Bowls ACT – Board Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday, 4 August 2026

Time: 5:35 pm - 7:45 pm

Location: Teams (Online)

Chair: David Pruss (President)

1. ATTENDANCE & APOLOGIES:

Present: David Pruss (President), Margaret Argue (V/P), Ruth Moore, Penny Auld, Andrew Carmody, Gayle Young, John Birch, Peter Hammond, Paul Gilbert (EO), Kate Lyttle (Projects -part)

Apologies: None recorded; all Directors were in attendance (Ruth Moore joined shortly after the meeting opened).

2. OPEN:

The meeting formally opened at 5:35 pm. The President welcomed Directors and confirmed the meeting could proceed while awaiting the arrival of the final attendee.

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST REGISTER:

The President called for any conflicts of interest. No conflicts were declared by any Director present.

4. INSURANCE DECLARATION:

The EO confirmed that current insurance arrangements remain in place and compliant, with the next renewal due in November 2026 (the insurer to advise ahead of that date). The President noted that Ray Watt is separately reviewing insurance arrangements and the use of reserves, with a report to be brought to the FAR Committee in coming weeks.

The August Board Meeting was conducted under a new portfolio-based reporting structure, with business arising presented by business unit (Projects, Governance, Finance, Match/Events, High Performance/Representative, Digital, Juniors and Accreditation) rather than by chronological agenda item. This format allowed the Board to focus discussion on outcomes, decisions and emerging issues within each area of responsibility.

Financial sustainability was the dominant theme of the meeting. Directors considered a proposed increase to club affiliation fees to $100 (GST inclusive) from 1 January 2027, together with annual

CPI-based adjustments, as part of a broader effort to reduce a projected budget deficit of approximately $47,000. Directors weighed the financial necessity of the increase against reputational risk, given that clubs had been advised as recently as May / June 2026 that no increase would occur before 2028. The President undertook to review prior correspondence and bring back a considered communication approach and confirmed he would forgo his honorarium this year to help offset the deficit. A reduction in representative team funding subsidies and a revised, GST-corrected budget model was noted to have already noticeably narrowed the projected shortfall.

The Board also revisited the Strategic Plan. Following concern that two AI-drafted versions of the plan had proceeded without adequate human input or endorsement, Directors agreed to step back from the current approach and pursue a more formal, facilitated strategic planning process, potentially involving Bowls Australia's strategic planner if this can occur at nil cost, culminating in a plan that the Board can properly consider and approve, and that is directly linked to a supporting financial management plan.

Governance and compliance remained a significant focus, with the EO advising that the ACT Child Safe Standards Scheme Self-Assessment and Review Tool 2024 remains outstanding and is a substantial, non-trivial undertaking that may need to be progressed through a targeted working group. The Constitution Review continued to progress slowly, with an interim review from Jack Kearslake now available for Board consideration, while efforts to secure legal input remain hampered by unavailability of prior contacts.

On representative and match matters, the Board received a wash-up of the Riverina and Cabramatta fixtures (both resulting in wins for ACT) and reviewed a disappointing 83-response Presentation Night survey that was sent to all 1300 members on the database, resolving that the event is not viable this year. Directors also agreed to discontinue free representative starter uniform kits for future debutants (suggesting only an embroidered cap), and resolved to establish a dedicated Uniform Committee to review the Association's overall uniform strategy and supplier arrangements. A frank discussion regarding a breakdown in communication between the Men's Selectors and the agreed team-announcement timeline prompted the Board to commit to developing a consistent, Board-endorsed Selection Policy across all committees.

The Junior Development Program continued to progress, though Directors noted that internal review of the Tuggeranong Junior Development Academy proposal has stalled and requires a dedicated meeting between the President, EO and Director Hammond. Separately, the Junior BPL team lost its confirmed coach following a breakdown in communication, and now faces increased costs and an earlier selection timeline following relocation of the event south of Geelong.

Finally, the Board welcomed a revised approach to EO reporting, with Directors requesting a more concise, outcomes-focused format going forward, and thanked Director Young for her flexibility in managing digital and website updates during the past month.

Key Decisions and Endorsements

- Confirmed the minutes of the 30 June 2026 Board meeting as a true and accurate record.
- Endorsed, in principle, an increase to club affiliation fees to $100 (GST inclusive) from 1 January 2027, subject to finalisation of Board-approved communication to clubs.
- Agreed that a formal, facilitated Strategic Plan process should replace the current AI-drafted document, ideally supported by Bowls Australia if this can be obtained at nil cost.
- Resolved that the 2026 Presentation/Awards Night is not viable this year, based on survey results, and agreed to publish the results and communicate the decision to members via the Bowls ACT Website.
- Agreed to discontinue the practice of providing a free representative "starter pack" uniform to future debutants post-2026, retaining only an embroidered cap.
- Agreed to establish a dedicated Uniform Committee to review BACT's representative uniform strategy and supplier arrangements.
- Agreed that a consistent, Board-endorsed Selection Policy is required across all BACT committees to ensure autonomy and prevent the recurrence of the recent Men's Selectors timeline issue.
- Agreed to progress disposal of obsolete uniform stock (jackets, vests, surplus hoodies) held in the office.
- Agreed that the EO's Report summary will move to a concise, dot-point summary format going forward, with detailed content following for cross-referencing if required.

Key Risks and Dependencies

- Reputational risk to Bowls ACT arising from the affiliation fee increase, given prior communication to clubs that fees would not increase before 2028.
- Continued budget deficit and reliance on prudent expenditure management, reserve usage and sponsorship/grant income to maintain financial sustainability.
- Outstanding completion of the ACT Child Safe Standards Scheme Self-Assessment and Review Tool 2024, which may affect 2026-2029 government funding categorisation.
- Dependence on external parties (Bowls Australia, Iain Evans / Chris Evans, Tim McGrath) for progress on the Constitution Review and Strategic Plan facilitation.
- Risk to representative program delivery from the unresolved Junior BPL coach / manager vacancy and compressed selection timeline.
- Reliance on volunteer capacity (e.g. digital and website administration) creating turnaround constraints for time-sensitive communications based on Operations Assistant - only access to Canva Graphics.
- Value-for-money and participation risk associated with entering teams at high-cost, low-return representative events (e.g. Dubbo 4s).
- Risk of continued committee/Board misalignment on selection and governance timelines in the absence of a documented, Board-endorsed Selection Policy.

9. Next Meeting

Date: Tuesday, 25 August 2026, 5:30pm
Location: Online / Teams

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10. Close

Meeting closed at 7.21 pm.