

**Chairman’s Report 2022/3**

After a small profit last year, we are pleased to announce a profit of $107,713.00 for the year. The board of directors has been working to build a strong future for our club. As we have been doing for many years, we continue to make small changes to the clubhouse to keep it comfortable for our members and visitors. At the same time, we are working on a vision for the future.

We are particularly mindful of the fact that as a small club with two bowling greens with significant overheads, we are very reliant on gaming machine revenue. Many changes may be taking place in our society relating to the controlling of gambling. Most of these indicate that there will be some kind of government intervention which will decrease our revenue from this area. The cashless card may be coming soon. We must be prepared.

Researchers from the University of NSW in 2022 found that Sydney bowling clubs decreased from 210 in 1980 to 128 in 2022. The attrition rate has accelerated recently with 51 club closures in the past decade. Of the 128 remaining clubs, 96 are independent while 28 have amalgamated with another club. Research by Clubs NSW reveals that most people who visit clubs do so for ‘good food and value for money”. We are running a business which supports the sport of bowls. Without a successful business behind it, bowls will not survive.

We are constantly searching for new and alternate sources of revenue.

Back in July 2019 we held a strategic planning meeting with the Board of directors, interested men and women bowling members, social members and community members. We looked to the future and began planning.

 **A number of objectives were clearly defined by the participants**.

* **1.** To use social media to enhance our image in the community
* **2.** To develop an outdoor entertaining and eating area
* **3.** To improve indoor and outdoor décor to attract members and visitors
* **4.** To promote junior bowls, corporate competitions and barefoot bowls
* **5.** To offer attractive and delicious bistro type food at a price to attract members and visitors
* 6. To attract tourists to our club

Information from the last census and Shoalhaven Tourism helps us to plan for the future.

The population of the Vincentia, Erowal Bay area is predicted to rise by 13.2% by 2051 and Huskisson, Woolamia, Falls Creek by 26.1%.

Tourism is increasing and Huskisson won two tourism awards in 2023. One was NSW best Tiny town and the other was an Australian tourism award. Huskisson was the only town in NSW to win an Australian award.

In our planning we must take into account future growth of local population and tourism.

Post-covid all around our country we are currently experiencing slow growth and consumer reluctance to spend. We are the first business at the entrance to Huskisson and we must take advantage of our position.

Our plans to develop a new restaurant, dining areas, an outdoor entertainment area and a children’s playground have been hampered by holdups with council, Shoalhaven Water and the state government. It appears that we are now unable to begin work until after Easter 2024.

In the meantime, we are setting up a food van in the carpark with seating near it. We will also open our existing building at the rear of green number 2. There will be seating and shade available there during summer. This will prepare members and visitors for the time when we will have food outlet at the rear of green 2. The food outlet will be called “La Cocina” and will serve bistro type food with some specials.

We have applied for several government grants. I would like to express our thanks to Bruce Goldsmith for the hours and expertise he put into an application this year. We have a medium-term vision for our future. As a board we are committed to making changes that benefit all segments of our membership. You will find Part A of a grant application on our website. This displays our vision for the foreseeable future.

**Our vision can be demonstrated in stages.**

**Stage 1 Making small changes to enhance the current building and amenities.**

**Stage 2 ‘The Station’ with additional toilets, dining areas, pergola and playground.**

**Stage 3 Synthetic carpet bowling surface on Green 2 when funds are available.**

**Stage 4 A roof over the green to enable all weather play and a possible event centre for Huskisson. The structure will be steel and engineered to hold solar panels.**

 **Stage 4 will be dependent on a government grant.**

I would like to emphasise the fact that we are very careful with the finances that we have judicially accumulated over the last few years. We make changes when we can afford to do so. We are very mindful that we must continue to change to succeed into the future.

Free social membership has helped us increase our local membership and we are investigating digital membership.

A Cash Redemption Terminal is coming soon to our gaming areas and new sign in machines will accept digital licences. In November the Chinese restaurant will begin to accept EFTPOS as well as cash. In February the ATM will accept Phones as well as cards. We have just replaced 200 solar panels on our roof and the eastern side retaining wall on the front Green will be replaced when details are sorted with Shoalhaven Council. Quotes have been received to upgrade our microphone and audio visual systems.

The unification of the Men’s Bowling Club And the Women’s Bowling Club into Husky Sports Bowling Club was completed on October 3rd so we are now one club. Details have yet to be finalised, but will be sorted soon. Thanks to the men and women who worked so hard on the unification process.

Special thanks are due to Don Booth, Norm Parkes, Ken Choice, Paul Winchester and Dave Caldwell for voluntary work around and in the clubhouse. Thanks also to retiring deputy chairman Derek Garnett for his years of contribution to club activities.

Once again on behalf of the Board of Directors I thank Felicity White, our manager and all the inside staff for their excellent work [sometimes in difficult circumstances]. Our greens staff also do a great job keeping our greens as serviceable as posssible and grounds very attractive to bowlers and visitors.

 As usual we are happy to accept any positive suggestions which may make our club even better.

Mark Schofield