

Bowls Australia

Participant Experience Survey:
Summary Report



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Prepared for: National Women in Bowls Working Party

Prepared by: Sarah Kearney

1. Summary and suggested actions

The National Women in Bowls Working Party collected a rich data set of 22 qualitative and quantitative questions from 2,965 lawn bowlers in mid-2020. The majority of survey participants identified as female (67%) and were aged 65-75 years old (45%). Analysis of survey responses was particularly focussed on the following five issues, which will inform the development of the National Women in Bowls Strategy and associated implementation activities.

1.1. Differences in gender

The majority of the sample identified as female 67% (referred to as women throughout this report), with 30% identifying as male (throughout this report), one individual as non-binary and the remainder preferring not to disclose their gender. While men and women had similar roles in bowls, their perspectives and experiences were quite different.

- Men were more likely to play weekend competitions whereas women were more likely play weekdays. For example, 76% of men played open pennants on the weekend as opposed to 46% of women.
- On the issue of mixed gender competition, men were more likely to *only* agree with positive statements about playing with the opposite gender (83% of men, 69% of women). A larger proportion of women (20%) demonstrated a mixed response, agreeing with both positive and negative statements about mixed gender competition, compared to men (7% gave a mixed response).
- There was a statistically significant difference in the proportion of women and men who had experienced or witnessed unacceptable behaviour- 49% of women and 36% of men reported this experience. The majority of men and women who provided examples of these behaviours described men who verbally intimidated or diminished women. Female survey participants provided a wider range of experiences of unacceptable behaviour, including sexual remarks, aggressive 'coaching' and the deliberate use of inappropriate language by men to put women off participating.
- Barriers to participation most frequently reported by men were a lack of time due to work/study commitments and timing of events. Women were more likely to mention bullying or intimidation as a current or previous barrier.
- Overall, women were less likely than men to report that *women and men were treated equally within bowls, that new women were welcomed and encouraged by men* and that *new ideas were welcomed and encouraged in bowls*. On the other hand, a greater proportion of women reported that *new women are welcomed and encouraged by other women*.
- Men were more likely than women to believe that bowls was accessible enough for women to participate (79% of men and 75% of women agreed). Similarly, men were more likely to believe that more opportunities existed for women now, compared to five years ago (61% of men and 46% of women believed more opportunities exist now).

Overall, it appears that more men held the general perception that bowls is a gender equal environment, whereas women had a heightened awareness of systemic barriers (such as access to competition and selection), social issues (such as unacceptable language and behaviour) as well as cultural issues (subtle stereotypes and discrimination). On a positive note, many men were also aware of these issues and like their female colleagues, were largely supportive of building a more inclusive culture.

1.2. Differences in age

35% of the survey sample were aged under 65 years. The majority of this younger age group were working in some capacity. The remaining 65% of survey participants were aged over 65 years, the vast majority of which were retired. Age appeared to have less bearing on an individual's responses to questions than gender, with the following exceptions.

- Women under 65 years were significantly more likely to report having witnessed or experienced sexist behaviours (62%) compared to women over 65 years (47%). There was no significance age difference for men (38% under 65 and 36% over 65 had witnessed or experienced such behaviours).
- Barriers to participation most frequently cited by younger players, aged 65 years and under were lack of time and timing of events. In contrast, those aged 65 and over were more likely to list poor health or injury as a barrier to playing.
- Overall, people aged over 65 years appeared to take a more positive view of the level of equality in bowls. Those aged 65 and over were more likely to agree that *new ideas were welcomed and encouraged*, that *women and men were treated equally*, and that *new women were welcomed and encouraged by other women*, compared to those under 65.
- Those aged under 65 years were significantly more likely to believe that more opportunities existed for women now than it did in the last five years (55%) compared to those aged over 65 (49%).
- The highest number of responses about inappropriate behaviour from people under age 65 was bullying or bitchiness from other women, especially toward new and younger players. Next was men not wanting to play with or against women
- On the issue of mixed gender competition, younger players (aged under 65) were more likely to be supportive, and only agree with positive statements about playing with the opposite gender (78%) than older players (71%).
- Older players (over 65) were more likely than younger players to report that no changes were required to their club to enable their participation. Younger players were more likely to report that a more inclusive culture would improve participation at their club.

Overall, while sample was skewed towards an older demographic, younger survey participants appeared to have higher level of awareness of gender inequality in bowls. It should be noted that many older players also recognised the challenges of the current culture and were supportive of change. Any efforts to make changes will need to consider how to manage the expectations of some older players who reported being content with current systems and culture.

1.3. Barriers facing younger women

Twice as many women over 65 participated in the survey compared to younger women aged under 65 years (44% vs 22%). The majority of younger women were working in some capacity (40% full time, 22% part time or casually) and 34% were retired.

- Younger women appreciated clubs that were inclusive of different age, gender, race and abilities and reported that their clubs would be improved by greater inclusion, fair selection and access to competitions.
- This group were the most likely to be aware of or report experiencing unacceptable behaviour towards women - 62% reported this had occurred in their clubs.
- There was concern that newer players - both male and female - were frequently intimidated or bullied on the basis of club rules, uniforms and etiquette, often being enforced by older players. Some survey participants highlighted the impact on young women - *I have seen both male and female senior players being grumpy (non supportive) with new women players. Considering how easily women lose their confidence, it's a miracle that we manage to keep them.*
- The image of bowls as an older person's sport was also cited as a concern for existing players and a potential barrier to recruiting more younger players. For example, when asked what the president or CEO of Bowls Australia should change about the sport, the most frequent suggestion was *target young people*, followed by *shift the perception that the game is 'just for older people'*.
- While the majority of younger women reported that women's bowls is accessible enough for women to participate (64% agreed), a large proportion (36%) disagreed. The rationale for this included the days/times available to women and players are limited (often weekday only), not enough mixed gender games are offered, games are too long for busy women and a perception that 'mixed' games still preference men.
- A small proportion of responses demonstrated that there were attitudinal barriers to young women, particularly working women and/or women with children. There was a perception that these groups should not be prioritised as they were a 'lost cause' - too busy and unlikely to generate memberships.

Feedback suggests that younger players of all gender identities would appreciate a more informal and social approach to bowls. Strict and expensive uniforms, rigid adherence to the rules, long games and the timing of games during the week (as opposed to after hours and weekends) were seen as significant barriers to broader and more diverse player participation. A wide range of strategies for engaging younger women and girls was

suggested, from national level communication and policy change, through to grass roots cultural change. Key suggested actions are listed on following page.

Suggested actions to engage younger women:

Club level:

1) A more informal, relaxed approach

- a) Relaxing uniform rules
- b) Family friendly start/finish times
- c) More emphasis on community and social aspects of the game
- d) A mix of social and competitive games, including mixed gender games at times accessible to women who are working or studying
- e) Consider childcare options and family friendly days

2) A fun, welcoming environment

- a) Frequent 'come and try days'
- b) Reach out via community groups, local markets and schools
- c) Entertaining atmosphere - music, night games etc.
- d) Coaching support and patience with new players

State or regional level:

3) Work with the education sector: Target schools, offer Bowls as part of school sport or after school activities

4) Support for clubs: sharing resources, develop a youth policy and associated communications materials to support cultural change

National association level:

5) Advertising to engage young women

Develop promotion strategy and messaging for younger women including:

- materials that promote young women in bowls, including elite young female players and emphasise the social and mental health benefits to women
- mixed social functions, such as evening wine, cheese and bowls evening, bowling with bubs, junior and corporate competitions
- consider how to make advertising visible to young women- for example, social media, women's news sites, childcare centres, parents groups and workplaces

1.4. Experiences of female bowlers within the current culture of bowls

Female participants described a wide range of experiences of club culture - from the very encouraging and supportive to the uncomfortable and alienating. For many players, the local bowls club was a source of friendship and inclusion. The most frequently reported enablers to participate in bowls were inclusive cultures, well run competitions, a friendly and social atmosphere and access to mixed gender competitions.

Gender based discrimination manifested in many different forms. Women provided

examples of subtle and overt examples of discrimination at every level of club culture from decision making - *I feel a women's opinion is not highly regarded* - to access to the greens - *I would change the view womens [SIC] bowls should fit in around men and the availability of greens*. The timing of women's games (which excludes working women), the selection of players to open gender teams, the expectation at some clubs that women provided the catering, misogynistic language or deliberate use of swearing or smoking by men to discourage female players were some of the more overt examples of discrimination experienced by women in bowls. As mentioned above, these subtle and overt forms of discrimination were more evident to women than to men.

Suggested actions to actively address gender inequality

Club level:

- 1)** Ensure women have equal access to the greens
 - a) Practical changes to scheduling of games, including mixed games and after hours (see actions to engage younger women above)
 - b) Fair selection processes
 - c) Examine distribution of labour by men and women - particularly volunteer positions such as catering
 - d) Support female players via women's coaching
 - e) Review, promote and enforce policies around smoking, swearing and sexual harassment

State or regional level:

- 2)** Unite state level associations: men's and women's associations brought together with equal representation
- 3)** Support for clubs - gender equality or unconscious bias training for staff, review of state policies (eg. uniform policies) with a gender lens

National association level:

- 4)** Open gender competition- look for opportunities to that have remove gender based distinctions and share positive experiences of clubs that have already done so
- 5)** Communication
 - Communication from the top down reflecting a clear consistent message on gender equality
 - Ongoing meaningful engagement with women at all levels of the sport

1.5. Engaging a more diverse range of women

Survey participants recognised the need to engage a more diverse demographic in bowls. Participants were invited to recommend strategies to engage eight groups including: Girls, Young women (18-30), Women working full time, Women with children, Retired women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls, Women and girls from culturally and

linguistically diverse backgrounds and Women and girls with disabilities. Many responses to this open ended questions were very detailed and considered the unique challenges and opportunities of engaging each group. Survey participants also recognised that they were not the experts on all groups of women and recommended directly engaging with these groups before strategies are developed.

The most frequently recommended opportunity to engage a more diverse range of women was advertising. Suggestions included television and social media advertisements to more grass roots initiatives including promotion at markets, flyers and letter box drops. Many individuals recommended that advertising would form one strategy within a broader, long-term marketing campaign to engage women in the sport.

Recommended strategies for engaging the first three groups are described on the previous page (younger women). Tailored advertising and accompanying imagery/promotion materials were also suggested for the remaining four demographic groups. It was suggested that advertising could promote:

- The social aspects and physical accessibility of bowls to **retired women and to women and girls with disabilities.**
- Existing **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** players to engage more indigenous women and girls, and consult directly with community leaders to tailor messaging
- Materials that depict multicultural players and translated resources to engage women and girls from **culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds**

Beyond advertising, a range of internal, cultural shifts as well as changes to the external perception of bowls were recommended by survey participants to broaden the diversity of bowls players, as summarised below:

Suggested actions to engage a more diverse range of women

All levels:

1) Consult and engage with different community groups

Any efforts to engage these groups must be informed by women from these backgrounds.

