

The 'Cliff Club News

October 2011



Hello and Welcome to the Queenscliff Bowling, Tennis & Croquet Club latest newsletter. Wishing members success on and off the greens & courts! Go Couta's Go!

Chairman's Report

Naturally, being a sporting club, we heartily congratulate the Queenscliff Football and Netball Club on their 3 Premierships!

Later in the report our Manager details aspects of the # regarding our gaming operations and I must say that over the last 3 years, Rod has achieved great outcomes for our Club.

Initially, the former Labor State Government proposed that there would be a free open market in respect to entitlement. This would mean that small clubs would be up against significantly wealthier clubs, and we could see the demise of many small clubs in the region. Fortunately by attending many meetings, lobbying hard, the system was changed and we were given the opportunity of a guaranteed minimum number of entitlements. This cost us in the vicinity of \$700,000 which can be paid off over a number of years interest free, again a significant variation to the original proposal.

During the 2010/11 year our Manager has produced many reports and spent many hours reviewing the best provider that we as a Club should engage.

Earlier in the year, we committed to engage Special Gaming Services as our Provider. At that time, we notified members that we believed we had achieved at least \$100,000 a year better than any other proposition in the market. We also engaged this company to assist us through the handover period, when Tabcorp ceases operation in August 2012, and we are on our own with our Provider.

In this interim period, SGS are advising us as to the purchase of the new machines and the handover plan between now and next August.

I have spent time outlining the background, because we should be very proud of the performance of our Manager, and the Board is now concentrating on the future of the Club in the full knowledge of a strong underpinning our finances.

The Board on your behalf has committed close to \$1 million in expenditure over the next 7 to 8 years, to do this we needed to have sound contracts and in 10 years time we will have fully exhausted our entitlements and at the same time have 30 machines as an asset.

Our Club has two real "GEMS" in John Anwyl and Ray Lawrence. Recently we agreed to fence between the west side of our number 3 green and Victoria Park, however this closed off the walkway used by campers to get to the Club. An idea developed and we have a new walkway in place behind the Tanks. Have a look at this skilled job that Ray and John have done. We are most grateful and we thank them for their continued support.

The bowls season is upon us, and we wish all bowlers great success and happy times and we welcome a number of new members to all of our sports, and we wish the croquet and tennis every success and enjoyment.

Yours,

Bob Merriman
Chairman.

Croquet Club News

The Croquet season commenced in August and we have a membership this year of 29 members which is great. New members are always welcome and anyone that would like to give Croquet go can contact the Secretary, Laurene Richmond on 52554456 for information and assistance.

Golf Croquet Pennant has commenced and we have 1 team in the 8-12 section. Darren Richmond and Frank Starkey are representing Queenscliff very well so far, with two convincing wins from two matches.. this will be played over the next couple of months with the Finals being held on the 12th and 13th December in Geelong... Hopefully our boys are there to represent us at that time.

Frank Starkey also has another string to his bow so to speak.. He was selected to represent Geelong in the recent Geelong Ballarat Challenge for Golf Croquet... Geelong won that match convincingly and now we wait for the return match to be played in Ballarat in April, to decide the overall winner... Scores for this round were Geelong 26 games 227 hoops to Ballarat 14 games 180 hoops... So from here in we do go into the next match with a handy lead.. Well done Frank and the other Geelong players.

Midweek Pennant Selection Committee Report (Gwen Close)

What a great start to 2011/12 Pennant Season on Tuesday. 2 wins out of 3. Our No.1 side lost narrowly by 4 shots, our No.,2 side won by 11 shots and our No.3 side won by 9 points. The best performed rink for this week was from our No. 3 side Lorraine Hudgell, Bev Long, Len Hudgell and Skipped by Bernice Thorn 37 to 8 – a great effort.

Our Club Championship games are underway, the Hoppen 2 bowl is down to the final, where Gwen Awty will play Lesley Taylor at a date to be set. The new event Club Championship Pairs is progressing, the second round was unable to be completed due to the heavy rain last Friday. We have been very pleased with the number of entries in these events. The 100 up Handicap event gets underway this week with 18 entries. Many thanks to our men members who have assisted us with markers in the first rounds of our events, it's really appreciated.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Gaming Transition

With the assistance of our Gaming Service Provider we have developed a plan to tackle the transition from Tabcorp machines to Club owned and operated machines by August 16 2012. As we are now within a year of the day of transition we are now facing some important decisions that will shape the gaming business and subsequently the financial viability of the club over the next decade. Some of these decisions will have an impact well before the transition with costs being incurred as soon as October 2011. Further to this our initial deployments of club purchased gaming machines will appear on our gaming floor as early as November or December this year.

