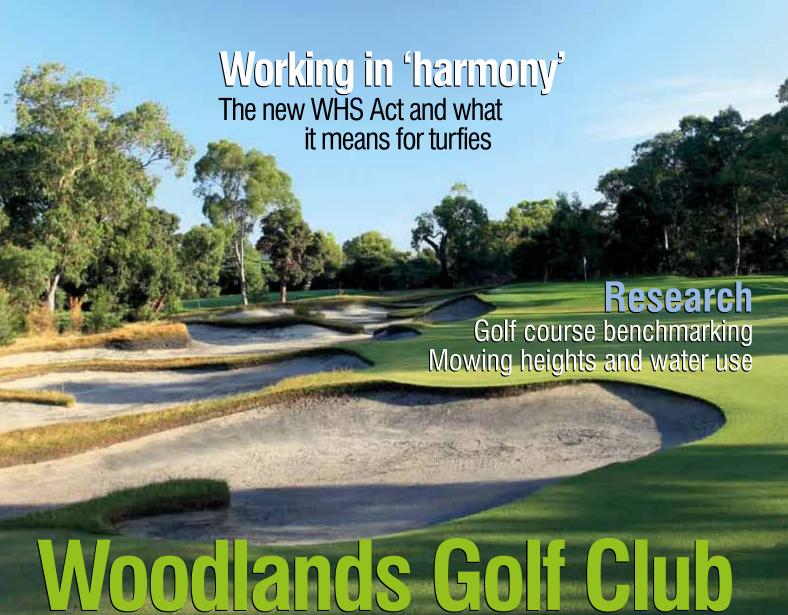




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Woodlands Golf Club: The

approach on the 10th hole at Woodlands Golf Club. Woodlands will host the Australian Amateur Championships in mid-January. Photo: Gary Lisbon (golfphotos.



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Woodlands Golf Club is regarded as one of the Melbourne sandbelt's most underrated courses. Its small greens and strategic nature make it one of the most challenging layouts around, while its stunning and diverse flora and fauna showcase the true biodiversity benefits that golf courses can offer. ATM catches up with Rod Tatt who is nearing his third year as course superintendent at Woodlands and looks ahead to what is set to be a busy tournament season for the club.

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FEATURES

Royal firm and fast for all the Presidents men



Royal Melbourne Golf Club's firm and fast Composite Course may not have provided the home town advantage the International Team was hoping for, but it certainly left a lasting impression on the players, PGA Tour officials, media and the huge galleries that flocked to watch the world's best players go head-to-head last November. ATM editor Brett Robinson looks back on a hugely successful Presidents Cup and takes an inside look at what went into preparing Royal Melbourne for the event.

Open season at The Lakes

With a star-studded field lining up for the 2011 Emirates Australian Open, all eyes were on The Lakes Golf Club as it kick started the tournament season in November. Course superintendent Russell Fletcher and his crew didn't disappoint in their second year preparing the course for the event.

Frewin finding his feet

Last November, former Barwon Heads Golf Club superintendent and past AGCSA president Peter Frewin started as the association's new general manager. ATM guizzes the 2009 AGCSA Distinguished Service Award recipient about his new role and plans for the association moving forward.

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Occupational health and safety expert Steve Wait looks at the Commonwealth Work Health and Safety Act due to come into force in 2012 and asks just what it will mean for superintendents and turf managers.

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The AGCSATech team presents preliminary findings from the one-year Horticulture Australia Limitedfunded golf course benchmarking study (HAL Project TU11003) which got underway in September 2011.

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OPINION

Great expectations 4

With all the major tournaments on at this time of year – including the 2011 Presidents Cup – The Pulse asks superintendents whether they have found it harder to manage the expectations of their members and committees?

RESEARCH UWA, DEEDI and Bayer



In this edition's wrap of local turfgrass research, ATM features work from the University of Western Australia looking at the influence of mowing heights on water use, updates the status of the Redland's 'living library' turf collection and reviews the inaugural Bayer turf and ornamental research field day held at Cobbity.

TURF PRODUCERS Grass roots of the industry



Turf Australia industry development manager Matthew Holmes reviews the current structure of the Australian turf production industry, which kicks off a new section in ATM highlighting news and issues relating to turf producers.

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Contributors to Australian Turfgrass Management Journal Volume 14.1 (January-February 2012)

Louise Barton (University of Western Australia); Tim Bilston (Heidelberg GC); Grant Bunting (NZGCSA); Chris Chapman (STA NSW); Tim Colmer (University of Western Australia); Russell Fletcher (The Lakes GC); Richard Forsyth (Royal Melbourne GC); Peter Frewin (AGCSA); Stephen Gaze (Wollongong GC); John Geary (AGCSATech); Steven Hewitt (VGCSA); Matthew Holmes (Turf Australia); Brent Hull (Moruya GC); Danny Hull (STA ACT Region); Jyri Kaapro (Bayer); Mark Lewis (Margaret River GC); Gary Lisbon (golfphotos.com. au); Peter Lonergan (Coolangatta & Tweed Heads GC); lan McKendry (STANZ); Craig Molloy (NSWGCSA); Dr Brett Morris (Brisbane GC); Andrew Peart (AGCSATech); Matt Roche (DEEDI); Des Russell (GCSAWA); Mark Schroder (Liverpool GC); Sam Sherriff (SAGCSA); Luke Spartalis (Royal Melbourne GC); Jay Spor I (US PGA); Rod Tatt (Woodlands GC); Wayne Tickle (Ballina GC); Nathan Tovey (TGAA VIC); Scott Trembath (Darwin GC); and Steve Wait (Safetee Pro).

Never too old to learn

'm used to getting told off. It comes with the territory being married to a passionate Greek lass and being a humble member of the less fairer sex. But at the recent Presidents Cup, one (deserved) bollocking came straight out of left field.

Chatting away with Royal Melbourne turf technician Luke Spartalis about his side of operations for the tournament, young apprentice Nathan Maloney wandered over after he had finished mowing fairways late on Friday afternoon. Having taken some photos of him and the rest of the fairway crew in action that afternoon, I suspected he was coming across to enquire whether I could send him some shots.

Instead, he proceeded to give me a serve about driving on fairways with the Workman, something which had been explicitly stated as a hanging offence by Royal Melbourne course superintendent Richard Forsyth during the morning staff meetings. Without realising it at the time, when I had finished taking some snaps of the fairway units in action, I had jumped back in the utility and turned a tad too sharply leaving a slight tear mark in the Legend couchgrass not far from the landing zone on 18 West (10 Composite). (And this after having hit a stake as well – amateur!) Nathan, however, spotted my indiscretion and went back over the patch with the Reelmaster to make sure there wasn't any evidence which could possibly show up on TV.

To Nathan's credit he was spot on in pulling me up and it just went to show the level of attention to detail that all the staff and volunteers had in the lead-up to and during the tournament. It also made me think with a quiet chuckle as I walked back to the media tent that you are never too old to learn and to be put in your place every now and then doesn't hurt. (Incidentally, I'm sure the certain member of the RMGC crew who managed to park a Flex 21 in the greenside bunker on 4 West (2 Composite) while mowing the fescue surrounds before one of the practice rounds would also have received similar learned advice from the 10 or so colleagues who happened to witness his finest moment!)

The day before that little encounter with Nathan I was sitting across from Richard just as the crew spilled out of the maintenance facility shortly after 6.30am to prep the course ahead of the opening day's foursomes matches. When I asked him about the state of the greens and how the immediate lead-up had gone, it was interesting to hear one of the industry's most experienced and respected superintendents admit that a week out from the event he was "distressed" about the appearance of the famed Suttons mix greens. As you will read in this edition's review of The Presidents Cup, if he had his time again there would be one thing he would have done differently, which again shows that even with more than 30 years in the turf management business under the belt you can never stop learning.

Despite that, you could not fault the exceptional conditioning of Royal Melbourne for The Presidents Cup and perhaps visiting PGA Tour agronomist Jay Sporl, who we also interview in this edition, summed it up best: "We had four different days with four different conditions and on each day the conditioning of the golf course was championship calibre. I would put (Royal Melbourne) up against any of the Major venues this past year – the conditions were just outstanding and the greens in particular were stellar."

Finally, I would like to say a heartfelt thanks to those who emailed, called or SMS'd after it was announced that I had picked up the Tom Ramsey Award at the annual Australian Golf Media Awards in November. The story ATM featured in Volume 13.1 on Cottesloe Golf Club superintendent Simon Bourne was judged the best out of all the 12 category winners on the

night and it was indeed very humbling to be presented the award by former Herald Sun editor Bruce Baskett. Enjoy the read...



Brett Robinson, Editor



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An honour to be able to serve this great association



his is my first Foreword Thinking in the role of AGCSA general manager and while some may think it strange I would like to devote the first few paragraphs to reflecting on the past rather than looking forward.

Not many people were aware I had applied for the position (not even my wife, but that is another story!) as I wanted to keep it quiet – the turf industry grapevine usually works faster than the Internet. As most would be aware I have history with the AGCSA, being a past president and board member, and I was in two minds whether this was an advantage or not. Having come through the interview process I think it was a slight advantage, but like many who have not been involved in an employment interview for some time, it was a daunting experience. The one lesson I did learn from the process was that we should all keep our resumes up to date – you never know when that dream job may be advertised!

testament to his professionalism and ability that the association has been able to run for a considerable period without someone having a hand on the rudder.

During John's tenure at the AGCSA he has assembled a hardworking group that attend to their duties in a competent and attentive manner. The systems that John has put in place have made my transition to the position very easy. We hope John will not be lost as a resource to the AGCSA, but thank him for the hard work and guidance he has given the association over the past 11 years.

During the time between John's departure and my arrival, the AGCSA staff were ably led by president Allan Devlin. During this period the AGCSA board also underwent some changes with a few new faces coming on board – Peter Lonergan (Coolangatta & Tweed Heads Golf Club), Tony Fogarty (Club Catalina Country Club) and Darren

I would like to thank everyone for the support I have received following my appointment. I am honoured to be able to serve the association.

My tenure as AGCSA general manager began in early November 2011 and to say that the first few weeks were a bit of whirlwind would be an understatement – lots to read up on and get up to speed with – but having an understanding of how the association worked made it slightly easier. The other thing in my favour in those initial weeks was the support of the AGCSA staff.

At this point I would also like to say a few words regarding my predecessor John Neylan. Most would be aware that I was involved in his original appointment at the AGCSA, an appointment that I am certainly proud to have been involved in. It is a

Wilson (Wembley Golf Complex). The new board's introduction came at a very difficult time and I cannot speak highly enough of the way they have conducted themselves during this time.

Looking ahead, planning is well underway for the Australian Turfgrass Conference to be held in Melbourne from 4-8 June 2012. The Melbourne event in the past has been the largest on the conference roster and 2012 is shaping up as another great event, especially with the addition of the International Summit of superintendent associations to be held in the lead-up. As in the past, allied associations will be involved and the speaking line-up is almost finalised.



This year there will be some minor changes to the format and we hope that these add to the event, if not you can all blame the new guy!

The AGCSATech team continues to be busy with the bentgrass evaluation project (HAL Project TU08002) moving towards completion and two other key industry projects also starting in recent times. The first of these projects – the biodiversity benefit and carbon footprint of golf courses – will have a significant bearing on the way things are done in the future. This is a three-year project being undertaken in conjunction with the University of Melbourne. This project is aimed at identifying the 'non-golf' benefits of golf courses including carbon sequestration and the biodiversity elements of flora and fauna.

The second of these projects is a golf course benchmarking study which will assist clubs by providing a foundation for consistent decision making by staff, management and committees in matters relating to their particular playing surfaces. A part of this process is for the club to set 'course quality objectives' for the playing surfaces against which its performance and budget can be measured.

In developing course quality objectives the principal aim is to establish criteria that will assist golf courses to better understand what is sustainable for their facility. This study will run for one year with nine clubs (of varying standard) in Melbourne initially involved and a snapshot of three clubs in Sydney and Brisbane also being undertaken.

Both of these projects will be of great significance for our industry and progress on each of these will be regularly updated in Australian Turfgrass Management Journal as well as on the Australian Golf Environment Initiative website http://environment.agcsa.com.au (see this edition's AGCSATech Update – pages 34-36 – for the first update on the benchmarking project - Ed).

In closing, I would like to thank everyone for the support I have received following the announcement of my appointment as AGCSA general manager. I am honoured to be able to serve the association and I hope that I am up to the task. Please feel free to contact me on 0418 593 072 or peter@agcsa. com.au should you have any issues or suggestions. Feedback, whether positive or negative, is always welcome.

I trust the weather gods are helpful in the coming months and I looking forward to catching up when our paths next cross. $\rlap/$





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What Woodlands Golf Club lacks in length off the tee, it more than makes up for in character, making it not only one of the most appealing courses to play but also one of the most appealing to maintain

Woodlands Golf Club is regarded as one of the Melbourne sandbelt's most underrated courses. Its small greens and strategic nature make it one of the most challenging layouts around, while its stunning and diverse flora and fauna showcase the true biodiversity benefits that golf courses afford. ATM editor Brett Robinson catches up with Rod Tatt who is in his third year as course superintendent at Woodlands and looks ahead to what is set to be a busy few months for the club.



ver since it was founded in 1913, Woodlands Golf Club, or Mordialloc Golf Club as it was then known as, has developed a reputation among Melbourne golfing circles as one of the sandbelt's most unique and cherished layouts. As the club's modern marketing catchphrase proudly proclaims, Woodlands is a course that is "naturally inviting" and although short by modern standards, it is the huge amount of character that makes the course not only one of the most appealing to play, but also one of the most appealing to maintain.

Darius Oliver, in his 2007 book 'Australia's Finest Golf Courses' succinctly sums up the Woodlands appeal: "The great variety at Woodlands makes it one of our most enjoyable classic golf courses and the playing surfaces are always superb."

Over the years Woodlands has also gained a reputation as having some of the firmest, fastest and trickiest greens on the sandbelt and in 2009, following a period of significant movement within the industry, up and coming course superintendent Rod Tatt was given the chance to keep that tradition alive.

Becoming a sandbelt superintendent at the age of 36 was testament to Tatt's greenkeeping skills which he had developed during the previous 12 years at Cranbourne Golf Club. Now, more than two years into the role at Woodlands, Tatt is slowly but surely leaving his mark, making subtle yet significant changes to add to the character and aesthetics of the course and its environs.

REALISING A DREAM

Arriving at Woodlands in the spring of 2009 was the fulfilment of a long-held desire by Tatt to work on the Melbourne sandbelt, one which formed during his days as an apprentice and member of the Victoria Golf Club pennant team. Tatt's introduction to golf came through his uncle Chris Tatt who for a number of years was one of the best amateur exponents in the state. Playing for the Victorian side as well as being a three-time club champion at Victoria, it wasn't surprising that other members of his family were drawn into the game.

And so it proved for his young nephew, who at the age of 12 found himself hitting balls down at Bacchus Marsh West Golf Club, not far from the 10,000-head sheep farm where he grew up on. After finishing high school and having developed a pretty handy swing, Tatt volunteered at the golf club and was ultimately offered an apprenticeship.

During his apprenticeship, Tatt got down to a one handicap and duly joined Victoria Golf Club where he was elevated to the Division 1 Pennant side, following in the footsteps of his uncle. Playing Melbourne's elite sandbelt courses on a regular basis whetted the appetite of the young turf manager and after finishing his apprenticeship set his sights on gaining employment on a sandbelt course.

The break Tatt was looking for came while working at Victoria in the lead-up to the Victorian Open one year. A job was advertised at Cranbourne



Golf Club in Melbourne's south east and he was fortunate enough to get the nod. Tatt spent five years as a member of the crew and after a brief three-month period as assistant superintendent took over as course superintendent when incumbent Steven Hughes left to head to Peninsula Country Golf Club in Frankston.

Tatt would end up spending eight valuable years in charge and a total of 12 years at Cranbourne, a period where he was able to hone his superintendent skill set and prepare himself for what would ultimately be the next big step in his career.

That came in 2008 when Jim Porter's resignation as superintendent at Royal Melbourne Golf Club triggered a veritable chain reaction of movement within the Melbourne superintendent community. Richard Forsyth moved across from Metropolitan to replace Porter, while the position he vacated at Metropolitan was filled by Glenn Stuart. That left Woodlands Golf Club looking for a new course superintendent midway through 2009 and Tatt didn't hesitate putting his name forward.

"I have been lucky enough to travel a bit and see some of the world's great courses and it's then that you get a real appreciation of how great the Melbourne sandbelt courses are," reflects Tatt. "I guess when the Woodlands job came up I jumped at the chance to apply because it was where I had wanted to be all along and also because the course is one of a kind.

"I really enjoyed my time at Cranbourne and it was a great course on which to develop my skills. It was very hands on and you got to deal with a range of issues. But after 12 years there I certainly felt I was ready for the next challenge and seeing where I fitted within the industry. Woodlands just felt right from the word go, even when I sent my application in, and I was over the moon when I got the position. Two years have gone by very quickly and I feel like part of the furniture already!"

The appeal of Woodlands was two-fold for Tatt. As a former pennant golfer (and still a very handy single figure handicapper these days) Tatt had long admired Woodland's strategic and challenging layout, in particular the small, firm and tricky greens which it is renowned for. However, it was the setting of the course and the incredible diversity of flora and fauna that really struck a chord with Tatt.

"Woodlands is such a unique place compared to the other sandbelt courses," says Tatt. "It's just a very pleasant place to be. You can walk out on the course in the mornings and feel like you are miles away from suburbia. The remnant vegetation, like the river red gums and manna gums, is so good here and there is an abundance of bird life. We still have a lot of work to do around the course, but the vegetation is certainly one of the features that sets Woodlands apart and is something that we are focusing very heavily on."

IMPROVING PLAYABILITY AND COURSE AESTHETICS

Tatt arrived at Woodlands at a time when the club was in the midst of a multi-million dollar refurbishment of the clubhouse. Tatt was immediately thrust into the construction of a new practice putter (which, unlike the rest of the greens, was built to USGA specifications) as well as the associated landscaping of the clubhouse surrounds and revegetating areas surrounding the greenside bunkers on 18.

With that work complete, the next major project Tatt tackled was the progressive oversowing of Santa ana into the existing native couch fairways.



Woodlands is one of 13 golf clubs in Melbourne to be a part of a biodiversity and carbon benefit study being undertaken by the University of Melbourne in conjunction with the AGCSA

After a 12-year stint at
Cranbourne Golf Club, including
eight years as superintendent, Rod
Tatt was appointed superintendent
at Woodlands Golf Club in 2009.
Tatt is pictured standing in front
of the 13th hole carry, one of four
carries to be rejuvenated as part
of ongoing re-veg works





 After pioneering the conversion of its fairways to couchgrass back in the 1980s, in 2010 and 2011 Woodlands line-planted its existing native couch fairways with Santa ana Although Woodlands was one of the early pioneers in converting its fairways to couchgrass back in the 1980s, 20 years on and the native couch was starting to exhibit some shortcomings, especially when put up against the newer hybrid couchgrasses which many of its sandbelt rivals had adopted.

The primary issue was the length of time for the native couch to come out of winter dormancy, so starting in September 2010 the club bit the bullet and made the call to line-plant Santa ana. The back nine was done that spring and this past September contractors Lawn and Turf Maintenance returned to do the front nine. The results to date have been excellent and with particularly good rains last season some areas of the back nine fairways are almost 100 per cent Santa ana.

In addition to the Santa ana, Tatt is also experimenting with oversowing fine fescue into the couch fairways and currently has a section of the 2nd fairway being used as a trial site. To date the fescue is performing beautifully and is something that the club is monitoring closely.

"The club had oversown a couple tees with fescue before I started here, so we are really just

following on from that work," says Tatt. "There are a lot of issues here with shade, especially on tees and the edges of fairways where the couch really struggles not only through the dormancy period but all year round. The fescue complements the couch very well in those areas and provides a great surface through winter."

Outside improving the consistency and playability of the Woodlands turf surfaces – which has also been aided by the club signing a new five year lease agreement with Toro last July – one area that Tatt has also focused resources on is revegetation works.

Already one of the key features of the course and with such a strong base from which to build on, Tatt saw some relatively simple and inexpensive improvements that could be made which would have a significant impact on course aesthetics. The carries from tee to fairway on some holes were an obvious starting point and over the past 18 months holes 4, 6, 9 and 13 have been rejuvenated. That work saw the removal of unsightly Parramatta grass and South African lovegrass and the planting of indigenous species such as wallaby grass, kangaroo grass, spear grass and a host of other native plants.

"The vegetation is one area where we can make good ground," says Tatt, who has also recently employed the services of a full-time horticulturalist Kate George to assist in this area. "Obviously the playing surfaces are your number one priority, but the vegetation is what sets this golf course apart and makes it so enjoyable to play.

"If you look at what other superintendents have done with their re-veg work, like lan (Todd) at Victoria, it's amazing how different and how much better a golf course looks when you spend a bit of time and effort on these areas. By concentrating on the carries here at Woodlands we can make such a difference to the course. We did the 13th first and now when you stand back on the tee and look down the fairway it just frames the hole beautifully."

Impressive stands of river red gums and manna gums at Woodlands is one of the club's prime assets and helps to set it apart from many of its sandbelt neighbours



In keeping with the push to improve the course's environmental credentials, Woodlands has also put its hand up to be part of a three-year biodiversity and carbon benefit study being carried out by the University of Melbourne and the AGCSA.

"We are very excited about that project," admits Tatt. "Over the past 12 months we have had TreeLogic update its survey and management plan of the trees and vegetation on the course, while Practical Ecology has also updated its flora and fauna study, so we have a lot of good documentation which the research team will be able to use. It is certainly a great initiative and it will be interesting to see what comes out of the project."

GREEN VISIONS

While the line-planting and re-veg work have kept Tatt busy, there is one project that he would really like to tackle, but given the significant investment in the clubhouse redevelopment recently it could be a few years away.

The Woodlands greens were converted to Penncross in the late 1980s, but rather than ripping the profile up the existing turf was sprayed out and the Penncross sown into the existing thatch player. Twenty-plus years later and not surprisingly Tatt now has some significant organic matter accumulation issues to deal with, a problem which was exacerbated by the club's decision not to renovate greens for a period of time. As a result, the old enemy *Poa*



annua is becoming increasingly difficult to keep out, especially with the small size of the greens and the high volume of traffic (Woodlands entertains about 55,000 rounds per year).

