

THE SPORT FOR ALL. THE SPORT FOR LIFE.









Bowls

Through the Covered Greens Project proposed in this document, Bowls Victoria seeks to partner with Government to maximise the value of Bowls for the entire Victorian community and ensure the sustained growth of the sport's diverse social, health and economic benefits.

- Each year, over 150,000 people of all ages in all parts of Victoria regularly participate and compete in the sport of
- At least another 433,000 Victorians play social and barefoot bowls annually, making it one of the strongest community sport activities in the State
- Victoria's 506 Bowls Clubs in metropolitan and regional areas act as a central hub for community connection, providing vital opportunity for social engagement and recreation through healthy activity
- Over 20% of all Bowls participants in Victoria are under the age of 40, with female participation experiencing the highest level of growth in social formats over the past decade
- Over 75% of regular participants and 70% of Clubs are in regional Victoria

ABOUT BOWLS VICTORIA

Bowls Victoria (BV) is the governing state body for the sport of bowls. Its primary purpose is to grow, develop and nurture Victoria's most accessible sport. BV services the State's clubs, members and participants and leads the sport and business of bowls for the benefit of the Victorian community.

BV owns and operates the Victorian Open, the State's annual marquee bowls tournament, staged in the Latrobe Valley and Gippsland from 2023 to 2027 through partnership with the Latrobe City Council, Destination Gippsland and the Victorian Government.

Second only in scale nationally to the Australian Open, the event attracted over 3800 participants in 2023 and generated over \$3.1 million in total economic impact for the region.

BV also guides, supports and manages state team representatives and world class athletes who represent our sport on the national and international stage and proudly call Victoria home.





with Bowls during their lifetime.

Our philosophy is that all Bowls is Bowls and anyone can Bowl.

Bowls Victoria Strategic Plan (2022-25)

Bowls is Victoria's most accessible and inclusive sport, catering to all abilities, ages, genders and backgrounds via programs and competitions delivered through Clubs around the State.

- Bowls offers a unique proposition to participants due to being a sport with few barriers to access. It is a low impact, non-contact sport that can be enjoyed at any stage in life, both socially or competitively, in a range of environments.
- With appropriate facilities, particularly covered synthetic greens and lighting, Bowls is a sport that can be played day and night, year round in all weather conditions.

CURRENT PARTICIPATION

- Full Members 40,464 full members participating in formal structured competition throughout the year
- Regular participants (more than four games annually in a structured competition) 150,000+
- Casual and social participants (including barefoot bowls) Estimated to be at least 433,000 annually.

PROGRAMS & OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL, FOR LIFE

Bowls Victoria, in partnership with Victoria's Bowls Clubs, supports the delivery of diverse programs, competitions, events and opportunities. These include:

- Bowling with Babies (new and expectant parents social bowling)
- Roll Up (teenager focused social participation)
- Barefoot Bowls (social mix of bowls and entertainment)
- Junior League (Under 18s competition)
- Schools Programs (delivered to over 8000 students each year)
- Blind Bowls and Deaf Bowls (entry level to elite)
- Para-Bowls (physically and intellectually disabled bowlers from entry level to elite)
- Bowlers Arm Competition (use of a mechanical aid to assist participation)
- Elite Development & State Representative squads (all age groups)
- Club and Region Based Competition and Pennant Bowls
- Volunteer, Coaching and Official training





Bowls is a leader in the development of opportunities for social sport for people of all ages.

Over the past two decades, social sport initiatives rolled out across the State have transformed Bowls and created unprecedented opportunity for people of all ages and abilities to make social connection while engaging in healthy activity.

Bowls Clubs throughout the state offer regular sessions, with indoor and covered facilities able to offer opportunities to play day and night throughout the year.

BAREFOOT BOWLS & JACK ATTACK

Diverse playing options available have contributed to making Barefoot Bowls an iconic success in bringing people together. Participants can play alone or with a team, for a long time or a short time, socially, with mates or the whole family.

Bowls Victoria is also building on this success with the introduction of an official State Championship.

