

BEYOND COMPETITION: CULTIVATING FRIENDSHIPS AND COMMUNITY AT PROSPECT BROADVIEW BOWLING CLUB

Under the radiant sun of Fiji, Ralph Dunn, a sprightly 92-year-old bowler, embarked on a journey that would etch a remarkable chapter in the history of the Prospect Broadview Bowling Club.

With great pride and honour, Ralph represented the club in the 2023 Sunny West Bowling Carnival in Nadi. As the sole representatives from South Australia, Ralph and his team joined 140 international players as part of the tournament, including bowlers from New Zealand, Samoa, and Canada.

Reflecting on his experience, Ralph reminisced about the opportunity his love of bowls had provided him. Despite unpredictable weather conditions, Ralph's unwavering enthusiasm and skill shone through. On the carnival's opening day, his team was tasked with completing three 15-end games, the first needing to be completed within two hours – a very difficult timeframe in tropical weather conditions!

While Ralph's journey to Fiji captures the imagination, the Prospect Broadview Bowling Club has a storied history that extends far beyond any one individual. The club's origin dates back to 1913, when the Prospect Bowling Club first emerged, finding a home adjacent to Prospect Oval. Nearly a century later in 2001, Prospect Bowling Club merged with Broadview Bowling Club, relocating to its current site on Collingrove Avenue and combining their vibrant colours—Prospect's red and white, and Broadview's blue and yellow—symbolising the club's defining unity.

Bowls, often misunderstood as a pastime for the older generation, is breaking free from these misconceptions at the Prospect Broadview Bowling Club. Rob Clutterham, Club President, expressed the club's commitment to providing avenues of participation for all ages and sporting abilities, emphasising that everyone can find a place within the club. Prior experience is not necessary, with current members gladly offering coaching and mentoring to new members keen to give bowls a go. The Night Owls social bowling competition, held on Tuesday evenings during the summer months, is consistently booked up with enthusiastic participants ranging in age. Kerry Johnston, Executive Officer, credits the combination of a relaxed competition and friendly mentoring for her involvement with the club.



"It's very addictive. I came in to play Night Owls, and now I live here!"

The pennant bowls season against other metropolitan clubs runs from October through March, with men playing on Wednesdays, women on Thursdays and mixed teams battling it out on Saturdays. While Prospect Broadview Bowling Club enjoys the competition, they understand some may have limited time or inclination to commit to the regular competitive play. Weather permitting, social bowls are played almost every Friday throughout the year, as well as on Wednesdays and Saturdays from April to September. This provides an opportunity for individuals with work commitments both during the week and across the weekend to join in the fun and relaxation.

The club's commitment to inclusivity extends beyond age and time constraints; financial accessibility is also championed. Amidst a cost-of-living crisis rendering some pastimes prohibitive, the Prospect Broadview Bowling Club offers an affordable alternative. With a modest annual pennant season membership fee of \$320, or a social membership for \$120, the club ensures that cost is no barrier to entry. This dedication to economical fun extends to the bar, too.

"It's not just cheap to play here, it's cheap to drink here too!" declared Peter Bruce, Vice President and Bar Manager.

Within the heart of the Prospect Broadview Bowling Club, a captivating spirit thrives, extending far beyond the realm of competition.

"It's never just about one person winning the game; you have to play as a team," Kerry said.

Bowls offers a space where individuals from diverse backgrounds and varying abilities can come together and cultivate friendships through friendly rivalry. The shared passion for the game acts as a powerful catalyst, fostering connections that transcend age and societal barriers. Peter, who joined the club just four years ago, reflects on the club's vibrant social fabric.

"In that time, I must've met 100 people I didn't previously know," he said.

His personal journey highlights the club's unwavering commitment to nurturing a sense of community and camaraderie.

Amidst their dedication to bowling, the club never forgets its role as a community hub. Prospect Broadview Bowling Club's open-door policy extends beyond the greens, embracing the wider community. Their function spaces, which have seen a surge in popularity, are available for hire, and the club generously offers them free of charge to local charities and community groups. With exclusive use of the clubrooms and bar facilities available, the club invites both individuals and organisations to come together, celebrate, and create memories that will last a lifetime.

As the Prospect Broadview Bowling Club continues to weave its tapestry of stories, embracing diversity, fostering friendships, and celebrating a quintessential Australian pastime, it stands as a testament to the power of community spirit.

Within its grounds, Ralph Dunn and countless others have found a second home—a place where age is but a number, barriers are broken, and the simple act of rolling a bowl can bridge generations. Ralph affectionately describes the club's impact on his life.

"It's a wonderful club, with wonderful people. I've enjoyed every day I've been here."

The Prospect Broadview Bowling Club beckons all who seek connection and camaraderie, reminding us that the true essence of a club lies not in its history or facilities, but in the hearts and souls of those who call it home.

For more information on the Prospect Broadview Bowling Club, including upcoming come and try days and facility hire, visit the club's website at prospectbroadviewbc.com.