

History of the Narre Warren Bowls Club

The catalyst for the formation of the club was a letter written to the City of Berwick (later named the City of Casey) in March 1984 by two Berwick bowlers, living at the time in Narre Warren. The bowlers, Lorna and Bill Wilson, pointed out the need for a second bowling club in the district as the existing club, Berwick, had reached saturation point. At that time the Berwick club had 300 members, and a long list waiting to join that club.

The City of Berwick responded in a positive way, and in October 1985 thirty-one bowls enthusiasts met at a public meeting called to look into the possibility of a second bowls club being formed in the area. Two possible sites were considered, with one being the current club site. A Steering Committee was formed at this meeting.

The Steering Committee was very active, and commenced raising funds and running bowls tournaments, with the help of the Berwick Bowls Club. A public meeting was held on the 9th April 1986, and quoting from a copy of the Invitation 'for persons 18 years and over who are interested, and wish to become members of this worthwhile club'. A total of 74 people attended the meeting, and of these 72 paid \$2.00, and thus became the foundation members of the club.

The decision on the site was made in February 1986 based on advice the Council received from an organisation called the Turf Research and Advisory Institute. A local newspaper article published in February 1986 detailed the advice given by the Institute. It says that included in the Institutes advice was a statement 'the site next to the oval allowed for the development of two good greens, with the potential for a third if the cricket oval was moved closer to the highway'.

Work started on the construction of the Green A in April or May 1987. Green A was constructed first and was completed some two years before Green B was completed. The first AGM of the Narre Warren Bowls Club was held on the 12th May 1987 at the Fountain Gate Cricket Club Pavilion. A Councillor of the Royal Victorian Bowls Association, Harry Reid, took the chair for the election of Office Bearers. Bob Roff was elected President. The meeting agreed on a joining Fee of \$30.00 and an annual fee of \$50.00 per member.

The Narre Warren Bowls Club was formally opened on the 19th September 1987. A large crowd attended the opening including special guests from the City of Berwick, RVBA, LBA and West Gippsland Bowling Association. A special guest was Mrs Sylvia Nobelius who was presented with a club badge. The significance of this presentation was that while the club badge was designed by Secretary Wattling, it depicted the Narre Warren Memorial Gates - which in turn had been built by Jack Nobelius. The Memorial is a substantial structure build in 1923 in memory of locals lost in WW1, and originally sited at the entry to the Narre Warren Sports Ground.

The club has undergone many changes during its 32-year history. Major changes include the club once being located in a rural type environment surrounded by large eucalyptus trees with access via a dirt track, to now being in a generally highly developed area. From once being a member and playing in the West Gippsland Bowling Association to now being part of the Metropolitan Section. From once having separate Men's and Ladies Divisions to now being unified under one umbrella. From once having two grass greens maintained solely by members to now having two synthetic greens.

The club has had a successful history, and the future looks bright. With funds now available, the club will soon see both greens covered with state -of -the -art domes to provide for all weather bowls and community events. It is intended the roof structure will complement the beauty of the nearby Bunjil Place structure. In addition, plans to upgrade the clubrooms are well advanced.