



Memo 343.19b

To: Club Secretaries, Club Presidents, District Secretaries & District Presidents

From: Women's Bowls NSW Head Office

cc: Women's Bowls NSW Board, Committee & Staff Members

Date: 24th May 2019

Re: **Annual Affiliation Fees – Frequently Asked Questions**

Further to the recently released affiliation model (memo 343.19), we provide a series of frequently asked questions. We note that this document was compiled from questions and comments directly received from the membership. Women's Bowls NSW provided all responses.

We understand that the new affiliation model is a large departure from the traditional system, however with increased costs of operation from core requirements such as electricity and amenities, printing, insurances, postage, stationary and travel, and after substantial operational losses for Women's Bowls NSW over the last few years, we were required to take steps to implement a correction.

We provide the following points as a basis for the Frequently Asked Question document attached:

- Modelling undertaken on the 2018/19 membership and expected expenditure for next year provides a breakeven point at \$80.00 per member. This is the value of our Gold membership which is the comparable membership level to our traditional membership. The Silver membership is the reduced value option offered as an alternative to those who do not want to play at the highest-level competitions that we offer.
- A 3.5% increase pa is required to maintain cost to income ratios. Those clubs that retain or increase overall membership are exempt from the increase. This was included as a recruitment initiative as retained membership provides greater income than would be offset by the 3.5% increase. This is not a penalty but rather an incentive for clubs to continue their recruiting efforts.
- Juniors and new members are free to join, which is also an inducement designed to promote recruitment. Clubs are encouraged to pass on this benefit to new members however we do not mandate that they do and rely on each club to implement this as they see fit.



- For most Clubs, affiliation reverts to the same price it was prior to the introduction of fixed fees.

We hope that this document will resolve some of the queries that have arisen from the implementation of this new affiliation model.

It would be appreciated if this Frequently Asked Questions document could be made available to all of your members.

Women's Bowls NSW

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

MEMBERSHIP

- 1. Can you please confirm for me that the fee structure outlined in the memo 343.19 is intended to be implemented immediately? Renewal Notices at our Club were sent out a couple of weeks ago and members are already paying their fees for the amount our Committee has determined and budgeted for. If the new structure is supposed to be happening for renewals due now, this is going to cause us quite a headache and I would appreciate your early response.***

The per member affiliation fee replacing fixed fees will be effective 1st July 2019 in line with our annual returns period. Notice of the fixed fee review was provided frequently since the WBNSW AGM last September.

- 2. Do members or clubs decide which level of membership, silver or gold, will be applied for?***

Generally, the club is free to decide the implementation of the membership level. Some clubs have opted to have a local rule where every member will be a Silver, or every member will be Gold depending on their activities, whilst other clubs have allowed individual members to assess their own desired level. We don't have a hard and fast rule in how that is implemented as it provides the club the opportunity and flexibility to determine what is best for them on an individual basis. However, WBNSW will facilitate the ability for every member to determine their own level if the club decides to implement it that way.

- 3. Are the fees listed inclusive of GST.***

The fees noted are inclusive of GST

- 4. Could you please advise the amount attributed to Bowls Australia in the 2019/20 Affiliation Fees?***

Whilst I can't provide figures specific to each individual membership, Bowls Australia payments will work out to be approximately 28% of total membership revenue received by us. Last financial year, this equated to a figure in excess of \$250,000.

- 5. The increase per year of 3.5 percent is well above the CPI of 1.8 or 1.9 percent which is a huge hike.***

The price is a gradual increase to account for the many years in which the price either remained unchanged, increased less than CPI levels or in some years was actually reduced. It is also reflective of the move back to a per member rate rather than a fixed fee model which absorbed some of those required increases. This will plateau over time but is a requirement in the short term to normalise pricing.

6. **Gold Membership (\$80) entitles members to play in the events run by Districts of which an affiliation fee is also paid to District. Will this membership now eliminate the fee paid to District if not, Members will now have to pay the gold membership and District affiliation fee as in our case \$12 making a total \$92 and then if Clubs do not maintain their membership will incur a penalty of 3.5%.**

The membership options are exclusively pricing for membership to Women's Bowls NSW. District and club fees are not included in this membership pricing. The 3.5% increase is a standard increase on the affiliation fee each year for the next three years. This is payable on all membership fees to ensure the cost of membership meets the projected increase in costs. It is envisaged that this will plateau over time. The 3.5% increase is not a penalty but not applying it is an incentive for clubs to recruit and maintain membership year on year. Keeping prices stagnant will result in the need to increase prices substantially in a couple of years as we have had to do now owing to previous stagnating prices. The 3.5% increase ensures this will not be required into the future.

