

Longreach Bowling Club QLD

Longreach Bowling Club is a small rural club in Central Queensland with 90% male membership and an average age of 50.

What was the problem?

It was too hot and the older members at the time did not encourage younger people to join the club.

What was your solution?

The older members gradually retired and a younger more energetic committee was put in.

The Club erected a retractable shade cover at a cost of \$120,000. A Friday night Goose Club was introduced where the club sold tickets during the week, up to the time of the draw. The Club entered in to partnership with many local businesses to provide prizes for a series of draws each Friday night.

A Members Draw was also introduced with a cash prize where members or social members had to be in the club at the time of the draw to collect a prize. Prizes rolled over each week if the winner was not there so there were some weeks where the jackpot was hundreds of dollars. This provided a good incentive for members to spend their evenings in the club on those nights.

Poker machines were also introduced but these are not the draw card they are in larger clubs. More "mercantile bowls nights" which are social bowls nights where people play for fun.

How did you promote it?

Word of mouth and some radio coverage.



How successful was it?

Club membership doubled in two years. There are now more volunteers doing jobs around the surrounds and caring for the greens. People just drop in now for a drink and some have even made it their regular meeting place to see their friends, be they full members or social members. The older members have said that some of the changes should have been made years ago. Families are made to feel welcome.

What worked best?

A younger committee gave the club a more relaxed atmosphere.

What didn't work?

Membership drives. Perhaps it was the way the club marketed them or the illusion you have to be old to play bowls which a lot of people think is the case. However when the club holds the mercantile nights (fun nights), people who do not play or who are not members, often come and have a game and find they like it and want to join the club and play on a regular basis.

What advice would you give other bowls clubs?

Try anything to make people of all ages want to go to the club.