Club level:

2) Maintain/build inclusive culture

Clubs that were inclusive of people from different ages, genders, races and abilities were seen as an enabling factor for participation by men and women of different ages. Priority issues include:

- Address racism if /when it occurs
- Celebrate diversity (e.g. cultural celebrations)
- Promote and celebrate diversity players

3) **Accessibility**

Consider how the physical environment can facilitate participation, for example

- Translated materials
- Equipment to aid those with physical disabilities
- Promote and celebrate diversity players
- Visible Aboriginal flags and/or recognition of country
- Tailored coaching - group specific

3) **Reaching out**

Engage directly with local groups, offering come and try days and/or equipment to trial. Contacts could include:

- multicultural hubs/associations
- Aboriginal organisations and land councils
- Carers groups and associations
- Different religious organisations

State or regional level:

4) **Support for clubs-** unconscious bias training for staff, review of state policies or promotion materials with intersectional lens

National association level:

5) **Advertising-** any promotion of lawn bowls to ensure a diverse range of ages, abilities, cultural backgrounds and genders.

6) **Media-** work with the media to actively disrupt the perception of bowls as just for older, white people, e.g. via positive news stories of young/diverse players

Conclusion

On and off the green, lawn bowls can reinforce positive community standards about respect and equality. While the participant experience survey found many opportunities for improvement and for expanding to a wider range of potential players, the existing members were largely supportive of the structural and cultural changes necessary to better engage women and girls in the sport.

2. Contents

Table of Contents

1. Executive summary	i
2. Contents	8
3. Context and approach	9
3.1. Background to the survey	9
3.2. Approach to data analysis	9
3.2.1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria.....	9
3.2.2. Statistical significance.....	9
3.2.3. Qualitative analysis.....	10
4. Results	11
4.1. Demographics	11
4.1.1. Age and gender.....	11
4.1.2. Ethnicity.....	13
4.1.3. Employment status.....	13
4.1.4. State.....	15
5. Findings	16
5.1. Participation in Bowls	16
5.1.1. Years playing bowls.....	16
5.1.2. Role in lawn bowls in the last 12 months.....	16
5.1.3. Forms of lawn bowls in the last 12 months.....	17
5.1.4. Reasons for playing.....	18
5.1.5. Other sports.....	19
5.1.6. Maximising participation.....	20
5.2. Accessibility	21
5.2.1. Support of mixed gender competition.....	21
5.2.2. Club participation- enabling participation.....	23
5.2.3. Club participation- barriers to participation.....	24
5.3. Engaging women	25
5.3.1. Referring non-playing women.....	25
5.3.2. Unacceptable behaviour.....	26
5.3.1. Gender equality.....	28
5.3.2. Barriers to participation.....	32
5.3.3. Accessibility for women.....	33
5.3.4. Opportunities for women, last 5 years.....	34
5.3.5. Actions to attract women and girls.....	35
5.4. Message to the CEO/President	38
6. Appendices	40
Appendix 1: Enabling participation	40
Appendix 2: Barriers to accessibility	41
Appendix 3: Unacceptable behaviour	42
Appendix 4: Message to the CEO/President	47

3. Context and approach

3.1. Background to the survey

The following report details the findings of a survey developed and distributed by the National Women in Bowls Working Party. The survey was developed to inform the development and implementation of the National Women in Bowls Strategy. The working party requested that the report focuses on comparing:

- differences in gender
- differences in age
- the barriers facing younger women
- experiences of female bowls within the current culture of bowls
- opportunities to better engage a more diverse range of women.

While the primary audience of this report is the National Women in Bowls Working Party and Bowls Australia Board, these groups may choose to distribute the findings to other stakeholders, including State and Territory Sporting Associations and the broader Australian bowls community to inform grassroots actions. A large data set was collected- 2965 responses to 22 questions were received between July 31 and September 6, 2020. Analysis was undertaken in late September and early October of 2020 and the following report submitted to the National Women in Bowls Working Party at the end of October, 2020.

3.2. Approach to data analysis

3.2.1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

A large number of surveys were incomplete so a flexible approach to inclusion was taken. Rather than excluding all incomplete survey responses, the responses to each question have been included in the 'overall' analysis of that question. Not all participants answered every question so the n values (number of responses) varies for each question. Where age and/or gender differences have been analysed, the individuals who didn't report these details (i.e. left gender identity question blank) have been excluded.

3.2.2. Statistical significance

In order to assess the impact of age and gender on players' views, t-tests and chi-square analyses were performed, and significant results are presented throughout this report. Given the low sample size of non-binary participants and those who did not disclose their gender (n=5), these participants are excluded from all gender analyses.

3.2.3. Qualitative analysis

Due to the large sample size and detailed responses, random samples of approximately 20% of the responses to each open ended question were coded to identify key themes. The most frequent key themes are summarised in the following report with illustrative quotes provided in the Appendix.

4. Results

4.1. Demographics

4.1.1. Age and gender

What is your identified gender?

The majority of survey participants identified as female (67%) with 30% identifying as male. The remaining responses were from individuals who preferred not to provide their gender, identified as non-binary or did not answer this question.

Please indicate your age

As shown in Figure 1, the majority of survey participants, including male, female and non-binary individuals were 65-75 years old (45%). The split between under 65 and over 65 years of age overall was 35.1% to 64.9%. Only 5% of responses came from people under 45 years of age and nearly 20% were over 75 years of age. This distribution of age was reflected for both men and women. A detailed breakdown of the ages of each gender identity is provided in

Table 1.

Figure 1: Age of survey participants (n=2965)

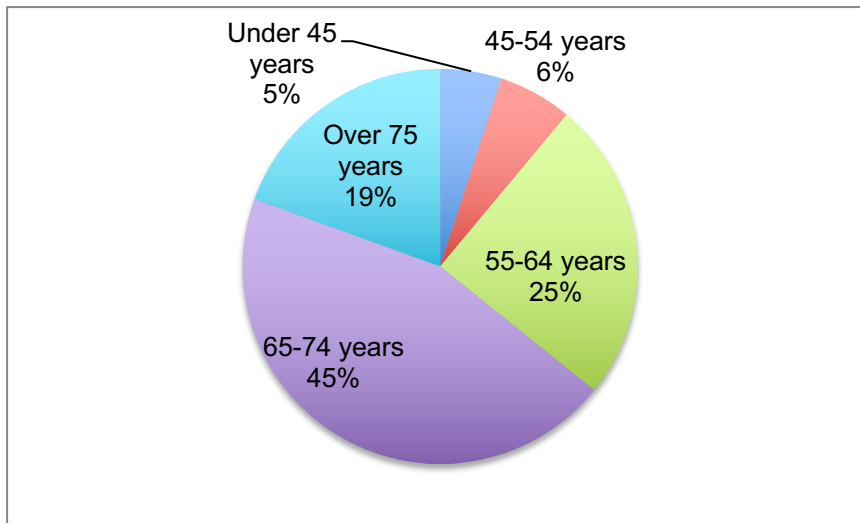
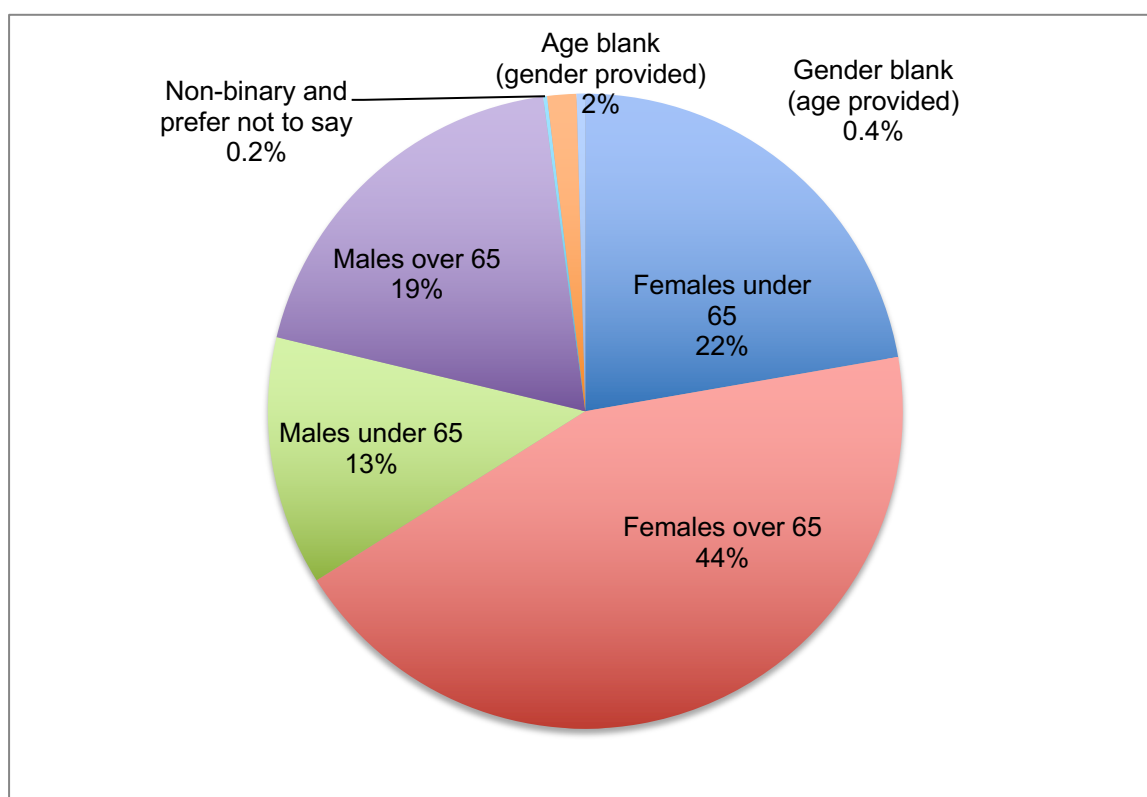


Table 1: Detailed demographics- age and gender (n=2956)

Age	Grand Total (n=2965)	Gender identity				
		Female (n=1984)	Male (n=961)	Non-binary (n=1)	Prefer not to say (n=5)	Gender left blank (n=13)
17 and under	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%			
18-24	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%			
25-34	1.6%	1.3%	2.3%			
35-44	2.6%	2.1%	3.7%			
45-54	5.9%	4.9%	8.2%			
55-64	24.2%	24.2%	24.2%		40.0%	23.1%
65-74	43.9%	46.3%	39.4%	100%	40.0%	15.4%
75+	19.1%	19.1%	19.6%			
Age left blank	1.8%	1.3%	1.9%		20.0%	61.5%

The ages of participants was collapsed into two categories- under 65 years and 65 years and over and referenced against gender as shown in Figure 2. The majority of survey participants were females aged over 65 (44%) followed by females aged under 65 (22%).

Figure 2: Age, gender and proportion of blanks (n=2956)



4.1.2. Ethnicity

What is your ancestry/ ethnicity?

As shown in Table 2, the majority of survey participants identified as Australian (85%), followed by European (9%) and Other (3%, who were mostly from the United Kingdom). The wording of this question made comparison to Australian Census Data challenging, however overall it appears that participants were less ethnically diverse than the general population of Australia. The majority of those surveyed had an anglo-celtic background (at least 94%), compared to 76% of the general population of Australia in 2016¹.