"Trying to keep *Poa annua* out and keeping the bentgrass healthy in order to provide a quality surface 12 months of the year is certainly a challenge here," says Tatt. "To manage the thatch we are getting back on a regular renovation programme and constantly monitoring our organic matter levels.

"I guess we are like any other club with greens this age that have developed a thatch layer over the years. What makes it hard for us is that our greens are comparatively small and we get a lot of play, so we have it all against is in trying to keep out the toughest weed in the world. The other problem is While likely to be a few years away, Tatt is hopeful the club will approve a greens resurfacing programme to help eliminate organic matter issues and remove the existing *Poa* seedbank in the greens





Woodlands plays host to the 2012 Australian Amateur Championships from 17-22 January

that there is a huge *Poa* seedbank in the greens and the only way to remove that is to rip up the profile.

"We have had discussions with the Board, but with the recent clubhouse work it is something that will be in the long-term. Ideally I would re-profile the greens, but we would certainly keep the natural pushup greens because they are unique to Woodlands and provide very firm and hard conditions."

With that project potentially on the horizon, Tatt has been doing his homework on the newer bentgrass varieties to have hit the market. What has also expedited that interest is the construction of a new 19th hole at Woodlands in the coming months, which will provide the opportunity for Tatt to road test one the new creeping bentgrasses. The club's appointed course architect Tom Doak has drawn up designs for the new short par three hole which will be opened in time for the club's centenary celebrations in 2013.

The new hole will be located in the northwest corner of the property, just behind the 10th and 16th greens, which contains a nice stand of river red gums. Shaping is due to start in the New Year and grassing in autumn, but even when ATM caught up with Tatt in November the jury was still out as to which bentgrass variety would get the nod.

FACT FILE - WOODLANDS GOLF CLUB

Founded: 1913.

Designed by: Rowley Banks and Sam Bennett.

Tournaments: Australian Amateur Championships (2005, 2011); Men's Victorian Open

(8 times), Women's Victorian Open (twice), Victorian PGA (once).

Ranking: 22 (Australian Golf Digest 2010).

Superintendent: Rod Tatt. Assistant: David Phillips.

Course staff: 12 full-time, one part-timer and seasonal worker.

Greens: Penncross bentgrass.

Fairways: Native couchgrass/Santa ana couchgrass (the past two seasons have seen Santa ana oversown into the existing native couch. A trial area of couch oversown with fescue is being assessed on the 2nd hole).

Tees: Santa ana oversown with fescue.

Did you know... Woodlands was known as Mordialloc Golf Club and comprised just nine holes up until 1917. It's name changed to Woodlands Golf Club in 1925. At that time, Royal Melbourne Golf Club head greenkeeper Mick Morcom was often called upon to proffer advice, especially on the care of the greens and fairways, and played a significant role in establishing the course's bunkering.

"You can really take your pick with the lot of them," says Tatt. "I like Mackenzie at this stage, but Authority is good as well. It really comes down to doing a bit more study and seeing what would suit Woodlands better. We want a grass that overwinters really well, that holds density through that time of year and, of course, doesn't get too thatchy. Shade tolerance is also another factor because if we do resurface the greens we have a number which are shade-affected."

TOURNAMENT FOCUS

While the new 19th hole is set to provide a welcome distraction from the everyday grooming of the course, the main focus for Tatt and his crew this season has and will continue to be on the hectic schedule of events that the club has signed up for.

Following the club championships which teed off in October, Woodlands hosted one of the richest one-day Pro-Am events at the start of Presidents Cup week in mid-November. The inaugural \$50,000 Betstar Melbourne Golf Invitational, the brainchild of former AFL player turned sports promoter Corey McKernan, attracted some of Australia's leading players as well as the mercurial John Daly.

Early in the New Year Woodlands will be in the thick of the action again when it plays secondary host alongside Spring Valley Golf Club (superintendent Hayden Mead) for the combined Men's and Women's Victorian Opens. A fortnight later it will be the principal host for the 2012 Australia Men's and Women's Amateur Championships from 17-22 January (Huntingdale Golf Club – superintendent Michael Freeman – will also be a secondary host). Then, just to keep Tatt and his crew on their toes, Woodlands has decided to bring forward its 2012 club championships to February. (Incidentally, the club is also seeking support form Golf Australia in hosting the 2014 Australian Women's Open).

The Australian Amateur Championships are Australia's most prestigious and oldest amateur golf championships, both having been played since 1894. Woodlands got a taste of the event last year when it was co-host alongside Victoria Golf Club, while in 2005, for the championship's centenary, it was co-host alongside Royal Melbourne.

"We are looking forward to hosting the Amateur and the changes they have made will certainly make it a better spectacle," says Tatt. "Our preparations for the Melbourne Golf Invitational went well and we had some great feedback on the course. We should be able to hold that conditioning through until the major events in January and into the club championships.

"The greens can be a little bit difficult to hold up for a period of time with the thatch issues that we have and also keeping the *Poa* in check. We are looking at putting out an application of Nominee which we have been doing some trial work with, which so far has produced some promising results. But, it's *Poa annua* so no doubt it will find a way to beat us." —



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It was the biggest golf tournament to descend on Australia in recent memory and Royal Melbourne Golf Club again proved why it is regarded as one of the world's great championship venues. ATM reviews The Presidents Cup held last November and discovers that it wasn't all plain sailing for superintendent Richard Forsyth.







One of two Royal Melbourne Golf Club fairway crews working in harmony on the 2nd Composite Course hole (4 West) ahead of the opening day's play at The Presidents Cup



East Course assistant Paul Thomas hand rakes the massive blowout bunker on 6 Composite (10 West) ne week out from perhaps the biggest tournament of his career and Royal Melbourne Golf Club course superintendent Richard Forsyth knew something wasn't quite right. One of the most important attributes a turf manager can possess is gut instinct, something which only comes with years of experience, and as Forsyth went around the course inspecting the greens late one afternoon in the week leading up to the Presidents Cup, a somewhat uncomfortable pit started to develop in his stomach.

Over the previous few days Forsyth had sent out the walk-behind greens mowers with brushes on them, a standard practice most superintendents would employ in the lead-up to a major event and something he had done many times in the past on the creeping bentgrass greens of his former home of 15 years Metropolitan Golf Club.

But as he has come to appreciate since arriving at Royal Melbourne back in July 2009, the Suttons mix colonial bentgrass is such an intrinsically unique greens grass and in the lead-up to The Presidents Cup Forsyth was taught a valuable lesson in how far he could push it.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

Royal Melbourne superintendent Richard Forsyth inspects the turf just hours before the opening round foursomes matches teed off on Thursday



Victorious US Team captain Fred Couples with The Presidents Cup

THE PRESIDENTS CUP

Peridents aug

Sporl is a 36-year veteran of the industry and has worked as a Tour agronomist for the past 15 years



The lower the Suttons mix was cut and the more it was rolled, the better it performed

SPORL SPRUIKS ROYAL'S 'CHAMPIONSHIP CALIBRE'

mong the more than 100 PGA Tour staff that descended on Royal Melbourne Golf Club for The Presidents Cup in November, there was one who had more than a key interest in the unique turf surfaces of the iconic sandbelt course.

Jay Sporl, a native of northern Virginia who has been part of the PGA Tour competitions agronomy team for the past 15 years, had the rather plum job of being the organisation's man on the ground, working alongside course superintendent Richard Forsyth and the Royal Melbourne crew.

While no stranger to Australia and Melbourne (Sporl is actually married to a Melbournian), it was his first experience of Royal Melbourne during a PGA Tour event and having been involved in the lead-up to the event for more than a year, the course, the turf and its conditioning left a lasting impression on the 36-year turf industry veteran.

"I have been blessed over the years to be involved in many tournaments, but this would have to rate among the best," says Sporl, who is part of a 10-strong PGA Tour agronomy team which covers up to 130 events per year. "I haven't counted how many Tour events I've done over the years, but it would be up around 200 and this would easily be in my top five, if not higher. I would love to see the Tour come here; they've come to Australia for the Nationwide Tour, so why not a PGA Tour event?

"This tournament was so unique. We had four different days, four different conditions and the conditioning of the golf course each day was of championship calibre. I would put this golf course up against any championship venue and any of the Major venues that we have had this past year. The conditions were just outstanding.

"Richard and his team were as every bit as professional as any other staff I have worked with around the world and they should all personally have a lot of pride in what they produced for The Presidents Cup."

Sporl's involvement with Royal Melbourne began back in November 2010 when he came out to visit the course, one of four occasions he would venture Down Under in the lead-up to The Presidents Cup. With the huge amount of re-grassing that had taken place at Royal Melbourne in the summer of

2009/2010, the immature nature of the Composite Course turf was something the PGA Tour was very mindful of.

"I would be lying to you if I said we didn't have some concerns about the turf last November," says Sporl, who prior to joining the PGA Tour worked as an agronomist for the Jack Nicklaus design company based in Europe. "The turf was still very young and the members were taking advantage of the new surfaces and it had worn in areas. But the transformation each time I came back was remarkable and showed what a great job Richard and his team did in the ensuing year to get this place ready. Even in the two weeks leading up to the tournament the course changed so dramatically."

What made The Presidents Cup special for Sporl was not only the conditioning of the course, but the conditions that the tournament was played in. Melbourne was at its unpredictable best for tournament week which not only tested the players, but also the skills of Forsyth and his team.

"I haven't experienced such changeable conditions in a tournament before," says Sporl. "In the States you either have a solid wet week or a totally dry week. But that's what makes Melbourne so unique I guess. They played with 16mm of rain on Saturday all day long. If we had that kind of rain heading into any other tournament in the States we would have had to suspend play because most courses there are already pretty wet and soft to start with.

"The greens, in particular, were stellar on Sunday. I particularly watch to see if the players make a lot of putts and on Sunday they made a lot of putts. Even on the Friday when the wind got up they were still making them. What I focus on is the four-five footers – if they are consistently making those then there is no variation in the greens.

"The Suttons mix is so unique and the more we mowed it, the lower we mowed it and the more we rolled it, the better it got. I can tell you that with some of the creeping bentgrasses, if they were of a similar young age to what the Suttons mix was here, they would have gone backwards.

"And that's the other unique thing about this grass. Our average tournament mowing heights would be between 2.5mm-3.0mm. (Royal Melbourne) was well below that and then if you put a sight prism on the turf and looked at the actual cut, we were borderline 1.5mm. That is as low as I have seen any tournament green."





PGA Tour agronomist Jay Sporl checks the greens cut ahead of the opening day of The Presidents Cup at Royal Melbourne



The fescue surrounds were certainly a talking point among the players and spectators and although held more moisture than Forsyth would have liked, performed superbly

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

"I'd like to say that it all worked out perfectly and that everything went to plan, but a week before the tournament started I was really unhappy with the greens and at one point was quite distressed about how they were looking," admits Forsyth. "It had a bit to do with the weather, but a lot of it was to do with learning about the Suttons mix.

"I have run a very lean nutrition programme since we ripped up the greens and seeded them in 2009/2010 and our intention was to always to put a brush on the greens mowers closer to the tournament. We did that only four times, but after brushing them for that short period and combined with the low nutrition levels, it set the Suttons back to the point where we were seeing almost a separation of the plant.



Even the tee markers were impressive



Composite 18 (2 West) in tournament trim





The Suttons mix greens were rock hard and fast with stimpmeter readings between 13 and 14.5 for the tournament

"I was definitely concerned a week out about how they were looking. Walking around late one afternoon I was definitely starting to get concerned and thinking that something wasn't quite right and you could see the greens that we weren't brushing still had great density.

"While they all came right by the Thursday, it was certainly a case of learning from your mistakes as late as a week before the tournament. I certainly wouldn't brush again based on what I saw. But, that's just this grass. What we found was that the Suttons responded much better to constant double cutting up and back on the same run. By doing that we found that density improved considerably each day and we were getting a lot of clip, whereas when we were brushing them they were going backwards.

"I called the supplier on Sunday to order some extra fertiliser and we put that out on the greens first thing Monday morning. It certainly wasn't planned, but they were looking average. That helped and the two lots of rain we had also helped.

"The blackness of the iron/magnesium/ manganese application was an idea we tossed about for a while, whether we went for that darker look, but we had a few imperfections in the greens, especially on the edges where we had to do a bit of plugging, so I wanted to hide those a little bit. We put it out on Monday knowing that they would turn black and everyone would be talking about it, but by the time the tournament started it would go back to a more natural colour."

Despite those issues in the lead-up to the event, no-one could fault the conditioning of Royal Melbourne come the opening day's foursomes matches. Two weeks of intense grooming had the players, PGA Tour officials and media raving about the quality of the turf surfaces which in turn gave the crew, which numbered over 60 for the tournament, a great boost.

US team member and Presidents Cup veteran Phil Mickelson likened the firmness and pace of the Royal Melbourne greens to Augusta National in his early days of playing the US Masters. Most of his US team members, in particular Presidents Cup rookies Bill Haas, Bubba Watson, Webb Simpson and Dustin Johnson were also in awe of the greens, with the latter commenting that they were the firmest and truest he had ever played on.

Tournament organisers could not have asked for more 'Melbourne-like' conditions for The Presidents Cup if they had tried. The opening day was warm yet benign, but on Friday the course bared its teeth as the firm and fast greens combined with warm blustery northerly winds to really test the players. Saturday's rain literally put a dampener on the firmness of the greens, but by Sunday they were again rolling smooth and true.

Despite being a part of the losing International team, local lad Geoff Ogilvy perhaps best summed up the week from a player perspective: "It has been a big week for us, the Australians. We are very proud of Royal Melbourne Golf Club and it showed every different aspect of why she's a great golf course. It has been fun to play this week. I can't imagine a better scenario for a golfer – to play on a team in your home town and on your favourite golf course, one that I'm very proud of and I know that all the Australians are proud of too."

Accolades aside, the real satisfaction for Forsyth came from two areas. The first was the amount of interest both locally and internationally in the golf course, especially all the resurfacing and re-grassing work that had gone on in the summer of 2009/2010. "I don't know how many media interviews I did that week," says Forsyth. "It was amazing the international focus and the attention the golf course was getting, but then again I guess they don't get many courses like this, in the US."

The greens and surrounds of Composite 1 (3 West) looking a treat on Thursday



The second and most pleasing, however, was the way in which his crew stepped up to the plate and enjoyed the event despite being under intense scrutiny to produce surfaces of the highest order. The camaraderie developed among the crew and volunteers was solid and no more was that evident when the crew joined in the celebrations at the Closing Ceremony on the Sunday.

"I'm really pleased for the staff who put two years of solid effort into getting the course to this stage," says Forsyth. "I'm really pleased that the players were so complimentary about the course, especially the firmness of the greens which is what the club was chasing and what we want to be known for. For me, that was satisfying because the staff worked really hard on getting that firmness back in the greens, even though we probably didn't have the ideal conditions given the rain we had in the lead-up.

"The senior guys on staff played such a crucial role to the success of the tournament. Mike Love, our assistant superintendent of works, took on the role to coordinate all the contractors, signage and tournament set-up with enthusiasm. One of the great comments we got from the week came from one of the PGA Tour guys who looks after all the signage.

He said that it had been one of the easiest tournaments they have done anywhere in the world and that was largely due to Mike being such a great guy to work with. Mike was under enormous



pressure during the tournament and the radio was going non-stop with requests from the PGA Tour and IMG guys. But nothing was too much trouble and he went out of the way to help.

"I was really impressed with how Simon (Muller, West Course assistant), Paul (Thomas, East Course assistant), Andrew (Boyle, West Course foreman) and John (Mann, East Course foreman) took it upon themselves to coordinate the crew for the

Hot northerly winds certainly tested the players on Friday ahead of a storm front rolling in that evening which dumped 16mm

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20





ATM caught up with turf technician Luke Spartalis during The Presidents Cup to see just what went into getting the engine room of the Royal Melbourne maintenance facility primed for such a big event.



All walk behind greens and fescue surrounds mowers were ground twice during tournament week

or Royal Melbourne Golf Club head turf technician Luke Spartalis, the four competition days of The Presidents Cup last November was the easy part. Sure he and his assistant Jeff Wesselson pulled nearly 80 hours that week and by the end of it had lost count of the amount of grinding wheels they had destroyed, but it was in the months leading up to the tournament where they had already earned their keep.

As far back as six months before The Presidents Cup started, preparations had well and truly got underway in the Royal Melbourne maintenance facility to ensure that come the tournament everything was in optimum working order. Whether it was the fleet of walk-behinds providing the finest of cuts on the Suttons mix greens or fescue surrounds, through to heavy-duty machines like the stump grinder and woodchipper, nothing was left to chance.

"It's the biggest tournament that we will ever be involved with so it was important that everything went off without a hitch," says Spartalis. "Because the tournament was announced back in 2008, we had been planning our preparations for a while and we made sure that everything was attended to in the lead-up. All eyes were on this event and Royal Melbourne and the last thing I wanted was something to go wrong with a machine when the guys were out there.

"Thankfully, it was pretty much smooth sailing for the tournament and it was great to hear all the praise about the conditioning of the surfaces from the players. That's what you like to hear because you have worked so hard to get the course to that level. The amount of preparation work we did certainly made a big difference. To see a mower that has 2000 hours on it cutting just as well as the mower next to it which has only two hours on it, that's when you know you've done the work."

AT YOUR SERVICE

To ensure all the Royal Melbourne machinery was in top shape, Spartalis and Wesselson embarked on a massive servicing regime in the lead-up the tournament. Every nut, bolt, hose, connection and battery on every machine in the maintenance facility was given the once over to ensure nothing would fail.

The club's four Toro Reelmaster 5610 fairways units, which average about three years in age, were singled out for special attention and were the first machines up on the hoist. Spartalis reckons they spent a total of three weeks on each fairway mower, literally rebuilding the cutting units and replacing all bearings, rollers, seals and bushes. Around \$10,000 worth of hydraulic hoses were also replaced just for a bit of insurance.

"A lot of our focus went on the fairway units," says Spartalis. "They have quite a few hours on them now because of the size of this place, so we wanted to make sure that they would match up with the five Reelmaster 5510s we had coming in on loan and getting that consistency of cut across the old and new units. Some of the old units weren't always cooperative and we had to use some serious persuasion to get old pins and bushes out, but in the end that extra time we spent on them made a difference."

It was a similar deal for the club's 20 walk-behind greens mowers. All were fully ground, serviced (bushes, seals, bearings) and tightened up so they tracked properly. Again, to ensure the same level of cut, all the loan walk-behinds (of which there were three Toro Greensmaster 1000s and four Toro Greensmaster Flex 21s) were checked to make sure they had the same 11-blade reels on them (some had 14).

Another prime focus was on Royal Melbourne's large fleet of 23 Workman utilities. With such a

sizeable crew and huge amount of machinery to transport around, ensuring they were reliable throughout the tournament was critical. All Workmans were fully serviced with clutches and belts replaced, while batteries were double checked and even if just slightly off were changed over. (Incidentally, an additional 10 Workman MDX utilities were loaned for the tournament).

"We pretty much covered all our bases," says Spartalis. "Everything that had given us grief in the past we addressed in the lead-up. We even beefed up the yokes on the fairway mowers. The position lock pins were constantly breaking on us so we bored them out and fitted new 12mm bolts to strengthen them."

As well as the huge level of servicing in the lead-up, Spartalis also found the time to fabricate a few special items for the tournament. Together with course superintendent Richard Forsyth, they devised a 7.2m-wide aluminium framed fairway brush manufactured by Calbah Industries in Keysborough. The brush was attached to the club's 65hp John Deere tractor and went out ahead of the fairway units in the week leading up to the tournament.

Two week's out from the event Spartalis also whipped up a heavy-duty hole changer, the second such implement he has manufactured for club. "Because the greens are so hard here, we kept having issues with handles breaking and bending so a while back I fabricated a solid steel hole changer to suit our conditions," says Spartalis. "With the tournament coming up, two weeks out we decided to make another one which took about 20 hours of machining and fabrication. It's weighty, but it works!"

GRINDING AWAY

As for the tournament and the week leading up to it, Spartalis and Wesselson – and Adam Thompson who came across from Commonwealth Golf Club to help – were literally slaves to the grind. As well as constantly adjusting and checking the machines before and after their daily cutting regimes each morning or afternoon, most of their time was spent grinding bedknives, cylinders and setting reels.

On the Monday before the tournament all the tournament walk-behind mowers – eight dedicated Greensmaster Flex 21s for the greens, nine Greensmaster Flex 21s for the fescue surrounds and three Greensmaster 1000s tee mowers – were completely ground, as were all the spare mowers (Spartalis estimates the total number of walk-behinds was about 30). They ground the fescue mowers again on the Thursday and the greens mowers again on Saturday. (As an aside, Microcut bedknives were used on the greens mowers and Tournament Cut bedknives on the fescue walk-behinds).

"They were basically as sharp as you could possibly get them," says Spartalis. "We took all that on ourselves because the last thing we wanted



during tournament week was rushing out there while the guys were doing their preparations and having to fix or adjust things on the run. We just wanted them to go out there, cut and come back in. There was no backlapping whatsoever. To get that finish you saw out there, grinding was the only way to guarantee it. With backlapping you don't get the consistency which these golfers demand."

While the tournament was a huge success and ultimate reward for all the hard work and dedication put in, for Spartalis there was one other tangible benefit. By undertaking all that extra work the fleet is now ready to go for the club's next two major events – the Master of the Amateurs early in the New Year and the 2012 Australian Women's Open which returns to the club in February.

"I hope Richard doesn't expect the same sort of conditioning," jokes Spartalis. "In all seriousness though, the hard work has been done for those tournaments. That's been a positive to come out of The Presidents Cup – the work we have done has set us up nicely and has also ensured that some of our older machines, like the fairway mowers, will now see us through to their changeover time without any problems."

