

SA – VETERANS CRICKET ASSOCIATION INC.

ANNUAL REPORT: SEASON 2024/2025

Veteran Cricketers Are Winners

What Champions Veteran Cricketers are! We keep playing the game we love. Some of us are as young as forty years while others are into their eighties, but we all give it a go. We compete almost all year around in local, regional, national and, for some, international events, enjoying the healthy physical activity they offer and treasuring the wonderful friendships they provide. Congratulations to you all for pushing on and keeping a smile on your face.

In this report I have endeavoured to detail highlights and achievements of our cricket during the past year, as well as suggesting the challenges that remain with us.

Social Responsibility

Again, we began the season showing our concern for men's health, by raising over \$7,000 for the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia. On a glorious September day, we played a series of T20 games on turf wickets. Teams comprised players from all age divisions, mixing in joyfully and finding creative ways of donating funds to the Foundation. Thank you to the Callington crew, who hosted the day and to all who participated. Your enthusiastic support and concern reflected excellently on SAVCA.

The Challenge Ahead:

A large association like ours should maintain some form of community responsibility. Fitting it into our cluttered calendar will always be a challenge.

Women's Team

History was made again when SAVCA brilliantly hosted the Over 40s Women's National Championships in Adelaide. Wonderfully led by Glenni Gabb, Jo Posgate, Heather Westwood, Kylie Holbrook, Lynley Ingerson, Angela Egan, Karen Knight-Smith and Kate Evans, the event was a massive success. With three divisions of teams from all around the country, players competed fiercely and enjoyed the excellent social atmosphere of the event. On the first day, all players were presented and photographed at Adelaide Oval on national television, and the Presentation Dinner on the final evening was a raucous joy to behold.

The Challenge Ahead:

SAVCA perhaps needs to develop a three-year plan to increase the playing opportunities for Veteran Women Cricketers, to both maintain a strong presence in National Championships and with the ultimate aim of holding a club competition in the future. This should include such things as holding training sessions, arranging matches, promoting our game through existing clubs... It will need members' ideas and support.

National Champions

It hasn't happened before for SAVCA, but this season two of our teams were heralded as National Champions. Led by Jamie Panelli, our Over 40s team was undefeated, overcoming Queensland in the final by three wickets. Winning by four wickets against Victoria, and also undefeated, was Graham Crawford's Over 55s team. Congratulations to all team members on their glorious efforts. We look forward to some of these boys playing in the Over 80s Championships in a few decades' time.

The Challenge Ahead:

For each team in all age groups in every division to prepare well, enjoy the competition and do their best. We are good enough to win some more titles.

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National Championships

From Perth in the west to Mackay in the north-east, commencing in October and concluding in March, SAVCA competed in eight National Championships. It was another record-breaking year for SAVCA, as we added Over 65s and 75s teams to the long list of women's and men's squads playing nationally. Congratulations to all who competed in the Nationals. Thank you very much to all partners who supported us, wholeheartedly joining in with the spirit of the events. Special thanks is due to our Age Division Committee Representatives, to each of the Selection Panels, to Team Managers and to the Umpires for their dedicated work in enabling us to compete. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

The Challenge Ahead:

We should attempt to increase our representation to have at least one team in all divisions of every National Championship. We will also be required to host a Championship every year. This will need us to find efficient ways to fulfill our responsibilities, keep costs to a minimum and develop economies of scale, while still providing rewarding experiences for Veteran Cricketers from across Australia. Our members will have to be prepared to contribute towards the organization of these events.

Over 65s Invitational Tournament

In its second year, this event was another roaring success. Teams from every state and the ACT joined us for games in the Barossa Valley. This time we added Chateau Tanunda to our list of venues and the games there were considered a highlight by all players. Thank you to John Geber and Aaron Rothe for their hosting of us at their beautiful ground. Thank you also to Stuart Swan and his amazing Tanunda team and to all the clubs in the Barossa and environs for their incredible support of the tournament. Special thanks also to all our Committee Members for initiating and conducting this competition.

