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MANAGEMENT JOURNAL

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Kauri Cliffs: The stunning 7th hole at Kauri Cliffs in New Zealand.

Photo: Kauri Cliffs/Gary Lisbon
www.golfphotos.com.au.



LEAD STORY: A profound legacy

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In November 1992, a keen and eager 26-year-old by the name of Euan Laird was appointed as the AGCSA's first full-time executive officer. Housed in what was effectively the broom closet of the old Australian Golf Union headquarters in South Melbourne, Laird was charged by the AGCSA Board of the time to turn the fledgling association into a body that promoted the superintendent profession. Armed with nothing more than a telephone and a wealth of ideas, Laird slowly but surely over a period of 10 years molded the AGCSA into one of the turf industry's peak bodies and set the solid foundations for the association the industry knows today. For those efforts, Laird was bestowed the AGCSA's highest honour at the recent 32nd Australian Turfgrass Conference – the Distinguished Service Award.

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Maleny Golf Club in the Sunshine Coast hinterland is a unique story. A community driven project, the course is a shining example of what can be achieved with a limited budget and a group of committed individuals. At the heart of its success is 2016 AGCSA Excellence in Golf Course Management Award winning superintendent Mick McCombe.



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A brand new venue, a smaller yet highly successful trade exhibition and a great line-up of local and international experts made for a memorable 32nd Australian Turfgrass Conference in Melbourne. ATM looks back at some of the highlights and images of the week at Crown Entertainment Complex.



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Taking the next step from assistant superintendent to superintendent can be a daunting one and at recent Australian Turfgrass Conferences it has been the subject of a number of workshops. At the Melbourne conference in June that was taken to a new level with the hosting of the inaugural AGCSA Future Turf Managers' Initiative.



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A tremendous contribution

The recent Australian Turfgrass Conference in Melbourne was yet another wonderful gathering and I trust that all those who attended returned to their facilities refreshed and armed with plenty of ideas and strategies to implement both on and off the course. Having been privy to the inner workings of 12 conferences now, it is without question one of the most enjoyable weeks of the year, albeit a very busy one for the AGCSA team. To see first-hand what goes into organising the conference each year, it is an absolute credit to my colleagues at the AGCSA who put in a tremendous amount of effort to ensure delegates and exhibitors alike are catered for in every aspect. I've got it easy.... I'm just the fool running around with a camera!

There were many highlights from this year's conference but the feel-good moment without doubt was Euan Laird receiving the AGCSA Distinguished Service Award (DSA). The very fact that I'm penning this is largely due to Euan as it was he who over a 10 year period between 1992 and 2002 laid the foundations of the AGCSA as we know today. Together with a series of progressive Boards he instituted a plethora of initiatives that have played a huge role in lifting the professionalism of Australian course superintendents and turf managers, among them the journal you currently hold in your hands.

Going on to a carve a very successful career in horticulture after his time with the AGCSA, in 2011 Euan was sadly diagnosed with young-onset Parkinson's disease at the age of 46. The years since have understandably been tough on Euan, his indomitable wife Jacque and their sons Rupert and Sinclair. In the weeks leading up to the Melbourne conference I had the pleasure of travelling to Euan's home in the outskirts of Melbourne to pre-record his acceptance speech just in case his health precluded him from attending the awards ceremony. For more than two hours he reminisced on his days as the AGCSA's first full-time executive officer and some of the many funny (and unpublishable) stories that he experienced along the journey.

Fortunately, Euan, together with Jacque, was present to accept the DSA in front of a full house of 260 guests at the Syngenta President's Dinner on the Monday night of the conference. The laughs he elicited in telling some of those stories, along with his ability to make light of his battles with Parkinson's, made for a truly memorable night.

In his acceptance speech Euan made the surprising comment that he felt like a fraud for being elevated alongside some of the great practitioners of our industry, the likes of Vince Church, Peter McMaugh, Doug Robinson, John Odell and John Neylan. Given the standing ovation Euan received as he left the stage, I hope it left him in no doubt of the profound legacy he left and that he has every right to be mentioned in the same circles as those industry doyens.

To conclude on another feel-good note, all who attended last year's Australian Turfgrass Conference in the Hunter Valley will remember the courageous presentation given by Suncorp Stadium curator Mal Caddies. His talk about his battles with malignant melanoma was one of the most raw and compelling sessions I have sat in on and prompted many, myself included, to go and have a skin check at the Danger, Sun Overhead stand.

In the weeks following this year's conference, Mal had his two-year follow-up scan. A clear result meant his chances of melanoma reoccurring would drop by up to 40 per cent. Given that two years ago Mal was being told by his GP to 'get his affairs in order', you can imagine the elated feeling he felt when the most recent scans came back all clear.

Enjoy the read...



Brett Robinson, Editor

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Frank, Fred and a golf course superintendent from Hobart



May I start this column with a huge thank you to all that made the 32nd Australian Turfgrass Conference and Trade Exhibition in Melbourne a huge success. When you make the decision to move from a venue that has been home to the event for as long as I care to remember, you do so with a great deal of trepidation. Whether it was good planning or just good luck, the Crown Entertainment Complex passed with flying colours. Most of this edition of ATM will be devoted to the conference week and while not wanting to take the shine off the editorial content, there are a few things I would like to highlight.

The week again kicked off on the Sunday with a trip down the Princes Highway for those that played in the 2016 Toro AGCSA Golf Championships. This year, for the first time, we headed to Barwon Heads Golf Club and Thirteenth Beach. Host superintendents **Adam Lamb** and **Steve Hewitt** ensured all those that made the journey enjoyed the

outing. Both were in sensational condition and the weather almost perfect for golf on the coast in the dead of winter.

Brent Hull (Moruya Golf Club) shot a fine 1-over par to add another title to his resume on a countback from **Anthony Toogood** (Commercial Club). The AGCSA Classic was won by **Brad Anderson** (Sun City Country Club) with a nett 68. The AGCSA stableford event was won by **Jason Kelly** (Royal Fremantle Golf Club) while the team from New South Wales took out the state event. Thanks to AGCSA Platinum Partner Toro who again sponsored the golf championships and the host clubs for their terrific hospitality.

The education component of the week kicked off on Monday morning with **Professor Fred Yelverton** and **David Bancroft-Turner** doing their things as part of the Jacobsen-sponsored workshop programme. Both speakers provided excellent content and all involved had a great day. David took another 40 conference delegates through his political intelligence workshop which he has done for the past three years. Fred presented to a packed house on the perennial favourite of weed control, in particular *Poa annua*. All that attended the workshop were looking for that silver bullet, but alas it was not forthcoming. He spoke about some possible new products but all had limitations.

Monday night saw the conference dinner take on a new look with **Ian Cover** assuming the role of MC for the night. The AGCSA Awards were again presented and I congratulate all the winners:

'I'm a golf course superintendent!' AGCSA Board member Steve Lewis on stage with ventriloquist Darren Carr at the Syngenta President's Dinner during the recent Melbourne conference



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- **Mick McCombe (Maleny Golf Club, Qld):** AGCSA Excellence in Golf Course Management Award, presented in partnership with Rain Bird.
- **Andy Wood (Kauri Cliffs, NZ):** AGCSA Claude Crockford Environmental Award, presented in partnership with Syngenta.
- **Will Koopmans (Ballarat Golf Club, Vic):** AGCSA Graduate of the Year Award, presented in partnership with Toro Australia.

At the dinner the AGCSA Board bestowed the Distinguished Service Award upon **Euan Laird** who was the AGCSA's first ever full-time executive officer. The award, which coincided with the AGCSA's 25th anniversary, was long overdue. Euan laid the foundation for the association and without his drive and enthusiasm we would not be in our current position. I had the pleasure to work with Euan during my tenure as AGCSA president and he was a delight to work with and he made many presidents and boards look very good!

With the formalities out of the way we welcomed **Darren Carr** who entertained us for the evening. I have been to many conference dinners and this year was the absolute highlight. AGCSA Board member **Steve Lewis** 'volunteered' to be a part of the show and what a show it was. Who would have thought the term 'I'm a golf course superintendent' could elicit so many tears of laughter from an audience.

The trade exhibition, while smaller (by choice) than previous 'large' conference years, was a huge success. The traffic through the exhibition was excellent and the venue the ideal size for delegates to mingle with exhibitors. The most positive thing was the degree of interaction between all in attendance; the room was buzzing with activity at all times. I would like to personally thank all those that exhibited at the event and thank them for their continued support.

Mark your diaries now as we return to Twin Waters Resort on the Sunshine Coast for the 33rd Australian Turfgrass Conference and Trade Exhibition in 2017. The conference will run from 25-29 June and we look forward to heading back after a very popular conference there in 2013. There will be a few subtle changes to the programme to ensure delegates and trade exhibitors get the most out of the week. We will also welcome a new course to the AGCSA Golf Championship roster with players set to take on Maroochy River Golf Club for the first time. I am sure host superintendent **Pat Pauli** and his crew will have the course primed for the visit.

I hope you get to enjoy the opportunity that the cooler weather offers and I look forward to catching up when our paths next cross. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have an issue or suggestion; any feedback is greatly appreciated. 🙌



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Between 1992 and 2002, Euan Laird instituted a range of AGCSA initiatives that at their heart had the aim of promoting the professionalism of golf course superintendents. His time at the AGCSA he rates as one of the most rewarding in an extensive career in horticulture





2016 AGCSA Distinguished Service Award winner Euan Laird (centre) with inaugural AGCSA president Doug Robinson (left) and immediate past president Peter Lonergan at the AGCSA Awards ceremony in June

A profound legacy

Euan Laird knows how to make an impression. Just ask Terry Woodcock and Doug Robinson.

Straight out of an ag science degree at the University of Melbourne in the mid-1980s, a keen and eager Laird successfully applied for a job at the Victorian Department of Agriculture's Turf Research and Advisory Institute in Frankston. Turning up for his first day, he shook hands with new boss Terry Woodcock and as he went to sit down accidentally head-butted him!

Six years later, Laird found himself sitting in an office at the Australian Golf Union headquarters in South Melbourne being interviewed by the full Board of the Australian Golf Course Superintendents' Association (AGCSA). The newly incorporated association was going places and needed someone to help drive that. The other shortlisted candidates had truckloads of experience in club and association management, but there was something about Laird, his enthusiasm and passion in particular, that really struck a chord, especially with inaugural AGCSA president Doug Robinson.

Taking a punt, the Board decided to give the 26-year-old a go. It was a decision that would prove a masterstroke and in November 1992 Laird began a tenure that would last almost a decade, ultimately setting up the successful foundations of the AGCSA that the industry knows today.

His time at the AGCSA taught him many valuable lessons which would prove instrumental in a horticulture career that would span some 24 years.

Laird would go on to lead AusVeg, the national peak industry body representing Australian vegetable growers, and for a period was head of horticulture services at the Victorian Department of Primary Industries. He also fronted Nursery and Garden Industry Victoria, the state's peak horticulture body, where he was responsible for, among other things, running the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show.

However, it was his time with the AGCSA that he looks back on with most fondness. It was a unique period in the AGCSA's history and Laird took full advantage of a series of proactive AGCSA Boards to make things happen. He saw an organisation that had huge potential and a membership base that he saw as being among some of the most professional and dedicated horticulture practitioners he had come across.

The body of work he would go on to undertake and institute during his time at the AGCSA was quite staggering. Together with the direction and support of the various AGCSA boards and assistance from part-time administration staff, Laird oversaw the organisation of conferences, seminars and workshops, put together newsletters, magazines and all manner of promotional material, set up membership plans, accreditation schemes and awards programmes, launched new initiatives such as AGCSATech and Australian Turfgrass Management magazine and developed and implemented strategic plans. All of these were done with just one goal in mind – to raise the level of professionalism of superintendents and thus get them the due recognition they deserved within the wider golf industry.

At the 32nd Australian Turfgrass Conference in Melbourne, fittingly on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the AGCSA, Laird's role in plotting the association's initial course was duly recognised with

In November 1992, a keen and eager 26-year-old by the name of Euan Laird was appointed as the AGCSA's first full-time executive officer. Over the next 10 years he virtually single-handedly turned a fledgling association into one of the turf industry's peak bodies. For those efforts, and on the occasion of the AGCSA's 25th anniversary, Laird was bestowed the association's highest honour at the 32nd Australian Turfgrass Conference – the Distinguished Service Award.



Housed in what was effectively the broom closet of the old Australian Golf Union headquarters in South Melbourne, a fresh-faced Laird was charged by the AGCSA Board of the time to raise the profile of superintendents and establish a solid financial base for the association



the Distinguished Service Award. Ironically Laird himself had played a principal role in inaugurating the award back in 1997, and despite his claims that he was not worthy of joining the award's previous winners, what he achieved during his time at the AGCSA more than qualifies him for that honour.

ATM: Congratulations on receiving the Distinguished Service Award Euan. What does the award mean to you?

Euan Laird: "I am deeply honoured and humbled to receive the award. When we first conjured up the idea of the Distinguished Service Award it was never meant to be for staff but to recognise those in the industry. Looking at some of the past winners I feel like a bit of a phoney, so to be ranked alongside them I feel very grateful and thankful.

"In accepting the award I do so on behalf of all those superintendents out there who turn up to work each day, give it their best and never receive the accolades or due recognition they deserve. From the small country golf course superintendent to those in charge of the major championship

golf courses, the dedication and passion of those involved in the management of their courses is without doubt impressive.

"The most you can ask for in life is to make a contribution and I was given that opportunity by the AGCSA Board of the time and to have that recognised is amazing in itself."

ATM: Your time with the AGCSA was just one part in a long horticulture career. It's obviously in your blood.

EL: "I've always been a green thumb. Mum was a big gardener and that rubbed off on me. I am the youngest of seven kids and from about the age of 12 at each Laird family Christmas I was charged with preparing the cricket pitch. Each year it would get better – I even introduced couchgrass into it – and we ended up having something close to the MCG!

"I went on and did ag science at university. The chemistry and maths side I was no good at but I loved biology, loved plants. After graduating a job came up at the Turf Research and Advisory Institute in Frankston. Growing up as a kid I had always wanted to be a park ranger because I loved the outdoors, but seeing that job advertised I knew it was for me. Terry Woodcock and Ron McCartney were there at the time and they were fantastic mentors and I certainly appreciate the patience they had to help me get my career started. It was there that I also met John Neylan, David McGeary and Michael Robinson who were fantastic to work with.

ATM: Six years out of university you found yourself as the first full-time executive officer of the AGCSA. Quite the rapid rise!

EL: "I had been with Turfgrass Technology as a field consultant for about two years with David, John and Michael and there was a lot of talk that the AGCSA was looking for a full-time executive officer. One day John mentioned something about being sounded out for it but had declined, so I literally went into the next office and rang up AGCSA Board member Wayne Dale and told him I was interested in the job.

"I think everyone at that time could see the potential the AGCSA had; it just needed someone to help it along a little. I had seen what the international superintendent associations were doing and what they had achieved and thought there was no reason why we couldn't do it as well. Superintendents were, and still are, a very marketable product. They are very professional and there were a lot of guys coming through the industry at that time who had completed their advanced certificate through TAFE, so there was this era of change happening.

"I knew I was jumping into the fire. I went to the 1990 conference in Sydney with Turfgrass Technology and I remember going to that and thinking how big it was and what it must be like to have to organise it. Low and behold two years later

While the AGCSA Fellowship Award was already in place (pictured is Trevor Strachan receiving it in 1993), Laird expanded the AGCSA Awards programme during his time at the AGCSA, introducing the Claude Crockford and Graduate of the Year awards and in 1997 the Distinguished Service Award



CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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I was! I can't thank that initial AGCSA board enough – Doug Robinson, Wayne Dale, Jeff Lane and Peter Sawyer. They had the boldness to give a 26-year-old kid, as green as they come with unparalleled naivety to boot, the opportunity of a lifetime to assist them in carving out a future for the AGCSA."

ATM: What were those early days like?

EL: "I was green as green could be and to be honest I had no idea some of the time, which was probably a good thing in hindsight. In Doug Robinson I found a mentor the calibre of which I have never experienced again. Everything you hear

about Doug is true – he is just an amazing individual and he provided me with great guidance in those early days.

"Our office was literally a cupboard in the AGU headquarters – there were clothes hanging down one end and I had a desk with a phone at the other. The AGU was very supportive of us at the time, but I don't think they quite knew what had hit them when we moved in. My phone would ring constantly and I think they were amazed at the amount of work we generated. I remember at the time I was driving a red Subaru Brumby ute and I felt rather out of place parking it alongside the European marques that the AGU guys had. One of them actually had to ask me what make and model my car was!"

A BOLD DECISION, BUT THE RIGHT DECISION

The appointment of Euan Laird to the position of full-time AGCSA chief executive officer was a bold decision by the Board of the day. The association had a part time secretary who did a great job, however, it became obvious that the administration of the newly incorporated Australian Golf Course Superintendents' Association would require far more time and energy than the members of the Board could provide on a voluntary basis.

The initial endeavour was to attract someone who had enough understanding and connection with the industry to help us reach our goals. A short list of three likely candidates was established and the Board came together to interview and select the future CEO. Each had strong credentials and it soon became obvious that the Board had a difficult task on its hands.

Two candidates were senior gentlemen who had strong backgrounds in club and association administration and were seen as very strong candidates. The third candidate was a young man who was university educated in agricultural science and working in turf research and consulting. I recall a vibrant, fresh-faced young man who displayed a persona of confidence, had a good understanding of the role of golf course superintendent and loads of enthusiasm.

Each member of the Board put forward their opinion of the candidates. This was followed by the completion of a checklist and rating of each candidate. The outcome was unanimous. Euan Laird, the enthusiastic young man who impressed all four members of the Board, was to become our new CEO.

As I look back, I realise that the job confronting Euan at that time was enormous. We had no office, no office equipment,

Euan Laird (right) and Doug Robinson (second from right) meet with NZGCSA representatives



no management systems and we had virtually no money. If my memory serves me correctly we had around \$7000 in the bank! I guess 25 years ago that was worth a bit more than in today's world. However, the challenge for Euan was to make that amount his salary and working funds until he could generate the income required to meet expenses and run a vibrant and successful association. With a national conference looming there was potential to establish sufficient financial resources to sustain the association and ensure the newly appointed CEO was financially rewarded for his services; that is exactly what he did!