Jack Attack appeals to people who are looking for a more structured bowls competition than barefoot bowls, but don't have the time to commit to longer formats of the game.

Jack Attack is intended to be run as a four-week competition, staged ideally on a midweek evening, but clubs are free to schedule games any time that suits their club and audiences.





Barefoot Bowls STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

ROLL UP

Roll Up is a fun, fast, social four-week program for 12 to 17-year-olds, designed to get more young people active. Developed in conjunction with VicHealth, the 4-week program offers an accessible, fun and socially inclusive environment for kids to engage in sport.





BOWLING WITH BABIES

Supported by VicHealth, Bowling with Babies aims to assist less active parents to become more active and enable them time to focus on their physical well-being in a fun, relaxing and comfortable environment - with their baby.

Attending a Bowling with Babies session enables expecting and new parents to connect with other parents in their local area, and helps to build a supportive peer network.









Bowls is continually creating new opportunity for people of all abilities and skillsets to play the sport, connect with peers and fulfil their aspirations.

That includes supporting the development of Club facilities that are accessible to all and capable of supporting programs and competition year round, regardless of the weather.

CLUB PROGRAMS

Many clubs across Victoria welcome people of all abilities to join their bowls community with tailored bowls programs. Those that don't offer a specific program welcome para-bowlers to play in their regular club events.

BLIND BOWLS VICTORIA

Bowls Victoria works closely with Blind Bowls Victoria to offer playing opportunities for blind and vision impaired bowlers. Blind Bowls Victoria move around the state providing ongoing opportunities for Visually Impaired bowlers and people in the community to come together in an accessible and inclusive environment. There is also a State Based Championship and a Victorian representative team competing in National Championships each year.

DEAF BOWLS VICTORIA

Membership is open to bowling members of a Club who are either totally deaf in both ears or who have a hearing deficit of greater than 45 decibels in their best hearing ear. Deaf Bowls Victoria organises and sends players to State Championships, Australian Deaf Games, National and International Championships.

VICTORIAN PARA-INTELLECTUAL SQUAD

The squad for para-intellectual bowlers meet and hold training sessions regularly at various Clubs around the state. The squad has a number of coaches who assist with the sessions and it is open to all para-intellectual bowlers that are affiliated members of a Club.

VICTORIAN PARA-PHYSICAL SOUAD

The para-physical bowlers take part in the Australian Para Nationals each year, and are made up of men and women throughout the state. Squad support and development is open to all para-physical bowlers that are affiliated members of a Club.





The core strength of Bowls in Victoria lies in its capacity to provide a sport for life, with 80% of regular participants over the age of 40.

For many who come to Bowls following previous social and competitive experience in other sports, it offers the opportunity to continue to develop new skills, stay fit, apply their sports IQ, hone talents and compete from Club to State and National Level.

Importantly, Bowls also provides older Victorians with more opportunities to continue to lead an active life in a nonconfronting environment, no matter their skills.

Bowls provides significant physical and mental health benefits for all Victorians. A La Trobe University study showed that a person who participates in Bowls is likely to be 12% physically healthier than someone who is not1.

The provision of indoor and covered greens is particularly valuable to older participants through:

- Enabling all weather play and healthy activity throughout the year, helping to address and reduce significant health issues
- Providing important shade from sun to counter the incidence of skin cancer (melanoma) and other health conditions
- Providing greater year round opportunities for regular social connection, which offers proven capacity to sustain and improve mental health
- Enabling continued participation in competitive sport
- Providing protection from the elements for officials, coaches and volunteers
- Maintain year round social connections





¹Building an evidence base to increase participation in Lawn Bowls (Centre for Sport and Social Impact, La Trobe University, 2013)

Victoria's towns and regional centres have always been the heartland of the sport in our State.

From clubs serving small farming communities in the Western District to state of the art event facilities on the Murray River and in the Latrobe Valley, nowhere in Australia is the passion for the game greater.

Over 70% (358) of Victoria's 506 Bowls Clubs and 75% of regular participants are located in regional areas, offering a diverse range of programs across social and competition bowls for people of all ages.