This is a situation that is necessary more so than desirable as our capital costs will only be offset in line with our current commission structure with Tabcorp. As such Tabcorp will be receiving the benefit from these purchases to an equal measure as the club without contributing to the capital outlay. This will be the case for at least the first two deployments of club machines and quite possibly more down the track should our negotiations with Tabcorp advance as we propose they will.

The positive result for our membership is that we will finally have some new product in our gaming room and will be able to remove the worst performing machines at our discretion for the first time. As we have not signed on with TABCORP's new gaming business going forward we have not had any machine or game upgrades for quite some time and now and the pending changes to our gaming floor are long overdue.

The costs associated with the gaming transition are substantial and the board has approved a strategy for transition that will be assertive in positioning the club well over the next twelve months and that also spreads the associated investments smoothly between October this year and August 2012. There has been a great deal of preparatory work completed in order to develop a sound transition strategy for the club and there is still more work to be done in order to execute this strategy with success.

With our strategy now set for this very important task, we turn our attention to other strategic matters. These include the lease negotiations, future directions of the association and a raft of other matters that the Board has already begun dealing with and which will be a priority over the next twelve months.

Pre commitment

The Federal push for a national, mandatory pre commitment scheme hangs like a dark cloud over clubs with gaming businesses. In particular smaller clubs such as ours who have a low gaming turnover, and who rely primarily on tourism and a more social patronage of their gaming facilities to generate their gaming income. The proposed scheme, or at least what we have been told in dribs and drabs from the so called policy makers so far, will hurt these smaller clubs far more than what has been stated.

In most media reporting the view is taken that the clubs are mounting their campaign against this policy in order to preserve revenue they currently derive from problem gamblers. This could not be further from the truth and more importantly is a most unbalanced reporting of the rationale that forms the basis of the Clubs Australia campaign. The notion that Clubs would actively pursue revenue from problem gamblers whether identified as having a problem or not is completely nonsensical. Clubs decide to operate a gaming machine business purely for the purposes of benefiting their members and the wider community through the provision of best practice club facilities and a broader community support in line with their objectives. These outcomes provide valuable community assets and are only possible with a well-managed and sustainable business model.

Clearly targeting revenue from these sources is contrary to this principle.

MANAGER'S REPORT(cont.)

Clubs have a responsibility to their members and guests to provide their gambling services in a responsible manner, and endeavour to do so at a local, state and national level through the venues, state and national representative groups and associations the deal with.

The campaign by clubs against the federal reforms is not protectionist but is based on some fundamental principles and concepts that are not only flawed but that form the basis of the federal policy. The policy does not address the issue of problem gambling. Whilst it will have a drastic effect on the revenue clubs are able to derive from their gambling operations it will not have a proportionately positive effect on the issue of problem gambling. The vast majority of revenue reduction, in particular in the case of small clubs like ours, will be from revenue that is derived from legitimate recreational and social play. This is an area where clubs by their nature will be disadvantaged far more than Andrew Wilkie would dare admit. The revenue losses, estimated at up to 40% by some, will directly reduce the ability of clubs to provide the valuable community assets and facilities that they currently do. When you consider the considerable debt incurred by clubs with gaming in order to provide these facilities, along with capital outlays currently being invested in to secure licenses and machines for 2012 through to 2022 the consequences of implementing this policy could be disastrous. When viewed along with the former, the contention that many clubs would fold as a result of this policy is a frighteningly real prospect. The policy is driven by a deal made by Julia Gillard to Secure the vote of Independent Andrew Wilkie to form a minority Government, a deal that enabled a government to be formed that had nothing to do with the policies the public voted on or for that matter any agenda on which Mr Wilkie was elected on the back of. The policy follows a personal agenda and lacks common sense and the ability to engage the industry in a positive and collaborative approach towards addressing what is a serious concern for the community. The reforms will hurt small clubs and are overly generalised and simplistic in their approach to what is a very complex issue. The concept of pre commitment is not one that clubs are against. Clubs are against being stripped of legitimate revenue that is channelled back into the community in a number of ways. Revenue that is derived primarily from members and guests who are not problem gamblers. Revenue that is the result of clubs offering first class hospitality and entertainment options in order to support their primary sporting existence. Gambling support services applaud the existing Self Exclusion Programs as an effective means of reducing the incidence of problem gambling in Victoria and assisting problem gamblers. The cornerstone of these programs is that they are voluntary; they do not operate on a banning or a prescriptive basis. Patrons identify they have a problem, often through the intervention of family and friends, and often through the assistance of gaming industry employees, and take steps to address their problem. They are supported by counselling services both personal and financial and they sign a legal document of their own volition to not enter or remain in the gaming area of venues that they nominate. Those venues then do their best to support the excluded patron in a discreet and positive manner. If these programs are so effective then why any new policy would clearly skip the most important part of a successful process, the persons buy-in to the process that directly addresses the issue once identified, is incomprehensible.

