



**HOBSONS BAY LAWN BOWLS NEEDS ASSESSMENT
FINAL REPORT – JULY 2021**

**HOBSONS
BAY CITY
COUNCIL**



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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The Hobsons Bay Lawn Bowls Needs Assessment has been prepared by specialist sport and leisure planners *insideEDGE* Sport and Leisure Planning in conjunction with the Hobsons Bay City Council.

This document identifies the potential future demand for lawn bowls across the municipality and provides information regarding the short and long-term financial viability and sustainability of each club.

Investigation into the potential constraints and opportunities on lawn bowls participation growth has been undertaken to identify the immediate and long-term needs of lawn bowls clubs and facilities.

A review and audit of the current network of lawn bowls venues provides an understanding of their condition and future requirements. Club and facility development priorities are recommended based on evidence to guide future investment in lawn bowls projects.

The Lawn Bowls Needs Assessment report was identified as a high priority in Council's Sports Facility Needs Analysis, with a clear objective to undertake operational and financial assessments of each club. The outcomes of the assessment will inform Council on how to support lawn bowls clubs in delivering participation opportunities, good governance practices and providing facilities that offer a broader community benefit.

A framework for the future provision, development and use of lawn bowls facilities will be established to ensure the long-term sustainability of lawn bowls clubs and facilities.

PARTICIPATION AND FACILITY DATA

The participation information utilised within the Lawn Bowls Need Assessment Report is based on the Bowls Australia 2019 Census Report, Bowls Victoria Facilities Strategy (2020) and the registered club membership data supplied by Bowls Victoria for 2016 to 2019. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic 2020 membership data was not available.

Club membership data for 2016 to 2019 provides club and resident information, as well as membership categories, member date of birth, gender and post code. Membership maps presented in this report are based on the post code of the member as residential addresses of members were not supplied.

General participation data sourced from the Bowls Australia 2019 Census Report and Bowls Victoria Facilities Strategy (2020) includes the total number of pennant and competition participants, regular social bowls, Jack Attack and school programs.

Facility information is provided from observational assessments and infrastructure audits undertaken of greens and clubroom facilities by *insideEDGE* staff. Bowls Victoria facility guidelines for the provision of competition greens are referenced in the audits of individual clubs to identify any non-compliance issues.

In general, lawn bowls provision is driven by the needs of competition and the need for fit-for-purpose bowls infrastructure. In most instances, facilities are planned and provided to meet specific sporting code standards and requirements.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Hobsons Bay City Council offers a range of sport and recreation facilities and services designed to provide participation opportunities to local communities and to enhance the health and well being of its residents. The Hobsons Bay Lawn Bowls Needs Assessment aims to provide Council with an understanding of current facility provision, participation trends, operational needs, supply and demand information and future facility requirements. The Lawn Bowls Needs Assessment has been driven through previous Council planning and was identified as a high priority in the Sports Facility Needs Analysis (2017).

There are 6 lawn bowls clubs and 389 registered lawn bowls participants living in the Hobsons Bay City Council area. These lawn bowls participants were registered with Lawn Bowls Victoria in 2019 and were mostly affiliated with Hobsons Bay clubs.

Hobsons Bay City Council is part of Lawn Bowls Victoria's Metropolitan West Region, along with Brimbank City Council, Maribyrnong City Council, Melbourne City Council, Melton City Council and Wyndham City Council.

The Metropolitan West Region contains a total of 22 clubs, 1,800 members and over 6,000 participants. A comparative assessment of clubs and facilities in the Metropolitan West Region is provided later in this report.

Collectively, the current lawn bowls offering in Hobsons Bay City Council includes 14 greens (12 grass and two synthetic greens) and 94 rinks. Rinks are the defined playing areas on a green. Clubs also have exclusive access to pavilions that have social rooms and amenities.

Bowls Victoria facility classifications identify four local and two major lawn bowls facilities in Hobsons Bay City Council.

Altona and Altona Sports Club are considered 'major' facilities due to having two or more functional greens and the capacity to host regional events. Altona North, Laverton, Newport and Williamstown are classified as local facilities catering for a local catchment.

Lawn bowls clubs are responsible for the management and maintenance of facilities. All clubs, except for Newport, operate under a lease agreement directly with Council. Newport is located on Crown land and has a direct lease with the Victorian Government's Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

Two bowls clubs, previously located in the Hobsons Bay City Council, closed in recent years. The Spotswood Kingsville RSL Bowling Club closed approximately five years ago, and the Williamstown Ladies Bowls Club merged with the Williamstown Bowls Club, both of which were located in Dennis Reserve. It is understood these facilities closed due to a lack of members.

Membership numbers for the six clubs in the Hobsons Bay City Council have remained relatively stable, with minimal fluctuations recorded the last five years.

Low membership numbers were reported in the female and junior membership categories, with many clubs advising of no junior players and very few female participants.

Bowls Victoria identified shorter and unstructured formats of the game, such as barefoot and social bowls, as key participation trends. Despite most clubs in the Hobsons Bay City Council offering these opportunities, Bowls Victoria indicated that some clubs could be more proactive in this space.

In terms of facility trends, undercover greens and LED lights which increase the capacity of lawn bowls clubs are increasing in popularity. There are no undercover greens in the Hobsons Bay City Council and 50% of greens have lights (not LED).

Synthetic greens account for approximately 50% of green surfaces across the state. These are mostly located in country Victoria. The demand for synthetic greens in the Hobsons Bay City Council is low.

Club health checks undertaken by Bowls Victoria identified one club (Altona North) as being in poor health. This is based on a range of criteria such as membership, participation, financial performance and accreditation.

PROJECT DRIVERS, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Preparation of the Lawn Bowls Needs Assessment Report was a key recommendation in Council's Sports Facility Needs Analysis (2018), which identified the following findings for lawn bowls in Hobsons Bay:

- Existing facilities are catering for current club demand, based on the existing club membership base.
- The priority for lawn bowls clubs will be to increase 'on-green and off-green activities' that maximise venue use and contribute to revenue generation in order to build sustainable clubs.
- A viability assessment of all lawn bowls clubs is required prior to any further infrastructure investment to ensure long-term sustainability for the sport and each venue can be achieved.
- This indicates that the demand for lawn bowls in Western Melbourne is considerably lower than other metropolitan and country areas.
- No new lawn bowls clubs or facilities are proposed in Hobsons Bay within the next 10 years.
- In 2017 the green to population ratio in the municipality is 1 : 6750. The recommended industry benchmark is 1 : 10000.

The Lawn Bowls Needs Assessment will provide a financial and operational assessments of each club and provide direction on how Council can best support clubs into the future.

Council's 2014 Sport and Recreation Strategy was developed to guide the future planning, development and delivery of sport and recreation infrastructure, services and programs.

The following principles were developed as part of this strategy and will be used as the basis for recommendations regarding lawn bowls facilities.

- **Access and Equity** - provide an accessible, equitable and inclusive approach to the provision of sport and recreation facilities and activities.
- **Health and Wellbeing** - Pursue opportunities that support the objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Plan and support the communities participation in sport and recreation.
- **Building Strong Communities** - Work in partnership with and empower the community and other stakeholders to use sport and recreation as a means to help build stronger and more resilient communities.
- **Sustainable Development** - Focus on sustainable practices in the planning, development and delivery of sport and recreation infrastructure, services and programs.
- **Multi-use and Flexibility** - Plan and develop facilities and resources that support multiple-uses and users and have capacity to adapt to changing community needs.

The following tasks have been undertaken in the preparation of this Report:

- Review all current documents, reports and available participation information.
- Engage with Bowls Victoria to access club and participant data and map results.
- Analyse the membership of each club to identify catchment, trends and forecasts.
- Consult with Bowls Victoria and surrounding LGAs to understand future lawn bowls development and facility priorities.
- Audit lawn bowls facilities and identify opportunities for rationalisation or expansion.
- Provide supply and demand information and a gap analysis to determine the optimum number of greens to service lawn bowls in the future.
- Confirm management and governance arrangements at existing lawn bowls clubs, including coaching and maintenance.
- Meet individually with lawn bowls clubs and analyse online survey results to understand club and facility needs, requirements and future aspirations.
- Preparation of a plan for lawn bowls that identifies capital, renewal and future planning work required to support the ongoing viability of clubs.
- Development of a Draft Lawn Bowls Needs Assessment Report for stakeholder review.

FOCUS AREAS FOR LAWN BOWLS IN HOBSONS BAY

GOVERNANCE

- Provide direct support and deliver strategic plans for lawn bowls clubs enrolled in Council's Strategic Planning for Sport and Recreation Clubs project.
- Develop best practice governance procedures for lawn bowls clubs as part of this process and share these with non-participating clubs.
- Review lease agreements and ensure that roles, responsibilities, financial obligations and venue requirements are clearly articulated, understood and monitored annually.
- Encouraging lawn bowls clubs to regulate the number of women who sit on committees.
- Support clubs and venue operators to undertake annual Club Health Checks and remain affiliated with Bowls Victoria.

PARTICIPATION

- Support the growth in social bowls and programs such as Jack Attack and Barefoot Bowls through appropriate facility development and grant funding.
- Identify an eastern, a central and a western venue to create geographical hubs and destinations for social bowls.
- Support clubs in developing participation opportunities for specific target markets such as juniors, local schools, CALD communities and females (i.e. This Girl Can).
- Improve collaboration with Bowls Victoria and support club initiatives that deliver inclusive participation opportunities.
- Encourage clubs to diversify the use of lawn bowls facilities, using facilities for community events, and promoting opportunities for access by non-members.

