

Public Forum Address to Council – 27 June 2012

Bowral Golf Club has been part of the highlands since 1901 and at its present site since 1917. We have ~ 480 members. The last few years have been difficult for all clubs and ours is no exception.

It has been built and is maintained by members funds with income also provided by visitor fees – no subsidy or support has been sought from the council. The majority of other sporting facilities in the highlands are built and maintained by the council with some types of facilities costing hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars. These facilities are often provided to residents free or at a nominal entry cost.

Our golf club is open to all, visitors come from both within and increasingly from outside the shire bringing income not only to our club but the local area.

In recent times clubs have failed (or have had serious problems) in the shire, Moss Vale Bowling Club, Mittagong Bowling Club, Bowral Country Club and The Highlands Golf Club.

The Bowral Country Club has been leased to a commercial operator for around \$17000 pa and they have to maintain it as a golf course under the conditions of the lease. Without the hotel it would fail.

The Highlands Golf Club has received some assistance from the council of approximately \$20,000 pa

Moss Vale Golf club have got the benefit of income from their accommodation – without this income it would be a different picture.

BGC has not got accommodation to help with its operating costs.

In days gone by BGC could have appealed to its members for assistance those days are long gone. The membership of BGC has changed dramatically in the last 40 years and today is comprised of people from all walks of life mainly retired. Our members could not afford any increase in fees

Rather than let our club drift into failure the new board and vigorous management has taken action in promoting the club both locally and on the internet and these actions are showing good positive results. New kitchen/catering arrangements have resulted in strong growth in the clubhouse.

While these trends are encouraging every avenue in being examined to improve the position of the club financially. Our total rates last year were \$41,000 with the land rate component of \$32,500. We asked in our letter to council for relief for 2 years from the land rates – around \$65,000 (\$90,000 was quoted incorrectly in the Agenda Item Introduction paper). It may not be possible for the council to offer this level of support because of the call on funds for other projects but any level of support will be appreciated.

In summary.

- BGC provide a sporting and social facility to the community and visitors that has been built and is maintained at no cost to the council.
- Our club and clubs membership has changed – the days of being depending on rich members benefactors are long gone – the clubs membership come from all walks of life are aare mainly retired.
- All clubs are having difficulties and ours is no exception – we cannot risk failure for the club. Failure cannot be countenanced, the land falling into disuse, then overgrown and then finally a developer forcing the development of houses. Our community will have lost this wonderful asset in the heart of Bowral forever.
- This year has seen a promising trend begin to develop in our finances but we would appreciate support from the council. We make this request in equity.
- Any support the council can give would be much appreciated.

kjb 27 June 2012