

# Board Bulletin – March 2023

I am very pleased to share this update with you following the March meeting of the World Bowls Board. Do please contact me if you have any queries or comments about any of the information herein.

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## CEO Report

- The Board formally approved the adoption and publication of the World Bowls Strategic Plan; you will be able to find a copy on the WB Website.
- A very worthwhile visit to Malaysia and Singapore in February by the CEO who received a great welcome. The visit was made possible with invaluable assistance from Claudius Lam; 8 countries were involved in the event which was hosted in excellent fashion by Malaysia. A great event and an opportunity to engage with MNAs in this important region.
- Strong support has been expressed by a number MNAs for the idea of WB finding a Global Airline sponsor and this will be a focus for the CEO going forward, as will be securing new members and developing coaching capacity around the world.
- The Board believes holding the next World Championships in Hong Kong China will be very important; a draft hosting agreement has been prepared and sent; WB notes the greens inspection will be later in March than previously advised.
- The CEO has attended a number of meetings in the last 3 months as well as the visits to Malaysia and Singapore including with the Commonwealth Games Federation and bowls in Bendigo regarding 2026 . It was noted that the Games Committee’s current focus is on infrastructure at the proposed venue in Bendigo. A meeting with the organizing committee to establish what they want from WB will be timely and will be pursued. CG 2030 Hamilton (Canada) – has withdrawn for bid for 2030 Games; other Canadian cities are in the running.
- Work is well underway to transition the company to a new corporate entity that has been registered in Australia.
- The CEO is eager for feedback on the proposed disciplines for the 2026 Commonwealth Games as previously circulated.

## Presentation from Solucio and Iggy Jovanovic – Commercial Opportunities for World Bowls

The Board received a presentation from the Solucio consulting team on a proposal to build the brand and profile of bowls globally – to primarily create new revenue streams to assist in growing the sport.

Areas covered in the presentation included:

- Recognizing a worldwide shift away from a focus just on “members”. Followers, fans, spectators and digital consumers have become the more valuable commodity for any sport.
- A pilot of the World Bowls Premier League (event name TBC) is proposed for later this year; with additional events planned to be held twice in 2024 and three times in 2025.
- A proposed model for a live World Rankings table of male, female and para athletes; proposed tiers are not fixed – a model similar to that in tennis and table tennis is being developed.

The WB Board has also considered some current prominent case studies available on Table Tennis; Pickle Ball, Volleyball and Surfing.

The Board understands very well the obligation to do something more with the sport than has been done in the last 20 years

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which focusses on real commercial and brand growth. In addition, the Board noted the current level of social media activity that goes on in the sport; there is a very engaged digital audience for the sport – more than might be expected – but this can be enhanced even much further.

The Board agreed unanimously that WB should continue to work with Solucio and its partners to progress the commercial model and agreements to the next phase - and that the broad proposal was one WB will support in principle.

It was also agreed that the integrity of the sport would be a critical challenge and that ensuring proper controls against match fixing and competition manipulations is an ongoing and critical issue.

## Regional Updates

### Americas (Ian Howard)

- There is a strong commitment in this Region for a Pan-American Open event. The idea is still alive – looking at the spring of 2024.
- There is a short season in North America because of weather constraints and the fact financing an event is likely to be the big challenge.

### Oceania (Brett O'Riley)

- A sponsorship proposal was prepared for Digicel to support the new Oceania Challenge. The proposal for 2023 is aiming for cost recovery only but looking to the prospect of generating additional funds from future events for re-investment into the Region. Very pleasing interest in the event and his main focus at the moment is the success of the event.
- Short Mat bowls has tremendous opportunity for this format amongst MNAs in Pacific Island nations.
- Re-engaging with Bowls Australia regarding the potential to secure DFAT funding for bowls activities in the Pacific; he will keep the Board updated on progress.

### Asia (Claudius Lam)

- A very successful Asian Lawn Bowls Championships staged in Ipoh, Malaysia with 8 countries attending.
- A proposal from Iran has been received to establish a hub to promote bowls amongst neighboring West Asian countries. Keen for WB endorsement.

## Other Business

### Short Mat Bowls

- The Board discussed the natural fit for countries with inclement weather and noted there is no current connection between World Bowls and the World Short Mat Council.
- It was noted the World Championships in Short Mat will be held in Aberdeen (UK) in a few weeks – a number of Canadian players will be attending. Short Mat is a winter sport in Canada.
- The attributes of Short Mat apply for places where building greens or space for greens infrastructure presents a challenge.
- The meeting noted the potential of Short Mat as a tool to get bowls into schools and for demonstrations in nontraditional spaces such as shopping centers.
- The Board agreed to formally contact the World Short Mat Council.

### Constitution

The Board discussed a draft of a new constitution with the items discussed as follows:

- Options for the composition of the board and differences between elected and appointed directors. This included the numbers of elected and appointed directors and whether directors be elected – or appointed – to specific roles.

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- The meeting recognised that a Board is strategic in its function rather than operational.
- The meeting discussed the idea of “one person; one vote” noting it’s potential to be a selling point for new members – the idea that all members have a say regardless of size.
- The meeting discussed the timeline to have a draft finished and the desirability of having it ready by August/September 2023 for ratification by the members.
- It was noted that a draft will be circulated for comment.
- It was noted that any timeframe for responses should be short.

## **Financial Management**

The CEO advised the Board that financially reporting will change due to the move from Quickbooks to Xero accounting package.

The meeting discussed any potential fee increase and when it should be advised. The meeting noted there will be a Council Meeting at World Championships later this year and that MNAs should be invoiced for the 2024 fees in November 2023.

The meeting discussed the current confusing membership structure – full, development etc. It was noted that the types of membership will be discussed in any discussion on the Constitution.

## **Laws Committee Terms of Reference (TOR)**

The President explained that the TOR for the Laws committee had been updated in consultation with Allan Thornhill, Mark Cowan and Hazel Wilson. A new approach, removing inappropriate functions for the committee.

## **Vacancy – Regional Director for Europe**

The Board discussed the vacancy as a result of Garry Collins resignation and in the context of the work on the new Constitution.

The Board agreed to appoint current Directors Sue Beatt and Hazel Wilson as the joint and interim Regional Directors for Europe in the short-term and asked if they could also follow-up with Garry Collins on any matters that might be outstanding for the Region.