SUSTAINABILITY

- Renewal priorities for lawn bowls facilities will focus on addressing ageing infrastructure and assisting clubs to meet proposed levels of service.
- In conjunction with Bowls Victoria, review club operational models and provide targeted support and resources to ensure their long-term sustainability.
- Provide immediate support for clubs identified as high risk according to the annual Bowls Victoria Club Health Check.
- Support the conversion of remaining bent grass greens to drought tolerant couch grass to improve playability and reduce the heavy reliance on water.
- Ensure all clubs have access to a sustainable water supply and harvesting system for natural grass greens. Support the conversion of grass greens to synthetic where appropriate.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Ensure all lawn bowls greens are fully operational and support both recreational and competition pathways and player development.
- Renew and upgrade ageing clubrooms and amenities to improve access to facilities and create long term cost savings for clubs.
- Develop multipurpose spaces that enable clubs to diversify the offering of lawn bowls facilities and provide opportunities for community engagement.
- Increase the capacity of lawn bowls clubs by supporting green floodlighting projects in strategic locations where there is a growing market for social bowls.
- Investigate opportunities to rationalise the building footprint at lawn bowls venues to reduce the demand on volunteer run clubs to maintain infrastructure.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND PRIORITIES BY WARD

EAST (STRAND)

Venue locations in this area:

- Williamstown Bowling Club
- Newport Bowls Club
- Altona North Bowling Club

The following priority recommendations have been identified for delivery over the 2021-2031 period:

- Work with Bowls Victoria to ensure all clubs in this ward are receiving appropriate governance and financial management advice and resources.
- Create a destination venue for social bowls from one of the existing lawn bowls clubs through enhanced lighting provision and marketing support.
- Improve the standard of existing playing surfaces at Williamstown and Altona North. Investigate the base issues identified at Williamstown and support a Tif grass conversion of the half green at Altona North.

CENTRAL (CHERRY LAKE)

Venue locations in this area:

- Altona Bowling Club
- Altona Sports Club

The following priorities have been identified for delivery over the 2021-2031 period:

- Identify suitable funding streams that support lawn bowls clubs attached to a commercial pokies or entertainment venue to apply for grant funding to run community programs and activities from quality facilities.
- Support the resurfacing of the existing synthetic green at the Altona Bowling Club to support the delivery of social bowls and school programs.
- Work alongside Bowls Victoria to ensure the Altona Bowling Club and Altona Sports Club are provided with opportunities to engage in learning and development programs that improve governance and operational efficiencies.

WEST (WETLANDS)

Venue locations in this area:

- Laverton Bowling Club

The following priorities have been identified for delivery over the 2021-2031 period:

- Assist the Laverton Bowling Club to develop a Strategic Plan with a focus on membership, participation and diversification.
- Plan for the projected population growth in Laverton and Altona Meadows as part of a future review of the AB Shaw Reserve Master Plan.
- Support improvements to the main playing surface at the Laverton Bowling Club and the re-activation of the half green to support community bowls.
- Work with Bowls Victoria and the club to increase the capacity and diversify the offering of the Laverton Bowling Club to meet changing community need.

LAWN BOWLS IN VICTORIA

Bowls Victoria have recently completed a Strategic Facilities Plan to understand, prioritise and guide the facility development of new and existing bowls clubs over the next 10 years.

The Facilities Plan identifies the following state-wide strategic priorities that will need to be considered in the context of future planning of lawn bowls in the Hobsons Bay City Council.

- Additional facilities to cater for future demand:

A regional level facility is recommended in the North West based on future population growth and may be delivered through partnerships with Retirement Lifestyle Villages (RLV's).

- Statewide access to all aspects of the sport:

Targets regions that are currently not catering for social/casual bowls, described as the fastest growing area of the sport. Bowls Victoria advised that Hobsons Bay clubs should be offering more opportunities for local communities to engage in these programs

- Increased community engagement and facility activation:

Support for clubs in regions that have a high proportion of facilities and low participation numbers. Not relevant to Hobsons Bay.

Develop a regional strategy to ensure ongoing sustainability:

Developing localised strategies for each region to guide future investment and support the ongoing sustainability of facilities. This applies to all regions including the Metro West Region.

Develop one Centre of Excellence in Victoria:

Metro West has been suggested as a potential region to accommodate a state level facility that delivers a Centre of Excellence for the sport. If feasible this would most like occur in a significant growth corridor such as Melton or Wyndham.

Over the next ten years Bowls Victoria will focus on delivering five key strategic priorities that have been developed to ensure a network of high-quality, sustainable and consistently operated bowls facilities.

The five strategic priorities are summarised below, with specific actions relevant to the needs of Hobsons Bay Lawn Bowls Clubs identified.

1. Finance

Improve club's business models and planning, targeting in need and distressed clubs. Altona North Bowling Club has been identified as a club in distress.

Educate and assist clubs in identifying and implementing activities that generate alternative revenue streams.

2. Facilities

Develop sustainable facility design guidelines, templates and standard operating procedures for Clubs to use when conducting local facility planning.

Develop decision making criteria to assist with identifying strategic facility project and to collaborate with developers and government.

3. Technologies

Conduct an initial club facility technology audit to establish key priorities for local technology enhancements and update it every 2-3 years.

Hobsons Bay clubs require support with web site development, social media and marketing to promote club activities and enhance customer experience.

4. Relationships

Develop a stakeholder engagement plan and local government contact register. This commitment will enhance the relationship between Council and Bowls Victoria, ultimately benefiting clubs and participants.

5. Markets

Increase connection with current participants and broaden engagement with new audiences. This will be delivered through the development of a rolling three-year insights program that identifies innovation and informs future facility planning.

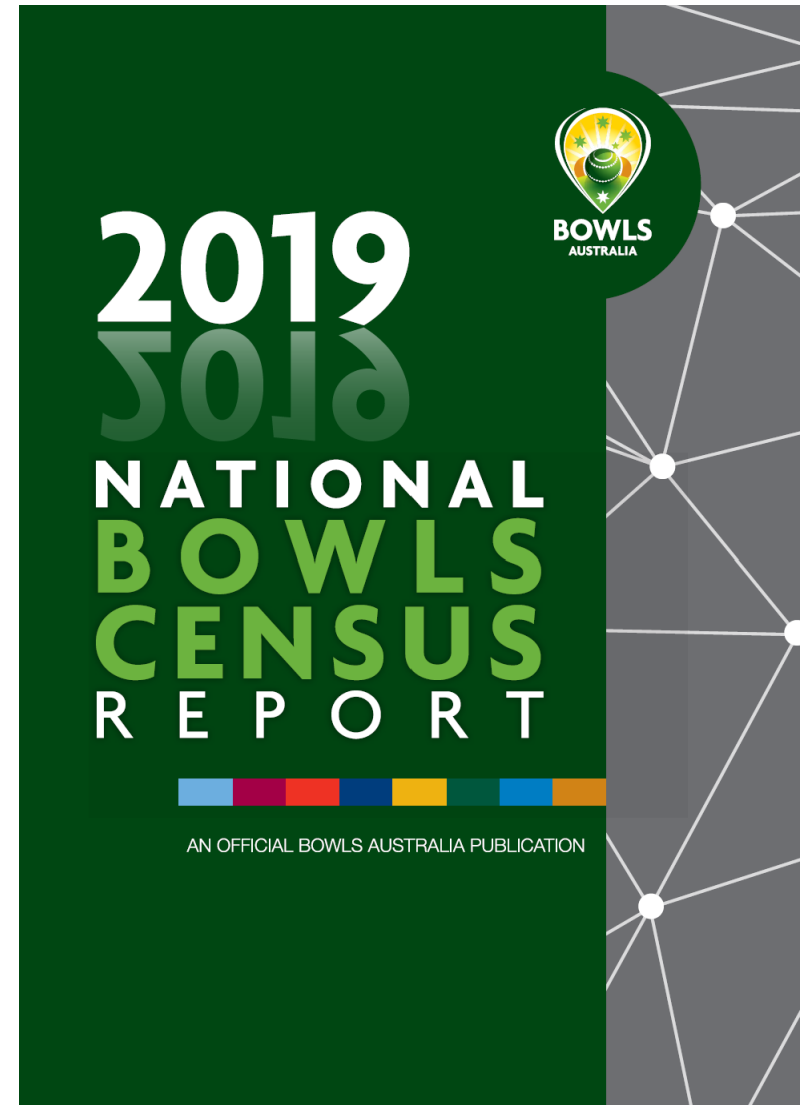
2019 NATIONAL BOWLS CENSUS

The 2019 National Bowls Census report identified that formal registered playing membership of bowls clubs had been decreased at a rate of 3.4% per annum on average for the past 30 years.

However, decreases in formal membership have been offset by growth in social participation. Growth in flexible formats for social bowls has also had a strong impact on the age structure of bowls participants.

In Victoria, the census identified:

- 198,152 participants in bowls competitions and programs (of at least 4 games duration) during 2019.
- The greatest participation segment was social bowls, with 68.3% of participants.
- Social bowls participation included 1,314 people in the innovative programs 'Bowling with Babies' (98.5% female and 1.5% male) and 'Mums on the Green'
- Male participation makes up 72.0% of all bowls participation.
- Participation in country Victoria (153,808) is much higher than metropolitan participation (44,344) and the largest regions for bowls participation are Central Victoria, Central Goulburn Murray, Bendigo Campaspe, West Coast, Peninsula Casey and Eastern Ranges.
- Many bowls participants are involved in more than one structured bowls competition, social or other program. This includes:
 - Pennant and other competition participants who regularly play in more than one competition during the same season or year.
 - Participants involved in both competition and social or corporate bowls.