From day one of Euan's tenure he embraced every challenge presented to him, and there were many. He established working relationships with commercial entities, golf associations, turf research groups and education facilities. His efforts were tireless. I have no doubt that Euan's professionalism and enthusiasm for the tasks at hand was duly recognised by Colin Phillips, then the CEO of The Australian Golf Union, who generously made office space (a very small room in Golf House, South

Melbourne) available to the association.

While the work area was small, the work that Euan generated from it was enormous. He took care of all membership related business, all the bookkeeping and conference arrangements as well as keeping up fantastic public relations with all the associated industry groups.

It should be noted that there were times when the 'establishment' found the formation of the AGCSA very confronting and were not as welcoming as you might think. However, Euan always bounced back and continued in a most professional and generous manner. There is no doubt in my mind that the foundations laid by him are the reason we enjoy the benefits of our wonderful association today.

In this, the 25th anniversary year of the AGCSA, Euan is a most worthy winner of the Distinguished Service Award. I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked and associated with such a true gentlemen. Thank you Euan.

DOUG ROBINSON
INAUGURAL AGCSA PRESIDENT

ATM: You pretty much did everything regarding association matters in those early days. How challenging was it?

EL: "I was very fortunate to be at the right place at the right time with the AGCSA organically on the cusp of a growth phase, so it was an exciting time. The diversity and sheer volume of work was the most challenging aspect. I wasn't organised, never have been, and I guess the naivety and greenness was a blessing in some respects, but a limitation in others.

"The amount of work was huge. We were doing everything from processing memberships, running conferences and seminars, public speaking and advocacy, through to writing articles and taking photos. I remember I had arranged to interview Wayne Grady after a practice round at one of the major tournaments. He'd obviously had a bad round and no sooner had I introduced myself he told me to 'just f**k off'!

"I was very fortunate to be guided by and have the support of some very proactive boards during this time. While I had plenty of ideas, they were the ones who had to sell these new ventures to the members and they did a tremendous job of doing so. I also had some fantastic part-time admin staff who really supported me and enabled me to concentrate on moving the association forward.

"I found the job very rewarding. It was like giving birth to something. Whether it was a magazine or a conference or seminar, you'd pull it all together and then move on to the next. There was always something different.

"The very first job I remember was to get a calendar off the ground and selling some sponsorship for that. One thing I have to say is that right throughout my time at the AGCSA all the sponsors were fantastic and really supportive of what we were doing.

"The first major events I helped organise were the national seminar in Canberra in 1993 and the Adelaide conference in 1994. The Adelaide conference was very memorable – we had some great international speakers, a great venue and brought the trade show indoors for the first time. But



the thing that stood out for me was being able to meet all these superintendents whom I'd only ever spoken to before over the phone.

"Improving the professionalism and value of the conference and recognising the importance of ongoing education was a big thing for me. As skilled as our guys were, they needed the credentials after their name to show their competence, so it was important that the conferences and seminars gave recognition of that. In saying that though, it wasn't until later in my time with the AGCSA that I also came to appreciate the non-educational value of the annual conference – the camaraderie, the mateship, the sharing of stories and the importance of getting together as a group."

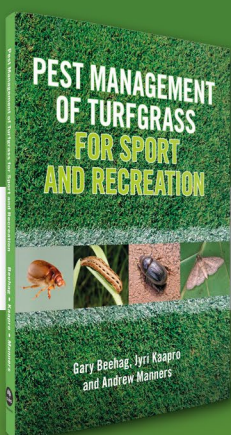
ATM: Were you effectively given carte blanche by the AGCSA Boards you worked under?

EL: "I wouldn't say it was carte blanche, but I didn't have many constraints placed on me. One of my strengths is that I always have plenty of ideas, much to my wife Jacque's chagrin. I guess it's a product of growing up the youngest of seven children; I've always wanted to change things and have never been short of an idea.

"Without fault every Board I worked with at the AGCSA was progressive. They always gave me the opportunity to put ideas to them and were prepared to give something new a go if it had merit.

Whether interviewing professional golfers for magazine articles or processing memberships, Laird pretty much did it all in the early days of the AGCSA

"My wife Jacque has always been an integral part of my life and part of my team and this award is rightfully hers as much as it is mine." – Euan Laird



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Laird, together with an expert advisory panel, pulled together the Millennium Turfgrass Conference in Melbourne which to this day still rates as the largest turf industry gathering Australia has witnessed

"I have been very fortunate throughout my career in horticulture to have served many sectors of the industry and I can say without a moment's hesitation that I consider golf course superintendents to be the most professional of any vocational group I have met." – Euan Laird

I've worked for many boards in my 24 years in horticulture and those at the AGCSA were among the best. Sure they knew how to party, but when it came down to serious decision making they were without fault in their due diligence and concern for the betterment of the association and its members. Above all, though, they were all just good people."

ATM: Two of the biggest initiatives during your time with the AGCSA were the launches of AGCSATech and ATM. Why and how did they come about?

EL: "In the back of my mind AGCSATech was always there. Having come from a technical background and seeing what was out there at the time, I always thought there was a niche market for the AGCSA to provide an independent technical advisory service. It took me a number of years to summon up the courage to go to the Board with the idea and I remember Jeff Gambin at the time looking at me agog when I put it to them.

"We had so many other things on at the time, so the Board was a little concerned about whether we'd be able to take on the extra work. But I presented the business case and they said go for it. The number one thing was to secure John Neylan and once we got him on board I knew it would be a success.

"It was certainly a very interesting time when we launched it and there was a lot of consternation from the trade. The key to it was AGCSATech being independent, which was the same reason why we launched ATM. That was our point of difference. Looking back I am very proud that we had the capability to coordinate it and pull it off. It was very rewarding to see it come to fruition and once we started getting some big contracts and clients I knew we had done the right thing.

"With ATM, we had good relationships with TurfCraft and then Golf & Sports Turf but I knew we had to go it alone. I looked at the international models and thought there was no reason why we couldn't produce our own association magazine. If we wanted to raise the professionalism of our industry and its members, we had to have a professional publication of our own.

"While it was a leap of faith, I was confident we had a good product to market, that being the superintendents, to make it worthwhile and the support of the industry. Editor Phil George and I worked like absolute dogs to get it off the ground and we were winging it most of the time, but it came together well. Now each time the magazine arrives in the mailbox, I feel a sense of contentment knowing that it's in good hands and has achieved far more than we could ever have imagined."

ATM: What do you take away most from your time at the AGCSA?

EL: "The people and the experiences. I have been very fortunate to have served many sectors of the horticulture industry and I can say without a moment's hesitation that I consider golf course superintendents to be the most professional of any vocational group I have met. Their technical skill, artistic flair and care for the natural environment cannot be questioned and I am always impressed by the quality of the work that they achieve against some pretty big odds.

"As you get older you realise that the most important things in life are the experiences and learnings you have. To the AGCSA and the turf industry in general, I am very grateful for the lessons I learned on the job. From pulling conferences together, to liaising with sponsors, starting new ventures like AGCSATech to the general day-to-day running of a member-based association, the on-the-job experiences I had at the AGCSA set me up for a long career in horticulture which I could never have hoped for.

"It's fantastic to see how the organisation has progressed. Sure I had some part in it, but the foundation was already there with the people who make up the industry. I feel thankful that I had the opportunity to make a contribution to what I now see is a very strong and professional organisation and I congratulate those CEOs and boards after my time for the amazing job they have done in taking a fledgling association as far as they have." 🙌



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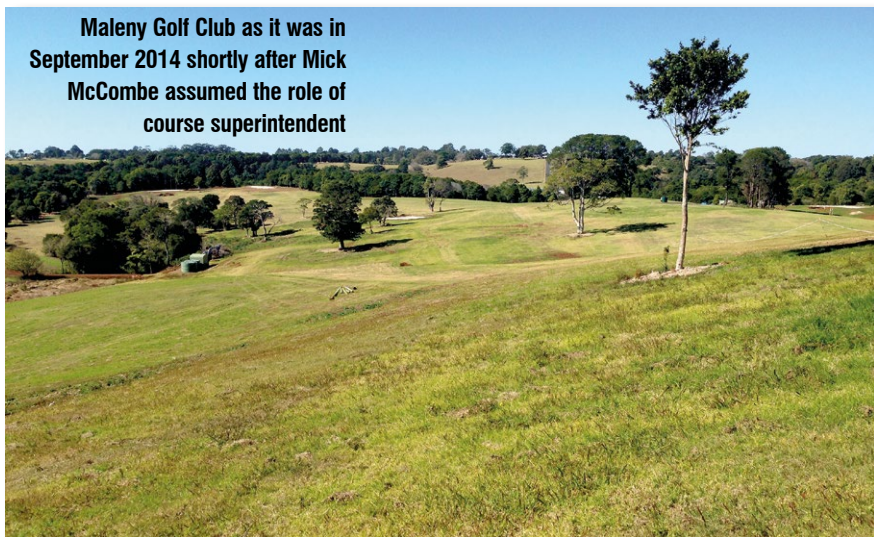
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Maleny Golf Club as it was in September 2014 shortly after Mick McCombe assumed the role of course superintendent



From paddocks to pars

The development of Maleny Golf Club in the Sunshine Coast hinterland is a unique story. A community driven project, the course is a shining example of what can be achieved with a limited budget and a group of committed and persistent individuals. Integral to its ultimate success has been course superintendent Mick McCombe, winner of the 2016 AGCSA Excellence in Golf Course Management Award, presented in partnership with Rain Bird.



To meet Mick McCombe for the first time you are immediately struck by his laid back personality and easy going nature, a product no doubt of growing up in one of the most remote corners of Australia. Originally from Gove in Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, McCombe's interest in turf was ingrained as a kid where he would spend countless hours in the backyard of the family home mowing pitches and honing his cricket skills.

It was therefore a natural progression when as a teenager McCombe took on a turf management apprenticeship at Pine Rivers Bowls Club a few clicks north of Brisbane. Loving it so much, McCombe ended up spending 10 years on the hybrid couch rinks before embarking, as many young Australians do, on a two-year working holiday to the UK. After interning at the likes of Coombe Hill Golf Club in southwest London, McCombe returned home to take on a role at Bribie Island Golf Club before joining the crew at Headland Golf Club as foreman. It was his two years there, under superintendent Ben Tilley, that would ultimately set McCombe on the path to a small Sunshine Coast hinterland golf course at Maleny and one of the most challenging yet rewarding chapters of his career to date.

Situated about 35 minutes due west of Caloundra and 450m above sea level, Maleny is a township of around 5000. From a dairy farming and timber industry background, the area has more recently become a haven for alternative lifestylers and retirees and is a popular destination for tourists and day-trippers from Brisbane. A strong sense of community prevails in Maleny and it is ultimately this, together with well-focused local support, that ultimately saw Maleny Golf Club come to fruition.



The history behind the development of the golf club is a long and protracted one. The course is part of the Maleny Precinct, which represents a large parcel of undulating land north of and overlooking the township. Back in 1995, then local authority Caloundra City Council purchased 'Armstrong farm' (now part of the precinct) essentially for the disposal of treated effluent water but with a longer term view of it becoming public open space. The land was rezoned in 1997 from 'rural' to 'sport and recreation' with the intention that it was also to be used for a community golf course.

The Maleny Golf Club (sans golf course) was incorporated in 2000 and after extensive consultation made a request to the council that the land be used for an 18-hole community golf course. Not long after, the council approached the owner of the adjacent 'Porter farm' with the prospect of combining the properties to form the 126 hectare Maleny Precinct. Settlement on this second land parcel was delayed until 2006, but broader consideration of potential uses for the combined site began in August 2003.

Through the committed efforts of the Maleny community and the expertise of course superintendent Mick McCombe, Maleny Golf Club opened its front nine in June 2015



with the formation by the council of the Maleny Precinct Task Force.

After a series of complex and unfortunate delays, the council released a draft master plan for the precinct in August 2007 for community consultation. As a result, as many as 30 sports, recreation, service and other community groups united as the Maleny Precinct Action Network to contribute to the plan. This resulted in amendments to the golf course layout and the inclusion of playing fields and a variety of other sporting facilities that could ultimately be serviced by a shared clubhouse.

An amended master plan was approved by the council, subject to a number of conditions, in November 2007 and it wasn't until August 2008 that it was ultimately endorsed, this time by Sunshine Coast Regional Council which was the new authority following a series of local government amalgamations. The final precinct master plan was completed in mid-2009 and with that GNP Golf Design (Graham Papworth) was engaged to come up with an 18-hole layout.

Detailed plans for the front nine holes, incorporating a driving range, were submitted as part of a DA in July 2011 and after a number of amendments were made, in early March 2014 the club finally got the green light to start construction. (For more on the history of the development and the course design process, read Graham Papworth's detailed article 'Sense of community' that appeared in Volume 17, 2015 of Golf Architecture journal).

MAKING A MARK

From the outset, all parties involved in the Maleny development were aware of the emphasis for a positive environmental and low cost outcome for the golf course. A driving philosophy throughout the project was 'golf as it was', drawing inspiration from Machrihanish Dunes in Scotland. Papworth's design did just that, taking advantage of an undulating parcel of land which boasted deep, well-draining volcanic red soil covered by kikuyu pastures, locating tee and green sites that slotted in naturally with the terrain.



2016 AGCSA Excellence in Golf Course Management Award winner Mick McCombe



It quickly became apparent to McCombe upon his arrival that the shaping of the 1st green complex was not representative of the proposed finish grades. It, along with a number of other greens already shaped, had to be deconstructed down to the base

In addition to the environmental benefits of such a philosophy, this *modus operandi* captured the social benefits of drawing on the substantial expertise and good will of the community that had fallen in behind the project and also ensured costs would be kept down.

At the time, the club had intended on recruiting a greenkeeper after the completion of construction and turfing of all playing surfaces – tees and fairways with the existing kikuyu turf and the greens with Tifdwarf stolons sourced from greens renovations at Beerwah Golf Club. However, the club bit the bullet and wisely recruited McCombe as course superintendent in August 2014 a month before they were due to stolonise the first greens. McCombe was recommended for the role by Tilley who had been heavily involved in the Maleny development over the years in an advisory capacity.

When McCombe arrived at Maleny, the pump house and irrigation system had been installed (with the exception of ring mains and sprinklers around greens) and bulk earthworks completed on all but two greens. Thus, McCombe's intended role was to oversee the grow-in of the greens, solid turf the tees and shape and groom the fairways and roughs from the existing kikuyu pastures.

Prior to McCombe's employment, the club had used volunteer engineers and contractors during the initial construction phases. It quickly became apparent to McCombe upon his arrival

The first four greens (including the 9th pictured) were propagated using Tifdwarf stolons sourced from nearby Beerwah Golf Club. Once established, scarifyings from those were used to stolonise the remaining greens



that the shaping of the 1st green complex was not representative of the proposed finish grades. It therefore became a delicate and tactful exercise to explain to the club that there were significant errors and that to achieve Papworth's vision the green site would need to be considerably altered.

The club took on board that advice and McCombe oversaw the deconstruction of the green, removing the sand and gravel layers and flat-pipe drainage before reshaping the base. All other greens and surrounds (in particular on holes 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9) were also revisited by McCombe with most sub-bases requiring adjustment, in some cases up to 200mm. He also redesigned the ring irrigation and sprinkler layout for all greens to ensure effective distribution uniformity.

The first four greens were propagated using Tifdwarf stolons from Beerwah and, once established, scarifyings from those were used to stolonise the remaining greens. As Mother Nature has a habit of doing, she intervened during the grow-in when Cyclone Marcia battered the Queensland coast in February 2015. Having just pulled the growth covers off the 2nd green the week before, Maleny copped more than 400mm which caused substantial washouts across the course. That set back some of the greens, but despite a few thin areas the official opening of the front nine holes went ahead on the last day of June 2015.

Total spend for the nine holes was approximately \$750,000 including greens irrigation and maintenance equipment that hadn't already been donated. \$450,000 came from the Sunshine Coast Regional Council's capital works programme and the balance by way of donations. The end result is a golf course that has become a real asset for the community and in the year since opening McCombe has been striving to present the course in as best condition as possible with the modest resources at his disposal.

COMMUNITY EFFORT

When McCombe started at Maleny there was no maintenance shed and the machinery available was more than rudimentary. There was no greens mower, no bunker rake, an old Fiat two-wheel drive tractor with a slasher and flail mower, one old six-foot Toro rough mower and an antique Toro five-reel fairway mower. While that inventory has improved now that the course is open, the biggest asset at McCombe's disposal is a large group of willing volunteers.

As mentioned earlier, at the heart of the Maleny development has been the community and despite the club being cash poor it has more than made up for it in what club president Max Whitten describes as "significant social capital". Many individuals have invested heavily in the project, whether at the outset by driving the initial development through council or getting their hands dirty during the construction, grow-in and subsequent day-to-day maintenance of the course.

The volunteers come from all manner of professional backgrounds – senior engineers, surveyors, mechanics, electricians, plumbers, builders and, in the case of Whitten, a retired scientist – who have been called upon to assist with almost every conceivable task. Along the journey they have tackled specific projects such as building access bridges and rock retaining walls and have also turned their hand to solid-turfing tees, stolonising greens and spreading amendments by hand!

One of McCombe's greatest strengths, aside from his greenkeeping nous, has been his ability to harness the energy of and guide this enthusiastic band of volunteers, identifying leaders who can do specific tasks and motivating the group as a whole. His ability to engage the local community to take ownership of the course combined with the rapport he has fostered with the volunteers has resulted in a golf course that the whole community can be proud of. It's ultimately this that has been one of the most rewarding aspects of McCombe's involvement.

"Through his hard work and total dedication between September 2014 and the official course opening in June 2015, Mick inspired and motivated our eclectic army of volunteers, and our few contractors, to achieve this good outcome," says president Whitten. "The engineers, surveyors, mechanics and other skilled volunteers now have a greater appreciation of what constitutes a fine

golf course. Mick has trained a cohort of committed volunteers to operate our expanding arsenal of machines and also supervised the recruitment and the ongoing training of a hardworking and capable apprentice Marc Kearney.

