



21/12/2021

To secretaries of all clubs,

As you may or may not be aware there has been a significant change in NSW government policy and Health Orders affecting registered clubs in NSW which has a consequent impact on bowls in the O&M.

As from Wednesday 15th December all people, regardless of their vaccination status are now allowed to access registered club premises and environs, including bowling greens.

The Victorian government has always had a defined a position of unvaccinated people being able to participate in “community sport”. For bowls, Bowls Vic elaborated and defined the community sport competitions as Pennant, State events held regionally and Championships that lead to State Championships. The “community sport” had to occur either in the entire venue or in a separate space within the venue which included separate entrances and separate facilities such as toilets. *Ref: Bowls Victoria: returning to play after snap lockdown COVID guidelines for Bowls 10 November 2021*

Up to 15/12/2021 in O&M region:

- all of our Victorian venues defined themselves as “physical recreation facilities” where community sport activities were run in conjunction with other activities which led to double vaccination being required
- Our NSW venues were defined by the NSW government under relevant health orders requiring double vaccination.

Now the NSW clubs meet the definition of “community sport” venues as defined by the Victorian Government and the O&M Board cannot refuse to accept entries to State events from unvaccinated people.

This is a step along the path of what governments have defined as “living with COVID”.

Despite concerns held by individual Board members, the Board has no choice in this matter.

If we deny unvaccinated people their right to compete in “community sport” under the appropriate guidelines we will be exposing our region to potential action and accompanying potential costs.

Bowls Victoria has made it clear that we cannot exclude unvaccinated players from participating in events where the venue meets the criteria required by the Victorian State government.

O&M has been fortunate not to have had to deal with this issue previously but you may be aware that other regions, particularly in the metro, have been negotiating this issue for most of the season. Individuals and clubs have been making decisions about their exposure to unvaccinated people with choices around giving walkovers, not participating etc.

At this point in time, there is no alteration for Victorian clubs and the “return to play” guidelines current at 10th November remain valid.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me on 0409739459

In the meantime I hope you all have a Happy Christmas and enjoy the short break in the season

Laureen