



Leederville Sporting Club



Pressures

- Croquet left in the 1990s.
- Competitive lawn bowls stopped in the 2000s.
- Participation in bowling in long-term decline nationally.
- Other social and recreational options nearby.
- Club membership declined to 100 in mid 2020.
- Membership demographic - male, over 70.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKku4RAWa4M>



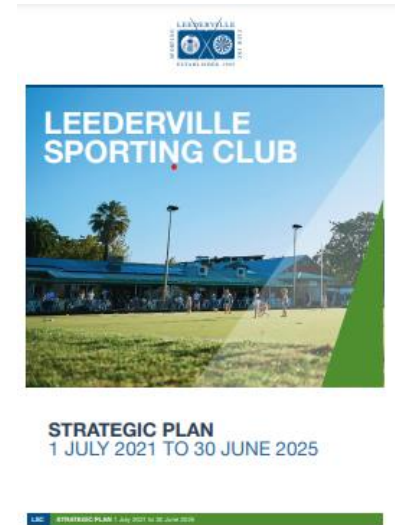
The spark

- Global pandemic in 2020 creates desire for community connection.
- A group of local Dads decide they need a space to connect.
- The 2020 AGM brings a new Committee with ideas and energy.



Strategy

- Formal consultation with existing members.
 - What do/do not you like about the Club?
 - What do you want to see change?
- Developed an inaugural strategic plan.
 - Clear vision 'Social and recreational hub for the community',
 - Target areas and goals.
 - Brought stakeholders along for the journey.
- Aligned activities to the strategy.



Engagement

- Commenced monthly emails to members on activities.
- Briefed key user-groups of the Club.
- Posted regularly on Facebook and Instagram.
- Reached out to critical stakeholders and briefed them onsite
 - Local Councillors.
 - Council administrators.
 - State/Federal Members of Parliament.
 - Relevant Ministers.
- Befriended community leaders and local businesses.



Inclusion

- Club needs to represent the community in which it resides.
- Developed Inclusion Policy.
- Focused on families
 - Free icy poles for kids
 - Increased outdoor games offering
 - Allowed kids to play on one green
 - Gate to the playground
 - Focused on local school social reps
- Disability
 - Accessible toilet to be installed
 - Access / inclusion infrastructure works
 - Inclusion training for the Committee
 - Developed Inclusion Policy
 - Hired first person with disability



A Reason to Come

- Bowl on grass greens.
- Meld with the community.
- Meat tray raffle.
- Chase the Ace.
- Craft beer and improved wine offering.
- Food trucks.
- BBQs.
- Sport on TV.
- Music.
- Games.
- Regular events.
- Access to playground.

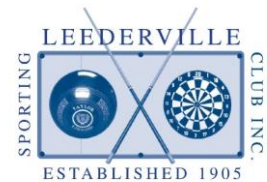


A contemporary brand



Heritage

- Revive and respect the history.
- Look for opportunities.



Funding

- Secured \$143k election commitment.
- \$100K from Grants.
- \$200K+ inv planned from Local Gov.
- Be ready with ideas and quotes.
- Convince others.
- Apply and apply and apply.
- Must drive the activity.
- Diverse revenue sources.



Media

- Embrace.
- Chase.

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POST

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Merged councils sink in sea of red ink

By BRET CHRISTIAN

NSW mega mergers also made the same predictions here when former premier Colin Barnett tried to force mergers of Perth metropolitan councils in 2013. His plan included merging seven western suburb councils into a mega council. He finally abandoned the idea in 2015 saying he was "putting up the white flag" after local voters rejected his mergers.

New Local Government Minister John Carey told the POST this week "As I have said on the public record, I have no intention to pursue forced amalgamations. I am considering the recommendations from the report by the Local Government Review Panel, and assessing further reforms to build greater accountability, transparency and better governance."

In NSW, all but one of the 14 councils that took legal action to resist forced mergers have reported surpluses, in contrast to most of the merged councils. Two merged NSW councils have now formally applied to de-merge, while five others are waiting in the wings. Two others are being run by administrators.

