

Annual Report to the members of Bowls North Harbour Inc.

This year the report is presented in three sections –
Governance, Operations and Finance

Governance:

The annual meeting in 2024 took place at Hobsonville Bowling Club and new members to the Board were elected in Laurie Kean as vice-president, Greg Yelavich, Nigel Rattray, and Sue Rossiter as Board members. Hanaan Shahwan was coopted onto the Board immediately following the annual meeting. Neil Connell was re-elected President for his third term.

The sole surviving member on the Board, Tony Popplewell, was elected chairperson. The lack of experience and knowledge in Centre matters was a feature for the new Board, who had to quickly come to grips with the planning for the season.

Unfortunately, as the season kicked into gear, we had two Board resignations. Laurie Kean found it necessary for personal reasons to resign as vice-president and as a member of the Board. Laurie was showing good leadership and communication with the representative squads and made an immediate impression with his input to Board matters. As a consequence of this resignation liaising with the representative squads became vacant and the Board was unable to fill the gap for the rest of the season. With no obvious candidate available for the vice-president position this was left vacant as provided by rule 19.3 of the Centre.

Shortly thereafter we learned of the resignation of Nigel Rattray, following his acceptance of a position with Bowls New Zealand. Nigel saw this as necessary to avoid any areas of conflict with the local Centre administration. Nigel was a real asset to the Board and his contribution was evident in the short time he was a member with the raising of the sponsorship for the BNH New Zealand Masters event. He was also instrumental in completing the fulfilment of the apparel contract which had been set up by the previous Board. To both these gentlemen, the Board thanks them for their contributions during their short tenures.

Board members were allocated roles as part of providing a stronger organisation for Centre affairs. There is no shortage of roles to provide for an efficient organisation at Centre level just like it is at club level. The Centre will always be in a position of requiring Board members to step up for such roles for continuing the development and the practises of delivering events and opportunities to bowls players in the Centre area.

During the year we welcomed one new club to come under the North Harbour Centre umbrella and that was the club of Wellsford. This now brings the number of clubs in the North Harbour Centre to 19.

The Match Committee is one committee which has a significant part to play in the sport at this level. Unfortunately two valuable members of the committee - Colin Rogan and Steve Cox – both of whom had made significant contributions over the years, decided to call time on their input and this did leave a major hole of experience available at this level. Efforts to encourage other players to join the committee failed to come to fruition and we soldiered on with the remaining members for the rest of the season. No major areas surfaced and the Match Committee were able to deal with those items that did with minimum inconvenience.

The contract the Board had in place for the Centre Manager position expired at the end of December 2024 and this was negotiated and renewed for a further two year term, which will give some certainty for the immediate future of the Centre. At this point it would be appropriate to note the service and support our Centre Manager, Garth Partridge, is providing to clubs throughout the Centre on an almost full-time basis, even though he is contracted for only 24 hours per week. With the extended use of the BowlsHub system for entering and managing events, Garth has been invaluable to assist club bowlers through the entry process. Thank you Garth from all members of the Board and the Centre.

Our treasurer, Raewyn Thomas, also does a fantastic job in looking after the finances of the Centre, despite the frustrations she has in reconciling the entries and the entrance fees to events. Raewyn is also instrumental in supporting the income of the Centre with completing and filing many grant applications during the year with a reasonable degree of success. She is also a willing helper to clubs who wish to use her expertise and assistance in making grant applications. Thank you, Raewyn.

During the year, the Bowls North Harbour Umpires Committee agreed to fully amalgamate with Bowls North Harbour and become a sub-committee of the Centre. As part of this process the Umpires Committee closed their bank account and the funds were transferred to a sub account of Bowls North Harbour, so their finances remain accountable and separate from the Centre, although they are incorporated for the purposes of accounting as a whole. They still maintain their independence of operation to progress the work of umpires for all our tournaments. A separate report from the Umpires Committee is included in this report to members.

The Board moved along the re-registration process for the Centre under the new Incorporated Societies Act 2022 and to achieve this the Centre proposed the adoption of an updated constitution to meet the new requirements at a special general meeting at the end of the March. This was unanimously endorsed by the delegates and re-registration was completed with the Registrar shortly thereafter.

Looking ahead we are currently operating with the minimum number of elected representatives on the Board. The Centre provides a vital link between clubs and the organising of Centre events and activities. Without the support of clubs, this would be difficult to achieve and we are relying on members to ensure that there are sufficient

nominations of people to step up and undertake these duties for the benefit of all the clubs and players in the Centre.

The Board is in the process of taking a significant step to add support and leadership for the Centre representative teams. A new position of Representative Team Director (RTD) has been advertised and an appointment should be made by the time of the annual meeting. This position will oversee and give direction for all the representative teams from Premier, Development and 1-5 year both men and women. It is expected that each team will then have their own coach and manager as in the past, who will have direct responsibility for the performance of their teams and report through to the RTD.

Premises:

For the past twelve months the Centre has been able to use space at the Sunnybrae Bowling Club for the storage of cups, trophies, records and representative uniforms. As this contract came to an end space was offered by Bowls Orewa, which was gladly accepted by the Centre. This was more accessible to our staff who are both located in this area. We thank Sunnybrae and Orewa for the past and future hire of this space.