Table 2: Ancestry/Ethnicity (n=2889)

What is your ancestry/ ethnicity?	Percentage
Australian	83.9%
European	8.5%
Other (please specify*)	3.4%
New Zealander	1.4%
Indigenous Australian or Torres Strait Islander	0.9%
Decline to answer	0.8%
North American	0.3%
Asian	0.3%
South American	0.2%
African	0.1%
Middle Eastern	0.1%
Indian	<0.1%

*Responses to 'Other, please specify' included: Mixed heritage, English, Scottish, Welsh, Anglosaxon/Caucasian, Canadian, South African. Several individuals used the open ended 'please specify' box to provide feedback on the wording of the question.

4.1.3. Employment status

Which of the following describes you best?

Overall, the majority of survey participants were retired (69%), followed by 15% who were working full time.

As shown in Table 3, the majority of those aged under 65 were working in some capacity (65% working fulltime or part time/casual) followed by 30% who had retired. For those aged over 65, the vast majority (92%) were retired, with a small proportion responding 'home duties' and 'other' (4%, 4%). Of the 'other' category, responses included: semiretired, volunteer, disability pensioner, carer, self-employed and descriptions of health conditions impacting on work ability.

¹ [2071.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Reflecting Australia - Stories from the Census, 2016](#). Australian Bureau of Statistics. 27/03/2018.

Table 3: Employment status by age group (n=2943)

Which of the following describes you best?	Overall (n=2943)	Under 65 years (n=1085)	Over 65 (n=1858)
Retired	68.80%	29.80%	91.60%
Working full time	14.90%	40.40%	
Working part time/ casual	9.20%	25.00%	
Home duties	2.70%		4.20%
Other (please specify)	2.70%		4.30%
Unemployed	1.00%	2.60%	
Tertiary student (university/ TAFE/ college)	0.50%	1.50%	
School student	0.30%	0.80%	

Analysis by gender for those aged under 65 is shown in Table 4 below. Slightly more women were retired (34% of females) than males (23%) whereas more men were working part time/casually (30% vs 23% of females).

Table 4: Employment status by gender, under 65 years

Which of the following describes you best?	Female (n= 681)	Male (n= 393)	Prefer not to say (n= 3)	Gender left blank (n= 8)	Grand Total (n= 1085)
Retired	33.9%	22.6%	66.7%	12.5%	29.8%
School student	0.6%	1.3%			0.8%
Tertiary student (university/ TAFE/ college)	1.5%	1.5%			1.5%
Unemployed	2.1%	3.6%			2.6%
Working full time	40.1%	41.5%		25.0%	40.4%
Working part time/ casual	21.9%	29.5%	33.3%	62.5%	25.0%

There were very few gender differences for those aged over 65, as shown in the table below. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of men, women, non-binary individuals and those who did not provide a gender were retired.

Table 5: Employment status by gender, over 65 years

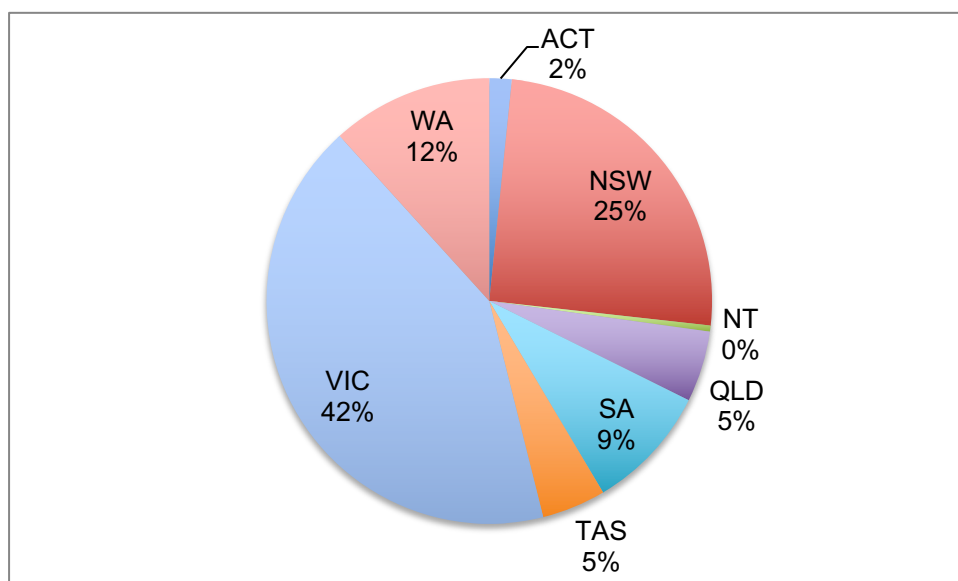
Which of the following describes you best?	Female (n=1294)	Male (n=559)	Non-binary (n=1)	Prefer not to say (n=2)	Gender left blank (n=2)	Grand Total (n=1858)
Retired	90.4%	94.1%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	91.6%
Home duties	4.9%	2.5%				4.2%
Other (please specify)	4.6%	3.4%				4.3%

4.1.4. State

In which state do you bowl the most?

Victorians provided the highest response rate to the survey (42% of responses), despite representing 26% of the Australian population as of March, 2020. This was followed by New South Wales (25%) and Western Australia (12%). See Figure 3 for further detail.

Figure 3: State of Australia (n=2952)



5. Findings

5.1. Participation in Bowls

5.1.1. Years playing bowls

How many years have you been playing bowls?

This question was open ended, with some participants providing a year of commencing bowls, others a specific number of years/months and others an approximate range. The data was grouped into five categories, as presented in Table 6. The majority of survey participants were seasoned bowlers, with the vast majority (73%) having played for more than 5 years. There were no significant differences between males and females.

Table 6: Years playing bowls by gender

How many years have you been playing bowls?	Overall (n=2923)*	Females (n=1955)	Males (n=950)	Non-binary and prefer not to say (n=5)
<1year	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%	
1-5 years	26.4%	26.4%	26.3%	40.0%
6-10 years	23.2%	23.6%	22.2%	20.0%
11-20 years	29.8%	29.6%	30.0%	40.0%
20+ years	19.8%	19.5%	20.6%	

*including 13 individuals who did not respond to the question of gender identity

5.1.2. Role in lawn bowls in the last 12 months

What role have you been involved in lawn bowls in the last 12 months? (Please select all that apply)

The vast majority of bowlers reported that they had been involved in lawn bowls as a full bowler in the past 12 months (81% overall). The distribution of each of the roles was evenly distributed between males and females, excluding greenskeeping which was exclusively undertaken by males, those who preferred not to provide their gender or non-binary individuals.

Table 7: What role have you been involved in lawn bowls in the last 12 months? (Please select all that apply)

What role have you been involved in lawn bowls in the last 12 months? (Please select all that apply)	Overall* (n=2962)	Female (n=1981)	Male (n=960)	Prefer not to say and non-binary (n=6)
Full Bowler	81%	83%	77%	83%
Player/ Participant	67%	67%	68%	100%
Administrator/Board/ Committee	45%	48%	39%	50%
Social Bowler	32%	31%	33%	17%
Volunteer	29%	30%	29%	33%
Umpire, Marker, Measurer	31%	32%	28%	17%
Selector	23%	24%	20%	0%
Coach	12%	12%	12%	0%
I do not currently play bowls	2%	2%	2%	0%
Parent	2%	2%	2%	0%
Greenskeeper	1%	0%	3%	17%

*includes 13 individuals that did not answer the question on gender identity.

5.1.3. Forms of lawn bowls in the last 12 months

Which of the following forms of bowls have you been involved in the last 12 months? (Please select all that apply).

The percentage of survey participants who reported playing each of the eighteen options provided are presented below in Table 8. As each individual could select multiple forms of bowls, the total percentages for each group does not equal 100%.

Most individuals are involved in club tournaments (approximately 60% of all survey participants) with little variation due to gender. Open pennants and social bowls were the other most popular forms of bowls. There was little gender variation for Open Gender Social Bowls (weekend and weekday), barefoot bowls, State or National Competitions, Come n Try, School programs, Night Owls or Roll Back the Clock games.

More men than women reported playing weekend pennants than women (both Open Pennant and Single Gender Pennants). Men were also more likely to be involved in BPL Cup, Jack Attack and Corporate Cups. Females were more likely to play weekday competitions- i.e. Open Pennants and Single Gender Pennants held on weekdays.

The other, please specify responses were mostly detailed explanations of participants bowling habits and/or the impact of COVID-19, descriptions of injuries, administrative or umpiring roles.

Table 8: Form of lawn bowls

Which of the following forms of bowls have you been involved in the last 12 months? (Please select all that apply)	Overall (n=2964)	Female (n=1984)	Male (n=961)	Prefer not to say and non-binary (n=6)
Club Tournament	59.4%	57.7%	63.4%	33.3%
Open Pennant – Weekend	55.7%	45.6%	76.4%	100.0%
Open Gender Social Bowls – Weekday	51.8%	52.0%	51.4%	50.0%
Open Gender Social Bowls – Weekend	48.5%	48.2%	49.3%	50.0%
Open Pennant - Weekday	41.9%	45.4%	35.0%	66.7%
Single Gender Pennant – Weekday	28.5%	37.1%	10.9%	33.3%
Barefoot Bowls	22.7%	21.4%	25.4%	16.7%
State or National Competitions	22.0%	22.6%	20.9%	33.3%
Single Gender Pennant – Weekend	15.1%	11.4%	22.8%	16.7%
Other (please specify)	10.3%	11.1%	8.7%	16.7%
Come n Try	8.6%	8.7%	8.3%	
School Program	8.1%	7.1%	10.4%	
Night Owls	7.8%	7.5%	8.4%	16.7%
BPL Cup	4.2%	2.8%	7.1%	
Jack Attack	3.9%	3.6%	4.6%	
Corporate Cup	3.7%	2.9%	5.3%	
I do not currently play Bowls	2.2%	2.4%	1.8%	
Roll Back the Clock	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	

5.1.4.Reasons for playing

Why do you play bowls? (Please select all that apply)

Survey responders could select multiple options (so the totals do not equal 100%) with the vast majority reporting that enjoyment/pleasure/fun (87%) and exercise/physical health (83%) were their motivations to play.

Table 9: Reasons for playing bowls (n=2959)

Why do you play bowls? (Please select all that apply)	
Enjoyment/ pleasure/ fun	87.3%
Exercise/physical health	83.4%
Social reasons/to make friends	75.0%
The challenge/ sense of achievement	72.3%
To be outdoors	66.7%
Competition or performance	61.2%

Psychological/ mental health	48.5%
Family member or friend is involved	32.5%
To volunteer/be involved in my community	31.9%
To learn a new skill/try something different	23.9%
To make a state team	8.5%
Other*	2.7%
School program	1.6%

*The 'other' reasons provided included: Love of the game, to make a particular team, because it is accessible and noncontact, despite a disability or injury, to encourage others, to win, teamwork and to contribute to/represent the community

5.1.5. Other sports

What other physical activity have you predominantly undertaken? (Please select all that apply).