The WA Labor Party policy was to not merge councils without the support of the local electors. But it supported the Barnett Liberal government's Bill that sliced off the southern part of Subiaco and attached it to the City of Perth, without a referendum. The then opposition Labor Party voted for the City of Perth Act.

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Kane Blackman and his West Leederville dads group have helped re-



Sunday afternoons are busier than ever after a surge in new members. Photo: Dan Carson

Dads bring Bowlo back from brink

By BEN DICKINSON

Craft beers and icy poles have helped a group of West Leederville dads revive the fortunes of their ailing bowls club. The Leederville Sporting Club, in Cambridge Street, has ballooned from 100 members to 450 in eight months.

Vice-president Kane Blackman said the club, founded in 1965, had been in a slow decline since it dropped out of competitive bowling about 20 years ago.

"They struggled to get the numbers to stay in a competitive bowls league," Mr Blackman said.

"After the football left Subi Oval, even fewer people were

Mr Blackman, a father of two and club member of two years, started signing up friends to the club after his local dads group outgrew their garage meeting spot.

"There's a really strong dad community in West Leederville," he said.

"We needed somewhere more family friendly that had drinks, toilets, and somewhere for the kids to play."

"I handed out 40 membership forms."

Three local dads joined the club committee after November elections, including Mr Blackman as vice-president.

"We went to work trying to

"We upgraded the beer list. Before there was just Carlton Draught and Great Northern, so we put some craft beers in."

"We've even got a gluten free beer."

"We bought a whole bunch of games for the kids."

"Any kid who wants a Zooper Dooper (icy pole) can have one for free."

The committee rebranded the club as "The Bowlo" - which they spray-painted on the side of a sea container in the carpark.

Mr Blackman said locals had been joining in droves ever since, lured by \$8 craft pints, barefoot bowls and the weekly meat tray raffle.

MP briefed on bowlo vision

The Leederville Sporting Club, or West Leedy Bowlo, recently hosted Sean L'Estrange, the local State MP.

The Churchlands MLA met the club committee, including secretary Matt Johnstone-Summers, treasurer Jamie Devitt, general committee Brian Buckley, vice-president Kane Blackman and president Deb Pett.

The club aspires to be the social and recreational hub for the community and Sean heard how membership has

risen from 130 to 260.

The club has been made family-friendly and outdoor games have been bought for member and guest use.

The club also set up the first Town of Cambridge Container for Change collection point.

It is seeking funds for a range of improvements including a gate to Holyrood playground, an upgraded kitchen, a disability toilet and child change area and seat and shading for a new social space.

Page 50 - POST, December 19, 2020

Community news

Dads encourage FOWLS play at West Leedy

The Leederville Sporting Club, aka the West Leedy Bowls Club, is in the midst of a transformation, thanks to a group of local dads who joined the board recently.

New vice-president Kane Blackman said: "We are injecting some new blood - think the movie Crackerjack - and aim to make the place the social and recreational hub for the community."

Kane said membership had reached 230 this week, a 54% growth in two months since the new committee was elected.

The new regime has introduced craft beer on tap and expanded the number of taps, upgraded the wine selection, added furniture, broadened family activities such as kids' movie nights, free icy poles for the takers and the use of extra sports equipment.

With the Fathers of West Leederville (FOWLS) group, they've planted the school garden.

The club is planning to have branded merchandise for sale and has boosted its social media presence to attract new members.

There are plans to improve the grounds, such as installing a gate to Holyrood Park, and they have got permission to play music outside.

"The place is buzzing and there is a really vibrant group of dads in the area who have taken to the place, along with the Rotary clubs and corporate functions that convene there," Kane said.

"It's a great eclectic mix."

The club is in Cambridge Street, opposite JB O'Reilly's. Find it on Facebook @LeedervilleSportingClub.



A recent FOWLS gathering at Leederville Sporting Club.

