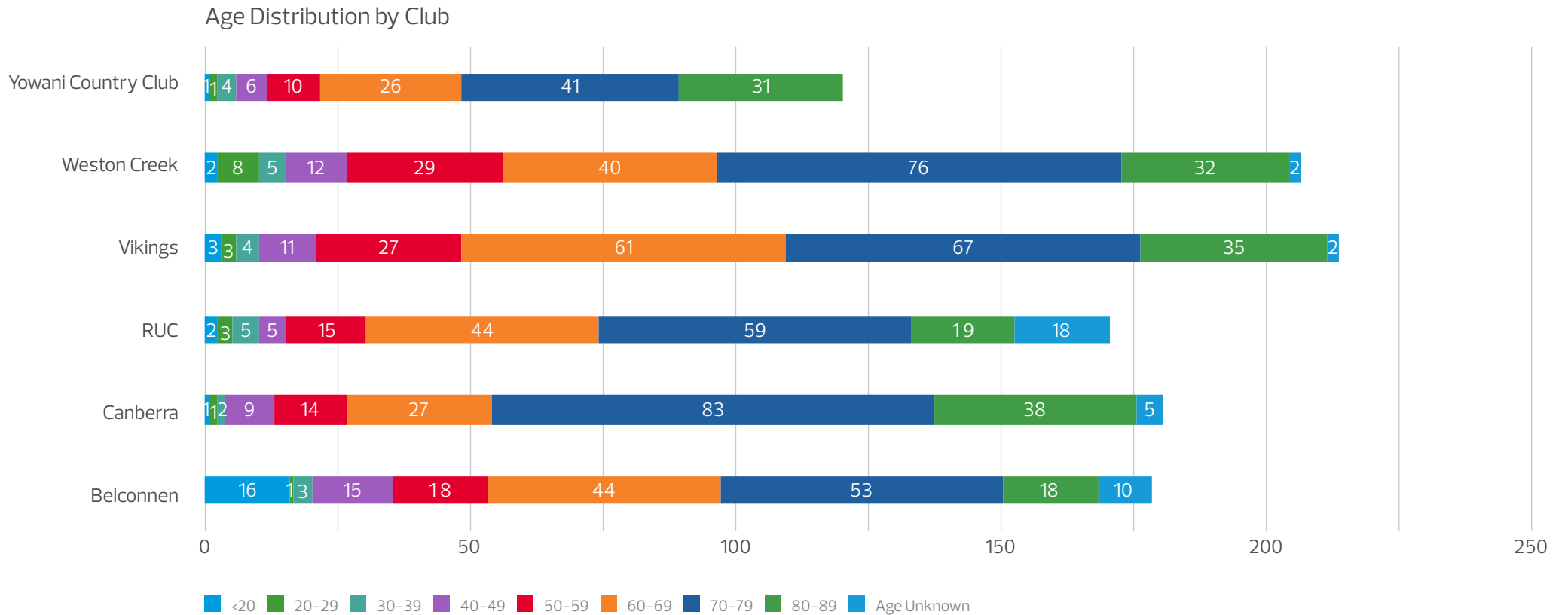


Figure 55: Age Distribution by Club.  
Source Bowls ACT Membership Data

### ACT Bowls Members Vs Population Aged 55+ Comparison

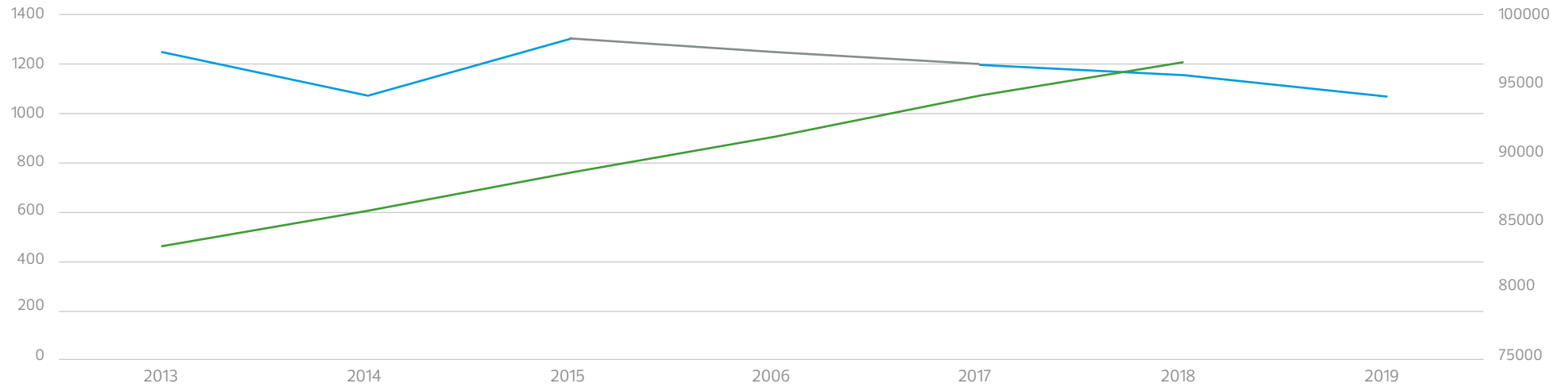


Figure 56: ACT Bowls Members vs Population Aged 55+ Change  
 Source: Bowls ACT Membership Database 2019; Population Australian Bureau Statistics

■ Total Bowls Members ■ Data Unavailable ■ ACT Population Aged 55+

### Average Age of Members, by Club Source: Bowls ACT Club Membership Database 2019

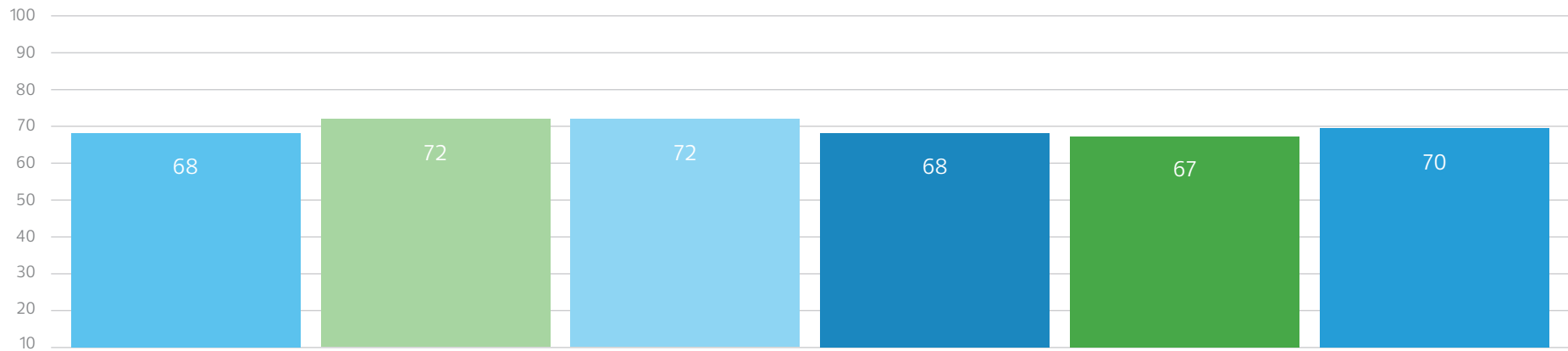


Figure 57: Average Age of Members, by Club  
 Source: Bowls ACT Club Membership Database 2019

■ BCC ■ CBC ■ RUC ■ Vikings BC ■ WCBC ■ YCC



## 15.3 TRAVEL TIME FROM HOME TO CLUB

We have calculated the average travel time for a member to their individual club.

*This information was calculated based on membership data and postcode location. We averaged the travel time from the main suburbs that the members of each club lived in for car and public transport (usually bus).*

Figure 58 illustrates the average travel time in minutes members spend to travel to their club. It takes usually around 10 minutes for members to travel to their club by car with variances by public transport depending on proximity to region hubs and light rail.

The analysis indicates that some clubs, e.g. Belconnen Bowls Club members have the lowest average travel time of 7.9 minutes, suggesting they have a higher density of members living closer to the club.

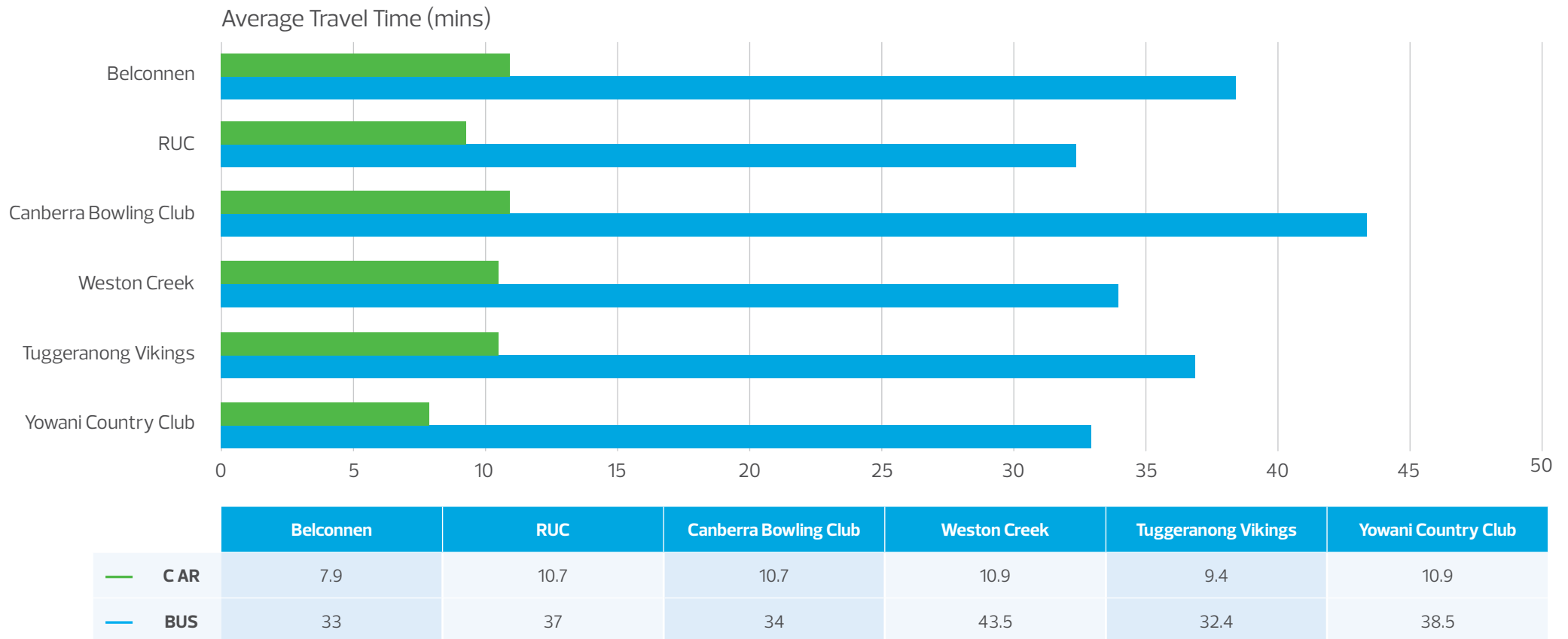


Figure 58: Average Travel Time in Minutes.  
Source: Analysis of Clubs ACT Member Postcodes and Google Maps

## 15.4 GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF FACILITIES IN THE ACT

Figure 59 illustrates the percentage of all bowls members who live in each ACT region. As shown in the graph, Belconnen, Woden/Weston, and Tuggeranong have the largest percentage of members and are the most popular regions in which bowls players reside. When compared to the percentage of the total population living in each ACT region:

- Belconnen has the highest density of members – the most members live in Belconnen, which only accounts for 16.3% of the total population and 16.3% of those aged 65 and over.
- The Woden/Weston region is over-represented, that being there is a higher density of members living in a region that only accounts for 16.3% of ACT residents.
- Tuggeranong also has a higher density of members, correlating to the highest percentage of the total population and those aged 65 and over living in the region.

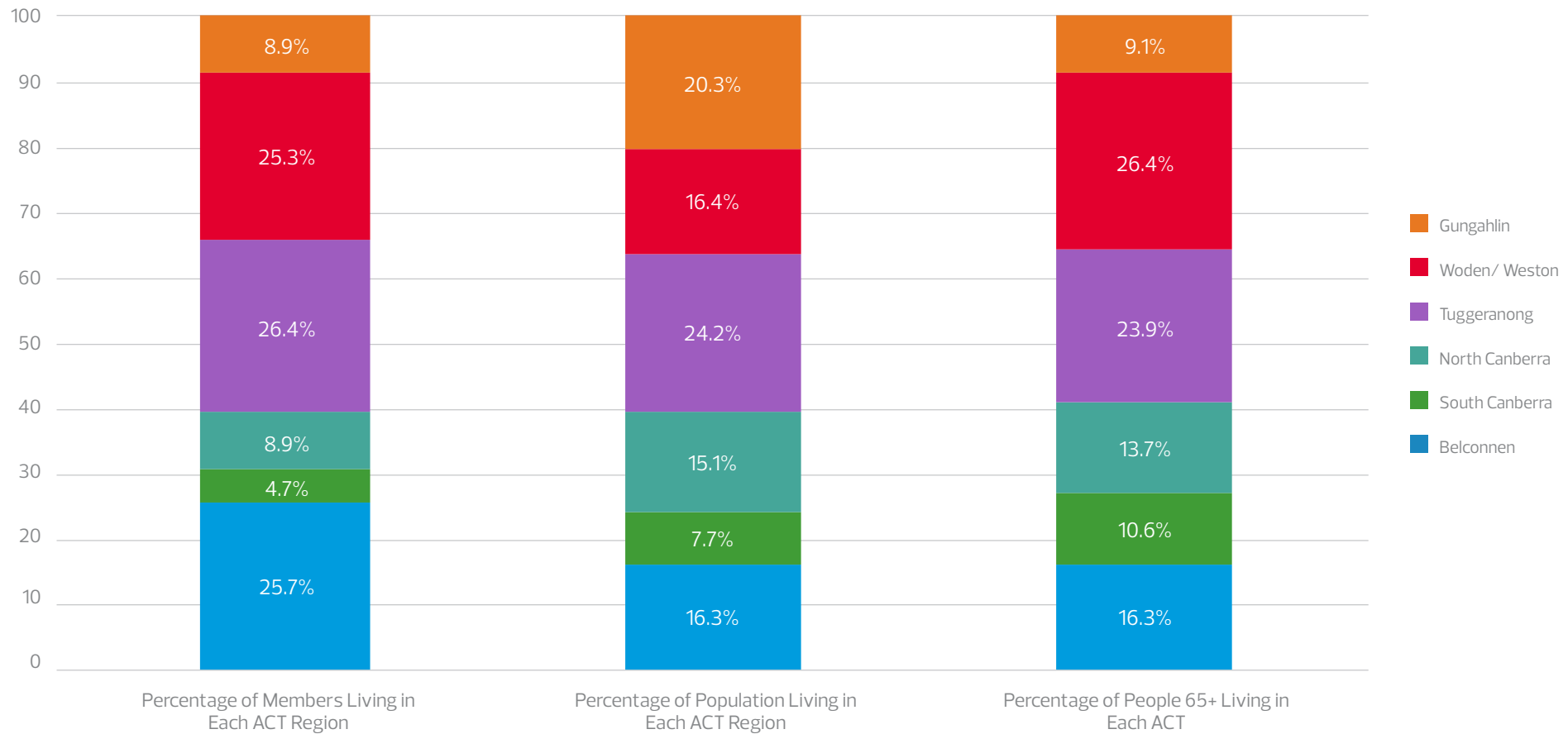


Figure 59: Percentage of Members Living in Each ACT Region.  
Source: Bowls ACT Membership Data and ABS

## 154.1 COMPARING GEOGRAPHIC FACILITY DISTRIBUTION TO PLAYER DISTRIBUTION

There has been emphasis in recent years on building a "local" bowls facility in Gungahlin. Gungahlin is well represented by Bowls members from a range of clubs, despite a facility not being "local".