However, Regional Victorian Clubs play a significant role beyond the sport, providing a vital place for community to meet, be active and connect.

- Victoria's regional communities now boast diverse cultural background and origin, making the provision of facilities promoting social connection and addressing isolation ever more important.
- Due to their early establishment, many regional Clubs are also centrally located, providing ease of access for residents.
- According to VicHealth¹, people who live in rural and regional Victoria experience poorer health than metropolitan Victorians. Some of the profound differences in health outcomes (including cancers, cardiovascular conditions and diabetes), for rural and regional Victorians compared to metropolitan Victorians, have existed for many years.

The importance of Bowls Clubs to regional Victorian life means that supporting their viability, reinforcing their existing capacity and creating greater opportunity for access is a key priority for Bowls Victoria.

The provision of covered greens has a vital role to play in enabling Clubs to operate year-round, welcome community and members at all times, provide opportunities for healthy activity and bolster social capacity and financial wellbeing. They also offer important new ability to attract and host events of high value to Club, town and regional visitor economy.



¹ https://www.health.vic.gov.au/your-health-report-of-the-chief-health-officer-vic-toria-2018/health-inequalities/rural-and-regional#

Bowls Clubs, with their mix of sporting and social facilities, are challenging to run and traditionally owe their success to dedicated teams of volunteers.

Unlike most sporting facilities, Bowls Clubs are frequently in operation beyond regular hours of training and competition, providing access to important meeting, leisure and hospitality facilities for community.

With an ageing and increasingly time-poor society, the provision of modern facilities, supported by a diverse offering will literally determine the survival and prosperity of some clubs.

Successful and sustainable facilities will, however, continue to deliver increased social and economic benefit for Victoria for generations to come.

BV FACILITIES STRATEGY

In 2020, BV commissioned independent consultant SBP (now Solucio) to undertake a comprehensive study of Bowls Club facilities throughout Victoria. The findings informed the creation of BV's *Rolling Toward 2030 Strategic Facilities Plan* guiding the development of the State's bowls infrastructure from 2022 - 2030.

Rolling Toward 2030 seeks to deliver:

- Fit-for-purpose facilities that are customer and community focused, delivering exceptional experiences at a local level.
- Strong connection to grassroots clubs and bowlers.
- Consistent application of a statewide facility hierarchy that designates the optimal mix of amenities and services, and enables facilities of all sizes to operate successfully.
- Increased collaboration with industry and key stakeholders including all levels of government, community and partners.
- Consistency and efficiency in facility presentation and operation.
- Greater innovation and collaboration with key stakeholders in the turf industry (e.g. Victorian Greenkeepers Association and the Australian Sports Turf Management Association).





