

Wow 2024 coming to a close!

It has been a year with many different projects and challenges.

Our main focus remains growing the club and we are fortunately well supported in our efforts by both the regional and National body helping us run advertising campaigns on Facebook. The summer and winter lessons conducted by Rosemary and Richard have received many compliments from the participants however retaining students beyond the first year remains a challenge. There is a Spanish saying that says to discover bridge is to find the fountain of youth. So tell your friends that there is such a fountain in Howick.

There is also a misconception that bridge is a game for the elderly. The fact remains that top international players mostly learned to play when they were teenagers. So let age not be a deterrent to joining the club. Encourage your younger friends, children and grandchildren. We are fortunate to have a small but active group of youth presently. They contribute in many ways not just flying the Howick flag when they play at tournaments but also by training to become directors of our club sessions and tournaments

The beginners find out quickly once they start playing that there is so much more to learn and we finally managed to organise a number of improvers classes this year. These were very well attended and we are planning another set for next year.

Following a survey of our Thursday members we found that approximately half preferred to play on line. Fortunately technology has allowed us to set up a hybrid session which caters for both mediums of play. It is not without its challenges but Richard our Thursday evening director is on top of it.

Next year we will be having a number of handicap events on Monday evenings. In the past we had a manual handicapping system which was rather crude and not very fair. Today there is a National Grading System (NGS) running in the background that tracks every session you play and this will form the basis of your handicap. It is dynamic so will change with each result. More on this later from Dave Christian.

Our annual charity event for the Totara Hospice raised \$4500 in line with previous years despite the depressed economic climate. The fact that it runs like clockwork is largely thanks to Mary Wood and her team of able helpers.

This year at the AGM we will be asking members to pass our new Constitution as required by the Incorporated Societies Act. Special thanks to Jan Holloway, Nat Natarajan and Dave Christian and all members that have provided input on corrections etc. It's been a long two year project.

Enjoy the Christmas and New Year break and see you at the club in 2025.