By averaging the travel time for the main suburbs in Gungahlin, it would take around 10 minutes for a member to travel to Yowani Country Club by car, as an example of a closeby club in northern Canberra, which is the same average time that a majority of members of Yowani travel for. This suggests that players who live in Gungahlin are not disadvantaged as the average travel time remains within a reasonable time to other players in the Territory.

Further, the table below illustrates the distribution of bowls players who live in each ACT region, and indexes the percentages of bowls members who reside in each region against the population.

- Only 9.1% of those aged 65 and over live in Gungahlin compared to all regions in the ACT, and this is almost exactly the proportion of bowls players who live in the ACT.
- Given the broader competitive landscape at present, adding a facility in Gungahlin would severely impact clubs located in the North of Canberra, drawing away members from all clubs.

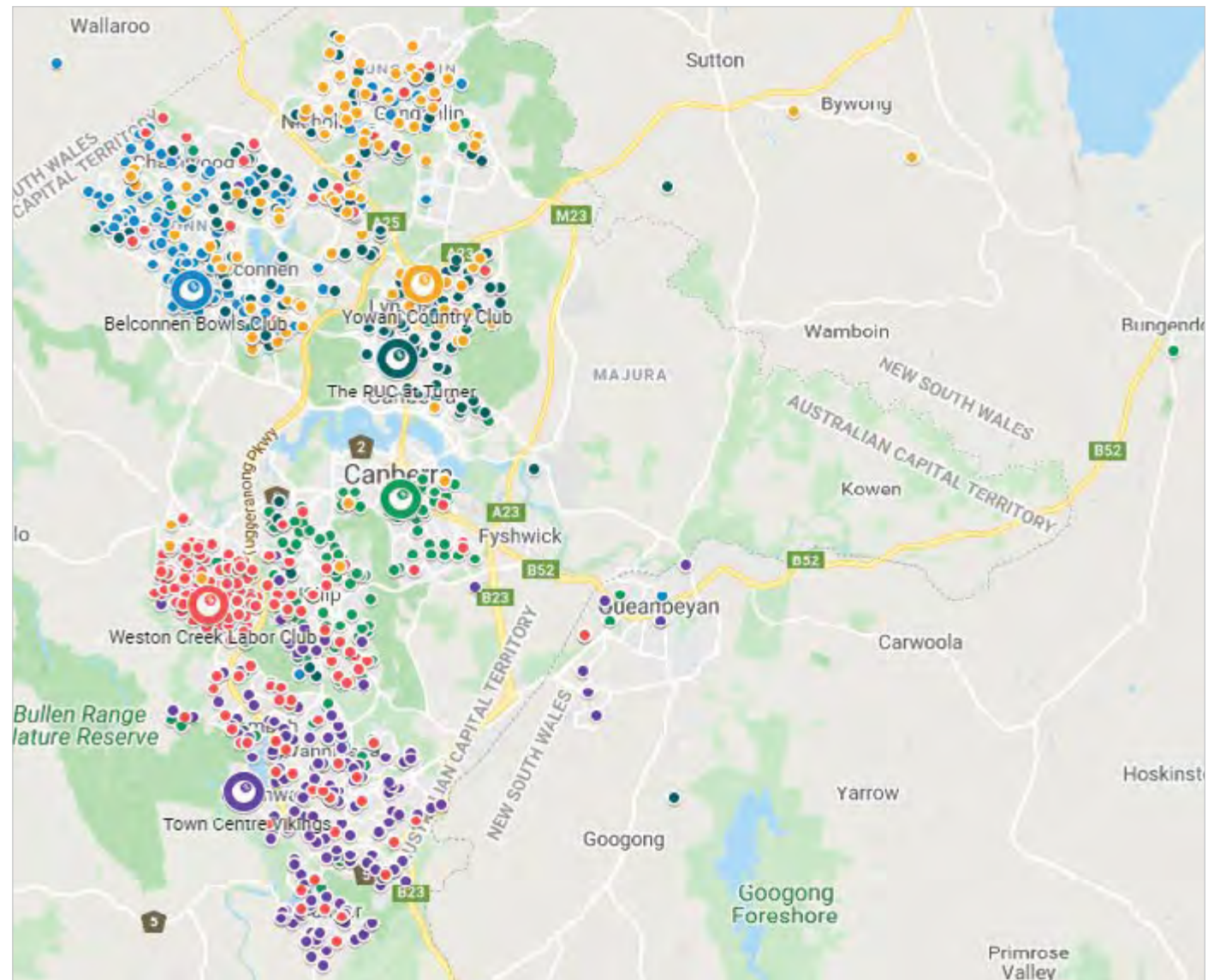


Figure 60: Maps of Bowls ACT Members.

Source: Google Map



	Number of members who live in Gungahlin	% of members who live in Gungahlin
Yowani	47	39%
Vikings	3	1%
Weston	7	3%
Canberra Bowling Club	3	2%
RUC	19	11%
Belconnen	17	10%

Figure 61: Number and Percentage of Members in each ACT Club.  
Source: Bowls ACT Membership Data

	Percentage of Bowls Members	Percentage Total Population	Index	Population All People Aged 65+	Index
Gungahlin	8.9	20.3	44	9.1	98
Woden/Weston	25.3	16.4	154	26.4	96
Tuggeranong	26.4	24.2	109	23.9	110
North Canberra	8.9	15.1	59	13.7	65
South Canberra	4.7	7.7	61	10.6	44
Belconnen	25.7	16.3	158	16.3	158

Figure 62: Comparison and Index of Population and Bowls Members by ACT Region  
Source: Bowls ACT Membership Data and ABS.



## 15.5 GENDER PROFILE

While we have grouped male/ female clubs together as one club for the purposes of this analysis, it is worth noting that there are clear and persistent divisions between the men's and women's clubs at Tuggeranong and Weston Creek. There have been ongoing discussions at each club regarding potential mergers, however this has not eventuated. While maintaining gender splits in clubs is comfortable and traditional for existing members, it is increasingly considered an anachronism, and does not support the modernisation of the sport or the open nature of the sport.

- Figure 63 depicts the number of bowls memberships by gender in each ACT club. Currently, participation in the ACT within the sport is male skewed, accounting for 69% of participants (Bowls ACT Membership Data).
- Amongst the six bowls clubs, the average age for male members is 68 and the average age for female members is 71.
- 6% of male members are under the age of 40, 18% are between 40 to 59 years of age, 42% are between 60 to 74 years of age, and 35% are over the age of 75.
- 3% of female members are under the age of 40, 11% are between 40 to 59 years of age, 42% are between 60 to 74 years of age, and 44% are over the age of 75.
- During the RSM consultations with the committee members of each ACT club, it was found that the Tuggeranong Vikings Womens Bowls Club are currently facing structural issue in regards to wanting to change to a mixed club.
- According to the consultation meeting, Tuggeranong Women's have been trying to change to a mixed club for a while in order to help attract new members / families, however, this has been difficult due to the views of the traditional members.

ACT Bowls Membership by gender

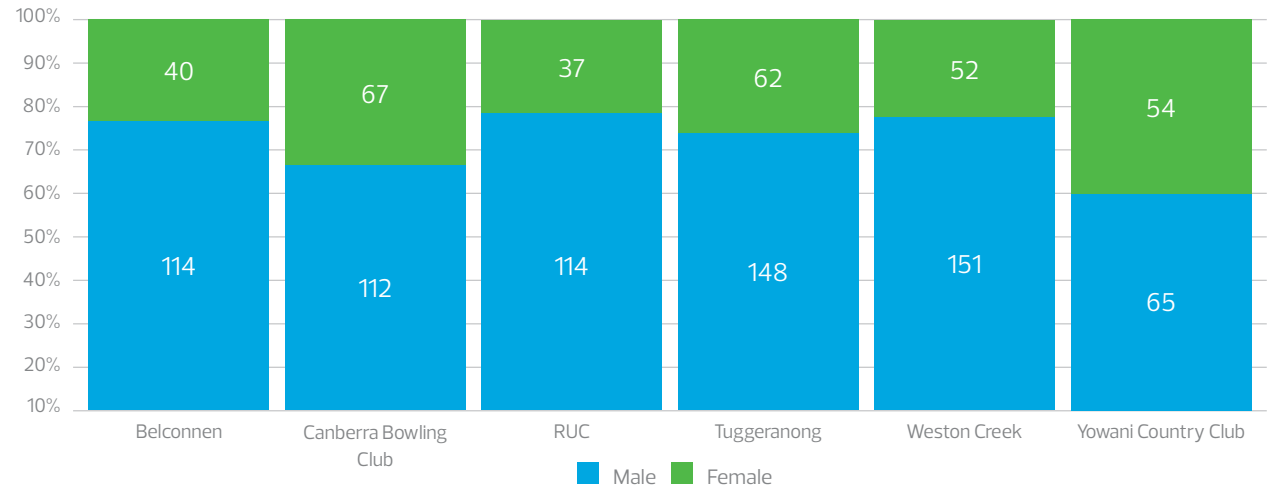


Figure 63: ACT Bowls Memberships by Gender.  
Source: Bowls ACT Membership Data

	Female	Male
Belconnen	1	2.85
Canberra Bowling Club	1	1.67
RUC	1	3.08
Tuggeranong	1	2.39
Weston Creek	1	2.9
Yowani Country Club	1	1.2

Figure 64: Female to Male Ratio for each Club.  
Source: Bowls ACT Membership Data

- Out of all the ACT clubs, Yowani Country Club has the smallest gap between the number of female members and the number of male members.
- The RUC has the largest difference between the number of female members and male members – on average, for every 1 female member there is 3 male members.

- According to the Bowls ACT Survey, 67% of respondents prefer to play in both single gender and mixed gender competition formats.
- Nonetheless, almost 20% of respondents still prefer the single gender competition format.

The following quotes have been extracted from the RSM Bowls Survey, describing gender in the sport from a members perspective:

“Bowls is one of the few sports that is age and gender irrelevant on performance; truly a sport for everyone.”  
(RSM Bowls Survey, 2019)

“Bowls is a sport where gender plays a minimal role; physical strength does not dictate who can Bowl against whom. More work needs to be done to promote and develop “mixed” gender competitions. Canada has a developed mixed program; unfortunately not so much in Australia (there is still a strong male bias against such competitions).”  
(RSM Bowls Survey, 2019)

“I think that the pennant competition in Canberra needs to go to an open gender competition, played on Saturday afternoon and be longer, rounds played before and after Christmas.”  
(RSM Bowls Survey, 2019)

“[I would like to be] able to play mixed gender pennant in the ACT (see Tasmania models) on weekends.”  
(RSM Bowls Survey, 2019)

“Gender inequality... Not enough mixing of partners in social games. I came from SA and all of those clubs are far more advanced in bowls game format and administration. Practice techniques, statistic gathering, Pennant selection and communicating changes. SA has had mixed Pennant and Saturdays judged on ability since 2007. SA Clubs are all mixed gender administered. (no male club and female club).”  
(RSM Bowls Survey, 2019)

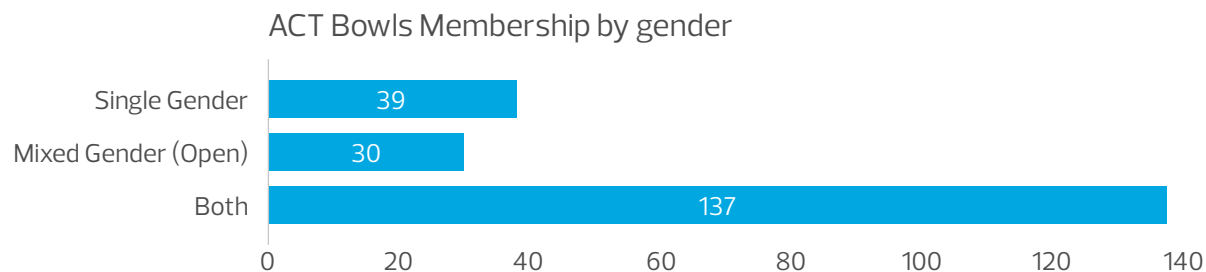


Figure 65: Bowls members preferred competition formats.  
Source: ACT Bowls Survey 2019

Club	Member	Change	Change (%)
Belconnen	Male	-91	-41.18%
	Female	-26	-35.14%
	Total	-117	-39.66%
Canberra Bowling Club	Male	52	86.67%
	Female	-9	-11.69%
	Total	43	31.39%
RUC	Male	30	30.30%
	Female	10	32.26%
	Total	40	30.77%
Yowani Country Club	Male	-38	-36.54%
	Female	-44	-44.90%
	Total	-82	-40.59%
Weston Creek Clubs	Male	-42	-21.76%
	Female	-14	-20.29%
	Total	-56	-21.37%
Tuggeranong Clubs	Male	12	8.70%
	Female	-22	-25.88%
	Total	-10	-4.48%

Figure 66: Change in membership by Gender from 2013 to 2019  
Source: Bowls ACT Membership Database 2019

## 15.6 PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL BOWLS VS COMPETITION PENNANTS / CHAMPIONSHIPS

There is a strong cross over between playing competition and social bowls amongst members. According to the Bowls Survey, an average 72% of players spend their time on playing social / casual bowls. However, 82% of players have an interest in playing pennant competition.

- In the Survey it was found that 53% of players were less than satisfied with Accessibility and the Quality of Coaching, suggesting that players are less inclined to participate in competitions because clubs lack accessibility to coaching.
- Professional coaching and organised training could be effective initiatives taken place to increase the number of members who play competition.

