Geelong Pickleball Club Inc.

President's Report — Annual General Meeting (20/10/26)

Good evening everyone, it's a pleasure to present the President's Report for the 2025/26 financial year. I'd like to begin by sincerely thanking Geoff McDonald for his contribution in the President's role until October last year. I'd also like to thank Jenny Climas-Dockhorn and Leonie Amerena for stepping into the role while I was away.

What a year it has been! The 2025/26 financial year has been exceptionally busy, with significant growth, new initiatives and important foundations laid for the future of our Club.

Early in the year, the Committee recognised the importance of taking a more strategic approach to our future and began developing a strategic plan for the Club. I'd like to thank the entire Committee for the time and effort invested in identifying our priorities and shaping the future direction of our GPC community. A special mention goes to one of our own members, Deb Samsom, for driving this process so effectively.

The strategic plan now provides a clear framework for the Committee's work. I'm proud to report that we have made significant progress against several priorities, although there is still plenty of work ahead.

At the heart of everything we do remains our vision: to foster a welcoming and supportive environment where every player — from beginner to competitor — feels valued, connected and empowered to play.

One of the key priorities identified in the plan was strengthening Club governance and compliance. We have made important progress in this area, introducing new policies covering member behaviour, club finances and dispute resolution. We have also formalised our contract with 002, an important step in securing a strong foundation for our Club's future.

Let's look at the numbers - they really do tell a remarkable story.

- **Financial membership:** increased from 163 in June 2025 to 313 at 30 June 2026 - an increase of 92%.
- **Total membership:** grew from 333 to 422, a 27% increase over the same period.
- **Induction coaching:** 41 sessions were held, introducing 198 people to our sport.
- **Playing opportunities:** 623 playing sessions were offered, that's a 77% increase on the previous financial year, with 644 unique players attending.
- **Specialist coaching:** 213 sessions were offered, with 171 people taking the opportunity to improve their skills.
- **Bookings:** a total of 13,257 bookings were recorded across all session types, an increase of 83% on the previous year.

And finally, a little recognition for our most enthusiastic booker of the year goes to Jhen Thoo, with an impressive 108 bookings!

These figures demonstrate just how much our Club has grown in a relatively short period.

Highlights and achievements;

New competitions and playing formats

- In July 2025, we held our inaugural Geelong Mini Cup. The response from the wider playing community was clearly very positive, and we were pleased to run the event again this year.
- At the beginning of this year, we introduced the Club's first Teams League. Feedback was again very positive, and this has proved to be another great addition to our playing calendar. Thanks to Jenny and Pat for this excellent format suggestion.
- Our Friday night league continued, adding to an already busy schedule and providing another opportunity for members to enjoy some structured competition.

New venues and improved facilities

- We established a new playing venue at Grovedale Secondary College. Thank you to the College for its support in installing the blinds, which have significantly improved the playability of the courts.
- We now look forward to bedding in our new Tarratarra venue in Armstrong Creek, which will provide further opportunities as we continue to grow.

Building our coaching and officiating capability

- In May 2025, GPC hosted a Level 1 Coaching course attended by 12 people. This has increased our pool of coaching resources and strengthened our ability to support players at all levels.
- In December 2025, we hosted a Pickleball Australia Referees course, with eight people attending. This is an important investment as we expand our Club tournament offerings and contribute to building referee capacity across the state.

Grants and community engagement

We were successful in two grant applications during the year. The first was the City of Greater Geelong's Active Ageing grant, which supports free induction sessions for older members of our community. The second was a Department of Sport and Recreation grant to support our strategic planning process.

Social connection

As we know pickleball is about much more than what happens on the court!

Our Burgers and Balls night at the Curlewis driving range was a great success, with a fantastic response from members and plenty of fun had by all. A big thank you to our Social Committee for organising such an enjoyable event.

Looking ahead

While we have much to celebrate, our growth also brings challenges that we need to address thoughtfully.