Royal Melbourne head turf technician Luke Spartalis (left) with assistant Jeff Wesselson (right) and Commonwealth Golf Club's Adam Thompson who assisted during The Presidents Cup



Spartalis manufactured a second heavy-duty hole changer a few weeks out from the event to suit Royal's rock hard greens



THE PRESIDENTS CUP

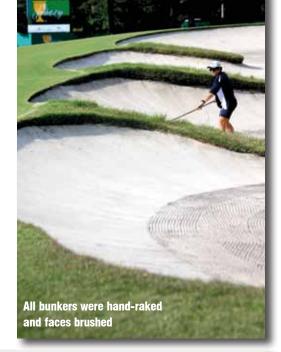
ALLY S	W22 - HM GREEN
ADAM T	411 - BUNKERS /
LUKE W	W6 - TEES.
MIKE W	WIG - TEES - 1
CHRIS A	49 - BUNNERS
STEVEN B	WII- BUNKERS
KADE M	W9- BLANKERS
TRAVIS S	W26- BUNKERS
DANIEL S	Smok Bunners
STEVE S	W21- FESCUE B,
JASON MATH	ENS WIA- BUNKER

Bunkers were a massive priority with a crew of 18 out preparing them most mornings

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

tournament. Ask anyone and they will tell you I am the world's worst delegator, so for me to relinquish that control was hard. But you had to do it in a situation like this and with a tournament of this scale you needed these guys to take control and they did so without hesitation and did a fantastic job.

"Luke (Spartalis, head turf technician) and Jeff (assistant) in the shed took it upon themselves to grind everything the week before the tournament and then pulled them all apart and did them again at the start of the tournament. I'm sure why we saw that evenness of cut and how flat and smooth the turf presented, was because of what they did. And that wasn't on my instruction either. They took that upon themselves, being the professionals in that area, to show just what they can do. As a superintendent you really can't ask for much more than that."



MAINTENANCE MATTERS – PRESIDENTS CUP PREPARATIONS

GRFFNS

Double cut (up and back on the same run) with a fleet of eight Toro Flex 21s (initially at 2.8mm and brought down to 2.5mm) from the Sunday before the start of the tournament right through until the last day of play. Greens rolled using Tru Turf rollers every day with the exception of Friday, while a handful of greens (most notably 5 and 6 West - 3 and 4 Composite) also missed out some days due to their slope. Stimpmeter readings ranged from 13 to 14. Greens were given a handwater on Tuesday afternoon, on Friday morning ahead of being cut and again following play that afternoon.

FAIRWAYS

In the week leading up to the tournament fairways were brushed with a specially fabricated 7.2m-wide broom ahead of being cut in various directions (tee to green, green to tee, cross cut) with the aim of having no striping, just a uniform appearance. During tournament week, two fairway crews, consisting of four units each (a mix of Reelmaster 5610s and 5510s) would cut with catchers. Depending on the schedule they would either cross cut or cut from tee to green. Height of cut 12mm.

SURROUNDS

Fescue surrounds double cut up and back on the same run every day at 6mm with a fleet of nine Toro Flex 21s.

TEES

Double cut up and back on the same run at 8mm with a fleet of three Toro Greensmaster 1000s. Steel brush used in the week before.

BUNKERS

After 42mm of rain on Wednesday 9 November, all Compositie Course bunkers needed to be reinstated after suffering major damage. For the tournament week, all bases were hand-raked and faces broomed. Bunker crew numbered upwards of 15 each day. No rakes were left in bunkers during the practice rounds and tournament play, with a member of the RMGC crew assigned to follow each match.

APPLICATIONS

Tees and fairways received a liquid feed the Friday and Saturday before the tournament - a bit of nitrogen, but more magnesium

and iron. Late liquid fertiliser application on the greens on Monday morning and potassium silicia to harden up the leaf. Fescue surrounds left untouched. Fungicide application on greens and surrounds the week before. Pest control programmes implemented up to about four weeks out form the start of the tournament.

MACHINERY

Loan machinery from Toro included five Reelmaster 5510s fairway units to complement RMGC's four 5610s; 10 Workman MDX utilities (total Workmans for the tournament – 33); four Greensmaster Flex 21s and three Greensmaster 1000s (they complemented RMGC's own fleet of 20 walk-behind greens mowers); and one 3500-D Sidewinder trim mower. Two Jacobsen fairway units were also loaned and used to cut the practice fairway across at Sandringham Golf Course. One TruTurf R52-ELT roller was also loaned.

VOLUNTEERS

Thirty course staff volunteers joined with the RMGC crew of 30 for the week leading up to the tournament and tournament week itself.

THE WET STUFF

Wed 9 Nov: 42mm
 Sun 13 Nov: 2mm
 Tues 15 Nov: 8.8mm
 Fri 18 Nov: 4mm

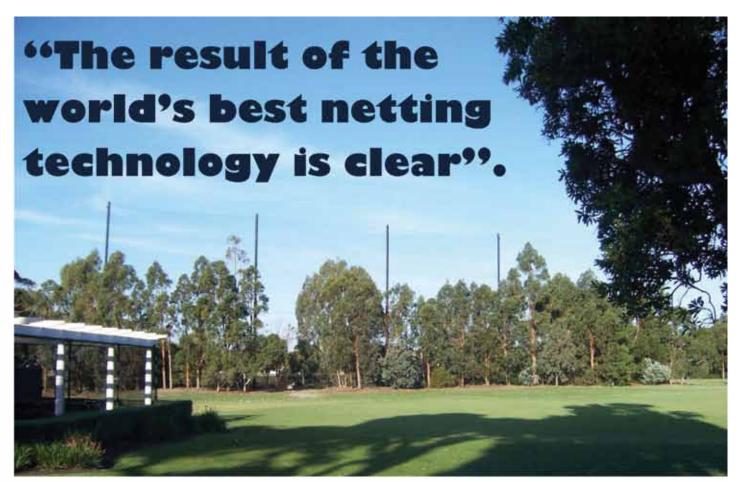
• Sat 19 Nov: 12mm (11 Day Total: 68.8mm)

READING THE GREENS

As well as being a volunteer, AGCSATech agronomist John Geary took daily measurements of Royal Melbourne's famed surfaces in tournament trim. Daily Clegg hammer readings, TDR moisture probe measurements and USGA TruFirm readings were recorded on five greens and surrounds – see Tech Talk, pg38, for the results.

FIFTEEN SECONDS OF FAME

Royal Melbourne crew member Nick Fitzpatrick got his name and photo in The Age newspaper after celebrating his 30th birthday on the opening day of the tournament. Fitzpatrick had the pick of the groups that day and raked bunkers for the highly anticipated Scott/Choi v Woods/Stricker foursomes match.



The Metropolitan Golf Club - Melbourne. 24m high safety screen adjacent to practice fairway.

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"On behalf of the Committee and Members of The Metropolitan Golf Club I wish to confirm our satisfaction with the work undertaken and the result.

I have already received many compliments from members, most of whom (previously) felt the high fence would be a visual intrusion on our lovely course. That the net is almost completely transparent is quite amazing".

Allan Shorland Secretary Manager The Metropolitan Golf Club



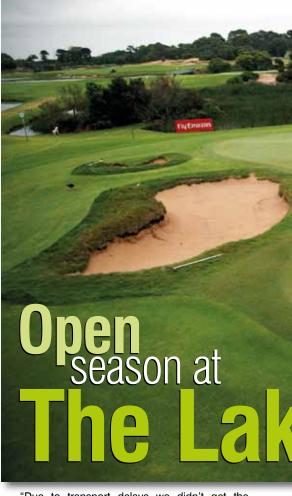


Bermagui superintendent David Thomson was among 30 volunteers to assist The Lakes crew at this year's Open hey say that lightning never strikes twice, but try telling that to The Lakes Golf Club course superintendent Russell Fletcher. Just two days out from hosting perhaps one of the best assembled fields for the 2011 Emirates Australian Open in early November, the Sydney course copped 39mm of rain in less than an hour, while a lightning strike fried the irrigation control system.

ATM looks back at the 2011 Emirates Australian Open held at The Lakes Golf Club It was a case of déjà vu for Fletcher who less than 12 months earlier had to clean up the course just hours before the start of the 2010 Open after more than 75mm of rain caused surface flooding and bunker washouts. Thankfully then he didn't have to worry about a lightning strike, which certainly made for an interesting lead-in to the 2011 tournament which was eventually claimed by Greg Chalmers with a score of 13-under.

Mark Neil (foreground) and Kevin Dodd give the massive 14th green a final trim on Sunday morning "We got hammered early Tuesday evening of tournament week by an electrical storm," recalls Fletcher. "It was about 6.30pm and I was in the shed when there was an almighty crack. Lightning hit the car park less than 100m away from the shed and took out power to the clubhouse and our irrigation computer along with it.





"Due to transport delays we didn't get the control computer back up until Saturday. I've never had the irrigation system down for such a long period and for it to happen during an Australian Open, who would have guessed! Thankfully the pumps were still working and we could turn the sprinklers on manually. The weather helped us out too although by Saturday afternoon the greens were starting to show a bit."

While the pre-tournament storm caused irrigation issues as well as plenty of bunker washouts, fortunately for Fletcher most of the drama happened out on course. John Daly made the headlines by calling it quits halfway through his first round after putting six balls into the water off the tee at 11, while eventual runner-up John Senden carded a blistering third round nine-under 63.

"I was certainly a lot more comfortable with how our preparations went this year compared to last year," says Fletcher. "And I think the guys were a lot more comfortable as well having been through the event in 2010. We didn't have the massive issues with nematodes like we had last year. We still had some areas that we were mindful of but they were generally on the edges of fairways where we could mask them by bringing them in a little.

"With the tournament a month earlier, we did a lot more fertilising this year while our renovations on greens and fairways were brought forward by about three weeks as well. We also did a light surface aeration about a month out from the Open. Having had that extra year, the biggest difference was just how much more mature the turf was."



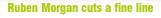
The Lakes Golf Club (pictured is the 16th) played host to one of the best Australian Open fields in years last November. Superintendent Russell Fletcher will also prepare the course for the 2012 Australian Open



The NSW golf course maintenance community again rallied around Fletcher with nearly 30 volunteers assisting during tournament week. Bermagui Golf Club superintendent David Thomson journeyed up from the NSW south coast, while NSWGCSA president and Shortland Waters Golf Club superintendent Craig Molloy joined with local Globe client manager Kevin Booth to assist in setting pins.

Second year Coffs Harbour Golf Club apprentice Beau Lavender got his first taste of Open preparations, while Ryde Parramatta assistant superintendent Jarrod Arps was among a host of local Sydney greenkeepers to volunteer their time, with others coming from the likes of The Australian, Cromer, Monash, Terrey Hills and Rosnay.

"We had some great support again this year," says Fletcher. "It was a thrill for everyone to be involved this year and the atmosphere was great, especially with some of the big name players in the field. The crowds on the first day this year were bigger than on the final day of last year's Open and hopefully we'll get similar numbers when its back here in 2012."





Volunteers Craig Molloy (left) and Kevin Booth set the pins ahead of the final round





The Open tee markers were unique to say the least

After hosting last year's Open, The Lakes had course preparations down to tee. Pictured is Monash CC volunteer John Kljajic



In early November Peter Frewin started as the AGCSA's new general manager. A few months into his tenure, ATM sits down with the former Barwon Heads Golf Club superintendent of 21 years to see how he has settled in during a period of change for the association.



Above: In taking over as AGCSA general manager from John **Neylan last November, Peter** Frewin became the first former superintendent to assume the role in the association's history

he past six months have without doubt seen plenty of change within the Australian Golf Course Superintendents Association. While a new-look board, with the exception of incumbent president Allan Devlin, has been finding its feet after being elected in Adelaide, the big news came last September when it was announced that former Barwon Heads Golf Club superintendent Peter Frewin had been appointed as the AGCSA's new general manager.

In taking over from respected agronomist John Nevlan, who announced he was stepping down from the position shortly after last year's Australian Turfgrass Conference, Frewin became the first former superintendent to assume the role in the association's history. As a past president and board member, as well as a turfie for the best part of three decades, Frewin's credentials for the role were unquestionable and in a press release issued by the AGCSA Board, it was his "zest for the position and positive ideas on moving the association forward on behalf of the Board and membership" that ultimately saw Frewin get the nod.

Frewin, who enters his new role having most recently spent two and half years working for trade company Globe Australia, has hit the ground running in his new post and no sooner had he started was involved in his first AGCSA board meeting and state presidents meeting in mid-November. Now, nearing the end of a second hectic month in the big seat, ATM editor Brett Robinson stole a few moments with the AGCSA's new chief to see how he has settled in and what lies ahead for the association.

have you settled in and what have you achieved so far?

Peter Frewin: "Not a great thing to say in your first interview, but not much! I have done a lot of reading to try and get up to speed with what has been going on in the past few years. I have also sat down with all the staff and had a chat. The board meeting and State Presidents' meetings in November were both productive. People may have forgotten but most of the board are also new, so it was an opportune time to come together as we could get each other up to speed.

ATM: I guess your phone didn't stop ringing when it was announced that you got the job. What was your reaction when you received the

PF: "When (AGCSA Board member) Peter Lonergan rang on the Friday to offer me the job, my response was '****'! His response was - I hope that is a good '****'. A little time later we agreed that my decision should be made quickly to try and stop the 'turf vine'. It was agreed I would let him know on the following Monday. As it happened I was actually working in Townsville for Globe Equipment that Monday when the AGCSA press release went out - I felt quite important for a while.

"The response was overwhelming although I quickly came back to earth when a couple of 'mates' pointed out that they were now my boss! My phone was normally pretty busy when I worked at Globe but it never ran out of battery. That day my battery was flat by 3pm. The best thing about the feedback was that I had calls from current and ex-supers, the trade, internationals and many of the people I did not really know. The feedback was great."

ATM: What made you apply for the position? Is it the 'dream job' for you and what qualities do you think you bring to the position?

PF: "At John Neylan's farewell we had a chat and spoke about areas where he thought the AGCSA needed 'change'. Driving home I thought about it and felt I could offer some input in these areas. I am not sure if John was baiting me or not but perhaps it worked?

I will be upfront and say I was not happy with a few little things that had happened in the past with the association so I thought 'don't whinge about it if you are not prepared to put your hand up and have a go'. When I started I set myself two immediate personal goals – get past the first board meeting and through the probation period, so I am nearly there!

"I'm not sure what qualities I bring, but the interview panel must have thought I had what it takes. I do think when the big fella upstairs was handing out commonsense I went back for seconds. Another good piece of advice that I received early on that I try and use is – you have two ears and one mouth, use them in the same ratio."

ATM: You said during your acceptance speech when you received the 2009 AGCSA Distinguished Service Award that the association holds a special place in your heart. Why is that? PF: "When I decided to put the cue in the rack at Barwon Heads Golf Club the only negative thought that entered my mind (apart from how was I going to pay the bills!) was missing the many people that I had met over the years, many of whom had become close friends. Without the VGCSA and AGCSA I may never have met these people. This industry and the

"A case in point is me going to work for Globe. If you had been involved in some of the 'discussions' that I had with Ted Baker back in the early AGCSATech days you would have thought that for me to work with him hell would have to freeze over. Again, this industry is different."

association have an amazing ability to bring people

from different backgrounds together and unite them.

ATM: You are the first former superintendent to be appointed into the AGCSA GM/CEO role? What significance does that hold for you?

PF: "I think it shows how much the industry has changed – I could not imagine this happening 10 years ago. I think it is a credit to how far the profession has come. When you look around there are quite a few 'turfies' that have gone on to hold some lofty positions with major companies. If all superintendents sat down and thought about what



they do on a daily basis I think they would be surprised at the skill set they have developed and where those skills could be transferred to."

ATM: What do you think having a former superintendent in the position will mean for the association? Is it long overdue?

PF: "Again, not overdue but perhaps a sign of how much the industry has changed. I use the term 'grass cutter' as a term of endearment – it is what we all started out as. The job has long moved on from that term. Being a super is a management position and running a golf course is much the same as an association – there is a board (or committee) to deal with and lots of grumpy members (just kidding), not much has changed really!"

Frewin was the recipient of the 2009 AGCSA Distinguished Service Award shortly after leaving Barwon Heads Golf Club where he served 21 years

have travelled a great deal and dollar for dollar our members produce surfaces that other counties can only dream of. The one area where most need to lift their game in is self-promotion. Most

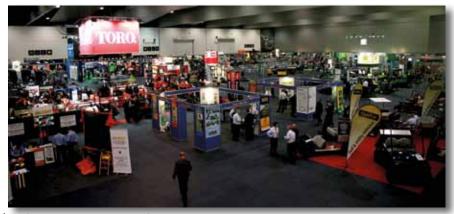
guys underestimate what they do and sell themselves short.

Peter Frewin, AGCSA general manager

ATM: You had an instrumental role in the development of the AGCSA during you past roles as an AGCSA board member and president. What has your past involvement taught you about the association and how will that aid you in your new role?

PF: "When I was president I believed that the AGCSA was a business and that any money generated got put back into developing programmes etc for the members. This belief has not changed. Perhaps with hindsight I could have handled things better back then, but that is history. I still have belief in what we as a board achieved then and the proof I suppose is in where the association is today.

"The one thing that to me is obvious is that the association needs to continually evolve, nothing can stand still. How it is today will not be how it is in 10 years' time. Who could have imagined 10 years ago that we would be walking around with a device in our pocket that had more power than the computer on our desk?



 Having spent two years working for Globe Australia, Frewin says the trade has a lot to offer the AGCSA "When I was AGCSA president I was lucky to have been working with some great people that were like minded. I think the group 'clicked' and had a good understanding of what we wanted to achieve. Back then we had ideas and poor Euan Laird (CEO) had to work the implementation. Thinking about it karma may have caught up with me? Having prior knowledge of the association should help; again the golf club background is not that dissimilar."

ATM: You were responsible for bringing John Neylan on board and getting him to head up one of the association's key departments in AGCSATech. You now find yourself taking over from him. What can you say about his influence and time with the association? Big shoes to fill? PF: "John Neylan is a man I have the utmost respect for. I can honestly say that if we had not been able to get John when we were discussing AGCSATech I don't believe it would ever have started.

"As for big shoes, I am size 11 and I'm not sure about John, but seriously, I think it is more like different shoes. The skill set at the AGCSA office has changed a fair bit with my arrival. John had a passion for the technical/research side of the

business. While I know my way around turf, I think I am more of a communicator and people manager."

ATM: How has the association changed from when you first started in the industry and during your time on the board?

PF: "From my time on the board the most noticeable thing is the staff numbers. When I started on the board we had 1.5 members of staff. That number grew to 3.5 when AGCSATech and ATM started. The other thing I have noticed is that the supers seem to get younger, although I'm not sure if that is really the case and I'm just getting older!"

ATM: One of the things that impressed the interview panel most was your "zest for the position and positive ideas on moving the association forward." What sort of plans do you have and what sort of path would you like to see the AGCSA tread in the future?

PF: "Zest is an interesting term. During the interview process I was fairly direct with some of my responses. I thought I may have offended with some of them – this must have been the 'zest'! I have desires, whether the board share those desires time will tell. In the short-term I do hope to start more electronic communication via social media etc, but these things take money so it will depend on funding.

ATM: What are the main challenges you see facing the AGCSA?

PF: "Like any business, which the AGCSA is, albeit not for profit it is a part of the wider turf industry that has gone through some hard times in recent times. Years of drought then flooding to many parts of the country has put pressure on clubs, which in turn puts pressure on association members.

"These pressures come in many different forms. Men's health issues have been highlighted at recent conferences, a programme I think should be expanded. Another area of interest to me is improving the knowledge of the members in financial matters. I believe a better understanding in this area will give the members a better understanding of why clubs make decisions that at times could impact their ability to do their job."

ATM: What are the main challenges you see facing superintendents and those employed in turf maintenance?

PF: "Providing better results with less money, staff retainment, WHS – the list goes on. Again, this highlights what a great skill set people develop over their careers."

ATM: What one area do you think superintendents excel at and one that they need to lift their game?

PF: "One they excel at is providing world class playing surfaces with, at times, very few resources. I have travelled a great deal and dollar for dollar

THE FREWIN FILE

Age: 49 (born in Bendigo, VIC)

Family: Wife Katrina, son Mitchell and daughter Bridie

Turf Management Career

- Cheltenham Golf Club, VIC (apprenticeship from Feb 1981)
- Maryborough Golf Club, VIC (greenkeeper, six months)
- Rich River Golf Club, NSW (senior greenkeeper, nine months)
- The Lakes Golf Club, NSW (assistant superintendent, 1986-1988)
- Barwon Heads Golf Club, VIC (21 years between 1988-2009. Included seven years as course and golf operations manager and six months as Barwon Heads general manager)
- Globe Australia (Victorian State Manager and Machinery Sales Manager, 2009-2011)

Association Involvement

- VGCSA: 1992-1997 (committee and president – during his time as president he was also on the TGAA Committee)
- Victorian Golf Association Turf
 Advisory Committee: 1994-1998
- AGCSA: 1997-2001 (was elected president in the first year of joining the board)

Did you know... Frewin received the Australian Sports Medal for services to sports administration in 2000. He was also bestowed the 2009 AGCSA Distinguished Service Award at the 25th Australian Turfgrass Conference in Hobart, becoming the fourth Victorian to collect the award since its inception in 1997.

our members produce surfaces that other counties can only dream of. The one area where most need to lift their game in is self-promotion. Most guys underestimate what they do on a day-to-day basis and sell themselves short."

ATM: What has your time on both sides of the industry taught you and how do you think that will benefit you in the AGCSA GM role?

PF: "I think that seeing the industry from both sides puts me in a unique position. In my many years as a superintendent I probably did not give some of the trade people the respect they deserved. Having said that, I don't think the lack of respect was arrogance, probably ignorance more than anything.

"My time 'on the dark side' at Globe was incredible and I learnt more in my time there than I did in the previous 10 years. That may sound a bit cliché, but it is fact. The trade have a lot to offer the AGCSA and hopefully that is one area that I would like to develop. There is an incredible depth of knowledge and expertise out there and is a great resource, something I think that needs to be harnessed."

ATM: Ultimately what do you hope to achieve during your tenure as AGCSA GM?

PF: "The important thing for me is not so much make a mark but leave the organisation in a better

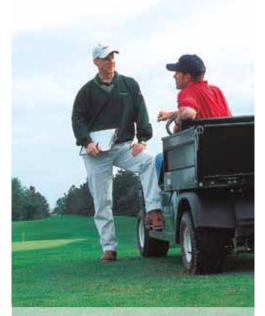


position than when you took it over, something that I hope I have done in all my previous positions."

ATM: Finally, anything you would like to say to the members of the association?

