

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE 2022 AGM**

Thank you, members for attending today.

We start by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the lands on which our clubhouse and sporting facilities are built and pay respect to their Ancestors and Elders past and present and to their Heritage.

The financial year to June 30, 2022 was the third year of disruption to club activities during the COVID 19 pandemic and resulted in your club being closed for 14 weeks.

Subject to the fickleness of the weather, we are now back to our normal program. Bowling activities and bar trade are returning to pre-COVID levels, and there is increasing use of club facilities by community groups for functions.

Hornsby Shire Council's approval of a revision to the DA relating to the sports courts has allowed for increased sporting usage and hopefully associated trade.

Members will recall that Bendigo Bank Epping Community Branch gave the club a generous grant of \$45,000 towards the updating and remodelling of the kitchen. This work has now been completed and has lifted our community profile. The club was also successful in obtaining a NSW Government Community grant of \$35,000 and as a result the club's contribution to the upgrade was approximately \$30,000.

This year has again seen pressure on smaller clubs and bowling clubs in particular. We have seen Beecroft Bowling Club amalgamate with the Norths Group and the Cheltenham Recreation Club has leased out on a long term basis their beverage and food business also to the Norths Group. Also, we believe that the North's Group has been in conversations with the Killara Bowling Club.

In addition, the Castle Hill Bowling Club has agreed to amalgamate with the Castle Hill RSL Club and they are expecting in conjunction with the RSL club to develop a new club house and bowling facilities.

We at North Epping Bowling Club are somewhat unusual in that we are a small club which still manages to operate as a stand-alone bowling club.

Of course, bowling continues to be our club's main activity, but as I reminded members last year, it is becoming more expensive to maintain bowling greens. We need to recruit new bowling members if we are to stay afloat, but we must also look at diversifying.

With this in mind the Board has looked at various means of increasing club revenue. As a result, you will see in the next few months some more building activity including:

- Removal of the notice boards from the eastern wall and a refresh of this wall.
- A false wall in the club house to display the bowls notices so they are not seen from the main room.
- A new front door /sound reducing barrier at the Boundary Road end of the veranda
- A new awning at the Boundary Road end of the veranda to cover a new position for the club BBQs.
- New outdoor furniture for the veranda area.

As well, we are investigating the possibility of another entrance from the car park at the Club's northern end to allow access to the sports courts without coming through the veranda area.

Our club has a pivotal place in the North Epping community, particularly since the opening up of the sports courts. For our long-term future, we need to take advantage of the opportunities available to us.

In recent years we have had a close relationship with North Epping Rangers Sports Club, which engages about 1000 local juniors and senior players in soccer, netball and tennis activities each year. In the past 12 months, at the initiative of Rangers, the Board has taken part in discussions to explore a possible merger of the activities of the two clubs. NER styles the plan as “One Community, One Club”, which has a nice ring to it.

These discussions are well advanced. They have centred on Rangers operating through Divisions of the Licensed Club in much the same way that our men's and women's bowling clubs operate under the Licensed Club's Constitution. The Divisions would have autonomy in running their affiliations and competitions and would report to the Board on a regular basis.

Senior NER players would become members of the Licensed club, which may need to change its name to North Epping Sports and Community Club.

The negotiating group is working to the following timelines:

- MOU completed and agreed by both Club committees around September 2022
- Intro to Club members around October 2022
- NEBCC AGM – October 2022
- NER AGM – December 2022
- Feedback from Club members Around December 2022
- Changes to constitution by end of February 2023 (Special AGM)
- Arrangements finalised by mid-2023
- Amalgamation in October 2023

From the perspective of our Board, the protection of bowls as an on-going priority is paramount, and we detect no opposition to this concept. The motivating factor is to develop our Club into the focal point for sporting activity in North Epping.

As the time frame I have outlined implies, and as the Licensed Club will be the “host” for the proposed merger, members of our club will be fully informed of the proposals and will have the final say.

I now wish to make special mention of our staff - Steve, Jon and Fiona. They have managed well in the difficult times of COVID and we thank them for their loyalty and support.

I also acknowledge the assistance of our major sponsors:

- Bendigo Bank Epping Community Branch
- Living Choice Retirement Villages
- Epping Medical Centre
- Cale Property, who have advised us of their withdrawal of financial support for our club.

Finally, I thank all members of the current Board for their contributions during what has at times been a difficult period. This is not an election year for the club, so the current Board members continue in office until the conclusion of the next AGM.

Margot Gardiner joined the Board in November last year to fill the vacancy created when Scott Parkinson decided not to seek re-election. She has already proven to be a wise selection.

The Board continues to work cooperatively and efficiently. My thanks go to Vice-president Ken Douglass, Secretary Rob Phillips, Treasurer Ron Peterson, and Board members Steve Colquhoun

and Lyn Walsh. The Board agreed that Lyn take leave of absence from Board duties during this term to allow her to deal with family matters, and we are hoping Lyn will be able to resume her input in the near future.

As members will know, the club's Boundary Road retaining wall suffered a significant collapse during the heavy storms that occurred in the first half of this year.

The Club has been in several conversations with Council over remediation of this wall and it has been determined that a Development Application is required prior to any remediation taking place. We have retained a consultant to assist with this process and have also made representation to the NSW Lands Department to allow for this work to proceed.

Repair of this wall is expected to cost in the region of \$80,000 and is only partially covered by our insurance policy. We are exploring other funding avenues that may be available but as yet have not had any positive replies to our funding applications.

Before I ask members to stand in brief silence to remember bowling and social members who passed away in the 12 month's since last year's AGM, I want to make particular mention of two sad circumstances during the year.

The first relates to the tragic accidental deaths of Peter and Penny King while holidaying on the northern NSW coast earlier this year. Peter and Penny were Boundary Road neighbours and regular visitors to the club. They were valued members.

My second tribute is to Brian Walsh, one of the earliest bowling members of the club who became a grade 1 bowler for North Epping, a club Secretary and President, a Life Member, and a mentor to many current pennant bowlers. Brian made it to 90 years and one week before his death. He was never short of an opinion, but he loved this club and most of our members who had the honour to know him loved him as well.

I now ask members to stand in brief silence to remember departed bowling and social members.