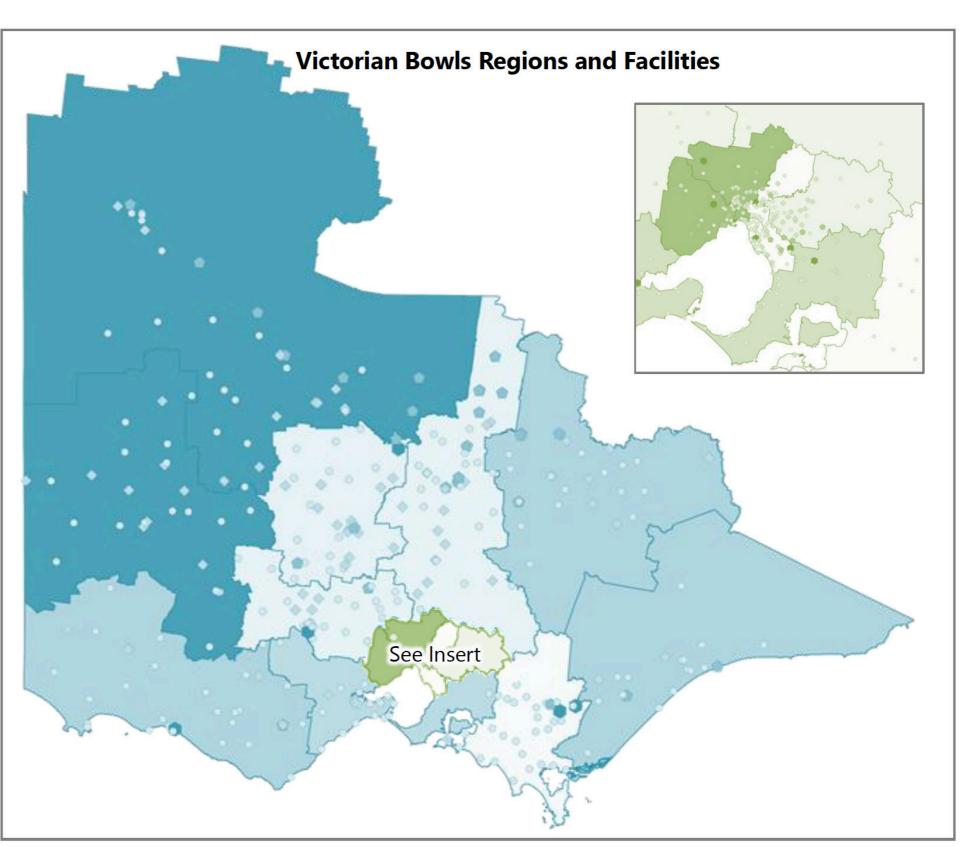
BOWLS FACILITY SNAPSHOT

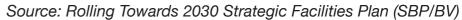
Quick Facts *

- 16 bowls regions
- 506 clubs
- 41,980 members
- 193,072 participants
- 945 greens
- 6,869 rinks

Bowls Region	Total Clubs	Total Participants
Eastern Ranges	33	12,231
Metropolitan West	22	6,076
Northern Gateway	26	7,313
Sandbelt	41	10,954
Yarra	26	8,422
Total Metropolitan	148	44,996
Bendigo Campaspe	33	17,396
Central Goulburn Murray	41	16,864
Central Victoria	42	34,447
Geelong	24	9,639
Gippsland	19	5,015
Murray Mallee	35	11,355
Ovens & Murray	28	10,443
Peninsula Casey	33	10,031
Strezlecki	33	6,499
West Coast	36	15,537
Wimmera	38	10,850
Total Regional	362	148,076
TOTAL*	510	193,072

^{*} Participation and Club statistics are correct as of July 2020. At July 2023, there are 506 Clubs and 358 in regional Victoria.







The Rolling Toward 2030 Plan considered all aspects of current and future infrastructure needs, including redevelopment, expansion and new builds in growth areas.

However, stakeholder consultation and facilities analysis indicated that the approach that could best contribute to maximising the value of Bowls for Victorian communities, while supporting participation growth and the financial health of Clubs, is the provision of covered greens at existing facilities.

Further study undertaken by BV in February 2023¹ revealed that Victorian Clubs that possessed covered greens were at a substantial advantage in terms of:

- participant growth, diversity and satisfaction levels
- protecting the health of participants (i.e. shade from sun and rain)
- breadth of program and competition offering
- extended operating and playing hours
- facility usage throughout the year, in all seasons
- event attraction and hosting
- ongoing Club financial health and sustainability

The impact of covered greens in attracting new participants to the sport and engaging people in healthy activity across all age groups is significant.