PF: "A great association is only as good as its members so I encourage everyone to participate when possible. It can be easy to say I am too busy, but I think it is important to make the time. I am humbled to have been given this chance and I hope I am up to the task. I am here to serve the members and that includes taking the bad with the good so please feel free to contact me should you have any issues or suggestions."

One of the strengths of the AGCSA and turf industry in general is its camaraderie and ability to bring people together



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The harmonising of state and territory OHS laws to be in line with one Commonwealth Work Health and Safety Act (WHS Act) represents a significant and historic change to OHS laws in **Australia**



Occupational health and safety is one of the more challenging aspects of the job for turf industry practitioners to get their head around and in 2012 the playing field is set to change again. Expert Steve Wait examines the introduction of the new Commonwealth Work Health and Safety Act and the implications it will have for the turf industry.

he laws for occupational health and safety are changing. From 1 January 2012, state OHS Acts will change to be in line with one Commonwealth Work Health and Safety Act (WHS Act). What this means for golf clubs is that each state and territory will, in effect, under their own legislation, mirror the federal laws. The term that lawmakers have given to this process is 'harmonisation', ensuring that all jurisdictions will adopt and implement similar WHS laws by 2012.

This is a significant and historic change to OHS laws in Australia and for the turf industry represents an opportunity to review how it looks at and approaches work health and safety. Interestingly, the introduction of the new Act will also usher in new terminology, with OHS to be replaced by WHS.

Rest assured if you comply with the current laws then you are well on your way to meeting the requirements of the new WHS laws. If, however, your club is not compliant with the current laws, then you will have issues to address under the new laws.

At a practical level, the new WHS Act is not significantly different from current OHS laws with much of it based on policies that are common to many jurisdictions. The new laws also do not significantly change how the senior officer of the business (more on this later) is required to support, educate and inform managers and workers in a typical golf club operation.

Obviously there have been some provisions in the introduction of the new laws to allow for adjustments to be negotiated with the states. However, a key point to be emphasised is that there will be no 'grace period' from 1 January 2012. The reason for this is that not to have a common start date would have been impractical and undermines the 'harmonised' system being initiated.

The overall intention is for each jurisdiction to enact the model provisions of the new Act, subject to permitted minor variations that are needed to ensure they are workable in each jurisdiction and interact effectively with local laws without affecting harmonisation.

One of the key reasons for changes to set common work health and safety laws across Australia was to make it easier for businesses and workers to comply with their work health and safety responsibilities. The requirements will largely be the same, regardless of how many states and territories they operate in.

SO WHAT'S CHANGING?

Harmonised occupational health and safety laws have long been recognised as a critical area of regulatory reform. In July 2008 the Council of Australian Governments signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement for Regulatory and Operational Reform in OHS (IGA) that established



the commitment of the Commonwealth, states and territories to adopt uniform WHS laws by the end of 2011. The new WHS laws will be complemented by nationally consistent approaches to compliance and enforcement.

There are some important changes to the new WHS Act that will affect the way golf course superintendents and general managers interact to ensure they promote health and safety to staff across the facility and operation. It is vital that the senior officer and management and the board of directors at clubs is aware of these changes and has provided the means and systemic support and resources. These new areas to be considered include:

- New terminology (e.g.: work health and safety (WHS) replaces occupational health and safety (OHS));
- 'Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking' (PCBUs, or sometimes referred to as 'peek-a -boos) replaces 'Employer';
- The introduction of the term 'workers' replacing 'employees'. Workers will now include contractors and volunteers;
- Broader consultation requirements (e.g.: who needs to be consulted, when and to what extent);
- The addition of a new 'officer' duty holder;
- Enhanced and changed duties on most duty holders, however, the duties on workers remain essentially unchanged;
- Changes to the potential numbers of health and safety representatives (HSRs) and deputies in a work group and who can be a HSR;
- Changes to how the regulator is notified of incidents in the workplace. PCBUs have the overall duty to notify the regulator for certain serious injuries or illnesses and dangerous incidents that arise out of work that occur at a workplace. A PCBU must notify immediately once they become aware of a notifiable incident by the fastest possible means.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SUPERS

Often the superintendent in a golf club, either by default or by allocated responsibility, is seen as the most competent person and adviser on WHS across the golf club. Although this is understandable



The new laws offer a fresh start to review how the golf club is supporting your role as a superintendent and your responsibility within the greater organisation's health and safety systems



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The new WHS Act sees a number of changes in terminology, including the introduction of the term 'workers' instead of 'employees'. Under the new Act 'workers' will now include contractors and volunteers



given the genuinely hazardous nature of the work that course maintenance staff undertake, it is not a reasonable practice to allow the WHS responsibility to lie solely with the superintendent and their greenkeeping team.

The WHS component of site policies and procedures under the new WHS laws will continue to assume that the business has in place a sound design and implementation of safety policies and procedures.

However, in my view, the real challenge continues to be how we achieve this 'system' and 'process' and at the same time have real worker involvement in consultation, communication and in the decision-making processes as close to the task and jobs where the highest risk lies.

WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

The new laws offer a fresh start to review how the golf club is supporting your role as a superintendent and your responsibility within the greater organisation's health and safety systems. It would be a timely opportunity for your own professional review of your policies and procedures and how they enable you to demonstrate due diligence and to lead and support your staff in safely undertaking their daily work activities.

To assess if you are already being provided with the resources to do the things that will meet the requirements of the new WHS laws, ask yourself the following questions.

- Does your club give you adequate and proportionate resources to develop, understand, promote and communicate health and safety policies and procedures in recognition of the acknowledged dangerous and hazardous working environment you and your team operate in?
- Do you have open lines of communication that allow you to effectively interact between workers, the general manager and the board of directors?

- Does your club actively support, encourage and communicate with you in regard to course maintenance operations in an open, honest and meaningful way?
- Do you have the capacity, training and knowledge to demonstrate your commitment to health and safety and model safe work practices?
- Do you have the resources and tools to put into practice a set of work place standards for your staff to follow?

WHEN DO I NEED TO DO THIS BY?

Industry associations, professional associations and senior managers across Australia have already been advised that they needed to review WHS governance now and map the differences between the current OHS Act and the new WHS Act. The process for the introduction of new national WHS laws actually started in July 2008. So be assured there can be no excuses for any state, industry, business or senior officer or manager to not be aware of the changes in WHS laws.

As part of the senior management team in the operation of a golf club, I would suggest that superintendents consider the following in regard to what they might do about the introduction of the new WHS laws:

- Have a discussion about any immediate safety concerns or issues with your GM and brief them on the urgency to commit to action, remembering your professional opinion and judgment is vital in calibrating the system priorities and controls on the site. (Tip: See the GM about your ideas on ways to approach the discussion and get them on the radar for future planning and budgets);
- Consider information sessions or other initiatives that will support workers to transition. (Tip: Keep up to date with the latest information through your own state WHS website under the area or topic of 'harmonisation');

- Introduce discussion on the new WHS laws into the workplace through your existing staff who hold or act in a HSRs capacity (they can carry over as HSRs under the new system), your club WHS committee and in everyday discussions with greens and club staff;
- Review, in consultation with all stakeholders, your local health and safety arrangements to identify gaps or potential improvements.

With these considerations in mind, you should then:

- Encourage your GM and other staff and workers to include WHS updates at all team meetings and to have WHS as a standing agenda item;
- Start sending out or providing any updates or new information through the club's existing communication channels:
- Make an assessment as a manager of the current hazards that in your view require treatment and need to be controlled;
- Perhaps schedule time for workers to attend workshops, training session on the new WHS laws. Seek to attend yourself or send key staff.

When the new WHS Act is phased in, you should:

 Check that all workers and business functions are ready for the transition to the new WHS laws. (Tip: Focus on the systems, policies and procedures that have been reviewed, updated and communicated.);

- Identify what activities need to be continued between January and June 2012, such as contractor management;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of consultation and communication processes. (Tip: Have the gaps been identified and considered in the planning of the next phase of communication?):
- Have HSRs and employee representatives been consulted and included in potential WHS changes that may affect their work group?
- The new law also defines the training for HSRs and deputies and states they are entitled to five days training within three months of election and one day training annually (the employer must cover reasonable costs). If you have a staff member currently trained and acting as the HSR they can continue so my advice is to 'hasten slowly' on sending staff off to any training. (NB: A national decision is pending on the approved HSR training);
- Make sure workers are aware of, and understand the need for, any changes to align with the new WHS laws.
- Determine who will now be 'workers' in your workplace and how this may affect your dayto-day work. The new laws have broadened the reach of WHS responsibilities of the PCBU to now include contractors and their staff, sub-contractors and their staff, students and volunteers.



Under the new WHS Act, there will be a move to three categories of offences which see a significant increase in penalties in terms of dollar amount and length of imprisonment for work health and safety breaches

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■ The introduction of the new WHS
Act represents an opportunity for
superintendents to review their
policies and procedures and how
they enable them to demonstrate
due diligence and to lead and
support staff in safely undertaking
their daily work activities

PENALTY CHANGES

Under the new WHS Act, there will be a move to three categories of offences which, by in large, will see a significant increase in penalties in terms of dollar amount and length of imprisonment for work health and safety breaches. The categories are:

- Category 1 (most serious): Recklessly exposes a person to risk of death or serious injury. Offences carry a \$3 million fine on corporations and \$600,000 fine on individuals and up to five years in prison to 'officers of that corporation' (that is the CEO, GM, CFO etc...) and three years for workers;
- Category 2: Exposing a person to serious risk of harm (without the recklessness element of category one). \$1.5 million fine for corporations, \$300,000 for officers and \$150,000 for workers;
- Category 3: Failing to comply with WHS duty. This carries a penalty of \$500,000 for corporations and up to a \$100,000 fine for officers and \$50,000 for workers.

In relation to penalties, a Category 1 offence is a crime because of the quantum of the penalties and those offences will be dealt with through the District Court, whereas Category 2 and 3 offences will be dealt with through the magistrates system.

These changes will see WHS law move out of the realm of tribunals and industrial relations courts, in which it has operated to date, with a move into 'black letter law', which for the first time will now also see an appeal process possible, which was not the case in most aspects of previous OHS systems in operation cross the country.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS?

The other important area of the new legislation that needs to be understood is that it removes the right for silence which used to exist when a person was asked to answer questions or provide documents or evidence

Under the new WHS Act a person is now not excused from answering a question or providing a

document, record or information on grounds that the answer, document etc... may tend to incriminate them.

However, the legislation does go on to provide further protection in that the evidence provided by that person cannot then be used in criminal or civil proceedings, unless it is false or misleading.

LATEST INFORMATION

Although most provisions of the model Act will be enacted in the same way in each state and territory, the model Act does envisage some minor jurisdictional differences. For example, each state and territory will have their own regulator (WorkSafe, WorkCover etc.), which will be the same body that currently regulates compliance under your state or territory system.

At the time of writing this article in November 2011, seven out of nine state and territory governments (Victoria and WA being the exceptions) had approved the model regulations and codes of practice and were committed to meeting the deadline of 1 January 2012.

In mid-November, the Minister for Workplace Relations, Senator Chris Evans, also issued a statement announcing that transitional arrangements for the model OHS laws had been developed by Safe Work Australia to assist businesses to move to the new harmonised arrangements. These transitional arrangements will apply to the model OHS regulations and provide delayed commencement of up to 12 months or more where the new laws result in a new or significantly different set of duties.

Despite this delayed start to the model WHS regulations, the bottom line remains that they will still come into effect, just that certain areas will be phased in over a longer period of time.

Lastly, it would be fair to say that OHS or WHS by nature has been somewhat dogged by overcomplex systems, documents, policies, procedures and risk assessment tools. Yet despite this, there has been no reduction in overall injuries in Australia and as recently as last year there were over 80,000 worker compensation claims.

As a result, change in WHS continues as a response to this 'dilemma' by lawmakers. For the turf industry it means we need to do more than just act with good intentions. We need to show evidence of good practices, we need to demonstrate management of risk which ultimately allows for us to more easily show that we care and that we act to reduce harm or injury to our staff to the satisfaction of 'black letter law'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Steve Wait from Safetee Pro delivers expert safety services and systems as the Director of Safety from within the e-par group. For more information about the new Commonwealth Work Health and Safety Act and how it affects you, contact Steve at steve@epar.com.au



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A range of course quality parameters are being assessed as part of the AGCSA's one-year golf course benchmarking study, among them green speed, surface hardness, soil moisture content, thatch/rootmat depth and overall surface quality

Up to the

AGCSATech recently started a comprehensive golf course benchmarking study of nine golf courses of varying standard with the aim of establishing criteria that assist clubs to better understand what is sustainable for their facility. Senior agronomist Andrew Peart provides an overview of the project and looks at results from the first three assessment dates.







t the end of September 2011, the AGCSA embarked on a one-year Horticulture Australia Limited-funded study (Project TU11003) to undertake assessments of nine golf courses in the Melbourne metropolitan area to formulate what can be called course quality objectives for greens and fairways.

The nine courses are grouped into three categories:

- Elite Standard: Metropolitan Golf Club, Yarra Yarra Golf Club and Riversdale Golf Club;
- Mid to High Standard: Keysborough Golf Club, Southern Golf Club and Box Hill Golf Club;
- Public Access Courses: Spring Park Golf Course, Ringwood Golf Course and Tirhatuan Lakes Golf Course.

While these courses are being assessed on a monthly basis, there will also be a one-off inspection in late summer/early autumn of three courses in Sydney and three courses in Brisbane with one club in these areas to be chosen to represent each category.

In developing course quality objectives, the principal aim is to establish criteria that assist individual golf courses to better understand what is sustainable for their facility. The aim is to determine the most appropriate test criteria for providing data on course quality as it relates to climate, maintenance and budget.

The establishment of course quality objectives provides a means by which to assess factors that may be limiting a club's ability to meet its vision for the course and then make informed decisions about the implementation of improvements or adjustments to the expectations. The purpose of the study is to:

- Determine the most appropriate test criteria for providing data on course quality objectives;
- Measure surface playability parameters and compare the results to climatic factors (i.e. rainfall, temperature, day length and shade);
- Collect course management data and relate it to budget and course quality data.

- Determine the 'red line' factors for budgets and resources as it relates to course condition factors. This is to be developed as a method of determining golf course sustainability; and
- Determine realistic and sustainable course quality parameters according to budget, available resources (in particular labour) and environment.

Greens at the nine courses are being assessed on a monthly basis for green speed, surface hardness, soil moisture content, average length of the majority of the root mass, longest root, as well as an overall quality rating of the playing surface. On a quarterly basis the greens are also being assessed for infiltration rate, Bent/Poa annua ratio and thatch/rootmat depth.

Fairways are being assessed on a monthly basis for overall presentation and on a quarterly basis for thatch, longest root depth and mean mass root depth (at three locations) and soil moisture (at six locations).

ASSESSMENT TOOLS GREEN SPEED

Green speed is measured using a stimpmeter in the normal manner. This involves locating a flat area on each green and rolling three golf balls down the stimpmeter up and back and then averaging the distances of the two passes to give a green speed measurement expressed in metres.

SURFACE HARDNESS

Surface hardness of the greens is being measured by two devices – the 0.5kg Clegg Impact Soil Tester and the USGA's Trufirm device. The Clegg is being used with two heads – the traditional flat head similar to that of the 2.25kg Clegg and also a domed head (see photo opposite). Surface hardness is being measured at 20 locations across each green, with both the flat and domed heads.

Golf greens were traditionally tested for surface hardness with a 0.5kg Clegg hammer with a flat

head, however, it was deemed that the reading exaggerated the actual firmness of the surface. The use of the domed head has since been introduced and has been used by the STRI in the UK in its evaluation of greens in the lead up to past Open Championships.

The Trufirm has been kindly lent to the AGCSA by the USGA for the duration of the trial to also provide a measure of surface hardness. Unlike the Clegg, which measures surface firmness in gravities, the Trufirm, which was developed by Dr. Matt Pringle of the UGSA, records the depth of penetration into the surface (expressed in inches). While a high Clegg hammer reading indicates a firmer green, a lower reading on the Trufirm represents a firmer green.

The USGA has been monitoring greens in the lead up to the US Open with the Trufirm for a number of years now. In our study, the Trufirm averages the firmness of each green at nine locations. The Clegg hammer with the domed head has also been dropped at the same nine locations to try and establish a correlation between the two devices.

SOIL MOISTURE

Soil moisture is being assessed using a Fieldscout TDR300 with 120mm length probes. On some occasions shorter length probes (67mm) may also be used to ascertain what additional moisture is being held in the upper portion of the profile that is more dominated by the rootmat. Soil moisture is being measured across 20 locations of the green, in generally the same locations as the Clegg readings.

ROOT LENGTH AND THATCH DEPTH

A slice of the upper 150mm of the green is removed with a profile corer (see photo page 36) to measure thatch/rootmat depth as well as root depth. Two measurements are taken for root depth which includes maximum root depth (normally a root that has found a Vertidrain or some other aeration void) and the depth of which the majority of the root mass extends to. On some greens this has been witnessed at a very shallow depth, particularly if that green had been sodded.

INFILTRATION RATE

Infiltration is measured using a single ring disc permeametre that provides an accurate measurement of surface infiltration. The permeametre is used at two locations across the green with the result of the two being averaged. The rate of water infiltration is generally a function of the level of thatch/rootmat accumulation, the construction medium of the green and the length of time since the last renovation.

BENT/POA RATIO AND OVERALL SURFACE QUALITY

These are visual assessments of the percentage of Poa annua and bentgrass over the entire playing surface, as well as a 0-9 rating of the quality of



the surface. The quality rating is a combination of surface uniformity, surface firmness, smoothness and playability.

QUALITY OF GREENS

The uniformity of the greens being assessed are generally variable due to their differing ages and even construction types. It is seemingly vary rare to have greens all at the same age, particularly with older more established clubs that have often reconstructed particular greens over time. This study has therefore provided the opportunity to assess the characteristics or performance of varying ages of greens as well as their construction type.

RESULTS TO DATE

With the first round of benchmarking assessment occurring at the end of September 2011, some clubs and courses had undertaken renovations while others hadn't, making overall uniformity of the assessment a little difficult. Coupled with renovations, rainfall also played a major role in the results particularly when it came to moisture retention and surface firmness. With those in mind, some conclusions can be drawn from the first three months (September, October and November 2011) of data collection.

GREEN SPEED

Generally, green speed has been slower at the public courses compared to the mid-high standard and elite courses on each of the assessment dates. The average for the public courses has been around 2.4 metres (8 feet), while the mid-high and elite standard courses are closer to 3.0 metres (10 feet).

SURFACE HARDNESS – TRUFIRM

The Trufirm was not used for the September assessments as it had not arrived from the USGA, however, it has provided some interesting results from the October and November assessments. The average for the public courses for those months was 0.53 (this measurement indicated that the probe penetrated the surface to a depth of 0.53 inches) on both occasions. The mid-high standard courses were 0.49" on both occasions and the elite clubs were 0.47" in October and 0.46" in November.

SURFACE HARDNESS - CLEGG

The Trufirm results were also reflected with the use of the Clegg hammer with the domed head when dropped at the same nine locations. The

Tirhatuan Lakes, a public access golf course in Melbourne's south east is one of nine golf courses being assessed as part of the HALfunded project



Surface hardness is being measured using a 0.5kg Clegg hammer using both the traditional flat head as well as dome head which mimics a golf ball



The Trufirm device (pictured left), which measures penetration into the green surface, has been leant to the AGCSA for the duration of the benchmarking study



A slice of the upper 150mm of each green is removed with a profile corer to measure thatch/ rootmat depth as well as root depth

results for the public courses has seen results of 80 and 82 gravities during October and November respectively, the mid-high standard courses both recorded 91 gravities, while the elite standard courses were 97 gravities.

Similar trends have been recorded when surface hardness was measured with the domed head and flat head Clegg over the 20 locations per green (Table 1). There was a distinct difference observed between September and October for the public courses with two of the three courses not undertaking renovations prior to the September assessment.

TABLE 1. SURFACE HARDNESS

	September		October		November	
Category	Domed ¹	Flat²	Domed	Flat	Domed	Flat
Public	93	132	80	111	80	115
Mid-high Standard	95	142	91	139	90	138
Elite Standard	95	142	98	146	96	152

¹ Dome head 0.5kg Clegg hammer; ² Flat head 0.5kg Clegg hammer

MOISTURE LEVELS

During September, October and November there were significant rainfall events at the end of the month when the assessments took place. The Bureau of Meteorology's Moorabbin Airport station recorded the following amounts:

- September 29, 2011: 37mm;
- October 25, 2011: 6.4mm;
- November 27, 2011: 46.4mm.

The same two clubs within the mid-high range were impacted by these rain events in September and October, while two public courses, one mid-high standard and two elite clubs were impacted by the November rainfall event.

The results have shown that again there is a consistent trend of the public courses holding the greatest amount of moisture within the top 120mm of their profiles, while the mid-high and elite courses have comparable levels of moisture retention.

THATCH/ROOTMAT LEVELS

Thatch depth is being measured on four occasions

during the trial and the initial assessment for thatch depth showed that the public courses had an average of 47mm, ranging from 30mm to 82mm. The mid-high standard courses averaged 35mm, ranging from 23mm to 42mm, while the elite courses averaged 32mm, ranging from 12mm to 43mm.

While thatch was recorded visually as a depth measurement, a loss on ignition test was also conducted on samples taken from four locations across each green at two depths – 0-20mm and 20mm-40mm. Surprisingly, the loss on ignition results did not correlate with the depth of thatch present. Loss on ignition records the actual amount of organic matter present, so while the depth of the rootmat may seem high it may well be diluted with sand. The results for loss on ignition at the two depths can be seen in Table 2.

TABLE 2. LOSS ON IGNITION TEST – SEPTEMBER 2011

Category	0-20mm	20-40mm
Public	6.4%	4.5%
Mid-high Standard	5.9%	3.2%
Elite Standard	7.0%	3.1%

The public courses certainly had more organic material further down the profile in the 20-40mm range, however, the amount of organic matter within the top 20mm was far more uniform across the three categories.

ROOT DEPTH

Longest root depth has been recorded at three locations per green on each course and the length appears to be very dependent on whether or not a root has grown down an aeration hole. To date the public courses have recorded the longest root growth as well as the deepest root mass, which has been a measure of the depth of the majority of the root system within the plug taken.

