Message from the Chair

"Bowlers!" bellows Jack on a late Saturday afternoon, before the call of the cards, to the cheers and sighs of those returned from the afternoon matches, so ended our Saturday afternoons of the summer pennant season. And what a glorious season it was. The weather was wonderful and wins outnumbered the losses. For a group of bowlers, so many of whom have few years on the green the outcomes have been spectacular.

The first side has won a place in Division 3 and the seconds fought their way up to Division 5. The Midweek pennant side climbed another rung in the ladder to go up a division again (something they have done each year for some years now). Best of all has been the camaraderie on the greens and the after match BBQs. It is great to end a competition on such a high note, sad that the summer pennant bowling has come to an end for the season. Never fear though, Winter Pennant is around the corner to allow a few more days on the sunny greens before it gets too cold.

The thanks due to so many volunteers is enormous. The selectors have suffered the usual complaints and grumblings all season, but the proof is in the pudding, the selections have led to three sides going up a division. The greens and club are welcoming and well presented due to the work of so many around the premises. The Bowls and Social Committees have organized great events. For many, Deb's Beer and Bowls event was a particular highlight, which we hope to see again.

Others keep finding ways to quietly go about improving the camaraderie of the club. Our very own Colin Ham raised the bar for away games management when he packed a wonderful hamper (or is that Ham-per) for Division 7 one week, a great example of the commitment so many have made to making Division 7 enjoyable and welcoming for new bowlers. Perhaps now he needs to be re-named 'Champagne Ham'. And of course, Steve Philips' great work in arranging the BBQ has made the Saturday evenings fantastic.

The end of the season also sees our new Manager settling in well and making improvements around the club. Less obvious improvements include careful management of staff costs and stock control that are showing clearly on the bottom line, returning the club to profits after the year without a green. The work of board members also often goes unnoticed in the day to day life of the club, making it important to acknowledge the work done by Maddy as secretary and Renee as treasurer.

I cannot help but look back on a fantastic year of friendship and bowls, and hope that members have enjoyed the season as much as I have. Next year promises to be bigger and better as we move into our celebrations of 150 years.

Grant Reithmuller

Presentation Night, 2016

Presentation Night will be held on April 16th between 7 and 9pm. A sit down meal is generously donated by Spitting Image with a free cocktail upon arrival. The Selectors will determine the winners of the various bowling categories and the Board will select the winner of the Curly award. The evening will be highlighted with the talents of Colin Ham as the M.C. The Bowls Committee is organising both the night and the purchase of trophies. To ensure accurate catering please RSVP on the Team App or email the Bowls Committee bowlscommittee@citybowls.net
The 150th Birthday Committee has been established with the following membership:

- Madeleine Scully (Chair, reporting to the Board)
- Maria Basile
- Madelene Diego
- Debra Dowling
- Dick Dowling
- Kevin Mansbridge
- Jeffrey Moore
- Kay Oke
- Henry Silis

Work is progressing on several fronts:

**Club History** – interviews will be completed by Easter. We expect to receive the manuscript in early April, and can then move to arrangements for design, printing and launch.

**Promotion and memorabilia** – the Club has commissioned artwork for a poster and letterhead and to align a byline with our existing logo. This will be used to badge all events and promotions through the year.

A promotion strategy will take up the myriad opportunities to publicise our 150th celebrations through local and wider media.

Plans for memorabilia include badges, glasses, clothing, an anniversary ale and Club-labelled wine and port / muscat. Other ideas are welcome – just speak to one of the Committee members.

There are plans to install an additional wall plaque to commemorate the 150th and arrangements for this will be in line with Melbourne City Council protocols.

**Events** – the Board has approved a schedule of events for the year, which includes regular Club events being badged for the 150th; more details to follow:

- Saturday, April 16th – Presentation Night
- Monday, April 25th – Anzac Day Bowls Tournament
- Friday, May 13th – Wine Dinner
- Friday, June 24th – Trivia Night
- Friday, 15 / 22 July 15 / 22nd – History of the Club Book Launch
- Thursday, August 18th – Birthday Party and plaque unveiling
- Saturday, August 20th – Back To CoMBC Ball
- August – Opening of the greens
- Saturday, September 17th – Oktoberfest
- Tuesday, November 1st – Melbourne Cup Tournament
- Sunday, December 11th – Christmas Party
- Saturday, December 31st – New Years Eve

Work is continuing on reconnecting with families of early / life members and former members as well as on community links.

Members are welcome to contribute ideas, just speak to any committee member.