Overall, approximately half of the survey participants reported that they were walkers/bushwalkers (52.6%) followed by golfers (33%) and tennis players (31%). As shown in Table 10, males were more likely to engage in golf (47.2% of men) or running (18% of men) than women. Focusing on those who identified as female, walking/bushwalking were the most popular forms of physical activity (57.2%) followed by netball (32%) and tennis. (35%).

Table 10: Other sports (n=2878)

<i>What other physical activity have you predominantly undertaken? (Please select all that apply)</i>	Overall *(n=2878)	Female (n=1928)	Male (n=934)	Non-binary and prefer not to say (n=6)
Walking/Bushwalking	52.60%	57.20%	43.60%	16.70%
Tennis	31.00%	35.30%	22.10%	
Netball	21.10%	30.70%	1.40%	
Golf	33.00%	26.00%	47.20%	66.70%
Fitness/gym	23.60%	25.70%	19.30%	16.70%
Swimming	23.10%	25.60%	18.10%	33.30%
Other**	18.50%	21.60%	12.00%	16.70%
Basketball	12.80%	13.30%	11.90%	
Cycling	12.00%	9.90%	16.10%	16.70%
Hockey	7.80%	9.30%	4.90%	
Running/jogging	11.20%	7.80%	18.00%	16.70%
None	7.40%	7.80%	6.60%	16.70%
Cricket	11.80%	2.50%	30.70%	33.30%
Football (Soccer)	4.70%	1.00%	12.20%	

Martial arts	1.50%	1.00%	2.60%	
Australian Rules Football	9.70%	0.70%	28.20%	33.30%
Rugby League	3.00%	0.10%	9.00%	

*Includes 10 individuals who did not provide a gender

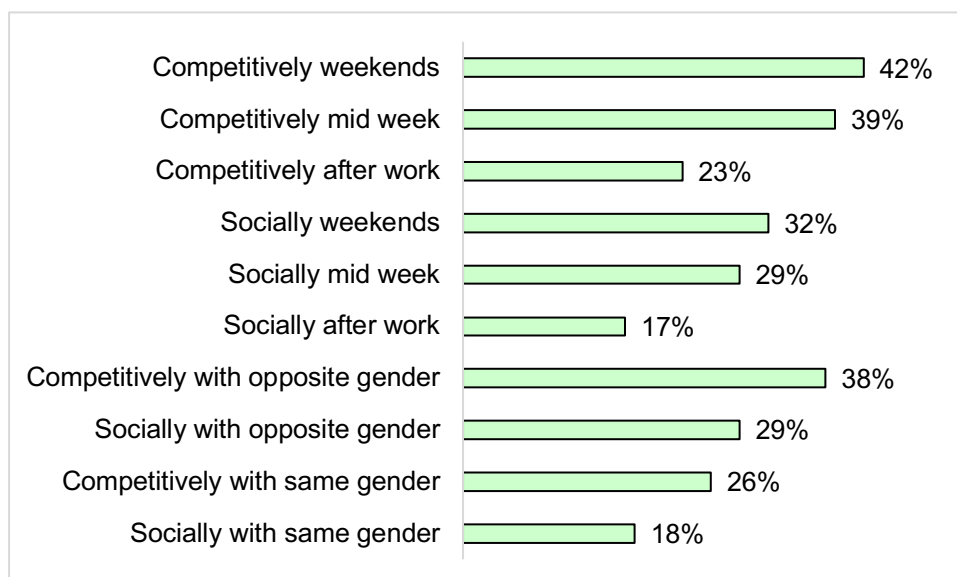
** The 'other' most frequently mentioned sports included: squash, softball, badminton, baseball, table tennis and yoga.

5.1.6. Maximising participation

What are your top 5 reasons that would make you interested in playing Bowls more often (socially or competitively)? (Provide drop-down list, including 'Other' with limited text box.)

The option to play competitively on weekends was the most appealing factor, rated in the top five reasons for 42% of players. Overall, there was a greater preference for weekend play, in comparison to mid-week or after work, as well as a stronger preference for competitive play than social play. The opportunity to play bowls with the opposite gender (38% included in top five reasons to play) was also a more frequently cited reason for playing bowls than the opportunity to compete with the same gender (26% included in their top five reasons to play).

Figure 4: Reasons for playing lawn bowls more often* (n=2394)



* Percentages reflect the proportion of respondents who indicated reason among their top five.

5.2. Accessibility

5.2.1. Support of mixed gender competition

Please select the reasons you do/do not enjoy playing competition with and against players of the opposite gender? (Select all that apply)

In terms of gender differences, women, more so than men, enjoyed playing against the opposite gender to improve their skills and for a broader range of competition types. However no gender differences emerged in the enjoyment of playing mixed gender bowls due to greater opportunities to play competitively, with both half of men and women indicating enjoyment of this.

In Table 11 below, significant differences between men and women are indicated in bold, as determined by chi-square test for independence ($p < .05$)

Table 11: Reasons for and against mixed gender competition (n=2758)

Please select the reasons you do/do not enjoy playing competition with and against players of the opposite gender? (Select all that apply)	Overall (n=2758*)	Female (n=1910)	Male (n=836)
I enjoy playing against the opposite gender as it provides more opportunities to improve skills	73%	78%	60%
I enjoy playing against the opposite gender as more opportunities to play competitively at a higher level exist when playing open gender	50%	50%	50%
I enjoy playing against the opposite gender as there are a broader range of competition types (including socially) when playing open gender	67%	64%	60%
I do not enjoy playing against the opposite gender as player skill level is unequal between genders	7%	8%	5%
I do not enjoy playing against the opposite gender as team selections are unfairly biased against women	14%	17%	6%
I do not enjoy playing against the opposite gender as bullying/intimidation occurs on the green between genders	8%	10%	4%

Please select the reasons you do/do not enjoy playing competition with and against players of the opposite gender? (Select all that apply)	Overall (n=2758*)	Female (n=1910)	Male (n=836)
I do not enjoy playing against the opposite gender as higher skilled players of the opposite gender are not fairly selected into teams	11%	12%	7%
I do not enjoy playing against the opposite gender as behaviours of the opposite gender makes me feel uncomfortable (e.g. inappropriate language, excessive drinking, smoking)	12%	15%	4%

*Includes 9 responses with incomplete demographic details (age and/or gender not provided), 1 non-binary individual and 2 who preferred not to provide gender.

Additional analysis of each survey participant's response to this question is presented in Table 12. Significant differences between men and women, or between under and over 65s are indicated in bold, as determined by chi-square test for independence ($p < .05$).

Overall, the majority (73%) of those surveyed only responded positively in terms of how they felt about mixed gender bowls, with 16% demonstrating a mixed response – enjoying certain aspects but not others. As shown in Table 7, men were significantly more likely than women to only respond positively. Women were more likely than men to demonstrate a mixed response, signalling some ambivalence to the potential benefits of mixed gender bowls.

In terms of age differences, younger players (aged 65 and under) were more likely to only respond positively, and less likely to only respond negatively, than those aged 65 and over.

Table 12: Overall support or resistance to mixed gender competition (n=2758)

	Overall (n=2758)	Female (n=1910)	Male (n=836)	Under 65 years (n=962)	Over 65 years (n=1748)
Only responded positively	73%	69%	83%	78%	71%
Only responded negatively	11%	10%	11%	7%	12%
Mixed response	16%	20%	7%	15%	17%

5.2.2. Club participation- enabling participation

What is the one thing that your club does well that makes it easy for you to participate in bowls?

Responses to this question were compared across men and women and those aged over and under 65 years (see Table 13). Players of all ages and genders reported several consistent enabling factors. The most frequently mentioned was the inclusive, welcoming culture at their club. On a similar theme, men and women of all ages also frequently mentioned a friendly and social club culture as another enabling factor.

Men and women aged under 65 and women aged over 65 reported mixed gender competitions were an enabling factor to their participation, whereas men over 65 mentioned this less frequently. It should be noted that older men were largely supportive of mixed gender games (see section on Support of mixed gender competition), however they recognised other aspects of their club that made it easy for them to participate.

While the running of games, facilities, access to greens or well run communications were also seen by some as enablers, it is interesting to note that it appears to be the less tangible features of a club culture that keeps players returning.

Illustrative quotes for each theme are provided in Appendix 1: Enabling participation.

Table 13: Enablers to participation

Female	
Under 65 years (n=633)	Over 65 years (n=1170)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusive (age, gender, race, abilities) 2. Well run competitions- multiple options 3. Friendly/social 4. Mixed gender competitions 5. Facilities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Friendly/social 2. Inclusive (age, gender, race, abilities) 3. Well run competitions- range of options 4. Mixed gender competitions 5. Coaching and encouragement
Male	
Under 65 years (n=377)	Over 65 years (n=516)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusive (age, gender, race, abilities) 2. Friendly/social 3. Mixed gender competitions 4. Well run competitions- highly organised 5. Access to greens 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusive (age, gender, race, abilities) 2. Friendly/social 3. Well run competitions- range of options 4. [Negative response- described challenge] 5. Access to greens

5.2.3. Club participation- barriers to participation

What is one thing that could be done better at your club that would improve participation?

There was recognition across all demographic groups that clubs are lacking in members, particularly younger members, and that active recruitment is required. It is of note that older players were more likely to report that no changes were required to their club, compared to younger players. Younger men and women reported that a more inclusive culture would benefit their clubs. Suggested strategies to enhance gender equality at clubs and at a state level included:

- a) Practical changes to scheduling of games, including mixed games and after hours (see actions to engage younger women above)
- b) Fair selection processes
- c) Examine distribution of labour by men and women - particularly volunteer positions such as catering
- d) Support female players via women's coaching
- e) Review, promote and enforce policies around smoking, swearing and sexual harassment
- f) Unite state level associations (i.e. joining men's and women's associations)

Women of all ages were more likely to request 'more social games' compared to men. Club facilities, including lighting, roofing and synthetic greens, were also mentioned by players as a priority for increasing participation. Facilities appeared to be of a higher priority for men (all ages) and women aged under 65 years, whereas for women aged over 65, gender equality at all levels of the club were seen as a high priority for improvement. Illustrative quotes for each theme are provided in Appendix 2: Barriers to accessibility.

Table 14: Top five barriers to participation

Female	
Under 65 years (171 responses)	Over 65 years (1289 responses)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to competitions/fair selection) 2. More social games 3. Inclusive culture 4. Communication 5. Facilities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 'Nothing' 2. Gender equality (all levels) 3. More social games 4. More/younger members 5. Improve selection processes
Male	
Under 65 years (138 responses)	Over 65 years (505 responses)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilities 2. Internal politics 3. Recruit more younger members 4. Inclusive culture 5. 'Nothing' 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 'Nothing' 2. Facilities 3. More members 4. Improve selection processes 5. More mixed gender teams

5.3. Engaging women

5.3.1. Referring non-playing women

Have you have invited other non-playing women (friends or family) to play bowls and they have refused? If Yes, please explain your response

Participant's responses demonstrated some confusion about this three-part question. Of the 1349 open ended responses to the question "If yes, please explain your response", approximately one quarter were not coded as they reflected on the question itself (e.g. *This is two questions. Yes, I've invited other non-playing women to play bowls and No, they have not refused*) or the response included an explanation of how that individual had promoted the concept of bowls to non-playing women (for example, *I explained the benefits of club life*). The remaining answers were from individuals who provided a reason for the friend or family member to declining to participate. The top reasons for non-playing women refusing to play bowls included:

1. Belief that bowls is for old people
2. Not interested
3. Too busy/other commitments
4. Feeing unwelcome
5. Times weren't suitable for working women

Due to confusion created by this question, the results in Table 15 and Table 16 should be interpreted with caution. Over half of players (56%) had invited a non-playing woman to play who had refused. This was significantly more likely among female players, of whom 59% had invited a non-playing woman, compared to 48% of male players. Due to the way the question was worded, it is not possible to tell if women are simply more likely to have invited non-playing women to play with them, and by virtue of asking more people, had a greater number of refusals. No significant age differences emerged, with those aged 65 and over equally likely to have invited a woman to play who had refused as those aged under 65.