"Mick has led by example, skill, relevant knowledge, extensive experience and hard work. He has earned and enjoys the full confidence of the club's management committee, its various sub-committees and members. This respect stems from the positive outcomes achieved by our affable and unassuming course superintendent."

DESERVED ACCOLADES

On a personal level, seeing what were essentially sprawling weed-infested kikuyu paddocks transformed into high quality turf surfaces has been a defining moment in McCombe's turf management career. Without losing sight of all the practical constraints of budget, equipment and skills of volunteers, McCombe has strived to achieve the very best outcomes for the club both in construction and turf management.

The proof of this lies in the quality of the course and its presentation. Feedback from visiting superintendents and greenkeepers, professional and amateur golfers, members and visitors alike has been extremely positive according to Whitten.

"In the 19 months since Mick was recruited to a construction site, we now have the first nine holes of



Just some of the 'local' challenges McCombe has to face after cows from a neighbouring property left their mark on the 5th green

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Maleny's 2nd green (above) as it looked at the opening in June 2015 and right how it looked four months earlier after Cyclone Marcia dumped 400mm on the course



a first class community golf course which is being favourably commented on by members, visitors and the media," says Whitten.

"The challenge for Mick on taking up his appointment at Maleny was to ensure that the course was constructed to the specifications of Graham Papworth and to produce and manage a high quality community golf course with minimum resources. He has achieved that and is now engaged in design work for the maintenance facility and the second nine holes on top of his substantive job of maintaining the course with one apprentice and voluntary labour.

"On a personal level, Mick has continued to mature as a leader and superintendent. He

is good at seeking and benefiting from advice from all quarters. With his hands-on disposition, a positive outcome is that Mick is now a well-regarded greenkeeper within the Maleny Golf Club and among his turf management peers, and is well positioned to play a leading role in the completion of the 18-hole course."

McCombe's efforts have certainly not gone unnoticed by the industry and earlier in 2016 he was bestowed the GCSAQ Superintendent Achievement Award at the Queensland Golf Industry Awards. That qualified him for the AGCSA Excellence in Golf Course Management Award, presented in partnership with Rain Bird, which he ultimately went on to collect at the recent 32nd Australian Turfgrass Conference in Melbourne.

In his acceptance speech a very humble McCombe paid tribute to the many volunteers who had assisted him in delivering a quality golf course for the Maleny community: "Starting at Maleny Golf Club some two years ago I never dreamt I'd have my work recognised in such a manner," says McCombe of the award. "Our achievements at Maleny would not have been possible without the great work from our committee and management team and I would like to especially thank president Max Whitten and greens director Rob Bailo who helped me no end to achieve all my goals.

"Myself and apprentice Marc Kearney are the only paid green staff on course so most tasks are undertaken by a great group of volunteers whom I can't praise enough. Thanks to the regular Monday and Friday team members, with special mention to Geoff, David, Roly, Bob and Brian who take on any turfing, weeding or rock wall building needed. Thanks also to Tom Bertwistle and John Pottage for their attention on fairways, Chris Pottinger and Barry Retschlag in the roughs, Alan Ward in the bunkers and last, but certainly not least, John Hay, John Hudson, Steve Laurence and Rex Redding who maintain all our equipment.

"Construction of the first nine holes at Maleny has been a massive undertaking and I'm really looking forward to using what I have learned so far to see the full 18-hole course come to fruition."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ATM wishes to thank Mick McCombe, Graham Papworth, Max Whitten and Ben Tilley for their assistance in putting this article together. 🙏



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Since opening its doors to the world in 2000, Kauri Cliffs has grown to become one of New Zealand's highest profile golf courses. Its stunning location perched high on the cliffs in the scenic Bay of Islands, combined with a dramatic layout, has seen Kauri Cliffs perennially reside inside the world's top 50 ranked courses. Fifteen holes view the Pacific Ocean, six of which are played alongside cliffs which plunge to the sea, while the inland holes wind through a beautiful mix of marsh, forest and farmland.

Of all those who know just how special Kauri Cliffs is, it's hard to go past course superintendent Andy Wood. Arriving in 1997 just as the former sheep station was starting to be transformed into a golf course by Florida-based architect David Harman, Wood is one of Kauri Cliffs' original employees. Over the ensuing two decades, Wood, together with a dedicated team, has overseen the gradual transformation of the course and its surrounding environment.

In addition to providing exemplary turf surfaces year round for the enjoyment of some very fortunate golfers, Wood has undertaken a raft of projects that have slowly but surely enhanced the natural environment of the property, as well

as fine-tune his course management practices so that they have minimal impact on the environment.

Such a long-standing commitment to environmental stewardship has ultimately been recognised in recent times and at the 32nd Australian Turfgrass Conference in Melbourne, Wood, an AGCSA international member, was bestowed the coveted Claude Crockford Environmental Award, presented in partnership with AGCSA Gold Partner Syngenta.

Just as Kauri Cliffs' sister course Cape Kidnappers and its former superintendent Steve Marsden did in 2012, the award came after Wood had collected the NZGCSA Environmental Award the previous year. And, to cap off a celebrated 12 months, a week after accepting the Claude Crockford Award, Wood was being honoured with the NZGCSA Parkland Excellence Award at the 2016 NZ Turf Conference in Auckland.

In addition to receiving a \$5000 bursary to be used toward further education or a study tour for winning the Claude Crockford Award, Wood will also be entered into Syngenta's annual Growth Awards. There he will compete alongside top growers and advisers from Australia and New Zealand who are making a difference to

Cliff-top haven

2016 AGCSA Claude Crockford Environmental Award recipient, Kauri Cliffs superintendent Andy Wood



In 2012 Cape Kidnappers received the AGCSA's coveted Claude Crockford Environmental Award. Four years later at the 32nd Australian Turfgrass Conference in Melbourne its Kiwi stablemate Kauri Cliffs was bestowed the same honour.

the horticulture industry through leadership, best practice and innovation. Nearly 70 were nominated for the awards in 2015 across three categories – productivity, sustainability and community and people – including the likes of Pennant Hills Golf Club superintendent Richard Kirkby.

In accepting the Claude Crockford Award in Melbourne, Wood praised Kauri Cliffs' owner Julian Robertson and his team for their commitment to environmental excellence over an extended period: "It's a great honour to receive this award and to be recognised for the work we have achieved at Kauri Cliffs," says Wood. "I have been at Kauri Cliffs for nearly 20 years now and when we look back as a team at what we have achieved and how we have enhanced the natural environment of the property, it is extremely satisfying. It's a great committed team and owner at Kauri Cliffs that have got the course to this stage and I am blessed to receive this award."

COMMITTED TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Kauri Cliffs has its origins back in 1995 when the 2500 hectare William's farm overlooking Matauri Bay in the Bay of Islands was purchased by Robertson. Opening in 2000, the Kauri Cliffs

course and lodge comprises around 200ha with the bulk of the property continuing to be operated as a commercial farm. A significant area of about 600ha can be considered as either natural land cover or areas of farmland reverting to natural land cover. There is also a 126ha pine plantation which has been through its first rotation and is about 19 years into its second.

Guiding all operations relating to the golf course is a simplistic yet dedicated Golf Course Environmental Policy which outlines Kauri Cliffs' ongoing commitment to environmental management best practice. It succinctly states: "Kauri Cliffs strives to employ only those management practices that minimise or eliminate the potential for negative impacts to the environment and the surrounding property, ensure compliance with all appropriate regulations, and to constantly re-evaluate our processes to achieve the highest standards of environmental excellence."

At its heart, the policy aims to reduce the use of water, nutrient inputs, pesticide, fuel and electricity as well as reducing total areas managed. Coupled with extensive nature and conservation projects both on the course and across the wider

Its stunning location aside, it's the work behind the scenes to enhance the golf course and surrounding landscape that makes Kauri Cliffs a shining example of how a golf course can benefit the natural environment





Since its inception, Kauri Cliffs has adopted a policy of planting only indigenous species, with over 102,000 indigenous plants and trees planted to enhance the golf course and surrounding landscape

An example of the stunning transformation of the landscape through revegetation and natural regeneration shown on the 6th at Kauri Cliffs (bottom) and how the area looked at the time of course construction (below)



property and constant engagement and liaising with the local community and authorities, Kauri Cliffs can justifiably argue its exemplary environmental management credentials.

NATURE AND CONSERVATION

One of the key focal points at Kauri Cliffs ever since the first sod was turned in construction of the golf course has been protecting and enhancing the property's native flora and fauna and environmentally-sensitive areas.

Since inception, Kauri Cliffs adopted a policy of planting only indigenous species. Working with ecologist Tony Foster, over 102,000 indigenous plants (most of significant size, PB5 or larger) have been used to enhance the golf course and its amenity areas to date, as well as the seascape from Waiaua Bay in the north to Pink Beach in the south. These plantings are separated into six clear zones, from the ornamental lodge landscaping planting to valley and stream plantings, coastal golf course margins, irrigation lake and the golf course interior.

The most recent undertaking was a 10ha native revegetation project from a cut-over pine and

eucalyptus forest block back to indigenous species. This involved planting over three seasons by firstly establishing the colonising species and controlling weed growth followed by the planting of canopy species over the next two winters.

Also initiated early on the development of the golf course was a QEII National Trust Open Space Covenant. This 12ha of bushland contains possibly the largest kauri on private land in the Northland region, as well as being an excellent example of mixed lowland podocarp forest in the healthy phase of recovery from being cut-over last century.

In consultation with the QEII National Trust, Kauri Cliffs has constructed walkways through this bush for the benefit of owners and visitors alike and is currently in negotiation with the New Zealand Government's Department of Conservation (DOC) for the potential release of native robin into this area. It is likely that further covenanting will also take place in the future.

Two stream and gully systems dissect the golf course and these wetland areas were retained during the course construction and enhanced with judicious planting of indigenous species (see photos bottom of this page and opposite page). These gully streams are have become increasingly effective as wildlife corridors, linking the coastal margin with the covenanted QEII bush area as the plants grow and natural regeneration takes place.

Pest control has also been a prime consideration since the early days of the course development which has paid huge dividends in enhancing the native fauna population. A dedicated predator control programme is now into its 18th year, with the club employing a full-time pest control officer who works closely with DOC and the Northland Regional Council. To date 18,206 possums, 147 goats, 60 pigs, 1117 rats (actual bodies found), 174 stoats, 235 cats, 1358 hedgehogs, 111 weasels, 1248 hares, 1082 rabbits and seven dogs have been removed from the property.

As well as pest control, since 1997 some 25 kilometres of new fencing projects have been undertaken to many of the natural areas on the property. Isolating these native forest and wetland areas from stock has had huge benefits for natural revegetation. Given this, there has been a large reduction in problematic weed species and subsequently increased the presence of native birdlife and general biodiversity of the property.

In addition to its ongoing work with the Northland Regional Council through a Community Pest Control Agreement, Kauri Cliffs also works closely with the kauri die back programme, helping to protect all the kauri trees on the property.

Kauri Cliffs has also recently fenced off another large area of wetland and started planting out this space last winter with native species in order to create another potential corridor for kiwi movement. The club is working closely with DOC to progress the release of brown teal and native robin.

As a result of all this conservation work, the Kauri Cliffs property boasts an abundance of birdlife including endemic species such as the endangered North Island brown kiwi, the rare New Zealand dotterel, New Zealand dabchick, fluttering shearwater, paradise shelduck, variable oystercatcher, banded rail, kukupa (NZ wood pigeon), grey warbler, tui, rifleman and the North Island tit. The club also conducts a Kiwi Call Monitoring Programme annually to monitor populations of New Zealand's iconic flightless bird.

CHEMICAL AND FERTILISER USE

On the golf course itself, Kauri Cliffs runs a preventative fungicide programme on greens and tees from September until April. Fertilisers are applied to all surfaces on an as- and when-needed basis and in doing so Wood has managed to reduce nitrogen inputs down to around 110kg per year on the bentgrass greens, 100kg on the bentgrass tees and 180kg on the ryegrass fairways. Weeds are only sprayed when necessary and Wood's staff perform a lot of knapsack spot spraying or dabbing.

"We use stabilised nitrogen products and mainly do foliar applications to all surfaces," explains Wood. "If we do use a granular product then it will be a slow release coated product and applied ensuring we avoid any significant rain events. We use very little phosphorus in any of our applications. The course is surrounded by large grassy waste areas that act



as buffer zones to assist in the prevention of any possible leaching into our waterways.

"We always strive to keep 100 per cent grass cover and believe that if we can achieve this, with minimal *Poa annua* invasion, we have a much higher chance of producing a quality playing surface. We have found that if our desired turf species are kept healthy with minimal *Poa annua*, it is less susceptible to any environmental conditions like drought or disease impacts, which, in turn, lessens the need to apply any chemicals.

We have significantly reduced our fertiliser inputs over the last five years on our fairways, cutting back nitrogen by 45 per cent, phosphorous by 75 per



Two stream and gully systems dissect the golf course. These wetland areas were enhanced with judicious planting of indigenous species (pictured are before and after shots of the 9th)



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PHOTO: GARY LISBON

◀ Gully streams, like the once pictured here on the 18th, have become increasingly effective as wildlife corridors, linking the coastal margin with covenanted bush area as the plants grow and natural regeneration takes place

Guiding all operations relating to the golf course is a simplistic yet dedicated Golf Course Environmental Policy which outlines Kauri Cliffs' ongoing commitment to environmental management

cent and potassium by 80 per cent. We have found that with regular surface aeration, nutrients are more capable of a natural recycling process due to better soil and root zone health."

WATER MANAGEMENT

Kauri Cliffs works closely with the Northland Regional Council and local Iwi on its water take and the monitoring of river levels. Two independent ecological reports have been completed on the course's water source and there is a fully certified and calibrated flow metre attached to the club's pumping system.

Irrigation to the course is applied through a state-of-the-art Toro irrigation system which enables Wood to percentage adjust stations to alleviate wet and dry areas. Wood uses both penetrants and wetting agents to ensure maximum benefit from any irrigation applied. Staff utilise hand-held TDR 300 moisture probes to identify dry areas and only hand water these spots, which has significantly reduced the use of overheads.

SPREADING THE WORD

Instituting all these environmental initiatives and undertaking enhancement works is one thing, but to promote what has been achieved is quite another. Often in the golf course industry clubs

undertake some fantastic projects worthy of greater awareness, however, these good-news stories are often not told or stay in house. One area where Kauri Cliffs has really excelled is its engagement with the local community and authorities to highlight the environmental benefits the golf course and their management practices are having.

Wood and his members of staff regularly meet with members of DOC, The Kiwi Foundation and the QEII National Trust. Field days for a variety of groups are regularly conducted, including the Far North Forestry Association, local garden clubs, the NZGCSA and regional superintendent associations and local predator control groups.

Kauri Cliffs also works with local students from education institute North Tec on revegetation work and is also in a Community Pest Control Agreement with the Far North District Council and neighbouring Matauri Bay Trust. This work also involves working closely with other small community groups as part of the Kiwi Coast project which is a collaborative initiative to increase kiwi numbers along Northland's east coast.

Justin Fitton, from North Tec's environmental and sport and outdoor education department, is just one of many representatives from local organisations and authorities to commend Kauri Cliffs on its ongoing environmental works.

"On an ecological level, the projects that the Kauri Cliffs estate undertakes are commendable," says Fitton. "The 10ha block of native regeneration our students were involved in maintaining could just as easily have become a paddock or pine forest. To have chosen the far more costly option of indigenous vegetation shows a fantastic example.

"The block was adjoining a well-established track of natives, displaying a good diversity of habitats that cater for species such as the North Island brown kiwi. Links between established forest and new regenerating habitats provide extremely important corridors for native fauna. The regenerating block itself showed areas that will establish into wetland environments further providing valuable habitat for struggling endemic species."

"Kauri Cliffs has shown a huge commitment and has a proven track record of conserving and enhancing the natural environment," concludes Wood. "This has been achieved by a very committed team and owner. We have very high standards in all our fertiliser and chemical applications, we have up-to-date record keeping and have passed a snap inspection from the Department of Labour's Hazardous Substances Officer where we were found to be the only facility in the Auckland north area to be 100 per cent compliant.

"With our frequent visits by the Ornithological Society we know our bird populations are increasing on the property. Also our close relationships with a number local authorities and conservation groups demonstrates our proven commitment towards environmental stewardship." 🌱



PHOTO: GARY LISBON



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Steve Herzberg's 'Charisma, conversations and communication' presentation gave delegates simple yet effective strategies on how to improve the way they interact with members and committees

A new venue, the return of some familiar international guests and the burgeoning show biz career of a certain golf course superintendent from Hobart... the 32nd Australian Turfgrass Conference had all that and more. ATM looks back on the week in Melbourne which saw the AGCSA celebrate its 25th anniversary.



"Thanks for
me know"

A crowning week

Tuesday, 25 November 2014, is a day the Australian cricketing community and sporting world in general will never forget. It was on that late spring day, just as play had resumed after lunch on the opening day of the Sheffield Shield clash between South Australia and NSW at the Sydney Cricket Ground, that a cricket ball rose a little more sharply than Australian Test and One-Day International batsman Phillip Hughes had anticipated.

Prior to lunch, the barrage from the NSW attack had been relentless. Hughes had successfully navigated the onslaught, raising the bat for a half century, and in what would be his last words to coach Darren Berry during lunch said, "It's tough out there coach, they're coming hard at me, but I wouldn't have it any other way."

Everyone knows what transpired shortly after. David Talalla, Cricket Australia's match referee for that game, remembers it more than most. Having watched all 160 balls of Hughes' innings from the match referee's room in the Members' Pavilion, Talalla watched on in disbelief as Hughes collapsed after being struck in the neck by the 161st. It triggered a chain of events which even some 20 months down the track are still playing out for those who were at the ground that day.