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**Inner City Winter Pennant 2016 - commencing soon**

This competition commences on Saturday, April 30th and will be played over seven rounds with the last round of matches before the finals scheduled for Saturday, June 11th. This season CoMBC will be entering three teams in the Inner City Winter Pennant competition.

The format is two sides of six, two bowls triples over twelve ends with all matches commencing at 1.00 p.m. The competition itself is very flexible with bowlers being able to change positions and the ability to be able to introduce substitute bowlers after the first game.

If you are interested in taking part in the Inner City Winter Pennant competition even it is only on an occasional basis please RSVP on Team APP Winter Pennant listed under Events.

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**BEERS, BOWLS AND BURGERS - TWO BIRD STYLE**

In follow up to Deb's very successful BBB day with the Barrow Boys, we invite you to join us for the Two Birds BBB (beer, bowls and burgers) afternoon. It will be held on Sunday, 10 April commencing at 1 pm. James will be organising the tournament, more details on that in due course.

Catering for the “build your own burger” is by Spitting Image. The cost is $20pp and is payable on the day.

Please RSVP by April 5 either via Team App or email bookings@citybowls.net

Any questions, please contact either Zac, Deb or Dick.
Selectors’ Report

Valued members, as you read this you would have already been told by one of the selectors what a magnificent job they’ve done in the season 2015/16. The selectors are always under pressure to field winning teams and have to contend with undesirable vexations such as bowler's unavailability and some member’s perception that they are all knowing in regard to selection matters.

It is worthwhile recapping the season just gone for posterity. Not since 1890, the year of the "Wounded Knee Massacre" has the CoMBC had such a successful season. Even Kevin Mansbridge couldn’t remember and he’s older than that. The Division 4 side finished on top of the ladder with a 12/5 win loss ratio, easily accounted for a hapless Maribyrnong Park in a "home" semi-final and showed extraordinary intestinal fortitude to narrowly go down to Melton in the Sectional Grand Final. The Division 6 side also finished the season with a 12/5 win loss ratio and also easily won their "home" semi final against Altona only to be thwarted in their quest for a Sectional flag by Point Cook at Rosamond.

Let’s not forget Division 7 as they are the future of the club. They won six games this season in a herculean effort considering players were poached from this side in the event of bowlers from Division 4 and 6 sides being unavailable. Thank you again to all players who made themselves available as emergencies, when, to bowl may not have been particularly convenient. There is an expectation that with natural improvement, accessing our coach and meaningful practice that the Division 7 side will play finals next season.

But there’s more..........the Division 2 mid week pennant side was also promoted to Division 1 which should be interesting after having lost only four games for the year.

And there’s still more........the Division 4 night pennant side reached the semi-finals where, after a great game lost to Keilor

In closing, selection is not all beer and skittles and all selectors ask is to be given a fair go, fair crack of the whip, fair suck of the sav and fair pluck of the low-flying crow. We have tried to emphasise that communication is all important and bowlers are again encouraged to approach any selector at any time with any questions regarding their bowls or where selectors see their bowling future. The selectors for next season have another difficult challenge ahead and competition for all spots will again be fierce. In all probability the teams selected for round one next season will look nothing like those that contested the finals. All we can advise is that to start your pre-season after Easter and come back in good form in readiness for practice matches in August.

Bring on season 2016/17

Jack Ainsaar, on behalf of the selectors

Midweek Pennant 2015/16

Three years ago the City of Melbourne Bowls Club (COMBC) entered a team in the Tuesday midweek pennant competition for those lucky enough to be unemployed or too old to work. After winning consecutive flags and indeed a divisional flag in Division 4 in their inaugural year, the CoMBC combine finished second on the ladder this year in Division 2 and only lost four games in the "Home and Away" rounds.

The team was granted a "home" semi-final against Melton (3) and prevailed via a walkover as the opposition felt that the Mills green wasn’t conducive to their style of play. On March 10th the intrepid combine ventured to regional Sunbury to play the grand final against Deer Park (1) who had been the best side all year. We fought hard and did the COMBC proud but were finally overcome by 22 shots.

The selectors’ stellar achievements continue to mount for the 2015/16 season and they would like to thank everyone involved in this successful season and in particular the emergencies who sacrificed their time to fill the occasional gaps which invariably arise. Bon voyage to Mark Minehan who had a great season and will be sorely missed.

The COMBC will be playing in Division 1 next year and we look forward to the challenge as it's always a learning experience to play against good bowlers. Anyone who has been retrenched or is simply considering quitting their jobs so they can be part of the midweek juggernaut for the 2016/17 season are more than welcome.