OVERALL TURF QUALITY

The elite and mid-high standard courses have to date produced greens of a higher standard than the public courses when aspects such as smoothness, uniformity, surface firmness and playability are taken into account.

CONCLUSIONS

While this trial is only in its infancy, it is hoped that there will be some notable trends observed throughout the trial period for which course quality objectives can be formulated to provide like clubs an indication of the quality of surfaces that could be expected at certain times of the year.

The AGCSA wishes to thank all the golf clubs and courses involved in this study, in particular course superintendents Glenn Stuart, Paul Holmes, David Mason, Mark Jennings, Chris Allan, Greg Rooke, David Cole, Will Hodder and Jeremy Cutajar for their assistance and cooperation.



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In the first instalment of a two-part article, AGCSATech's John Geary looks at the key agronomic factors that influence the delivery of consistent, high quality putting surfaces.

urf managers are continually under pressure to produce high quality playing conditions, often with little in the way of resources. While working in an advisory capacity, it is not unusual to liaise with golf club representatives who, despite best intentions, often have little understanding as to what can be achieved given the resources available. This is particularly so when it comes to managing putting surfaces.

The reality however, is that it is seen as the greenkeeper's responsibility to produce consistent surfaces day in, day out no matter how little you have to work with. How often have you heard the phrase "a greenkeeper lives or dies on the quality of the greens he/she produces".

There are many variables which can influence the consistency and day-to-day performance of putting green surfaces. Factors such as design, amount of play and weather conditions all play a major role, but from an agronomic viewpoint the key criteria which influence the quality of putting greens include turfgrass composition, rootzone characteristics, organic matter, the presence or absence of black layer, root health, soil nutrients, microclimate and maintenance practices.

In this edition we will examine the first four of these components and in Volume 14.2 (March-April) will discuss the remaining factors.

TURFGRASS COMPOSITION

New bentgrass and couchgrass cultivars, which have been released over the past 10-20 years, display characteristics such as greater turf density, reduced spiking, lower cutting height, increased salt and heat tolerance and increased disease resistance. The most obvious changes in characteristics have been in density and vigour, yet while many cultivars have become denser and produce smoother and faster surfaces, they also require more frequent cutting, dusting and thatch removal.

Most cultivars have undergone extensive trialling and it is recommended to closely study research data before embarking on a re-grassing program. For instance the AGCSA's creeping bentgrass varieties trial (HAL Project TU08002) has now been running for two years, while an extensive four year trial (HAL Project TU05001) was completed in early 2010 assessing a wide range of couchgrass hybrids for their performance under Australian conditions.

ROOTZONE CHARACTERISTICS

Understandably, the selection of the right rootzone material is critical in satisfying both the needs of the turfgrass plant while also providing consistent, high quality putting surfaces.

The United States Golf Association (USGA) has been instrumental in creating laboratory tests and guidelines for the selection of suitable soils and sands. The USGA specifications have been developed to provide consistency in surface qualities such as pace, hardness, traction and bounce.

The physical characteristics indicate sands which meet the criteria should provide adequate oxygen and available water, while also draining rapidly to avoid prolonged waterlogging. Such sands should also provide enough strength to allow easy root growth together with favourable nutrient and biological conditions.

Above: To produce high quality putting surfaces, superintendents have the onerous task of managing several agronomic criteria which can have significant impact on the consistency and day-to-day performance of their greens

It has been interesting to note in recent years the trend to use sands which contain a greater percentage of fine sand particles. While there are many factors to consider such as depth of sand, inclusion of gravel layer, etc, the theory is native sands, such as those found on the Melbourne sandbelt which contain a high percentage of fines, provide firmer playing conditions than sands which meet the USGA specifications.

The AGCSA is currently undertaking an extensive benchmarking study of playing surfaces where we are measuring the performance and overall condition of greens. One aspect being measured is surface firmness using both a Clegg impact hammer (0.5 kg domed head) and the USGA's Trufirm device.

While it is too early to draw any definitive conclusions with regards to surface firmness for Australian conditions, in 2010 the STRI released a firmness scale based on a Clegg hammer pilot study. The scale (measured in gravities) is:

- Over 130: Hard and unreceptive. Ball impacts and continually bounces forward. No control.
- 100-130: Very firm. Ball impacts, bounces on, checks and then rolls out. Ideal for links courses.
- 80-100: Firm. Ball impacts, bounces on, checks and then stops quickly. Ideal for parkland style courses;
- 70-80: Receptive. Ball impacts then stops on first bounce or spins backwards. No footprinting.
- 60-70: Soft. Balls stop dead and leave a large pitch mark. Footprinting becomes evident. Not a good surface.
- Below 60: Very soft. Unstable and poor surface. With regard to the Trufirm, firmness is measured by the depth of indentation (in inches), with lower values indicating a firmer surface. At this point the USGA has not released firmness guidelines, preferring to review the data on a course by course basis.

USGA Northwest region director Larry Gilhuly reported that during the 2010 US Senior Open at Sahalee County Club, Trufirm values of 0.345-0.360 inches were considered optimal, while at the US Amateur of 2010 held at Chambers Bay Golf Club the perfect ball reaction was noted as being at the very low penetration value of 0.250-0.260 inches without wind and 0.260-0.270 inches with wind.

In the lead up to The Presidents Cup held at Royal Melbourne Golf Club, the AGCSA was fortunate to carry out surface firmness readings on five selected greens. Clegg values averaged from 120 up to the mid-150s while Trufirm readings varied between a low of 0.277 through to 0.384 after substantial overnight rains.

ORGANIC MATTER

The total rootmat layer can be described as the layer of accumulated organic matter between the grass surface and soil. Rootmat is the natural accumulation of organic matter which initially starts

as thatch and then as it mixes with topdressing sand consolidates as rootmat.

This high organic component has a very high moisture retention and slow infiltration rate. Consequently, this layer holds excessive moisture and prevents excess water from penetrating deep into the profile, leading to slower paced greens as well as an increased incidence of divotting. Even on well drained sands and well drained greens, the accumulation of rootmat will undo all of the good attributes of the underlying sand.

While it is difficult to physically reduce the depth of the rootmat layer, sand dusting and hollow coring will greatly assist in diluting it. The impact of removing this rootmat layer from the profile can be seen in the photograph above with much healthier turf being clearly visible in all of the core holes due primarily to an increased amount of air in these areas.

So, what level of organic matter is considered as acceptable? Carrow (2004) states that regardless of climate zone, greater than four percent organic matter content in the top 50mm becomes a red flag value that indicates the probability of developing low oxygen, excessive surface water retention and reduced saturated hydraulic conductivity. As organic matter increases above this value the greater the potential for problems.

Alternatively, O'Brien and Hartwiger (2001) state that golf courses with mature greens need to be hollow tined with a minimum of 15-20 per cent of surface area impacted each year to successfully manage organic layer in the top of the profile.

BLACK LAYER

Black layer occurs primarily due to a lack of available oxygen (anaerobic soil conditions) within the rootzone. The lack of oxygen is often a result of a combination of compacted, waterlogged soil conditions and left unchecked can lead to a build-up of hydrogen sulphide gas within the rootzone, which can be toxic to plant roots.

The irony is sand rootzones are just as prone to developing black layer. This is brought about if a thatch layer is allowed to develop and many high profile sand-based sports field constructions have suffered as a result. This is due to thatch holding around 35 per cent of its own weight in water.

The impact of the thatch layer is twofold – roots are not induced to grow into the sand rootzone below and, secondly, a perched water table is created at the interface between the thatch layer and the rootzone, which is often anaerobic.

Most, if not all, of the new bentgrasses and ultradwarf couchgrasses produce high levels of organic matter and it is imperative to implement a regular renovation programme to overcome any build-up of black layer. Cultural practices such as hollow tining and/or vertidraining together with an aggressive dusting programme are strongly recommended.



The impact of removing rootmat layer from the profile can be seen with much healthier turf clearly visible in all of the core holes



Devices such as the Clegg impact hammer and the Trufirm (pictured) are seen as tools superintendents can use to objectively help evaluate overall greens quality



Sand rootzones are just as prone to developing black layer



Great expectations

Managing member, player and committee expectations can be one of a superintendent's more demanding and difficult tasks. With the spate of recent tournaments including The Presidents Cup -The Pulse wanted to know whether it is harder to manage these expectations at such a time and how superintendents approach such an issue.

ollongong Golf Club recently held the New South Wales PGA Championships and during and after the tournament we always get the familiar comments from members of 'why doesn't the course look this good all year round' or 'why don't we have the greens like this for the members'. During an event when the golf course is at its best condition, members can't help but think that they are not getting the priority that they deserve after spending so much money in annual fees.

I have found a newsletter that gets to all members and posting a course maintenance blog on the club website useful tools to educate members of the cost involved and the maintenance practices that goes into a big event and the potential problems we might get in trying to sustain these practices all year round. By doing this the message gets to all members, not just committees that sometime fail to pass on information to the members." Stephen Gaze, Wollongong Golf Club, NSW

"I don't receive any extra requirements or comparative comments when major events are held and televised nationally, as the members here are aware that events such as The Presidents Cup require greater inputs in the lead-up to the event.

I find with member-driven clubs that as long as you are making gradual improvements to the course, while maintaining a regular high standard of playing surface, that they will come to fully support your actions and decision making, thereby not placing any unreasonable demands on you." Dr Brett Morris, The Brisbane Golf Club, QLD

"With so much golf around this summer, Heidelberg Golf Club is deliberately promoting itself in a number of areas in order to attract new faces to the club.

Raising the bar is a term I hear often, ensuring that new guests/visitors enjoy a great experience on any given day. Yes, expectations are up, and with board members and management being regular visitors to the sand belt region and other tournament locations, they always return with fresh ideas.

Having had some past experience at Huntingdale Golf Club helps me set reachable goals on my own property. Striving to recreate at Heidelberg the turf qualities, processes and procedures I helped produce at Huntingdale is the best way to manage expectation. Staff numbers, budget constraints and soil structure at Heidelberg make it difficult, but not impossible, to produce good surfaces.

The most difficult hurdle at a smaller club like ours is holding onto the quality. One staff member at school, another on annual leave and one off sick leaves a small crew vulnerable. Having knowledge of what goes into preparing for an international tournament also has its advantages in managing expectations, but for me, being able to show improvement each year is working." Tim Bilston, Heidelberg Golf Club, VIC

"This is a very interesting topic and one that is certainly at the forefront of my thoughts this year, particularly following The Presidents Cup. We are all well aware of the 'Augusta Syndrome' but I would suggest that it has now been replaced by the 'Royal Syndrome' following the efforts of Richard Forsyth and his crew for the 2011 Presidents Cup!

I was lucky enough to attend the tournament and having guite a bit of familiarity with the course I was amazed at how much work they had done and how well they had done it. I have already had many comments from my members here at Coolangatta & Tweed Heads about Royal Melbourne.

Dean Henderson and his crew's effort at the Australian PGA have also caused some comment among my members, particularly with the fantastic condition of the 328 couchgrass greens. There is also a fair bit of talk about the conditioning of US PGA Tour event courses on a weekly basis.

My approach to handling these increased expectations is to use my course maintenance blog



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to highlight the differences between the tournament venues and my own course. With the US courses it is quite easy as there is a fact sheet available for each tournament and I often use these to highlight the differences between them and my own course.

Bunkers are the number one topic at my club and I used some photos I took at The Presidents Cup to highlight the differences between the amount of work that was put in at Royal Melbourne and what we can achieve here. I recently responded to a member's email criticising the maintenance of our bunkers and sent the information on my blog and a bit more in reply. This is part of the reply from that member:

"Many thanks for your reply Peter you've made me feel soooo bad. I should post your reply on our noticeboard so that others might better understand and be more tolerant of the problems you face. Subject closed, but you can be rest assured I'll go into bat for you every time."

As I said in a presentation at the conference in Adelaide, managing members' expectations can often be controlled to a degree by communicating with them and not just brushing off their thoughts and concerns." Peter Lonergan, Coolangatta & Tweed Heads Golf Club. NSW

"We are lucky up here in the Northern Territory as our wet season is upon us and member/committee expectations tend to fall away somewhat. Most of our resources are put into rough cutting and general mowing so the course is playable once the weather has subsided, rather than minor presentation

has subsided, rather than minor presentation details. However, during the tournament season (dry season) the expectations of golfers have certainly increased due to the amount of televised golf. As superintendent I make a conscious effort that everything we do on the course each week, including the one percenters, will help improve the overall experience for members and guests." Scott Trembath, Darwin Golf Club, NT.

"It is an age old argument – is it easier to manage the course or expectations – but generally if you have a good board or organisation running the course hat I have observed over many years is that at this time of year there is a general tightening of the screw in terms of individual perspective and wants of overall course presentation.

A recent example of this hysteria is that several members of my club returned from The Presidents Cup (congratulations to Richard Forsyth and his team by the way) with comments and questions of how we could possibly achieve a similar bunkering system or model, anywhere from sand type, colour, playability,

contouring and aesthetic characteristics.

This hysteria generally settles by the time the Christmas Banquet is served. Reality and achievable vision normally settle and self-align once explained and benchmarked against areas such as available human resources and overall budget restrictions, in addition to recent on course achievements and improvements being highlighted. That usually settles the natives for another year at least." Mark Schroder, Liverpool Golf Club, NSW

they will back your decisions and experience. As a superintendent you tend to find that you have to be your own worst critic and the hardest person to please, but experience has told me that you never dismiss any point of view or opinion.

As with most things, communication is the key. Members, committees and players all like and demand to know what is happening and why, before it actually happens. The major items of contention would have to be green speed, cutting heights and renovations. It is true that we are no longer greenkeepers but 'managers' instead." Wayne Tickle, Ballina Golf Club, NSW.



superintendents and golf clubs course maintenance standards

TORO TURF TOUR

alk to Malcolm Ollard, golf course superintendent at Paradise Palms Country Club just north of Cairns, and he'll quickly tell you that size does matter. If you have had the pleasure of visiting the stunning Far North Queensland resort course, which has been Ollard's home since the start of 2011, then you'll understand why.

Designed by Graham Marsh and opened in 1990 during the golf boom, Paradise Palms is a course on a grand scale. Routed through rolling heritage-listed rainforest and flanked by stunning tropical ranges, Paradise Palms sprawls across 80 spectacular hectares and at 6592m provides one of the toughest challenges in Australian golf.

While it is literally a golfer's paradise, from a golf course maintenance perspective keeping Paradise Palms in the optimum condition befitting its design is one of the toughest assignments going. Not only does the size of the course provide numerous logistical challenges for Ollard and his small crew of nine, the harsh tropical climate can be punishing on course maintenance machinery.

Those combined mean that Ollard needs productive, reliable and hard-wearing machinery to "get the job done" and during his turf management career, which has now spanned two decades, he has come to respect just one brand which delivers on these parameters time and time again - Toro.

RED SHED

The challenges facing Ollard when he joined



Paradise Palms were numerous. Having weathered some tough times in recent years, the course was in need of TLC and no sooner had he set foot in Cairns than Ollard was charged with getting the course back on track. New course owners HS Vision had already approved an upgrade of course machinery and Ollard didn't waste any time in pushing hard for a wishlist that was all 'red'.

"I have worked with Toro machinery for much of my career and to put it simply it's the ease of use, the reliability and the ease of maintenance which makes Toro a winner in has always been a strength and even though we are up in Cairns, the Toro guys down in Townsville will drop everything and come up if we have a problem. Ken McNeill our mechanic has been around a long time and knows these machines like the back of his hand and he'll tell you there's nothing easier on the market to maintain than Toro."

Organising a tailor-made lease agreement through the expert team at Toro Finance, in July 2011 Paradise Palms took delivery of virtually a whole new shed worth of Toro equipment. Among the inventory were:

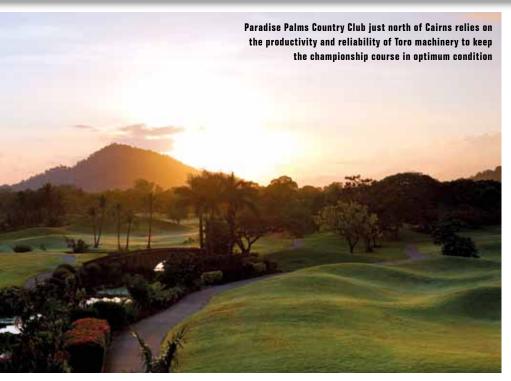
- Groundsmaster® 4700-D
- Groundsmaster® 4000-D
- Groundsmaster® 7200
- 2 x Reelmaster® 5610s
- 4 x Greensmaster® 3250-D
- Multi Pro® 5800
- Sand Pro® 5040
- Pro Force[™] blower

The impact of this new equipment has been remarkable and you only have to ask the Paradise Palms members just how much the place has transformed inside the past six months. As well as putting it down to the hard work and dedication of his crew, Ollard says that having the reliability and productivity of a new Toro fleet has been integral in achieving such impressive results.

"It has been a great first year and we have



Location: Paradise Palms Country Club, QLD Superintendent: Malcolm Ollard



achieved a hell of a lot, reflects Ollard. "The club has spent some money on our machinery which is one of the main reasons why we have been able to turn the place around. All of the existing machines were between five and 10 years old and we just couldn't maintain the course properly with such an ageing fleet.

"One of the things I wanted to change when I started was to up the mowing frequency to improve presentation. I wanted the course looking good all the time, not just on a Friday or at weekends. The members have certainly noticed that and have been very complimentary to the staff about the job we are doing.

"We have a pretty small staff for such a big place – it's about one and a half times the size of your average golf course – and we also look after all the clubhouse surrounds and resorts here too. While it has been a challenge to get the place back up it has been very rewarding for all of us to see what we have achieved. The course is just glowing at the moment."

BIG MACHINES FOR A BIG JOB

With such a big maintenance operation to

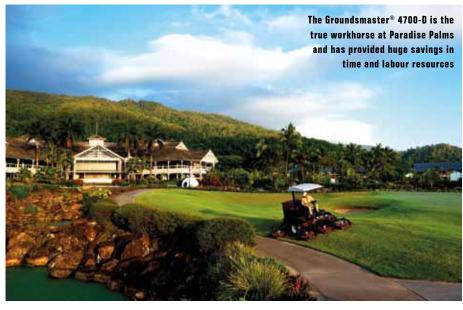
orchestrate at Paradise Palms, Ollard knew he would need some of Toro's biggest performers on his side in order to meet his course quality objectives. Without hesitation, the heavy-hitting Groundsmaster® 4700-D and Groundsmaster® 4000-D were the first entries on Ollard's list.

The sheer productivity of the 4700-D and its superb cutting performance meant it was a must-have for Ollard. With a powerful 60hp Kubota® engine (which makes it the most powerful mower in its class) and full-time 4-wheel drive, the 4700-D has an abundance of power to handle the demanding mowing conditions which Paradise Palms can throw its way.

The free-floating Contour™ Plus cutting decks follow the contour of the terrain for a championship quality cut with air inlet pockets keeping the grass standing tall for the cleanest possible cut. However, it's the 3.8 metre width of cut which was the 4700-D's big selling point, which translates to 4.2 hectares per hour. For Ollard, such productivity is literally worth its weight in gold and is a huge saver in terms of time, labour and fuel.

Coming a close second to the 4700-D and another of Toro's principal workhorses, the 4000-D wide area rough mower was also a critical addition to the Paradise Palms shed. Again one of the most strongest and productive mowers in the trade, the 4000-D delivers power where you need it most to cut tough grass.

In addition to effectively mowing a 157.5cm to 3.4m swath with its fast wing lifts, the 4000-D offers incredibly tight trimming



Toro Turf Tour Toro

Location: Paradise Palms Country Club, QLD Superintendent: Malcolm Ollard



capabilities. It allows operators to trim how they want with one, two, or all three decks engaged, depending on the situation. It also has the SmartCoolTM system with autoreversing fan which blows chaff off the intake screen to help reduce overheating.

"With these two machines – the 4700-D and 4000-D – we can now mow the whole course, from the fairway edges out to the treelines, in four days whereas before we would be lucky to be able to do that in two weeks," says Ollard. "The 4000-D is invaluable because we have so many trees here and we can get around them without any damage. These two machines alone save us such a huge amount of time and they are also very tough and reliable. The reverse fan on the 4000-D is a brilliant feature, especially because of the amount of clip we get up here."

For management of the finer turf surfaces such as fairways and greens, two Reelmaster® 5610s and four Greensmaster® 3250-Ds were also no-brainers for Ollard. The Reelmaster® fairway units have long been a favourite of

Ollard's with the five-gang 5610 providing the precision cut and after cut appearance that he was looking for.

The Reelmaster's Dual Precision Adjustment (DPA) cutting units maintain levelness and hold adjustments longer, while harder reel and bedknife steel retains a sharp edge up to three times longer to minimise the need and frequency of adjustments, backlapping and grinding. Improved access to routine service points and service components, along with a robust machine design, means the Reelmaster is rarely laid up in the workshop for long, leaving more time to do what it does best – provide a superior level of cut.

"The DPA units are superb and I love the after cut finish they give," says Ollard. "And it (the 5610) just keeps on going and going which is just as well because here the growth rates can be ridiculous. You can be out cutting fairways and you can literally watch the Greenlees Park grow right behind you!"

One of the other key additions to the

shed was the Toro Multi Pro® 5800 sprayer. With disease pressures heightened in such a tropical climate, having the big daddy of Toro's sprayer range means that Ollard can get on top of any outbreaks quickly and efficiently. Whether its tees, greens or fairways, the Multi Pro® 5800's 1136-litre tank and oversized six diaphragm pump means it is ready for the long haul and can satisfy the highest of spray rates.

"All round, Toro is just a great fit for us here at Paradise Palms," says Ollard. "It's the whole package – ease of use, easy to change and adjust, easy to maintain and reliable. The new fleet has made a huge difference to the presentation of the place and we can now get the job done and know that the course will look good. It certainly makes my job and that of the crew's a lot easier."





Researchers at the University of Western Australia will shortly conclude a two-year study into the effects of mowing height on water use. Pictured is the travelling-boom irrigator at the UWA's Shenton Park turf research facility which applied uniform irrigation at a set percentage of replacement of net evaporation



Mowing height influence on Water USE

The influence of mowing height on water use was measured for four warmseason turfgrass species during a recent research project conducted by turfgrass researchers at The University of Western Australia.



