

Toowoomba City Bowls Club

1938 - April 2022

In early 1934, members of the West Toowoomba Progress Association held meetings to discuss forming a third Bowls Club in Toowoomba. At this time, Toowoomba Club, Lindsay Street, and West Toowoomba Club in Taylor Street existed.

Mr John Duggan M.L.A had shown great interest in the formation of this Club and as a result on 22 April 1937, advice was received from the Council that they had agreed to borrow one thousand pounds for improvements and were prepared to lease the area for 20 years at a rental of seventy-seven pounds per annum.

On 26 May 1937, the Chronicle reported that seven (7) rinks were available and that at a General Meeting held at the Soldiers Hall, Foundation Office Bearers were elected. Patron: Hon. J E Duggan M.L.A.; President: Dr E Bruce-Smith; Vice - President: J Hoare; Secretary: H E Wilson; Treasure: F Cooper; Greens: T L Fryer; Committee: G Herbert, J C Murphy, C Redwood, A E King. Subscription was three (3) guineas with green fee to be one shilling and sixpence.

The first official game was played on 5 February 1938. The lease was received in March and a discussion regarding forming a Ladies' Club met with a favourable response on 29 March 1938. The Pavilion was completed with the first Committee Meeting being held on 21 April 1938. The first Annual General Meeting was held 22 July 1938. At this meeting, the membership was 40.

In 1951 negotiations were opened with the Council to obtain extra land for a further green, but this matter was deferred until the site for the new swimming pool was finalised.

The swimming pool was commenced, and the Club was advised that the fill from this work was to be used to level the area West of the green and this area was to be utilised by the Members as a car park.

The club house was extended in 1962. This increased the bar area, placed the kitchen at the eastern end of the building with a new Secretary's office adjacent.

In the same year, the title of the Club, which was originally the City Bowling Club was changed to the Toowoomba City Bowls Club (Incorporated).

In 1970 due to the deterioration of the green, it was closed for a period of six (6) months. The couch grass was replaced with Transvaal couch and prefabricated ditch boards were installed. Play continued due to the generosity of other Clubs in Toowoomba, allowing City members to continue to play competition on their greens.

On Sunday, 27 July 1986, the Hon. Tom McVeigh, local Federal Member, assisted by His Worship the Mayor, Alderman Clive Berghofer officially opened a new half-green. Unfortunately, despite a maximum attendance bowls could not be played due to wet conditions.



In October 1986, the original No. 1 Green was closed, the original grass removed, levels taken and resown with tift-dwarf grass. Proper drainage was also installed. In February 1987 it was reopened for play and officially opened by Mr Bill Appleby the Immediate Past President of RQBA on Sunday 1 March 1987.

In year 2011, devastating floods tore through the Toowoomba CBD and yet the City Bowls Club was relatively unscathed.

2013 to 2018, witnessed significant redevelopment all around the Toowoomba City Bowls Club. In late 2013 media reports were starting to circulate that the Grand Central Shopping Centre owned by Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC) was about to expand.

QIC had purchased the nearby Village Fair Shopping Centre, across the road, and the existing Toowoomba Library and car park, which were right next door to the bowls club.

With the demolition of Garden Town Shopping Centre, the City Library and carpark, it soon became evident that the greens, clubhouse, and carpark would be impacted. The Club greenkeeper reported significant changes to the profile of the main green because of heavy machinery contributing to soil movement. Constant heavy machinery vibration was also felt inside the clubhouse resulting in minor damage.

After several meetings with ProBuild Constructions, it was agreed that the Toowoomba City Bowls Club would allow ProBuild to use the "half-green" during the construction period. In return, a new synthetic green, consisting of three rinks, would be established in its place, using the expertise of the Berry Bowling Company, at a cost of \$200,000 which would be paid by ProBuild.

The club also negotiated the restoration of the carpark, which had been damaged by construction machinery over the three-year period.

Credit must go to the men and women who held positions on the management committee at the time. Without their dedication, the club could have easily folded owing to such adversity.

The COVID-19 pandemic saw the first cases identified in Australia in late January 2020. The City Club, following advice from the Queensland Chief Health Officer closed its doors in late March 2020, and reopened under mandated COVID restrictions, approximately six (6) months later. The Club abided by the guidelines put in place by the Queensland Government. On Thursday 14 April 2022, the requirement to check in and to be fully vaccinated in a range of venues and events ceased.

Today, The Toowoomba City Bowls Club stands as true testament of courage, determination, and challenging work; may it continue well into the future.

Compiled by Bill Tedford, City President, April 2022 based on records held and maintained by the Toowoomba City Bowls Club Inc.