Jack Ainsaar
Are you the club member with a creative spatial brain?

Some lateral thinking needed to net a few innovative ideas to create a more convivial setting at CoMBC.

The Board and Club Manager are interested in receiving members’ suggestions as to how we can improve as a club both on and off the green.

Zac is interested in receiving member feedback as to more comfortable seating options and configuration for the members bar area understanding the current restrictions. If you have any suggestions please make use of the Suggestion Box near the Bar area.

Northern Gateway Night Pennant

The final round of Night Pennant matches was played on Tuesday, March 15th. In what has turned out to be a bitter sweet result for CoMBC the Division 3 team fell agonisingly short of making the finals finishing in fifth position only 4 points from the fourth position. Despite being unlucky to miss out on the finals the Division 3 team consisting of Deb Dowling, Kaz Rothwell, Gay Edgecombe, Adam Gason, David Kelly, Colin Ham, Rob Barker, Russell King, Grant Riethmuller and John McLaren performed well and were competitive all year in what was a very strong division which included a number of teams from the larger clubs.

The Division 4 team of Sophie Jing, Jack Ainsaar, Dennis Connell, James Larmour-Reid, Roger Scott, Jeff Moore, Peter Macdonald, Trevor Smith and Gary Dowling ended up in second position after a fantastic come from behind win over Alphington on Tuesday Night, March 15th. The Division 4 team made it to the Semi Final however unfortunately as we all now know we ended up going down by 6 shots. The final scores from Tuesday, 22 March Semi Final really do not do justice to what was a very tight match all night. The Division 4 bowlers certainly appreciated the vocal support from club members who came along to watch the match.

Well done to all CoMBC bowlers who took part in the Night Pennant Competition and a vote of thanks to the CoMBC Night Pennant coordinators, John McLaren and Gary Dowling.

Go City!

ARE YOU THE CLUB MEMBER WITH A CREATIVE SPATIAL BRAIN?

Mazda Cup

The City Mazda Cup will run over the month of April commencing Friday, April 1st continuing each Friday night concluding Friday, April 29th. Play starts at 6.30pm with ½ hour happy hour starting at 6.00pm and a further ½ hour happy hour at the completion of play. If you are unable to form a team but would like to take part in the Mazda Cup the Mazda Cup Committee will be able to place you in a team. In the past, the Mazda Cup has been responsible for introducing a number of new members to the club and as such the Mazda Cup Committee would welcome the support of members in encouraging their friends and workmates to take part in the Mazda Cup competition.

What’s included each week

• All equipment supplied;
• Catered meal (served at completion of first game);
• 2 x ½ hr happy hours with drinks at members prices during games;
• Theme nights (with spot prizes);
• Positions - Skip, Second and Lead;
• Players are able to be interchanged at the end of each game or if a player is not available each week; and
• 2 games per night against the same team on the same rink

Entry Fee

- If 5 weeks paid upfront - $300/team for the 5 weeks or ($60p/team/pw) or $20 pw single player.
- If paid weekly - $375/team for the 5 weeks or ($75p/team/pw) or $25 pw single player.

To register or if you require any further information, please do not hesitate to get in contact either email mazdacup@citybowls.net or call Roger on 0402 206 502.

CoMBC will be holding an Oktoberfest function at the club on Saturday September 17th. The function will be closely modelled along the lines of the very successful Oktoberfest which was previously held at the Royal Standard Hotel. Planning is well underway for this event however if you have any ideas or suggestions which will add to the Oktoberfest experience please do not hesitate to raise them with Zac Potier or Gary Dowling.
Bowls Committee Report

Members of the bowls committee and key responsibilities follow:

John McLaren - Chair
Brad Etchell - Secretary
Rob Oke - membership pack
Steve Phillips - equipment and catering
Jeff Moore - presentation trophies
Debra Dowling - uniforms and badges

The aim of the Bowls Committee is to ensure 'all things bowling' run smoothly.

Uniform tops may change this year depending on recommendations from the 150th birthday committee. Options include badge of existing shirts, or new shirts.

The Bowls library seems to have been a success this year with all the larger sets of bowls being loaned out or sold and a number of smaller sets going as well. Restocking will be done for day to day items such as grippo, bowls polish, chalk, towels and bowls measures. If you have any specific requirements please see Steve Phillips.

The Bowls Committee invites member input.

Match Committee

The match committee consists of 2 members from the Bowls Committee - Debra Dowling and Dan Lynch and 2 selectors - Dave Kelly and Jack Ainsaar.

