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To: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
PROVINCIAL PRESIDENTS  
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DISTRICT SECRETARIES  
MEDIA

7 February 2025

### CIRCULAR 12 / 2025

### DR CHARLES LOUW – 100<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY

The President and Executive of Bowls SA, together with bowlers throughout the country, celebrate together with his close family and friends, the occasion of **Dr Charles Louw** 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday

Dr Charles Louw (fondly known as Doc) was born on the 7th February 1925 in Somerset West and matriculated from Paarl Boys High. Doc graduated as a medical doctor from Wits University in 1947. From 1949 to 1983 he practiced as a Medical Practitioner in Adelaide, Eastern Cape.

His passion for sports turf was ignited during his university days when as part of his Botany syllabus he attended a course on turf management which was run by the Wits turf research institute. As these years were the time when many soldiers were returning home from the war the Professor of Botany at Wits held the belief that these soldiers would seek sporting engagements and likely to turn to golf. He recalls being part of a weeklong golf trip to Gauteng in 1952 at that time there were already 68 courses in the area. Given the number today the forecast by the Botany professor about the growth of sporting institutions proved well founded.

In 1949 Charles became involved in the green keeping at Adelaide Golf Club. His interest in bowls was largely due to work pressure as he found it difficult to get to golf in time after surgery hours on a Saturday. At the time Charles was also mayor of Adelaide and as the bowls season was to be opened, his late wife Jean, as mayoress was invited to get proceedings underway. Charles accompanied her to the event and was immediately attracted to the game. It suited him better from a timing perspective as he was able to get to 'tabs-in' in good time. He was immediately hooked on the game. Being the ever, competitive person Charles achieved some credible results including as Skip of the team that won the Eastern Province Trips in 1991 and being runner-up three times in the Eastern Province pairs.

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In 1983 Charles sold his practice in Adelaide and moved to Port Alfred where he finally retired as Acting Director of Health in the Eastern Cape. The Kowie Health Department facility closed in 1982 and thirty members then got together to start the Club at its present-day site. Charles became involved in the greens at Kowie and through the years those of us fortunate to have played there will attest to the quality of the surfaces. People arriving at the club for a bowls event were often greeted by the sight of Charles, dressed in whites, on his 'ironing-machine' moving back and forward to ensure contestants had the best surface he could offer.

In 1988 Doc was appointed as chairman of the Green Keepers committee a position he held for 20 years. During this time, he travelled extensively visiting clubs throughout the country to inspect greens and conduct seminars. On one particular ten-day trip to Cape Town, he inspected 123 greens in the surrounding area. Apart from his vast travels he also produced some forty 'grass clippings' articles which were published over many years together with Bowls newsletters.

Charles had gained incredible knowledge and experience on green keeping over his many years and he wrote his first book 'How to Evaluate a Green'. This was followed by another book 'Basic Principles of Green Keeping'. Then came his most memorable undertaking when he wrote his last reference book, 'Bowls Greens Management'. This book of Four hundred and Fifty well referenced A4 pages took eight years to complete and was published in 2013 when Charles was the tender age of eighty-eight. The book was sold throughout the country and as far afield as the USA.

Charles has been well recognized for his huge contribution to bowls in South Africa. He has been made an honorary life member of Adelaide and Kowie Bowls Club as well as the Eastern Areas sub-district. He is also an honorary vice-president of EP Bowls but his proudest moment was when he was made honorary life member of **Bowls South Africa** in 2010.

Anybody who has been privileged to be in the company of Charles can only but marvel at his lucid recall on names and events that took place many years ago. Many people have been fortunate to have been the beneficiary of his shared knowledge which he freely passed on to all who cared to take time with him. His legacy and contribution to our sport and those many green keepers will long live in the memory of all who knew him.

With grateful acknowledgement to Bryan Hart – Convenor of Bowls SA Green Keepers NSC

**BOBBY DONNELLY**  
**CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER**



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