

# Bowled approach leads to marriage

## Great way to be active, socialise

By Jane Barraclough

NEWLYWEDS Larry and Crystal Downs have a strong testimony for the benefits of social sport.

The retirees, who met on the bowling green three years ago, spend their days rounding up players at Lifestyle Seasons in Tarnet.

Since moving into the retirement village in December, the pair have been busy raising the profile of bowls.

They want to encourage other residents to socialise while keeping their minds active through sport.

"It is easy to become isolated in your retirement, but I've found playing bowls is the best way to make friends, and give your brain a workout through the game, but also the people you meet," Mrs Downs said.

"I often think 'I don't know what I'd do with myself without it (bowls)'."

Mouths also get a good workout among the chatter players. "I love exchanging jokes with the other players, and the long conversations you have over a game."

Having played for 15 years, Mrs Downs is a veteran when it comes to the social element of the sport. While romance was not the aim, she first spotted Larry at the Hoppers Crossing Bowls Club three years ago when he made a comment about the potential for isolation in retirement.

"When I first met Larry at the Hoppers Crossing club, he was telling me how he was somewhat isolated living on his own, and having just moved from WA. He told me he was reluctant to go out to the movies, and to dinner by himself. So I invited him out for tea, 'no strings attached'," she said. He was quick to take up the offer.



Wedded to the green: Newlyweds Larry and Crystal Downs want retirees to take up lawn bowls for the mingling as well as the mind exercise. Picture: Scott McLaughlin

"We're married now, so she must have been lying when she said 'no strings attached'," Mr Downs said with a laugh.

He said playing bowls since moving to Melbourne had not only introduced him to his wife, but a large network of friends.

"Bowls is one of the greatest things going. It's not just an old man's sport any more. People are out getting a bit of exercise, while meeting friends, keeping busy and focusing their minds on something."

He said 40 spectators had turned out for a game

against another village last weekend. "More and more people are rolling up, to watch or play; bowls is drawing more attention."

As the wintry weather sets in, Mr Downs plans to organise a soup kitchen to attract players. He also offers coaching.



# Units refused

## Proposal for complex drew 46 objections

By Cameron Hill

FEARS of a worsening traffic snarl in the heart of Werribee has led Wyndham Council to knock back a multi-story development as the city continues to grapple with issues around residential density housing.

The controversial proposal for a pair of three-story blocks containing 50 units near the notorious Werribee and Cottrell streets was rejected on Monday night.

Concerns were raised over neighbourhood character, parking and increased traffic volumes near the Cottrell Street site.

First revealed in the Banner on February 24, the proposal was for a 30.5-metre complex on a 2073-square-metre block between Wedge Street and Werribee Street North.

At the time a resident who did not want to be named said the units would create traffic havoc in the area, particularly with St Andrew's Primary School and church nearby.

"Concentrating hundreds of people into one little suburban dead-end street I believe will have serious negative implications and would not be in the interests of families with young children or the general community," the resident said.

A council report recommended a planning permit for the development reduced to 29 units, subject to conditions.

According to the report, the proposal complied with planning requirements relating to neighbourhood character, parking provision and overlooking into adjoining properties. However, it

was deemed not to comply with the 5-metre maximum height requirement or dwelling diversity with all units to have the same facilities and floor layout.

There were 46 objections, which raised issues including the potential for the units to overshadow adjoining properties and the character of the surrounding area. Concerns were also raised about the increased density, the lack of surrounding footpaths and the fact it could set a precedent.

Cr John Messegano said the development had the potential to "change the dynamics of the neighbourhood".

He said that with 30 units, up to 60 vehicles, not including those of visitors, could be parked around the complex.

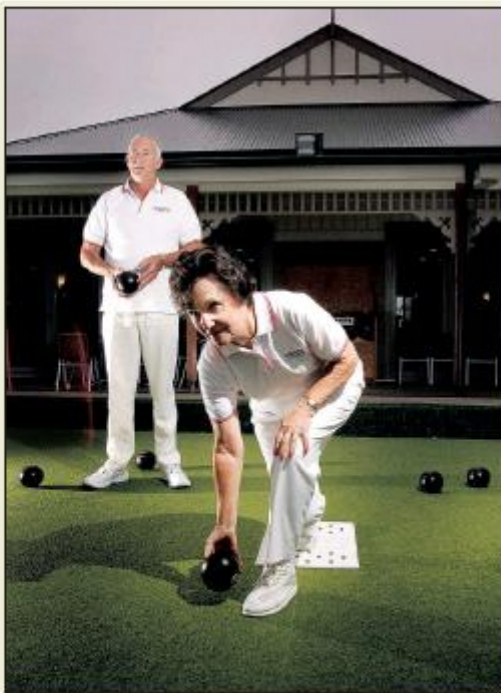
"The extra vehicles will also place additional pressure on the Werribee and Cottrell streets intersection, already voted by drivers as the worst traffic hot spot in Wyndham."

Cr Messegano said given the size of the units and the lack of diversity there was a "strong possibility" it would be looked upon by the community as a "de-facto-type of social housing project".

Cr Cynthia Mason disagreed, saying the development would offer cheap and affordable housing.

The motion by Cr Messegano to refuse the application was passed 5-3 with councillor Mason, Parslough and De Crescenzo voting against.

Area Design director Jane Childs said the developers were disappointed with the outcome but were likely to appeal to VCAT.



### Bowled over

Lanes bowls is a great way to be active and make new friends — just ask newlyweds Larry and Crystal Downs.

The couple met while playing at Hoppers Crossing Bowls Club and are happily promoting the social benefits of the sport.

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Picture: Scott McNaughton