LAWN BOWLS PARTICIPATION

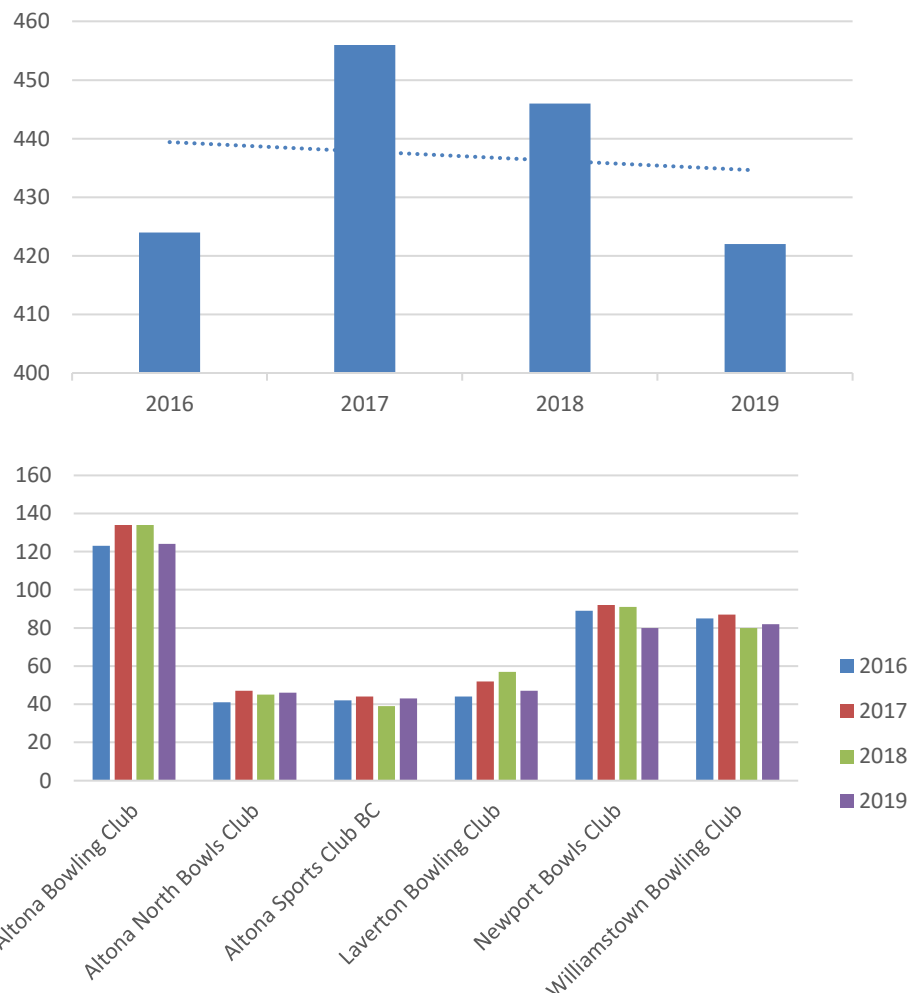
For the purposes of the Lawn Bowls Needs Assessment, the measurement and analysis of lawn bowls participation has focused on the use of localised registered player data provided by Bowls Victoria, and state-wide and regional participation numbers from the Bowls Victoria Facilities Strategy 2020. The analysis provided in the following pages is considered a more detailed assessment of regular participants, which in turn drives the needs for facilities, programs and services.

Bowls Victoria is divided into 16 regions, including 5 in the metropolitan area and 11 in regional areas. In 2019, across the 5 metropolitan regions, there were 44,996 lawn bowls participants, with 6,076 in the Metropolitan West Region.

The Metropolitan West Region has a total of 1,754 lawn bowls club members, an average of 80 members across the 22 clubs, and a participation rate of 0.8%. In comparison, the City of Hobsons Bay Club lawn bowls clubs have a total membership of 422, an average of 70 members per club.

Current club membership numbers (422) are at a similar level to 2016 (425) and consequently Hobson Bay City Council bowling club membership numbers have remained relatively stable.

The following graphs provide the total lawn bowls club membership fluctuations for Hobsons Bay City Council and the breakdown by club. In 2019 The Altona Bowling Club had the highest club membership at 124, followed by Williamstown (82), Newport (80), Laverton (47), Altona North (46) And Altona Sports (43).



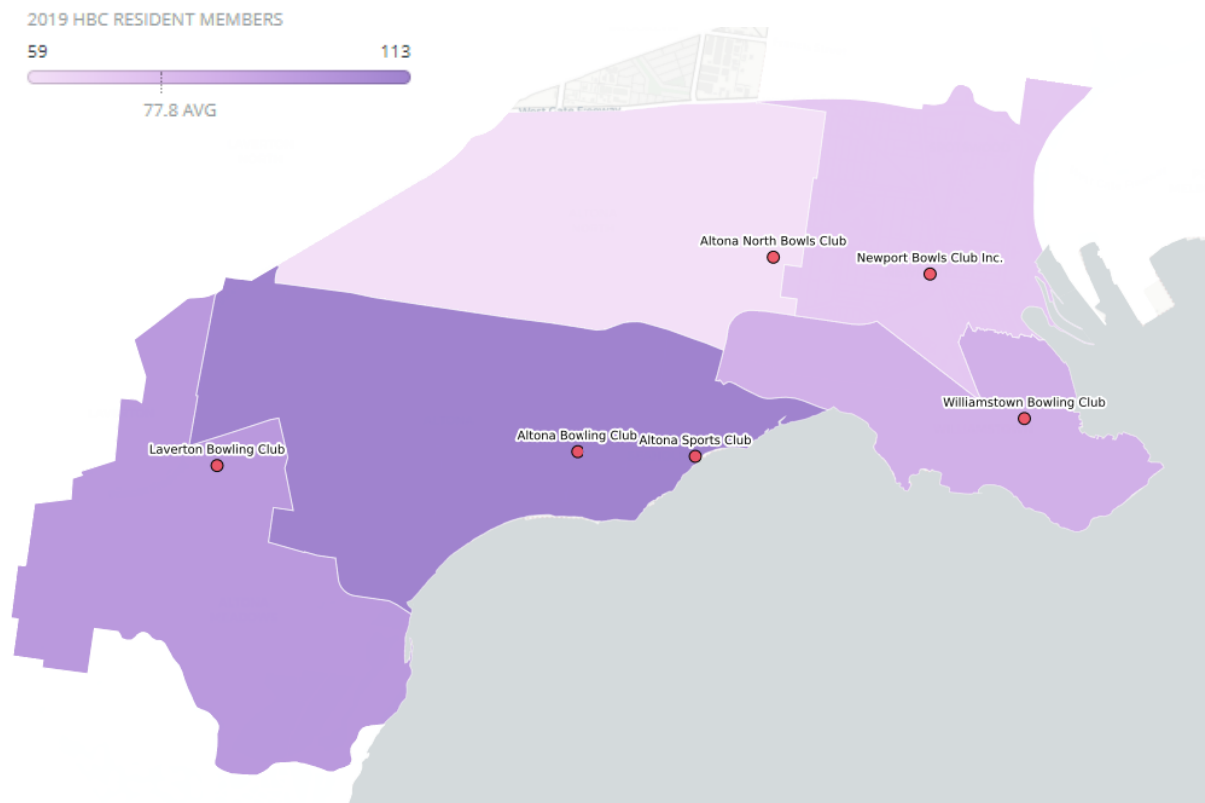
HOBSONS BAY RESIDENCE

In 2019 there were 389 registered lawn bowls members living within Hobsons Bay. The number of resident lawn bowls members has remained relatively stable, reducing by only 2% since 2016.

Participation hot spots for lawn bowls in Hobsons Bay are Altona (3018) and Altona Meadows (3028). These suburbs, located in the Chery Lake Ward and Wetlands Ward, are serviced by three bowling clubs and combine to represent 50% (198) of total resident members.

Further information and analysis on lawn bowls participants living in Hobsons Bay is provided below:

- The average age of lawn bowls members is 66
- 75% of lawn bowls members are male
- 76% are members of clubs in Hobsons Bay.
- The remaining 24% (94 players) are participating at clubs outside the municipality.
- The Yarraville Footscray Bowling Club, in the City of Maribyrnong, is attracting 50% of lawn bowls members who live in but participate outside Hobsons Bay.
- The Yarraville Footscray Bowling Club is 4km from the Newport Bowls Club.