“I like to play socially on Thursday nights during daylight saving. I'd like to participate in **some organised group training.**”  
(RSM Bowls Survey, 2019)

Average Percentage of Time Members Spend on Social and Pennant Bowls (from ACT Bowls Survey)

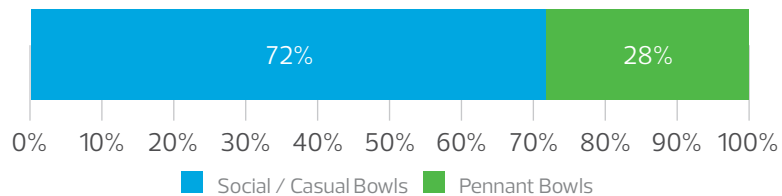


Figure 67: Average Percentage of Time Members Spend on Social and Pennant Bowls. Source: RSM Bowls Survey



Interest in Playing Competition (from ACT Bowls Survey)

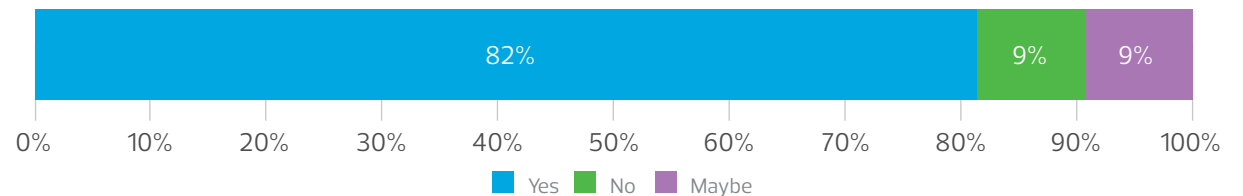


Figure 68: Interest in Playing Competition. Source: RSM Bowls Survey





## 15.7 MEMBERSHIPS BY CLUBS

Number of Members per Club 2019

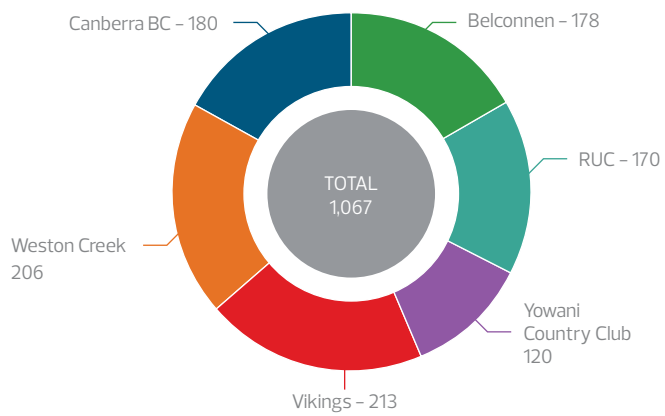
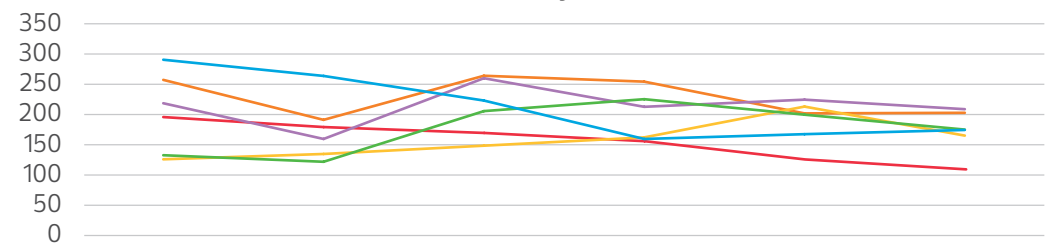


Figure 69: Number of members per Club  
Source: Bowls ACT Membership Survey 2019

Total Members from 2013 to 2019 by Club



	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	2019
Belconnen	295	268	227	163	171	178
Canberra BC	137	126	211	231	205	180
RUC	130	139	153	167	219	170
Tuggeranong Vikings	223	163	265	217	229	213
Yowani	202	185	175	161	126	120
Weston Creek	262	194	269	259	205	206

Figure 70: Membership Trends from 2013 to 2019  
Source: Bowls ACT)





## 15.8 MEMBERSHIP PROFILE (RSM SURVEY, 2019)



**Males 61%**

58% over 65

53% HH income \$70,001+ 58% over 65

59% Higher Education Qualification

68% Identify as Older Couple

#1 Motivation- Friendships that participation in bowls provides

Quality of the Greens

Accessibility and Quality of Coaching

27% Professional Careers

61% Identify their Health as Good



**Females 39%**

62% over 65

77% HH income \$70,001+

50% Higher Education Qualification

68% Identify as Older Couple

#1 Motivation- Friendships that participation in bowls provides

Quality of the Greens

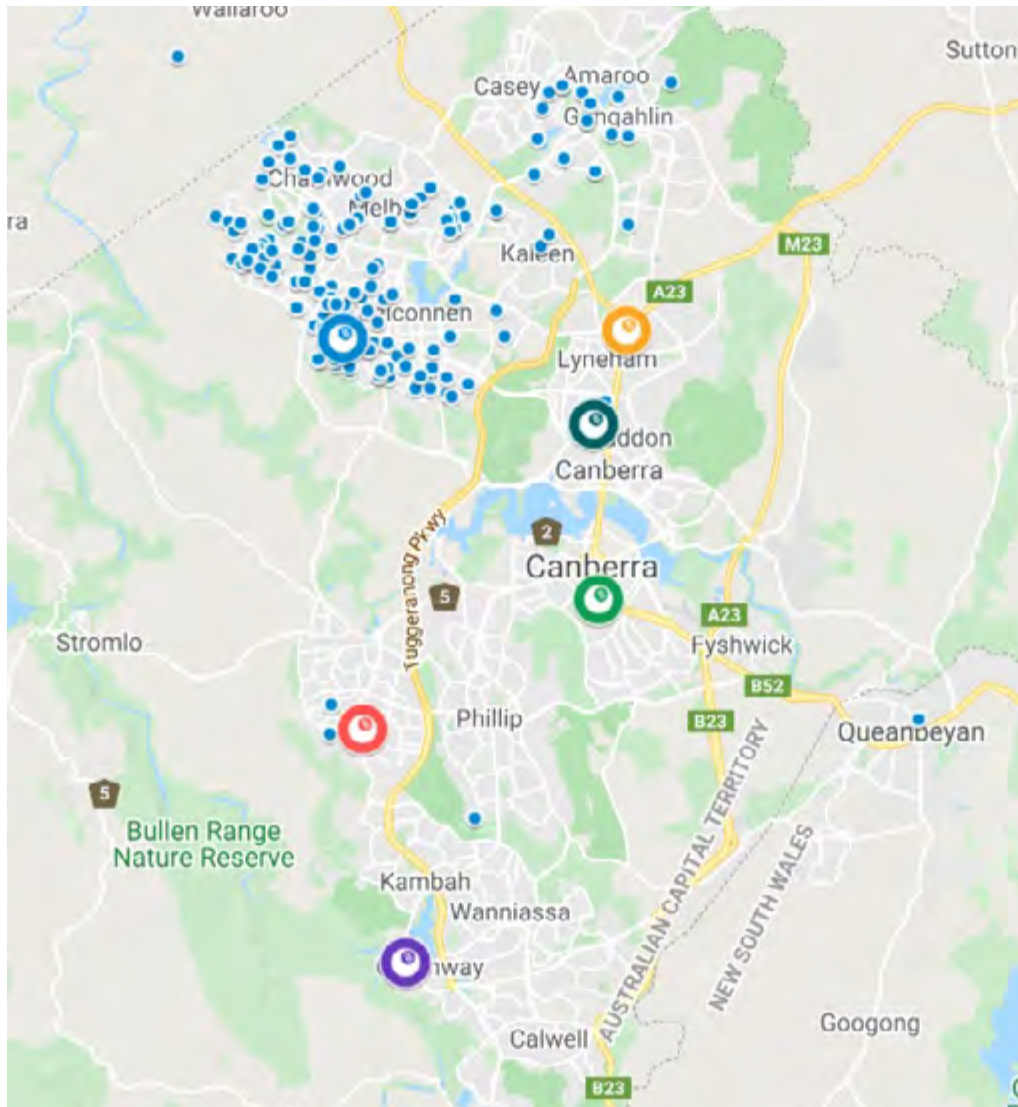
Accessibility and Quality of Coaching

47% Clerical and Administration Careers

57% Identify their Health as Good



## 15.9 MEMBERSHIP MAP: BELCONNEN BOWLS CLUB



The Belconnen Bowling Club was established in 1972 and is located in Hawker, Canberra.

### Facilities include:

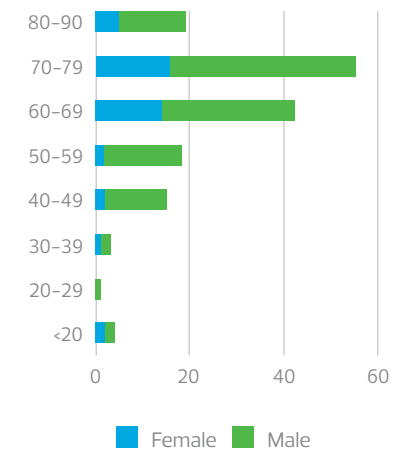
- Three natural grass lawn bowls greens
- Licensed bar
- Pool tables
- Vending machines
- EGMs

### Club activities include:

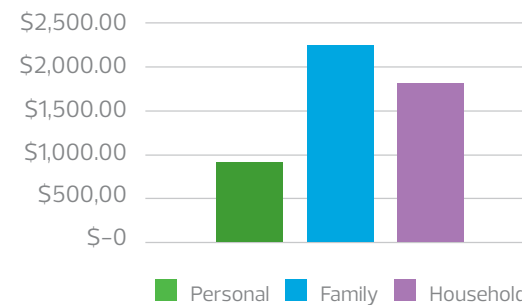
- Formal bowls pennants
- Bowls Championships
- Social bowls

Number of Members	Average Age
178	68

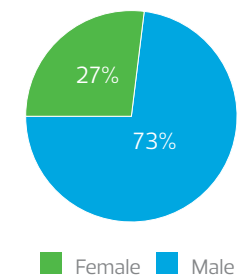
Age Distribution of Club Members by Gender – BBC



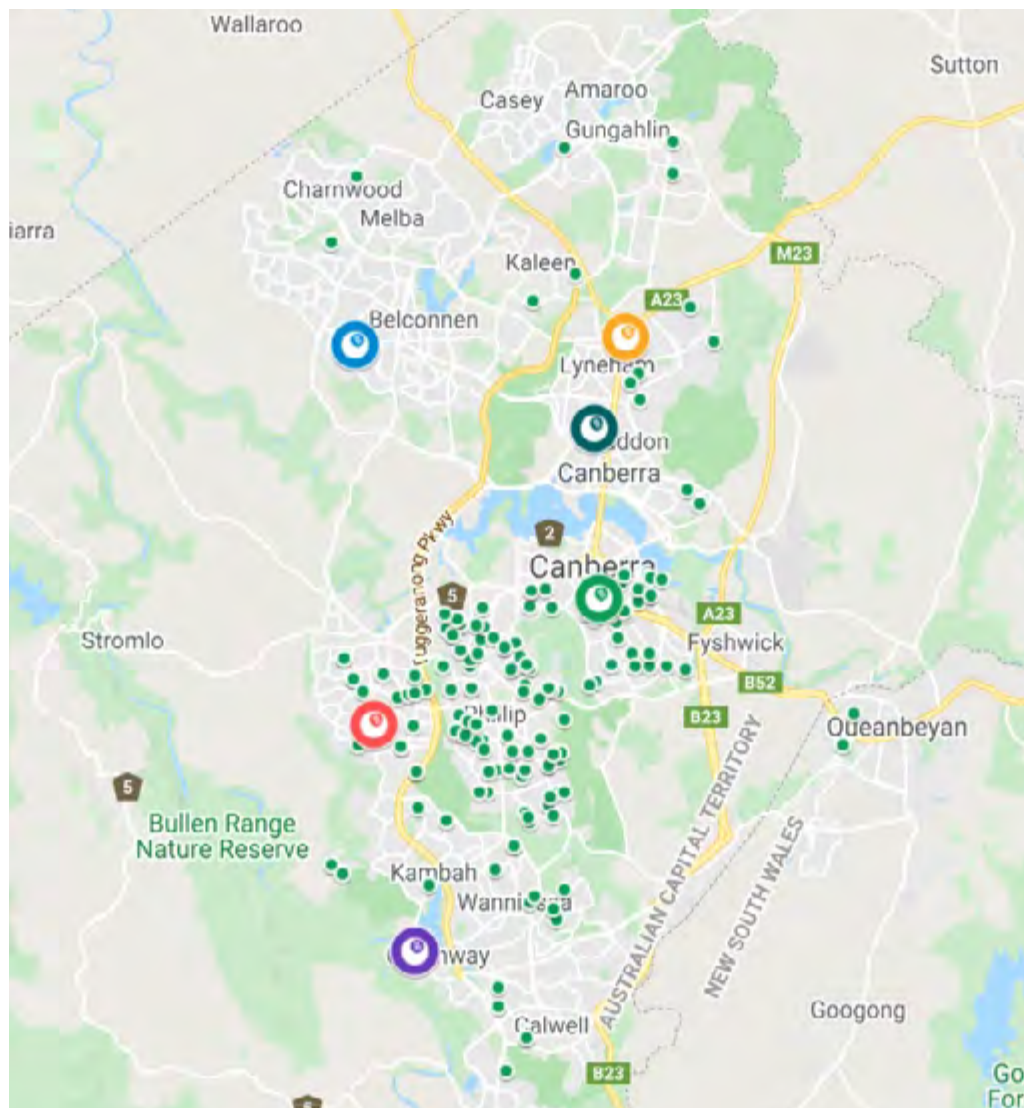
Average Weekly Incomes – BBC LCA



Proportion of Males and Females – BBC



## 15.10 MEMBERSHIP MAP: CANBERRA BOWLS CLUB



The Canberra Bowling Club has been established since 1926 and is located in Forrest, Canberra.

