

Northern Gateway Bowls Region



Action Plan 2017 - 2022

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CONTEXT , VISION AND ACTIONS

The Context for Development

The Northern Gateway Bowls Region was established in 2011 as a regional response to the historic unification of the Royal Victorian Bowls Association and the Victorian Ladies Bowls Association at the Victorian State level. Unification at a State level resulted in the dissolution of RVBA & VLBA Groups & Associations across Victoria. The Northern Gateway Bowls Region (NGBR) now caters for 29 clubs in the north-west of Melbourne ranging from Flemington/Kensington in the south to Sunbury and Whittlesea in the north.

The region serves as an agent of the clubs themselves but also as a decentralized administrative arm of Bowls Victoria. As a relatively new and evolving organization the NGBR is seeking to further develop its own operation to ensure the best support and services are provided to the clubs of the region. The region is led by a Board of Directors elected by the clubs.

The current functions of the region include:

1. Conduct regional events to provide pathways for players to state titles
2. Train and support umpires
3. Train and support coaches
4. Assist clubs with development needs
5. Monitor and advise clubs re-greens performance
6. Select and manage regional sides for state regional championships
7. Develop and manage youth involvement in bowls
8. Conduct night pennant competitions for NGBR clubs
9. Perform ceremonial roles and award presentations on behalf of BV and NGBR
10. Manage the business and finances of the region to support of the above functions

In 2016 the Board initiated a review which provided all clubs with the opportunity to provide feedback through a survey and a workshop. The Board has now used those inputs to define this action plan for continuous improvement of the regional services, the clubs and the players.

The Region Vision

While the region has functions stipulated in its constitution, at the heart of the matter is a desire to foster the sport of lawn bowls, the clubs of the region and the players of the region.

Our clubs not only provide healthy sporting involvements which can last a life-time but serve as a focal point for communities and the mutual support of members. Our endeavours embrace the achievement of excellence to the fostering of life-long involvements in the game of bowls in a socially cohesive environment.

The Northern Gateway Bowls Region - supporting clubs to be their best.....to support players to be their bestin healthy community club environments.

The Action Plan

In the pages that follow the inputs from regional clubs have been incorporated into a 5 year plan for the NGBR Board to implement. Seven of the ten functions listed have 100% support from clubs for their continuation while others attracted suggestions for changes.

Across all functions there is a need to improve communications and engagement in regional general meetings. The Action Plan outlines steps which are now proposed to improve in these areas.

The first table in the Action Plan details the services the region conducts and the specific steps which will be taken. While most are a reinforcement of the good work already done by the region there are some actions which will be taken to change and improve services as appropriate.

The second section of the Action Plan focuses on regional operational matters. This includes roles of office bearers, communications strategies, engagement in general meetings and management of resources.

Annual Review

The Plan should be reviewed on a regular basis but not less than once per year. The Board shall undertake the review of progress on the plan and make amendments as then considered appropriate for the best long-term interests of region.

Region general meetings, special planning workshops and surveys will be used to ensure clubs can provide constructive feedback and advice to the region as the Action Plan is updated.

NGBR ACTION PLAN 2017-2022.

NGBR Programs and Services:

1. Conduct regional events to provide pathways for players to state titles

Overview	Goals	Targets	Key Initiatives	Responsibility	Timelines
<p>*NGBR will continue to foster participation of players in regional events to enhance their bowls experiences and to provide pathways to state titles.</p> <p>*Events will be conducted annually for Men's & Ladies in the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Champion of Champions -Singles -Pairs -Triples -Novice singles -Over 60s singles -Over 60s Pairs -Mixed Pairs will also be conducted <p>All events lead onto State level while Champion of Champions leads all the way to World Championships.</p>	<p>*NGBR seeks to ensure all players in all clubs are provided with these opportunities. To this end the goals are to have multiple participants in each category from every club in the region, and to progressively increase total participation by players.</p>	<p>*Increase the number of clubs engaging players in regional events by 3 clubs per year until all clubs are represented</p> <p>*Increase the level of player participation by 10% per year</p>	<p>*Define the events calendar in July</p> <p>*Prepare corporatized posters for display in clubs promoting participation</p> <p>*Prepare and distribute a player focused region newsletter to give the events a higher profile (email version for clubs to send on to all members)</p> <p>*Ask club boards, particularly in clubs where current participation is low, to consider appointing a State Events Liaison Officer to manage promotion and recruitment of entries at the local level</p> <p>*Analyse participation data and make personal approaches to clubs not engaged.</p>	<p>*NGBR Communications Director in partnership with the Chair of the Match Committee (Also to increase attendance by Region Board ensure all event scheduling is notified to President and Directors)</p> <p>*Match Committee with added communications expertise</p>	<p>*Produce calendar in July</p> <p>*Produce posters and newsletter for distribution by the end of August</p> <p>*Communications with clubs regarding developments in August including provisional allocation of greens to host all rounds</p> <p>*Personal approaches to clubs and players in September including hand delivery of event information and entry forms by committee members</p>