In front of a packed room of 32nd Australian Turfgrass Conference delegates in Melbourne in June, Talalla recounted the gripping events of that fateful day as he opened the men's health session





North Carolina State University's Professor Fred Yelverton discusses weed control

WORDS AND PHOTOS: BRETT ROBINSON

which focussed on recognising and dealing with stress in the workplace. It was the first time that Talalla had talked about the Hughes incident in a conference forum and in a way it was yet another step he has taken in coming to terms with one of the most freakish incidents world sport has witnessed.

Indeed, if there has been one thing Talalla has taken away from the Hughes tragedy it's the importance of opening up. It was that premise which would run throughout Talalla's rivetting presentation and to highlight that point he began by sharing the life story of his father Richard.

OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND

In 1942, during World War II, a 12-year-old Richard was put on Death Row in Malaysia's notorious Pudu Prison. He and other members of his family had been thrown in there by the Japanese after they got wind that two of his brothers were pilots in the RAF. During his two years on Death Row he witnessed his mother being tortured and countless

other horrors of prison life. When the Japanese eventually surrendered, Richard and his family were released and a day later he was back at school as if nothing had happened. There was no discussion, no therapy, no psychological assessment; life just went on and nobody talked about what had happened.

Richard was eventually shipped off to England to read law for the next five years. Having completed his last exam, he walked out of the classroom to find his brother standing there who duly informed him their father had just died. Being a six week trip back to Malaysia via boat, Richard didn't get the chance to go to the funeral or say a final goodbye to his father. Again, it was something that was never talked about or discussed.

Despite these personal traumas in his early life, Richard would go on to become a High Court judge in Malaysia, a job which, ironically, would see him preside over capital punishment cases where the Death Penalty is the only course of action due to the country's strict laws. Indeed, Talalla, who would



David Talalla's opening address as part of the men's health session on recognising and dealing with stress in the workplace was powerful and thought-provoking



◀ **Cornell University's turf maestro Dr Frank Rossi enamoured conference delegates yet again with his unique style of presentation and insightful commentary on a wide variety of turf management issues**



David Cassidy teamed with fellow former and current ex-pats Mick Kelly and Marcus Hartup to talk about the perks and pitfalls of working as a superintendent abroad

A total of 58 companies exhibited at the trade show which was held for the first time in the Crown Palladium Ballroom

follow his father into law and who has since gone on to operate a successful legal and executive recruitment firm, has been in the gallery when his father has handed down such a sentence. Having that authority is extremely stressful in itself.

In retelling his father's story, Talalla was making the point of how older generations never opened up about traumatic events in their lives. It was all kept out of sight, out of mind and considered too taboo to be discussed in the open. Such attitudes were passed down the generations and Talalla readily admits he was a product of such an environment.

So when the Hughes incident occurred, it was little surprise that in the days and weeks afterwards Talalla found himself struggling. When you look at the improbable events and the profound effect it had on so many people that day, it was no surprise he needed some assistance.

AT A LOSS

Talalla calls it the 'ripple effect'. Within moments of Hughes being struck and collapsing and the gravity of the situation was realised, that's when

the real stress set in. Talalla had to deal with players, umpires, coaches, support staff, media, scorers and Cricket NSW administrators all of whom were in a state of abject shock. Among those he counselled was SCG curator Tom Parker who was understandably mortified at what had just taken place on his hallowed turf and wanted desperately to know whether it was the pitch that had played a part in the incident.

Just like his father, Talalla defaulted back to normal after the event and went about his business as usual, reluctant to open up or seek help about processing what had happened. However, at the insistence of his wife Ruth and Cricket Australia's cricket services officer Cate Ryan, Talalla eventually did the smartest thing he could do and went to see a psychologist who specialised in trauma. When he did it was like a valve had been released and he could finally answer the many questions about why the incident had had such an effect on him.

"I was really at a loss," Talalla reflected. "I was asking the psychologist, 'Why am I so upset over this?' It wasn't like Phil was a close mate. I knew him of course but he wasn't a friend, so why was I getting caught up in it? My psychologist was a former police officer who had seen some pretty horrible things during her time and she explained to me that when she, as a police officer, went to a car crash or murder she already knew that the accident had taken place and her mind had time to prepare for what it was likely to witness. In my case it was different. You don't go to a cricket match expecting to see someone fatally injured so your mind doesn't have that time to prepare.

"The hardest thing for me was dealing with the reaction of the players and officials – their screams and the shock. I remember standing next to South Australian coach Darren Berry with Phillip on the stretcher just metres away. All he could say was, 'This is just like David Hookes, this is just like David



Hookes'. Darren was there that night in 2004 when David was king hit outside a Melbourne pub and subsequently died. Two others in the SA team were also there that day. After Phillip had been taken to hospital I made a point of tracking Darren down and found him effectively barricaded in the changing room toilet in a state of shock.

"I had a BBL game at the SCG a month later and I told my psychologist that I wasn't looking forward to going back. But she brought me around and showed me that I had a chance to get some closure on what had happened and move on. It was really important that I did go and I'm glad I did."

In concluding his presentation Talalla rammed home a couple of key points to delegates about managing stress. The first he couldn't impress hard enough – talk, talk, talk; never bottle issues up. He highlighted the importance of speaking with colleagues, building a solid and trustworthy mentor network and the need to delegate work and empower staff. Working and communicating with all stakeholders is a must as is taking a break from work every three or six months to gain some perspective and recharge the batteries.

Such points were also echoed by Talalla's fellow session presenters Phil Moylan (Gosnells Golf Club, Perth) and Phil Beal (The Australian Golf Club, Sydney). Both superintendents have recently had to deal with significant stress in their workplaces, with Beal's well-documented breakdown following the 2014 Emirates Australian Open the subject of an article which appeared in Volume 18.1 of Australian Turfgrass Management Journal (January-February 2016).

Their unique insight into the everyday pressures that superintendents have to face dovetailed nicely with Talalla's talk and the subsequent 25 minutes of questions from the room demonstrated just how significant an issue dealing with and managing stress has become. Among the discussion points raised during question time were whether stress management techniques should be incorporated into turf management training, the importance of getting professional help and how vital simple things like getting a good night's sleep are in dealing with stress.

Not surprisingly, the men's health session ranked the highest by delegates in the post-conference survey conducted by the AGCSA, just as it had done a year earlier at the Hunter Valley conference when Suncorp Stadium curator Mal Caddies courageously talked about his battle after being diagnosed with malignant melanoma.

"I sat in on David's talk and it really was impressive," says AGCSA events and education manager Simone Staples. "Like last year's session on skin cancer, this year's men's health session was the highest weighted talk of the conference and again vindicates the AGCSA's continual push to have presentations of such a nature front and centre of every conference."



NEW VENUE, FAMILIAR FACES

The men's health session was just one of huge variety of education sessions that ran across four days of the 32nd Australian Turfgrass Conference and Trade Exhibition. Held at the Crown Entertainment Complex for the first time due to the unavailability of the Melbourne Convention Centre, the conference attracted 491 fully registered and day delegates across four streams – golf, sportsfields, course architects and turf technicians. With nearly 200 delegates responding to the post-conference survey, Staples says she was delighted with the positive feedback on this year's event and the suggestions for future improvements.

"The responses have been honest and have pointed out both positives and negatives from across the week," says Staples. "With the change in venue some teething problems were bound to occur. There was always going to be compromise given that there was only a limited amount of conferencing space. Popular workshops were unable to be repeated, limiting choice for some delegates, rooms were often full to capacity and being unable to open conference registration on the Sunday due to a late scheduled event in Crown Palladium created some confusion and long queues on Monday.

Talalla joined with course superintendents Phil Moylan (centre) and Phil Beal who each talked about their unique situations and the pressures they found themselves under in the workplace



Former Atlanta Athletic Club director of grounds Ken Mangum spoke on his experiences with zoysia

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

The popular David Bancroft-Turner returned to the Australian Turfgrass Conference for a third straight year



Right and below: 2016 AGCSA Golf Championship winner Brent Hull carded a one-over 71 to win on a countback at Barwon Heads GC

In 2011 he beat three others in a playoff to claim his first. In 2016 he collected his second on a countback. Moruya Golf Club's Brent Hull knows how to win the Toro AGCSA Golf Championships in dramatic circumstances.



You'd forgive Moruya Golf club course superintendent Brent Hull from experiencing just a touch of déjà-vu when he was announced as winner of the 2016 AGCSA Golf Championship on the eve of the 32nd Australian Turfgrass Conference.

Five years earlier when he collected his first Toro Red Jacket at Kooyonga Golf Club in Adelaide, he had done so in quite dramatic circumstances after prevailing on the second hole of a four-way playoff. It was a just one of many highlights that year and in addition to his feats on the golf course, his eldest daughter got married that December and, being a well known horse breeder and equestrian rider, he had a horse qualify for the Show Horse Council's Grand National Championships, the sports pinnacle event in Australia.

In 2016, the parallels were eerily similar. While there was no playoff, this time he triumphed on a countback from Anthony Toogood from the Commercial Club in Albury, his youngest daughter announced earlier in the year she was getting married and, you guessed it, this year he had another horse qualify for the Grand National.

The 56-year-old, who finished top 20 in the Australian Senior Amateur Championship at Manly Golf Club last October, posted the lowest winning

total in more than 15 years (a one-over par 71) to claim the AGCSA Championship, played for the first time at Barwon Heads Golf Club. Despite being right on the coastline and renowned for its wind, Barwon Heads dished up a near still day for the event, so rare that former resident superintendent and current AGCSA chief executive Peter Frewin described it as a one-in-200-day occurrence.

Starting on the 16th and playing alongside host superintendent Adam Lamb, AGCSA president elect Brett Balloch and Cobram Barooga's Matt McLeod, Hull quickly found himself in the red after a birdie on the 17th. However, his very next shot undid that good start as he was forced to take an unplayable lie after pushing his drive left into the scrub. Scrambling a five, two further bogeys on 2 and 6 saw him back to two-over, but a birdie on 7 and consistent par golf for the remainder of the round saw him sign for a 71. Playing partner Lamb would shoot 74 and finish tied for fifth alongside another former Red Jacket winner Scott Fogg.

For Toogood, a three time AGCSA Championship winner, through 14 holes the odds were looking good for an unprecedented fourth Red Jacket. Crafting one of his better rounds in a while, a bogey on 10 was countered by a fine birdie on the par three 13th and he teed up on the 15th at even. However,

2016 TORO AGCSA GOLF CHAMPIONSHIPS RESULTS

Stroke (Barwon Heads)

71: Brent Hull (Moruya Golf Club, NSW) wins on countback from Anthony Toogood (Commercial Club, NSW)

72: Nick Price (The Cut, WA) and Brett Woodward (Armidale Golf Club, NSW)

74: Scott Fogg (Living Turf) and Adam Lamb (Barwon Heads Golf Club, Vic)

75: Jason Seis (Mudgee Golf Club, NSW) and Cory Budden (Sandhurst Club, Vic)

AGCSA Classic (Nett)

68: Brad Anderson (Sun City Country Club, WA)

Stableford (13th Beach)

Jason Kelly (Royal Fremantle) on countback from Aaron Banks (Bonville Golf Resort)

Nearest the Pins

13th Beach: Justin Bradbury (Bonnie Doon GC, NSW, 7th) **Barwon Heads:** Anthony Toogood (Commercial Club, NSW, 8th)

Longest Drive

13th Beach: Teague Baldry (Marist College, ACT, 11th) **Barwon Heads:** Nick Price (The Cut, WA, 18th)

a poor drive led to a bogey and were it not for a couple of brilliant up and downs on 17 and 18 he would have handed the title to Hull outright.

On the par three 17th his tee shot found the front right hand greenside bunker, but a spectacular sand save saw him tap in for par. On 18 and with the light fading rapidly, his approach shot agonisingly hung on the left edge of the green before rolling down into a swale. Leaving his third about eight feet short, it was understandable that his par saving putt was meet with a small fist pump. However, it wasn't to be for Toogood and his back nine 37 was one stroke more than Hull.

The victory, which will see him compete in the GCSAA Championships for a second time next February in Orlando, proved a nice way to put behind what had been a trying month for Hull. Along with many other clubs along the eastern seaboard, Moruya felt the full impact of the East Coast Low which smashed the region during the first week of June. Hull's course recorded in excess of 360mm in a two day period, with six holes going under.

"It was one of the best rounds that I have played in a long time," reflects Hull on his win. "The course was superb and it really suited me. It wasn't long and with the exception of the 18th I stayed out of trouble off the tee all day and hit 14 greens in regulation. I'm not the best putter, but the Poa greens were quick and true and I had just 32 putts for the round."



A countback was also required in the stableford competition played on the Beach course at the neighbouring Thirteenth Beach (host superintendent Steve Hewitt). Jason Kelly (Royal Fremantle GC) prevailed over Aaron Banks from Bonville Golf Resort, while the AGCSA Classic (best nett) played at Barwon Heads also went the way of WA. Despite nursing an injured calf, Sun City Country Club superintendent Brad Anderson (13 handicap) posted a nett 68 to collect the trophy.

After a few years absence, NSW returned to the winner's circle in the state teams' event. Jason Seis (Mudgee GC), Dominic Yates (Oatlands GC), Ben Grylewicz (now Royal Canberra GC) and Brett Woodward (Armidale GC) posted a total of 101 points to beat home the WA team by three points. 🍷

It was a case of so close yet so far for Anthony Toogood who was gunning for a fourth Red Jacket



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In excess of 490 full and day delegates registered for the education sessions across four streams – golf, sportsfields, turf technicians and course architects



After an absence of 13 years Dr Stan Kostka made a welcome return to the Australian Turfgrass Conference, with his 'Water disassembled' workshop fully subscribed

Ventriloquist Darren Carr brought the house down at the Syngenta President's Dinner

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

"Feedback on the education content was extremely positive. As well as the men's health session, other highly ranked talks included 'Accommodating the AFL – Inspections, expectations, irritations and inspirations' and Steve Herzberg's 'Charisma, conversations and communication'. It was great having Dr Frank Rossi back and his plenary session address 'Taking the high ground – A look at current and future environmental issues' also rated very highly as did the Turfgrass Talkback session which he was involved with on the final day. The survey results show that delegates enjoyed the wide range of topics and speakers and we got the mix of both agronomic and management topics, as well as international and local content, right."

The conference's social programme also rated highly among delegates and exhibitors. Despite the long trek to Barwon Heads and Thirteenth Beach for the Toro AGCSA Golf Championships, both proved popular venues. Feedback such as 'Thirteenth Beach was an excellent place to play and the organisation getting there and to Barwon Heads and the dinner was excellent' was common. The

ICL Farewell Bash was well attended with delegates and trade reps alike braving a cold, wet Melbourne evening to relax after the week.

The undoubted hit of the week was the sold-out Syngenta President's Dinner which incorporated the AGCSA Awards and association's 25th anniversary celebrations. In addition to the formal part of the evening which saw Euan Laird, Mick McCombe, Andy Wood, William Koopmans and Kurt Dillon honoured, AGCSA director Steve Lewis took to the stage with ventriloquist Darren Carr and literally brought all 260 guests to their knees.

Feedback on the trade show was also positive. Held in the Crown Palladium Ballroom, this year's floorplan was smaller than Melbourne conferences of the past, however, that did not detract from its impact. A total of 58 companies and 300 company representatives exhibited at the show with more than 950 trade exhibition visitors (pre-registered and walk-ups) in addition to the 491 registered delegates who enjoyed the close proximity of the sessions to the exhibition area.

Overall the event was a great success and Staples thanked all those who attended and took the time after to provide feedback. "As with any event of this nature there is always room for improvement," says Staples. "We need to do better in providing maps and signage and keeping the conference app updated. Some delegates commented they had trouble finding the registration area and its opening hours. These constructive criticisms are how we continue to improve the event and we look forward to doing it all again when we converge on Twin Waters on the Sunshine Coast in 2017."

At the 2016 AGCSA AGM, Anglesea Golf Club's Brett Balloch was elected as the association's eighth president. He replaces Coolangatta & Tweed Heads Golf Club superintendent Peter Loneragan who stepped down from the role he took over in 2012. Loneragan will remain on the Board as a director alongside Darren Wilson (Wembley Golf Complex, WA) and Steve Lewis (Royal Hobart GC, Tas). 🏌️



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PERFORMANCE FERTILISERS



The 32nd Australian Turfgrass Conference saw the inaugural AGCSA Future Turf Managers' Initiative run in conjunction with Gold Partner Jacobsen. ATM looks back at the intensive two-day programme and what the 13 candidates got out of it.

Above: Thirteen aspiring turf managers from around Australia descended on Melbourne during the 32nd Australian Turfgrass Conference for the very first AGCSA Future Turf Managers' Initiative, sponsored by Jacobsen

Taking the next step from assistant superintendent to superintendent can be a daunting one and at past Australian Turfgrass Conferences it has been the subject of a number of presentations and workshops. At the Melbourne conference in June that was taken to a new level with the hosting of the inaugural AGCSA Future Turf Managers' Initiative (FTMI), presented in partnership with AGCSA Gold Partner Jacobsen.

Following an application process earlier in the year, 13 aspiring turf managers from around the country were ultimately selected to take part in the programme which Jacobsen has successfully run in a number of countries over the past four years. The initial intake included Brock Agnew (Sanctuary Cove G&CC, Qld), Nathan Arnett (Traralgon GC, Vic), Jarrod Arps (Ryde-Parramatta GC, NSW), Liam Ash (Monash CC, NSW), Stuart Campbell (Maroochy River GC, Qld), Justin Crowe (Huntingdale GC, Vic), Rowan Daymond (The Grange GC, SA), Mark Harkness (Peninsula-Kingwood CGC, Vic), Kirsty Herring (Kalgoorlie GC, WA), Tom Hogan (Barwon Heads GC, Vic), David Hurst (Cromer GC, NSW), Stewart MacFarlane (Settlers Run G&CC, Vic) and Nick Marino (Mandalay GC, Vic).