### Facilities include:

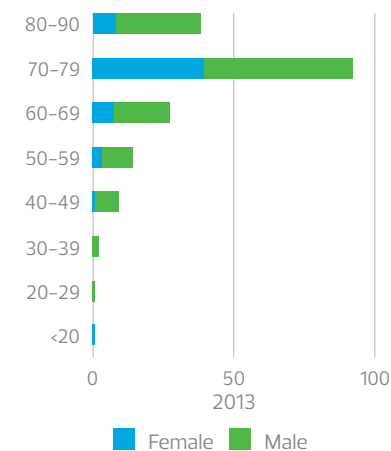
- Two synthetic bowls greens
- Outdoor BBQ area
- Licensed bar
- Commercial Kitchen
- EGMs

### Club activities include:

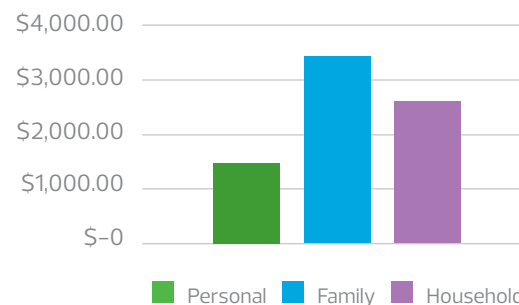
- Separate men's and women's bowls programs
- Formal bowls pennants
- Social bowls
- Championship bowls events
- Mixed social bowls
- Various special events

Number of Members	Average Age
180	72

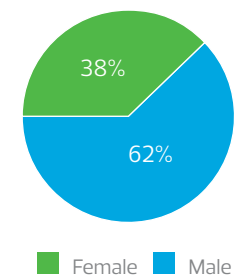
Age Distribution of Club Members by Gender - CBC



Average Weekly Incomes - BBC LCA



Proportion of Males and Females - CBC

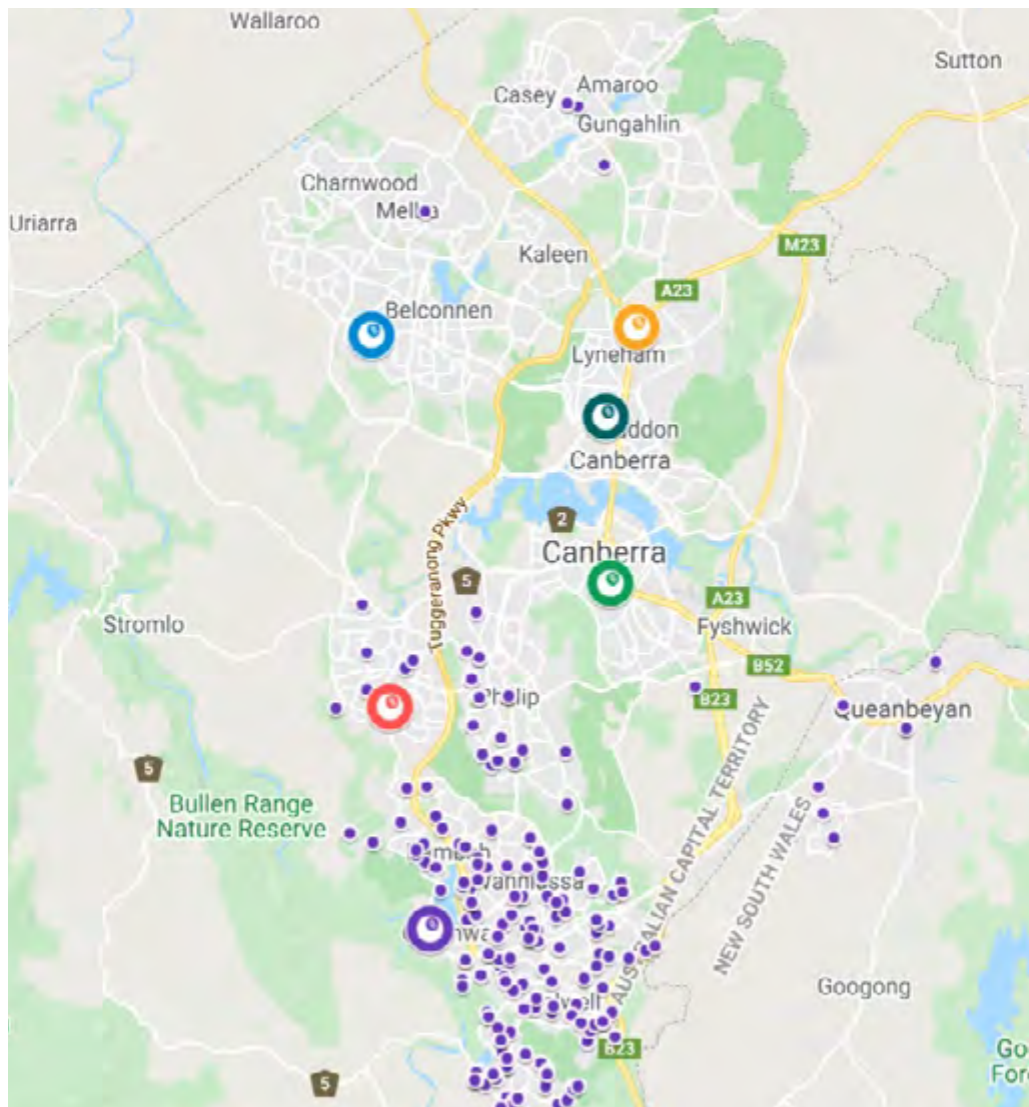








## 15.12 TUGGERANONG TOWN CENTRE SPORTS CLUB



Town Centre Vikings is part of the Vikings Group and is located in Greenway, Canberra.

### Facilities include:

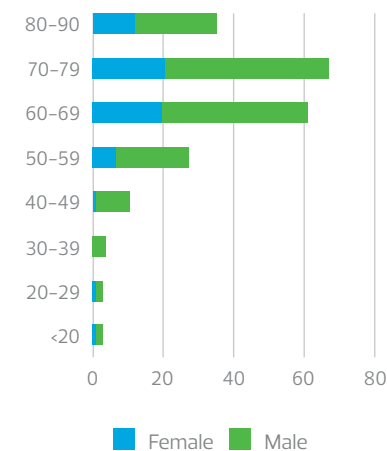
- Three International sized bowls greens
- Licensed bar
- Commercial kitchen
- Various size function rooms
- EGMs

### Club activities include:

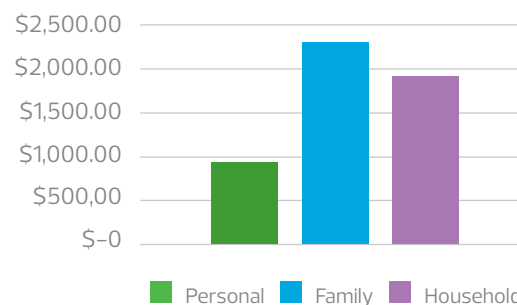
- Pennant bowls
- Competition and championship bowls
- Social bowls
- Barefoot bowls
- Men's and women's bowls programs
- Weekly raffles
- Various promotions

Number of Members	Average Age
213	67

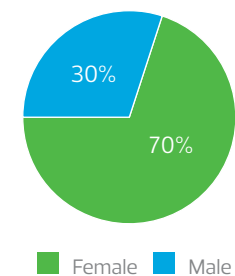
Age Distribution of Club Members by Gender – TCV



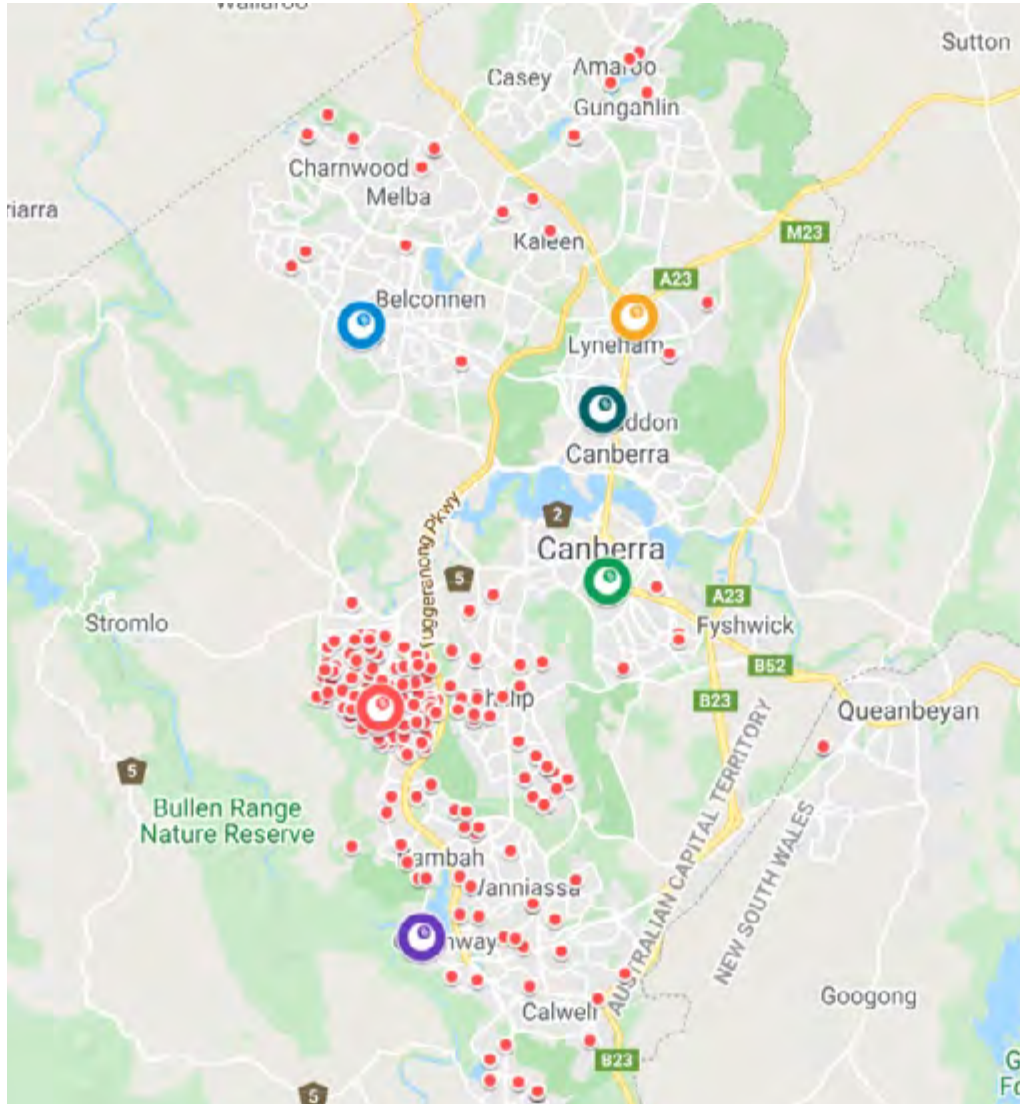
Average Weekly Incomes – TCV LCA



Proportion of Males and Females – TCV



## 15.13 WESTON CREEK LABOR CLUB



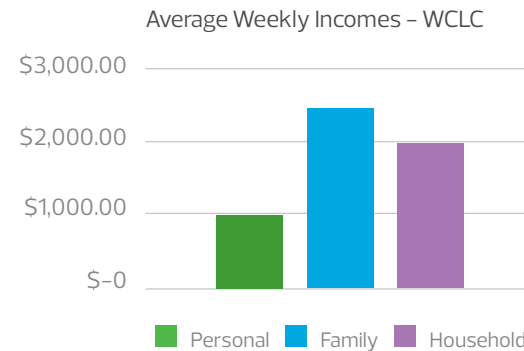
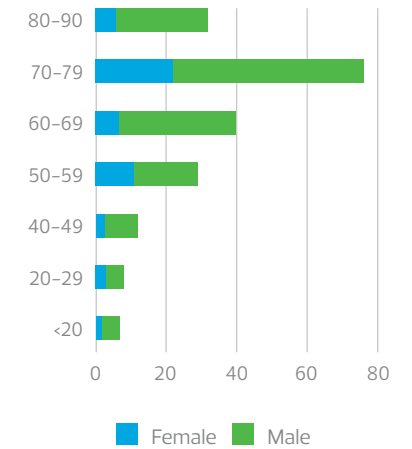
Weston Creek Labor Club is part of the Canberra Labor Club Group and is located in Stirling, Canberra.

### Facilities include:

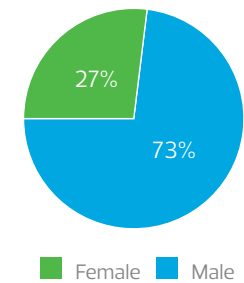
- Two Tifdwarf grass greens
- One synthetic green
- Function room
- EGMs
- Dining facilities
- Licensed bar
- Club activities:
- Bowls pennants
- Championships and representative bowls competitions
- Social bowls
- Live bands

Number of Members	Average Age
206	66

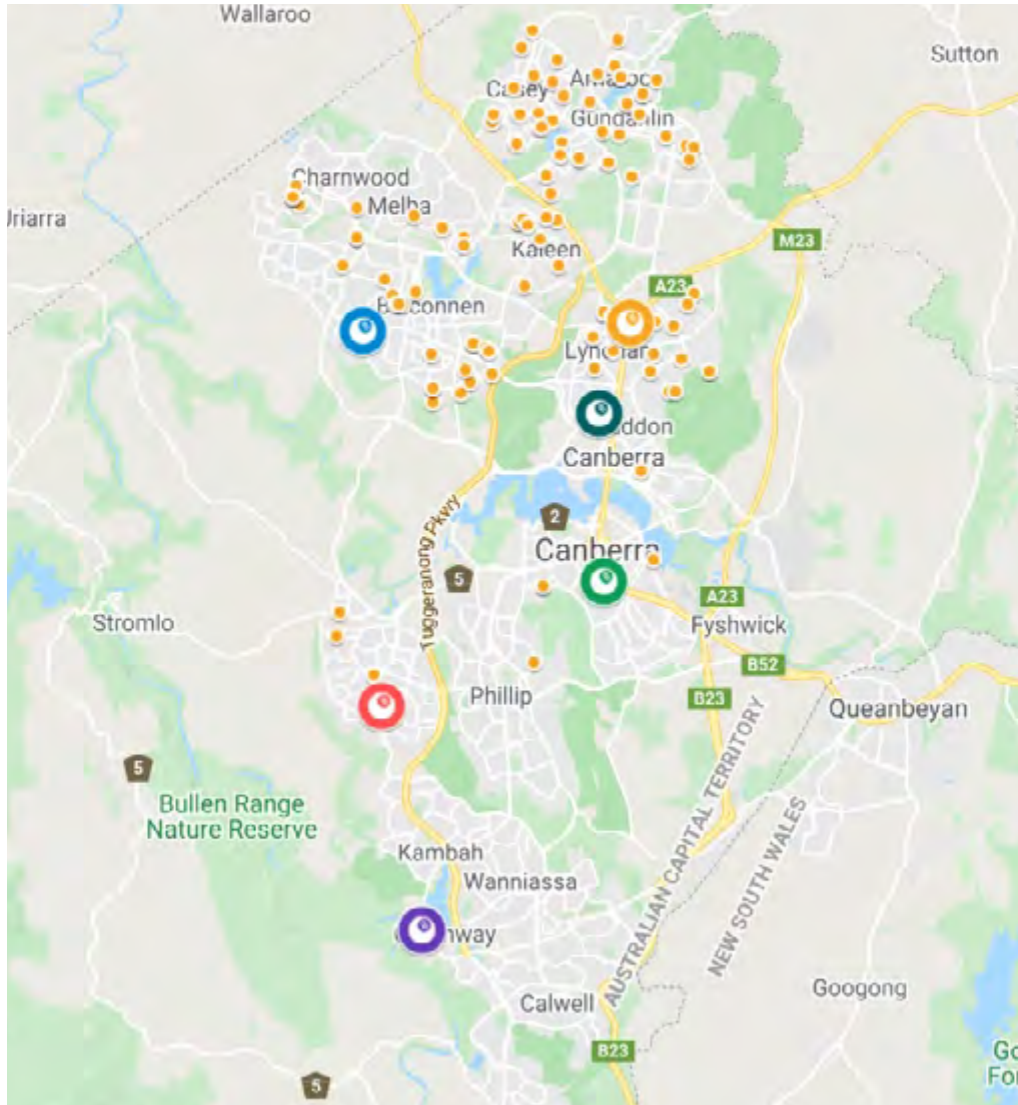
Age Distribution of Club Members by Gender – WCLC



Proportion of Males and Females – WCLC



## 15.14 MEMBERSHIP MAP: YOWANI COUNTRY CLUB



Yowani Country Club is located in Lyneham, Canberra.