Know-how for Horticulture™

he influence of mowing height on water use and drought tolerance continues to be debated. Some consider that raising mowing heights during summer can enhance turfgrass performance during periods of hot weather and water deficits, whereas others argue that increased leaf area associated with higher mowing can increase turfgrass evapotranspiration (i.e.: water use).

In 2009 the University of Western Australia embarked on a Horticulture Australia Limited-funded research project (TU09005) which measured the influence of mowing heights on water use for four warm-season turfgrass species:

- Soft-leaf buffalograss (Stenotaphrum secundatum cv. Sir Walter);
- Couchgrass (Cynodon dactylon cv. Wintergreen);
- Kikuyu (Pennisetum clandestinum cv. Village Green); and
- Zoysia (Zoysia japonica cv. Empire).

Turfgrass growth, quality and water use were assessed using field plots and lysimeters. The trial site was planted with plugs of turf towards the end of September 2009. The lysimeters were PVC columns filled with soil and housed within casings inserted into each plot. The lysimeters and plots were managed in the same way.

Following the establishment phase, the turfgrass received 15kg/ha of elemental N every four weeks in the form of Turf Special fertiliser and was irrigated at 70 per cent replacement of net evaporation (summed and applied three times per week) during periods requiring irrigation. Each replicate block contained three plots (9m²) of each of the four species, so that each species could be mown at three different heights.

Three different mowing heights (10mm, 25mm or 50mm) were imposed in late December 2009, with

plots then mown weekly (or every two weeks during the subsequent winter). Water use measurements were conducted in February and March 2010, which was about five months after planting, and so the lysimeters and plots were considered 'young' during this first summer of measurements.

By the second summer (December 2010-February 2011) the lysimeters and plots had been mown for one year at the three different heights, and so were more mature and the canopy volumes were fully developed.

RESULTS

Data from measurements taken during two summers, averaged for the four turfgrass species so as to highlight the influence of mowing height, are presented in Table 1. Water use (i.e.: evapotranspiration) increased as mowing height was raised. Pan evaporation provides a measure of the evaporative demand for water in a particular location, so turfgrass water use is expressed in Table 1 as a percentage of the daily evaporative demand.

TABLE 1. TURFGRASS EVAPOTRANSPIRATION

Mowing Height (mm)	Summer 1	Summer 2
10	64¹	66
25	69	70
50	76	73

¹Means across four species. Water use as % pan evaporation

The ranges of water use by the four turfgrass species at each mowing height were:

- At 10mm mowing height 60-67 per cent of pan evaporation;
- At 25mm mowing height 65-74 per cent of pan evaporation;
- At 50mm mowing height 71-86 per cent of pan evaporation.

These data support the view that raised mowing heights can result in greater water use, when soil water is available.

Various other parameters were also measured for the four turfgrass species under the three different



mowing heights. All four species responded to low mowing by substantial investment into new shoot growth, so that the amount of clippings produced was greatest for each species when mown at 10mm. All data from the project will be publically available in a final report to HAL currently in preparation for submission during the first half of 2012.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Authors Tim Colmer and Louise Barton would like to thank Sarah Rich for assistance during site planting

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HAL Project TU09005 is facilitated by Horticulture Australia Ltd in partnership with Turf Growers Association of WA, Water Corporation, Sir Walter WA Growers, Future Turf P/L (Village Green), WA Group P/L (Empire Zoysia). In-kind support from Greenacres Turf Farm, Betta Turf, Turf Developments WA, Alwest Turfing, CSBP, Nick Bell and MowMaster. The authors thank the UWA Turf Industries Research Steering Committee for support and advice.



Left: UWA researcher Tim Colmer collects clippings for dry weight measurements (brown paper bag) and also freezes sub-samples in liquid nitrogen for subsequent pigment analyses

Above: Measurement of lysimeter weight after 24 hours enables determination of turfgrass water use

BAYER HOLDS INAUGURAL TURF RESEARCH FIELD DAY

n mid-November, Bayer held its first Turf and Ornamental Research Field Day in conjunction with the University of Sydney at Cobbity, NSW. Despite wet weather, more than 100 golf superintendents, turf managers, council greenkeepers, distributors and turf consultants attended the event at Bayer's research facility where they were able to view a number of trials including:

MANAGEMENT OF KIKUYU IN COUCHGRASS

This trial has been set up to examine a programme of MSMA or DSMA applications with Tribute to examine effectiveness for kikuyu control. Trials in 2010 showed a three spray programme of DSMA followed by Tribute, followed by another Tribute application, gave 95 per cent kikuyu control six months after starting the spray programme. This year's trial is comparing the use of MSMA and additives like ammonium sulphate and surfactants. The trial will be continued through summer.

POST-EMERGENT CONTROL OF DIGITARIA SP.

This trial started in October to evaluate combinations of herbicides for the post-emergent control of *Digitaria* sp. One month after spraying a combination of Tribute and Destiny, good weed control has been observed. This trial will continue until the end of the year.

PRE-EMERGENT DIGITARIA SP. CONTROL TRIAL

This trial was established in late August to compare a new preemergent herbicide called Specticle with currently available preemergent herbicides for *Digitaria* sp. control. At three months after application Specticle is as effective as or better than the current industry standards. The trial will continue through the summer.



TURFGRASS SAFETY SCREENING OF HERBICIDES

This trial was a demonstration trial showing the phytotoxicity symptoms of Spearhead, Destiny and Tribute at three and six weeks after spraying. The three chemicals were applied at the maximum label rate and double the maximum label rate. The chemicals were applied to warm-season turfgrass varieties of kikuyu, couch, buffalo, zoysia and Queensland blue couch.

MANAGEMENT OF DOLLAR SPOT DISEASE IN TURF

Two new fungicides are being evaluated at two different rates for dollar spot control. Effectiveness was compared from one application five weeks before the field day and two repeat applications five and two weeks before the field day. One of the new fungicides was giving good control with the high rate five weeks after application. Disease was starting to develop in the other treatments. All treatments which had been applied five and two weeks prior to the field day were showing good disease control. Registration of these new fungicides is expected in 2013.



The Redlands Research Station turf collection. developed in 2000, represents the largest turfgrass reference collection in the Southern Hemisphere

library' to turfgrass descriptors and associated R&D information on the website by utilising Quick Reference (QR) codes (see photo below).

The new website aims to fast track the dissemination of information from R&D projects and the like to industry in a timely manner. HAL milestones and other reports, magazine articles, digital photographs and videos, scientific papers, information kits etc... that hold no commercialin-confidence will also be made available for downloading from the website.

The website also aims to house a portal to inform consumers where they can purchase commercially available varieties located in the Redlands 'living library' from accredited suppliers through an advanced search engine (e.g. local (post code), state, variety, genus). The latter will provide useful for homeowners and turf professionals wanting a one stop shop for independent turf information.

The HAL project extension aims to:

- Assist in the improvement and maintenance of the DEEDI turfgrass collection;
- Provide an independent education source of information through plot inspections/tours and the distribution of varietal information pertaining to the plots for the turf industry, students and general public;
- Direct consumers to accredited turf suppliers;
- Benefit the Australian turf production industry through increased sales.

The Redlands turf research staff would like to thank HAL and the Australian turfgrass industry for their support in funding TU09002 and providing security to a reference collection of this kind, the largest in the Southern Hemisphere.

Funding of this nature ensures the detailed collection will be maintained and made available to the wider turfgrass industry and general public for years to come. It also provides a great advertisement of the health and environmental benefits of choosing turf. 👑



DEEDI research scientist Matt Roche provides an update on HAL Project TU09002 which focuses on the improvement and maintenance of the turf demonstration plots for national research and extension at Queensland's Redlands Research Station.





Know-how for Horticulture™



n 2000, the Queensland Department of Employment, Economic Development & Innovation (DEEDI) built a 'living library' of turfgrass selections made up of 138 different cultivars. Back-up material of all plus additional cultivars are also preserved in tubs (see above) in an attempt to limit encroachment or contamination and maintain genetic purity of the collection.

Between 2000 and 2009 DEEDI was solely responsible for the construction and maintenance of the entire collection. In 2009, a three-year Horticulture Australia Ltd application (HAL Project TU09002) was given the support of the turf industry, utilising levy funds, to share costs associated with the maintenance and resources required to maintain the integrity of the collection.

The establishment of the plots has assisted the turf industry by:

- Maintaining a reference point for warm-season turf material. This includes regular visits to inspect the plots by educational groups, members of the public and industry representatives from around Australia and internationally:
- Reducing research and development costs by allowing rapid and easy propagation of material for research, Plant Breeder's Rights and demonstration purposes; and
- Allowing greater access to new (international) material for R&D purposes (e.g. TU09001 tropical turfgrass project).

Funding for the HAL Project TU09002 ends in May 2012. An extension to keep funds available to house and maintain the collection at Redlands was submitted to HAL in November 2011 seeking levy and matched funding from HAL until 2015.

A component of the much-needed HAL funding will be to grow the education and extension component of the turfgrass collection. Plant descriptors and varietal information will be made available on what will hopefully be a stand-alone (non-government), newly constructed website.

The independent website, which will be maintained by DEEDI research and extension staff, will link visitors of the Redlands 'living







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^{*} Winter grass (Poa annua), Crab grass (Digitaria sanguinalis), Summer grass (Digitaria ciliaris), Crowsfoot grass (Eleusine indica).



Moruya Golf Club NSW

At the 2011 Adelaide conference, Brent Hull put Moruya Golf Club on the map when he won the Toro AGCSA Golf Championship title for the first time. This edition's regional profile heads to the south coast of NSW where Hull provides an insight into managing the Moruya course which has been his home for the past 17 years.

Superintendent: Brent Hull.

Nickname: Hully.

Age: 51.

Years as a superintendent: 29.

Years as an AGCSA member: Six.

Turf management career:

- Narooma Golf Club, NSW (apprentice greenkeeper);
- Antill Park Country Club, Picton, NSW (superintendent, seven years);
- Young Golf Club, NSW (superintendent, seven years):
- Moruya Golf Club, NSW (superintendent, 17 years).

Turf management qualifications: Certificate III Horticulture (Ryde School of Horticulture).

Where in Australia is Moruya and what is the town famous for (apart from being home of the current Toro Red Jacket holder)? Moruya is located on the far south coast of NSW, 300 kilometres south of Sydney and 175km east of Canberra. The town, nestled in the heart of the beautiful Eurobodalla Coast, is famous as it supplied the granite for the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Tell us a little about your background and how you ended up at Moruya Golf Club?

I started out not in the turf industry but wanting to be a golf professional. After selling Mars bars at Narooma Golf Club, I quickly realised this was not for me. I was lucky enough to gain the position of apprentice greenkeeper at Narooma Golf Club working under Richard Goodridge and the late John Spencer. After Narooma I had stints at Antill Park Country Club and Young Golf Club, but I always wanted to return to the south coast of NSW. Fortunately the position at Moruya became available and I was successful in getting the nod. My time at Moruya Golf Club has been very rewarding and satisfying and has been home now for 17 years.

Give us an overview of Moruya Golf Club and some of its unique characteristics? The Moruya course was designed and built by a group of members using their own trucks and excavators and was completed in 1988. One of the most unique characteristics about the course is the huge double green (9th and 18th holes) which is 2100 square metres in size.

Take us through your turf management operations there and how you have fine-tuned them during your time as superintendent? The course can at times be hard to manage as it is built on a flood plain and we have had major inundations over the years. We try to present the course in the same condition every week. I find if I can keep the bunker edges tidy it keeps the whole course looking neat. When I first arrived here 17 years ago the course was watered by roll out hoses and travelling irrigators. Now we have a fully automatic computerised system which certainly makes managing the course a lot easier.

Any special environmental considerations that you have to incorporate into the management of the course? Using effluent water we have a withholding period for our members to walk on, so with chemicals that need washing in we come back late in the evening to spray these products and let the automatic system wash them in for us.

What are some of the major challenges facing Moruya Golf Club? Like a lot of small regional clubs, financial issues are always a challenge.





The Moruya crew (from left) Brent Hull, Adam Crain, Mitchell Stage, Andrew Foran and Tom Halligan

Any major course improvement works recently completed? We redesigned our 10th hole in January 2011 from a par four to a par three due to a public safety issue. We realigned the hole a little and built a new green and tee complex and did it all in-house. I have just finished a master plan where I am hoping to reshape all the bunkers and concrete all our pathways. We have some drainage issues with the bunkers here because parts of the course are low lying.

Water is obviously a critical issue around the country. How is Moruya GC faring in the water management stakes? We are very lucky to have effluent water pumped into our storage dam by the local shire at no cost at this stage.

The one product I couldn't manage my course without is... Primo Maxx, because of the excessive growth of the kikuyu.

What are some pros and cons of being a regional

superintendent? The lifestyle here would have to be the major pro. The course is not as busy as some metropolitan courses which enables us to get out on the course and get work done. The only drawback is the time it takes to get parts to me. As mentioned, like any regional club finances are always tight and it would be great to have a bit more in the budget each year in order to undertake more course improvements.

Are expectations of course presentation and conditioning any less than that placed on your metropolitan counterparts? No, I feel our members expect the presentation of the course to be as good as the metropolitan counterparts and we certainly aim to have the course in best possible condition each week.

Do you have to be more resourceful as a regional-based superintendent? Yes, because we don't have the high budget of the larger courses so sometimes we have to improvise with things. We converted an old 3000-D greens mower into a roller, replacing the cylinders with rollers made locally and removing the hydraulic pumps.

How important are the relationships you have with other nearby country course supers/trade reps? I have a great relationship with a number of superintendents on the coast including David Thompson (Bermagui), Tim Watson (Tuross Head) and some of the superintendents in the ACT. We often borrow machinery from each other.



Moruya's tees, fairways and roughs are all kikuyu

AT A GLANCE - MORUYA GOLF CLUB

Course specs: 18 holes, 5878 metres, 25 hectares of managed turf.

Greens: Bentgrass/*Poa annua* mix maintained at an average of 3mm. Surrounds kept at 7mm.

Tees: Kikuyu maintained at 7mm.

Fairways: Kikuyu (13mm). Rough: Kikuyu (75mm).

Members: 520 full members, 1300 social.

Annual rounds: 20,000.

Major tournaments/events: Ainsworth two-day Trainee Pro-Am. Men's and Ladies Moruya Open.

Annual course management budget: \$120,000.

Staff structure: Brent Hull (course superintendent); Adam Crain (assistant superintendent); Mitchell Stage (2nd year apprentice); Tom Halligan and Andrew Foran (senior groundsmen); Dick Kelly (mechanic – one day per week).

Climate: Temperature averages around 17 in winter and around 26-27 degrees in summer. Our annual rainfall averages around 850mm.

Soil types: We have two types – on the flat we have a sandy loam and on higher parts of the course a heavier loam.

Water sources: We use recycled effluent water which the local shire pumps into our storage dam. At this stage we have an unlimited supply.

Irrigation system: Toro LCT Plus with four variable speed Grundfos pumps.

Renovations: We have one major renovation each year in September where we scarify and core using 5/8" tines. We try to groom our greens every two weeks.

Major disease pressures: Pythium is our major problem and we carry out a monthly preventative treatment to control this from October through to March.



Moruya has an unlimited supply of recycled effluent water which is pumped in from the local shire council

What have you got in your shed and which piece of machinery gets trashed the most?

- 2 Toro Greensmasters (one is set up for tees and surrounds)
- Toro Sidewinder
- Toro 4000-D rough mower
- Toro Reelmaster fairway unit
- Toro Sand Pro bunker rake
- Workman with spray tank
- Kubota tractor
- Mustang skid steer loader
- Turbine blower

greens are scarified and cored each September to keep them in optimum health

Moruya's bentgrass/Poa annua



The rough mower seems to be the machine that has to be replaced more often. I would love a new shed as by the time everything is put away at the end of the day we literally have to climb out of the shed!

Given your distance from the major metro areas, how do you make sure you keep abreast of the latest turf management techniques and methods? Australian Turfgrass Management Journal, industry sales reps, Internet and the phone.

What are some of the more unusual requests/ things you have had to do as a superintendent of a regional course? I was asked to scatter a member's ashes on the golf course.

Favourite spot on your course? The massive 9th/18th double green.

Most pleasing/rewarding moment during your time as Moruya Golf Club superintendent? Receiving great comments about the course from visitors.

Name three golf courses that you would like most to visit and why? St Andrews (for the tradition), Cape Kidnappers in New Zealand (just to see what it would be like) and some of the desert courses in America (just for curiosity's sake) 44



OFF THE COURSE - BRENT HULL

Family: Wife Jean and two daughters Terri (22) and Kelly (17).

Any claims to fame outside of turf management?

I originally hail from New Zealand from a little farming town outside of Hamilton. The family moved across to Australia when I was eight years old. During my time at Moruya I have won the club championship 12 times.

Any interesting hobbies/past-times away from turf? I compete with the family in equestrian events and have done so since I was about 20. We travel

regularly all over NSW to compete and I won at the Royal Show in Sydney once. I used to showjump but now just show horses (dressage).

Favourite sporting team? Wests Tigers and the All Blacks

Golf handicap? 3.

Favourite golfer? I actually don't have one, but I like watching players that don't give up.

The best thing about Moruya (aside from the golf club) is... the great lifestyle being so close to the coast.

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NEW PUSH TO BOOST TOURISM BY SHOWCASING BEST OF AUSTRALIAN GOLF

Barnbougle Dunes (top), Kingston
Heath Golf Club (bottom left) and
NSW Golf Club (bottom right) are
among six of Australia's leading
golf courses to be a part of a
new tourism venture to promote
Australian golf courses and golfing
experiences

major new partnership between the Australian golf and tourism industries was announced in mid-November, which aims to use the appeal of the country's very best golf courses to position Australia as one of the world's leading golf tourism destinations.

'Great Golf Courses of Australia' is a marketing collaboration between the country's premier golf courses, Tourism Australia, state tourism offices and the PGA of Australia aimed at tapping into the tourism potential of a sport which is worth \$3 billion annually to the Australian economy.

The group will initially comprise the six Australian courses as featured by US Golf Magazine in its 'Top 100' courses of the world – Barnbougle Dunes and Barnbougle Lost Farm in Tasmania (superintendent Phil Hill), Kingston Heath and Royal Melbourne in Victoria (superintendents Martin Greenwood and Richard Forsyth), New South Wales Golf Club in Sydney (superintendent Gary Dempsey) and Royal

Adelaide in South Australia (superintendent Nathan Bennett).

Liz Sattler, director of Great Golf Courses of Australia and daughter of Richard Sattler, owner of Tasmania's Barnbougle Dunes and Lost Farm golf courses, believes that relying on the quality of Australia's golfing product alone is not enough to establish the country as an international golf tourism destination.

"In order for Australia to establish itself as one of the world's leading golf destinations, we must continue to drive the buzz that has been created around Australia in recent years and in particular off the back of The Presidents Cup," says Sattler. "Successful marketing, promotion and distribution of Australian golf to the international market is vital if we are to gain a greater share of the golf tourism market pie.

"Using our six top 100 ranked courses to front the exceptional array of golfing product that Australia has to offer, and combining the marketing and distribution offered by this partnership, we can establish Australia as one of the world's truly great golfing destinations."

Tourism Australia managing director Andrew McEvoy believes that Australia is well placed to tap into the huge tourism potential of golf and through this latest collaboration will be able to grab a bigger share of the multi-million dollar golf tourism market.

"We currently boast six of the world's top 100 courses, as well as many others that are located in iconic and distinctly Australian settings, which offer up real tourism potential," says McEvoy. "We definitely see an opportunity here to build golf into the holiday experience, particularly by tapping into those overseas markets that love their golf, such as China, Korea and Japan.

PGA chief executive Brian Thorburn is hopeful that the six courses so far signed up is just the start. "Golf tourism is incredibly important to both the tourism and sporting economies and our partnership with Tourism Australia will ensure our country continues to be regarded as a leading golf tourism destination," Thorburn said.

It is envisaged that the partnership will be extended in subsequent phases to include other golf courses and experiences on offer in Australia, with 'Great Golf Courses of Australia' providing a centralised resource from which golfers and media from around the world can access information on Australia's top golf courses and Australian golf experiences.





GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR NSW BUSH REGENERATION PROJECTS

olf clubs in NSW are being encouraged to apply for the NSW Government's new grant funding programme which specifically targets community bush regeneration projects. The new \$8 million Community Bush Regeneration Large Project Stream is offering grants of between \$200,000 and \$250,000 for projects which will run for up to six years.

The new funding stream has been established, and will be administered, under the NSW Environmental Trust's existing Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation Program. Applications, which close on 31 January 2012, are invited for projects that:

- Regenerate degraded natural areas, including bushland, riverbanks, degraded waterways and rare and endangered ecosystems;
- Improve the ongoing health and improve resilience of important ecosystems and habitats of rare and endangered flora and fauna;
- Improve ecological connectivity within and between natural areas; and
- Improve the capacity of, and resource local community groups to protect, restore and enhance the environment by strengthening local community organisations whose primary purpose is to undertake environmental works in their local area.

Applications for projects which include partnerships, collaboration, other funding sources and in-kind contributions are encouraged. Councils (and ROCs) are not eligible to apply for funding, however, councils can administer grants on behalf of local community groups (Bushcare, Landcare etc) who are not incorporated. Full details can be found at http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/BushRegeneration.htm



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

I'm about to pay you a compliment that perhaps I should have extended well before this.

For six years I was course director at Federal Golf Club in the ACT, and I'm now into my fifth year as president. Over that time I have had the opportunity to read your Australian Turfgrass Management Journal on many occasions, often just out of general interest but sometimes to aid my understanding of turf issues that have arisen on the course.

Very recently, I needed information

on – you guessed it – *Poa annua* control and went to your magazine and website in search of information. While answers on this subject are very difficult to come by, at least your magazine was the source of much valuable information and I thank you for it.

I have read many trade and professional magazines over the years and I would rate your publication as among the very best. Well done, and keep up the good work.

David Nelson

President, Federal Golf Club (ACT)







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Margaret River course superintendent Mark Lewis



NARROW ESCAPE FOR GOLF CLUB AS BUSHFIRES HIT MARGARET RIVER

argaret River Golf Club in Western Australia had a lucky escape from bushfires which ripped through more than 2000 hectares in the region in late November after a WA Department of Environment and Conservation prescribed burn got out of control.