Jacobsen's international marketing and communications manager Karen Proctor, together with the company's Asia Pacific managing director Chuck Greif, attended the inaugural Australian FTMI and was extremely impressed with the quality of the candidates chosen: "The FTMI educational event is a great opportunity for highly motivated and career focused individuals to immerse themselves in an intense, inspiring and memorable experience," says

Proctor. "The course equips them with the skills and knowledge to be successful in their careers."

"The quality of the applications received during the selection process was of the highest calibre demonstrating the incredible talent in Australia's turf industry. Congratulations to the 13 candidates who now join a group of incredibly talented individuals around the globe that have graduated from this invaluable educational programme."

The group was also joined by three superintendent mentors – Justin Bradbury (Bonnie Doon GC, NSW), Steve Hewitt (Thirteenth Beach, Vic) and Ben Tilley (Headland GC, Qld) – and over two days attended a range of conference sessions as well as dedicated FTMI workshops that focused on staff and HR management, communication and personal development, as well as budgeting and CV/job interview techniques. There was also plenty of time to network with fellow FTMI delegates.

Hewitt, immediate past president of the VGCSA and long-serving superintendent at Thirteenth Beach, gave the programme a huge tick of approval and says Jacobsen should be congratulated on developing the programme.

"As a mentor I was encouraged by the calibre of the assistant superintendents that applied," says Hewitt. "They all had a desire to succeed and learn and will no doubt forge successful paths in this industry. The programme was mostly centred around people management which as we all know is most important in developing a cohesive team and getting results. It was noticeable that everyone engaged with the learning and individual scenarios were shared among the group."

"As a superintendent it was enlightening to hear what challenges assistants have from a managerial perspective out on the golf course, which is often fuelled by inconsistent and poor communication. I also learnt that I could be doing more to educate my staff in dealing with managerial issues and committees which would make them more rounded employees."

Following the conference, ATM canvassed the 'Class of 2016' to get their impressions of the FTMI and some of the lessons they took home not only to improve their skills in a work capacity but also personally. Perhaps the best summation came from Maroochy River Golf Club assistant superintendent Stuart Campbell.

"The FTMI programme was nothing short of sensational," says Campbell. "It was an exceptionally organised and professionally delivered course that I was proud to be selected for and participate in. I have personally gained valuable insight into my own leadership qualities that can now be utilised not only at work but in my everyday life."

"Since the completion of the programme I see myself more confident and better prepared to take on the next step, whether it is going for an interview, employing staff, reading budgets or giving feedback. However, I believe the single most important thing I acquired is the realisation that in order to create a team environment and get the most out of staff, I need to change myself. It is far better



Headland Golf Club's Ben Tilley was one of three superintendent mentors that were also part of the FTMI programme

to alter my views and opinions of others than to try and 'change them' and then understand how I can influence them just by appreciating their personality preferences."

Here are what other FTMI participants had to say about the programme:

ROWAN DAYMOND
Assistant superintendent
The Grange GC, SA

"The FTMI was a great networking exercise and a chance to cover topics you may not always encounter in your daily work activities. It was great to be among like-minded people and I would certainly recommend it to anybody in a senior role. The sessions taught me how to embrace all differences when managing staff and I got a good handle on areas for improvement or more involvement (e.g.: budgets).



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Kirsty Herring: "The FTMI has given me greater confidence in communicating with staff."

"The HR side of the programme outlined my strengths and also highlighted weaknesses which you tend not to focus on so much. For me, communication has been an area I need to work on. Now I know how people may respond to my natural way of talking/acting which will help me address situations in a more positive way and help me connect with people/staff better and hopefully influence them in a positive way to achieve higher standards/efficiency for our club."

NICK MARINO

Assistant superintendent
Club Mandalay, Vic

"The programme was excellent. Staff management, communication and budgets are all major parts of the job these days and the programme highlighted for me the importance of more effective team management, communication skills and networking. It has helped me understand the overall running of clubs better as well as the advantages of taking a different approach to general staff management."

KIRSTY HERRING

Assistant superintendent
Kalgoorlie GC, WA

"The FTMI was a well-planned, well thought out programme which has given me the skills to become a better manager. As participants, we were extremely

well looked after and treated to an intense but great couple of days. The key points for me were:

- Behaviour breeds behaviour and how you perceive someone is exactly how they will act;
- Understanding there are differing personalities and how to influence and communicate with varying people; and
- The importance of the relationship with your GM and other management staff.

"The FTMI has given me greater confidence in communicating with staff and has helped me realise how my behaviour influences others. As a result, I'll definitely be altering my behaviour appropriately depending on individuals and approaching difficult conversations more effectively to achieve positive results."

JUSTIN CROWE

Assistant superintendent
Huntingdale GC, Vic

"The FTMI programme was a huge honour to be part of, with the knowledge and the experience gained invaluable. I was hesitant at first because I knew it would push me out of my comfort zone, but as soon as the programme started I knew this was going to benefit me greatly. Networking with similar professionals within the industry has created a strong group of friends, while overall the programme has given me clarity for future goals to advance my career. It highlighted how I can become a better manager and gave me valuable insight into my own leadership qualities that I can now utilise not only in the workplace but in life."

STEWART MACFARLANE

Assistant superintendent
Settlers Run G&CC, Vic

"The sessions were exceptional and I found them very interesting and relevant. It was a privilege to be accepted as one of the participants and the skills learnt will be beneficial in my future career. Attending the programme has increased my confidence and skills when dealing with staff performance management, managing budgets and recruitment interview techniques.

"I feel more comfortable and confident in my position as an assistant superintendent already as a direct result of the information I received while attending the FTMI. After attending the conference I immediately felt validated, motivated, equipped and inspired to handle the challenges of the 'day in the life of an assistant superintendent'. Thank you for investing in me."

BROCK AGNEW

Assistant superintendent
Sanctuary Cove G&CC, Qld

"The FTMI was a fantastic forum. Each presenter handed over a wealth of knowledge for everyone to use at their home clubs. It was great to focus on management of staff and ourselves rather than



Jarrod Arps: "The FTMI is a breath of fresh air for our industry."

focusing on the agronomy aspects of our work places. Although we only spent a couple of hours on budgeting, it was great to hear how the money is spent from a general manager's point of view.

"I still need to work on my HR skills, communication and understanding staff needs and responsibilities. David Bancroft-Turner's sessions did shine a massive light and take a lot of the stress and weight off when it comes to dealing with these issues. Switching off is something I need to work on, although after talking with the other candidates it was reassuring to hear that I wasn't the only one who found this difficult. I need to relax and trust that my staff, if trained correctly, will do the task expected correctly and that because not everyone has the same personality or level of passion I have, I need to change the way I communicate with staff."

MARK HARKNESS

**Assistant superintendent
Peninsula Kingswood CGC, Vic**

"The FTMI has given me experience and more confidence in taking the next step. The mentors were great and shared their experiences of managing staff etc with us and it was a tremendous opportunity to network with other assistants from all around Australia. As well as getting an understanding of budgets and how to best work with your board/managers, the sessions also gave me an insight into how to manage staff. Everyone has different



Mentor Steve Hewitt (right) and Barwon Heads assistant superintendent Tom Hogan work through some of the exercises during one of the FTMI sessions

personalities and it has given me the confidence when instructing staff how to effectively communicate to them depending on their personality type. As a result, I have changed my whole mindset when dealing with staff and trying to better relate to them by using some of the techniques we learned."

JARROD ARPS

**Assistant superintendent
Ryde-Parramatta GC, NSW**

"The FTMI is a breath of fresh air for our industry and for the immediate next generation. The programme was very well run with high quality speakers delivering quality interactive lectures. The inclusion of mentors was fantastic as we could bounce ideas off of them throughout the two days. There was a great balance of formal and informal forums along with the time to learn more about each other both professionally and personally over group meals.

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◀ **Brock Agnew:** "It was great to focus on management of staff and ourselves rather than on agronomy."



Huntingdale Golf Club general manager Stewart Fenton provided an excellent insight to golf club finances and budgets

I have already recommended to a senior staff member that this programme is a 'must do'.

Some of the key things I took away were:

- People have different behavioural preferences and for a message that I am delivering to them to be successful it must be delivered in their preference not mine;
- Profit and loss are not the sole factors as to whether a club is sustainable or viable; and
- There was a statement made by David Bancroft-Turner in one of his lectures that went something like "If you are not getting the desired response from a person it isn't their fault, it is your fault". From that I am first going to look at my performance as a manager when dealing with cases of poor performances by a staff member."

TOM HOGAN

**Assistant superintendent
Barwon Heads GC, Vic**

"The FTMI was a fantastic programme and an opportunity that I was very grateful to be a part of. The chance to meet some great people in similar positions from around the country and to participate in sessions on leadership, club finances, resume writing and interviewing techniques was an invaluable experience.

"The presentation by Huntingdale GC general manager Stewart Fenton on club budgets and finances I found extremely informative. This is one area where I haven't had a great deal of experience with and he gave us a great insight and helped provide an understanding of how to interpret a financial report or budget.

"The FTMI included some great sessions on how to interact with all the different people involved in a golf club environment, covering processes and ideas to communicate with different people and situations, whether it be in a day-to-day work situation, interacting with members or going for a job interview. Having formulas and ideas on how to manage different people and situations will leave me more equipped and confident to do so in my current role and in the future. The other big thing I took out of it was to put yourself out there – do something different to get noticed."

NATHAN ARNETT

**Superintendent
Traralgon GC, Vic**

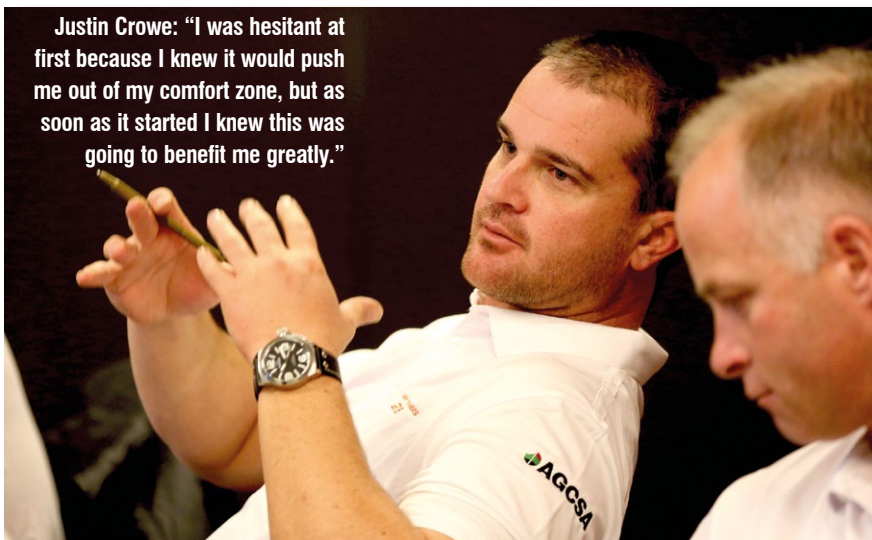
"My first impression was how wonderful it was to be surrounded by professionals who were filled with enthusiasm and who had sound knowledge of the industry. The eagerness to consume as much information as possible was very evident.

"People management skills, network expansion and communication skills were the three main things I took away from the FTMI. Understanding that not all people can be dealt with the same way has broadened my skill set and provided me with the knowledge to address any future issues that may arise at my club, ranging from the bottom right to the top of the organisation.

"Proper communication skills for a variety of different circumstances were a big talking point. This topic was very educational. With people management being a weakness, I gained great insight from different methods/practices on how to deal with a range of personalities which are present in the workplace. David Bancroft-Turner provided knowledgeable tools and techniques which I intend on utilising for my future growth.

"Attending the FTMI has really made me think about the way I address issues with staff and other club representatives. With this broadened skill set I feel as though I can approach a variety of situations that arise and handle all circumstances in a positive and professional manner. Maintaining a golf course can often be the easiest part at times, it's dealing with people involved in the whole operation that can be the hardest part. The FTMI addressed all these issues and I am very grateful to have taken part in the programme."

Following the successful launch of the FTMI, the AGCSA and Jacobsen look forward to running it again in 2017. Those who are interested in applying should stay tuned to the AGCSA website and The Cut towards the end of 2016 for further details. 🍷



Justin Crowe: "I was hesitant at first because I knew it would push me out of my comfort zone, but as soon as it started I knew this was going to benefit me greatly."



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Main photo: Looking down the 6th at The Western Australian Golf Club which hosted its third WA Open in 16 years back in late April.

Open returns to WAGC

Western Australian Golf Club course superintendent Idris Evans takes a look back at the hosting of the 2016 Nexus Risk TSA Group WA Open in late April.

From 28 April to 1 May the Western Australian Golf Club played host to the \$100,000 Nexus Risk TSA Group WA Open. This was the third time the tournament had visited the club after hosting it in 2001 and 2010. The club was supposed to hold the event in October 2015, but due to some major clubhouse works the event was moved to the last weekend in April.

The months leading up to the tournament were very challenging as the club had undertaken a major building project on the clubhouse. This included the construction of a new veranda and pro shop that overlooked a new putting green and reconstructed 10th tee. The building works also included pathways

from the course and around the clubhouse, along with landscaping and a total revamp of the front entrance to the clubhouse at a cost of \$1.9 million.

One of the challenges was trying to maintain the golf course leading into a very busy golfing schedule given the clubhouse build was three months behind schedule. The course staff and I were heavily involved and spent as much as 23 per cent of our man hours on the clubhouse works.

Some of our days were spent wheel barrowing concrete for pathways as access was almost impossible with trying to limit trucks and pumping equipment damaging the golf course. In one of the pours 16m² was manually transported using ►



In the lead-up to the Open WAGC undertook extensive works around the clubhouse, including the construction of a new practice green





◀ The semi-rough became a talking point leading into the Open after it was grown out from 50mm to 100mm to place a premium on finding the fairways. The step cut was at 18mm



The fairways were cut every day at a height of 8mm

three wheelbarrows... not much fun! We also had to re-install the sprinkler system in the putting green and landscape gardens surrounding the clubhouse.

The new putting green was supposed to be seeded but because of the building works being behind it was decided to solid turf the green from our nursery. It was put down on 27 January 2016 and was opened for play in mid-March which gave the green very little time to take root and settle down.

Given the time restraints we were under and the time of year, it was very pleasing to have the course in good shape. I had decided to take a very minimalistic approach to how we were going to set the course up for the Open.

Starting in March the fairways were foliar fertilised every three weeks with iron sulphate (200kg), potassium sulphate (100kg), magnesium sulphate (100kg) and urea (100kg) over 12 hectares. The same rate was also applied to the semi-rough (19 hectares) but this was only done twice leading into the tournament. The semi-rough became a talking point leading into the Open as we let it grow out from 50mm to 100mm. This was because we are not a long course by today's standards and we wanted to make finding the fairways a premium. The step cut was 18mm.

Leading into the Open we had some perfect weather allowing us to get the course set up and having it looking quite nice. We had to be very mindful how hard we pushed the greens leading into the cooler months, in particular the 14th green which was five months old and the putting green which was just three months old.

One of the local pros made a great comment about a week out from the Open saying that every farmer should hold a golf tournament because it's guaranteed to rain. Of course, right on cue, it rained on Monday through to Friday of tournament week which softened the greens up considerably and made getting speed out of them just that bit more difficult. In total we received just over 22mm of rain.

Each day of the tournament began at 4am with the crew working through until 8am and then returning around 4pm to clean up and take care of whatever needed doing. Tuesday saw a strong front come through which caused a lot of tree debris which meant the fairways, greens and bunkers needed to be tidied. Thankfully we have three Pro-force blowers that made light work of this.

The set-up of the greens consisted of double cutting each morning at 2.75mm, with rolling only carried out on the Tuesday, Saturday and Sunday because of all the rain. The putting green that was still very young took an absolute pounding. As we all know the pros love to stand in one spot and practice which meant we changed holes every day to try and share the wear.

The fairways were cut in a shadow pattern every day at a height of 8mm. Aprons and greens surrounds were cut each morning before play also at 8mm. Bunkers were raked each morning and a lot of time was spent in them after play each day brooming the faces and repairing where the golfers had been.

The tournament, which was won by amateur Curtis Luck, ended with some nice feedback on the course from the players and the PGA of Australia. I'm very fortunate to have a great crew that has been involved in past events and they understand the requirements of such an event. They know what to do and just get on with it. 🙌





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Practice, practice practice

Many golf clubs around Australia have recently or are in the process of upgrading their practice facilities in the wake of increased demand by golfers. USGA agronomists David Oatis and Todd Lowe ask whether your practice facility stacks up and provide some pointers on how to improve it.

Above: Practice facilities that are well-built and well-maintained are popular and valuable components of a golf facility. They provide a place for players to warm up before their round, fine tune their skills or receive instruction

Practice facilities are important and play a valuable role at golf facilities. Many courses have invested in practice facility improvements, expansions and upgrades in recent years. Are you wondering whether improvements to your practice facilities would be worthwhile? Have you considered all the different options? Learning about the history of practice facilities and the importance of design, use and maintenance will help you create a safe and fun area where players can work on their game.

PRACTICE FACILITY HISTORY

In the early 1900s, golf instruction was generally given in the form of playing lessons and little thought was given to practice facilities. Perhaps the earliest recorded history of practice facilities in the United States was at Pinehurst Golf Resort in North Carolina in 1913 when Donald Ross designed a practice area by relocating the 1st, 2nd and 18th holes of Course No. 1. The practice area was an immediate hit and eventually earned the nickname Maniac Hill, presumably in reference to the numerous golf addicts that tried to hone their skills there.

In 1926, Maynard Metcalf, a Chicago-area golf course superintendent, bemoaned the lack of adequate practice facilities in an article he wrote for the Bulletin of the Green Section of the United States Golf Association: *"Practice ground of sufficient size and proper character for driving, for short and long approaching by run up, pitch and run, or dead-stop shots, for shots out of sand traps and out of rough and for putting, should be provided in connection with every course which is designed to train good golfers."*

Metcalf understood the importance of practice facilities long before most others. However, it took many years before golf clubs realised the potential value of practice facilities and began investing in them. Early practice facilities were neither elaborate nor large and they received minimal maintenance, likely adversely affecting their popularity and usage. These facilities typically consisted of a putting green, possibly a chipping green and a field or driving range where golfers could hit their own practice balls. Later, courses began selling practice balls by the bucket or bag.