### Facilities include:

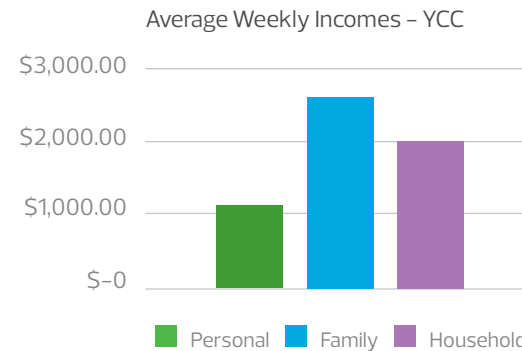
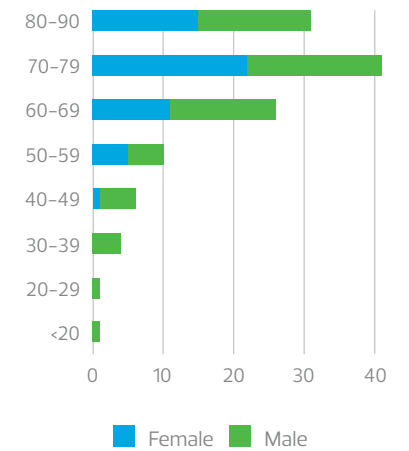
- Three couch greens with seats
- lighting infrastructure for night bowls
- Two greens with sun shading
- 6330 metre golf course
- 24 on site motel units
- Commercial kitchen
- Licensed bar
- Seminar room
- EGMs

### Club activities include:

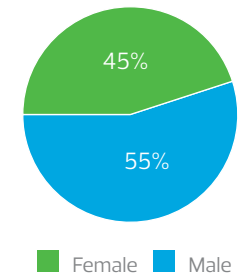
- Pennant bowls
- Club bowls championships
- Social and roll-up bowls
- Corporate bowls
- Various special bowls and golf events
- Pro-Am golf competitions
- Golf championships
- Social and corporate golf
- Cocktail parties or functions

Number of Members	Average Age
120	70

Age Distribution of Club Members by Gender – YCC



Proportion of Males and Females – YCC



16.0

## COMPARISON SPORTS – GOLF AND TENNIS



## 16.0 COMPARISON SPORTS – GOLF AND TENNIS

Upon research into Australian participation in organised physical activity, Golf and Tennis were chosen as appropriate comparison sports with consideration of popularity amongst as well as comparative cost and revenue structures to Bowls.

- Golf Clubs have clubhouse operations that include food and beverage services, as well as operational costs to maintain grass facilities.
- Tennis Clubs provide a comparison of an organised sporting club model that involves managing a mix of natural and artificial surfaces.

Australia is currently facing a severe decline in participation in organised sport, with many individuals preferring the flexible and time-efficient nature of activities such as walking or attending the gym, and both sporting codes are affected by gradual decline in participation. (Roy Morgan, 2017) Golf in particular has similar issues to Bowls with managing high maintenance costs.

### 16.1 COST TO PARTICIPATE COMPARISON WITH OTHER SPORTS

There are currently 11 golf courses in the greater Canberra region supporting 8,169 members and 15,764 participants (SportAUS, Golf State of Play Report, 2019), while 31 tennis clubs are supporting 6,051 members and 16,025 participants (SportAUS, Tennis State of Play report, 2019). This equates to an average of 743 golf members and 195 tennis members per facility. The data for tennis participation may be slightly skewed due to the presence of stand-alone tennis courts without associated club support. Contrast these figures with Bowls, which has 6 facilities, which has 6 facilities for 1,067 members at an average of 178 members per club.

	Bowls	Golf	Tennis
Number of Facilities	6 facilities / 18 greens	11 courses	31 facilities / 162 courts
Number of clubs	6	11	31
Number of Members	1,067 (excludes barefoot)	8,169	6,051 members, 16,025 participants
Average Members per Facility	178	743	209
National benchmarks	1 green per 90 members		One court per 2000 people
Average Cost to Play	\$2,040.13	\$2,315.53	\$963.28

Figure 71: Comparison of Average Cost to Play in Bowls, Golf and Tennis – Sources: This table summarises Figures 22 and 72. Please refer to these tables for methodology and source data for respective sports)



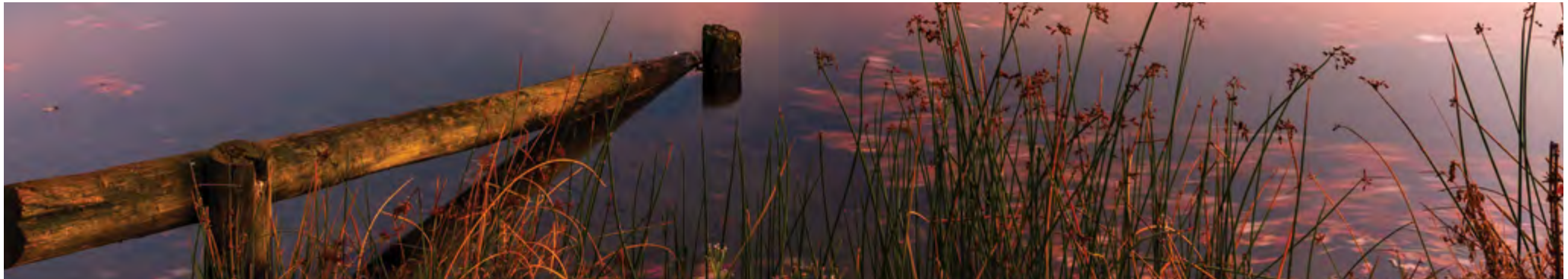


## 16.1.1 ACT PRICING TO PLAY GOLF AND TENNIS

- Tennis and Golf clubs both operate similar models to Lawn Bowls in the ACT, with clubs opting to charge a yearly membership cost combined with a usage fee to source revenue. Golf's annual cost varies significantly amongst clubs in Canberra, ranging from \$5,200 to \$825, with an average of \$1,700. Social usage costs range from \$2 to \$5, while competition fees fall between \$10 and \$15 on top of this usage fee.
- Tennis clubs charge an average annual fee \$188, with significantly less variance across most clubs with prices ranging from \$125 to \$160 (excluding the Canberra Tennis Centre at \$884).
- Considering that there is much variation in pricing –
- The average cost to play organised Tennis (as opposed to casual "book a court" play) is \$963 per annum or \$18.52 per week.
- The average cost to play golf in Canberra is \$2,315.53 per annum or \$44.53 per week.

Category	Club:	Tennis (Organised)	Golf
Fees to Play	Membership Fees	\$188.00	\$1,700.00
	Greens or court fees	\$8.00	\$5.00
Cost to Travel	Car (Average KM x 68 cents) per visit	\$2.95	\$4.50
Set Up Costs (essential purchases)	Equipment	\$130.00	\$430.00
	Shoes (uniform not required)	\$110.00	\$80.00
Competition Fees	Estimate over 16 weeks	\$225.00	\$12.50
Ausplay ACT Average Frequency Per Annum		42	55
Average number club visits per week		1.24	1.24
Set Up Costs - Uniform and Equipment		240	510
Members (Play all competitions and socially) Average Amount Spent per Week		\$18.52	\$44.53
Members Average Amount Spent per Year (52 weeks)		\$963.28	\$2,315.53

Figure 72: Average Costs to Play Tennis and Golf in the ACT  
Source: Published fees, Ausplay Data Category Club: Tennis (Organised) Golf



## 16.2 GOLF

Similar to Bowls, Golf has experienced a decrease in memberships, declining at 0.8% per annum over the past 5 years, while the ACT's membership decline is worse at 1.8% p.a. over the same period. Declining memberships manifests in less demand for facilities, which increases risk of financial distress and shutdown. Furthermore, Golf nationally is suffering from a significantly ageing profile, with 20% of golfers aged between 25–44, falling from 30% ten years ago.

### 16.2.1 REVENUE AND COST

Tennis and Golf clubs both operate similar models to Lawn Bowls in the ACT, with clubs opting to charge a yearly membership cost combined with a usage fee to source revenue. Golf's annual cost varies significantly amongst clubs in Canberra, ranging from \$5,200 for full membership at Golf Club A to \$825 for Golf Club B, with an average of \$1,700. Social usage costs range from \$2 to \$5, while competition fees fall between \$10 and \$15 on top of this usage fee.

Tennis clubs charge an average annual fee \$188, with significantly less variance across most clubs with prices ranging from \$125 to \$160 (excluding the Canberra Tennis Centre at \$884).

To achieve a more accurate depiction of individual clubs' costs and revenue, we selected a sample of publicly available financial reports. The sample included 2 golf courses and 1 tennis club's financial data from 2017–18. This data was examined and used for comparative purposes, but has not been included in this report for privacy reasons.

### 16.2.2 GOLF STRATEGY

Golf Australia has recently released a strategic plan outlining objectives and priorities for 2018–21. The plan is focused around 6 key areas, namely: Leadership and Governance; Clubs and Facilities Health; Participation; Women and Girls; Customer Engagement; and Showcasing the Game.

A centralised governance structure enables greater co-ordination and efficiency gains across clubs, particularly those lacking funding or capabilities to implement various systems. OneGolf is a system which aims to aid regional and small clubs by providing a single source for bookings, results viewing and other club administration activities. This improves accessibility and efficiency for the club, saving regional and small clubs finances as well as decreasing the cost of membership regarding time and effort.

Golf Australia has also recognised the potential lack of business and hospitality knowledge amongst some smaller golf clubs and has committed to providing greater human resources and tools for managing the club aspect of courses. This includes greater customer orientated initiatives and governance tools to ensure members view the club as a social gathering spot in addition to a golf course.

An increased focus is to be placed on junior development and starting programs for golf beginners. The steep learning curve is often a deterrent for new players, while the typical etiquette and fear of judgement can also stop individuals from entering clubs. Golf Australia has promised to "Make golf easier for all Australians to access, learn and play" to address these issues. This will be achieved through MyGolf, a junior program development through schools, as well as a "Get Me Started" taster program to curb the aforementioned issues.

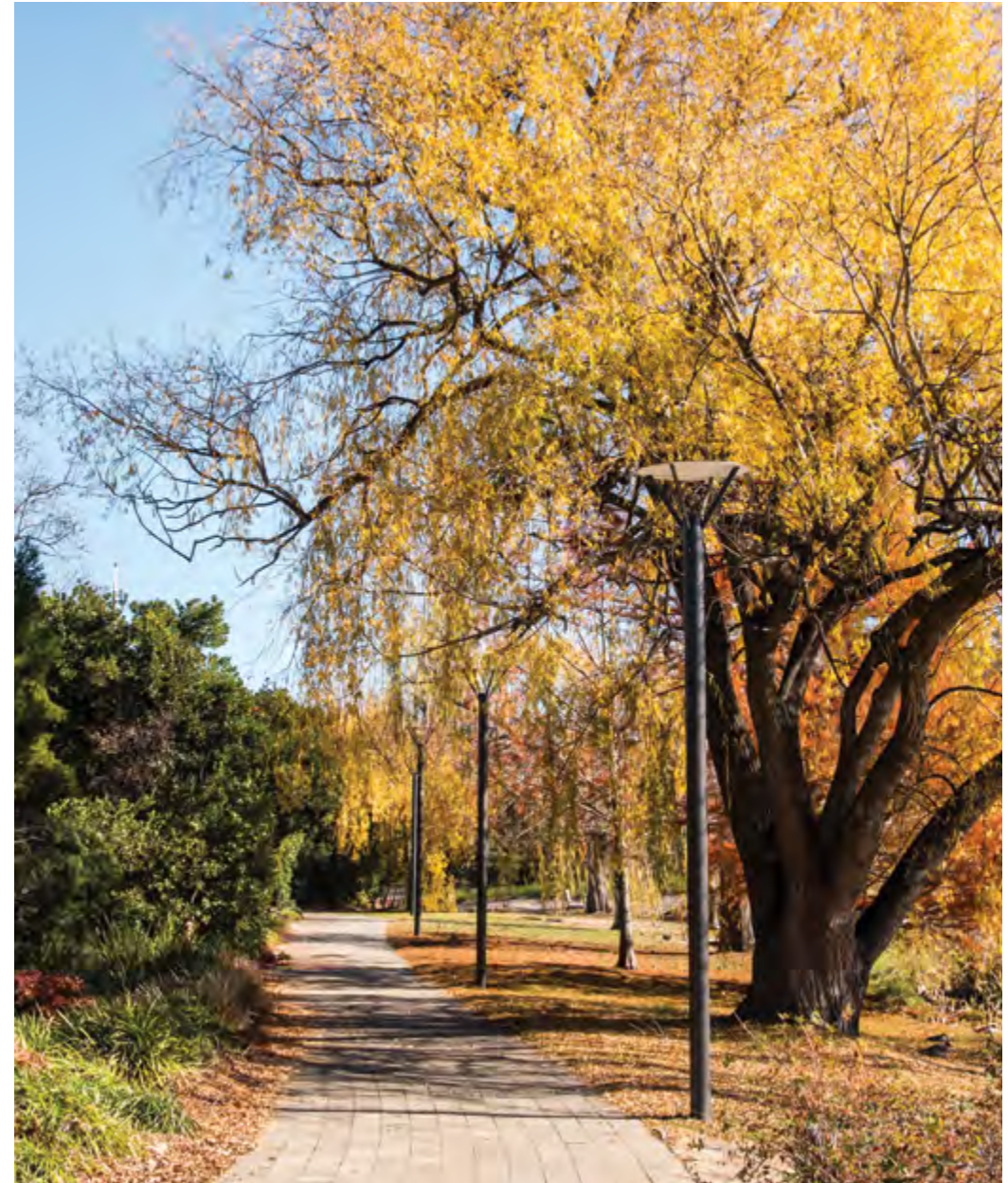


## 16.3 TENNIS

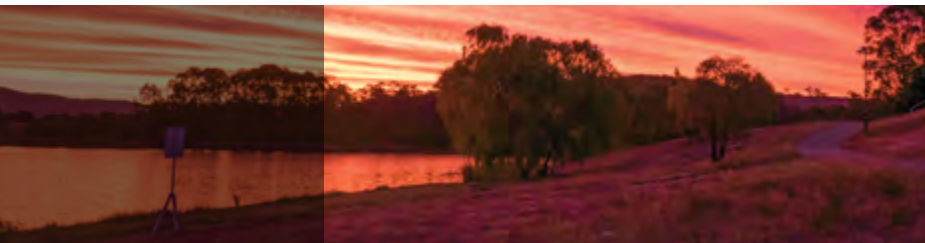
Tennis has suffered a decline in competitive participation over the past two decades, with a 35% decrease in individuals playing tennis regularly since 2001. However, on the other hand, overall participation has remained steady since 2010, rising from around 1 million individuals to 1.2 million. This suggests a movement away from regular, organised sport to a flexible arrangement which accommodates participants busier lives.