Hobsons Bay lawn bowls facilities and number of members by post code

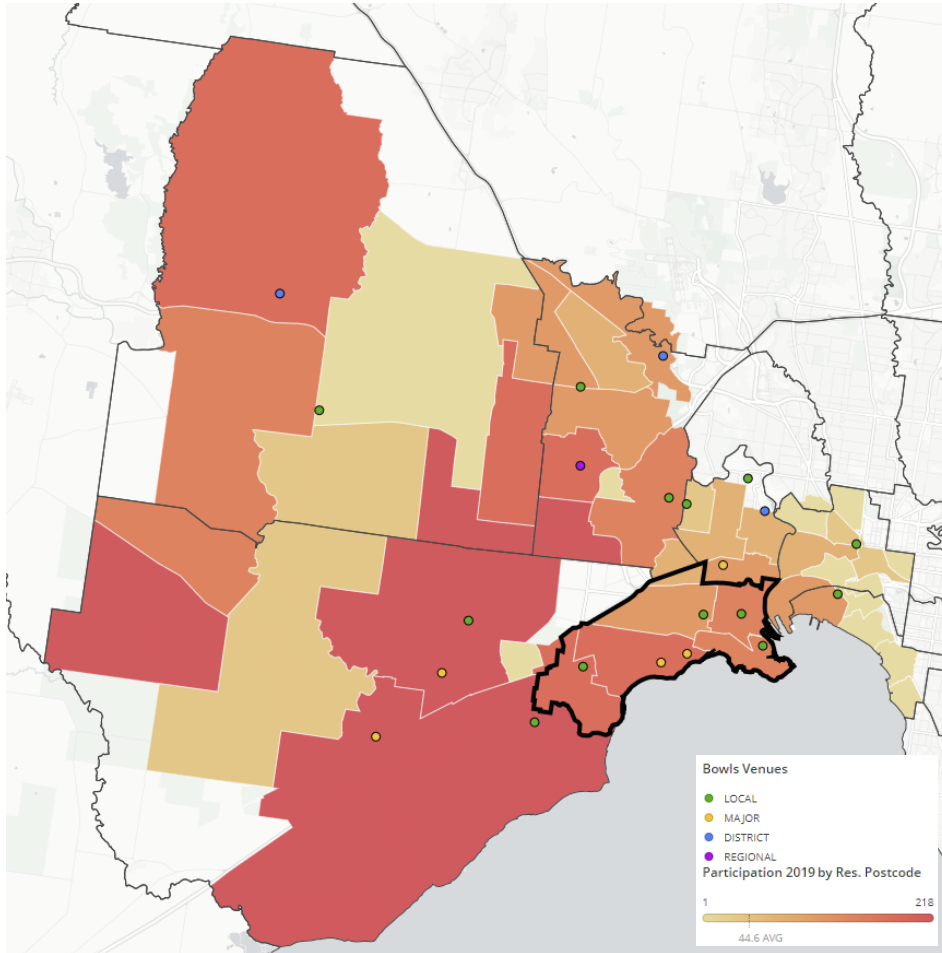
STATE AND REGIONAL BENCHMARKS

Bowls Victoria has five regions in metropolitan Melbourne and 11 in country regions. In 2019 there were 198,152 participants in lawn bowls competitions and programs across Victoria. The greatest participation segment in Victoria is social bowls, with 68% of participants. Male participation makes up 72% of all bowls participation in Victoria and participation in country Victoria (153,808) is much higher than metropolitan participation (44,344).

Hobsons Bay is in Bowls Victoria's Metropolitan West Region with Brimbank City Council, Maribyrnong City Council, Melbourne City Council, Melton City Council and Wyndham City Council. Hobsons Bay has more clubs, more members and the highest participation rate compared to other LGAs in the region. It also has the lowest club to population ratio. A detailed comparative assessment of participation and facility provision between Hobsons Bay and the regional, metropolitan and state averages is provided in the table below.

LGA	NUMBER OF CLUBS / VENUES	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	AVE. MEMBERS PER CLUB	CLUB PER POP. RATIO	PARTICIPATION RATE
Hobsons Bay	6	422	70	1:16,268	1.2%
Brimbank	4	349	87	1:52,236	0.7%
Maribyrnong	4	277	69	1:23,322	0.6%
Melbourne	3	217	72	1:59,938	0.2%
Melton	3	154	51	1:54,673	0.3%
Wyndham	4	410	102	1:68,068	0.6%
Regional average	4	305	75	1:45,795	0.8%
Metropolitan	148	15,183	98	1:28,889	1.1%
Statewide	510	41,980	82	1:12,933	1.5%

REGIONAL PARTICIPATION



Metropolitan West Region lawn bowls 2019 participation heat map by postcode

The adjacent heat map provides an overview of the location of lawn bowls club members by post code across the Metropolitan West Region.

- Post code 3018 has the highest number of lawn bowls members in Hobsons Bay with 106.
- Post code 3018 includes the suburbs of Altona and Seaholme and has two major venues (Altona and Altona Sports).
- Post code 3028 (Altona Meadows and Laverton) has 70 members, 3016 (Williamstown) has 68 members and 3015 (Newport and Spotswood) has 60 members.
- The participation hot spots for club members in the region are located further west in Wyndham, Brimbank and Melton, where there is a gap in facility provision and a recommendation to investigate a future State level facility / Centre of Excellence.
- Point Cook, Werribee and Hoppers Crossing are hot spot suburbs in Wyndham, whilst Caroline Springs in Melton and Sunshine in Brimbank have a high number of bowls club members.
- The white area on the map is post code 3026 (Laverton North, Derrimut) and indicates no lawn bowls club members. Data provided by Bowls Victoria.

AUSPLAY STATISTICS

Trends in the broader forms of lawn bowls, including recreational and social play can be identified via government sources such as Ausplay.

Ausplay is the national population tracking survey funded by Sports Australia that is the single source of participation data used by the government and sports sector.

The following high level national participation information is based on aggregated data collected from the start of Ausplay in October 2015. Where available a comparative assessment of state, regional or local Hobsons Bay data is also provided.

- 286,700 adults nationally participate in lawn bowls annually at rate of 1.4%.
- Victoria has a lawn bowls participation rate of 1.5% and has the second highest participation figure (75,382) behind NSW (93,449).
- Hobsons Bay has a participation rate of 1.2%. This is achieved by dividing the participation figure of 1,223 reported in the Bowls Victoria Facilities Strategy by the population of Hobsons Bay.
- The State's gender participation breakdown is 63% males and 37% females, a slight variance to the 75% male and 25% female identified for lawn bowls members in Hobsons Bay.

- 1,700 children aged from 0 to 14 are participating in organised lawn bowls annually. The youngest recorded lawn bowls member in Hobsons Bay is 19 years (Laverton Bowls Club).
- The peak participation rate for males is 6.5% and females is 3.8% (occurs in the 65+ age cohort).
- 82,912 people nationally have indicated that they would consider participating in lawn bowls and 13,181 current participants are at risk of dropping out.
- The top three reasons for considering lawn bowls were social (66%) and fun/enjoyment (31%). The main reason for dropping out is poor health, injury and not enough time or too many other commitments.
- 94% of adult bowls participation was organised, with 73% organised through a sports club or association.
- Of the total bowls participation, 94% is lawn bowls, 3.8% is indoor bowls, 2.1% is carpet bowls and 0.1% is Jack Attack - a modified version from the traditional form of lawn bowls, that aims to encourage participation with non bowling members of the community.

Ausplay reported that 70% of lawn bowls participants are age 65+, 17% are 55 to 64 and 6% aged 45 to 54.

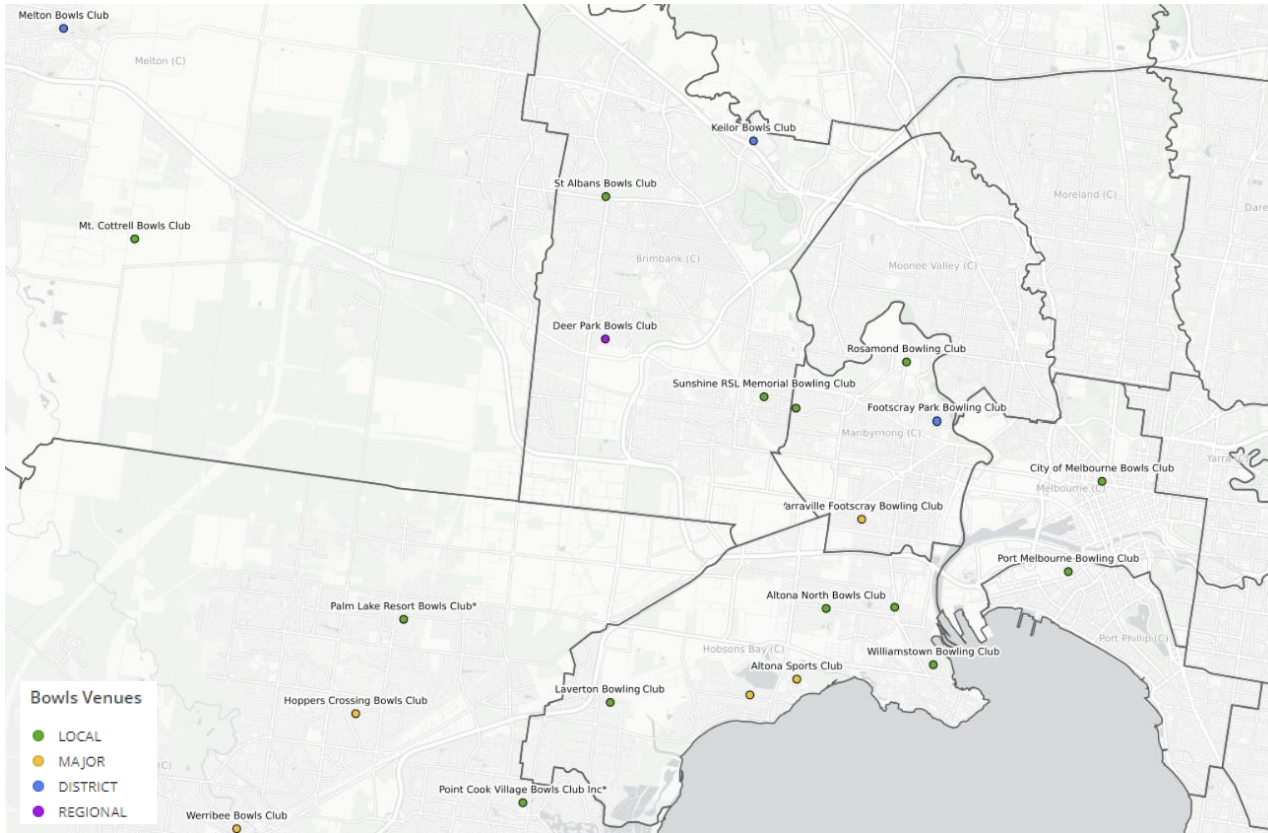
In comparison, 57% of lawn bowls members in Hobsons Bay are aged 65+ , 16% 55 to 64 and 11% aged 45 to 54.