The Challenge Ahead:

We should maintain this as a special boutique tournament, highlighting the Barossa Valley, with teams from every state/territory and New Zealand enthusiastically seeking to take part.

Over 40s

Building on the success of winning the National Championships, the Over 40s cohort have accepted the task of hosting next season's event. Already a small group of players have begun work on organising the two-division tournament, scheduled for February next year. As well as that, SAVCA has received a proposal to begin an Over 40s club competition in 2025/2026. Nathan Green and Rocco Zappia have presented a very professional plan to implement this, which will be presented at the AGM.

The Challenge Ahead:

To organise and manage a successful Championship for sixteen teams and to introduce a local competition will require the support and hard work of the Over 40s fraternity, collaborating with SAVCA, to make both these ventures a success.

Silver Ashes Tour

The English have asked us to host the first half of their tour to Australia of their Over 70s team. They intend to visit at the end of January to play three games against South Australian opposition and the first of their One Day Internationals against the Australian Team. This will be a great opportunity for SAVCA players, and it is to our credit that the English wish to come here rather than the larger eastern states. We plan to use venues in both the Barossa and Adelaide.

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The Challenge Ahead:

SAVCA will need 'all hands on deck' to prepare for the tour and to manage a positive experience for the tourists, as well as our players and those of the Australian Over 70s Team.

Partnerships

During the year we entered into a three-year partnership with Gillespie Sports. They will provide 24-hour access to the Cricket Centre at Edwardstown and provide us with training facilities free of charge. Their Helix Sportswear will become our uniform supplier, enabling our players to have improved access to the purchasing of all apparel. The Hurley Group at the Arkaba Hotel continue to offer us generous sponsorship and access to their meeting rooms of SAVCA during this season. We thank both companies for their excellent support of SAVCA.

The Challenge Ahead:

To maintain and service our current forms of sponsorship and to seek further opportunities for future support.

Club Competitions

Over 50s

Brahma Lodge joined us this year, expanding the competition to fifteen teams, with home bases ranging from Yorke Peninsula, through the Barossa, out to Sunraysia, down to the Fleurieu Peninsula and into the Adelaide suburbs and hills. Adelaide Ezys won the Championship from Goodwood, with Barossa and Light winning the Division 2 Final from Hills Fleurieu. Congratulations to both teams. John Rankin and Colin Petersen, ably supported by Iain Campbell, worked strongly representing the Over 50s cohort and are thanked for their excellent efforts.

Over 60s

This age division again played a dual system, splitting into two divisions after the first round. It is hoped that teams will be placed in two divisions for the next season's commencement. Adelaide University again won the Tanner Shield from Grange, while the Eastern Reds defeated Woodville South in the Division 2 Final. Well done to Uni and the Reds.

Supporting their colleagues wonderfully, Tim Pellen and Frank Sergi worked tirelessly as the Over 60s Representatives; thank you both.

Special mention must be made here of when one of our players collapsed with a heart attack. It was his teammates who saved his life in the dire emergency. It was his caring SAVCA friends who big-heartedly supported his recovery. It is times like this that make us special and proud to be part of a caring group of people.

Over 70s

The competition continued with five teams this season and, while no finals were played, the rivalry between clubs was both fierce and joyful. A highlight throughout the season was the excellent support and respect that players displayed, by filling in for teams that were short of players.

Peter Howland and Graeme Oliver valiantly kept the competition afloat and deserve great thanks for their splendid efforts on behalf of the old blokes.

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Reviews

A series of Review Meetings were held post-season for every age division, providing all players with the opportunity to contribute to improving SAVCA and its competitions. Discussions were vibrant and robust, with the sharing of ideas resulting in fine-tuning our processes and bylaws. The reviews were open, transparent, democratic and have succeeded in enhancing our cricketing experiences. Improved bylaws will be written during the off-season.

Well-deserved thanks are due to our skilful facilitators Tim Pellen and Iain Campbell.