Table 15: Invited non-playing women to play and they refused (n=2522)

	Overall (n=2522)	Female (n=1720)	Male (n=790)	Under 65 years (n=915)	Over 65 years (n=1568)
Yes	56%	59%	48%	55%	56%
No	44%	41%	52%	45%	44%

Note: Significant differences between men and women are indicated in bold, as determined by chi-square test for independence ($p < .05$)

Table 16: Invited non-playing women to play and they refused (older men, younger men, older women, younger women)

	Female		Male	
	Under 65 years (n=590)	Over 65 years (n=1110)	Under 65 years (n=322)	Over 65 years (n=453)
Yes	59%	60%	49%	47%
No	41%	40%	51%	53%

5.3.2. Unacceptable behaviour

Have you ever experienced or witnessed any unacceptable behaviour towards women or girls in your club environment from another member?

Just under half (45%) of players indicated that they had experienced or witnessed unacceptable behaviour towards women from another club member. This was significantly higher among women compared with men (49% vs. 36%). Overall those aged under 65 were not significantly more likely to have experienced or witnessed such behaviour than those aged 65 and over.

Table 17: Witnessed or experienced sexist behaviour towards women/girls

	Overall (n=2913)	Female (n=1949)	Male (n=952)	Under 65 years (n=1036)	Over 65 years (n=1835)
Yes	45%	49%	36%	47%	44%
No	55%	51%	64%	53%	56%

Note: Significant differences between men and women are indicated in bold, as determined by chi-square test for independence ($p < .05$)

Focusing just on women (see Table 18), there were age differences in witnessing or experiencing sexist behaviours. Women under 65 were significantly more likely to have experienced or witnessed such behaviours (62%) compared to women over 65 (47%).

Table 18: Witnessed or experienced sexist behaviour towards women/girls (older men, younger men, older women, younger women)

	Female		Male	
	Under 65 years (n=560)	Over 65 years (n=1271)	Under 65 years (n=376)	Over 65 years (n=560)
Yes	62%	47%	38%	36%
No	38%	53%	62%	64%

Note: Significant differences between men and women are indicated in bold, as determined by chi-square test for independence ($p < .05$)

The second part to this question, *if yes, please explain your response*, was interpreted differently by some participants. While the majority of respondents understood this to be a prompt to explain the unacceptable behaviour that was observed towards women or girls, some survey participants (mostly men) explained how they reacted in the situation.

As shown in the following tables, women reported a wide range of unacceptable behaviours, compared to men. The majority of women's responses related to verbal intimidation/degrading comments. This was also the most frequent example of unacceptable behaviour noted by men, though at a lower rate than women. Male survey respondents were more likely to focus on overt discrimination against female players in the form of resistance to mixed gender games.

Women provided a wide range of specific examples of unacceptable behaviour, including sexual remarks, aggressive 'coaching' and the deliberate use of inappropriate language by men to put women off participating. Women were more conscious of sexual remarks or behaviours by men whereas very few men commented on this being an issue. Illustrative quotes for each theme are provided in Appendix 3: Unacceptable behaviour.

Additional analysis of this question was undertaken by the National Women in Bowls Working Party to focus on the experiences of those aged under 65 years. They found that the highest number of responses about inappropriate behaviour from people under age 65 was bullying or bitchiness from other women, especially toward new and younger players. This was followed by men not wanting to play with or against women.

Female (973 responses)	
Most frequent examples , provided by women (>5% of comments including these themes)	Approx. Mentions
1. Male to female verbal intimidation including: disparaging remarks, verbal aggression, aggressive 'coaching'	59%
2. Resistance to or refusal to engage with mixed teams and/or female skips	15%
3. Intimidation of new players	13%
4. Sexual remarks or behaviours by males (towards or about women)	7%
5. Female to female verbal intimidation including: disparaging remarks, verbal aggression, 'bitchy' comments	7%
6. Swearing and/or inappropriate language	7%

Male (341 responses)	
Most frequent examples, provided by men (>5% of comments including these themes)	Approx. Mentions
1. Male to female intimidation and discrimination including: disparaging remarks, verbal aggression	40%
2. Resistance to or refusal to engage with mixed teams and/or female skips	35%
3. Swearing and/or inappropriate language	13%
4. Intimidation of new players	5%

5.3.1. Gender equality

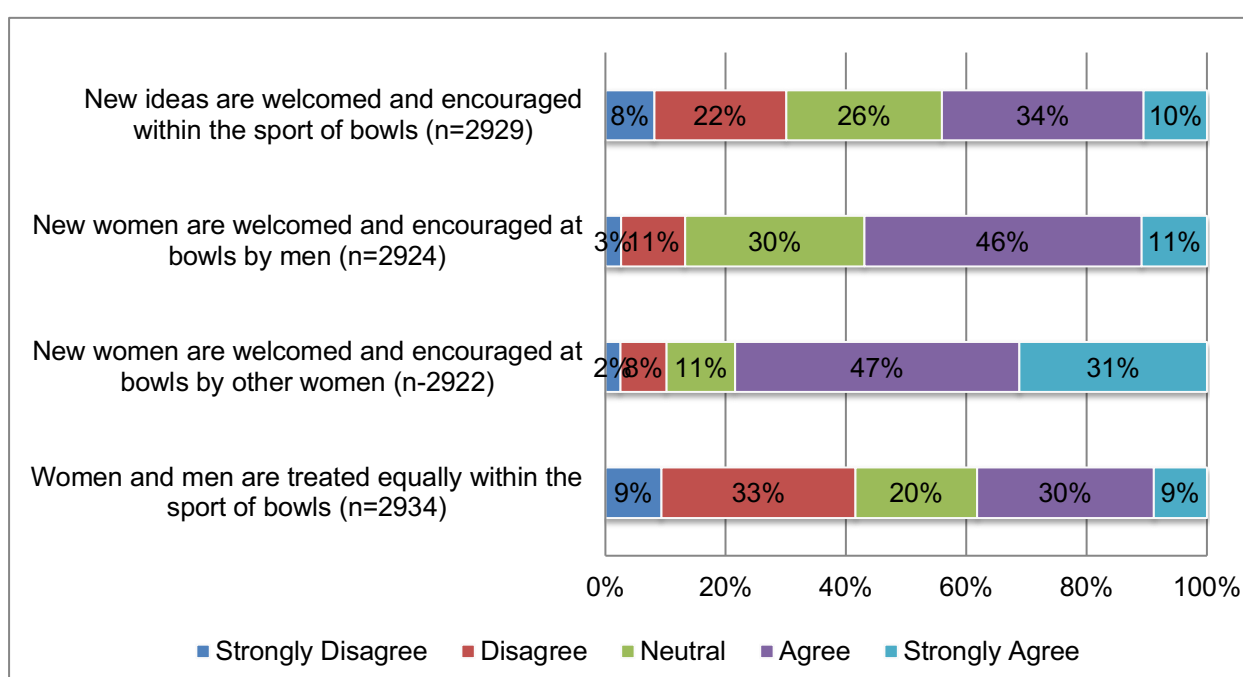
Please select one box in each row to indicate your opinion of the following statements.

- I believe new ideas are welcomed and encouraged within bowls
- I believe new women are welcomed and encouraged at bowls by men
- I believe new women are welcomed & encouraged at bowls by other women

I believe that women and men are treated equally within bowls

There were mixed views as to how equal men and women were treated within the sport of bowls, with 39% agreeing that there was equal treatment of men and women, and a similar percentage (42%) disagreeing. There was greater agreement that women were welcomed in the sport by other women (78% agreeing) than by men (57% agreeing). Just under half of players (44%) believed that new ideas were welcomed and encouraged within the sport.

Figure 5: Agreement with gender equality statements (n value varies)



Breaking this down by gender (as shown in Figure 6), significant differences emerged. Comparing mean scores², men were significantly more likely than women to believe that new ideas were welcomed and encouraged within the sport, that new women were encouraged and welcomed at bowls by other men, and that men and women were treated equally in the sport. On the other hand, women were significantly more likely than men to believe that new women were welcomed and encouraged at bowls by other women.

In addition to gender differences, there were some differences between older and younger bowls players. Overall, those aged over 65 appeared to take a more positive view of the level of equality in bowls (please refer to Figure 7). Those aged 65 and over were more likely to agree that new ideas were welcomed and encouraged, that women and men were treated equally, and that new women were welcomed and encouraged by other women, compared to those under 65. There were no age differences, however, in agreement that new women were welcomed and encouraged at bowls by other men.

² Significant differences between men and women were examined via independent samples t-tests. All findings reported are significant at $p < .05$.