LAWN BOWLS FACILITIES

This section of the report provides information on the current supply of lawn bowls facilities in Hobsons Bay and across the broader Metropolitan West Region. The table below provides a breakdown of current provision, facility hierarchy, occupancy and management arrangements, with the subsequent pages providing specific information on club operations, needs and facility priorities.

#	Club name	Ward	Ownership / Occupancy	Management model	No. of greens	No. of rinks	No. of floodlit greens	Hierarchy
1	Altona	Cherry Lake	Council freehold <i>Managed by Council Property Team</i>	Commercial lease to Bowling Club (poker machines)	3 (1 synthetic)	21	3	Major
2	Altona North	Cherry Lake	Council freehold	Community lease to Bowling Club	2	12	0	Local
3	Altona Sports	Cherry Lake	Crown land <i>Council Committee of Management</i>	Commercial lease to Altona Sports Club (poker machines)	2 (1 synthetic)	14	1	Major
4	Laverton	Wetlands	Part crown land part Council freehold	Community lease to Bowling Club	2	12	0	Local
5	Newport	Strand	Crown land <i>Council Committee of Management</i>	Leased from State Government (DELWP)	3	21	0	Local
6	Williamstown	Strand	Crown land <i>Council Committee of Management</i>	Community lease to Bowling Club	2	14	2	Local
Total		-	-	-	14	94	6	2 major 4 local

LAWN BOWLS FACILITIES IN THE REGION



Metropolitan West Region lawn bowls facilities by hierarchy and number of members by post code

The following information provides the context for bowls venues in the Metropolitan West Region and the relationship with Hobsons Bay facilities.

- The Deer Park Bowling Club in the City of Brimbank is the dedicated regional bowls venue for the Metropolitan West Region.
- Hobsons Bay has two of the five major venues in the region, being Altona Bowling Club and Altona Sports Club.
- The Yarraville Bowling Club is another major venue located just outside the municipality in the City of Maribyrnong. As previously mentioned, this club is attracting a significant number of Hobson Bay City Council residents.
- The remaining Hobsons Bay lawn bowls venues are classified as local, and there are no district level venues. The two district level venues are in Brimbank and Melton.

ALTONA BOWLS CLUB



General

- 124 bowls club members and 1800 social members
- 5 teams including a Premier League team
- Commercial venue with 18 staff and 37 poker machines
- Club operates under a Board of Management with a separate bowls committee
- Pay a lease fee to Council each year
- Green maintenance is an ongoing expense met by the club
- Club has reduced its debt significantly since 2013 through member donations
- 15% of club revenue is distributed back into the community

Club priorities

- Permanent shade structure over main green
- Replace synthetic green
- LED floodlights
- Funding support for participation programs



KEY FINDING – CLUB FOCUSED ON ATTRACTING ELITE PLAYERS. THIS NEEDS TO BE BALANCED WITH BETTER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

ALTONA NORTH BOWLS CLUB



General

- 46 bowls club members (2 teams) and 10 social members
- Average age of membership is between 40 and 45
- Fees are the cheapest of any club in the western region
- One full size competition green and one half size green
- Undersized green is not currently playable and will require approximately \$15k to bring it back to playable standard
- Pavilion and car parking has recently been upgraded
- Club experiencing governance issues (currently without a President and Treasurer)

Club priorities

- Support with governance, strategic planning and website
- Upgrade undersized green for social and barefoot bowls
- Improve access - pathways and ramps to greens
- New perimeter fencing and front entrance sign



KEY FINDING – CLUB REQUIRE GOVERNANCE SUPPORT. REACHED OUT FOR COUNCIL SUPPORT VIA THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS.

ALTONA SPORTS CLUB



General

- The Altona Sports Club has approximately 6,000 financial members including 43 lawn bowls members (4 teams)
- The bowls club have a stand-alone committee and is one of five sports that are supported by the Altona Sports Club
- The bowls club is very reliant on the success of the Altona Sports Club. Bowls Victoria indicated that the club may not exist if they weren't supported by a commercial venue.
- Bowling expenses are met by the Sports Club
- Altona Sports Club lease the premises from Council and have a license to operate 83 poker machines
- Club retains approximately 9% of poker machine revenue with most of the profits invested back into club infrastructure

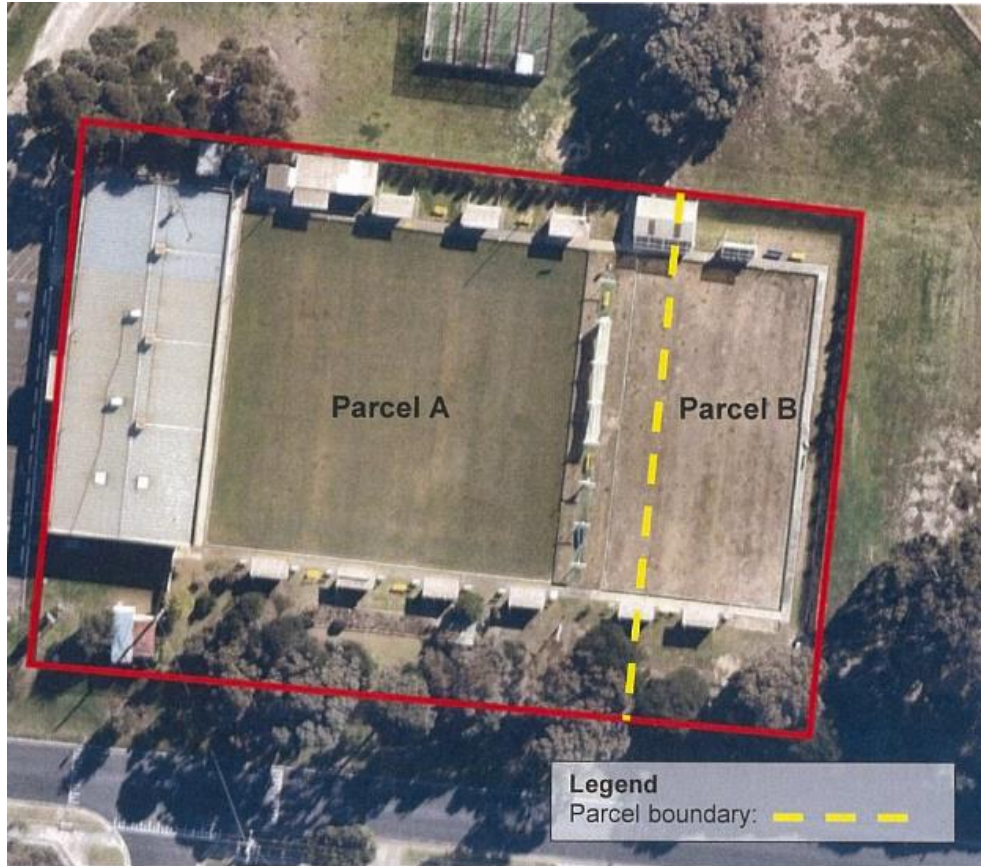
Club priorities

- Permanent roof over the synthetic green
- LED floodlights
- Consider the feasibility of maintaining grass green



KEY FINDING – ALTONA SPORTS CLUB WILL ONLY INVEST MAJOR CAPITAL ON BOWLS IF A LONGER-TERM LEASE IS AGREED BY COUNCIL.

LAVERTON BOWLS CLUB



General

- The club has 47 members (2 teams) with an average age 75, the highest average age in municipality
- Gender breakdown is 60% male and 40% female. The club is encouraging more females via This Girl Can Campaign
- The club is run by a Board of Management that includes a female president and two co-opted community positions
- The club offers community bingo 50 weeks of the year, have regular school visits and offer barefoot bowls and family events
- Bingo is run by club volunteers which attracts 80 to 100 people a week and provides a return to the club
- The club has recently adopted a more inclusive strategy which has a focus on showcasing the club to non bowler visitors
- The club has participated in the work for the dole scheme for 8 years which also generates income that is invested back into the facility

Club priorities

- General building upgrade – HVAC, roof and toilets
- Upgrade to both greens and shade structures



KEY FINDING – CLUB RELY ON BINGO FOR REVENUE. STRONG VOLUNTEER BASE BUT REQUIRE MARKETING ADVICE TO ATTRACT NEW MEMBERS.

NEWPORT BOWLS CLUB



General

- Located on Crown Land, the club currently has an unresolved lease agreement with DELWP
- The club has 80 active bowlers, 50 social members and is in a healthy financial position
- Club revenue is generated through membership subscriptions, function room hire, bar and sponsorship
- The adjacent RSL, scout group, playground and Bryan Martyn Oval creates a strong community precinct
- There are multiple buildings on site, with the original clubrooms used only for storage and some small group meetings
- The club received a state government grant for the recent delivery of new unisex amenities
- Key issues are ageing buildings with poor access, high utility charges, inadequate heating system and outdated roofing

Club priorities

- Building upgrades including natural gas, access improvements, new roof with solar panels
- Building signage and fence renewal



KEY FINDING – LOCATED IN YOUNGER DEMOGRAPHIC AREA, THE CLUB HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GROW LAWN BOWLS PARTICIPATION.

WILLIAMSTOWN BOWLS CLUB



General

- The club has the oldest average membership of all bowls clubs. 82 playing members, predominantly male, and 73 social members
- The club run a regular school program with Williamstown North Primary but are unable to attract junior players
- The club recently executed a new lease with Council which has reduced some of their maintenance responsibilities
- Former Ladies Bowls Club operated from the same site (Dennis Reserve) before amalgamating with the men's club
- Both greens have some condition and compliance issues. Elm tree impacting Green 1 and failing sub-base impacting Green 2
- The club are financial and profits are invested back into facility upgrades. Recent projects include kitchen and bar upgrades and green surrounds.