We have organised the Open and Women’s Singles, Pairs, Novice and Mixed Pairs Championships and the Triples Championship.

Congratulations to Hazel Gabriel and Butch Reed, worthy winners of the Singles Championships and to the runners up Sophia Jing and Rob Stoney. The members were provided with a very enjoyable and exciting Grand Final on December 17th.

Hazel and Butch represented our club in the Bowls Victoria Champion of Champions held on 14.2.16. Butch played at St. Albans and won all his matches to play in the section Grand Final.

The Grand Final of the Pairs Championship was held on December 20th with a few hardy members braving the heat, wind and rain to watch David Loader and Russell King win against last year’s pair champions, Jim Pallister and Gary Dowling. Congratulations to Russell and David.

The Novice Championship Grand Final was held on 28th January 28th between Laurie Garmston and Henry Silis. Congratulations to Laurie, the winner against a very worthy rival in Henry. The Novice game had to be changed from the scheduled time due to Laurie having to go into hospital the following week.

Hazel and Michael Gabriel were victors over Jack Ainsaar and Kaz Rothwell in the Grand Final of the Mixed Pair Championship held on Wednesday, February 17th. Unfortunately, there were not many spectators to this game as it had to be moved from the scheduled day due to the unavailability of the green.

The Triples Championship Day was held on the 21 February 21st. A great day was had by all. The catering was organised by the social group, Dick Dowling, Gay Edgecombe, Nan Nankervis, Lisa Larmour-Reid and I with help from Rosemary Walsh and Maria Basile who cooked the BBQ and helped prepare the food. Thanks also to Steve Phillips organised the menu and bought all the food for the BBQ on the previous Saturday. You are awesome bro! The Triples Championship winners were Dave Kelly, Adam Gason and Madge Diego over worthy runners up Michael Gabriel, Hazel Gabriel and Simon Kwok.

Dave, Dan, Jack and I are now in the process of organising the ANZAC Day Tournament. We hope to extend invitations to our fellow Bowls Clubs, especially those who have had practise matches with us and also to some of our previous members who now play at other clubs. There will be teams of 4, x 2 bowls. Please come along to this event, the first tournament held in our 150 year celebrations.

We would be very happy to receive feedback and suggestions about the way the Championships and Tournaments are run. Help running tournaments and championships will be much appreciated also.

Debra Dowling

Greens Director’s Report

Mansbridge Carpet Green

Draft requests for quotes have been submitted to the Board for approval to replace the Mansbridge carpet green. These entail major sub-surface excavation and restoration and the relaying of the current Dales green or alternatively a new bowling surface.

Mills Grass Green

The top dressing of the Mills grass green on February 4th has worked very well in producing a flat surface that runs truly. Greenkeeper Darren Walls stretched the green as far as possible to get it to 13 seconds for the great winning Division 6 Pennant home final on Saturday March 7th. Our aim is to get full grass coverage before the green enters winter dormancy. The green still has unsatisfactory drainage and we need to be able to water it with clean mains water to give it the best chance we can.

Regarding the tank, we think diversion of the green runoff to the storm the water drain is a priority. Then we could totally drain and clean the tank and only fill it with clean mains water. This way untainted clean water would be used to irrigate the green and the high sodium and sulphur would be eliminated. Darren is continuing to treat the green with chemicals designed to reduce the elevated sulphur and sodium levels.

The Board was unhappy with an excessively high quote for this work. Two other plumbers will quote for the work this week and Darren and I will strongly press for the best quote to be accepted by the Board.

Dick Dowling
North Melbourne Football Club visit COMBC

Manager Zac asked me as greens director if I wouldn’t mind lending a hand to assist last Wednesday March 9th when the entire North Melbourne Football team visited the club. Would I mind! Gosh as a lifelong NMFC member just try and stop me!

NMFC had booked out our club for their annual player sponsor night. Each player is individually sponsored by an individual, family or company and they all got to spend two hours bowling and dining with their AFL idols. I also enlisted the help of another mad NMFC supporter Adam Gason who supervised the Mansbridge green while I took care of the Mills green. But it was soon apparent that we wouldn’t have much work to do as all the players knew how to bowl and some, like Daniel Wells were absolutely brilliant.

So we were able to circulate around and talk to players like Drew Petrie, Captain Andrew Swallow, Nick Del Santo, Boomer Harvey and big Todd Goldstein our best and fairest winner and the best ruckman in the AFL.

I was really impressed with the players who were extremely polite and good natured and clearly enjoyed themselves as did their sponsors in a relaxed evening of bowls which for Adam and I was a great highlight.