Figure 6: Agreement with gender equality statements by gender (n value varies)

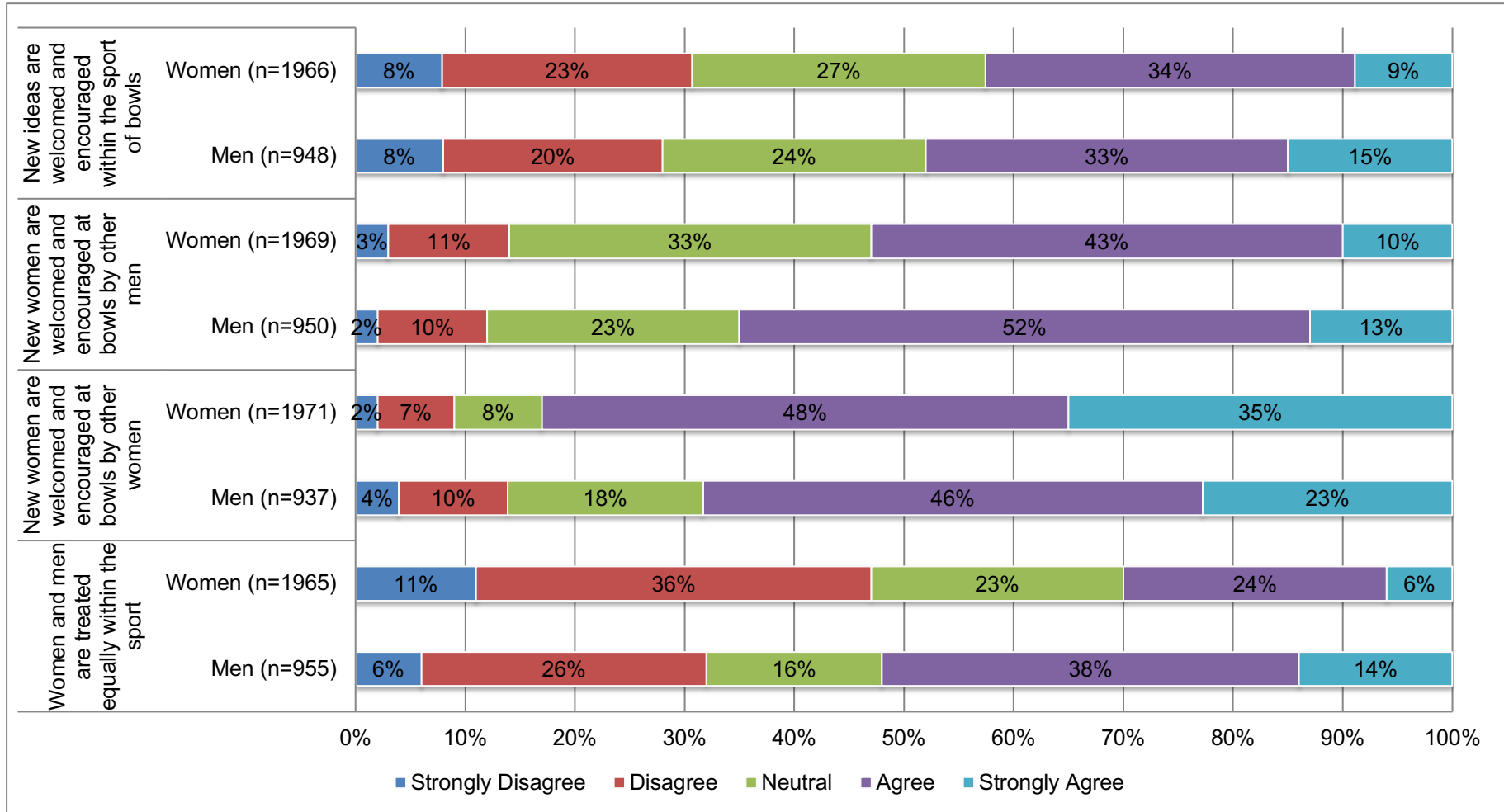
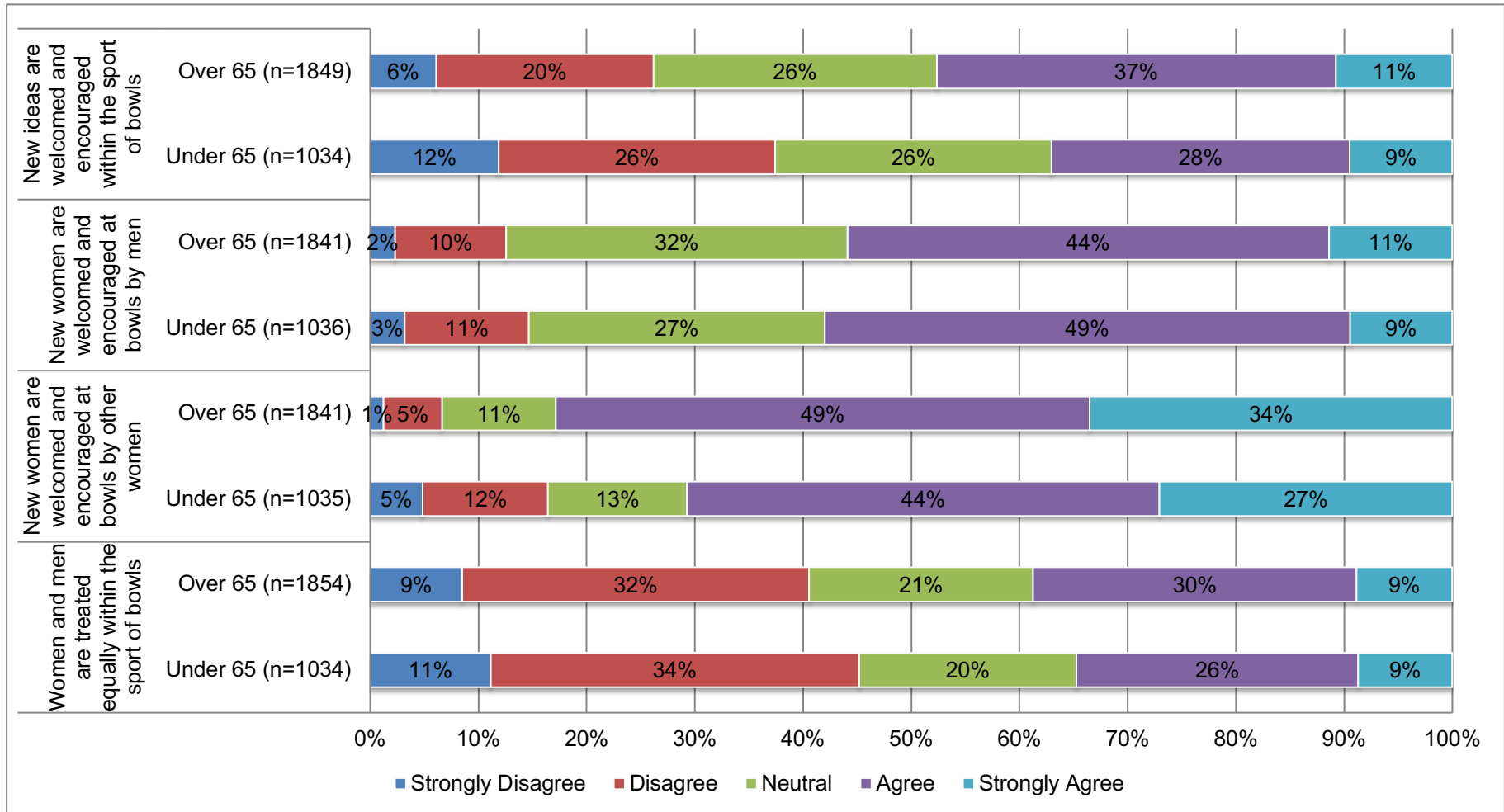


Figure 7: Agreement with gender equality statements by age group (n value varies)



5.3.2. Barriers to participation

Have you ever experienced any of the following barriers to bowls participation?

Fourteen options were provided for participants to select from- the top five most frequently mentioned barriers are displayed in Table 19. In terms of gender differences, men were more likely than women to identify the lack of time due to work/study commitments and timing of events as a current or previous barrier, whereas women were more likely to mention bullying or intimidation as a barrier. Age differences were also apparent. Those aged 65 years and under were more likely to mention lack of time, and timing of events as barriers. In contrast, those aged 65 and over were more likely to list poor health or injury as a barrier to playing.

Note: Significant differences between men and women, or between those under 65 and over 65, are indicated in bold, as determined by chi-square test for independence ($p < .05$)

Table 19: Top 5 reported barriers to participating (n values vary)

<i>Reported as a current or previous barrier to bowls participation:</i>	Overall	Female	Male	Under 65 years	Over 65 years
Lack of time due to work/study commitments	50%	44%	66%	73%	37%
Unfair selection	39%	37%	39%	41%	37%
Timing of events e.g. weekday or midweek competitions	36%	34%	39%	54%	26%
Poor health or injury	27%	28%	27%	24%	29%
Bullying / intimidation	24%	16%	28%	26%	24%

5.3.3. Accessibility for women

Do you think women's bowls in your State is accessible enough for women to participate (i.e. timing of events etc.)? If No, please explain your response.

Over two thirds of players (76%) believed that women's bowls was accessible enough for women to participate. These beliefs were significantly higher among men compared to women (79% vs. 75%). They were also significantly higher among those aged 65 and over compared to those under 65 (81% vs. 67%). Statistically significant differences between men and women, or between under and over 65s are indicated in bold in Table 20, as determined by chi-square test for independence ($p < .05$).

Table 20: Accessible for women to participate

	Overall (n=2903)	Female (n=1945)	Male (n=943)	Under 65 years (n=1028)	Over 65 years (n=1828)
Yes	76%	75%	79%	67%	81%
No	24%	25%	21%	33%	19%

Further analysis demonstrates that gender differences are only apparent in the under 65 age group. Whereas among players aged 65 and over, there were no differences between men and women in their perception that women's bowls was accessible, there was a gender difference among the under 65s. Men aged under 65 were more likely to agree that women's bowls was accessible compared to women under 65 (72% vs 64%).

Table 21: Accessible for women to participate (older men, younger men, older women, younger women)

	Female		Male	
	Under 65 years (n=650)	Over 65 years (n=1271)	Under 65 years (n=373)	Over 65 years (n=552)
Yes	64%	81%	72%	82%
No	36%	19%	28%	18%

Three quarters of the individuals that responded 'No' to this question provided a rationale. There was very strong consensus from men and women alike that women's bowls was not accessible to women due to the timing of games. Survey participants reported that working women, juniors and women with children were most impacted. The most frequently mentioned barriers to women included:

- Not accessible for working women, due to the timing of women's competitions on weekdays
- Not accessible to women with families
- The days/times available to women players are limited

- Not enough mixed gender games are offered
- Games are too long for busy women with other commitments
- Perception that 'mixed' games still preference men

A smaller group of individuals suggested that some older women may be less likely to participate due to the increased presence of male players mid week.

5.3.4. Opportunities for women, last 5 years

If you have played for five or more years, how are opportunities for women now compared to five years ago? (Please select one response).

The sample size (n=2288) to this question is lower as it excludes participants who had played the sport for less than five years. Overall, there was some support that opportunities for women in the sport had increased in the last five years, with 41% agreeing that more opportunities existed now, and only 9% indicating that opportunities had decreased over this time.

However, some differences emerged across the demographics. Significant differences between men and women, or between under and over 65s are indicated in bold in Table 22, as determined by chi-square test for independence ($p < .05$). Men were significantly more likely than women to believe that more opportunities existed for women now, as did under 65s compared to over 65s.

Table 22: Opportunities for women in last 5 years

	Overall (n=2288)	Female (n=1489)	Male (n=784)	Under 65 years (n=696)	Over 65 years (n=1548)
More opportunities exist now	41%	46%	61%	55%	49%
Fewer opportunities exist now	9%	10%	6%	4%	11%
About the same	40%	45%	32%	41%	40%

5.3.5.Actions to attract women and girls

What do you think the sport can do to attract the following groups? (Please answer as many as you wish)

Survey respondents provided a wide range of strategies, including quite detailed suggestions, in response to the question *What do you think the sport can do to attract* different demographic groups. These eight groups included: Girls, Young women (18-30), Women working full time, Women with children, Retired women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls, Women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and Women and girls with disabilities. Many responses to this open ended questions were very detailed and considered the unique challenges and opportunities of engaging each group. The following table summarises the most frequently recommended strategies for each group. In addition, across all groups, having club members who were friendly and welcoming was seen as vital.