NGBR Programs and Services:

2. Train and support umpires

Overview	Goals	Targets	Key Initiatives	Responsibility	Timelines
<p>*NGBR will ensure that training and accreditation for new and experienced, markers, measurers and umpires is provided on a regular basis.</p> <p>*NGBR will ensure the technical officials and clubs are aware of the current edition of Laws, Rules, Domestic Regulations and Pennant Conditions of Play.</p>	<p>*NGBR seeks to ensure that every club has accredited umpires for each of its pennant teams.</p> <p>*NGBR seeks to ensure that all clubs and their technical officials are kept up-to-date with relevant information, advised and interpretation of laws and rules issued by BA and BV.</p> <p>*NGBR will maintain an up to date database of technical officer accreditations and contact details</p>	<p>*Every club to have at least 4 accredited umpires</p> <p>*By 2022 every club will have not less than 8% of their membership as accredited umpires</p> <p>*All clubs are represented at umpires briefings and updates</p> <p>*NGBR has a minimum of 3 BV accredited Presenters and Assessors to deliver courses and assess participants under the National Officiating Program</p>	<p>*As required seek clarification from BV on the interpretation and application of Laws, Rules, Domestic Regulations and Pennant Conditions of Play.</p> <p>*Ensure that NGBR Umpires Committee has the numbers, resources and support it needs to conduct training programs</p> <p>*Promote the importance of trained umpires to all bowlers through an NGBR all player newsletter and posters</p> <p>* Encourage clubs to promote training courses within the club</p>	<p>*NGBR Director to be appointed to Umpires and Rules Committee.</p> <p>*Designated NGBR Director in partnership with NGBR appointed chair of Umpires and Rules Committee</p>	<p>* Conduct at least one new accreditation and reaccreditation course annually</p> <p>* Conduct an Umpire Forum in September each year</p>

NGBR Programs and Services:**3. Train and support coaches**

Overview	Goals	Targets	Key Initiatives	Responsibility	Timelines
<p>*NGBR will ensure that training for new and experienced coaches is provided on a regular basis.</p> <p>*NGBR will ensure that training includes strategies to improve club, team and individual performances.</p> <p>*NGBR will ensure training is provided to maximize inclusion of all players including those with disabilities and needing to use a bowlers-arm.</p>	<p>*NGBR seeks to ensure that every club has a minimum of two(2) accredited coaches to provide the best possible and advice and support for developing players</p> <p>*NGBR seeks to ensure that all coaches are provided with refresher courses or briefings on a regular basis</p>	<p>*Every NGBR club has at least two accredited coaches per 50 playing members</p> <p>*Increase the number of accredited coaches in the region by 8% per year</p> <p>* Conduct 2 training programs for new coaches per year</p>	<p>*Seek to identify appropriate players for training as coaches and to become part of the NGBR Coaching Panel to help improve player performance across the whole region</p> <p>*Develop with BV an up-to-date regional data base of trained and accredited coaches.</p> <p>*Use the data base to appropriately recognize trained coaches at regional level.</p> <p>*Investigate the establishment of a regional "Coach of the Year" Award.</p> <p>*Use the data base to identify clubs with deficiencies in coaching to support their involvement as a strategy to improve the club.</p>	<p>*Coaching Committee with designated Director</p>	<p>*Establish data base by end of 2017.</p> <p>*</p> <p>*</p> <p>*</p>

*Make personal contact with all clubs to promote the training of more coaches and to schedule programs to suit clubs and trainees as needed.

*In partnership with the Youth Development Committee foster development of coaching techniques for junior players in clubs. Do this in conjunction with fostering an on-going schools competition in lawn bowls.