7. **If 4 members decide to change from silver membership to gold membership does that mean that the club will be charged up to 3.5% because their silver membership has fallen by 4, even though the overall club membership has not changed? If this is the case, is the 3.5% based on the number of silver members the club currently has or on the 4 players that are no longer silver members?**

The factored 3.5% increase is factored on overall membership regardless of the Silver or Gold membership ratio.

8. **Will the 3.5% be added on if we don't retain our membership to silver membership or our gold membership or to the total amount.**

The 3.5% will be added to the top of each membership type. Gold will be \$82.80, Silver \$62.10 per member in 2020/21 year. However, what we will be looking for is the maintenance or increase in overall membership numbers for the club to be eligible. There will be no increase for clubs who maintain their total membership levels regardless of the membership type that each member holds.

9. **Are clubs to suffer the 3.5% annual increase if they increase their membership?**

No – Clubs who retain or increase overall membership from the year prior will not incur the factored price rise of 3.5% for membership for that year

10. **If you join now as a silver member and then when the fees are due next financial year you decide that you want to join as a gold member does the \$30 transfer fee apply.**

At the time of annual return each year the member will decide what level of membership they wish to be and pay that fee accordingly. Should they decide mid- year (between annual return periods) to upgrade from Silver to Gold, they will incur the upgrade fee paid to WBNSW of \$30.00 dollars which is

the difference between the silver and gold memberships (\$20.00) plus the costs of printing the new card and postage (\$10.00).

- 11. Upgrades from Silver to Gold membership may occur midyear, what timeframe is midyear? Can a member upgrade at any time if she chooses to do so, especially if the member wishes to participate in the events as listed in the membership categories?**

Upgrades can occur anytime outside of the usual affiliation period.

- 12. The Club's usual policies and fee structure states that members must pay the WBNSW affiliation fee, but under the WBNSW new affiliation policy, new members are not liable for this fee. Does this mean that the Club can charge the fee and retain it for their funds?**

The waiving of membership fees for new players is a resource to assist in recruitment, we would hope clubs would consider the merits of passing on the free membership to encourage new membership and participation, however we do not mandate that action, and rely on each club to make the best decision for each.

- 13. Can you confirm that all members who have joined our club within the last 24 months will not be subject to charge for affiliation in the first year of this new system (2019/20)?**

That is not correct. The new affiliation model is not retrospective. Any member who joins WBNSW after the annual returns period at 1 July 2019, who has not been a member with us for the past two years will not be charged to be a member in that year. Their first membership levy will be charged the following annual return period. This encourages clubs to recruit new members to "try" the sport before incurring membership fees.

- 14. The new system introduced is discriminatory, why are you trying to divide club members?**

The new system is not discriminatory by any means. It provides equal opportunity for every player to select the level of membership appropriate to them. Every member is afforded the same opportunity. The introduction of the Silver membership is to cater for those who do not want to play at the higher levels. Gold membership is the standard membership with Silver being the alternative option. Both are equally available to all members.

As noted in FAQ 2 , if clubs believe the tiered system is dividing club members, clubs may wish to adopt a local rule of all members only being eligible for the one type of membership. That is for each club to determine themselves.

DISTRICT

- 15. On the silver membership you may be eligible to nominate to a district committee. Do you have to be a member of the district to nominate?**

Yes, you do. This is a condition of the District Constitution (22.2) (d)

- 16. Do the Silver category players have to play District Fees or is it only those who may wish to stand for a District Position or delegate?**

Yes, at this point all members of Women's Bowls NSW must be a member of a District. However, this matter has been included on the agenda at the upcoming District Presidents Conference for discussion.

- 17. As a Silver Member I am allowed the privilege to nominate for positions on various Club or District committees, in a volunteer capacity, but will be charged extra to play in District & Region events.**

The difference in Gold and Silver membership is not an extra charge. The Gold membership is the equivalent or comparable to the traditional membership that had been in place for many years. The introduction of the Silver membership is a reduction from the standard gold membership for those who do not compete in all events provided as a value add offering. If we were to move to a single tiered model, the gold membership and fee would be the default membership utilised to cover the costs required by the Association for conducting events. As explained elsewhere, we will be rationalising some of the expenses in order to compensate for the financial losses for those electing to take Silver membership.

BOWLS MATTERS

- 18. The additional \$11 for Bowls Matters seems excessive. Will this be available online for our members?**

\$11.00 is well under the cost to produce, print and post 2 editions of the Bowls Matters magazine. The \$11.00 charged actually offsets the excessive cost of the magazine, it does not cover it nor absorbs it completely. As indicated in the memo, Bowls Matters is available electronically at no cost and can also be printed from there if desired.

- 19. Will we be permitted to put a link to Bowls Matters magazine on our club website?**

There will be a link on our website (as there is now) to Bowls Matters. Being an external publishing site that will host the electronic magazine, your club would be better served linking to the Women's Bowls NSW website where the magazine will be available rather than a direct link to the magazine.