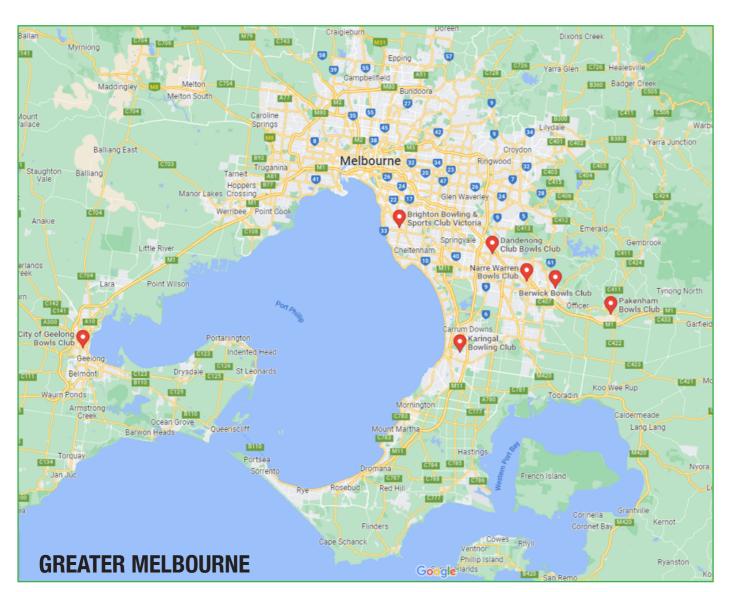
For example, the installation of two covered greens at Narre Warren Bowls Club in 2021 has seen participation soar from approximately 400 to 2500+ through the provision of more opportunities for all ages to play across more social and competitive formats at any time of year.

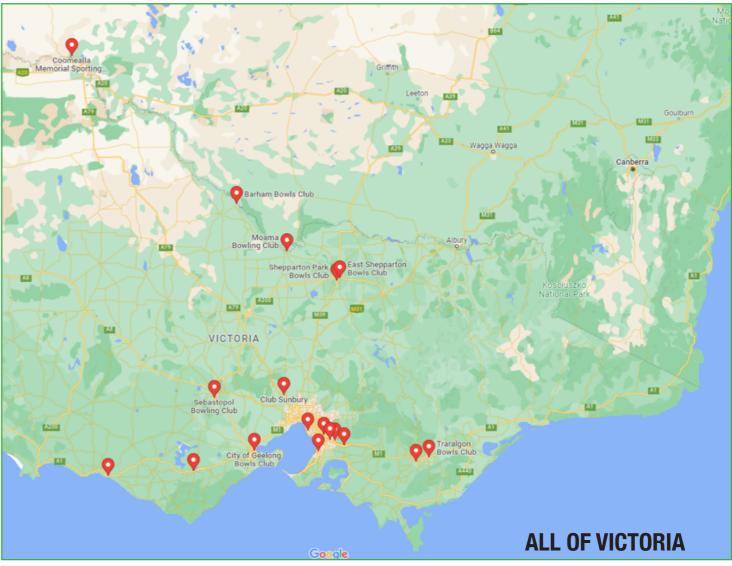
BOWLS

A YEAR ROUND SOLUTION

It became clear from stakeholder consultation and facilities analysis that the approach that could best contribute to maximising the value of Bowls for Victorian communities, while supporting participation growth and the health of Clubs, is the provision of covered greens at existing facilities.

CURRENT COVERED GREEN PROVISION





There are currently 18 covered facilities across Victoria, most of which have been installed in the last five years.

Some locations in regional Victoria are well catered for, including Shepparton, Traralgon/Morwell, Echuca/Moama, Colac and Warrnambool.

However there are also numerous areas of high population without any covered facilities, including Bendigo, Wodonga and Horsham.

In metropolitan Melbourne, the south-eastern area has several covered greens, but there is a lack of covered facilities elsewhere, including the significant population centres and growth corridors of the northern and western suburbs and the Bellarine & Mornington Peninsulas.

GREATER MELBOURNE

Narre Warren
Berwick
Pakenham
Karingal
Dandenong Club
Sunbury
Brighton (Indoor)
Geelong

REGIONAL VICTORIA

Traralgon (Indoor)
Morwell (x2)
Sebastopol
Shepparton Park
East Shepparton
Warrnambool (x2)
Colac
Barham







CASE STUDIES

NARRE WARREN

Build & Investment

- Two greens covered (synthetic) in 2021
- \$2.0 million (2021) \$1m (Federal and State Government), \$750K (Casey Council),
 \$250K Club/community donations

Key Impacts

- Membership more than doubled and is continuing to increase
- Participation has increased from 400 to over 2500 with increased competitions, programs and opportunities to bowl day and night throughout the year
- Cover protects bowlers in all seasons
- Due to the open sided roof structure design, Narre Warren has retained its status to stage open air tournaments
- Increased economic impact in the region as a result of hosting events