Margaret River course superintendent and GCSAWA member Mark Lewis said the club, which is located just a few kilometres west of the Margaret River township, suffered some minor damage but on the whole had "dodged a bullet", with fire taking out the treeline along the first fairway and coming within metres of the maintenance facility.

"We were pretty lucky," says Lewis, who has been superintendent at Margaret River since 2006. "The DEC had been doing controlled burns that week and I left the course at 12.30pm on the Wednesday. At that stage there were no issues, but by 2pm announcements started coming across to either evacuate or stay and fight.

The WA DEC map clearly shows the fire-affected area (in red) literally stopping on the western and northern boundaries of Margaret River Golf Club

"I got back to the course the following morning through a couple of roadblocks and it (the fire) had licked the back of the maintenance shed and caretaker's house which is on the western boundary. The topdresser which was parked out the back of the shed caught on fire. With half a fleet of new Toro machinery in the shed, my first priority was moving it to safe ground on the 18th fairway and green surrounds, while all the pro shop golf carts were moved onto the driving range tee.

"The wind shifted again that afternoon and brought the fire back towards the course and the treeline down the 1st fairway caught alight, but thankfully the rest of the course wasn't affected. We didn't have power for a couple of days which meant I couldn't water the greens, but they held up remarkably well. We also had a fire truck drive straight across the 1st green so we put that down as collateral damage!"

The WA DEC map above (the fire zone is highlighted red and Margaret River GC boundary is indicated by the white outline) shows just how lucky Margaret River Golf Club was. According to the DEC, the fire started as a result of an escape from a prescribed burn conducted in Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park.

Weather conditions at the time of the outbreak were hot and blustery, with temperatures hitting maximums of 32 (Wednesday) and 33 (Thursday) and winds gusting up to 70km. By early Thursday morning more than 2000 hectares had been burnt with more than 400 fire personnel from DEC, local volunteer bushfire brigades and Fire and Rescue Service working to control the blaze. More than 50 homes were destroyed or damaged by the fire.

PAKENHAM RACING CLUB SET TO BOAST AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST RACETRACK

vergreen Turf has won the contract to build Australia's largest thoroughbred racetrack. Evergreen Turf will construct the Pakenham Racing Club's new racetrack at Tynong, which is expected to start racing in early 2014.

Once built, the Tynong track will be Australia's largest racetrack, measuring 2402m in circumference and 25m wide. Evergreen Turf, also based in Pakenham, will use its StaLok product in the construction of the track, which it has been used at other tracks around the world. The StaLok technology is a synthetic fibre that re-enforces the stability of the turf by mimicking a natural grass root.

Evergreen Turf managing director Rob Davey said the company was excited to be building its first racetrack in Australia. "This technology has not been used to build a racetrack in Australia as yet, and we believe it is going to change the way future tracks are constructed," says Davey. "While this

is our first complete thoroughbred racing surface, it has been used in several repair and renovation cases in Australia."

According to Davey the StaLok design promises benefits of improved drainage, which in turn reduces the likelihood of heavy track ratings, eliminating surface water, less divoting and promotes better turf growth.

The Pakenham Racing Club is currently in the process of selling its existing 24 hectare racecourse site in Pakenham, which will give the final green light to move to the state-of-the-art facility in Tynong. The club hopes to start works on the new track in the first half of 2012.

Stage one of the new facility will boast the 2402m Evergreen track, a purpose-built synthetic track, a 500-seat event centre facility as well as a 150-acre (60 hectare) trainer allotment subdivision, allowing trainers to live and train on site.

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TORO'S NEW 7000-D FAIRWAY UNIT THE REEL DEAL



Toro's new Reelmaster 7000-D replaces the Reelmaster 4000

oro Australia has introduced the new Reelmaster 7000-D fairway unit to its golf course management line this past spring. The multi-purpose, heavy-duty reel mower offers a powerful engine, high-torque reel motors and enhanced cooling for performance in fairway and rough conditions.

Replacing the existing Reelmaster 4000 model, the Reelmaster 7000-D is equipped with a 36.5kW (49hp) Kubota engine, as well as SmartCool autoreversing fan that intermittently blows debris off the air intake screen to keep the engine cool. Hightorque reel motors allow for greater productivity.

Following in the footsteps of other Toro reel

mowers, the Reelmaster 7000-D also offers Toro's dual precision adjustment (DPA) cutting units, which manicures turf with a cut as low as 6.35mm and as high as 63.5mm. The five-gang design offers a 307cm width of cut. It has a wider swathe than a standard five-gang fairway mower, so operators can cut more grass in less time. The units are easy to adjust, have fewer adjustments and hold adjustments longer, saving time and simplifying maintenance. They also maintain a constant cutting-edge position for improved quality of cut and after-cut appearance.

"Today's customers are more focused on productivity, because they're working with fewer operators and resources," says Toro's national sales manager for golf Peter Schumacher. "The multi-function Reelmaster 7000-D gives them a more versatile, efficient option for fairways, roughs and can increase productivity as golf courses and sports turf grounds enter their annual renovation programme, especially in the warm-season turf species."

Additional features of the Reelmaster 7000-D include a premium seat with air-ride suspension and an ergonomic control arm for greater comfort and productivity. An optional overlap configuration with 32-inch 8-blade rear cutting units is also available.

For more information on the new Reelmaster 7000-D, call your Toro Area Sales Manager, phone 1800 356 377 or visit www.toro.com.au



Honda recently held a product demonstration day at its Melbourne manufacturing plant

HONDA HOSTS DEMO DAY

Honda recently opened its Melbourne-based Somerton manufacturing plant for its 2011 product demonstration day. The Honda Experience combined a tour of the Honda Manufacturing Australia (HMA) plant with a hands-on test of Honda power equipment products and a motorcycle ride at the Honda Australia Rider Training facility.

An integral part of the day included power equipment demonstration, which combined an overview of the technology and safety features of the Honda product range with the opportunity for guests to try out the products.

HMA moved into the 17,500 square-metre Somerton facility in 2009 and employs 25 local workers who assemble lawnmowers on-site for both Australian and export markets including New Zealand, South Africa, Egypt, India, the Middle East, the South Pacific and parts of Asia. As well as lawnmowers, five brushcutter models are also assembled at the facility.

SUPERS OFF TO THE 'STRIP'

Commonwealth Golf Club course superintendent Mark Prosser and acting Latrobe Golf Club

superintendent Scott Irving will be packing their bags for Las Vegas early in 2012. Prosser was named winner of Globe Australia's Las Vegas Study Tour prize, his name drawn from a pool of nearly 2000 entrants who had conducted soil testing through Barmac and attended the Globe Discovery Tour held earlier in the year.

Irving was winner of the 'Par-Aide' Las Vegas competition run by Country Club International. Over the months of September and October Country Club International ran the nationwide competition with entries coming in from Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia. Irving will join representatives from Country Club International on a week-long trip to take in the sights and sounds of Las Vegas and also the Golf Industry Show.

BOTANIC GARDENS GETS A SPRAY

Toro Australia has donated a \$45,000 turf spraying system for liquid applications to Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain Trust as part of its annual Toro Company Giving Program, an international activity with a primary focus on supporting organisations that preserve the outdoor environment.

The Multi Pro 1250 turf spray unit was presented to executive director of the Royal Botanic Gardens & Domain Trust Professor David Mabberley on 13 October 2011 by Toro's equipment business manager Cameron Russell. The sprayer, which will replace an ageing 400-litre tractor-mounted boom spray unit, will be used to assist in the control of seasonal weeds, pests and diseases on the more than 35 hectares of lawns managed by the Trust.

HE-VAN SCOOPS AWARD

Rain Bird's new High-Efficiency Variable Arc Nozzle (HE-VAN) has received the American Irrigation Association's 2011 Best New Product of the Year Award in the Turf and Landscape category. The award was announced in early November and marks the second year in a row that a Rain Bird product has received the honour, with the XFS Subsurface Dripline achieving similar status in 2010.

Like other variable arc nozzles, the HE-VAN's spray pattern is adjustable from 0 to 360 degrees, making it possible to irrigate unique landscapes of all shapes and sizes. In independent testing conducted at the Centre for Irrigation Technology, the

HE-VAN nozzles delivered a consistently repeatable increase in distribution uniformity (DU) performance. Throughout testing, the HE-VAN demonstrated a 41 per cent increase in DU performance over competing variable arc nozzles.

The HE-VAN's scheduling coefficient was less than 1.4, representing a 37 per cent reduction over competing variable arc spray nozzles. Because of its overall higher efficiency, the HE-VAN shortens watering windows while also decreasing energy costs and reducing system wear-and-tear.

A number of new features make it possible for the HE-VAN, which is available in 12' and 15' radii, to achieve its high distribution uniformity and low scheduling coefficient.

Patent-pending Flow Control Technology provides lower trajectory streams for close-in watering and more uniform coverage across the entire spray pattern. Thicker water streams and larger droplets offer better wind resistance.

For more information about the HE-VAN, contact Rain Bird Australia national sales manager Anthony Long at along@rainbird.com.au or visit http://rainbird.com/hevan/



Rain Bird's HE-VAN collected best new product at the recent American Irrigation Association awards

INDUSTRY ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APPOINTMENTS

NEW NAME. NEW OFFICE. NEW FACE

Simplot Proline has announced a number of recent changes, including a change of name, the opening of a new NSW office/warehouse and the appointment of a new territory

manager. Coming into effect from 1 November 2011, Simplot Proline has changed its name to Simplot Partners, which according to general manager **Matt Scott** is designed to bring the company more in line with its US parent company.

"The change will help with the strategic marketing and servicing of the Australian and international markets which will coincide with the resources in the US," says Scott. All ABNs and CANs, phone numbers and addresses will remain the same, however, the website will be changed to www.simplotpartners.com.au

As well as the name change, Simplot Partners has opened a NSW branch office/warehouse in Wetherill Park. Located at 27 Bentley Street, Wetherill Park, Simplot products can be purchased directly from territory managers at the warehouse. Contact details for the new warehouse are: ph (02) 9741 2960; fx (02) 9725 1054; Steve Martin (warehouse manager) 0437 369 672; and Bob Cooke (state manager) 0419 221 309.

The new premises will also be the home of recently appointed NSW territory manager **Stuart Miller** who makes the move to Simplot Partners from Living Turf. Miller brings with him over 30

SIMPLOT PARTNERS*

turf & horticulture

years' experience within the professional turf industry, with strong technical experience in turf nutrition and chemical programming. Miller can be contacted on 0488 760 173 or via email stuart. miller@simplot.com.au

FRASER JOINS GLOBE

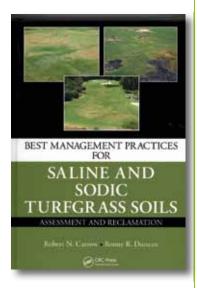
Former Mt Osmond Golf Club assistant superintendent **Sam Fraser** has switched sides and is now part of Globe Australia's South Australia team. Fraser has taken on the role of turf client manager and will work alongside Luke Clohesy and senior turf client manager Andrew Manthorpe. Fraser can be contacted on 0438 700 119 or via email sfraser@globeaustralia.com.au

In other news, Globe has a new office location in Townsville. Originally on Pilkington Street, Garbutt, in late November 2011 Globe shifted into bigger premises at 2/13 Civil Road, Garbutt. Contact details remain the same – ph (07) 4775 1822 and fx (07) 4775 1833, email dwellington@globeaustralia.com.au

LIVING TURF WELCOMES NEW REP

Ben Miller has joined the Living Turf team as a technical sales representative. Miller has been servicing the golf turf market in the metropolitan Sydney, northern and north western NSW for nearly 15 years. In his previous role he represented a major manufacturer of golf furniture and consumables, establishing strong relations with course superintendents all over the state. A qualified greenkeeper, Miller can be contacted on 0407 100 222 or bmiller@livingturf.com.





Best Management Practices for Saline and Sodic Turfgrass Soils: Assessment and Reclamation

By R.N. Carrow and R.R. Duncan

CRC Press, 2011

niversity of Georgia duo Bob Carrow and Ronny Duncan would have to be among the most prolific authors within the international turfgrass management scene over the past decade and they have recently added Best Management Practices for Saline and Sodic Turgrass Soils: Assessment and Reclamation to their ever-growing back catalogue.

Using the 'best management practices (BMPs) concept, their new book examines the complex issues around salinity management, presenting comprehensive scientific principles and detailing practical management and assessment recommendations for turfgrass and landscape sites. Their overriding message is that there is no 'silver bullet' amendment, treatment, or grass for salinity management and that only a holistic BMPs approach will be successful and sustainable.

The comprehensive 455-page hard cover book has a number of features, including the following:

- Provides BMPs addressing both proactive site assessment and specific individual site management programmes that can be implemented for each type of saline and sodic problem affecting turfgrass performance;
- Identifies all possible BMP strategies including: irrigation system design; irrigation scheduling and salinity leaching; chemical, physical, and biological amendments; cultivation; topdressing; soil modification; sand-capping; surface and subsurface drainage options; nutritional practices; additional cultural practices (PGRs, biotic and abiotic stresses, traffic stresses); and on-going monitoring;
- Since plant and soil nutrient and element deficiencies, imbalances and toxicities are an integral part of salinity stresses, this book contains detailed information specific to turfgrass managers specific to turfgrass soil testing (routine and salt package tests), water quality, and plant analyses as well as report interpretation of each of these potential management tools.

- Includes the role and use of field and laboratory analytical methods for site assessment approaches for both plant performance and whole ecosystem assessment in relation to environmental issues such as soil quality/ sustainability, salt disposal, and potential to affect surface and ground waters;
- Presents emerging challenges, technology and concepts including: integration of salinity management into comprehensive site environmental or sustainable management systems; use of halophytic turfgrasses for nontraditional purposes; integration of geospatial and geostatistical concepts and technology; and integration of new sensor technology.

The book is broken up into five sections. Section one looks at the characteristics of salt-affected sites, saline soils and sodic, saline-sodic and alkaline soils. The next section, titled 'Site assessment BMPs for saline and sodic soil sites', looks at salinity soil tests and interpretation; routine soil test methods; irrigation water quality tests, interpretation and selection; plant analysis; and assessment for salt movement, additions and retention.

Section three outlines management BMPs for saline and sodic soil sites and includes chapters on turfgrass and landscape plant selection; irrigation system design and maintenance for poor-quality water; irrigation scheduling and salinity leaching; remediation approaches and amendments; amendment application options and guidelines; cultivation, topdressing and soil modification; drainage and sand capping; and nutritional practices on saline and sodic sites. Section four focuses on environmental stewardship and sustainability issues, while the final section looks at non-traditional use of turfgrasses on salt-affected sites.

Best Management Practices for Saline and Sodic Turfgrass Soils: Assessment and Reclamation is now available through the AGCSA Bookshop and AGCSA members can purchase a copy for \$121 (non-members \$145).

CURRENTLY AVAILABLE THROUGH THE AGCSA BOOKSHOP....



Turfgrass and Landscape Irrigation Water Quality: Assessment and Management By R.R. Duncan, R. N. Carrow and M. Huck CRCPress, 2009

With increased use of alternative irrigation water sources on turfgrass and landscape sites, management challenges related to irrigation water are becoming more complex

and whole ecosystems-oriented. In response to this, three of the US turf industry's most prominent figures have combined to produce 'Turfgrass and Landscape Irrigation Water Quality: Assessment and Management.'

Over 464 pages, they identify and present practical management options for problems that may occur over the whole spectrum of irrigation water movement, from issues occurring at the initial water source, delivery system, storage in lakes or ponds, application on grasses and soils

and subsurface or surface environmental concerns. The book is split into four sections – understanding assessment of irrigation water; irrigation water quality situations and management; management options for site-specific problems; and environmental concerns relating to the use of variable quality irrigation sources on landscapes and recreational turfgrass areas from the landscape to watershed levels.

AGCSA member price: \$165 Non-member price: \$195



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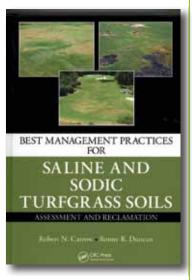








JAGCSA



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CRC Press, 2011

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The grass roots of the industry

This first edition of Australian Turfgrass Management Journal for 2012 sees the start of a regular turf producers section which will feature news and updates from Australia's turf production community. To kick start things, Turf Australia industry development manager Matthew Holmes provides an overview of the industry and its structure.



urf Producers Australia (TPA) is the peak industry body representing the Australian turf production industry. For several years the turf production industry has collected a statutory levy which goes towards funding research, development and extension activities, as well as marketing activities, to increase the production and use of turf by Australian consumers.

All turf producers who sell over 20,000m² per year pay the levy. Funds from this arrangement used in research and development projects are matched dollar for dollar by the government, via Horticulture Australia Ltd (HAL). While primarily benefitting turf producers, often levy funded research benefits the maintenance sector, including golf, sports fields, parks, racecourses etc.

HAL works closely with TPA across various projects, including industry development and communications. The latter is considered an important component by the turf production sector, and until now generally only growers have seen the results of research projects performed using levy funds. In coming editions, ATM will feature a regular update on happenings in the turf production world, as well as state association updates and information and reviews of future events.

TPA BOARD AND STATE ASSOCIATIONS

The TPA Board consists of six members:

- Adrian Pitsikas (Greenacres Turf Group, WA,
- John Keleher (Australian Lawn Concepts, QLD)
- Anthony Muscat (Greener Lawn, NSW)
- Jason Muscat (Hi Quality Turf, NSW)
- John Cotter (Anco, VIC)
- Brad Shearer (Coolabah Turf, VIC)

Australia's turf production industry is valued nationally at over \$3 billion, with about 400 turf production businesses throughout country employing some 80.000 people

All gentlemen have been in the turf production industry for many years, and represent just about all major production areas of Australia. The day-to-day operation of TPA is managed by Matthew Holmes, in a combined role of industry development manager and general manager.

In addition to the national association, there are turf producer associations in most states. The state associations work locally with growers on issues of significance to their area. Often these associations undertake funded projects via HAL or through the state systems and co-operate with other outside industry associations such as the Nursery and Garden Industry's state associations. The main contacts for each association are:

- Turf Queensland (Jim Vaughan, chief executive)
- Turf Growers Association NSW (Bob Jeffries, Lawn and Turf Services, president)
- Turf Growers Association Victoria (Steve Cole, Lilydale Instant Lawn, chairman)
- Turf Growers Association Western Australia (Eva Ricci, industry development officer)

INDUSTRY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

As peak industry body, TPA is also responsible for the formation and maintenance of an Industry Advisory Committee (IAC), which is essentially a sub-committee of the HAL board responsible for guiding HAL on the expenditure of project funding. The current IAC consists of:

- Barry Underhill (DEEDI, QLD, chairman)
- Bruce Stephens (Anco, VIC)
- Terry Anderlini (Tropical Lawns, QLD)
- Tony Cross (Caboolture Turf, QLD)
- Adrian Pitsikas (Greenacres Turf Group, WA)
- John Keleher (Australian Lawn Concepts, QLD)
- Dr Ian Chivers (Native Seeds, VIC)
- Matthew Holmes (TPA, ex officio)
- Craig Perring (HAL ex officio)

The IAC meets three to four times per year to discuss ongoing projects and to advise HAL on proposed projects for levy and voluntary contribution (VC) funding. At the moment there are two calls for projects per year. The 'industry call' which closes in November is for levy funded projects, and the 'general call' which closes in March is for VC projects. It is the latter call which receives projects funded by individual sectors such as the AGCSA, Racecourse Managers Association as well as Turf Producers Australia.

From the IAC, projects that are highly recommended are forwarded to HAL for contracting. Some of the projects currently being funded by levy money include:

Screening warm-season turfgrasses for Group A herbicide tolerance (HAL Project TU09009);



The Industry Advisory Committee is comprised of (back row, from left) Craig Perring, Ian Chivers, Barry Underhill, Adrian Pitsikas and Tony Cross. Seated (from left) are Matthew Holmes, Terry Anderlini, Bruce Stephens and John Keleher

- Mite damage a survey of four warm-season turfgrasses (TU10002);
- Screening chemicals for eriophyid mite control in four warm-season turfgrasses (TU10004);
- Erosion control turf research and development facility (TU10025);
- WA Turf Industry Development (TU11015)
- Turf Industry Capacity Building 2009-2012 (TU09028); and
- Turf Industry Communications 2009-2012 (TU09030).

For more details or to contact TPA, call Matthew Holmes on 0427 088 200, email idm@turfaustralia.com.au www.turfaustralia.com.au

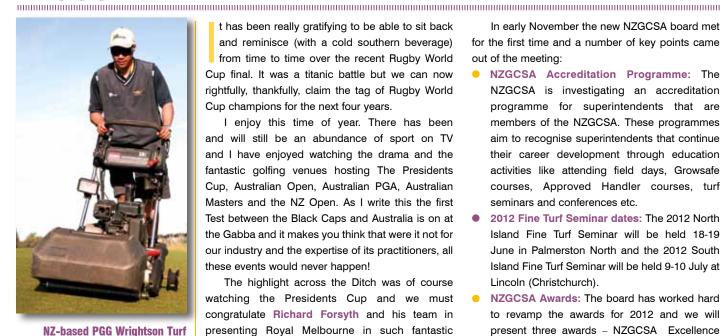
AUSTRALIA'S TURF PRODUCTION INDUSTRY

- Australia's turf production industry is substantial with around 6700 hectares of turf under production at any time.
- There are about 400 turf production businesses throughout Australia, employing some 80,000 people and valued nationally at over \$3 billion.
- Turf production in Australia is valued at \$450 million per annum and turf maintenance is valued at over \$500 million per annum in servicing more than 10,000 prepared turf surfaces.
- According to 2010/2011 production figures, Queensland can lay claim to producing 42 per cent of all turf in Australia. NSW/ACT come in next at 34 per cent, followed by Western Australia (11 per cent), Victoria (8 per cent) and South Australia/Tasmania/ NT (5 per cent combined).
- All Australian turf producers that produce over 20,000m² of turf annually pay a 1.5 cent per square metre industry levy. The current levy is split two ways – 1.2 cents for R&D and 0.3 cents for marketing.