EVENTS

20. ***The Silver Membership (\$60) is pretty useless up here in the northern region as we do not get to play in the extra events such as:***

- ***Weekend pennant - which we have no need for***
- ***Summer League - no one here wants to be involved in that either,***
- ***State Carnival a few teams from the district will go to, but it is a handful at most.***

That is where it becomes discerning, as these events are of no interest to us.

As I'm sure it can be appreciated, WBNSW are required to set policy and rules that cater for all clubs not ones that are specific to any single entity or region. We politely suggest that possibly adopting events like Summer League, Weekend Pennant or encouraging the participation in the State Carnival will provide greater value for money and possibly assist in your club's recruitment of new members who may join with less restrictive playing opportunities available to them. The fact that members of your club have an option to participate in the events mentioned however elect not to, is disappointing to us however remains a choice for your club members.

21. ***Our main competition in the area is Pennant and District Championships etc. - which we would be excluded from in the Silver. So, it doesn't give members much incentive to join at \$60 just to play in club championships.***

The Silver membership is not designed for people wishing to play Pennant. Whilst we hope many clubs would play Pennant, we accept that not all are going to and as such we have provided the Silver option. We note that membership for less than \$2.00 per week is not unaffordable in the current market. It is the choice of all members to determine whether they elect to take Gold or Silver membership when deciding if membership is for them. Running and conducting Pennant is an expensive exercise that has run at a loss for far too long. This event needs to be self-sustaining to continue, however those expenses should not be imposed upon those players who do not play in that competition.

22. ***We also see that under the Silver, we can be on the District Committee, vote on District issues, have a Delegate to District, cannot play for District, but we can play in the Australian Open, Don't you think there is a discrepancy there?***

There are many people who don't play Pennants or District events any longer but who would like to volunteer their time to a District, and they have a lot of experience and expertise to offer. Hence the allowance to include this under the Silver membership. The allowance for the Australian Open is based on this event being self-entered (not through clubs) and sanctioned by Bowls Australia. It has no relevance to District or Club activity and is not controlled

by WBNSW. It is a requirement of the Australian Open that a player must be a member of a State Association. Any affiliated member can submit an entry to BA directly for this event. Placing the AO at Silver level allows more people the opportunity to play at this event.

23. ***Isn't Pennant the core of Lawn Bowling, together with down to basic District Championships? What will happen to Districts? Is there a future for them? Members will be penalised for their club's membership reducing and will be charged the extra 3.5% levy if that happens. Very rude. A lot of small clubs are facing the wall as it is. There are so many clubs who are in areas where their members are the older generations therefore finding it hard to replenish with younger membership. This is not just any one club as you say, it will be many. Unbelievable.***

It is our position that participation, enjoyment, inclusiveness, health and well-being and community as well as competition are the core of lawn bowls and will sustain the sport going forward. Districts are still a very important part of the sporting landscape and we regularly contact District Presidents and Secretaries informing them of what we are doing and our plans. There is nothing within the membership document to indicate the demise of Districts.

Further, in relation to the 3.5%, that is a standard increase which will be implemented as a result of a decreasing membership. If clubs are proactive in recruitment and maintaining their membership, they should be rewarded and encouraged as the maintenance of membership offsets some of the losses that are incurred by clubs who do not recruit or replenish diminishing memberships. These clubs offset the rising costs for clubs who don't. Membership is the cornerstone of your club's long-term survival, hence the reason there is no charge for new members and no charge for juniors in this new plan. There is also a membership grant available to clubs to recruit new players to their clubs. We suggest any club that is not taking steps to recruit new members is destined to fold in time, regardless of the fees charged. Unfortunately, it is an inevitability that can't be ignored. WBNSW has no preference in relation to age at which new players are recruited. We encourage clubs to recruit from all generations in their community not just younger ladies.

24. ***The average Club bowler would not play in City v Country, Australia, State trial games or Australian Side teams for NSW and maybe one or two may play in the Indoor Australian Singles. Members who like playing Pennants for their Club, are now being asked to pay \$80 plus the District fee of \$12 to be eligible and may not even be selected.***

We are trying to provide an alternative for the grassroots player. Members who choose to play in the higher level competitions are asked to contribute a greater membership fee. That is the result of a per member pricing structure. Further, District fees are set by the Individual Districts with some not charging at all.

25. **We have a member who has qualified and entered into the Champion of Club Champion Singles to be held July 2019. If she renews her membership, which is due on the 30th June 2019, and elects to be a Silver member will she be eligible to participate in the tournament? If not, will her entry fee be reimbursed?**

Champion of Club Champion Singles can be played by a Silver member. Whilst it is not specifically listed, for clarity we will add this event into our membership category list. For any other withdrawal, the player would need to comply with the Conditions of Play.