TODAY



Coup de grass

A new generation takes over the bowls club

ALSO INSIDE

HEART ON THE LINE

Why Love on the Spectrum is the best dating show on TV

MAIN EVENT

A hearty winter dish to fill your tummy

A whole new slant on

Leederville Bowls has had a remarkable renaissance — from declining local gem to family-friendly hotspot where everyone is welcome

Simon Collins

If you go down to the Leederville Sporting Club on a sunny Sunday afternoon, you'll find a hive of activity. Kids running amok on the greens, some playing games of Giant Jenga or Connect 4, while parents sip craft beers and order early dinners from food trucks. There's still some bowls matches and the most raucous recently made a comeback, but this is not your typical lawn bowls club. Around six months ago, some local dads looking for a safe place for their offspring to play while they enjoyed a beer or two paid the \$40 membership fee at Leederville Sporting Club, swelling the numbers from 100 to around 140. In a bloodless takeover, three of the dads got onto the committee and set about transforming it into a vibrant West Leederville community hub that now boasts 475 members. "There's not a sporting club in Australia that could boast that membership growth," says vice-president Kane Blackman, one of the local parents behind the coup de grass. "I've been a member for three years," the 38-year-old father of two explains.

"It's beautiful to see on a Sunday afternoon in Leederville, families flooding in having a great time."



Leederville Sporting Club vice-president Kane Blackman and his son James, 2.



"I first joined up because I fell in love with this little green community space. I noticed that it was a really under-utilised asset and held a lot of potential, but it looked like it hadn't had much attention."

Asked how Leederville Sporting Club presented a year ago, Blackman does not mince words.

"Tired," he states. "Humble would be the best description of the facilities."

Probably the lights had been kept on but there wasn't much engagement with the community. It wasn't family-friendly, people didn't know it was there unless you were a group of lawn bowlers, you know, old-school gentlemen lawn bowlers.

Members who did sign up never got any correspondence about what was happening with the club," Blackman adds. "There was no social media presence. There was no food offerings. That was really the vibe."

Blackman says that with Perth planning to double population density in suburbs like West Leederville by 2035, "what better place to put high rises on than a sleepy community green asset that's walking distance to two train lines".

The new members realised this was a case of use it, or lose it.

"If you've only got 100 members and no activity you'd be a perfect candidate to lose the right to continue to exist there," Blackman says. "Which is the way bowling clubs have been going all around Australia — reducing membership base, low diversity and declining revenue stream."

"We saw those micro trends and thought, no, we need to breathe fresh life into here."

The first change was to expand the beer offering from two taps of mass-produced lager to four hosting craft beer, including — in a win for hyper-localism — West Leederville microbrewery Nootherman's Leederville Lager.

Then they fired up an Instagram page, bought kids' games, booked food trucks and, all of a sudden, the Leederville Sporting Club was the place to be.

"We'd done no marketing, no letter drops, no incentives to sign up," Blackman says. "It's just been word-of-mouth through the community."

The VP was behind the return of the meat raffle. "It's been a little goal of mine," he laughs.

The club, which lost its competitive bowls status around 20 years ago, hosts three Rotary Clubs plus disparate groups ranging from kung fu exponents and Holden car enthusiasts to fish breeders and WAPL umpires.

Leederville Sporting Club also secured a

Credits

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the Bowlo
WEST LEEDY

bowling



A group of local dads have revitalised the Leederville Sporting Club, aka The Bowlo, putting on craft beers, kids' games and food trucks to make the West Leederville venue the place to be on a sunny Sunday.
Picture: Ian Munro

Jack high

Leederville Sporting Club is not the only, nor first, bowlo to roll with the times. Here are a few other local heroes.

BAYSWATER BOWLING AND RECREATION CLUB
58 Murray St, Bayswater
Boasting more than 500 members, this 86-year-old venue offers social bowls and since 2015 has hosted the Street Roller Hockey League. Social memberships are \$10.

PERTH AND TATTERSALLS BOWLING AND RECREATION CLUB
2 Plain St, East Perth
WA's first official bowling club opened on the Esplanade in 1835 and moved to the present location in 1962. Today it hosts various sporting and social groups, including the Perth Ladies Darts Club, City of Perth RSL, and Bridges Hash House Harriers, and offers "retro pub meals". Social memberships are \$20.

HILTON PARK BOWLING CLUB
64 Shepherd St, Beaconsfield
Social memberships costing \$35 get use of greens, and those all important members' prices at the bar plus live music every Friday night and every second Sunday during warmer months.