*Identify and recruit existing coaches with appropriate skills and experience to join the Coaching Committee and become trainers of coaches

NGBR Programs and Services:

4. Assist clubs with development needs

Overview	Goals	Targets	Key Initiatives	Responsibility	Timelines
<p>*NGBR in partnership with Bowls Victoria will liaise with local municipal authorities to support the creation and development of new bowls clubs in growth areas of the region.</p> <p>*NGBR will liaise with local municipal authorities to support the most strategic use of local resources to maximize bowls development for the enhancement of the sport and enhancement of local communities.</p> <p>*NGBR will ensure that clubs have access to "best practice" from other clubs to support growth and development of individual clubs and the sport of lawn bowls</p>	<p>*NGBR will partner local authorities in establishment of new bowls clubs</p> <p>*NGBR will seek engagement with municipal authorities in supporting local recreation plans to include a focus on lawn bowls and to provide advice to optimise the value of any grants being made available.</p> <p>*NGBR seeks to support growth in every club</p> <p>*NGBR club knowledge, experience and skills will be made available to support clubs experiencing challenges and/or seeking to develop aspects of their operations and performance.</p>	<p>*NGBR will partner Hume City Council in the establishment of a new club at Merrifield and a new club at Lockerbie.</p> <p>*At least two NGBR General Meetings per year will involve forums with presentations from clubs and panel discussions to share good practice.</p>	<p>*Establish working parties with Hume Council in relation to the proposed new clubs</p> <p>*Establish links for grants advice on the NGBR Website.</p> <p>*Ensure that clubs needing advice and support gain that from the BV Regional Development Manager as appropriate</p> <p>*Develop a regional resource of "best practice" examples for use by other clubs with the region being a contact point for good ideas in clubs.</p> <p>*Remodel General Meeting agendas to focus on sharing "what works of us" best practice</p>	<p>*Chair of Club Support and Development Committee</p>	<p>*Initiate discussions with Hume Council be late in 2017</p> <p>*Conduct General Meetings as a club development forums from the first meeting in 2017</p>

NGBR Programs and Services:**5. Monitor and advise clubs re-greens performance**

Overview	Goals	Targets	Key Initiatives	Responsibility	Timelines
<p>*NGBR will ensure that all bowling greens in the region will be assessed by an expert panel during October/November each year. Advice shall be provided to clubs on any remedial works needed.</p> <p>*Greens to be re-assessed in February to inform advice on progress and to inform BV which greens should be used for finals.</p>	<p>*NGBR seeks to ensure all greens in the region are of the highest standard possible to foster quality playing conditions for all.</p> <p>*NGBR seeks to ensure that finals are only played on greens which are up to an acceptable standard</p>	<p>*Assessments of greens to show 10% improvement in scores over 2 years</p> <p>*Recruit at least 3 clubs greens directors or other appropriately experienced members to join the region Greens Committee. Sponsor their training with BV to become formally accredited Greens Inspectors.</p>	<p>*Develop a panel of greens inspectors, specifically including practicing experts, to support the Committee and the Board</p> <p>*Convene meetings of Greens Directors from each club twice per year to share best practice</p> <p>*Establish a set of awards for green keepers/clubs such as "Most Improved" and "Best Green of the Year"</p> <p>*Improve communication and timelines for inspections with corporatize notifications and advanced scheduling</p> <p>*Liaise with BV to ensure only greens approved by the region are used for finals</p>	<p>*Chair of Greens Committee with support from Communications Director.</p>	<p>*Provide notices of 2017 /2018 season greens inspections in early September for inspection dates in late October/early November</p>

NGBR Programs and Services:**6. Select and manage regional sides for state regional championships**

Overview	Goals	Targets	Key Initiatives	Responsibility	Timelines
<p>*NGBR will select and sponsor sides to compete in the Victorian Regional Championships conducted each year for men and women.</p> <p>*NGBR will foster opportunities and develop players for regional and state selection to cover U18, U25 and open championships and events.</p>	<p>*Select the best sides to represent the NGBR</p> <p>*Win the Regional Sides Championships</p> <p>*Win at least 70% of Regional Sides Championship games</p>	<p>*Include the best</p> <p>*Win</p> <p>*Increase number of players trialling to represent the region by 20% per year</p>	<p>*Appoint an experienced coordinator plus 2 experienced players and a manager for each of our regional sides.</p> <p>*Promote participation in the regional sides to all players in the regions and particularly targeting talented and successful players.</p> <p>*Coordinators/managers to monitor players at region championships to help inform selection processes.</p> <p>*Succession plan engagement of others in these key roles</p> <p>*Seek a sponsorship partnership to help offset the costs of fielding the best NGBR sides.</p>	<p>*Region Sides Committee and delegated Director</p>	