1 100%

1 575% PARTICIPATION

GEELONG

Build & Investment

- Single green covered (synthetic)
- \$650K (State Government). Balance from proceeds of sale of two clubs (Geelong West and Drumcondra) that merged to create Geelong City

Key Impacts

- Social bowling participation doubled to 1200 people a month, with many nonbowling members now using the green/facility
- New schools participants (now 200-300 each month)
- Post-Covid Club membership increases of ~30% per year.
- Night-time pennant matches and evening barefoot bowls sessions
- Hosting of several new Regional and State events (e.g. Victorian Teachers Games) due to being able to provide certainty of play in any weather





CASE STUDIES

KARINGAL

Build & Investment

- Single green covered (synthetic)
- \$1.57 million (2021) self-funded (gaming venue)
- 2021 Winner of (SAPIA) Sports & Play Industry award for excellence

Key Impacts

- Participation up by 200% and continual membership growth, even during the COVID period
- Previously closed five months each year through winter
- Hosting of an Interstate Test Series in winter (not previously possible)
- New SuperLeague evening competition attracting players from other regions
- Hosts the largest streamed competition on the Mornington Peninsula due to certainty of play regardless of weather conditions
- Capacity to host school participant programs at all times



1 100%
MEMBERSHIP

† 200% PARTICIPATION

DANDENONG

Build & Investment

- Single green covered (synthetic)
- Club funded (gaming venue)

Key Impacts

- Number of participants has more than trebled and Membership more than doubled
- Club now used on average 90 hours per week, from an average of 36
- Club now provides thousands of social experiences with barefoot parties and corporate events all year round
- Now hosts many high profile competitions due to certainty of play
- Hosting of several new Regional and State events



T 100%
MEMBERSHIP

1 300% PARTICIPATION



BOOSTING COMMUNITY INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY

- Create capacity to expand both the social and competitive Bowls offering to meet the preferences of people of all ages and skills
- Extend capacity for evening participation (and outside of traditional working hours) meeting the needs of people with different levels of time availability and preference
- Provide greater capacity to deliver programs and competition for all abilities bowls - blind, deaf, para-ID and para-physical bowlers
- Provide for extended use by schools in all weather conditions
- Provide greater capacity to offer the Bowling with Babies program, providing new mothers with important means of connection and recreation
- Cater to people of different levels of health and fitness through offering a wider range of programs
- Enhance Bowls Clubs' proven ability to play a key role in providing social opportunities through engagement in sport and healthy activity - an important part of regional Victoria's community fabric
- Capitalise on the central location of Bowls Clubs in many regional towns to create a year round place for recreation and connection
- Capitalise on the low cost and lack of barriers to entry of the sport and opening up more opportunities for all to participate

DELIVERING DIRECT HEALTH BENEFITS

- Provide important shade from sun to counter the incidence of skin cancer (melanoma), particularly among older Australians
- Expand opportunities for regular social connection, which offers proven capacity to sustain and improve mental health
- Provide older people with more opportunities to participate in healthy activity in a non-confronting environment, no matter their skills
- Studies have shown that a person who participates in Bowls is likely to be 12% physically healthier than someone who is not¹
- Provide an inclusive non-collision sport option for younger people, with opportunities to play for fun (e.g. Roll Up program) or participate in development pathways and competition to elite level.