The Board are also appreciative of Bowls Orewa in allowing the Centre Board to hold their meetings in the Annex.

Operations:

Season Overview

The 2024–2025 season for Bowls North Harbour (BNH) commenced on 8 September 2024 with a well-attended Opening Day. Hobsonville Bowling Club claimed the Executive Bonus Fours title, setting a strong tone for the season. Despite some minor disruptions, the season was marked by quality competitions, innovation in event management, and enhanced digital engagement.

Competitions and Events

Centre Championships

BNH delivered a comprehensive calendar of Centre Championship events.

Club Open Tournaments

Local clubs hosted a wide range of open tournaments, which encouraged broader community participation and fostered interclub collaboration.

BNH Metlifecare NZ Masters 2024

Held 7–11 October 2024, the BNH Metlifecare NZ Masters was a standout event featuring multiple age categories and competitive formats. Browns Bay Bowling Club served as event headquarters, supported by a network of co-host venues, and the event attracted significant national interest.

Octagonal Competitions

BNH successfully hosted the Men's and Women's Octagonal Representative Events for the Premiers and the 1-5 squads, featuring eight regional centres in a round-robin format. The competitions showcased regional talent and demonstrated BNH's capacity to run elite-level events with excellence.

General

In these events the Centre was well supported by the umpires who fulfil a valuable part of the progress in delivering the events for the players. The Board also acknowledges the part played by the event directors in the administration of the events and providing the results of the tournaments progressively online through the Bowlshub environment.

Development and Coaching

Coaching Certification courses planned for May 2025—including Foundation, Development, and Refresher programs—were postponed due to scheduling and resourcing challenges. The winter coaching sessions were well supported by both the players and our volunteer coaches. A revised coaching calendar will be released for the 2025–2026 season, reaffirming the Centre's commitment to player and coach development.

Digital Tools and Innovation

BowlsHub Aotearoa

BNH expanded its use of BowlsHub Aotearoa this season to streamline event administration. Key features utilised included:

- Online player entry and registration
- Live draws and real-time results
- Automated scheduling and communications to players and officials

The platform significantly reduced administrative workload and improved the player experience, and further adoption across clubs is encouraged for 2025–2026.

Bowls+ Platform

BNH is preparing to support and promote the launch of Bowls+, Bowls New Zealand's new digital platform set to centralise content, events, and player engagement. Bowls+ aims to become the national hub for:

- Accessing livestreams, event highlights, and coaching content
- Viewing club information, results, and news in one place
- Supporting player profiles and tracking development over time

BNH is committed to helping members transition smoothly to this new platform as it develops.

New BNZ Communication Tool

In addition, Bowls New Zealand is rolling out a new mobile communication tool, designed as a messaging platform similar to WhatsApp. The app will be used to:

- Improve real-time communication between players, clubs, and centre officials
- Reduce reliance on email and paper notices
- Facilitate alerts and updates during competitions

BNH has begun initial testing and will provide guidance to clubs and members on how to use this tool ahead of full implementation in the 2025–2026 season.

Communication and Resources

BNH continued to communicate clearly and frequently through:

- Hardcopy & Digital Centre Handbook – a comprehensive guide covering competitions, rules, and contacts
- Website Updates – timely posts for draws, results, weather notices, and news items
- Transition to Digital Platforms – emphasis on BowlsHub, Bowls+, and BNZ’s messaging tool to modernise member engagement

Conclusion

The 2024–2025 season was operationally successful, highlighted by strong event delivery, enhanced digital tools, and preparations for broader tech adoption. Despite the postponement of coaching certification programs, Bowls North Harbour is well-positioned for continued growth and innovation heading into the 2025–2026 season.

Finance:

A summary of the financial performance of the Centre is included with this report. As will be seen a substantial loss of \$26k has been incurred as against a modest surplus in the previous twelve months. The main contributor to this deficit is the costs of the representative teams and tournaments. In broad terms the representative teams were outfitted in new uniforms this season and part of the costs were covered by sponsorship but a larger portion was also left to the Board.

The capitation fees paid by clubs do not cover the cost of our Centre administration and we rely heavily on receiving grants to cover the difference. Tournament expenses were also higher with the increased prize money allocated to the BNH Metlifecare NZ Masters tournament although this was well supported by the sponsorship for this event.

Also included in the Tournament costs are those for the two Octagonal events which were hosted by the Centre. Whilst the costs may appear high for a local event we are relieved of the cost for travel and accommodation while the event is hosted locally.

Going forward the increasing pressure of the full representative programme will continue to be costly to the Centre and may well involve some hard decision making as to how this can be fully supported by the Board in the future.

Meanwhile the budget for this next twelve months shows an improved position although still shows a small loss of \$3k. The Inter-centre being played in Auckland next season assists us greatly in this respect and also our dependency on successful grant applications will have a bearing on the financial outcome for the year.



Tony Popplewell, Chairman

May 2025



Garth Partridge, Centre Manager