26. **Our grade 1 and grade 2 Pennant sides are to play in the regional playoffs on Sunday the 19th May 2019. If either or both were to win would any member that elects to renew their membership on the 30th June 2019 as a Silver member be eligible to play in the State Pennant Finals in August 2019?**

Only gold members are eligible to play in Pennant Finals.

27. **In the past when we play Pennants for example, when playing at home, if for whatever reason, we have to call somebody from the floor to fill in that day, under this scheme is it right that only gold members can fill in? If all our gold players are already playing can a silver player fill in? Otherwise does it mean that all our players have to be gold members to play. We have a number of players that don't want to commit to pennants but will fill in if requested. I am keen to know where we stand on this matter.**

Under the new affiliation model, only those that are Gold Level members can play in the Pennants competition. Sides are permitted to play a player short if a gold member replacement/substitute player cannot be found.

28. **As a Silver member, I am permitted to play in the "Summer League" and the "Weekend Pennant". If I happen to win, say the Weekend Pennant at District level then am I permitted to play at Regional Level considering that I am only a Silver Member?**

Yes – Summer League and Weekend Pennant are both indicated on the Membership Category List as permissible on Silver membership.

29. **If you have a non-playing manager for Pennants, do they have to be gold, or can they be silver as they're not playing.**

In this example, Silver membership is fine for the non-playing manager. However if for some reason a Silver member was the manager they could not become the reserve for the team and play if required.

30. **As you can play Weekend Pennants on a Silver affiliation, are you able to play in a Grade 5 Pennant side during the week on a silver affiliation.**

As grade 5 (shield or plate) is a club/district level event that does not progress to State level, therefore it does fall under the Silver Member category.

GENERAL

31. *Is it not the position of Women's Bowls NSW that the sport is becoming very expensive?*

Bowls is undervalued as a sport and has been for too long. There is not another sport or pastime where the cost to be a member of the Association is less than \$2.00 per week. The attempt in the past to keep the sport "affordable" has resulted in the current position of needing to bring the sport and the Association back to a level of sustainability.

32. *This will make an increase of \$22 per person in our club. We have been lucky to a degree in that the old system did suit us but feel that the 2-tier pricing system is wrong and should be made more uniform with one price of maybe \$70 all round.*

The two-tiered system was introduced at the request of many members who felt that membership was geared towards the player who plays at the higher level at the expense of the grassroots player. Whilst the option existed for us to implement a single fee, the option chosen allows choice amongst the players. During the review, it was envisaged that the breakeven point for the Association is \$80.00 per player. The introduction of the silver membership was to avoid the increase for those grassroots players and ask players who want the option to play at the higher levels of competition, to choose Gold membership to cover the costs of this option. The difference in income will be found by reducing costs where possible. Even a \$22 increase (at the maximum) equates to less than 50 cents per week which is not a lot considering the price of affiliation has fluctuated for many years. It was cheaper to affiliate in 2015/16 (last of the per member years) than it was in 2008/09. Please bear in mind that even at the \$60 and \$80 price points, the current costs to running the sport are unachievable, however have been set in order to minimise the effect on players.

33. *Social Bowlers must be a Silver Member to make them eligible to just play social bowls at their Clubs? Is this correct?*

No that is incorrect. Social members may be Silver members or may not, depending on the requirements stipulated by the club. If they want the privileges of the other items listed under the Silver membership, then they must obviously take Silver membership.

34. *Will there be some recognition on Club Membership lists as to who is Silver and Gold Members? Reason being, when checking on Members for District and Representative Games, I always check on National ID etc. Will there be recognition on Membership Lists?*

Yes, there will be a distinguishing method for Gold and Silver members on all lists, membership cards and alike. We anticipate some clubs will also develop records to reflect the differing membership status.

35. *We will have two category of membership, Gold and Silver – will all new membership cards be introduced and our membership numbers all changed?*

The membership cards are provided annually so each member would receive a new card even under the old system. However, under the new system, each member will receive a card which will indicate their level of membership. In regards to individual membership numbers we are currently assessing a new database and whilst we would like the numbers to remain consistent and intend for that to occur, until a final assessment is completed on the database and its capabilities we cannot guarantee it.

36. *Do our umpires have to be gold or can they be a silver affiliation.*

No they don't have to be gold members – Umpires have a separate national accreditation. The accreditation of officials is not linked or has any relevance to the gold or silver membership levels.

37. *It is disappointing that WBNSW have decided to introduce two tiers of membership. The new fee structure will drive members to drop their affiliation and play at their clubs on a social basis which would be very disappointing.*

if the decision was made to move to a single tiered membership as suggested, it would be the gold membership level with no discounted Silver membership available. Surely, those you suggest that would be inclined to drop Silver membership would do the same if there was only one gold membership available for the same reasons. At least under the current scheme there is a more attractive model that they may consider, allowing them to maintain formal participation in the sport.