Tennis Club A			
Category	Line Item		
Revenue		\$	% of Revenue
	Membership	\$24,878	40%
	Competition	\$5,914	10%
	Court Hire/Social Play	\$25,462	41%
	Interest	\$202	0%
	Other	\$5,103	8%
	Total	\$61,559	
Costs		\$	% of Costs
	Association Fees	\$3,363	9%
	External Court Hire	\$356	1%
	Repairs & Maintenance + Rent	\$19,843	56%
	Utilities	\$5,909	17%
	Admin	\$1,276	4%
	Competition Fees	\$4,668	13%
	Total	\$35,415	

Figure 73: Tennis Club Financial Analysis







### 16.3.1 REVENUE AND COST

From the ACT, Tennis Club A was selected due to its greater than average number of courts and relatively average fees compared with other clubs.

Tennis Club A has 245 number of members which share the use of 8 Outdoor Synthetic Grass Courts. These courts cost an average of \$35,000 to replace every ten years. This expense is reflected within the "Depreciation" cost. Tennis Club A fully recover all repairs and maintenance costs through membership alone, including funding for the required upgrading of the courts.

Tennis Club A also produces significant revenue through casual court hire and social play. Tennis Club A has recently implemented Tennis Australia's "Book a Court" system, which allows players to book online and input a code to enter the courts.

### 16.3.2 TENNIS STRATEGY

Similar to Golf Australia, Tennis Australia has implemented an online booking system "Book a Court". This system is designed to aid smaller clubs without capabilities to implement improvements to the online booking system. The system provides an efficient method of booking for non-members, as well as 'free riding' individuals from accessing the courts for free. This resulted in over 70,000 bookings during 2017-18. (Tennis Australia, 2018).

Tennis Australia's strategy also has a focus on introducing young people to the sport. The "Hot Shots" program is designed to encourage school children and grassroots participation by promoting and investing into tennis products. The "Hot Shots" program has grown significantly from 194,000 participants in 2009 to 544,000 in 2018 (Tennis Australia, 2018). A major driver of the success of "Hot Shots" is a school partnership program, which allows delivery of over 2700 "Hot Shot" programs by schools as part of the physical education.

program. From 2018 onwards, Tennis Australia is also attempting to increase retention from Primary School participation to Secondary students. This is achieved through 117 partnerships with schools for students aged 12-16.

Tennis Australia derives a significant amount of revenue and sport awareness through athletes' success and major tournaments in Australia, headlined by the Australian Open (AO). The AO contributed roughly \$320 million out of a total of \$331 million in revenue for 2018. A new initiative Tennis Australia has implemented is chat-bots on Facebook to encourage ticket sales. Upon visiting the AO Facebook page or viewing an AO ad, users are greeted with an automated chat-bot to purchase tickets. Chat-bots generated 24.3x return on investment for ticket sales.

## 16.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR BOWLS ACT AND CLUBS

- Focus on building young participation – implementation of either a young committee at state level or for individual clubs.
- Centralised governance and online systems – bookings and results published through Bowls ACT.
- Increasing participation – open day with a coaching lesson to begin with then followed by games or activities to gather interest – might be opportunities to drive this from Bowls ACT.
- Test balancing membership amounts with model similar to golf eg. Increasing membership costs but reducing the cost to play – allow for a direct debit system to make membership seem more affordable as a weekly cost.
- Implementation of "high performance centres" in Canberra – charge higher cost for serious competitors, individuals looking for social aspect can access lower quality but more affordable greens.

17.0

## FUTURE DEMAND ON BOWLS FACILITIES

## 17.0 FUTURE DEMAND ON BOWLS FACILITIES

**Purpose:** Understand how many facilities will be required out to 2040 in the future to service demand? Considering population growth, and local bowls membership trends.

Estimate the level of bowls facility provision across the Territory in 2018 and 2030 that consider population growth for Canberra and trends.

### 17.1 CURRENT UTILISATION AND CAPACITY OF GREENS

In 2009, the Bowls ACT Strategic Facilities Plan 2009–2025 Report was released. The report establishes a Green/ rink ratio in the ACT. This is benchmarked at a desirable ratio of 90:1, or 90 players to one green, assuming that one third of members play pairs or triples per green.

- This is based on an analysis considering the number of players that can be accommodated on a standard green of 7 rinks depending on the types of competition.
- It takes into account the most favoured game types being pairs and triples, thus catering for a maximum of 84 to 126 players per 3 green facility. It also considers renovation periods for natural grass greens.

Standard green consists 7 rinks – number players accommodated per game type		
Singles	7 rinks x 2	14
Pairs	7 rinks x 6	42
Triples	7 rinks x 4	28
Fours	7 rinks x 8	56

Figure 74 compares the ratio of greens to members from 2009 to 2019. Note that this is based on members playing social and competition bowls, and does not include "barefoot bowls".

The closure of facilities has obviously had an impact on the capacity and utilisation of greens, but in ten years, with four facilities and 11 greens closed, the impact of membership declines has resulted

in every club in the ACT operating under capacity (in the context of competition and social bowls), with the exception of Canberra Bowling Club, which meets the desirable ratio exactly. It is worth noting that Canberra North / The RUC has redeployed capacity into barefoot bowls which blocks out significant amounts of time on weekend and evenings in summer.

Club	Number Greens	Green per member ratio	Comparison to Benchmark 90	Number Greens	Green per member ratio	Comparison to Benchmark 90
Year	2009			2019		
Belconnen BC	3	132	42	3	59	-31
Canberra BC	2	57	-33	2	90	0
Canberra North RUC	3	42	-48	3	57	-33
Yowani CC	3	73	-17	3	40	-50
Weston Creek BC	3	67	-23	3	69	-21
Tuggeranong BC	3	110	20	3	71	-19
Deakin West Hellenic	3	54	-36	Closed		
Canberra City BC	3	58	-32	Closed		
South Canberra BC	2	41	-50	Closed		
Southern Cross BC	3	75	-15	Closed		
<b>All ACT Facilities</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>-17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>-27</b>

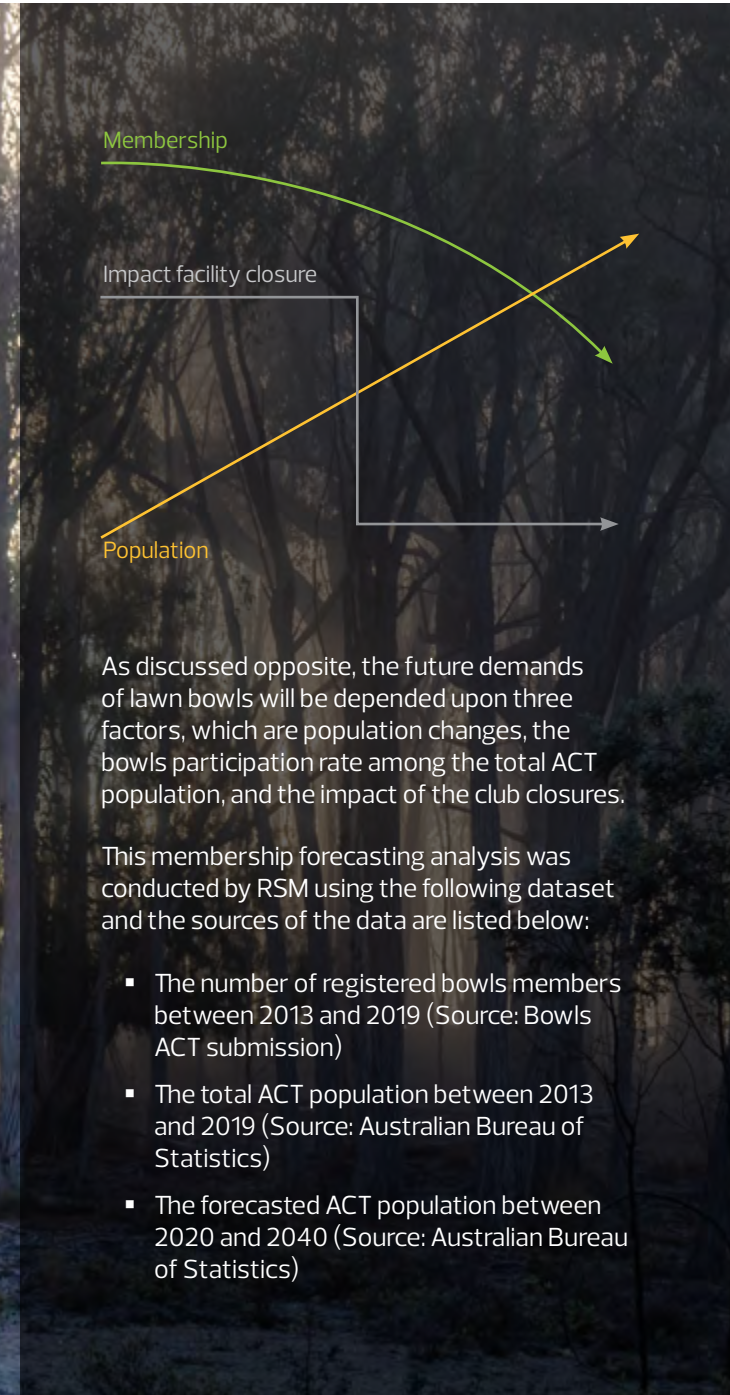
Figure 74: Greens Facilities Capacity Vs Membership Ratios



## 17.2 FUTURE DEMAND – FORECASTING MEMBERSHIPS TO 2040

Calculating demand for future bowls facilities has to take into account a number of variables.

- **Population Increases:** The population in the ACT is forecast to increase at a rate of around 1.8% p.a. This will see the population aged 65+ almost double from 55,410 people to 90,463 people.
- **Membership Declines:** Since 2009, the rate of total bowls memberships in the ACT has declined at the average rate of around 100 bowls members per year. In member numbers, this is a decline from 1,649 members to 1,067 members in 2019. As a proportion of total members, this is an average decline of 6.74% p.a. The participation rate in the population of bowls members is 0.25%, with the decline representing 0.03% each year on average. This is a dramatic decline and is in opposition to the rising population.
- **Impact of Club Closures:** Club closures are precipitated by a period of club disruption and dissatisfaction with management decision making. This can be observed by reviewing the membership transfer data, which shows members transitioning to other clubs up to several years prior to the club closure. It is estimated that 80% of bowls members transfer to other clubs, strengthening other clubs membership numbers, however a club closure does represent a net loss of players to the sport.







The membership forecasting is scenario-based and three individual scenarios are included in the analysis below with an attempt to illustrate the significant impacts on the forecasting results when making different assumptions. The results of the membership forecasting over the period from 2020 to 2040 are illustrated below by scenarios:

### Bowls Membership Forecasting 2020-2040

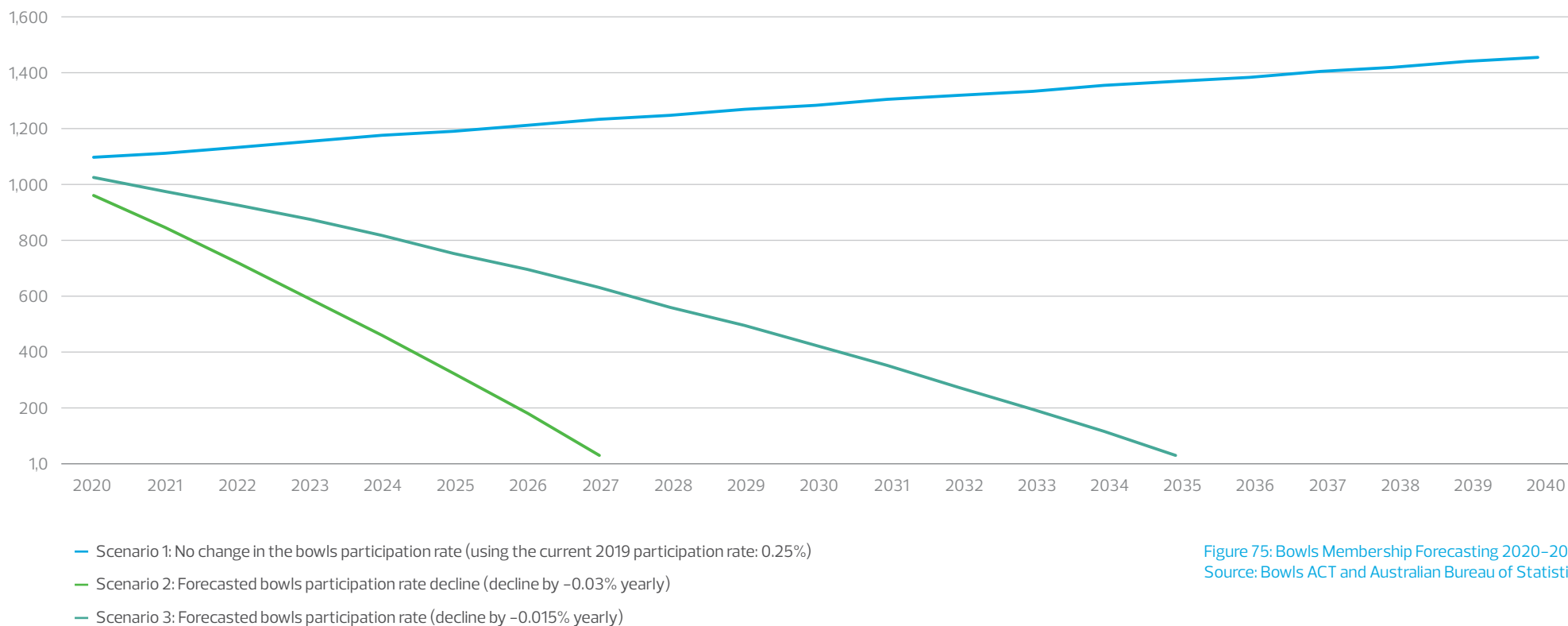


Figure 75: Bowls Membership Forecasting 2020-2040  
Source: Bowls ACT and Australian Bureau of Statistics



### Scenario 1:

- In the Strategic Facilities Plan 2009 –2025 published by Bowls ACT in 2009, the methodology utilised for membership forecasting was to apply the current bowls participation rate in 2009 to the future forecasted population.
- Based on the data provided to RSM, the current bowls participation rate out of the total ACT population in 2019 is 0.25%. If we adopt the methodology utilised in the Strategic Facilities Plan 2009–2025 for forecasting the future bowls membership between 2020 to 2040, in line with the increased ACT population, there will be 1,446 bowls members by the end of 2040.
- However, the limitation of this methodology is that it does not take into the fact that the bowls participation rate is likely to decline overtime and therefore the number of future bowls members is likely to be less than what is predicted in scenario 1.
- By utilising this methodology, the conclusion reached in the Strategic Facilities Plan 2009 – 2025 was that by the end of 2016, the potential participants for lawns bowls was expected to be 5,632. Compared to the actual number of registered bowls members in 2016 (i.e. 1,481 members), this methodology provides an overly optimistic result.