¹Building an evidence base to increase participation in Lawn Bowls (Centre for Sport and Social Impact, La Trobe University, 2013)

GENERATING ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- Enable the attraction and frequent hosting of regional, state, national and international level events in Victorian locations - the Victorian Open in Gippsland generates over \$3 million in economic input per year to the regional economy.
- Enable the creation of new events attracting inter-regional and intrastate participants (e.g. SuperLeague competition in Karingal)
- Creating potential for new casual and full time jobs (and training) in Club services and hospitality throughout the year

IMPROVING CLUB HEALTH & SELF-SUFFICIENCY

- Create proven capacity to boost membership and social participation, boosting Club revenue streams
- Provide the capacity to expand club operations, including hospitality and dining, by day and night across the full calendar year, delivering significant financial benefits
- Opportunity to generate new revenue from the hosting of new tournaments and key events
- Expanded capacity to attract and host corporate functions and events throughout the year
- Improve member, customer and visitor satisfaction levels through providing a non-weather dependent consistent and diverse offering
- Improve player comfort levels in all conditions, encouraging increased participation and Club attendance throughout the year
- Provide improved conditions for Club volunteers, event officials and program delivery officers
- Create new opportunity for contracting of hospitality providers, and improve hospitality offerings, with an increased and consistent level of customer use throughout the year
- Improve the sponsor offering, resulting in increased Club revenues
- Reduce the cost of maintenance and repair through protection from weather extremes and the provision of covered synthetic greens









The Covered Greens Initiative will contribute to the achievement of public policy objectives of both the Victorian and Federal Governments.

In particular, it will deliver key outcomes in areas of demonstrated community need and Government focus including:

- Physical and mental health
- Promoting engagement in healthy activity and sport for older Australians
- Youth engagement in healthy activity and sport
- Promotion of social connection, inclusion and diversity
- Improving opportunities for regional Victorians
- Contributing to regional visitor economies
- Promoting intergenerational activity

1. ACTIVE VICTORIA 2022-2026 (VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT)

The outcomes of the Covered Green Project will directly contribute to the achievement of each of the key targets articulated in the Active Victoria policy.

- Increasing equitable participation in sport and active recreation
- Delivering quality infrastructure that is accessible, respectful and inclusive
- Building the capability of the sport and active recreation workforce
- Implementing good governance practices to ensure a safe and sustainable sector
- Supporting a pipeline of sporting events within the Victorian events calendar
- Encouraging Victorians to achieve success at the highest level through high performance.

2. REGIONAL SPORTING FACILITIES INVESTMENT

Investment in bowls facilities in regional Victoria will also support the Government's re-commitment to delivering the anticipated sports facility legacy from the Commonwealth Games and enable the attraction of new events of high value to the regional visitor economy.





National trends show people are moving away from organised sport towards less structured, informal physical activity opportunities.

However, sport has a broad value proposition meaning it contributes far more to communities than just a way to be physically active. This is particularly true in regional areas where sport is often at the heart of local communities.

ACTIVE VICTORIA 2022-2026

3. AGEING WELL ACTION PLAN 2022-26 (VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT)

The project's objectives directly contribute to the achievement of Priority Action Area 1 of the Victorian Government's Ageing Well Action Plan 2022-26.

Priority action area 1: Resilient, connected seniorsIncreasing opportunities for older people to retain a sense of purpose through social and intergenerational connections

"Older people told the Commissioner for Senior Victorians that volunteering and belonging to clubs or community groups is vital for having meaning and purpose in life.

It also leads to social connections that they can sustain. During our extended lockdown periods, many community-based organisations stopped operating. This meant they lost volunteers and members, and stopped running activities.

Helping older people and community organisations get back to offering social activities will help the wellbeing of all Victorians."