MANAGER'S REPORT(cont.)

Pre commitment is a viable manner in which to address the issue of problem gambling only if it is a part of an overall strategy that engages the people it is aimed to assist and the industry that delivers the services and products. In order to achieve this, any system must be voluntary and supported through education and facilitation with existing gambling support services and industry participants already working amongst the varied issues associated with problem gambling. This is exactly what the federal policy fails to do, and Mr Wilkie has no intention of acknowledging this fact or the fact that the policy will not work.

Tennis

There are some new initiatives being put in place through the office of the club aimed at rebuilding the declining tennis section of the club. The aim is to attract some social players and hopefully new members that will become active within the club.

We will be commencing a Wednesday night twilight social tennis with entry open to all. The format will be doubles and there will be an emphasis on social play and interaction. This will commence in the second half of October so check the website and noticeboards for more detail. We will be commencing some junior development sessions with the assistance of local tennis coach Julie Golightly on Friday evenings, and there will be junior holiday clinics run over the summer holidays. Also for those interested in getting up and moving again we are hoping to introduce a Cardio Tennis program in the near future. This would be the first of its kind in the area and hopefully can attract some new faces to the club.

Finally we will attempt to run the *Tennis for Mums* program in term one next year, this program has worked well elsewhere and we hope to offer a popular program here based on those successes. These initiatives will give an indication of the future of tennis at this club and I am hopeful that they will reinvigorate the sport at this club and within our community. Keep an eye on the website and on the clubs noticeboards for more details as they are released.

General

Overall we have had a difficult winter period, and spring and daylight savings could not come soon enough. This traditional time of upturn is as welcome as the warmer weather and commencement of the bowling season proper. With all that has been happening behind the scenes of late it will be a welcome change of focus to be concentrating on the increased patronage that comes with this time of year. Members will see some new faces in the staff group as we gear up for the "silly" season so make them welcome when you get the chance. – Finally how can you not mention the great success of the football and netball club taking home three flags this season including their first senior flag since 1975 – what a great effort, well done Coutas! Hopefully we can emulate those successes in the coming bowling season.... GO COUTAS!

Rod Wayth
MANAGER

Mens Bowling Section

The pennant season commences next Saturday. We are short of players so we need to recruit previous or new bowlers to make up the numbers for four teams.

Following suggestions from members it has been decided to vary arrangements for welcoming the visitors and the afternoon tea break. During or before the rollup the President or his proxy will issue a general welcome to visiting players and an invitation to join us after the game for conviviality. The public address system will be used.

There will be an optional break approximately half way through the game and in the bar refreshments will be available and a raffle conducted.

It is considered that the ritual and boring repetition which has developed is outdated and unnecessary.

The future of our club shirts used for pennant and representative games needs to be considered. At the moment the use of both worn by men and women are in accordance with the regulations. It may be necessary to think about one shirt for everyone in the future. Now this will cause some discussion and that is what is needed so that an acceptable solution will eventuate. This is not an urgent matter but one which all members should be aware of.

This year the premier team will travel by bus sponsored by Mortimor Petroleum of Drysdale. This commitment is in the order of \$1600 and becomes the major sponsor of our Club. I am very grateful to David for this contribution and remind members that all sponsors should get support from us where possible. In this instance I suggest that members especially premier players could make a short detour to fill their car. The large service station is on the highway west of Drysdale shopping centre.

The Melbourne Cup Calcutta is on Monday October 31. Conditions will be the same as previous years with tables of 10 allocated a horse. Bookings can be made with staff and I encourage members to support their club by attending.

I hope that we can again have a successful year both on and off the greens

Keith Wayth
President.

Ladies Bowls Section Report

Queenscliff ladies "Open Day" is on the Friday 14th October. We have 30 teams of four, coming from Clubs in the Geelong Bowls Region and look forward to some good games and fellowship on the greens. Lunch will be provided by the RipView Bistro. Off the green, there will be stalls for cakes, veggies & plants, books and three raffles - One provided from each Pennant Side.

We would appreciate any donations for the stalls. We will be setting up early on the Friday morning if you have any items for our stalls or maybe you would like to buy a cake.

Good bowling to all members.

Janet Reeman
President