Through Horticulture Australia Ltd, the turf industry is currently supporting 38 projects. Two of these projects received a combination of R&D levy and voluntary contribution (VC) funding, 17 are levy funded only and 21 are VC projects.







sales rep Joe Johnson came across to volunteer for The **Presidents Cup at Royal Melbourne**

t has been really gratifying to be able to sit back and reminisce (with a cold southern beverage) from time to time over the recent Rugby World Cup final. It was a titanic battle but we can now rightfully, thankfully, claim the tag of Rugby World Cup champions for the next four years.

I enjoy this time of year. There has been and will still be an abundance of sport on TV and I have enjoyed watching the drama and the fantastic golfing venues hosting The Presidents Cup, Australian Open, Australian PGA, Australian Masters and the NZ Open. As I write this the first Test between the Black Caps and Australia is on at the Gabba and it makes you think that were it not for our industry and the expertise of its practitioners, all these events would never happen!

The highlight across the Ditch was of course watching the Presidents Cup and we must congratulate Richard Forsyth and his team in presenting Royal Melbourne in such fantastic condition. What was especially pleasing was his willingness to welcome a number of Kiwis into his team for the week prior and during the event.

On the home front it was great to see Clearwater Resort in Christchurch host the NZ Open in the first week of December. This was the first major sporting event to be held in the city since the devastating earthquakes and it was good to see the course in such great condition. Course superintendent Ryan Adams, 2IC Ricky Walker and the rest of their team have done a stupendous job in what has been an extremely difficult year.

In early November the new NZGCSA board met for the first time and a number of key points came out of the meeting:

- NZGCSA Accreditation Programme: The NZGCSA is investigating an accreditation programme for superintendents that are members of the NZGCSA. These programmes aim to recognise superintendents that continue their career development through education activities like attending field days, Growsafe courses, Approved Handler courses, turf seminars and conferences etc.
- 2012 Fine Turf Seminar dates: The 2012 North Island Fine Turf Seminar will be held 18-19 June in Palmerston North and the 2012 South Island Fine Turf Seminar will be held 9-10 July at Lincoln (Christchurch).
- NZGCSA Awards: The board has worked hard to revamp the awards for 2012 and we will present three awards - NZGCSA Excellence Award (proudly supported by John Deere), NZGCSA Graduate of the Year Award (proudly supported by Powerturf and Jacobsen) and NZGCSA Environment Award (proudly supported by PGG Wrightsons Turf). Nomination forms are available from www.nzgcsa.org.nz

So from across the Ditch, the NZGCSA wish you all a very Merry Christmas and all the best for a bright and prosperous New Year!

> **GRANT BUNTING** PRESIDENT, NZGCSA

ON THE MOVE

A quick wrap up of recent superintendent and assistant superintendent movements from around the country...

Jason Ferry: Left the industry December in 2011 to work commercial Ferry construction after



seven years as superintendent at Queanbeyan Golf Club, NSW Lincoln Coombes: From operations manager Evergreen Turf, VIC to superintendent RACV Royal Pines Resort, QLD Darren Dicks: From superintendent Kooringal Golf Club, VIC to superintendent Eynesbury Golf Club, VIC

nother STA year has passed us by - they seem to be passing faster each year. 2011 was a year of mixed successes for us. On the positive side was the Turf Alive event that was held at the Castle Hill Showgrounds. This event brought together for the first time the STA, TGA and the NSW Bowling Greenkeepers Association as a joint venture to host an event that could cater to the entire turf community. It was a great initiative and one that we will push forward with in the years to come.

The inaugural winner of the Toro STA NSW TAFE Student of the Year Shaun Patterson was another highlight. Shaun is a shining light and with the like of his calibre coming through the system it's safe to say that the industry is in good hands.

On the down side this year was the cancellation of our end of year function. The Ute Muster at Parramatta Stadium was going to be a less formal more relaxed event that we thought would appeal to our sponsors and members after 10 years of more formal functions. This was a decision that was not taken lightly but at the end of the day it was the right one.

On a much brighter note, 2012 will be a 'back to the future' year for us. We return to Ryde TAFE for our Sydney Seminar for the first time in three years. Ryde has always been a great venue to host this event because of its location and facilities. We are also delighted to welcome back Les Burdett for our Cricket Wicket Seminar at Blacktown Olympic Park. Once again Les will give us his practical and occasionally humorous insights into the preparation and maintenance of great wickets.

Our first event for the year, however, will be as guests at Martin O'Malley's magnificent Lynwood Country Club for our annual golf day. Anybody who has played at Lynwood will know that it's a tough course, so don't get caught short like John Daly and only take six balls!

Finally, on behalf of myself, Jen and the committee I would like to wish everybody a very happy 2012 and I look forward to seeing you at an event during the year.

> CHRIS CHAPMAN PRESIDENT, STA NSW

VGCSA 🗢

hat an exciting event The Presidents Cup was at Royal Melbourne Golf Club for Victoria and for golf in general. Hosting such a major event in our home state certainly had a positive impact on many other golf clubs in the vicinity besides the majestic Royal Melbourne layout.

Congratulations to superintendent Richard Forsyth and his team of staff and volunteers for the outstanding work achieved to present the course in magnificent condition for the event. The condition of the turf surfaces was outstanding and to receive so many positive comments from the players, organisers and the golfing fraternity in general would have been pleasing for those involved in preparing for and hosting the event.

Congratulations also go to Mark Prosser (superintendent Commonwealth Golf Club) and John Mansfield (David Golf). Mark is the recipient of the 2011 VGCSA Superintendent Recognition Award and John the Trade Recognition Award. Mark's involvement on the VGCSA committee over past years and his leadership as president has been much appreciated. His ongoing attendance at events and general support of the VGCSA since then does not go unnoticed and is also applauded by all members and the committee.

John has a long-standing involvement in the golf industry. An accomplished golfer and a club champion, John is heavily involved in his home club as well as supporting superintendents in his day-to-day role with David Golf. John has been a supporter of the VGCSA for many years.

The Huntingdale Golf Club team was successful at winning the main prize at the VGCSA Turf Research Golf Day held at Peninsula Country Golf Club in October. Sixty-six players took up the challenge to win the \$2000 prize money which is to go towards the costs associated with attending a turf registered conference. Host superintendent Steven Hughes presented the course in great condition and the hospitality provided by Peninsula made the day extremely enjoyable. Once again, thank you to Bayer for sponsoring the day; their sponsorship goes a long way to making the day possible and for allowing projects related to turf research achievable.

The VGCSA committee has been working hard to secure venues and speakers for next year's meetings. A lot of thought and planning has gone into the events already to provide enjoyable and educational content throughout the year.

STEVEN HEWITT PRESIDENT, VGCSA



Commonwealth Golf Club superintendent Mark Prosser received the VGCSA's 2011 Superintendent Recognition Award

STANZ STANZ

he Sports Turf Association New Zealand recently completed a strategic planning session and we have identified a number of key pathways to connect and grow within the industry. Over the next 12 months STANZ will look to prioritise these key pathways and get the wheels in motion. These pathways include:

Maintaining regional representation

- Identify and appoint regional facilitators and representatives;
- Develop and implement an active business plan;
- Develop and maintain an active constitution;
- Appoint and maintain a paid administrator position and patron.

Promoting STANZ within NZ turf industry

- Develop and implement a marketing strategy;
- Produce a regular newsletter for members;
- Secure and maintain a viable membership;
- Facilitate and/or deliver regional field days and seminars for members;
- Determine the sports field and cricket programme for regional and national turf conferences;
- Facilitate and/or deliver regional trainee days.

Securing revenue for long-term sustainability

- Develop and implement a membership strategy;
- Identify and exploit leverage opportunities within the sports turf and related industries;

- Connect with, influence and gain support from relevant national sports organisations on turf management issues;
- Establish and maintain a working relationship with relevant local and central government organisations;
- Identify and exploit sponsorship opportunities.

Generating a leadership and advocacy role

- Maintain a governance and support role with the Industry Training Organisation responsible for delivery of turf training;
- Develop and maintain an active lobbying capability on behalf of the sports turf industry;
- Carry out and/or contribute to submissions on behalf of the sports turf industry;
- Identify and endorse best practice in the sports turf industry (eg. production of guidelines and/or standards);
- Identify and facilitate the opportunity for research and development in the sports turf industry;
- Offer support to other like-minded organisations with an interest in sports turf management (eg. NZRA, NZGCSA, NZBGKA, CNITMA).

IAN MCKENDRY VICE-CHAIRMAN, STANZ

ON THE MOVE

A quick wrap up of recent superintendent and assistant superintendent movements from around the country...

Mike Healy: From superintendent M a n d u r a h Country Club, WA to superintendent



Gosnells Golf Club, WA Shannon White: From assistant superintendent to superintendent Mandurah Country Club, WA Simon Work: From Kooyonga Golf Club, SA to assistant superintendent Mt Osmond Golf Club, SA (replaces Sam Fraser who is now with Globe Australia) **Andrew** Wright: From superintendent Melton Valley Golf Club, VIC to superintendent Gisborne Golf Club (replaces James Stewart)

SAGCSA ②

Right: Metropolitan Machinery sales manager Chris Simounds (right) presents Ivan Swinstead with the SAGCSA Distinguished Service Award



SAGCSA Graduate of the Year winner Tyson Dickinson

n recent months South Australia has had mild and dry conditions, great for golfers but not for superintendents establishing couch.

Our recent October education meeting was held at Penfield Golf Club, a small 9-hole course in the northern suburbs of Adelaide. Course superintendent Kim Tonkin has just a casual to help him maintain the course, but despite a limited budget and resources Penfield has a good reputation for quality playing surfaces with many who attended paying close attention to Kim's strategies.

Kim also explained how he has developed a masterplan which will see the course expand to 18 holes – a huge plan which will take some 15 years to complete. It is a great parcel of land to work with and I am sure we will all keep a close eye on the changes. Thanks to sponsors K&B Adams and Nadeem Zreikat from Colin Campbell for his talk on disease control and social media.

Long-serving Tea Tree Gully Golf Club course superintendent Ivan Swinstead received the SAGCSA's Distinguished Service Award, sponsored by Metropolitan Machinery at the inaugural South Australian Golf Industry Awards Night held at the Adelaide Oval on Saturday 29 October. Ivan was one of three SAGCSA members to win awards on the night which was attended by 250 golfing representatives from across the state.

Tyson Dickinson (The Grange GC) collected the SAGCSA Graduate of the Year Award sponsored by Toro and Stuart Gillespie (West Lakes GC, formerly Riverside GC) received the SAGCSA Excellence



in Golf Course Management Award sponsored by Globe Australia.

The other big news recently was the appointment of a new course superintendent at Royal Adelaide Golf Club. Last November we welcomed Nathan Bennett who has taken over from Jeff Kaines who has left the industry. We congratulate Nathan on making the move across the border.

As a committee we are still working through a redraft of the constitution and should have something to present to members soon. Look out for our next meeting in February at Adelaide Oval which will be a great opportunity to see this iconic venue up close. We are also planning a south east SA bus trip around May.

On behalf of the SACGSA I wish everyone a successful summer and a happy New Year and I look forward to seeing you at Adelaide Oval.

SAM SHERRIFF PRESIDENT, SAGCSA

GCSAWA

he new committee has met a couple of times now and we are starting to get on with life without Darren Wilson and Craig New. Glenn Cross is filling the role on the Water Wise Golf Course Program Committee, while Secret Harbour assistant Paul Needham is doing a fantastic job as secretary (the more Allan Devlin is away the more time Paul seems to have!)

Neil Graham has already been productive organising the survey about the Margaret River Conference and results will be in the next issue of our Divots newsletter. Simon Bourne has already been able to surpass Newy's effort by chasing up bills and increasing our operating budget.

Meanwhile, young Callum Hitching is all over the 2012 Super Series and with some support from the clubs in the Perth region it should be a very successful year. And last but not least I have just returned from the state presidents meeting in Melbourne which I found very productive and I await another encore!

Congratulates are in order for Mike Healy who was recently appointed as the new superintendent at Gosnells Golf Club in Perth. I am positive Gosnells have found the perfect man to take over from Brad Sofield (apart from the fact that he barracks for Collingwood which I bet didn't come up during the interview). Congratulations must also go to Shannon White on his promotion to superintendent

at Mandurah Country Club. Shannon has been a faithful assistant to Mike for years and will have no problem stepping up.

The UWA Turf Research Programme has now been funded even with some clubs not yet on board with their small financial contribution. The new trial on "managing turfgrass on a reduced water allocation" is an issue which should be at the forefront of the minds of golf clubs throughout WA and UWA researcher Louise Barton has already sent out the first newsletter to keep clubs up to date.

As predicted the 2011 Super Series went the way of the 'Burswood Bandit', the little fella without a future, **Peter Flemming**. Pete basically just had to turn up to win at Nedlands but of course Callum 'the Turf Whisperer' Hitching did put up a fight on **Aaron Petrovski's** beautifully prepared course. A big thank you to **Geoff Kirk** again for providing breakfast at every event and also purchasing all trophies and to **Mark Rodereda** for his sponsorship for the overall prizes.

Finally, the WA Golf Industry Awards Night – Friday 24 February – is fast approaching and we welcome ADH Club Car as the naming sponsor for the night. It should be a great night for our industry.

DES RUSSELL PRESIDENT, GCSAWA

NSWGCSA

hat a difference 12 months can make! This time last year the start of summer was extremely dry with above normal temperatures and most superintendents were looking at reducing their water consumption or at least constantly monitoring their water usage.

So far this year summer has been quite kind to us with most of our dams currently full and temperatures lucky to exceed the mid 20's! I'm sure it will change quite quickly as we head into late January/February, but the short-term forecast looks quite mild heading into the New Year.

At the last NSWGCSA Directors Meeting on 28 November at Northbridge Golf Club we finalised our calendar of events for 2012, with the Rube Walkerden and Annual General Meeting to be held jointly on 12 November 2012 at Elanora Country Club (host superintendent Dan Cook). Our next event will see us return to The Vintage Golf Club for the annual Hunter Valley Ambrose Day on 7 May.

Other issues adopted during the meeting were the introduction of two scholarships for Certificate V and two regional scholarships for Certificate IV. These scholarships have come about due to the demise of the University of Sydney's Masters programme.

There are also a few NSWGCSA Board portfolio changes in 2012 with Steve Jacobsen taking over the role of treasurer, Martin O'Malley adding OH&S to his environment portfolio and Dennis Grounds taking over the field days portfolio.

The most recent NSWGCSA education day in November was held at Manly Golf Club with 40 members in attendance. Host superintendent Michael Bradbery conducted a course tour of the newly completed first and second stages, as well as the third and final stage which is currently under construction.

The day concluded with on open forum on the topic dealing with boards and committees. The panel consisted of Dan Cook (Elanora Country Club), Martyn Black (Castle Hill Country Club), Norm Foord (New Brighton Golf Club), Michael Bradbery (Manly Golf Club) and NSWGCSA life member Bill Hopkinson. Special thanks to Rob Cooper from Living Turf for sponsoring the day.

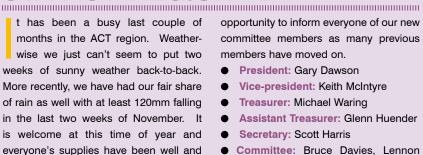
Congratulations to Russell Fletcher (The Lakes Golf Club) for successfully hosting the 2011 Emirates Australian Open. This year's Open saw a world class field of golfers attempt to tame The Lakes course with the overall winner being Russell and his staff who presented a world class golf course in testing conditions. Congratulations also to fellow NSWGCSA Board member Matthew Goodbun who played host to his first NSW Open at Newcastle Golf Club in late November. Once again the weather gods played havoc during the tournament, but hopefully next year they will be kinder.



On behalf of the NSWGCSA Board of Directors, I wish you all a happy New Year and hopefully the kind weather continues.

Carnarvon Golf Club superintendent Steve Jacobsen has taken over as NSWGCSA treasurer

CRAIG MOLLOY PRESIDENT. NSWGCSA



After a couple of months of negotiating, we are pleased to announce that we have changed our name from TGAA ACT and become the ACT/Southern NSW region of the Sports Turf Association. At an extraordinary general meeting held on 22 November, members overwhelmingly voted in favour of this proposal and we will now be known as Sports Turf Association - ACT Region. This allows us to provide support, networking opportunities and education to the turf industry by tapping into a broader target audience.

truly topped up.

We can now move forward and ensure the longevity of our association and also provide opportunities to members and sponsors of being involved in events and training resources from other regions. We are confident that all sponsors and members will benefit greatly and the association as a whole will retain the strength to continue for many years in the future

As it has been a few editions since our last report, I would like to take this opportunity to inform everyone of our new committee members as many previous members have moved on.

- **President: Gary Dawson**
- Vice-president: Keith McIntyre
- Treasurer: Michael Waring
- **Assistant Treasurer: Glenn Huender**
- Secretary: Scott Harris
- Committee: Bruce Davies, Lennon Ryan, Danny Hull, Scott Fogg and Karen Higgs.

Many thanks must go out to previous committee members Jason Ferry, Norm Dunn, Brock Weston and Stuart Miller for their contributions to our association.

Candidates for the ACT Apprentice of the Year have been decided and I am pleased to announce Jamie Green (Queanbeyan Golf Club), Damien Miller (Young Bowling Club), Mark Spicer (The Moorings Resort, South Coast) and Matthew Taylor (Royal Canberra Golf Club) will vie for this year's honour. Interviews will take place in January and a winner announced shortly after.

We are also busy planning our 2012 seminar to be held on 25 July. It promises to be a very educational day with a great list of interesting and informative topics to be discussed. In the meantime, we wish everyone a happy and safe time leading up to the festive season.



he numbers for this year's GCSAQ Wet 'n' Wild Christmas party were a vast improvement on last year and a beautiful sunny day greeted those attending. Congratulations to treasurer Dave Morrison for pretty much organising this day on his own and to the intrepid families who turned up, some for the tenth year in a row. Thanks also to those who helped on the day with the cooking and catering and a big thanks to the group on the next BBQ who generously gave us some of their sausages after the butcher 'forgot' to put ours in!

Gold Coast Burleigh Golf Club assistant superintendent **Alan Bishop** will be hoping the Wet 'n' Wild day continues so he can take along his recently arrived second child Riley. Congratulations to 'Bisho' and wife Libby.

Congratulations on another front are due to Hyatt Regency Coolum superintendent **Dean Henderson** and his crew plus the volunteers who prepared the course in "best ever" condition for the recent Australian PGA Championship. Following the week after the hype of The Presidents Cup was always going to be a tough gig but Dean's team certainly produced the goods. "Best 328 greens I have seen" was the comment from a couple of people and one of the commentators labelled them "treacherous" which is quite unusual for 328 greens.

Dean had some luck with the rain which he was fortunate with as rain magnet Paul McLean, formerly of Royal Pines and now with Nuturf, provided breakfast for the crew each day. Toro chipped in with some machinery as did Horton Park and

Lakelands golf clubs, while Simplot Partners and Toro provided shirts for the crew. The 12 volunteers certainly contributed with **Dean Niland** from Grafton volunteering for two weeks and others coming from as far afield as Canada and South Africa.

Good news for a couple of Gold Coast club's recently with Robina Woods and Colonial being purchased by mining magnate Clive Palmer's company Queensland Nickel after spending seven months in receivership. Arundel Hills has a new owner too and they are investigating changing the greens from bentgrass to TifEagle.

The Queensland Golf Industry Awards are coming up once again and nominations will shortly be called for our four awards – the Superintendent Achievement Award, Bayer Superintendent Environmental Award, Industry Recognition Award and Turf Apprentice of the Year. You will notice that Bayer has stepped up to sponsor the Environment Award which is a first for us and we are hopeful of securing sponsors for the other awards as well. The awards night will take place on 13 March, 2012.

And speaking of awards, the GCSAQ Assistant Superintendent Recognition Award winners have returned from their week at the 2011 Barclays Singapore Open. Brisbane Golf Club assistant Ray Lawrence, one of three to go to Sentosa Golf Club, penned the following thoughts on his return.

"I wanted to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for the most amazing week in Singapore as we helped prepare the beautiful Sentosa Golf Club for the Barclay's Singapore Open. A big thank you must go out to Simplot Partners, Toro Australia and GCSAQ for sponsoring the recognition award.

We are so grateful for the opportunity to see first-hand what goes into running such a prestigious event as the Singapore Open and the knowledge we obtained will be put to use at our own clubs. Our 'chaperones' Tim and Colin were great and we are certainly very grateful for their efforts. In Singapore, Danny, Geoffrey and Mick were fantastic showing us all the great things Singapore has to offer.

Sentosa Golf Club is spectacular and the work shed was every greenkeeper's wish – great machinery, great layout and a great crew. I had the pleasure of working with Chin and he was so helpful, courteous and humble.... a great man. I wish to extend a huge thank you to all the crew at Sentosa Golf Club.

We were quickly made to feel at home and part of the team for this year's Barclay's Singapore Open and for their hospitality we are most thankful. This experience was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me and something I am incredibly proud to be part of. It is an experience I will never forget."

> PETER LONERGAN PRESIDENT, GCSAQ

CIRCLE WORK ALL A PART OF PGA PREPARATIONS

Turfies are generally a resourceful and innovative lot, but the staff and volunteers working at Hyatt Regency Coolum took that to a new level when an unusual problem developed during the second round of the 2011 Australian PGA Championship in November.

With an unusually dry month leading up to the PGA Championship, Coolum course superintendent and AGCSA member **Dean Henderson** had the need to pump a lot more treated effluent water into the course's dams for irrigation. That, however, created some algal bloom issues and as luck would have it one developed in the dam which surrounds Coolum's iconic par three 11th during Friday's second round.

Contacting Turf Irrigation Services in Brisbane, Henderson had a fountain hurriedly transported up late Friday and installed early Saturday morning. However, a more novel approach was suggested by Coolum assistant



superintendent **Scott Howes** and some local supers – get a jet ski in the dam to disperse the unsightly bloom.

As it transpired, Jared Stevenson, who had come up from St Lucia Golf Club to volunteer for the week, had a jet ski back home in Brisbane and after a quick call his brother was on the road with the jet ski in tow. After raking bunkers for much of the week, Stevenson (pictured above) had the rather plum job of spending more than an hour ahead of the Saturday and Sunday rounds doing circle work to help aerate the dam and break up the bloom.

The new Eclipse 322



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(CLOWARA



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Rob Christie Course Superintendent Marysville Community Golf & Bowls Club

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