The results of the bowls membership forecasting are highly depended upon the assumptions made as well as the potential impacts of uncontrollable external factors. The purpose of this forecasting analysis is to highlight the immediate needs for ACT bowls clubs to focus on the health and the financial sustainability of clubs, as well as understanding the importance of growing overall memberships with ACT bowls clubs.

### Scenario 2:

- Based on the data submission received, RSM was able to calculate the annual declining rate of the bowls participation rate among total the ACT population between from 2013 to 2019. The current bowls participation rate among the total ACT population is 0.25% in 2019. On average, the bowls participation rate among the total ACT population declines by 0.03% yearly and in scenario 2, this declining rate is applied yearly to the future bowls participation rate between 2020 to 2040.
- If the current participation rate declines by 0.03% yearly, by the end of 2028, there will be no bowls members in the ACT as the bowls participation rate is reduced to 0% in that year.
- The limitation of this methodology is that scenario 2 does not take into account the effects of the potential policy changes imposed by the government, as well as the future strategies and actions adopted by Bowls ACT and bowls clubs. It is unlikely that the bowls participation rate among the total population will continuously decline by 0.03% yearly. Hence, this scenario may disclose a relatively pessimistic rather than a realistic picture of the future number of registered bowls members in the ACT.

### Scenario 3:

- The third scenario assumes that with the actions taken by the government, Bowls ACT and bowls clubs, the annual declining rate of the bowls participation among the total ACT population would be halved (i.e. 0.015%) than what is predicted in scenario 2.
- The forecasting results of scenario 3 shows that rather than having 0 bowls members in 2028 as predicted in scenario 2, the number of the registered bowls members would be 556 in 2028 and 26 in 2035.
- Please bear in mind that we are not suggesting that by the end of 2038 there is definitely no bowls members in the ACT. Instead, it is highly likely that in the future consolidation of bowls clubs might take place, resulting in more bowls members playing in fewer clubs in the ACT.
- Additionally, it is worth noting that there will be various external factors that can heavily influence the future bowls participation in the ACT. For example, socioeconomic factors such as the health of the population, the younger generation's perception of bowls activities in the future, and such factors could significantly change the future of bowls as a sport.

## 17.3 Development of Facilities

When considering the improvements recommended in Bowls ACT Strategic Facilities Plan 2009 –2025, very little has eventuated apart from installation of lighting facilities at one club, and the implementation of synthetic greens at Canberra Bowling Club and Weston Creek.

Bowls Strategic Facilities Plan 2009	2019 Status
No existing "state level" bowls facility in the ACT	Tuggeranong has early in this decade, developed its facilities and is considered a "state level facility". We note that Bowls Australia national competitions are now held exclusively in Queensland.
No indoor bowls facility in the ACT	No indoor bowls facility.
No Existing synthetic greens in the ACT (noted Weston Creek's plan to build in 2010)	Weston Creek 3rd green is synthetic. Canberra Bowling Club have two synthetic greens.
Four greens on the south side of Canberra have lights	Tuggeranong Vikings and Yowani have lighting.
Two clubs operating at capacity with limited opportunity to service increased membership. (Belconnen and Tuggeranong)	All clubs operating significantly under capacity.
Two existing facilities cease to operate (Canberra South 2009 and Southern Cross 2010)	Four existing facilities ceased to operate. Canberra South 2009, Southern Cross 2010, West Deakin Hellenic 2015, Canberra City 2019.
One existing facility redeveloped post 2015. (West Deakin Hellenic)	West Deakin Hellenic closed 2015. No other facility redeveloped.



18.0

BOWLS ACT



## 18.0 BOWLS ACT

**Purpose:** Analysis of membership model and its effectiveness in generating sufficient revenue to support its activities as the peak body and the activities of each member bowls club.

Bowls ACT is the peak body for Bowls in the ACT, with the chief mission to grow the sport of bowls. Bowls ACT represent all ACT clubs and report to Bowls Australia as the national peak governing body.

The main activities conducted by Bowls Australia include:

- Organising and managing ACT Pennant Competitions and ACT Championships tournaments.
- Supporting Junior players pathways into the sport.
- Supporting member clubs with industry communication and information, material and logistical support if required. Provide representation and advocacy to government, and associated communication and consultation with the clubs.
- Administration and Governance of the sport in the ACT, administered via three committees
- Match Committee: preparation, planning, conduct and review of pennant and championship events.
- Coaching Committee: centre of excellence on coaching, accreditation for coaches.
- Officiating Committee: high quality officiating program, accreditation of National Umpires, Markers and Measurers.

Bowls ACT employ a part-time executive director and an office administrator to service the ACT Bowls community.

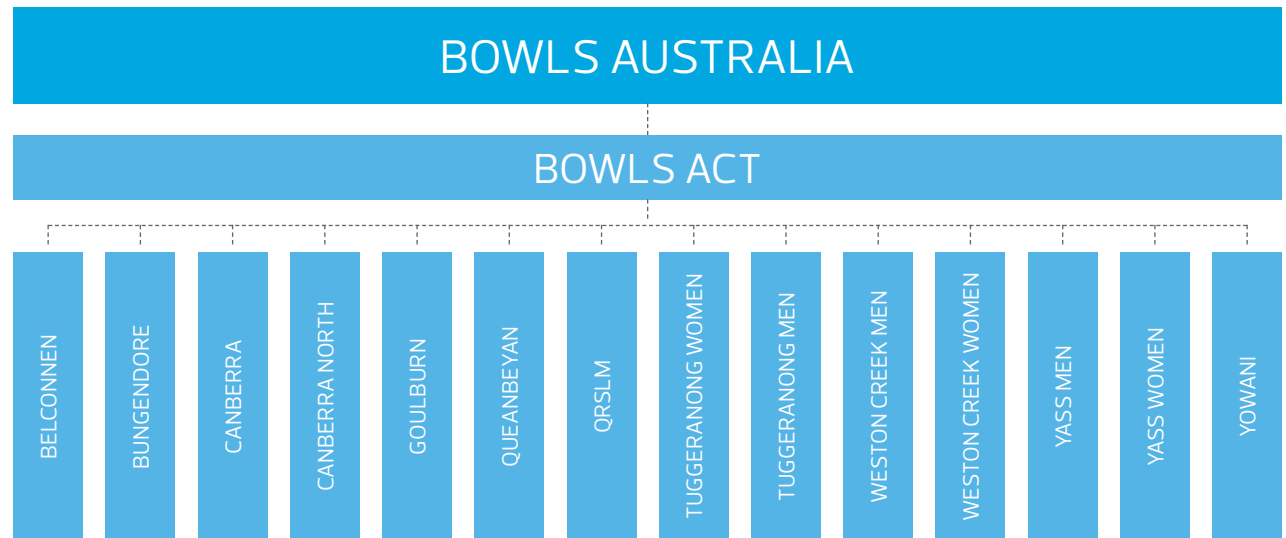
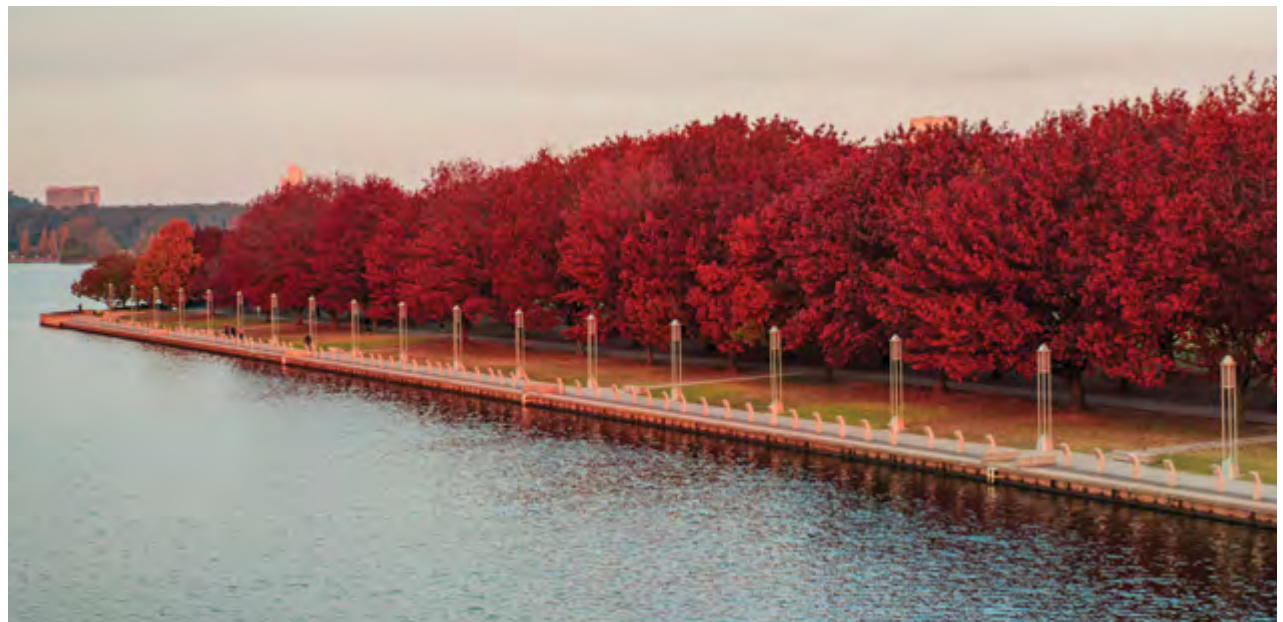


Figure 76: Diagram of Bowls Governance Structure in Australian Capital Territory and Surrounds





## 18.1 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

In general, Bowls ACT has carefully managed their financial performance and demonstrated a conservative approach to fiscal management to build a surplus position by the end of 2018.

As indicated by the Figure 77 opposite, the results of Bowls ACT revenue and expenses trend analysis demonstrate that from 2013 to 2018, it appears that there were increases in the net profitability shown in the Bowls ACT financial statements. This is mainly due to the fact the over the past few years, in line with the additional bowls clubs which joined Bowls ACT, they were able to increase the affiliation fees received, and meanwhile Bowls ACT reduced their operational expenses in areas such as travel, accommodation (varies depending on destinations) and employee salaries.

Notably, starting from 2015, "The Bowls Warehouse" has been contracted out, taken back in-house, and eventually sold in 2018. As a large number of warehouse stock has been written off and the warehouse fluctuations in the past years would no longer have financial impacts to future operations of Bowls ACT, the net profit or loss derived from "The Bowls Warehouse" was taken out to demonstrate the trend variation in the net profitability of Bowls ACT without the impacts of the warehouse.

Additionally, owing to that Bowls ACT has changed their financial year from July – June to January – December in 2017–2018, RSM has adjusted the financial figures included in the 2017 financial statements (i.e. 18 months from July 2016 to Dec 2017) to 12 months with the aim to standardise the comparative period against other financial years.

Revenue vs. Expenses Trend Analysis Bowls ACT 2013–2018

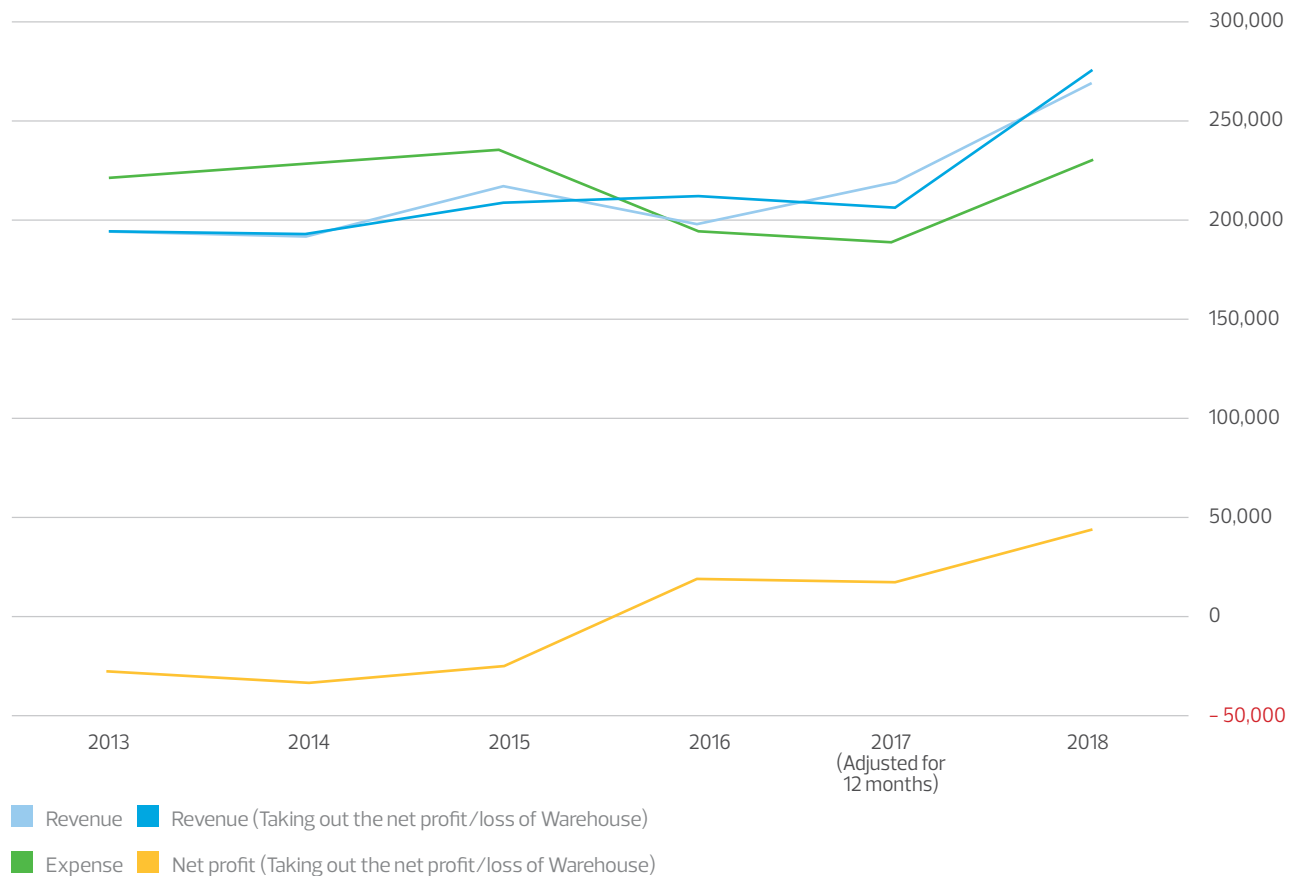


Figure 77: Bowls ACT Revenue and Expenses Trend Analysis 2013 –2018



It is worth noting that Bowls ACT "Our Business Model" is a key strategy in the strategic plan, and a number of initiatives have been considered and trialled, including:

- For several years, Bowls ACT tried several models for a retail sales of bowls equipment and supplies. This included hosting the shop on premises, run by Bowls ACT staff, as well as hiring a Shop Manager. Holding the level of stock required became cost prohibitive, and increasing price competition from online retailers led to diminishing sales. Bowls ACT found that bowls would be trialed at the shop and then purchased online through competitors. Thus the shop was closed.
- Bowls ACT is under continual pressure to attract sponsorship, however this has been challenging to pursue from a resourcing perspective internally. Additionally, there is limited "real estate" in which Bowls ACT can sell a potential sponsor, as playing facilities and uniforms are under the purview of the respective Bowls Clubs, who may or may not have separate and competing arrangements.
- Bowls ACT have floated proposals for alternative fee raising initiatives, such as barefoot bowlers fees or greens fees. Clubs have refused to consider increasing fees in any significant way.
- Early discussions around acquiring a club or other asset are under way.