Practice facilities did not seem to receive concentrated and thoughtful innovation or intensive maintenance until much later. In the early 1980s, USGA Green Section national director Al Radko stated: *"Practice ranges at golf courses are often an eyesore in an otherwise plush setting. The range, a most desirable facility, is too frequently neglected in the budget and is given little incentive for improvement."*

In a 1982 USGA Green Section Record article, agronomist William Brewer wrote that 4500 square feet (418m²) of practice teeing area might be enough for some courses but others might need five times that amount. In a modern context, even the higher number would be woefully inadequate at many courses. So what caused such a dramatic shift in the popularity of practice?

Several key changes occurred that sparked a tremendous increase in the popularity of practice. The surge prompted many to place much greater emphasis on having good practice facilities where golfers could work on all facets of their game. Among the changes included:

- Unlimited range ball programmes: Golf courses (particularly in the US) have started charging for range balls on a yearly basis, rather than by the bucket, causing a profound effect on golfer practice habits. Driving range use sharply increased at courses that initiated such programmes. Golfers that once hit a small bucket to warm up before a round of golf suddenly began hitting buckets of golf balls.
- Increased emphasis on practice: Golfers have long realised that improving their game requires practice. Golf instructors and pupils need areas to teach, learn and practice the game. While many golfers are satisfied with simply hitting a few golf balls to warm up before their round, others want better, larger and more varied practice facilities where they can spend time hitting balls and working on different aspects of their golf game.
- Limited free time: For many, the increased popularity of practicing is partially due to a lack of free time. The time that it takes to play a round of golf and busy personal schedules can make it tough for golfers to play nine or 18 holes. Practice facilities provide a great opportunity for players that have limited free time.

ADJUSTING TO THE DEMAND

Golf courses recognise that good practice facilities are an attraction for many golfers and can serve as an effective marketing tool. Practice facilities also are ideal areas for introducing new golfers to the game.

Unlimited range ball programmes brought in by many clubs stimulated a surge in practice that quickly laid waste to driving range tees everywhere. As a result, many courses responded by expanding driving range tees and some courses began experimenting with artificial turf surfaces. More than a few courses have expanded driving range practice tees multiple times in an effort to keep up with the dramatic increase in practice.

Having a practice tee with enough hitting area to maintain reasonable turf conditions is an important starting point, but today's golfers want to do more than just hit balls on the driving range. In response, courses have installed practice bunkers, elaborate short game practice areas and even par-3 courses to meet those desires. Innovative teaching aids such as video equipment, golf simulators and launch monitors also are being incorporated into practice facility design.

Clearly, there are many good reasons to develop bigger and better practice facilities, so why don't all courses have them? The most common answers are simple: lack of space or funding. In addition, maintaining heavily used practice facilities requires labour and resources that are unavailable to some courses. However, given the popularity of practice, many courses would be wise to consider investing in their practice facilities.



PRIORITIES

In a perfect world, every golf course would have a large driving range with plenty of hitting area, a par-3 course, a short game practice area and one or more practice putting greens. In reality, golf courses have to do the best they can with their available resources, starting with a sound design that maximises the available space.

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

A large practice tee with plenty of hitting area is ideal, but how big should it be? Determining the amount of hitting area needed can be difficult to calculate because it depends on several factors. Golfer profile, proximity to the pro shop and clubhouse, climate and the periods of peak activity are just some of the factors that influence how heavily a range is used and how much hitting area is needed. Turf conditions also influence usage – better turf conditions often results in heavier use.

Paul Vermeulen (2002), former director of the North Central Region of the USGA Green Section, developed a useful formula for determining adequate practice tee size. However, a sound motto for practice tee size is 'bigger is better'. It is difficult to build a practice tee that is large enough to handle today's intensive practice. In fact, some courses that expand their practice tee fail to see a major improvement in turf quality because use increases along with the expansion. Nevertheless, a large practice tee will support better turf conditions and may require less-intensive maintenance if wear can be effectively distributed.

Golf courses recognise that good practice facilities are an attraction for many golfers and can serve as an effective marketing tool

Below: Consolidating divots in small areas leads to severe turf damage and extremely slow recovery. Although less area may be damaged, the slow recovery negates any benefits

Below left: Some golfers like to scatter their divots. This causes more damage because each swing produces a full divot





◀ The best way to take divots on a practice tee is in a linear pattern by placing the ball on the turf immediately behind the preceding divot. Following a linear pattern, each swing will take less turf than a full divot. The resulting narrow lines heal quicker

When considering practice tee size, it is important to be aware that tee width can be as important as depth. Wider tees allow more golfers to practice at the same time, an important feature for courses where heavy play and shotgun starts are common. Wide tees also allow practice stations to be shifted laterally as well as forward and back, helping to spread the wear.

It is critically important to maximise the amount of usable teeing area when building new or expanding existing practice tees. The most efficient use of space dictates that large, single-level designs be utilised, but they may not be practical where elevation changes are severe. Multilevel designs help a tee fit more naturally into a steep site and can help golfers see the landing zone. However, valuable teeing space is lost to grade changes between levels so, when space is limited and usage is heavy, the use of multilevel tees should be minimised.

Getting golfers to and from the practice facility without causing concentrated wear is another important design consideration. Golfer traffic patterns should be carefully studied and the practice facility design adjusted to minimise wear problems. Providing ample room for parking, foot traffic and maintenance access will improve how a practice facility functions.

Artificial turf gives golfers a place to practice while grass tees recover. This is essential when space is limited and practice facility use is heavy



TURF SPECIES SELECTION

The unfortunate reality is that most courses have limited area and range tees usually are smaller than ideal. Courses must be mindful of their turf species, climate and usage patterns to maximise practice tee performance.

Warm-season grasses grow rapidly in hot, sunny weather but go dormant in the winter. Less teeing area may suffice during the summer when recovery is rapid, but significantly more area is needed during winter when growth and recovery are slow or suspended. If the primary playing season is winter, far more teeing area will be needed.

In areas where cool-season turf is grown and use is heavy, courses usually need one or two acres (4000-8000m²) of usable hitting area to maintain reasonable turf quality without relying on artificial turf surfaces. Courses that experience heavy range usage may require even more area. Courses in a transition zone climate are increasingly maintaining practice tees with both warm-season and cool-season turf. Players practice on the cool-season turf areas during spring, autumn and winter but use the bermudagrass areas during the hot summer months.

GOLFERS CAN HELP

Golfer behaviour can have a significant impact on how a practice tee performs during the season. Patterns of use must be carefully managed to maximise teeing space and uniformly spread turfgrass wear. Using ropes to define hitting areas is very helpful for guiding golfers.

How golfers practice also affects practice tee performance. For years, golfers took divots on the practice tee without giving much thought to the turf. Worse yet, some golfers were encouraged to concentrate divot patterns to conserve turf. Concentrating divot patterns reduces the amount of turf being damaged, but the damage is so severe that the increased time and labour needed for recovery negates any benefits.

A linear divot pattern, where each shot is struck from immediately behind the previous divot, is the best way to minimise damage and promote recovery. Educating golfers and monitoring their activity is an important part of practice facility management.

MAINTENANCE

Maintenance strategies have a tremendous impact on how much use a practice tee can withstand. Effective and aggressive management programmes, combined with golfer cooperation, can have a hugely positive impact on conditions. Frequent fertilisation, divot filling, seeding and periodic re-sodding are practices that help maintain turf on heavily used practice tees. Irrigation systems designed to match wear patterns also can be an invaluable tool for promoting recovery.

In the northern US for instance, courses typically seed practice tees with perennial ryegrass because of its rapid germination and ability to tolerate traffic. However, perennial ryegrass does not form thatch, which is needed for surface strength and resiliency. Kentucky bluegrass forms thatch and tolerates traffic well, but is extremely slow to germinate and establish. Therefore, a common technique is to sod practice tees with Kentucky bluegrass and then seed divots with perennial ryegrass. After a few years of heavy use, most of the bluegrass will be eliminated and there will only be a thin turf of perennial ryegrass. Once this stage is reached, it is time to start the process over again by re-sodding the practice tee.

Regardless of the species, it is important to allow time in the autumn for recovery. For warm- and cool-season species, this means closing the practice tee in time for the turf to regain full coverage before growth slows down and dormancy sets in. Some southern US golf courses overseed bermudagrass practice areas with perennial ryegrass to provide colour and turf recovery during the shoulder seasons when bermudagrass recovery is slow.

WHEN THE TEE ISN'T BIG ENOUGH

No matter how large and well-managed a practice tee is, most courses still require players to use artificial turf when the grass tee needs time to recover. Often, courses with undersized practice

tees need to use artificial surfaces during the growing season to prevent excessive wear on grass tees. Using artificial tees is an excellent strategy for avoiding damage and aiding recovery and they should also be used during periods of wet weather when grass tees are softened and damage is magnified. An added benefit of artificial tees is that shelters can be constructed over them to give golfers protection without limiting turf growth.

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

Improving or maintaining the practice facility at the expense of the golf course is an egregious mistake. Practice facilities are wonderful, but the golf course should always come first. When a course has limited area, slight changes to a hole or two may be worthwhile to create room for a practice facility, but this should be done with the greatest care. More than a few courses have ruined good golf holes just to squeeze in a practice range.

Another common mistake is having too many target greens on a practice range. Target greens and yardage markers are worthwhile practice aids for golfers. Three to five target greens is sufficient for small- to medium-sized ranges while longer ranges may benefit from one or two more. It is important to locate targets in the middle portion of the range to minimise the risk of miss-hit shots leaving the range. Locating target greens near the outer perimeter of the range should be avoided.

“Practice facilities are wonderful, but the golf course should always come first. Improving or maintaining the practice facility at the expense of the golf course is an egregious mistake”



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Netted facilities can provide an excellent practice experience at golf courses where there is not enough room for a full-sized driving range.

When the ceiling net is angled upward, golfers can watch the trajectory of their ball flight

Maintenance strategies have a tremendous impact on how much use a practice tee can withstand



Elaborate target greens complete with real or artificial bunkers can be very attractive, but they require added maintenance and make retrieving balls more difficult and expensive. Turf damage caused by ball-retrieval equipment is magnified by sharp turns and steep topography. Furthermore, balls must be retrieved manually from bunkers. The visual benefits of bunkers must be weighed against the increased labour and potential traffic damage.

Artificial bunkers created by removing sod and replacing it with a hard-packing sand or aggregate can create the illusion of a bunker without the associated turf damage and increased labour. However, hard materials can scuff practice balls, shortening their useful life.

Practice tees can be equipped with a host of accoutrements and golf bag stands are particularly popular. Purchasing bag stands, club cleaners, yardage signs and clocks is the first step in a chain reaction of expenses. Practice facility accessories must be frequently moved to avoid turf damage and periodically cleaned and repaired, costing time and money. Range tee accessories are nice additions, but when labour and budget dollars are tight, leave out the extras and focus on turfgrass management.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR COURSES WITH LIMITED SPACE

There are plenty of options for providing meaningful practice opportunities at courses that do not have enough room for a large practice facility. Limited-flight golf balls and nets allow golfers to practice safely in smaller areas. Some facilities allow golfers to see the take-off trajectory of their shots by angling the netted ceiling. These popular facilities require much less space than a typical driving range and still offer a valuable practice experience. Consuming less space with a driving range may also leave room for other types of practice areas, such as a short game area or practice bunkers.



SUMMARY

Practice facilities that are well-built and well-maintained are popular and valuable components of a golf facility. They provide a place for players to warm up before their round, fine tune their skills or receive instruction. They also give beginners a place to learn the game. Therefore, practice facilities deserve the same thoughtful consideration as other parts of a golf operation.

Hopefully this article has provided you with some ideas about how to improve your practice facility. The next step is to speak with a golf course architect and weigh all the varied options. For years golf courses have developed master plans to chart out programmes for making architectural improvements; practice facilities deserve the same thoughtful consideration. Make no mistake, practice is popular and courses should do all they can to capitalise on that.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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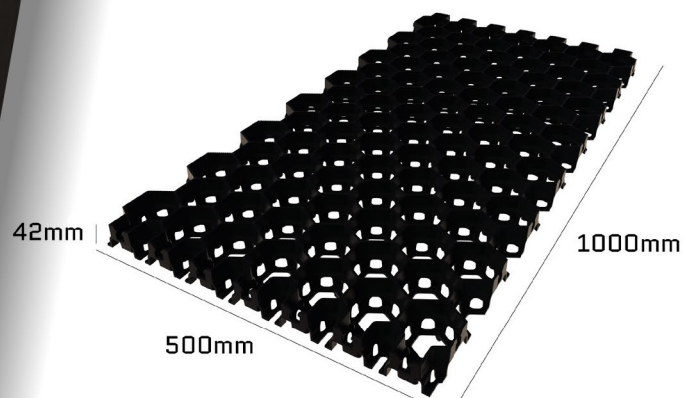
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STAND YOUR GROUND!



Starting with the 12th hole last summer, Box Hill Golf Club is undertaking an ongoing greens replacement programme to remedy playability and maintenance issues



In ATMs continuing look at ongoing projects, Josh Leyland from Box Hill Golf Club reviews some of the course improvements work recently undertaken at the Melbourne-based club.

The new 12th green was solid turfed with Tyee bentgrass from the club's 2000m² nursery



Box Hill Golf Club, situated in Melbourne's eastern suburbs, has a rich history with origins dating back to 1892. The club has been at its original site since 1933 and is known to be one of the oldest golf courses in Melbourne. Great foresight by the club's pioneers managed to obtain a magnificent location for golf. The course is generally flat, which is characteristic of the area, but well drained and heavily treed with native eucalypts, which are an endearing feature of the course.

Throughout its history the course has undergone a number of reconstructions and significant changes and recent updates have resulted in a challenging 5592 metre par 71 course. Situated on a clay belt which can be quite demanding in the winter period, it provides excellent all year round golf for the current 1100 members.

Today's course is a credit to the club's general manager, board of directors and previous course manager of recent years, who together have pursued the design recommendations to start to reconstruct a number of the historically poor greens to large well-drained greens, to reconstruct tee complexes,

covert all fairways to couchgrass, upgrade the irrigation system and also focus on a number of poorly designed bunkers.

GREENS RECONSTRUCTION

2015 was going to be a challenging year. I had only been at Box Hill for a short time as superintendent and there were a number of course management programmes I was changing and implementing and keen interest from the membership and the board to start reconstructing the greens.

The club's new strategic course management plan focused on a number of concerns. First and most were the current greens surfaces and poor design, with the need to provide more consistent putting surfaces and a more predictable profile to manage. Also high on the agenda were improving access to a number of deep bunkers throughout the course and the construction of a 19th hole to enable a full 18 holes to be kept in play during the greens reconstruction works.

It was agreed to reconstruct the par four 12th green first. A flat, circular *Poa* green, it was uninteresting and historically would often become unplayable in winter. Crafter and Mogford Golf Strategies was employed and came up with a large undulating green which would provide a complete transformation of the hole. SJM Turf and Civil were retained for the construction and shaping works due to its long-standing relationship with the club. Construction started after the club's Pro-Am and club championships in late November 2015 with a four week window to complete the work

To help with the ongoing greens reconstruction, a greens turf nursery was also built. Over the summer of 2014/15 a 2000m² site was sown with Tyee bentgrass from Advanced Seed. Tyee was

chosen because of its extra density, excellent heat tolerance, winter active growth, bright dark green colour and ability to handle stress. The nursery was sown at 750g/100m² with growth cloths assisting germination within five days. About three weeks after seeding the first cut was made at 10mm and by three months the nursery was being maintained at 3mm.

The key to successfully turfing greens is to have a nursery that is maintained exactly the same as the greens. Although there was initially a large capital outlay to set up the nursery, the benefits have been enormous, both from a cost point of view as well as a turf management perspective.

Due to the nature of the existing 12th green site, there were a number of concerns raised prior to work starting that the natural subsoils and clays were inadequate for the sub-base or for any new shape works. As construction works had to be completed within a narrow timeframe, we couldn't afford any delays so it was necessary that appropriate fill was sourced in case we needed it.

As luck had it a new soccer oval was being constructed 1km away from the course and there was 700m³ of clean fill available. As we had approval to build the 19th spare green, I put my hand up for the entire 700m³, with 300m³ used for the 19th green sub-base and the remainder for the 12th green. As it turned out there was a large pocket of black saturated clay which had to be removed from the existing 12th green base.

The new 12th green was constructed using a modified USGA-spec design with 1000m² of bentgrass used from the nursery. A further 1500m² of Santa Ana couchgrass was used to re-turf the approach as part of our ongoing programme to convert all approaches from cool- to warm-season. The new green opened for play in March 2016.

BUNKER WORKS

Works have also been undertaken on a number of bunkers to improve accessibility, playability and maintenance issues. Four bunkers were so steep that aluminium steps had been previously installed to help golfers gain access.

With a number bunkers already having a textile liner installed without great success, research into alternate bunker liners begun with Kustom Bind ultimately chosen. A trial was conducted in a bunker adjacent to the 16th green, with subtle changes made to the entry and exit point to allow golfers suitable access. Some 50m² of Kustom Bind was installed and it proved to be a great product.

Kustom Bind was also engaged in December to complete bunker reconstruction works on the par three 9th. Three of the four resort-style bunkers were reshaped to allow for easier access with all four having Kustom Bind installed. We now have Kustom Bind in six bunkers.

One of the toughest aspects of the ongoing improvement works was maintaining the rest of the



After successful trials, Kustom Bind bunker liner has now been installed in six bunkers, including those on the new par four 12th



Three of the four resort-style bunkers on the 9th have been reshaped to allow for easier access



Course improvement works to date at Box Hill have been very well received by the members

course to a high standard as the focus was to have these projects completed on schedule and back into play as soon as possible. My staff really stepped up to the extra demand during the hot Melbourne summer and did a great job.