The Challenges Ahead:

The focus of much of the discussion at the meetings was on getting the right amount of good quality cricket played. For the Over 50s it is ten rounds plus finals. For Over 60s it was fourteen matches, while the Over 70s are happy with the status quo. Although it provides huge challenges to book appropriate venues, catch-up rounds for matches lost due to heat or rain were strongly recommended. Getting the fixtures right for the next season will require responsive action by the Committee, the age group leaders and the clubs. Fitting them into the schedules of local, regional and national tournaments adds a huge layer of complexity to these deliberations.

International Championships

Opportunities for international cricket for our players have increased dramatically over the past year. SAVCA players recently selected to represent Australia include:

- **Over 40s:** Jamie Panelli, Shaun Matthews, Robbie Drenthen, Richie Wyld, Mark Cleary, Russell Curyer, Andrew Frick and Josh Thompson
- **Over 55s:** Graham Crawford, Tony Hickey, Jed Mensforth and Brad Purdue
- **Over 60s:** Peter Judd, Mark Trafford-Walker and David Wenham
- **Over 70s:** Mike Riley, Graeme Fielke

Congratulations to the above players for their wonderful efforts in achieving this tremendous honour.

Your Committee

We are most fortunate to have an enthusiastic, dedicated and productive Committee to serve us. SAVCA would not survive without their selfless commitment and insightful efforts. Thank you to, Vice-President David “Mojo” Crocker, Secretary Iain Campbell, Treasurer Bill Kidd, Cricket Coordinator Stephen Brown, Over 50s Representatives John Rankin and Colin Petersen, Over 60s Representatives, Tim Pellen and Frank Sergi and Over 70s Representatives Peter Howland and Graeme Oliver. Without their strong and intelligent efforts and their ability to attack the issues confronting our association, SAVCA would not be in the thriving position that it is in today. We sincerely thank them for all that they do for us.

The Future of SAVCA: How should it operate?

My first task as President four years ago, was to update the Constitution, to incorporate clubs into our programs. Since then, I have been monitoring our processes and procedures, our form of governance. I am convinced that it is now time to improve on the way we operate, to be more representative of our members and their clubs, to respond to the needs of our players, to expect more to take responsibility for the conducting of SAVCA business and to acknowledge that the needs and expectations of a 40 year old are different from those of a 50 or 60 or 70 or 80 year old.

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Accordingly, I have discussed this broadly with the Committee, at the Review meetings and with critical friends. The result has been the Future Governance Discussion Paper which has been sent to all the membership. It has received a very positive response.

The Challenge Ahead:

This Annual Report is extremely positive, highlighting the many achievements of our people. That is marvellous. But we are under pressure. More and more is expected of our association. We need to respond to the diverse needs of our players, and they vary dramatically across the age groups. We need to have a thorough and responsible approach to communicating with our members and potential members. We should share our knowledge and help shape our parent body, Veterans Cricket Australia, while acknowledging their impact on us. We are obliged to set up our matches in an extremely cluttered calendar. Yet for most of us, we just want to play another game of cricket. This is our dilemma, can we do that while neglecting all the other expectations?

So, check out all the above “Challenges Ahead” and find an answer to the question “How can I contribute?” If the answer is a positive one, be it large or small, for your team, club, or the Association, then we will continue to thrive.

On a Personal Note

My second term of office as your President has come to an end. It is time for someone with new thoughts, ideas and energy to take us forward. My work has been plentiful and challenging but has provided me with immense satisfaction. I have always felt respected and appreciated by you, even during the most difficult of times. Thank you to all who have supported me. The friendships you have extended to me are priceless and I am honoured to be your mate.

Conclusion

Veterans Cricket throughout Australia is enmeshed in corporatisation, international cricket, promotion, financial packages... Yet our Mission Statement clearly declares “The Association provides a safe and friendly environment where all players are welcome, with the focus on participation.”

The Challenge Ahead:

Let us never lose sight of our mission. Let us, even in the fiercest of competition, maintain enjoyment of playing the game we love as our major aim. Let us keep smiling and looking out for our mates. And in the words of that great poet, Bob Dylan, “May you stay forever young.”

Dixie
Christopher Daw
SAVCA President

May 26th, 2025