Club priorities

- LED floodlights and green upgrades
- Governance support
- Club signage (reserve and building)



KEY FINDING – THE CLUB IS IN A PROMINENT LOCATION AND COULD INCREASE ITS COMMUNITY REACH WITH A STRONG STRATEGIC PLAN.

FUTURE DEMAND FOR LAWN BOWLS

The future demand for lawn bowls will be impacted by the location, age and gender of current and potential participants.

The typical profile of a current lawn bowls participant in Hobsons Bay is predominantly male between the ages of 60 to 80. The local population of empty nesters aged 60-69, and seniors aged 70 to 84, will influence future participation numbers.

The typical age profile of lawn bowls participants has been analysed against local area population change to highlight the likely demand for lawn bowls in Hobsons Bay over the next 10 years.

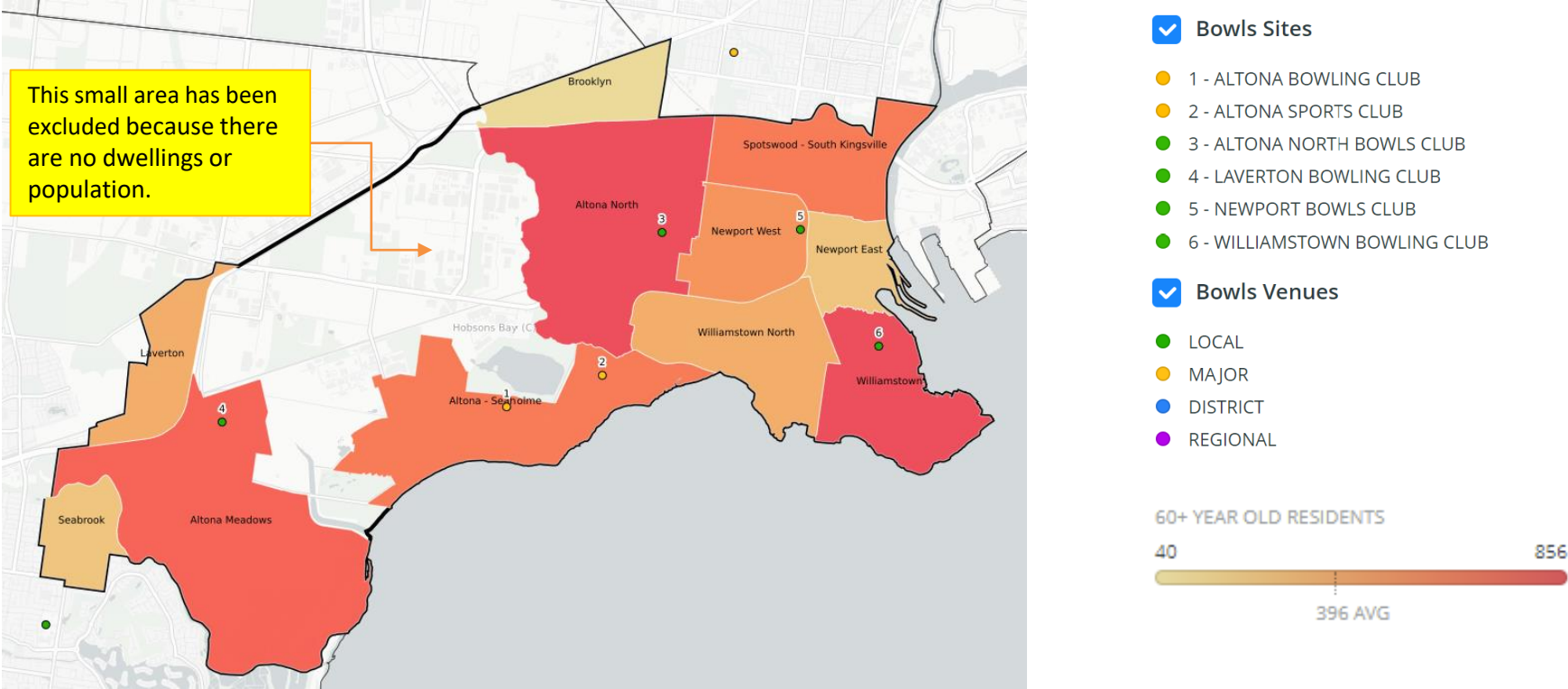
The table below shows the estimated change in resident population for the 60+ age cohort between 2021 and 2031 by local area. The colours represent the key areas of change within the specific age cohorts.

Future population influences on lawn bowls is provided below:

- The population of Hobsons Bay is forecast to increase from approximately 100,000 residents in 2021 to 116,000 in 2031, an increase of 16%.
- Currently, 18,000 residents in Hobsons Bay are empty nesters (60-69 years) and seniors (70 to 84 years). This number is expected to increase to 22,000 by 2031, creating a solid market for future lawn bowls participation.
- More than half of the residents in this age cohort (11,600) will be living in Altona Meadows, Altona North and Altona-Seaholme in 2031, creating strong demand for lawn bowls in these suburbs (refer map following).
- Spotswood-South Kingsville and Williamstown North will experience the greatest percentage increase of residents in this age cohort (44% and 31% respectively). Both located in the Strand Ward close to Newport and Williamstown Bowling Clubs.

	60-64 years				65-69 years				70-74 years				75-79 years				80-84 years				85 years and over			
	2021	2026	2031	2021-31 Change	2021	2026	2031	2021-31 Change	2021	2026	2031	2021-31 Change	2021	2026	2031	2021-31 Change	2021	2026	2031	2021-31 Change	2021	2026	2031	2021-31 Change
Persons	6208	6430	6690	482	4948	5718	5965	1017	3981	4452	5123	1142	2905	3501	3964	1059	2144	2440	2957	813	2664	2742	3034	370
Altona - Seaholme	823	829	925	102	697	765	771	74	651	656	710	59	513	564	576	63	314	380	426	112	340	297	326	-14
Altona Meadows	1282	1233	1188	-94	1043	1155	1127	84	893	930	1029	136	571	768	814	243	402	482	632	230	498	566	628	130
Altona North	607	707	898	291	547	652	789	242	487	551	681	194	507	486	579	72	526	485	504	-22	582	622	661	79
Brooklyn	93	87	84	-9	79	87	83	4	60	69	75	15	42	56	64	22	35	37	48	13	46	41	41	-5
Laverton	259	256	279	20	191	233	232	41	126	159	194	68	79	97	126	47	53	60	78	25	50	53	64	14
Newport East	257	275	280	23	203	216	231	28	148	168	179	31	90	123	139	49	58	75	101	43	93	92	104	11
Newport West	450	441	435	-15	311	398	395	84	202	272	341	139	171	189	247	76	133	155	173	40	255	250	273	18
Seabrook	293	314	283	-10	222	246	264	42	150	189	210	60	106	117	149	43	47	60	68	21	22	27	33	11
Spotswood - South Kingsville	232	256	304	72	193	231	262	69	156	185	225	69	100	136	167	67	76	100	133	57	72	95	114	42
Williamstown	880	952	949	69	682	799	839	157	550	594	679	129	354	476	514	160	223	291	393	170	196	197	249	53
Williamstown North	324	362	350	26	265	321	346	81	208	239	281	73	112	176	202	90	86	85	128	42	163	160	164	1

60+ YEAR OLD PROPULATION GROWTH BY LOCAL AREA – 2021 TO 2031



KEY FINDING – ALTONA NORTH AND ALTONA SEAHOLME WILL HAVE THE BIGGEST GROWTH OF 60+ YEAR OLDS TO 2031

LAWN BOWLS GREENS PER HEAD OF POPULATION BY LOCAL AREA

Industry benchmarks for the provision of lawn bowls greens per head of population is commonly around 1:10,000. The green to population ratio in the Metropolitan West Region is approximately 1:18,000. Ratios are used as a guide only as there are many other local demographic, facility quality, frequency of use and service driven demands that are not considered. Provision ratios do however provide an indication of geographical and venue-based demand for lawn bowls.

Local Area	Postcode	No. of Greens	Population 2021	Green to population ratio (2021)	Population 2026	Green to population ratio (2026)	Population 2031	Green to population ratio (2031)
Brooklyn	3012	0	2,205	No provision	2,407	No provision	2,567	No provision
Newport East	3015	0	4,686	No provision	4,684	No provision	4,699	No provision
Newport West		3	9,572	1 : 3191	9,987	1 : 3329	10,219	1 : 3406
Spotswood-South Kingsville		0	5,197	No provision	6,518	No provision	7,780	No provision
Williamstown	3016	2	13,060	1 : 6530	13,830	1 : 6915	13,747	1 : 6873
Williamstown North		0	4,750	No provision	5,253	No provision	5,461	No provision
Altona-Seaholme	3018	5	14,706	1 : 2941	15,841	1 : 3168	16,621	1 : 3324
Altona North	3025	1	14,510	1 : 14510	17,484	1 : 17484	21,637	1 : 21637
Altona Meadows	3028	1	20,548	1 : 20548	20,668	1 : 20668	20,861	1 : 20861
Laverton		0	5,830	No provision	6,649	No provision	7,185	No provision
Seabrook		0	5,298	No provision	5,239	No provision	5,234	No provision
Totals / Averages	-	14	100,362	1:7,169	108,560	1 : 7754	116,011	1:8,286

Note: Population estimates sourced from 2021 Forecast ID.

Note: Highlighted boxes refer to localities that have a higher than Hobsons Bay average green to population ratio.