Planning is now in full swing with concept plans approved for the new par three 4th hole starting in November, along with a number of programed irrigation valve-in-head upgrades and isolated fairway drainage installations. The upgrades to the course have been extremely well received by the members and they are looking forward to future course improvements. 🌱

A 19th hole has also been constructed at Box Hill to keep 18 holes in play while greens reconstruction works are ongoing





Club Taree is a parkland course boasting 21 holes. Superintendent Mark Spraggs heads a team of six who have modified practices and undertaken a heap of improvement works to lift on-course standards

Club Taree, NSW

Originally from New Zealand, superintendent Mark Spraggs and his crew are helping to put Club Taree back on the regional golfing map.

The Club Taree crew (from left) Darren Wearing, Daniel Walsh, Barry Muscio, superintendent Mark Spraggs (seated), Greg Hain (assistant) and Ted Wills

Superintendent: Mark Spraggs (29).

Nickname: Spraggsy.

Family: I am single, however, I have two beautiful kids Aaron (5) and Ellie (3) that keep me busy outside of work.

Years as a superintendent: Nearly three.

Association involvement: AGCSA (two years). Formerly part of the NZGCSA.

Turf management career: I started my career at the nine-hole Boulcott Golf Club in Wellington where I was offered an apprenticeship. Midway through the apprenticeship I transferred to Hutt Golf Club which was right next door but an 18-hole championship course. Once I finished my trade I moved to Taupo and spent two years under Steve Marsden during the construction, grow-in and eventual opening of the Jack Nicklaus-designed Kinloch Club. From there I got in touch with Mike O'Keeffe and went over and did The Ohio Program where I was placed

at Pine Valley Golf Club for seven months and then Sea Island Resort for the remaining five months. After finishing in the US I got a role at Elanora Country Club in Sydney working under Dan Cook. I spent a lot of the time with irrigation projects and later became a joint foreman. I spent a couple of years there before moving to Forster Tuncurry Golf Club as assistant superintendent before taking on my current role of superintendent at Club Taree in October 2013.

Qualifications: National Certificate in Sports Turf Management Level 4 (NZSTITO). Currently midway through my Diploma of Sports Turf Management through Ryde TAFE.

Where in Australia is Club Taree? Club Taree is in the Mid-North Coast of NSW. Taree itself is about 15km from the coast and 300km north of Sydney. We are in the centre of everything with Port Macquarie 45 minutes north and Forster Tuncurry 25 minutes south. Danny Buderus is a famous name from the area as are current NRL stars Latrell Mitchell and Boyd Cordner.



Tell us a bit about your background and how you came to be a superintendent. The turf management side of things is in the family. My father John Spraggs is the very well respected course manager at Royal Wellington Golf Club in New Zealand so growing up I was never far away from a golf course. I started playing the game at a young age and went on to represent my district which helped me to get into the industry. Obviously since joining the industry the golf game has gone downhill very quickly! The travelling side of things and experiencing different

climates and conditions has been something I will never regret and something I needed to do to create my own name rather than staying in New Zealand and being known as 'John's son'.

Who were some of your early mentors? My father has always been my main mentor and someone who, especially when taking on my first superintendent job, has been able to help me anytime I have a question. I think early on in my career when, as an 18-year-old, I moved to Taupo to work for Steve Marsden at Kinloch, that was the biggest eye opener and something I will never forget. If anyone ever gets the opportunity to see what really goes into building and growing in a golf course from native countryside it will show you just how diverse the industry is.

How did the job at Club Taree come about? I left Elanora in early 2012 to move up here. I would have stayed in Sydney had the cost of bringing children up been more affordable, but my then partner's family are all based in Forster and the 2IC gig came up there. I was there a year and a half before the superintendent's job at Club Taree came up on the AGCSA website and knowing I was ready to make that step up I was confident through the interview process and fortunately landed the position. The best thing about the job is the amount of trust the club, board of directors and golf committee have in whatever I have to say in regards to future planning and course works.

Give us an overview of Club Taree and some of its unique characteristics. The course was formed in 1915 and has changed locations twice before settling on its current site. In December 2001 the golf course amalgamated with the local RSL which cemented the future for both organisations while creating opportunity for the establishment of a brand new state-of-the-art clubhouse facility. We have 21 holes that are lined with gums and iron barks and by modern standards the course is short in length

but is highly strategic (lots of undulations, doglegs and small greens). The wildlife is pretty impressive with the odd wallaby, foxes and hundreds of different bird species.

What are some of the unique features about Club Taree from a turf management perspective?

The different weather conditions are what make managing the course here unique. We are far enough away from the coastline to miss the sea breeze and just east of Barrington Tops to miss or receive a lot of the wild weather. In summer it is not uncommon to get temps in the high 30s and early 40s with nights sitting in the 20s with high humidity. In winter we get frosts that will last until lunchtime!

Is it an easy/hard facility to manage? Now that we have all practices on the golf course where or near where we want them, maintaining turf coverage and keeping greens healthy through the hot summer periods is a lot more manageable. The most challenging aspect is seeing the amount of work that still needs to be done to improve the place. With only six guys including myself, time management is key to making sure we are not dropping standards and continually scheduling improvement works.

What changes have you implemented in terms of managing the course during your tenure as superintendent? Upon starting here, myself and the assistant spent a lot of time aligning and getting the course up to a comfortable level with things such as planning, water management practises, cultural practises and staff management a key focus. A couple of staff left but they were replaced with guys who are now completely trained up and the environment we have is a lot healthier. Recently it has been about future planning, creating operating procedures, putting machinery replacement programmes in place and stabilising everything so that we meet all standards.



Just another glorious morning at Club Taree overlooking the 11th green

CONTINUED ON PAGE 55



During his short tenure at the club Spraggs has instituted an intensive programme to improve the quality of Club Taree's bent/Poa greens



AT A GLANCE – CLUB TAREE, NSW

Club Taree's greens are rolled once a fortnight with a modified old-school bowling green roller

Improved planning, time management and more efficient practices enables the Club Taree crew to focus on the 'one percenters'



Course specs: We have 55 hectares of land and currently maintain 21 holes. Greens are small in size and combined come to 0.8 hectares. The greens are bentgrass/*Poa* with a pretty intense programme to increase bent percentages. Tees and tee surrounds are 2ha of kikuyu. The fairways are 11ha and consist of kikuyu and Queensland blue couch.

Members/rounds: 500/20,000.

Major tournaments: We have held the NSW All-Schools Championships as well as the NSW Mid-Amateur Championships in the last year.

Annual course budget: \$782,402.

Staff structure: Mark Spraggs (superintendent), Greg Hain (assistant superintendent), Ted Wills (mechanic), Darren Wearing (horticulturist/groundsman), Daniel Walsh and Barry Muscio (groundsman).

Climate/rainfall: Average rainfall is 1200mm.

Soil types: Greens are predominantly sand based, but a few older greens are original push ups that we are trying to increase the sand content of through renovations and dusting. Tees are a sand/soil mix and fairways and roughs are a heavy soil/clay which makes things interesting. Some areas of the golf course have a good rock shelf under the surface.

Water sources: We have a water feature/dam that holds 40 megalitres. We have also directed all storm water from the roof of the clubhouse as well as the multilevel carpark we have into a holding dam that has a submersible pump that takes it straight to the dam. In 2015 we looked at other water options and found a fracture underground that we were able to drill into and create a bore. This has been completed, however, we have not dropped a pump down and started pumping due to the timing of the rainfall we have received since which has kept dam levels sufficient. We can pump out of the bore at 2ltrs/sec so it is more or less just a top up.

Irrigation system: As I write this our system is in the process of being replaced. We previously had a Rain Master EDM1 32v satellite system which

is being replaced by the Toro Lynx NSN wireless satellite and central control system.

Cutting heights/regimes: Greens are cut at 3.5mm year round with triplexes fitted with grooved rollers. Greens are cut 4-5 times a week with double cuts on an as needed basis to get speed. The greens are rolled once a fortnight with a heavy bowling green roller to limit compaction but produce a firm fast surface. We could roll more and do during tournaments but the members are happy with greens constantly running around 10-10.5.

Tees are cut between 10-12mm depending on time of year. They are cut twice a week with single cuts in winter and double cuts with triplexes in summer. Fairways are cut at 14-16mm depending on the time of year and are cut twice a week in summer and on an as needs basis in winter. Intermediate roughs and surrounds cuts are set at 25mm with the roughs cut at 50mm.

Renovations: Upon starting here, due to a lack of funding, renovations were one process that was not very common to save costs. Over the past three years we have been pretty intense with our practises including ½ inch hollow coring and sanding twice a year and 3/8 solid tining and sanding also twice a year to create a profile that will give the roots plenty of room to continue moving down. The root system has gone from one inch in depth down to 7-8 inches in places which has helped to reduce stress on the greens, particular in summer. We also verticut and dust as needed depending on mat density and/or ball roll quality.

We oversow our tees with a transitional ryegrass at 500kg/ha prior to the onset of winter and I find this is beneficial from a presentation as well as a wear tolerance point of view. It's a good rate that doesn't suffocate the warm-season grasses come spring time.

Major disease pressures: Dollar spot, which I am fine with. Trying to stress the *Poa* and promote the bent through low N outputs is always going to help this disease outbreak. We do also get anthracnose in summer more so after a rain event or when humidity levels are through the roof, but this problem is being rectified by strategically removing trees around green surrounds to allow for more light and air flow. We combat dollar spot by drying the leaf out, handwatering rather than using overheads, dusting and cultural practises with chemical control a last resort. The greens recover very quickly as long as you keep the weather conditions in your head as well as past practises, so more often than not we are on top of the disease before it scars.

Nutrition management: Soil testing is carried out quarterly to see levels of individual compounds and a programme is set based on that. The big one for me is organics and raising CEC levels. Greens are spoon fed fortnightly to give just enough nutrition to help the bentgrass. Amendments/granules are always put out during each renovation.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 53

What other maintenance changes are you wanting to/planning on introducing? Maintenance wise we have been fairly aggressive with our tree removal programme to create a better growing environment for our small greens. Succession planning is a biggie at the moment too and the club and I are very big on staff training. Improving our aging fleet of machinery so that our mechanic, who is a magician, can focus on things other than repairs and maintenance is also a priority.

Any major course improvement works recently completed or ongoing? We are currently installing a new irrigation system, replacing the old Rain Master EDM1 32-volt satellite system that breaks down and runs programmes whenever it feels like it. We are installing a Toro Lynx wireless satellite system so that we have support, can track water and individualise run times. The project has caused a fair amount of disruption as we are having to trench 240-volt power throughout the course down to 600mm.

Other projects we have coming up are the rebuild and reshaping of the 14th and 11th tees due to size, age and wear. These are two of our shortest holes and have the smallest teeing grounds. Future works involve the club using golf course land to look at a way of dramatically increasing revenue. The first one will be the building and establishment of aged care living units. The area is becoming very

popular with retirees so this will be a successful venture. Despite losing some land it will give us the opportunity to rebuild some holes and build new holes which I'm looking forward to.


The one product I couldn't manage my course without is... Primo Maxx and EC products. I know this is very common but because we are only a small staff, applying Primo helps to keep density and reduce the amount of time spent mowing. This means we can get to those small 'one per cent' jobs that visitors see and come back for.

What are some pros and cons of being a regional superintendent? The work-life balance is a lot better, however, there are times where you still do as many hours as when on the big courses just to keep one step ahead. With irrigation projects and upcoming master planning sessions to get ready for, the work-life balance is pretty ordinary at the moment, but I am lucky to have an assistant I can completely trust if I need to take some time away.

The one con I find having worked previously in metro areas all my life is communication and support. I found you are given more information and made aware of more information because of the amount of people you run into in the industry. Up here you spend a lot more time on websites trying to read about the latest and greatest as well as what people are fighting with at certain times of the year.




Club Taree's greens are predominantly sand based with a few older original push up greens gradually having more sand incorporated through ongoing renovations and dusting



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◀ **Greens are cut at 3.5mm year round with triplexes fitted with grooved rollers. Greens are cut 4-5 times a week with double cuts on an as needed basis**



Club Taree is currently midway through upgrading to a Toro Lynx NSN wireless satellite and central control system



A fairly aggressive tree removal programme is helping to create a better growing environment for Club Taree's small greens

Are expectations of course presentation and conditioning any less than that placed on your metropolitan counterparts? I think members always expect Augusta or a manicured course free of weeds and disease because that is what they see on TV, but the reality is we as supers are limited to budgets and staff numbers. I suppose if a member pays more in a metro area then they expect better surfaces. The issue I have getting through to the members up here is they don't pay anywhere near the same as they would in the metro areas, however, they travel and play those courses regularly and come back with questions. My guys have put in a lot of hours over the last few years that the golfers don't see and only now are they getting recognised for that work. It has been tough on them but to their credit they have turned up and presented a product they should be proud of.

If you could change one thing about your job as a regional superintendent what would it be and why? Access to the tools needed quicker. Unfortunately being regional if something were to break down or there is an unexpected disease outbreak (not that we have had this happen yet) it would take a good day or two to send the right part, piece of equipment or product.

What have you got in your shed? In some cases we have got two or three of the same machine because our equipment is that old we need back-ups for when they break down. We currently have six Jacobsen Greens King VIs (two used for greens and two for tees), two Jacobsen 3810 fairway mowers, two John Deere 2653s, a few Toro Workmans, a Cushman 400ltr spray rig with topdresser and core harvester attachments, Coremaster corer, David Brown FEL, 5-tonne excavator with three different buckets and grab and ripper attachments, two hydraulic John Deere tractors and hydraulic tipping Dean trailer, bunker machine, two out-front rough mowers, Toro 580 16ft rough mower and Greens King IV (for verticutting and scarifying).

What's your favourite piece of machinery and why? The IHI 5-tonne excavator now that we have purchased a grab and ripper attachments. We can now drop our own trees and clean them up in a quarter of the time with a lot less staff. We can also do our own drainage and irrigation installs with the trenching bucket and bulk shaping such as bunkers and tee rebuilds; it is just a very beneficial machine when looking to improve.

What will be your next major purchase? We have approved two new fairway mowers leading into spring. On the wish list is a coring/Vertidrain machine because I am big on renovating to continue to push our root profiles and we are currently limited with the depths we can go with our current machine.

Any interesting pieces of machinery you have in the shed? Our old bowling green roller – it has been manufactured so the rollers float with our undulations. It looks like something out of the 1800s but it gives a great finish and speeds increase dramatically when we do bring it out.

What's the best advice you have received about being a superintendent and who gave it to you? Honesty. If you feel the board or golf committee are making a decision that is detrimental to the progress of the club, speak up before it's too late. We are hired as the professionals in our field and therefore know more than everyone in the room.

What do you think is the most challenging aspect of a superintendent's role today? Communication. Making sure all the lines of communication are aligned when we have different committees and boards is very important. It's about making sure everyone is in the room when delivering a proposal or at least making sure everyone is aware of what is happening. Also, time management is one area I find difficult but one that I have improved. I can now completely rely on the guys to deliver a great product while I am able to focus more on planning.

What gives you the most job satisfaction? Delivering a quality product each day and seeing membership and social numbers increase year by year. It shows that what we are doing is working and getting out to the wider area and giving the club a platform for the future.

Most pleasing/rewarding moment during your time as Club Taree superintendent? Whenever a member or visitor passes on positive feedback or acknowledges a job well done, because we as a team have put in a hell of an effort to get the place healthy and consistent. Also being acknowledged by hosting a couple of Golf NSW events earlier this year and getting through without any problems and getting some great feedback from golfers from all over the state was very positive. 🌳

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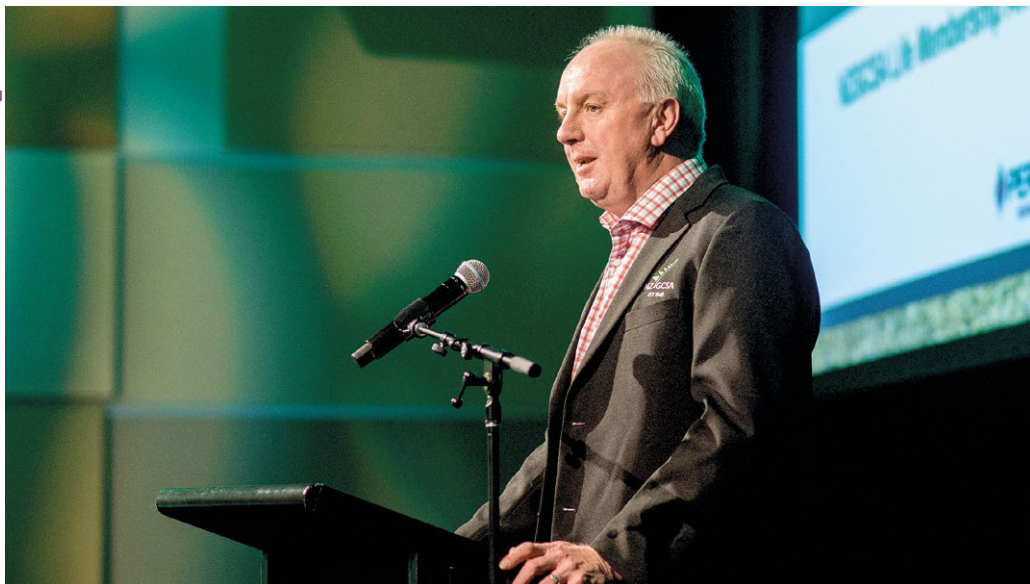




Top right: Past NZGCSA president Peter Boyd was presented a Life Membership Award at the recent NZ Turf Conference

Top: After winning the AGCSA Claude Crockford Environment Award in Melbourne a week earlier, Kauri Cliffs superintendent Andy Wood was collecting the NZGCSA Parkland Excellence Award

Above: Newly elected NZGCSA president Martin Burger (left) and Powerturf's John Woodham (right) with NZGCSA Graduate of the Year winner Scott Dunkerley (centre)



A warm winters welcome from New Zealand and another instalment to the ATM Journal from the NZGCSA. This is my first report as the new president and I am very fortunate to be able to report on the latest news from this side of 'the Ditch'.