NGBR Programs and Services:**7. Develop and manage youth involvement in bowls**

Overview	Goals	Targets	Key Initiatives	Responsibility	Timelines
<p>*NGBR will sponsor activities to encourage youth involvement in lawn bowls</p> <p>*NGBR ... Northern Flyers...</p>	<p>*NGBR seeks to grow the number of young people engaging in the sport of lawn bowls</p> <p>*Develop a model for clubs to assist them in encouraging participation in school programs</p>	<p>*80% of under 18 bowlers participate with the Flyers from Gateway clubs (On-going)</p> <p>*Minimum of six structured squad training days per annum. This includes a team competing at -</p> <p>-Junior Regional Championships held in January each year at Daylesford (Flyers have now won this event the last two years)</p> <p>-Victorian U18 Championships (Normally held in Bendigo in April replaced with the Doug Kneebone classic this year at Melbourne BC by Bowls Vic)</p> <p>*50% of the squad to be nominated and trial for the Victorian U18 squad trial days.(Ongoing)</p> <p>*Regional participation and success at the Victoria Under 18</p>	<p>*Entering a Flyer team in tournaments in full Flyer uniform in Gateway club tournaments. (This will further promote the Flyers) – Timelines 2017/2018 and beyond</p> <p>*Participation at the Ted King Classic(Tocumal-January – 2 day event) and the Barooga Junior U19 Classic) Previous two years has seen 40% of the squad competing at this event. (Ongoing)</p> <p>*Expand the communication strategy to identify and encourage participation of young players and also involving their families</p> <p>*Conduct information sessions and forums for young players to share their views and interests</p>	<p>*Flyers Chairman</p> <p>*Flyers Coach</p> <p>*Flyers Manager</p> <p>*Designated NGBR Director</p>	

		<p>Singles, Pairs and Triples (Ongoing)</p> <p>*10% pa increase in clubs in NGBR fostering participation with the Northern Flyers</p> <p>*10% pa increase in number of players participating with the Northern Flyers</p>	<p>*Develop a set of Special awards to recognize young players in NGBR clubs</p> <p>*Develop a body of experienced persons to manage, coach and develop our U18 squad</p> <p>*Work in partnership with the Coaches Committee to work with club coaches to improve young players</p> <p>*Bring players to the attention of the state junior committee to allow them to be identified as players of the future</p>		
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NGBR Programs and Services:

8. Conduct night pennant competitions for NGBR clubs

Overview	Goals	Targets	Key Initiatives	Responsibility	Timelines
<p>*NGBR will provide opportunities for all clubs to compete in a regionally based night pennant competition.</p>	<p>*To maximize involvement in bowls by broadening opportunities for players to compete</p> <p>*Stem the decline in numbers, and play on the date and use the format that participants enjoy the most.</p> <p>*Include more clubs from both within our region and from neighbouring regions to participate in it.</p> <p>*Continue to grow the reputation of the competition for its management and willing to make changes to further boost the competition.</p>	<p>*To make approaches to neighbouring region clubs to become members of the Night Pennant competition and build up the numbers to split Div 2 into a region based competition to alleviate as much travel as possible.</p> <p>*To regain clubs that had left the competition and had the ability to field sides.</p> <p>*To work with clubs that are struggling to get the player numbers to endure that they don't drop out.</p>	<p>* Support clubs exploring night pennant as a way to expand their membership. (A number of clubs have players who don't play Saturday pennant, some of whom play night pennant as a second sport. If clubs base their existence around Saturday pennant and ignore cricketers, footballers etc who can potentially enjoy night pennant they may miss out on recruiting their next generation.)</p> <p>*Review changes trialled for 16/17</p> <p>*Offer opportunities to participate to clubs bordering on NGBR</p>	<p>*Night Pennant Committee in conjunction with designated NGBR Director</p> <p>(Please note that these inputs are based on advice from John Adams but he also advises a review is scheduled in the near future and further changes/edits may be made)</p>	

NGBR Programs and Services:

9. Perform ceremonial roles and award presentations on behalf of BV and NGBR

Overview	Goals	Targets	Key Initiatives	Responsibility	Timelines
*NGBR through its Bowls Victoria Regional Representatives will perform roles such as medal presentations as required	*To formally recognize high achievers, long serving players and outstanding contributors to club leadership and workers etc		*Encourage clubs to nominate members for awards *NGBR to promote awards at general meetings and through the proposed newsletters for players *Provide hard copies of award application forms at NGBR general meetings	*President in conjunction with the Secretary	