I believe Zac did a great financial deal for them and it was good to see two local community clubs working together. I reckon they will be back again next year.

Annual Report from the Social Committee

The Social Committee has had an enjoyable year working on each of the Club’s functions in 2015-16.

The functions we organised or assisted with included:

2015 - Wine dinner-May; Trivia night- June; Club Birthday- August; Melbourne Cup - November ; Christmas Party-December; New Years Eve Party-December

2016 – catering for the Barrow Boys- January and Club Triples-February

We have delivered on budget or made a profit for all events thanks to careful planning and costing and long volunteer hours in the kitchen particularly by Lisa Lamour-Reid, Nan Nankervis and Barbara Elderfield. Dick Dowling has done a great job in putting together excel spread sheets for all functions with input from the team.

A special thank you to the Probus team led by Jenny Eltham who planned, purchased and plated the Melbourne Cup lunch with the support of a large Probus team and all members of the City of Melbourne Bowling Club Social Committee. David Loader has been a huge help on the dish washing team for several functions.

Thank you to numerous members of the Bowling Club who lend a hand clearing dishes and assisting in the kitchen. For the first time the Committee has tried new ideas for Club Functions. Debra Dowling organised the Barrow Boys day in January 2016 which was a resounding success. Debra got together a very large team to help. Club Members not on the Social Committee came on board to help the Committee to put on a function for 71 people. Some new members were signed up by Dick. Thanks to Mark Mineham who was a very generous contributor in assisting and providing some food for the function. Steve Phillips organised the food and purchased most of it. He drew up a list of functions for the team to follow.

Thanks to Rob Stoney for the impromptu auction in which he generously provided items to be auctioned and ran the event to raise money at the Club Birthday. This money making strategy will be tried again in 2016.

Thanks to Steve Phillips who helped the committee to plan the food for Barrow Boys and Club Triples event.

A very special thank you to Barbara Elderfield who has designed and organised all decorations for each Club function. Barbara has set a very high standard for the Social Committee to follow into the future. Barbara you are also missed in the kitchen where you kept us laughing and on our toes.

socialclub@citybowls.net

North Melbourne Football Club visit COMBC
Access to CoMBC toilets by the public

Members and staff are asked to assist with implementing the Board policy that CoMBC toilets are not for use by the public. CoMBC is a private club and is responsible for health and safety and security at the club for members, staff and groups which have hired the facility. Please redirect members of the public to use the toilets in the Flagstaff Gardens, Flagstaff Station or Victoria Market.

Club Membership

Welcome to Matthew Ranger who has joined as a social member. The Board is pleased when new members choose to join CoMBC and trust that they enjoy both the company of members and our state-of-the-art bowls facilities.

Obituary - Christopher James Cotter

Those of you who remember the old clubhouse will probably remember Chris Cotter as a funny guy with a cheeky grin. Chris was one of the Customs guys who joined in the early 90’s due to the proximity of the office to the club and more likely the offer of free car parking in the CBD, for one of Chris’s major loves was cars. All of his cars seemed to have a story, whether it was the Cadillac convertible or the Falcon ute that had done many thousands of kms, but all at 80 km/h as a pilot vehicle for a towing company. Indeed his love of cars was such that his bowls rag was a swatch of red brocade from an old Holden Brougham.

Chris was quite a handy bowler in his day, indeed he may have been much more successful had the twin factors of work and family not limited his time on the green. As it was he was a popular and successful skip, particularly in Division 8 in the heady season of 2005/06 as all sides made the finals. Chris was the winning skip in our semi-final match against Yarra Glen.

Chris had to devote more time to his young family and living in the hills made it difficult to play for the City. He also spent time working at the airport and even overseas which conspired to keep him away, so we didn’t get to see much of him in latter years.

Chris passed away in January aged only 50 after a struggle with illness. He leaves a partner Kerrie, 3 children, a menagerie and more cars and bikes than we will probably ever know.

Contributed by Simon Inglis (Past President and current member of CoMBC)

A very special life member, a doyen of CoMBC, Gerry O’Dea

As we go to print our thoughts are with life member Gerry O’Dea and his family. Gerry was admitted to the Epworth Hospital on Tuesday, March 15th with pneumonia and since then has suffered a stroke. His condition remains critical.

Contributed by Simon Inglis (Past President and current member of CoMBC)

The next newsletter will be published after the AGM. Once again we welcome any contributions from members.

Newsletter Team – Lynne, Madge and Steve
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