## BOWLS ACT CONSTITUTION (30 MAY 2019)

### Statement of purposes

As the peak body responsible for Bowls in the ACT and surrounding areas, Bowls ACT will, for the benefit of its Members:

- (a) promote, conduct and administer Bowls, including by staging competitions, throughout the ACT and surrounding areas;
- (b) maintain membership of Bowls Australia and act in accordance with the Bowls Australia constitution, rules, regulations or policies;
- (c) adopt the playing rules of World Bowls and abide by the interpretation of such rules as determined by Bowls ACT;
- (d) promote the health and safety of individuals participating in Bowls in any capacity;
- (e) select and manage players and teams to represent the ACT in national and other representative Bowls competitions inside and outside the ACT;
- (f) encourage players, umpires, coaches and officials to contribute to the development of Bowls in the ACT and surrounding areas;
- (g) pursue such commercial arrangements, including sponsorship and marketing opportunities, as are appropriate to advance these purposes; and
- (h) undertake other actions or activities that are necessary, incidental or conducive to advancing these purposes.



## 18.2 THE MEMBERSHIP MODEL OF BOWLS ACT AND BOWLS AUSTRALIA

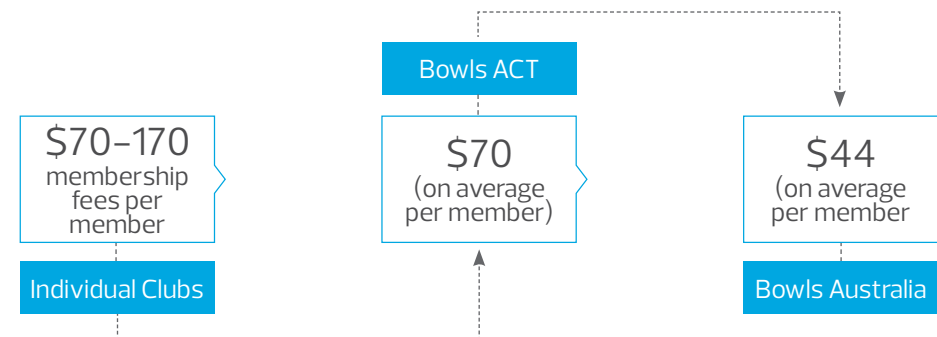
Bowls ACT draws revenue from surrounding Clubs in NSW, who have chosen to align with ACT

Affiliation Fee Calculation for 2019–20 (including GST)	\$
Belconnen	12,224.34
Bungendore	–
Canberra	14,500.67
Canberra North	9,818.32
Goulburn Men	5,237.55
Queanbeyan	8,081.08
QRSLM	7,923.37
Tuggeranong women	4,678.20
Tuggeranong Men	11,102.57
Weston Creek Men	12,763.35
Weston Creek Women	4,682.27
Yass Men	6,003.35
Yass Women	2,128.58
Yowani	8,312.96
<b>Total – ACT only</b>	<b>78,082.68</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>107,456.61</b>
<b>Bowls Australia</b>	<b>23,640.45</b>

Note the figures below exclude adjustments for COVID–19 pandemic.

Affiliation Fee per Member Calculation for 2019–20 (including GST)	Bowls ACT	Bowls Australia
Affiliation Fee for 2019–20	\$78,082.68	\$23,640.45
Number of Registered Members	1,122	540
Affiliation Fee per Member	\$70	\$44

This illustrates the transition of fees. Each club member pays a fee to their individual club, who then pays a fee up to Bowls ACT, who then pays a fee up to Bowls Australia. Bowls Australia then pay licensing fees to World Bowls.





19.0

# APPENDIX



## 19.1 REFERENCES

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Category	Club	Yowari Country Club \$	Vikings Mens \$	Vikings Womens \$	Weston Creek Mens \$	Weston Creek Womens \$	Canberra Bowling Club \$	RUC \$	Belconnen \$	Average \$
Fees to Play	Membership Fees	190	110	110	150	150	95	90	150	130.63
	Barefoot Bowls Fees	15	12	15	8	8	20	18	20	14.5
	Social Member Fees	15	20	20	30	30	10	5	5	16.88
	Greens Fees	8.5	8	8	8	8	14	10	15	9.94
Cost to Travel	Car (Average KM x 68 cents)	5.19	4.08	4.08	3.56	3.56	4.28	4.6	2.95	4.04
	Bus and Light Rail <sup>^</sup>	6.44 <sup>^</sup>	3.22	3.22	3.22	3.22	3.22	3.22	3.22	3.62
Additional Purchases	Equipment	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	500
	Uniform	134	90	90	120	120	100	150	105	113.63
Competition Fees	Championship per championship	10	15	15	10.00	10	14	10	35	14.88
	Pennant	10.00	5	5	18	18	10	10	10	10.75
Average number club visits per week (Social Players)		2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5
Average number club visits per week (Competition Players)		3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Set Up Costs – Uniform and Equipment		634	590	590	620	620	600	650	605	613.63
Members (Play competitions and socially) Ave Spent per Week		46.65	40.28	40.28	40.26	40.26	58.97	47.45	61.06	46.9
Members Average Amount Spent per Year (52 weeks)		2,425.64	2,094.48	2,094.48	2,093.36	2,093.36	3,066.68	2,467.60	3,175.20	2,438.85
Competition Player (Championships and Pennant) per week		38.26	32.89	32.89	32.17	32.17	48.07	38.62	49.11	38.02
Competition Player (Championships and Pennant) per year		1,989.70	1,710.40	1,710.40	1,672.80	1,672.80	2,499.40	2,008.00	2,553.50	1,977.13
"Social" Player (plays no championships or pennant) per week		37.88	32.32	32.32	31.78	31.78	47.53	38.23	47.76	37.45
"Social" Player (plays no championships or pennant) per year		1,969.70	1,680.40	1,680.40	1,652.80	1,652.80	2,471.40	1,988.00	2,483.50	1,947.38
Social Non-Playing Member Ave Spent per Week		5.48	4.46	4.46	4.14	4.14	4.47	4.7	3.05	4.36
Social Non Playing Member Ave Spent per Year (52 weeks)		284.88	232.16	232.16	215.12	215.12	232.56	244.2	158.4	226.83
Barefoot Average Amount Spent per Game		28.69	24.08	27.08	19.56	19.56	38.28	32.6	37.95	28.48

Figure 78: Bowls ACT Members Cost to Play Expenses Breakdown Source: Club Committee submissions, published fee and uniform pricing information

#### Notes

Pricing for club based costs such as uniforms and fees are based on published sources such as club websites in December / January 2019; or direct inquiries with on site club staff. Assumptions such as average number of days played is based on Bowls Survey 2019.

#### Equipment

- Pricing has been calculated based on purchasing new equipment and uniforms. Second hand bowls can be purchased from around \$140 online sources.
- Sundry items for personal use / preference such as mats, grip, or approved mobility aids such as bowling arms are not included in equipment pricing as they are not "universally" used by all players. Sundry expenses may add up an additional \$2–300. Bowling arms retail for between \$200 and \$250.

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Abbreviation Meaning</b>
<b>LVC</b>	Lease Variation Charge
<b>CC</b>	Community Contributions
<b>EGM</b>	Electronic Gaming Machine
<b>AVE</b>	Average
<b>CBC</b>	Canberra Bowling Club
<b>BBC</b>	Belconnen Bowling Club
<b>TVC</b>	Tuggeranong Vikings Lawn Bowls Club and Tuggeranong Valley Women's Bowling Club
<b>WCBC</b>	Weston Creek Women's Bowling Club and Weston Creek Bowling Club
<b>The RUC</b>	Canberra North Bowling and Rugby Union Club
<b>YCC</b>	Yowani Country Club
<b>WC</b>	Weston Creek
<b>NGMR</b>	Net Gaming Machine Revenue



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## 19.4 REQUIRED AND ACTUAL COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS OF EACH BOWLS CLUB

These tables report the total eligible electronic gaming machine contributions across all categories for all Clubs.

Gross Revenue per machine is calculated from published data. Note that number of EGM's represents number of authorisations at the end of the data period.

Source: ACT Government Gambling and Racing Commission Annual Community Contribution Reports.

### 19.4.1 BELCONNEN BOWLING CLUB

Belconnen Bowls Club	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of EGMS	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	11
Gross Gaming Machine Rev	111,038	125,357	116,195	108,423	98,016	91,031	82,819	79,178	63,936	115,052	68,449
Net Gaming Machine Rev	84,389	95,249	88,308	82,401	74,492	69,184	62,942	60,175	48,591	87,440	52,021
Minimum Requirement (7% of NGMR)	5,907	6,667	6,182	6,592	5,959	5,535	5,035	7,814	3,887	6,995	4,162
Eligible Contributions (\$)	8,768	12,846	8,683	22,090	153,800	218,845	184,819	157,012	154,540	144,494	135,865
% of NGMR	10	13	10	27	206	316	294	260	318	165	261
Excess / (Shortfall) (\$)	2,861	6,179	2,501	15,498	147,841	213,310	179,784	152,198	150,653	137,499	131,704

### 19.4.2 CANBERRA BOWLS CLUB

Canberra Bowls Club	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of EGMS	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
Gross Gaming Machine Rev	56,202	68,070	73,183	72,905	73,330	62,325	65,543	64,876	69,297	19,757	20,662
Net Gaming Machine Rev	42,714	51,733	55,619	55,408	55,731	47,367	49,813	49,306	52,666	15,015	15,703
Minimum Requirement (7% of NGMR)	2,990	3,621	3,893	4,433	4,458	3,789	3,985	3,944	4,213	1,201	1,256
Eligible Contributions (\$)	5,093	4,634	5,538	5,885	6,031	4,774	4,470	3,758	7,393	6,031	4,277
% of NGMR	12	9	10	11	11	10	9	8	14	40	27
Excess / (Shortfall) (\$)	2,103	1,013	1,645	1,452	1,843	985	485	-186	3,180	4,830	3,020



### 19.4.3 WESTON CREEK LABOR CLUB

Weston Creek Labor Club	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of EGMS	63	63	63	63	63	50	50	50	50	50	44
Gross Gaming Machine Rev	1,800,725	1,770,379	1,796,475	1,699,463	1,665,587	1,453,820	1,654,498	1,534,191	1,700,387	1,613,981	1,622,663
Net Gaming Machine Rev	1,047,396	1,030,706	1,045,059	991,704	973,073	856,601	966,973	918,805	1,010,213	962,690	967,465
Minimum Requirement (7% of NGMR)	73,318	72,149	73,154	79,336	77,846	68,528	77,358	73,504	80,817	77,015	77,397
Eligible Contributions (\$)	79,661	80,444	74,587	86,525	81,790	105,159	117,590	89,741	103,388	117,591	105,872
% of NGMR	8	8	7	9	8	12	12	10	10	12	11
Excess / (Shortfall) (\$)	6,343	8,295	1,433	7,189	3,944	36,631	40,232	16,237	22,571	40,576	28,475

### 19.4.4 THE RUC

The RUC	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of EGMS	50	50	50	50	40
Gross Gaming Machine Rev	229,876	598,046	567,475	518,027	628,662
Net Gaming Machine Rev	157,424	402,753	384,330	374,859	448,565
Minimum Requirement (7% of NGMR)	12,594	32,220	30,746	29,989	35,885
Eligible Contributions (\$)	29,622	37,003	43,420	88,334	85,765
% of NGMR	19	9	11	24	19
Excess / (Shortfall) (\$)	17,028	4,783	12,673	58,345	49,880





## 19.4.5 TUGGERANONG TOWNS CENTRE SPORTS CLUB

Tuggeronang Town Centre Sports Club	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of EGMS	183	183	183	183	183	183	183	183	183	183	188
Gross Gaming Machine Rev	6,841,087	6,289,149	6,510,334	7,109,926	7,390,650	7,171,516	7,056,725	7,229,473	6,650,365	7,651,466	7,838,314
Net Gaming Machine Rev	3,874,595	3,516,030	3,637,681	3,967,459	4,121,858	4,001,334	3,938,199	4,048,420	3,732,139	4,270,958	4,376,188
Minimum Requirement (7% of NGMR)	271,222	246,122	254,638	317,397	329,749	320,107	315,056	323,874	298,571	341,677	350,095
Eligible Contributions (\$)	607,439	771,141	550,125	562,522	516,868	502,420	560,060	569,810	566,100	475,730	651,330
% of NGMR	1,583	22	15	14	13	13	14	14	15	11	15
Excess / (Shortfall) (\$)	277,724	525,019	295,487	245,125	187,119	182,313	245,034	245,936	267,529	134,053	301,235

## 19.4.6 YOWANI COUNTRY CLUB

Yowani Country Club	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Number of EGMS	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	21
Gross Gaming Machine Rev	498,925	579,155	579,591	409,857	350,127	313,139	266,754	266,628	195,671	181,427	182,058
Net Gaming Machine Rev	327,349	372,876	374,154	273,867	239,372	217,026	188,814	201,133	147,857	137,885	138,364
Minimum Requirement (7% of NGMR)	22,914	26,101	26,191	21,909	19,150	17,362	15,105	16,091	11,829	11,031	11,069
Eligible Contributions (\$)	535,855	482,756	35,609	26,643	29,320	26,533	19,148	26,582	21,309	19,993	19,933
% of NGMR	164	129	10	10	12	12	10	13	14	15	14
Excess / (Shortfall) (\$)	512,941	456,655	9,418	4,734	10,170	9,171	4,043	10,491	9,480	8,962	8,864

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