Table 23: Top five actions to attract women and girls

Girls
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Target schools and broader education sector 2. Advertise- ensure a broad demographic is promoted 3. Address ageist stereotypes- via advertising, media coverage and developing a youth policy, more appealing uniforms 4. Junior/inter school competitions 5. Timing- after school and weekend games and coaching
Young women (18-30)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advertise- via a targeted marketing strategy (multiple platforms) 2. Timing- increase after hours and weekend access, including coaching 3. Combine with social functions- e.g. wine and cheese, after work bowls, family events 4. Address ageist stereotypes 5. Create a more fun, welcoming atmosphere- e.g. music, attitude change, social competitions
Women working full time
Same response as young women, plus mentions of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promoting social/mental health benefits 2. Corporate events
Women with children
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Childcare- onsite creche or volunteer child minding 2. Bowls with babies 3. Timing- weekend, during school hours, evenings 4. Build a family friendly culture 5. Advertise- via parents groups and childcare centres
Retired women
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advertise- promoting the social, physical and mental health benefits 2. Open days/Come and try days (not just at the start of the season) 3. Address cultural barriers within clubs- promoting a safer, friendlier atmosphere to new comers 4. Free or group specific coaching

5. Emphasize **social aspects** over competition

Advertising, promotion and/or a dedicated marketing strategy was the most frequently mentioned strategy across all groups. Tailored messaging was suggested for younger women, with similar themes for women aged 18-30, working full time and with children. These included:

- promote young women in bowls, including elite young female players
- emphasise the social and mental health benefits to women
- advertise social functions, such as evening wine, cheese and bowls events
- ensure advertising visible where women gather- for example, childcare centres, parents groups and workplaces

Dedicated campaigns and accompanying imagery was also suggested for the remaining four demographic groups. It was suggested that advertising could promote:

- The social aspects and physical accessibility of bowls to retired women and to women and girls with disabilities.
- Existing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players to engage more indigenous women and girls, and consult directly with community leaders to tailor messaging
- Materials that depict multicultural players and translated resources to engage women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island women and girls

1. **Change culture** to be more inclusive. E.g. address racism if/when it occurs, celebrate diversity, acknowledge country/fly Australian flag
2. **Advertise-** promoting indigenous players
3. **'No different'** to engaging other women/girls*
4. **Consultation** and direct engagement with Aboriginal elders. Reach out via Aboriginal organisations and Aboriginal Land Councils
5. **'Not sure'**

Women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

1. **Change policy and culture** to be more inclusive. E.g. Unconscious bias training, policies on addressing racism if/when it occurs and celebrate specific cultural or religious days.
2. **Advertise-** promoting diverse players and multicultural resources
3. **'No different'** to engaging other women/girls*
4. **Consultation** and direct engagement with multicultural communities and hubs
5. **Language support** for those from non English speaking backgrounds e.g. interpreters, translated materials

Women and girls with disabilities

1. **Come and try days-** ideally informed by people with disabilities
2. **Provide equipment/accessible** physical environment
3. **Reach out** via community groups, carers associations and specialist providers
4. **Advertise-** promoting the accessibility of bowls
5. Tailored **coaching/trained** coaches

* I.e. belief that a dedicated or tailored approach to these groups is not needed as 'we are all equal'

Challenges in prioritising women:

As shown in the tables above, there were several reoccurring themes that related to all target groups, and participants provided detailed explanations of how strategies should be tailored to engage women from those backgrounds. However, a small proportion of responses reflected attitudinal barriers to engaging women. While these views were not mentioned by the majority, they may reflect more widespread attitudes and should be considered when developing strategies that target the recruitment of women to bowls. These two challenges are described below.

1. *A lost cause*

For some participants, there was a belief that working women or women with children were a 'lost cause' or less of a priority. Statements like '*Won't work...not enough time for domestic duties*', '*I think that is pretty impossible as both parents work nowdays*', '*Not possible to fit 2 or more hours bowls in while running the family*' and '*it won't happen*' suggest that these groups are not seen as a priority as they were less likely to generate memberships. This reflects the real challenge for clubs who may invest in engaging certain groups of women who may not be in a position to undertake full memberships or participate in regular competition at this stage of their lives. Other survey participants mentioned that flexibility around memberships and the length and timing of games should be considered - which may address these concerns.

2. *We're already equal*

A small proportion of responses suggested that there was no need to directly engage women in bowl or develop a tailored approach to different groups of women as 'we are all equal'. For example, '*Quite a racist question- we are all equal*' and '*we treat everyone equally*'. Future strategies will need to address the misconception that increased effort and support is required to ensure equal access for all players.

5.4. Message to the CEO/President

If you were the President or CEO of Bowls Australia, what would you change about bowls and why?

A wide variety of responses were generated, ranging from game specific rule changes through to overarching questions of culture and perception. The following top five sentiments were the most frequently mentioned priorities for the President or CEO of Bowls Australia.

Table 24: Top 5 changes suggested to CEO/President (n=2017)

Top 5 recommended actions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Target young people2. Shift perceptions of game 'just for older people'3. Increase mixed gender games/pennants4. Actively address gender inequality5. More informal, accessible clubs
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1. Target young people

The most frequent response to this question mentioned children, young people or schools. Survey participants recommended that young people become engaged via:

1. School programs
2. Youth specific competitions
3. Television advertising (that depicts young people)
4. Social media campaigns

2. Shift perceptions

The second most frequently cited area for change was the need to shift the preconception that bowls is just for older people. Some participants elaborated by recommending that this perception is addressed by:

1. Engaging young people (see above)
2. Provide multiple pathways for engagement with the sport- both social and competitive games need to be promoted
3. Community engagement (eg. via workshops, presentations, local markets, club open days).
4. Dedicated campaigns including TV and social media promotion featuring all demographics
5. Local advertising
6. More TV coverage of the sport

3. Increase mixed gender games/pennants

While there was very mixed support for open vs. gender specific competitions, a large proportion of individuals recommended that competitions be 'gender-less'. This was also seen as a point of difference and potential leverage for bowls over other sports.

Of the group that recommended mixed gender games, a significant proportion suggested that there was still a place for some gender segregated games.

4. Actively address gender inequality

A broader theme of building gender diversity across the Bowls Australia hierarchy emerged. While this concern was likely foregrounded for participants through the previous survey questions, survey participants identified barriers to women's participation both in a structural sense (how systems are run) as well as culturally.

Suggested areas for improvement included:

1. Practical changes to scheduling of games (including mixed games and after hours- see above)
2. Direct messaging and advocacy by CEO/ Bowls Australia on gender equality
3. Committee and board quotas
4. Supporting female players (eg. via women's coaching)
5. Ongoing meaningful engagement with women at all levels of the sport
6. Combining men's and women's state associations

5. More informal, accessible clubs

Strict and expensive uniforms, rigid adherence to the rules, long games and the timing of games during the week (as opposed to after hours and weekends) were seen as significant barriers to broader and more diverse player participation. Survey responders suggested that bowls would be improved by:

1. Relaxing uniform rules
2. Family friendly start/finish times
3. More emphasis on community and social aspects of the game
4. A mix of social and competitive games

Illustrative quotes for each of these five themes are provided in Appendix 4: Message to the CEO/President.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Enabling participation

5 most frequently mentioned enablers	Approx. mentions	Illustrative quotes
Inclusive, welcoming culture	22%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My club promotes "inclusion" in all aspects of the club and encourages volunteering for mental stimulation.</i> • <i>Inclusive of all races, genders and personality types</i> • <i>They are very friendly and welcoming to me and new people wanting to play of all abilities</i>
Friendly and supportive	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The culture and the positive vibe behind the club. Being in that environment is why I keep going back there and playing bowls. Everyone is so friendly and very easy going which allows me to just play my bowls and have fun</i> • <i>My club has been very supportive of my family as we face our fifth year of drought. They're encouraging and friendly and really seem to care about us.</i> • <i>Range of social events, friendly, welcoming atmosphere, strong level of competition.</i>
Well run	13%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>My club is well run which makes Pennant and Social bowls run smoothly</i> • <i>My club is run in a very professional manner and is inclusive of everyone regardless of age, gender, mental ability or Seuss orientation</i> • <i>Runs tournaments very well, very friendly</i>
Range of competitions	9%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Has a good range of options available, mixed bowls etc</i> • <i>Plenty of games summer and winter</i> • <i>Covers social, club competitions and Pennant very well and advertises other Club, State competitions as well</i>
Access to greens and facilities	9%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Allows use of lights to practice and play after sunset</i> • <i>Greens are easy to access for personal practice and plenty of people there for advice or coaching ideas</i> • <i>Highly organised, highly competitive and highly social club with great greens and facilities</i>

Appendix 2: Barriers to accessibility

5 most frequently mentioned barriers	Approx. mentions	Illustrative quotes
'Nothing'	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We have a great club that caters for everyone.</i> • <i>Nothing comes to mind</i> • <i>My club is fantastic</i>
Facilities	11%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>That would be a money matter, a permanent sun protection roof would be the answer and we would have not enough room to accommodate all participants.</i> • <i>Better greens.</i>
Younger members/events	10%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We are trying to find ways to attract younger players, males and females to join members in other events such as a "pro-am", family fun days, student interactions following School Programs but have not yet found the right formula.</i> • <i>To try to attract younger members of the community; unfortunately we are an aging club.</i> • <i>Encourage younger members to join & play. Where are the Grey Nomads & why are they not playing ????</i>
Gender equality at all levels	7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Equality of gender</i> • <i>I think there is still a great reliance, particularly in small clubs to assume that women members will look after the catering. This places an unfair burden on women and their participation at times.</i> • <i>Balance the decision making positions to be more representative of members regarding gender</i>
Selection process	6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Selectors who were interested in all players in all divisions not just the side/team they ate in.</i> • <i>Equal gender selection, if you don't have a penis..... you don't get a look in unfortunately...</i> • <i>Select teams irrespective of gender.</i>
More inclusive (in general)	6%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Change the culture. Be more inclusive. make everyone more welcome when learning the game. that is include them in all competition and mix them with the better players so they can learn how the game is played</i> • <i>I think to get new members is quite easy, retaining them is more difficult, we need to be more active with inclusion</i>