TOTAL PROPULATION GROWTH BY LOCAL AREA – 2021 TO 2031



KEY FINDING – THE POPULATION OF ALTONA NORTH IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE BY MORE THAN 7,000 RESIDENTS BY 2031

GENERAL DEMAND SUMMARY

The following provides a high-level summary of the lawn bowls supply and demand conditions and considerations within Hobsons Bay:

- The current ratio of lawn bowls greens to population in Hobsons Bay of 1 green to 7,169 residents indicates a better than average rate of provision against industry benchmarks (1:10,000).
- Should the number of lawn bowls greens remain the same in Hobsons Bay, this ratio will rise to 1:7,754 by 2026 based merely on population growth. This ratio will increase to 1:8,268 by 2031.
- These ratios suggest that currently, there is an adequate supply of lawn bowls greens spread across the municipality.
- However, green to population ratios for local areas such as Altona North and Altona Meadows are below industry benchmarks. Both local areas currently provide one lawn bowls green each and by 2031 will have a green to population ratio that exceeds 1:20,000.
- There is a need to ensure that Altona North Bowling Club and Newport Bowls Club are providing adequate facilities to meet local demand. Ensuring all greens are playable and providing adequate lighting to increase the capacity of both these venues is a priority.
- Facility audits conducted in early 2021 show that existing green provision and the quality of the playing surfaces is generally meeting demand.
- Although clubrooms are generally meeting the needs of lawn bowls clubs, most of them are outdated and underutilised. Except for the commercial venues and the recently renovated Altona North clubrooms, further assessment is required to detail future pavilion improvements to ensure compliance of amenities.
- Williamstown, Laverton and Newport Bowling Clubs all have building issues that if addressed would improve the overall operation of these clubs.



Council is currently developing a Property Strategy that will incentivize lawn bowls clubs to make greater use of their facilities.

STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

The following consultation activities were undertaken to inform the development of the Lawn Bowls Needs Assessment.

- Review of online sporting club survey results conducted as part of Council's 2017 Sports Facility Needs Analysis. *Note - The survey was completed by only two lawn bowls clubs – Williamstown and Altona North.*
- Online survey of all 6 lawn bowls clubs to understand club membership and participation trends, facility needs and aspirations and operational challenges.
- Facility audits of all lawn bowls venues to establish condition and compliance information and to inform the development of a future asset renewal program.
- Engagement with neighbouring Local Government Areas to understand lawn bowls in a regional context and to identify future developments and/or influences that may impact on lawn bowls within Hobsons Bay.
- Consultation with Bowls Victoria staff via an online meeting to discuss individual club needs and to identify key issues and influences relevant to lawn bowls in Hobsons Bay.
- Consultation with Council's Sport and Recreation and Property Teams.



SUMMARY OF ONLINE SURVEY RESPONSES

In 2017 an online survey was distributed to all sporting clubs in Hobsons Bay as part of the Sports Facility Needs Assessment project.

A high-level summary of responses from the two lawn bowls clubs who completed the survey is provided below:

- There was no change in lawn bowls participation over the previous 5 years.
- There was only moderate demand for lawn bowls over the previous 5 years.
- The two clubs predicted only moderate demand for the sport in the next 5 years.
- The clubs have enough space to meet their existing needs and would be open to sharing.
- Williamstown identified additional storage and Altona North identified spectator shelters as priority facility improvement.

It is important to note that the Altona North Bowling Club pavilion has been upgraded since the completion of the Hobsons Bay Sports Facility Needs Assessment.

All six Hobsons Bay lawn bowls clubs responded to the online survey conducted in February 2021 as part of the Lawn Bowls Need Assessment. A summary of responses is provided below:

- Two bowls clubs (Altona North and Laverton) are offering a specific program for bowlers with a disability.
- The Altona North Bowls Club is also targeting people from disadvantaged and non-english speaking backgrounds.
- Altona Bowling Club have the most female adult members (35) and Altona North have the least (9). Three clubs reported a slight decrease in female participation.
- Altona Bowling Club and Williamstown Bowling Club reported a large increase in female social members in the last 5 years.
- Altona Sports Club was the only club that described the demand for lawn bowls in the past 5 years as strong. All other clubs indicated only moderate demand.
- Four out of six clubs believe that future demand for lawn bowls will be moderate, whilst Altona and Altona Sports Club expect it to be strong.
- Five of the six clubs rated their ability to attract and retain volunteers as 'average'. Altona Bowls Club described this as good.

- Williamstown and Altona Sports Club described their financial position as strong, whilst Laverton, Altona North and Altona Bowls Club indicated a stable financial position. No response received from Newport.
- All clubs, except for Laverton and Altona North are registered for GST.
- All clubs reported sound financial record keeping and preparation. Laverton is the only club that don't have their financial records independently certified.
- On average, clubs are using their facilities approximately 15 hours per week for competition and 25 hours per week for training and participation programs.
- All clubs indicated that their facilities were under-utilised and had the capacity to accommodate additional use.
- The Newport Bowls Club hire their facilities extensively to external community organisations and operate as an entertainment venue. The Laverton Bowling Club offer a successful weekly bingo program and work for the dole scheme.
- All clubs agreed that pavilions and greens are being well maintained. Altona Bowls Club were the only club that indicated their facilities did not meet their needs.
- Williamstown were the only club to disagree that the best way to grow a club is to improve facilities.

CLUB FACILITY PRIORITIES FROM ONLINE SURVEY RESPONSES

ALTONA BOWLING CLUB

1	New synthetic green
2	Lighting Green 1
3	Shading all greens

ALTONA NORTH BOWLS CLUB

1	Restore / upgrade half green
2	Spectator seating
3	Perimeter fencing renewal

ALTONA SPORTS CLUB

1	Cover over synthetic green
2	Additional seating
3	Car parking

LAVERTON BOWLING CLUB

1	Redevelop both greens
2	Internal amenity upgrades
3	External clubroom upgrade

NEWPORT BOWLS CLUB

1	No response
2	No response
3	No response

WILLIAMSTOWN BOWLING CLUB

1	Shade structures / shelters
2	Upgrade unisex toilets
3	Address green issues

BOWLS VICTORIA CONSULTATION FINDINGS

The following information was provided by Bowls Victoria during an online meeting in February 2021.

General

- In terms of facility development, the general trend for lawn bowls is to provide covered greens that increase venue capacity.
- There is a focus on increasing the number of floodlit greens across the state to also increase the capacity of bowls venues.
- Synthetic playing surfaces are more popular in the country regions than metropolitan areas and account for 50% of greens across the state.
- Female participation in lawn bowls has declined across the state. To address this Bowls Victoria believes clubs need more female committee members to drive participation.
- Bowls Victoria has introduced programs in partnership with VicHealth such as "Bowling with Babies" to encourage more female participation.
- Clubs in Hobsons Bay need support with marketing and enhancing their digital presence, with some needing guidance around governance. This is currently being offered by the Regional Bowls Manager at Bowls Victoria.

- Membership should not be the only guide as to the health of a club. The focus should be on the level of participation and community engagement.
- Social bowls is trending up across the state however the take up in Hobsons Bay is reasonably poor.
- The location of a club sometimes influences the success of social bowls e.g., not located close to public transport.
- Bowls Victoria is currently not concerned with any Hobsons Bay lawn bowls clubs folding.
- Williamstown would be the only one that appear to be struggling but there is potential to improve.

Altona Bowling Club

- Paid off a significant debt and investing funds back into capital facility improvement and sponsorship.
- The club values competition success at all levels. Increasing membership and community participation are key priorities.
- Bowls Victoria understands Council's position of not investing in facility development projects for clubs with pokies.
- Providing support via a participation grant that enables the club to better engage with the community would be a good outcome.

Altona North

- The club urgently require governance and promotional support. They are participating in the Council funded Strategic Planning for Sporting Clubs project to improve in these areas.
- There is no demand for two full size greens, however the priority is to support the club in re-activating Green 2 to enable social bowls.
- LED floodlighting on Green 2 would create opportunity for more barefoot and social bowls and compliment existing amenity.

Laverton

- A very community focused club operating in a strong anglo saxon but low socio-economic area.
- The club is not marketing themselves and there is a gap in junior development.
- There is a high proportion of female members on the club's board who are doing an excellent job. The regular bingo is keeping the club solvent.
- Facilities and infrastructure are outdated. The greens are in average condition and both need to be upgraded. As a minimum Green 2 needs to be operational, more shade provided and lighting to enable barefoot bowls.

Williamstown

- The club is in a prominent location but is not leveraging this opportunity. More signage would help to increase their profile. There is also no clear point of entry to clubrooms.
- The club continue to struggle financially. They have the oldest membership out of all the clubs in Hobsons Bay and need governance support.
- They are doing school programs well, but they do not really reach out for help very often.
- Need to improve governance and require support off the green.
- The need for two full size greens should be investigated considering the clubs modest membership base and limited community engagement activities.
- Although Bowls Victoria would not like to see greens removed, if the number of greens is to be reduced this would be a good location for a large single 12 rink covered green.
- Both greens have issues that need to be addressed and the floodlighting requires updating to enable the club to showcase barefoot bowls.

Newport

- The club have invested heavily in ensuring their playing surfaces are of high quality by converting their three greens from bent grass to tiff grass.
- The club has a strong external user market and generate revenue through hosting regular functions and events.
- Although club membership has been stagnant the regular bingo, functions and events has resulted in an increase in participation.
- The club need to leverage off being in a relatively young demographic with young families and surrounded by primary schools.
- Bowls Victoria believes the club need to be more innovative to attract additional members. Engaging the local community through program offerings such as Jack Attack and social bowls is encouraged.
- Capital projects such as lighting upgrades and outdoor social spaced for the community should be prioritised.

