



CASE STUDY Bowls Australia Club Support

Project background

In 2023, Bowls Australia (BA) received funding from the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) through the Play Well Grant to support the implementation of its bespoke Club Support (CSP). The CSP is designed as an industry leading club development and education to build capability in the Bowls system.

The ASC funding provided an additional funding option to undertake an independent and evidence-based evaluation, of which BA was successful in receiving. [Life Sport Journey](#) was appointed to undertake the CSP evaluation.

Now in its second year of iteration, the timing serves to support a meaningful evaluation of the CSP.

Club Support background & objectives

BA launched the refreshed CSP in September 2023 following a review of its Regional Bowls Manager. The CSP was co-designed with State and Territory Associations (STAs), Club volunteers and industry experts.

A unique partnership model which includes a range of services from **CLUBMAP**, **Kinetica** and **Australian Sports Camps**, supports CSP delivery with:

- An online education and resource hub.
- Sophisticated data and intelligence to target and drive participation outcomes.
- An expanded workforce to reach new markets.

The CSP has four objectives. These are:

1. Increase club system capability via a tailored bowls-specific club development.
2. Create welcoming, safe and inclusive clubs.
3. Use data and intelligence to increase participation of all ages, genders, and cultures and drive long-life involvement in Bowls.
4. Scalability to support BA's 1,800 clubs.

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2025 BA Club Support Survey insights summary – of the 565 club responses

- **11% response rate:** 75% aged 65+, 76% committee members, 64% regional clubs/36% metro clubs
- **Top 3 Club challenges:** Membership decline (54%), Attract/retain volunteers (49%), Grant applications (26%)
- **Engagement with BA-CLUBMAP:** 38% webinar attendance, 23% online resource hub, 15% Club Health Check
- **Clubs highlighted tangible benefits from support** in the following key areas: BowlsLink education, grant applications, governance, strategic planning & membership

Project objectives

The objectives of the BA Club Support evaluation are summarised as:

1. Undertake an evidence-based evaluation of the ASC-funded activities within the BA CSP and effectiveness in supporting the capability development of BA's clubs and volunteers.
2. Determine the extent to which the ASC-funded activities contributed to CSP objectives and outcomes.
3. Develop a report that includes an evidence-based evaluation of the CSP and provides strategic recommendations to inform a future-focused and sustainable club capability development .

A structured project approach

1. Literature review
2. Club administrator survey
3. Stakeholder consultation
4. Issues & Opportunities Paper
5. Final Report & Case Study

What we asked

Stakeholders were asked a set of questions to obtain their impressions of BA's CSP, with a focus on the BA-CLUBMAP services and products.

What we found

The evaluation identified six strategic themes, with recommendations shared below to be actively implemented by Bowls Australia over the next year:

1. **Club Support reach & impact:**
 - Leverage CSP strengths to build club capability.
 - Optimise Club Support Manager role effectiveness & BA/STA alignment.
2. **Club engagement & communications:**
 - Streamline club data collection.
 - Improve club digital literacy and confidence.
 - Deliver more case studies and story-telling.
 - Increase club awareness and engagement.
3. **Digital integration & data use:**
 - Optimise data integration and efficiency.
 - Build bowls system confidence in using data.
 - Refine/leverage data for STA/club initiatives.
4. **Club development & education:**
 - Encourage increased Health Check completion.
 - Optimise BA-CLUBMAP webinar engagement.
 - Drive greater use of the online resource hub.
5. **Creating welcoming, safe & inclusive clubs:**
 - Effectively measure club safety and inclusion.
 - Optimise collaboration between Club Support Managers & the Diversity & Inclusion Manager.
 - Embed Sport Integrity Australia and STA resources into BA resources.
6. **Sustainability & long-term success:**
 - Position the Bowls system and structure for enduring success.