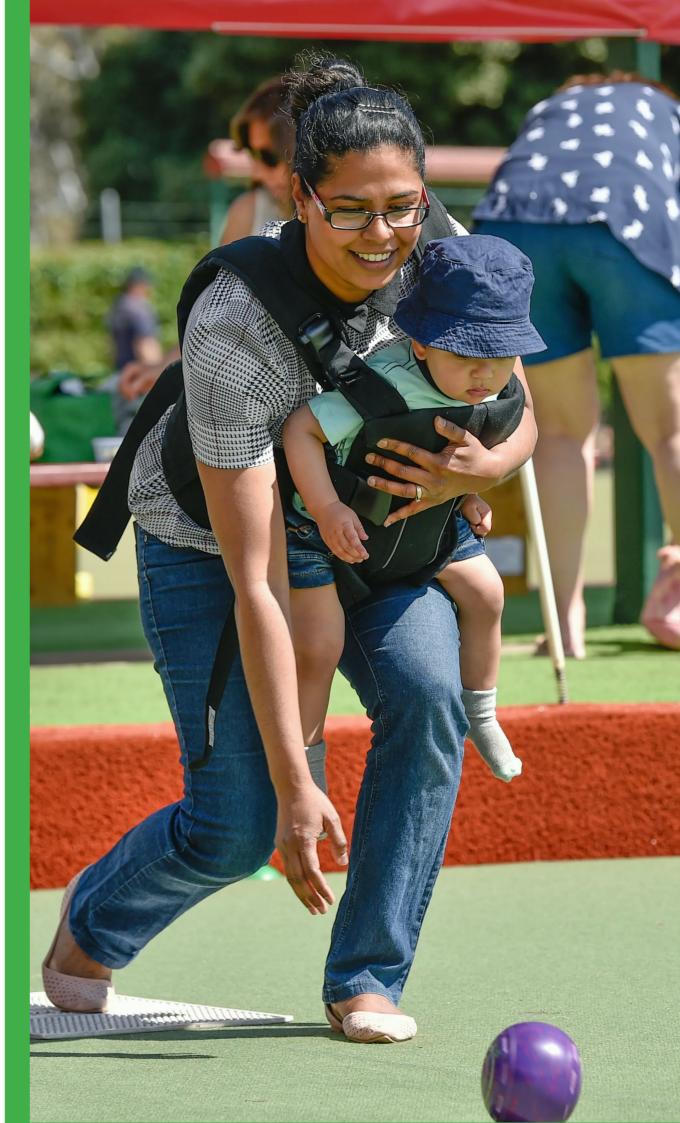
4. SPORT 2030 - NATIONAL SPORT PLAN (FEDERAL)

The Federal Government's primary sports policies are articulated through the Sport 2030 National Sport Plan, administered by Sport Australia.

The plan's four key priority areas include:

- Build a more active Australia More Australians, more active, more often
 - > Reduce inactivity amongst Australians by 15% by 2030
 - > More people of all ages engaged in sport and physical activity throughout every stage of their life
- Strengthening Australia's sport industry
 - > A thriving Australian sport and recreation industry.
 - > A strong, viable, contemporary and inclusive sports industry with high quality successful organisations driving economic and social benefits





Each of Sport 2030's five target outcomes are in direct alignment with the aims of the Covered Greens initiative:

- Improve the physical health of Australians through the benefits of sport and physical activity, including reduced risk of chronic conditions.
- Improve the mental health of Australians through the recognised mental health benefits of sport and physical activity, including the improved management of mental illness and greater social connectedness.
- Grow personal development from taking up a new challenge, to setting a new personal goal or striving for the podium, being active can help everyone endeavour to be their best self.
- Strengthen our communities by harnessing the social benefits of sport including through improved cohesion and reduced isolation
- Grow Australia's economy building on the already significant contribution of sport to the Australian economy.

The number of Australians over the age of 65 is projected to more than double in the next 40 years.

Being physically active in older age has significant cardiovascular and metabolic health benefits, it also helps to control weight and combat chronic conditions.

Beyond the individual physical and mental health benefits, Australia's network of community-based sporting clubs and competitions is a unique source of social capital which helps bind Australian communities.





PROJECT FOCUS

The project will have a strong focus on achieving access to covered greens for all Victorian bowls participants within 60 minutes travel from their homes.

Regional Victoria and key metropolitan population growth corridors will be a high priority for project delivery.

PROJECT DELIVERY & INVESTMENT

Bowls Victoria, in partnership with Bowls Clubs, proposes to work directly with all tiers of Government and relevant agencies to achieve the most effective means of project funding and delivery.

Based upon previous projects (including design and construction cost escalation over time), the current estimated cost of covered green installation is approximately \$1.6 million per site.

Bowls Victoria is seeking the support of Governments to realise the Covered Greens initiative.

It is anticipated that individual Clubs will contribute in accordance with their means to the cost of individual project delivery.







