



## Open Bowls Position Statement

In recent years there have been a number of challenges relating to anti-discrimination legislation at club, regional and state/territory association level. Bowls Australia has undertaken detailed research and has formulated a position on Open Bowls in Australia.

Open Bowls is defined as a competition that does not discriminate based on gender, age, religion, race, culture, disability or any other trait. For example, where a competition allows for both genders to participate in an event concurrently, open competition does not need to be staged.

Strength, stamina and physique has been proven to be irrelevant to the sport of bowls (Royal Victorian Bowls Association Inc. (Anti-Discrimination Exemption) [2008] VCAT 2415) and as such is unlikely to be successful as an exception to discrimination in bowls on the grounds of gender.

Legislation differs in each state/territory and federally. All stakeholders in bowls in Australia should be aware of their obligations under the relevant anti-discrimination Act that applies in their area. It is up to the relevant organisation to ensure that all aspects of their operations comply with all applicable legislation.

Bowls Australia encourages its state/territory associations, districts, regions, associations and clubs to apply the following principles:

- Where only single gender competition is offered, it is desirable to provide an opportunity for Open Bowls to take place;
- Wherever possible, promote and encourage Open Bowls at grassroots level;
- Provide equal access to greens and other facilities for all members;
- Provide equal opportunities for all members in all aspects of club, region and association operations, including within its constitutions.

For more information on the relevant legislation, please contact:

- Your state/territory bowls association;
- Your relevant state/territory anti-discrimination or human rights commission;
- Australian Human Rights Commission;
- Bowls Australia.

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