NGBR Programs and Services:

10. Manage the business and finances of the region to support of the above functions

Overview	Goals	Targets	Key Initiatives	Responsibility	Timelines
<p>*NGBR will prepare program budgets for adoption at NGBR General Meetings to ensure that activities conducted under this Action Plan are appropriately resourced.</p> <p>*NGBR will provide services for clubs defined in this action plan as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible</p>	<p>*To establish and operate within a budget balanced within each financial year.</p>	<p>*Reverse trend of recent years to operate at a financial loss</p>	<p>*Reduce level of honorariums but cover costs incurred by members in managing regional functions and activities.</p> <p>*Form a Finance Committee with both a monitoring role but to also pursue sponsorship packages, particularly for costs supporting Regional Sides and Junior Development.</p>	<p>*Treasurer with Finance Committee</p>	<p>*Ongoing</p>

NGBR ACTION PLAN 2017-2022.

NGBR Operational Matters

The review and planning process has identified that the NGBR is a well run region. However as a well-run region it is open to suggestions for improvement and five key items have been identified:

1. Communications
2. Meeting schedules and engagement
3. Implications for amendments to the constitution
4. Directors and committee roles
5. Management of resources

1.Communications: Throughout the body of the section on Regional Programs and Services, feedback has highlighted the need for improved communications with clubs, but also more specifically with players. To this end it is planned to introduce an occasional NGBR Newsletter which focuses on direct engagement with players. It is also planned to produce corporatized posters to promote engagement in regional events.

The website needs to be updated and a coordinator appointed as soon as possible. Upgrading of the site should include a region directory kept up to date by the region secretary.

2.Meeting schedules and engagement: Feedback on the role and frequency of delegates meetings and engagement of club leaders attracted significant variations in responses. However the greater engagement of senior club office bearers is considered to be a priority to ensure a proactive two way communication exchange between the region and clubs. It is planned to conduct regional general meetings on a more regular basis. These meetings would not just be reporting meetings but be engaging for Presidents and Secretaries, particularly around sharing good practice on club development and improvement strategies. Where they could not attend then the president may delegate attendance to a representative from the club board. The position of "delegate" would be removed.

Meeting	Attendees	Frequency	Role	
NGBR Board of Directors	Directors	Monthly	Govern Region and manage programs and services	
NGBR General Meetings	All club presidents and secretaries or representatives from the club board	Four per year but timed to coincide with major activities	To ensure matters raised at meetings are shared back at club level. Raise awareness of the region as a service provider for clubs and encourage members to join the Board.	
NGBR Annual General Meeting (AGM)	All club presidents and secretaries or representatives from the club board	Once per year in June	Receive annual reports, adopt plans, elect directors office bearers and other officials.	
NGBR Program and Service Committees	Committee members as appointed by the NGBR Board . Committees to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match/Region Events • Rules/Umpires • Greens • Club Development • Under 18 Development • Coaching • Region Side Selection - Womeen • Region Side Selection - Men • Night Pennant 	As required	To manage the programs and services as agreed with the Board. To ensure succession processes are in place in every committee	

3. Constitution amendments: Following the 2015/2016 AGM a process was set in place by the Board to amend the constitution. The election of the Board and office bearers highlighted some short-comings in the current wording of the constitution on the elections and gender representation. The review work has now further identified the need to remove the term "delegate" from the document and to revise the purpose of general meetings and engagement with clubs. These changes can now be expedited.

4. Directors Roles: The Review has highlighted that in the current functioning of the region that a number of directors have roles which overlap in relation to communications with clubs. To ensure greater consistency a proposal to delegate a Board members as Communications Director needs further consideration.

It is also recognized that the links with some committees are not now systematic. This is particularly the case where a committee operates with no representation or direct link with the Board. It is therefore proposed that every committee shall be designated with a liaison with a current NGBR Director. That Director may or may not be a member of the committee but would be responsible for liaison with the committee to ensure appropriate two way communication on issues being addressed.

5. Management of Resources: The review and some earlier correspondence highlighted the need for greater transparency in relation to resources controlled by the region. The treasurer has already instituted some procedures to address that perception however these need to be formalized to provide protection for the region and any office bearers involved.

A review of regional running costs and honorariums is also needed. It is apparent that much of some honorariums is used for actual costs but the reports are open to other interpretations.