Appendix 3: Unacceptable behaviour

Most frequent examples, provided by <u>women</u> (>5% of comments including these themes)	Mentions	Illustrative quotes
1. Male to female verbal intimidation including: disparaging remarks, verbal aggression, aggressive 'coaching'	59%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The list is long but a short summary- men yelling at women, making rude comments about their play, men using foul language.....</i> • <i>I have also had a man tell on the green, that I should be in the kitchen</i> • <i>General body language, men think they are better. Some snide comments, ignoring women, women can't bowl long ends!</i> • <i>Male player dressed in female clothing making fun of women wanting to join men's club behaviour unacceptable</i> • <i>Yes, once I was in an all female pennant team when the opposite team (all men) were making ill received jokes about match making us to other players. After we won our game the rest of the males in the opposite team kept making reference that they lost to a "bunch of girls".</i> • <i>As a novice bowler ..was told you women are all the same ..always trying to take over ..told women playing with men in mixed social was ruining our club ..you women stick to yourselves and leave our Wednesday's alone ..</i> • <i>Sexist comments. Being called love and darl constantly. Not being taken seriously. Leered at.</i>
2. Resistance to or refusal to engage with mixed teams and/or female skips	15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have heard the rare comment about 'women shouldn't be playing mens pennant on Saturday'.</i> • <i>Refusal to shake a female opponent's hand because she out bowled her male counterpart. In that case I did not call it out. A male member commenting to a female in the same team that she should go back to her knitting which was reported to Club Chair and duly dealt with effectively. A male bowler making advances to a number of single women in the club which was consequently dealt with via disciplinary process. Overall there has been an improvement in on-green behaviour. There still remains a resistance to women skips which I am pressing to have addressed via coaching development.</i> • <i>Open hostility about playing against a female.</i> • <i>Especially men trying to kiss the oposition [SIC] after a game. I once had a man tell me he was not going tolet [SIC] any f.... woman beat him.</i> • <i>A few men refused to play in mixed bowls because of women</i> • <i>Some men refuse to outright play with women.</i>
3. Intimidation of new	13%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>More experienced Bowlers being impatient and rude to new bowlers.</i> • <i>Over criticism from skips towards new players. Just be more patient.</i>

Most frequent examples, provided by <u>women</u> (>5% of comments including these themes)	Mentions	Illustrative quotes
players		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>This could be a thesis - I think with women being rude with other women! 1. Power tripping "look what I know that you don't know" pathetic but ... 2. Impatience with newer bowler seemingly letting someone down</i> <i>Humiliation due to not having correct uniform or not having club stickers on bowls during district events It can be just basically unpleasant playing pennants with women</i> <i>But it did not seem to be a gender specific thing. Rather it was a belittling of someone new to the game.</i>
4. Sexual remarks or behaviours by males (towards or about women)	7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Constantly. Predatory behaviour and unwanted attention that did not stop until they were made aware that I had a partner, being belittled and spoken to inappropriately on the green during a pennant game, skippers failing to pass on concerns about inappropriate behaviour (it should be mandatory under the laws to report it to the umpire), hearing comments from one man to another such as 'don't play like a girl' (highly offensive), opposition players behaving like bullies telling everyone how long they've been playing and how well qualified they are (even though I am just as qualified but don't have to yell to the world to say so), sexist comments about women's legs, selection of skippers that usually prefers men over women in social games. Some clubs are worse than others, but often women are made to feel that they belong in the kitchen. If a man is helping in the kitchen there are jokes made about it and much laughter by most of the men in the club when they are acknowledged how disgraceful, it further reinforces the gender imbalance.</i> <i>sexual remarks to me and others.</i> <i>Sexual comments, insinuating women provide sexual favours for selection in top side</i> <i>I have heard males discussing women's backsides as they bowl and what they would like to do to them. I have heard a male bowler walking down the green calling his opposition a 'stupid f.....g bitch'.</i> <i>A male player walked up behind me while I was bending forward taking my bowls out of my bag and made a sexual movement toward me out of my vision. I was told about it much later and more upset then, that witnesses had not called him out immediately.</i> <i>Inappropriate male behaviour - sexual & bullying, personality clashes between women - though these can happen in any activity</i>
5. Female to female verbal intimidation	7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Mostly I have seen bad behaviour from women towards other women. Some would win at all costs, even being nasty to their own friends.</i> <i>Oh dear, sticklers to the rules. Women's who cannot let go of their baggage, rules, and run ins and want to throw their weight around and force people out of the club just because they clash personally.</i>

Most frequent examples, provided by <u>women</u> (>5% of comments including these themes)	Mentions	Illustrative quotes
including: disparaging remarks, verbal aggression, 'bitchy' comments		<p><i>We recently had a lady come to the club on ladies day to try bowls. She was made to feel unwelcome by one person and she walked out and never to be seen again. That is why we need to have our coaching course so we can accommodate coaching of new bowlers. We also lost 3 bowler about 2 years ago because of this sort of thing. I guess it is classed as bullying..</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Women are very bitchy towards women</i> • <i>Women can also behave badly ie sarcasm, tantrums, "give me something!" which is not acceptable.</i> • <i>I have witnessed verbal bullying (criticism of skills and appearance) to other women by women who consider their own skills and appearance to be superior.</i>
6. Swearing and/or inappropriate language	7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mostly swearing and not showing any respect</i> • <i>A lot of swearing on the green around women. Men refusing to smoke away from the green.</i> • <i>Men swearing, smoking, drinking on the green even though we have a non smoking no tolerance policy</i> • <i>Swearing esp where drunkenness is involved.</i>
<p>Less frequent themes included: inappropriate touching, physical intimidation (eg. crushing handshakes), less recognition of female service, unequal distribution of prize monies, ageism (older women), ageism (younger players), discrimination against those with disabilities (including cognitive decline), domestic abuse, accusations of cheating, undermining decisions/measures, smoking and consumption of alcohol on greens.</p>		

Most frequent examples, provided by <u>men</u> (>5% of comments including these themes)	Mentions	Illustrative quotes
1. Male to female intimidation and discrimination including: disparaging remarks, verbal aggression	40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Old school gender bias. Comments about appearance. Refusal to play against women.</i> • <i>sadly based on gender identifying roles, "should only be in the kitchen" or "should only be cleaning the clubhouse" "She can't play Div 1 or Premier grade coz she is female and can't be as good as a man"</i> • <i>sadly based on gender identifying roles, "should only be in the kitchen" or "should only be cleaning the clubhouse" "She can't play Div 1 or Premier grade coz she is female and can't be as good as a man"</i> • <i>I have witnessed male bowlers being condescending, making sexist or crude comments but also many instances where they were chastised by other male bowlers which suggests progress in creating a better atmosphere to attract and keep women in mixed bowls.</i> • <i>People putting women down and implying they are only sex objects makes me angry. This is why 1 third of Australians live alone and women see most men as untrustworthy.</i>
2. Resistance to or refusal to engage with mixed teams and/or female skips	35%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The odd dinosaur saying things like 'I thought this was a men's day' Or even something about growing balls. Unfortunate but rare. Dealt with by the committee.</i> • <i>This years pennants, older gentlemen refused to play against the women and were swapping teams.</i> • <i>I have heard people say women should not play with the men. They say some men come to bowls to get away from their wife</i> • <i>By some males who, display poor sportsmanship and poor body language and make it known that they don't want women in their team. esp Saturday Pennant.</i> • <i>Sexism and comments condemning Ladies Bowls as a lesser standard. Male bowlers refusing to bowl with ladies on a Saturday Pennant day.</i> •
3. Swearing and/or inappropriate language	13%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Male bowlers can't except them into what they think is a male sport. Purposely swear to offend them make rude gestures towards them</i> • <i>Yes foul language by male bowlers, not acceptable at our club</i> • <i>A man swore in great anger to a young lady during a pennant match. I made him apologise or I would stop the game</i> • <i>Sexist and rude language</i>
4. Intimidation of new	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>New member told to sit at another table rather than join a group of so called elite women. New member abused for being 5 minutes late to pay green fees. New member abused for not wearing</i>

players		<p><i>strict dress code on first attendance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Younger bowlers with potential being isolated within their club as they don't fit in. New players being made to feel like outcasts due to female clubs not wanting to risk losing control of their "click".</i> • <i>Older women towards younger women and juniors including those that work, especially in scheduling Club competitions.</i> • <i>Bullying of newer bowlers and younger bowlers and being too strict on process</i>
<p>Less frequent themes included: inappropriate touching (eg. congratulatory kisses), sexual comments/innuendo, ageism (younger players), female to female abuse, domestic abuse, accusations of cheating, undermining decisions/measures of females, smoking and consumption of alcohol on greens.</p>		

Appendix 4: Message to the CEO/President

5 most recommended actions	Illustrative quotes
<p>1. Target young people The most frequent response to this question mentioned children, young people or schools. Survey participants recommended that young people become engaged via:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> school programs youth specific competitions television advertising (that depicts young people) social media campaigns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>More clinics for school kids</i> <i>I would change the younger persons belief of the game by continuing to push school programs and participation. I would also try and introduce a competition similar to soccer where juniors can play other clubs (4X4)</i> <i>Advocate to the education department for bowls to become a compulsory part of the curriculum; a healthy sport through the lifespan, accessible to all no matter your physical ability, gender or age</i>
<p>2. Shift perceptions Some participants elaborated by recommending that this perception is addressed by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Engaging young people (see above) Provide multiple pathways for engagement with the sport- both social and competitive games need to be promoted Community engagement (eg. via workshops, presentations, local markets, club open days). Dedicated campaigns including TV and social media promotion featuring all demographics Local advertising More TV coverage of the sport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Perception - A typical response to 'want to play?' is "No I still have my own teeth.</i> <i>To change perception of bowls from a rigid, old-peoples, boring sport to one that is fun, young and vibrant is needed.</i> <i>I strongly believe that image alone is a great deterrent to younger membership. We still have a scones and jam image</i> <i>Try and change the community perception that Bowls is a stagnant game for older people. Showcase the younger bowlers, bowlers with disabilities etc. Do for bowls what Dylan Alcott did for disabled tennis, do a game changer. The older opeiole [SIC] will still bowl but younger and disabled bowlers may also see this as an exciting game/sport.</i>
<p>3. Increase mixed gender games/pennants</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Bowls needs to become gender neutral the quicker the better.</i> <p>Note: Some suggested need for both segregated and mixed, for example-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Personally I would like Men and women to have one day per week separately for social bowls and the remaining days to be bowled together.</i> <i>...I think most older women would prefer to play in a women's only</i>

5 most recommended actions	Illustrative quotes
	<p><i>competition whereas middle aged and younger women are happy to mix with the men but want an equal opportunity</i></p>
<p>4. Actively address gender inequality Areas for improvement included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Practical changes to scheduling of games (including mixed games and after hours- see above) Direct messaging and advocacy by Bowls Australia on gender equality Committee and board quotas Supporting female players (eg. via women's coaching) Combining men's and women's state associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I would try to change the view that womens [SIC] bowls should 'fit in' around men and the availability of the greens. More opportunities to be made available for working women with meaningful competitive opportunities for women on weekends. I think time for mixed gender pennants as I see no factor to prevent men and women competing on an even level.</i> <i>Having been on our committee for 4 years I feel a woman's opinion is not highly regarded. Bowls Australia maybe could let clubs know women are important"</i> <i>Open gender competition. Have open gender state associations (combine male/female)</i> <i>All pennant competitions to be open gender and all distinctions between genders within clubs to be removed</i>
<p>5. More informal, accessible clubs Survey responders suggested that bowls would be improved by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Relaxing uniform rules Family friendly start/finish times More emphasis on community and social aspects of the game Separate social and competitive games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I would run more fun bowling competitions [SIC] as such to encourage new bowlers and support those who are learning to make them feel valued at the club as the more experience bowlers.</i> <i>Starting times, length of games so people with families can still have some time for their families on weekends</i> <i>I would not insist that players wear the dreadful 'approved' bowls outfits.</i> <i>Young people are depressed by the attire. Oldies like me hate the poor quality and design ... and NO ONE (male or female) looks interesting in such attire"</i>