As the second-largest pickleball club in Victoria, one of our biggest operational challenges is securing sufficient court space and suitable playing times. We also need to continue finding the right balance between social and competitive play. Our members have a wide range of abilities, interests and aspirations. We need to ensure our weekly schedules and playing formats cater to that diversity, giving everyone a fair opportunity to get on court, develop their skills and enjoy the game.

Another important challenge is ensuring that our governance, infrastructure, processes and policies keep pace with our extraordinary growth. Building a sustainable Club requires more than simply increasing membership and playing opportunities; it means creating the systems and foundations that will support us well into the future.

Our financial position is very healthy, which puts the incoming Committee in a strong position to consolidate what we have achieved and plan for the short and long term.

Continued collaboration with our regional pickleball clubs and Pickleball Victoria will also be vital. By working together, sharing knowledge and supporting the development of the sport, we can ensure that pickleball continues to grow in a sustainable and coordinated way, with benefits for players and clubs throughout our region and beyond.

Thank yous

None of these achievements would be possible without the many people who give their time, energy and passion to our Club.

Our Committee

To Jenny, Leonie, Ingrid, Jordie, Kerry, Ricardo, Chris and Wendy — thank you for your commitment and hard work throughout the year. It has been a pleasure working alongside you all. Your time, energy and willingness to take on the many tasks involved in running a growing club have been invaluable.

A special acknowledgement goes to Jenny, who will be retiring from the Committee tonight. Jenny has been at the forefront of this Club since its inception and has played a central role in getting us to where we are today. Jen, thank you for your passion, dedication and enormous contribution to GPC. You leave a wonderful legacy, and we are incredibly grateful for everything you have done.

I'd also like to recognise Chris Rimmer, who will be retiring from the Committee tonight. Chris has taken on a substantial amount of challenging work this year, particularly in contract negotiations, developing our behaviour policy and undertaking the player advocate role. These are not always easy tasks, but Chris has approached them with commitment and professionalism. Thank you, Chris, for your sterling efforts and the significant contribution you have made.

Our volunteers and session helpers

To our amazing Duty Managers and session helpers — thank you. This is now a substantial group of people, and without your willingness to volunteer, our Club simply could not operate at the level it does today.

As we continue to grow, we will need even more members to step forward, whether to assist with Duty Manager responsibilities or contribute to the many other tasks and projects that keep the Club running. Every contribution makes a difference, and I encourage members to consider how they might get involved.

Our coaching team

Thank you to our coaching team for the work you do week in and week out, delivering induction sessions and more formalised instruction to help our players learn, improve and enjoy the sport. A special mention goes to Jordie for her leadership and guidance in this area.

Our venues and partners

Thank you to the YMCA Newtown and Grovedale Secondary College. We have built strong relationships with the management teams at both venues, and their support has been essential in providing playing opportunities for our members. We look forward to continuing these relationships into the future.

To Move Physio, our sponsor, thank you for your ongoing support and contribution to the Club.

Our technology partner

As always, thank you to Pat for continuing to maintain and develop the 002 app. It plays an important role in the day-to-day operation of our Club, and we are delighted to have formalised our commitment through a contract this year.

Recognition for GPC

Finally, thank you to Zytel Hircoe for proactively preparing and submitting our application to Pickleball Victoria for the 2026 Club of the Year award. It was a fantastic application, and we are delighted that GPC has been shortlisted. Regardless of the final outcome, being shortlisted is a wonderful recognition of the effort and commitment shown across our Club.

Closing remarks

Finally, and most importantly, thank you to you, our members.

Thank you for being part of GPC and for demonstrating our values of community, inclusion and safety every time you step onto the pickleball court.

When I see the smiles, friendship, care and support shared among our members, I am reminded that what we are building here is about so much more than a game. We are building a community where people can stay active, learn new skills, challenge themselves and form lasting friendships.

We have achieved a great deal this year, and we have plenty of opportunities and challenges ahead. With the continued support of our members, volunteers, Committee and partners, I am confident that Geelong Pickleball Club has a very bright future.

Peter Kelly
President
Geelong Pickleball Club Inc.