MOSMAN PARK BOWLING CLUB
Julie Dodd Park, 39 Bay View Terrace, Mosman Park
Described as "the club with the million dollar view", this popular venue offers barefoot bowls, access to the bar and TAB facility, greens discounts and more for the \$55 social membership. The views are worth it — if you can get a booking!

MT LAWLEY BOWLING CLUB
Cor Storthes and Rockwood St, Mt Lawley
Established in 1909 and housed in a gorgeous art deco building in the inner-city suburb, the Mt Lawley bowlo offers bar access, club meals and discount on room hire for \$30 social memberships.

NORTH PERTH BOWLS CLUB
10 Farmer St, North Perth
"Enjoy the privileges of the club" for \$20 per year. One of the more vibrant inner-city bowloos boasts more than 800 local members (many too young to get the AstraZeneca vaccine) and hosts everything from DJ nights and gigs, to great value Friday night dinners.



Mosman Park Bowling Club



North Perth Bowls Club

commitment of \$143,000 from the State Government via Churchlands MLA Christine Tonkin before the last election.

The money will fund a range of projects, including a disability toilet built in partnership with the City of Cambridge, a commercial kitchen and new fencing between the car park and greens. They also aim to create Perth's biggest inner-city beer garden and kids' cultural play space.

Blackman, who has a son with Angelman syndrome, plans to hire people with disabilities "to make the club even more inclusive".

At the core of this heartwarming project is the importance of community in a post-pandemic world.

"People are longing for this sense of connection and community," Blackman says. "Local bowls clubs are this diamond in the rough. It's beautiful to see on a Sunday afternoon in Leederville, families flooding in having a great time, enjoying a drink, kids in safe space."

What about the 100 members who predate this transformation? How do they feel about Bowlo 2.0?

"I'd say 99 per cent are extremely supportive," Blackman says. "They've loved that there's been fresh blood and talent and energy injected into the site."

"There's probably been only one or two people who like the place as it was before."

"I kid you not," he laughs. "This is word for word what one member said to me: 'Kane, I love the fact it's family friendly but there's too many families here now.'"

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Letters to the POST

Please email letters to letters@postnewspapers.com.au, lodge online at www.postnewspapers.com.au every letter to include the writer's full name and address plus daytime phone number for verification. Bo

Magic memories of Leedy bowls

I was thrilled to read about the revival of the Leederville (Bowls) Sporting Club (*Dads bring Bowlo back from brink*, POST, May 15).

Both of my grandparents were devoted members and I remember the busy days in the 1960s when we came to Perth and visited them at the club.

My grandmother, Vi Tonkin, was made a life member, was ladies president when she was 95 years old and played until she was 99.

She even had her 100th birthday there, such was the importance of the club.

At her funeral the ladies lined up beside her casket in their bowling whites. It was a very special and very beautiful moment.

Well done, Kane Blackman and the other West Leederville community members.

There are many past bowlers smiling down at you.

Noel Youngman
Colin Street, Dalkeith



Vi Tonkin, centre, at 98, raises the flag at the Leederville Bowls Club. Photo supplied by Vi's grandson Noel Youngman.

Stop the blame game on vaccinations



FUTURE DIRECTION



Culture

- A sense of community.
- Relaxed vibe.
- Safe and respectful.
- Embrace an eclectic mix of activities.
- Ask everyone 'What do you do?'



BE A Boulo
WEST LEEDY

LEGEND

VOLUNTEER REGISTER

A club is only as strong as its members, and we could always use a hand to keep the club thriving... so volunteer today!

Want to get more involved? We'd love to have you!

Full Name: _____
DOB: _____
Email: _____
Mobile: _____
Preferred contact: _____

I'm interested in volunteering for:

<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching bowls	<input type="checkbox"/> Marketing
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooking a BBQ	<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsorship / donation / corporate partnership
<input type="checkbox"/> Running a raffle	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: I have a skill / trade / piece of equipment / contacts / idea that might be useful!
<input type="checkbox"/> Helping with special events	Details: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Working the bar	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Handyman / maintenance	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Garden	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual working bee	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance / admin	_____



Membership

