

2026 President's Address

2025-26 has run very smoothly for our club. The big changes made in the previous 2 years have all settled in and are working very effectively.

A cashless accredited club with electronic scoring, electronic dealing and a functional website – even though it may not be flashy – is pretty good for a club with limited membership and one which charges \$4 table fees.

Thank you to everyone who makes all this happen – our Committee, our behind the scenes workers, our Directors – and to you, our members who support them in many ways. Vice President Peter Greenwood resigned earlier this year.

A highlight of the year was our team of Audrey Donsen, Albert Kong, Nathanael Shoumack and Mandy Tomney winning the Autumn National Rookie Teams Championship at Wayville in May – a great achievement and one which focussed considerable attention on our club.

At previous AGMs I have spoken of the Committee's plan to allow our bank balance to reduce somewhat before we see the need to increase table fees.

We will hear from the Treasurer that our funds have indeed reduced by around \$2,000, but we still have more than \$41,000 in the bank, which means there should be no need to increase table fees this year.

All costs, especially rent, increase.

Of more concern is a decline in our numbers playing bridge – last year there was a 7.9% decline – most obvious on Fridays.

Age and illness take their toll – this decline can only be reversed by increasing membership and getting new members to play club bridge.

We have a number of fairly enthusiastic people coming to U3A courses.

Quite a few have dipped their toe into club bridge and been scared off.

There is a big step from social bridge at home or beginner's classes to club bridge – a bit like having a social hit of tennis at a friend's house to playing competitively for a club.

I think they feel a club is less friendly, less social and more intimidating – and they are put off.

Club Bridge is not social bridge – it is more serious – and some players tend to be more rigid in their play and manner.

I think we need to recognise, rightly or wrongly that the newcomers often do feel intimidated.

It may be that the very future of the club depends on us all trying to be a bit more friendly – a bit more welcoming – and hope that more will stay with us,

This year's Christmas Function will again be at The Clovey on December 3rd – don't miss it.

Enjoy this coming year, make bridge as much fun as you can and take any newcomers under your wings.

Milton Hart