



To: **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
PROVINCIAL PRESIDENTS
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DISTRICT PRESIDENTS
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MEDIA**

18 February 2026

CIRCULAR 13 – 2026

WELCOME TO 2026 FROM THE WORLD BOWLS PRESIDENT

Kia ora,

Welcome to 2026 and another exciting chapter for World Bowls.

1. Around the world, our sport continues to grow in reach, relevance, and ambition. From community greens to the world stage, bowls is connecting people, cultures, and generations in powerful ways — and World Bowls is proud to be helping shape that future alongside our Members, Associates, partners, and volunteers.

We are looking ahead with real momentum.

2. Preparations are progressing strongly for the 2027 World Championships, while the upcoming Commonwealth Games in Glasgow represent a major moment to showcase our sport to a global audience. At the same time, our World Bowls and World Bowls Series events (and the rankings) continue to expand in scale and quality, reinforcing clear international pathways and bringing consistency, professionalism, and excitement to bowls competition worldwide. CEO Neil Dalrymple will soon be releasing an EOI process for the hosting of our World Bowls events for 2027 onwards.
3. Growth, however, is not only about elite events. It is about people. It is about supporting regions, strengthening national federations, and attracting new participants to the game. We are investing in regional development to help build capacity where it matters most, and we are delighted to welcome a new World Bowls region spanning Eastern Europe and Middle Asia — a powerful signal of bowls' expanding global footprint. The recently launched World Bowls Academy will help build the capacity and capability in existing and new nations, creating global consistency in learning domains like coaching, Para classifying, administration, and ITOs, while also providing entry level guides to our sport.
4. Initiatives such as the Bowls for Brisbane campaign reflect our commitment to legacy, community impact and ensuring bowls continues to thrive in new environments. We have also started engaging with the bidding cities for the 2036 Olympics and Paralympics, including Amdavad in India and Jeonju in Korea. Both cities are already interested in bowls being part of their proposed programmes, thanks to the encouragement and advocacy of our Member Nations and Associates. Hopefully, Brisbane will grasp the opportunity first, and thanks to Bowls Australia for their partnership on this.



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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Executive Committee:

President: David Hamer, Vice President: Lyla Young
Members: Bruce Burt, Fred Darke, Owen James, Damien Stefaans,
Chief Operations Officer: Bobby Donnelly



5. Following on from successfully joining the International Paralympic Committee last year, we are finalising International Olympic Committee recognition through our membership of the World Pétanque and Bowls Federation. These two milestones can also facilitate the inclusion of Bowls and Para bowls in regional multi-sport events like the Asian Games and European Games.
6. Inclusion and diversity sit at the heart of everything we do. The integration of the International Bowls for the Disabled into World Bowls was a landmark step forward, reinforcing our belief that our sport should be accessible to all. There are several significant opportunities that are already emerging from the merger - watch this space!
7. This progress is matched by the strengthening of our commercial partnerships, with new sponsors coming on board to support innovation, sustainability, and growth. We are also continuing to build our broadcast, media, and social media presence, telling better stories, reaching new audiences, and giving our sport the visibility it deserves.
8. Entering its third year, the World Bowls Series (WBS) has become a truly global, year-round competition framework — connecting sanctioned events across continents and linking them through a single, unified ranking system. WBS is about opportunity, clarity and connection, and it continues to evolve in response to the needs of players and Member organisations. It is great to see new events in new countries expressing interest in participating.
9. A particularly exciting development is the World Bowls Prime Series (55+). Inspired by successful events like the Atlantic Senior Open in Cyprus, and interest from other countries, we are pleased to confirm we will be launching this new Prime Series. Designed specifically for players aged 55 and over, the Prime Series delivers professionally run events across multiple regions, with results contributing directly to new global WBS Prime Rankings. The Series will provide a clear, structured international calendar for 55+ players — creating meaningful competition, recognition, and a sense of belonging within the wider World Bowls Series throughout the year.
10. As we look forward, our focus is clear: to grow the sport, strengthen our global community, embrace innovation, and ensure bowls remains one of the world's most inclusive, accessible, and connected sports.
11. We are blessed to have a fantastic cohort of players, administrators, technical officials, coaches, partners, and supporters, that are committed to our sport and its growth.
12. Together, we are building something special — and the best is still to come.

Thank you for your commitment and support.

Nga mihi,

Brett O'Riley
World Bowls President



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