

RESURRECTION OF PBA TRANS TASMAN CHALLENGE

After a three year absence due to the Pandemic, the annual PBA Challenge between the Australian and New Zealand Professional Bowls Association branches will resume on Monday at the Mandurah Club in Perth. This will be a catch-up '2022' Challenge with a return leg 2023 event happening in September in New Zealand.

The New Zealand PBA has a strong line-up with the recent World Bowls World Indoor Singles runner-up Andrew Kelly travelling direct from Warilla in New South Wales keeping his spot as the best performed kiwi in the last edition in 2019. Kelly is joined by the best ranked NZ players from 2021 still currently in the PBA Ray Martin, Gavin Scrivener, Sheldon Bagrie-Howley and Craig Merrilees.

This will be Kelly's third appearance with an impressive 9 win 3 loss record finishing 3rd in 2017 and 2nd in 2019. Merrilees will be playing in his seventh consecutive Challenge with a 15 win 18 loss record finishing 3rd in 2015, 2nd in 2018 and 5th in 2019. Martin, Scrivener and Bagrie-Howley are all making their debuts. They are not without PBA international experience however with Bagrie-Howley playing the 2016 Scottish Singles and Martin the 2019 World Indoor Singles in the UK. Scrivener has made the NZ national play-offs in 5 events over the last 3 years.

The Australian team will all also be making their PBA Challenge debuts featuring Jack East, Lisa Featherby, Paul Davies, Conner Biddle and Blake Butler. East is 21 years old and made his World Bowls Tour debut in Scotland last year, while Featherby featured in this year's Ladies Invitation Singles and Mixed Pairs at Potter's Leisure Resort in England.

Play gets underway at 5pm NZST on Monday with all kiwis playing all aussies over two days culminating in the best three of each team playing off against their counterpart to decide which Association wins the Challenge.

Information including an application form, entry forms, dates and venues for the NZ PBA can be found on the worldbowlstour.org site under PBA – New Zealand.