



## **President Report BTC AGM 2021 – Damien Saunder**

### **WELCOME**

Getting a brand new tennis club up and running in what has been a difficult year for many is no mean feat. The entire club has shown resilience and determination and I applaud its achievements to-date.

Since forming in August 2020 the club has formalised its affiliation with its major stakeholders—Tennis Victoria and the Bendigo Tennis Association and continues to strengthen its relationship with our affiliated clubs in the region.

I would like to especially thank all of our members for their fantastic support over the last 12 months—we currently have just shy of 60 members signed up for the 2020/21 season which is an outstanding effort by everyone.

For the first time, the club is set to enter teams in a range of grades across both Junior and Senior BTA Pennant for the 2021/22 season. Our tight-knit Thursday Men's group of approximately 40 players will return to play in mid-week tennis at the Fosterville Gold Tennis Center this coming term. The club will also enter 2 or 3 teams into the Wednesday night mixed competition. Our fun filled Women's Tuesday night group has grown beyond 35 players and offers social and competitive playing opportunities for women of all levels.

Our inaugural Singles and Doubles club championships were held throughout the year with Marcos de Noronha being crowned our Singles Club Champion while Brad Heyme and Brad Harris were crowned our Doubles Club Champions. Congratulations to our winners and everyone that participated.

Club income took on a steady rise throughout the year off the back of competition and membership fees, sponsorship, merchandise and a \$1,500 community sports sector grant from the Victorian Government. Expenses remained relatively consistent throughout the year with court hire, tennis balls, Tennis Victoria affiliation fees, merchandise and our world famous end of year party contributing as major expenses. A portion of the club's membership fees were used to make a \$500 donation to the Bendigo Winter Night Shelter. Each year, the club will continue to donate portions of its membership revenue to an important local charity.

The club continues to focus heavily on developing its back-end technology stack and this was strengthened recently by implementing Club Spark, a Tennis Victoria portal which supports club membership operations. Club Spark has reduced our club's administrative membership overhead dramatically. This year we also moved all of our club's documentation onto Google Drive, a cloud based file storage system where the committee can collaborate, record and synchronize files.

Our social media engagement rates continue to outperform market expectations with the club seeing 20%+ regular engagement through our social channels. Our Facebook group contains 120 members while our Instagram followers sit at 158. These two platforms continue to provide the club with endless possibilities to engage with its members and the greater tennis community. WhatsApp continues to provide a fast and effective way to share important club information and provides an entertaining platform for many to socialise with our members or find a hitting partner. The club continues to bolster its marketing materials with stickers, stubby holders, t-shirts and hats. These provide valuable exposure opportunities for the club.

To our sponsors, Kebab Run and Notts Timber Design, thank-you for your continued support. To our interim committee, Chris, Craig and Barry, Roger and Sammy, congratulations on helping getting the club to where it is today and to its first AGM. To Hamish, your continued advice in dealing with complex issues has been invaluable. To everyone else who has been providing support in the background, thank-you also. The club looks forward to formalising its first official committee at the 2021 AGM with suitably experienced and like minded individuals who will set the club for success in the years to come.

The goals of the new committee will be to continue to strengthen our club culture that welcomes everyone in a fun and engaging manner, and we mean everyone. They will continue to provide flexible playing opportunities and evenly graded teams—our

members have told us that this is something they value the most. They will strive to find innovative ways to generate revenue while keeping expenses at bay. Another area of focus will be to provide pathways into tennis for disadvantage kids, something the club feels strongly about. The new committee will also be charged with working towards developing a three-year strategic plan for the club. The future is in our hands and the results will be defined by our collective efforts.

More broadly, the committee will aim to encourage our local tennis community to be more open to thinking differently about some of the old problems at hand. We hope that we are able to have open, transparent and constructive debates with key stakeholders and other club's about what's best for tennis in Bendigo. These discussions will provide important opportunities to learn other points of view and drive progress forward.

Finally, over the next 12 months we look forward to laying the foundation of a great club for many generations to come, and we are very much looking forward to creating many more memorable moments on and off the court.