SURROUNDING LGA CONSULTATION FINDINGS

City of Maribyrnong

The City of Maribyrnong has three lawn bowls venues and 207 club members. The Yarraville - Footscray Bowling Club is the largest club in the municipality with 140 members (and considered a district level facility), followed by the Footscray Park Bowling Club (53 members) and Sunshine VRI (14 members).

Council's Sports Development Strategy 2015 stated that five lawn bowls clubs in the City of Maribyrnong have closed in approximately 15 years.

Council revisited elements of this study in 2021 via its Outdoor Sport and Recreation Facilities Future Directions Plan. The 2021 Plan has been developed to provide Council with clear recommendations to guide the future planning, provision and investment in outdoor sport and recreation facilities over the next 10 years to 2030, including future directions and recommendations for lawn bowls.

A summary of information that may influence the Hobsons Bay Lawn Bowls Needs Assessment includes:

- The population in south-east area of Maribyrnong (bordering Spotswood) will grow by around 3,000 people to 2040.

- Court and rink-based sports including Tennis, Lawn Bowls and Trugo have also remained stable in recent years and provide for a mix of junior (mainly Tennis) and adult programs.
- Lawn Bowls has remained stable at around 230-250 total members over the past three years.
- The Future Directions Plan makes no recommendation for the addition of any new bowls greens between 2021 and 2040.
- All three existing sites (totally seven greens) are in highly prominent locations on main arterial roads and form part of broader sport, community and education precincts.
- One of the three greens at Footscray Park Bowls Club has fallen into a state of disrepair due to lack of use.
- Yarraville-Footscray Bowls Club provides a similar model of bowls and entertainment like Altona Bowls Club and Altona Sports Club and is the most utilised and sustainability of the three clubs.

City of Wyndham

The City of Wyndham has two lawn bowls venues operating in Hoppers Crossing and Werribee. The Werribee facility has three rinks (2 turf, 1 synthetic) whilst the Hoppers Crossing Venue has one of each surface.

Lawn bowls is participated in by both males (61%) and females (39%) predominately over the age of 50 years of age. The participation rate for lawn bowls in the City of Wyndham is 1.3%.

The demand ratio is 1 lawn bowls green per 40,000 residents. In 2045 it is expected that Wyndham will need 11 rinks located across four venues. Council's Sports Strategy to 2045 provides the following recommendations:

- Complete the Chirnside Park Master Plan to reconfirm the vision for the reserve and the capital investment in the ongoing use and development of the reserve for lawn bowls and all other stakeholders.
- Advocate for the ongoing operation of the bowls venue located at the Hoppers Club, Hoppers Crossing.
- Provide the opportunity for bowls within the Aviators Field Precinct Structure Plan (Point Cook).

City of Brimbank

- There are four lawn bowls clubs within the City of Brimbank. The Deer Park Bowling Club (regional), Keilor Bowls Club (district), St Albans Bowls Club and Sunshine RSL Bowling Club (local).

City of Brimbank continued

- Council's 2017 Sports Facility Development Plan identified 219 lawn bowls members at a participation rate of 0.1%, with no shortfall of facilities to 2027.
- Council manage two lawn bowls facilities, Keilor Bowls Club and St Albans Bowls Club. Both Clubs have a lease agreements with Council.
- Keilor Bowl Clubs own their pavilion, which is on private property. Council has no responsibility for the pavilion; however, the greens are on Council land which is what the lease covers. St Albans have two greens, one natural and one synthetic.
- There have been no significant facility upgrades in recent years. In terms of trends, membership numbers have remained stable.
- Other bowls clubs which Council are not involved with include Sunshine RSL and Deer Park Bowls Club, which are both gaming venues. There is an indoor green at Deer Park.

PRIORITIES AND PRINCIPLES

Council's immediate priorities will be to initiate programs that influence the ongoing health and viability of lawn bowls clubs and support facility improvement projects. Programs that improve club governance and operations should be prioritised, along with club driven facility improvement projects that increase participation opportunities.

Support for capital projects should consider the needs of lawn bowls clubs in Hobsons Bay and the facility development themes and directions provided in the Bowls Victoria Facilities Strategy.

The planning and development principles from Councils Sports Facility Needs Analysis have been adapted to guide the interpretation, consideration and preparation of project recommendations. The following guiding principles should be considered in identifying and supporting priority investment and service decisions for lawn bowls in Hobsons Bay over the next 10 years.

Use and sustainability

- Ensure planning, club development programs and facility improvement priorities contribute to the viability and sustainability of lawn bowls clubs and provide opportunities to improve management and operational efficiencies.
- Promote projects that support the delivery of club, peak sporting body and other broader government objectives for sport, physical activity and mental health.
- Identify shared facility provision and investment opportunities through partnership approaches with neighboring local government authorities, the education sector, all levels of government and venue users.

Participation and access

- Deliver planning and facility improvement projects that increase participation opportunities for girls and women, young people, older adults and those not traditionally engaged in sport.
- Maintain an even distribution of lawn bowls facility across Hobsons Bay to maximise access for residents and reduce travel time.
- Promote facility provision locations and improvement opportunities that support localised demand and catchments.
- Support the development of high-quality lawn bowls facilities and amenities that can deliver a diverse range of social and entry level programs and activities.
- Lawn bowls facilities will be developed to be fit-for-purpose for their intended use (e.g., meeting field-of-play competition dimensions).
- Lawn bowls facilities will be universally designed to provide inclusive opportunities and sustainable buildings and infrastructure.

Maximise use of facilities

- Prioritise projects that maximise the use of existing lawn bowls facilities through the introduction of new user groups and activities.
- Prioritise projects that will have an immediate impact on participation growth, promote year-round facility usage and/or increase the existing capacity of playing areas and off-field support amenities (e.g., floodlighting, synthetic surfaces).
- Provision and allocation of lawn bowls facilities should maximise shared usage and flexibility to sustainably meet changing Hobsons Bay needs and aspirations.

CLUB DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The following planning and club development projects are recommended to support the health and sustainability of lawn bowls clubs in Hobsons Bay.

SHORT TERM (2021 – 2023)

- Assist clubs to improve governance and understand financial responsibilities by sharing the information and resources obtained from the Club Strategic Planning Project. Provide relevant templates to support the development of strategic plans for all clubs.
- Complete a feasibility assessment to determine if permanent shade structures should be constructed at lawn bowls venues, to provide a safe environment for players and spectators.
- Partner with Bowls Victoria, local clubs and other Council Departments to identify opportunities to expand and introduce alternate uses for lawn bowls venues (both community greens and clubrooms). Promote these initiatives and opportunities to the broader community.
- Review lease agreements and ensure that roles, responsibilities, financial obligations and venue requirements are clearly articulated, understood and monitored annually.
- Assess annual building audits to determine high priority items to ensure bowls club pavilions are maintained and renewed to compliant standards. Identify priority projects for consideration in Council's annual building renewal program.

- As part of Council's upcoming Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Condition Audit, undertake lux level testing for all lawn bowls venues. Develop a lighting upgrade program at club-based venues that offer barefoot bowls, prioritising Altona North, Laverton and Williamstown.

MEDIUM TERM (2024 – 2027)

- Work with Bowls Victoria and clubs to develop programs and initiatives that target female and junior participants. Engage with local schools and encourage clubs to regulate the number of women who sit on committees.
- Ensure all clubs and venue operators are affiliated with Bowls Victoria and participate in annual Club Health Checks.
- As part of a future review of the AB Shaw Reserve Master Plan, ensure facilities at the Laverton Bowling Club and the broader AB Shaw Reserve Precinct are appropriate to meet the needs of the projected population growth in Laverton and Altona Meadows.

LONG TERM (2028 – 2031)

- Identify suitable funding streams that support lawn bowls clubs attached to a commercial pokies or entertainment venue to apply for grant funding to run community programs and activities from quality facilities.

INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

The following infrastructure priorities are designed to support clubs in delivering more functional and modern facilities. Projects that improve access, diversify and maximise use and contribute to increased participation opportunities at lawn bowls clubs will be prioritised.

It should be noted that securing funding to implement these recommendations is the responsibility of all stakeholders, with the delivery of major capital projects requiring funding support from lawn bowls and relevant sport and government departments. Although the following projects are considered priorities, no specific timelines or funding have been identified for their delivery.

- Support the improvement of existing greens at the Laverton Bowling Club and Altona North Bowling Club, including the re-activation of the half greens at both clubs to support social and community bowls.
- Undertake detailed investigation into the root invasion issues on Green 1 and base issues on Green 2 at the Williamstown Bowling Club and develop an improvement program with the club and Bowls Victoria.
- From the Lawn Bowls Facilities Audit, identify projects that improve physical access to lawn bowls greens and clubrooms. Works would vary by club however may include sealed pathways from car parks and ramps or portable steps down to greens.
- Create a destination venue for social bowls at the Newport Bowling Club that responds to the needs of the younger demographic. Projects to achieve this would include enhanced lighting provision and marketing support.
- In line with Council's annual building renewal program, support a detailed assessment of roof structure replacement projects at Laverton and Newport Bowling Club.
- Work with Bowls Victoria and the Altona Sports Club to investigate the feasibility of providing a roof structure over the existing synthetic green to increase the capacity of this venue and provide a safe playing environment.
- Assist clubs with ongoing green renewal with a focus on converting existing bent grass greens to drought tolerant Tif couch to reduce the daily water requirement. Ensure clubs have access to a sustainable water supply and harvesting system for natural grass greens.
- Support the resurfacing of the existing synthetic green at the Altona Bowling Club to support the delivery of social bowls and school programs.

APPENDICES

1. Lawn Bowls Facility Audits
2. Lawn Bowls Club Survey Responses