This year has already seen some major changes in the New Zealand workplace with the new Health & Safety Work Act (HSWA) 2015 which was enforced in early April with a higher focus on identifying, managing and controlling risks. As a nation we do have a bad track record for not sending our work mates home safely each night. This new Act is a step in the right direction by our Government but it does need the push from all industry leaders to help change the 'she'll be right mate' attitudes which often still remain in the workplace. In saying this, there are some great people doing amazing work at each turf venue and behind the scenes to help improve workplace and employee safety.

NZ TURF CONFERENCE

The 2016 NZ Turf Conference recently held at the Sky City Convention Centre in Auckland was a great few days for the delegates that attended and those who braved the always-changing Auckland conditions for the Sunday golf tournament and Wednesday field trip.

The golf sector had a great line-up of international speakers including **David Bancroft-Turner** (Matrix Training & Coaching), **Dr Fred Yelverton** (North Carolina State University) and **Clint Mattox** (Oregon State University), along with well-respected NZ speakers **Andy Wood** (Kauri Cliffs) and **Mark Hooker** (Royal Auckland Golf Club). All the plenary and golf sector speakers provided great insights into their topics and provided some great answers to questions from the delegates.

During the conference the NZGCSA Board was elected. We had two highly regarded Board members step down – outgoing president **Brendan Allen** (The Hills) and **Dane Hawker** (North Shore GC). We welcome onto the Board **Brendon O'Hara** (Nelson GC) and **Sam Keats** (Royal Wellington

GC). The full NZGCSA Board for 2016-17 is: **Martin Burger** (Whitford Park GC), **Greg Swafford** (Titirangi GC), **Steve Hodson** (Westown GC), **Jason Perkins** (Omanu GC), **Brendon O'Hara** and **Sam Keats**.

Personal thanks must go Dane Hawker for his social media work and who has now left the golf turf industry, and to past president Brendan Allen who has been our great leader for the last few years and a mentor to me. I have some big shoes to fill but also have some very good support from the whole golf turf industry.

The Tuesday evening Awards Dinner was a fantastic night with some very sore stomach muscles from the laughter and teary eyes from the great life stories of our guest speaker **Eric Rush** (a former New Zealand 7's and All Blacks rugby great). It brought back some great memories of childhood life lessons learnt.

The NZGCSA presented awards to some very well deserved names in the golf turf industry. The NZGCSA Graduate of the Year Award, sponsored by Jacobsen & Powerturf, went to **Scott Dunkerley** (Karori GC). The new and revamped NZGCSA Parkland Excellence Award, sponsored by Parkland Products, was tightly contested with this year's winner **Andy Wood** (Kauri Cliffs GC) narrowly edging runner-up **John Spraggs** (Royal Wellington GC).

It was also an absolute honour as one of my first presidential roles to present a Life Membership Award to **Peter Boyd** (Pakuranga GC) to acknowledge not only his dedicated work to the NZGCSA and his relationships that were created with the AGCSA, but also his ongoing commitment to the wider NZ turf industry through training organisations. A standing ovation for Peter showed overwhelming approval of this award for his known work and stature within the wider turf industry.

As Kiwis we do not appreciate and acknowledge early enough the excellent work done by great people, so to acknowledge Peter now while still during his time in the golf turf industry is a start in the right direction.

FUTURE TURF MANAGERS' INITIATIVE

This initiative, with the support of Jacobsen and Powerturf, continues to grow. The FTMI took place on the Sunday before the NZ Turf Conference with those involved having a day's intense training with David Bancroft-Turner, mentors John Spraggs and Brendan Allen, along with **Chuck Greif** (Jacobsen Asia-Pacific managing director) and **Karen Proctor** (Jacobsen international marketing and communications manager).

This was the third year of the FTMI and the feedback from the recipients speaks well for the continuing future of this initiative. This year's recipients were:

- **Matt Ellis** (Royal Auckland GC – The Grange);
- **Noel Hill** (Kaiapoi GC);
- **Sam Keats** (Royal Wellington GC);

- **Lance Shaw** (Royal Auckland GC);
- **Brett Smith** (Paraparaumu Beach GC);
- **Matthew Spraggs** (Boulcott's Farm Heritage GC);
- **Ben Taylor** (The Hills); and
- **Ryan Trembath** (Cape Kidnappers).

Looking ahead, we have had confirmation the Southland Turf Mangers Association will be hosting a Fine Turf Seminar in 2017 and discussions are ongoing regarding a joint conference with the AGCSA in 2018. The NZ golf industry is very excited about this prospect and we will work closely with the AGCSA to ensure this gets off the ground.

MARTIN BURGER
PRESIDENT, NZGCSA

VGCSA

Congratulations to the AGCSA for a successful national conference held in our home state this year. It was great to see many Victorian members involved in the week-long activities. Catching up with interstate colleagues was also a highlight as was the networking opportunities to discuss issues and successes with other turf managers. Our very own **William Koopmans** from Ballarat Golf Club took out the AGCSA Graduate of the Year Award and on behalf of the VGCSA the committee congratulates him on a fine achievement.

Another successful 2IC/Groundstaff education day was held down at Devil Bend Golf Club (course superintendent **Trevor U'Ren**) in early June. Thanks to **Jim Brennan** from Applied Agronomics for again sponsoring the day. Thanks also to **Andrew Peart** (AGCSA) and **Darren Balfour** (course superintendent Ocean & Moonah courses, The National Golf Club) for their educational presentations which were followed by an extensive course walk with Trevor.

The next VGCSA meeting is up on the Murray River at Rich River Golf Club (superintendent **Andrew Johnson**) for our annual combined Supers/2IC country meeting. We are privileged to have **John**

Neylan presenting the latest results of an ongoing microbiology trial which is evaluating their benefits in golf green profiles. The trial is being conducted in conjunction with Sorrento Golf Club (superintendent **Shane Greenhill**) and is partly funded by the VGCSA. Our other speaker will be **David Meagher** from DPM Consulting who specialises in managing the production and implementation of human resource strategies.

Our sponsors for the two-day program include Toro, ADE Turf Equipment, Kubota, Globe Australia, Rain Bird, Bayer, Colin Campbell Chemicals, Independent Turf Services, Turf Culture and Anco Seed & Turf, who will be delivering presentations on relevant turf products, information and machinery, ensuring our members receive up to date information from across the trade. Thanks to the sponsors for their continual support of this popular event. The first week of September will see an education meeting at Eastern Golf Club (superintendent **Clayton Howell**) where the topic will be all things construction.

MATHEW POULTNEY
PRESIDENT, VGCSA



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NSWGCSA



Dunheved Golf Club (right) and Liverpool Golf Club (above) were hit hard by floods caused by an East Coast Low in early June



Many of our members are still licking their wounds following the huge rain event that swept the state at the beginning of June. Some areas received over 300mm in 48 hours while others had nearby rivers break their banks and flood their courses. In some cases there were course closures of over a week with silt covering greens, tees, fairways and bunkers alike. No doubt the clean-up will continue for a while yet and our thoughts are with those affected. The next edition of the NSWGCSA newsletter is dedicated to the storm.

July is a very busy month for the NSWGCSA, which will see the launch of our new website. We have revamped the layout of the website and updated all the association details, information and galleries. The website now contains a members' login area which will contain our new WHS, EMS and chemical management guide templates that are included with membership to the association.

These documents will assist any superintendent who wishes to develop and implement their own work health and safety and environmental management systems. It is important to note that this documentation will not meet compliance if they are not developed and implemented; it will be up to the user to do this. We therefore suggest if you are not committed to carrying out the necessary work that you should use an external source to do it for you.

Another new section to the website is the members' forum. This will be a great platform to network and communicate to other members throughout the state, please use it as without your input it won't have any benefit. You never know, you may learn some new practices or be able to help out a fellow member.

We are also holding our first walk and talk education day in July at Bonnie Doon Golf Club. Course superintendent **Justin Bradbury** will be donating some of his time to take us through the 3rd stage of the course reconstruction. If you can't get to this, make sure you get along to the September walk and talk day to be held at Muirfield Golf Club in September with course superintendent **Peter Watts**.

Membership renewals are now due so don't forget to email admin@nswgcsa.com.au if you are looking to take up one of our new membership package offerings:

- Superintendent and Assistant (\$250 – add another \$50 for any further members)
- Two-person trade membership (\$195) and three-person trade membership (\$250 – add another \$50 for any further trade members).

Single membership can be purchased through the AGCSA.

STUART GILL
PRESIDENT, NSWGCSA

ON THE MOVE

DAVE BRENNAN: From superintendent Denarau Golf & Rackets Club, Fiji to superintendent Bunbury Golf Club, WA.

PETER BRYANT: From assistant superintendent Eastlake Golf Club, NSW to Australian Botanic Gardens, NSW.

DARREN FELMINGHAM: Resigned in July as superintendent of Sale Golf Club after 27 years.

BEN GRYLEWICZ: From superintendent The Ridge Golf Club, NSW to superintendent Royal Canberra Golf Club, ACT.

TONY JONAS: Formerly of Middle Ridge Golf Club, Toowoomba, now superintendent of North Shore Golf Club, Auckland, NZ where he has replaced Dane Hawker.

DAVID SCOTT: From Pitchcraft, Vic to assistant superintendent Gisborne Golf Club, Vic.

STA QLD



The STA QLD committee has been very busy since the AGM in early May, coming up with new and exciting ways of engaging with the members. In this new age of social media there are so many ways to communicate and we are looking at how best to use social media to our advantage.

STA QLD has held two events since the AGM, with 23 members boarding a bus and heading down to Coffs Harbour for the Bonville Golf Club trade show in early June. This is always a fantastic event and all our Queensland attendees enjoyed the journey, especially with the Maroons getting the biscuits in the first State of Origin.

The conference day was very well attended with some great speakers. Golf on the Thursday was fantastic and course superintendent **Chris Neville**

and all the staff at Bonville should be congratulated on the superb presentation of the course.

Our second day was held in Hervey Bay on a very wet and chilly Sunday morning. This event was put on in partnership with the Fraser Coast Council. We had 14 staff from local sports grounds and schools listen very intently to some great talks put on by some of our STA partners. Hopefully this will become an annual event with the council very keen to educate some of their local sports field and school staff to improve their turf surfaces. As this edition of ATM was going to print we were about to host our annual Open Day on 2 August.

MAL CADDIES
PRESIDENT, STA QLD

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Dr Frank Rossi holds court at Sanctuary Cove



Some of the ongoing works to install Shadetuff *zoysia matrella* around bunkers at Indooroopilly Golf Club

With the format being finalised for our AGM in early August, it seems like only yesterday that I was receiving the president's baton from **Charlie Giffard** 12 months ago at Maroochy River Golf Club.

Over the past year the GCSAQ committee has endeavoured to improve camaraderie, create strong partnerships with our sponsors and provide practical and educational field days. Treasurer **Stu Campbell** has built a solid financial platform for the upcoming 2016/17 financial year and we look forward to creating more diverse content over the next 12 months.

This year's AGM will be held at Royal Queensland Golf Club on 8 August. It is a rare opportunity to have access to **Marcus Price's** course and I am sure the day will be well attended. Following the AGM our Turf Industry Day will be held at Lakelands Golf Club (superintendent **Phil Soegaard**) on Friday 9 September. The day is already generating a great deal of interest from our sponsors and will be very well supported, so don't miss out on a great networking opportunity.

Following another great Australian Turfgrass Conference, around 30 GCSAQ members converged on **Paul McLean's** Sanctuary Cove Golf & Country Club for the final leg of the **Dr Frank Rossi** 'walk 'n' talk' sessions organised by the AGCSA. After a brief welcome in the Palms clubhouse, the group ventured out onto the golf course for a very informative session. Frank was his usual self and quickly got down to turf level and produced his

famous knife where he proceeded to cut sections out of the beautifully prepared Palms surfaces.

The host superintendent must have paid off our international guest during their pre-dawn visit to familiarise himself with the facility, as Frank was full of praise for Paul's maintenance practices, in particular the dusting programme that is in place there. The questions quickly flowed from all in attendance and as we have come to expect from Frank the answers made everyone think about what they were doing at their respective facilities.

Around the traps, **Charlie Giffard** at Indooroopilly is continuing with bunker refurbishments. He is using **Don Loch's** Shadetuff *zoysia matrella* around bunker perimeters in an attempt to reduce maintenance inputs. This work has been ongoing for the past two years with plans to roll it out across all 36 holes.

Elsewhere, **Doug Robinson** is warming to the task of resurfacing **Todd McCully's** greens at Arundel Hills Country Club with TifEagle and facing a deadline of having them all in play by year's end. And spare a thought too for **Brian Cox** at Murwillumbah Golf Club who had 11 greens under water after the most recent East Coast Low in June.

I look forward to catching up with those attending the AGM and hope it will be the start of another great year for our association.

BEN TILLEY
PRESIDENT, GCSAQ

After bidding farewell to a hot, dry summer, South Australian superintendents were hit with plenty of rain in May and June. While it may not have been as much as the Eastern Seaboard, it was plenty for us coupled with very cold temperatures... bring on summer!

We have been reasonably quiet as an association early this year mainly with the summer we have had. The Grange Golf Club hosted a very successful Women's Australian Open back in February and congratulations to **Richard James** and his crew. I know **Nathan Bennett** and his team at Royal Adelaide are already gearing up for next year's Open which will be held from 16-19 February 2017.

In May we held an overnight trip to the Fleurieu Peninsula visiting Links lady Bay Golf Club (superintendent **Tim Warren**), Victor Harbour Golf Club (superintendent **Mike Bohnsack**) and Fleurieu Golf Club (superintendent **Phil Tripodi**). About 15 SAGCSA members enjoyed the two days visiting a beautiful part of South Australia.

All SAGCSA members who attended the AGCSA conference in Melbourne said that they totally

enjoyed the event. Congratulations to **Keenan Hutchings** (The Grange Golf Club) who represented SA in the AGCSA Graduate of the Year Award. Although not winning, Keenan had a great week and on behalf of the committee I congratulate him on making it to the final.

The Wednesday after the conference Royal Adelaide Golf Club hosted a 'walk 'n' talk' session with **Dr Frank Rossi**. The SAGCSA would like to thank Frank, AGCSA events and education manager **Simone Staples** and the AGCSA for organising the event. Frank was great to listen to and the 22 that attended interacted really well, talking about a number of issues. I think Frank handled the chilly conditions at Royal Adelaide a lot better than the rest of the attendees!

Upcoming events include our popular AGM at Flagstaff Hill Golf Club (superintendent **Aaron Kelly**) followed by our education day at The Grange Golf Club in August.

BAZZ BRYANT
PRESIDENT, SAGCSA

I am writing this after saying a final farewell to a well-respected and highly esteemed mentor of the WA turf industry. **Lin Hambleton** (26 June 1942 – 22 June 2016) was and still is the man many of us consider to be the father of vocational turf education in the Perth metropolitan area.

He was instrumental in establishing and developing the turf department at TAFE College in Perth way back in the 1970s, personally drafting and shaping the curriculum as well as writing a number of text and reference books that the students used for their turf management courses.

Lin was the senior turf lecturer at Bentley TAFE alongside friend and industry doyen **Jim Clements** when I studied turf management through the late 1980s. Everyone agrees that Lin is warmly remembered as a big gentle man whose animated face was framed by those large round 70s glasses that magnified his huge smiling eyes.

I also remember that Lin had an even bigger desire to share his love for learning with students that was at times a little intimidating to a young student, especially when he got started on the botanical and chemical complexities occurring within turfgrass systems.

At his funeral we celebrated that Lin was at heart a very strong community-minded, passionate and generous person. This was borne out of a boyhood growing up in a very sport-orientated family that soon developed from being a player to coach of both junior AFL and cricket teams and as a diehard supporter of the Subiaco Lions Football Club, albeit notoriously as one of their leading larrikins.

Thank you to his son Danny, also well known to all within the industry as the senior representative for Globe Australia in Perth, who shared with all of us some heart-warming and very amusing stories of life with his father over the years. Lin was an inspiration to us all, not only as an educator but also for having the vision to see the potential within each of us young hopefuls then in becoming the WA turf industry as it is today and into the future.

On a lighter note, members of the STA WA and WA turf industry in general came together at Hartfield Country Club in May for the inaugural STA WA Golf Challenge. Taking home the T-Quip sponsored trophy was the four-man team of **Rob Thompson** (Programmed Property Services), **Adam Harrison** (Mow Master), **Adam Curtayne** (Baileys Fertilisers) and **John Rukavina** (Growise). It was a great morning and I had the personal experience of demonstrating to my team the principles of persistence and consistency by sending three consecutive balls straight into the first water hazard we came across. The STA WA is very grateful for the support from host superintendent **Nick Kinley** and his team at Hartfield.

Upcoming events include our AGM on 10 August, a revisited STA WA Cricket Wicket Seminar planned for 7 September and the annual WA Turf Industry Awards on 15 November. The STA WA Social Day has been pencilled in for 7 December.

TONY GUY
PRESIDENT, STA WA

GCSAWA

We have seen some rain in WA over the last few months with approximately 300mm from the start of May.

The national conference in Melbourne was again excellent and it was great to catch up with everyone within our industry and listen to a wide range of speakers and topics. WA was well represented with excellent presentations given by award-winning superintendents **Nick Kinley** (Hartfield CC) and **Simon Bourne** (Cottesloe GC).

Dr Frank Rossi conducted a 'walk 'n' talk' morning at Wembley Golf Complex on the Monday following the conference. This was beneficial for our members and an excellent initiative by the AGCSA. Topics of discussion included renovation techniques, topdressing/dusting, shade management, trialling zoysia grass, growing degree days, soil and leaf tissue testing and *Poa annua* control. Dr Rossi also spoke on his involvement with the Olympic golf course. Thought will be given to getting him back to Perth again.

On 12 July the GCSAWA held its first Trade Challenge at Secret Harbour Golf Club. Trade companies entered teams of four which included their representatives and invited superintendents and members from the association. It was an excellent turn out with 10 teams playing Ambrose. Host superintendent **Adam Strachan** had the course in excellent condition and he turned on the fine weather as well. Globe took out first prize closely followed by Dint. The GCSAWA AGM will be held on 9 August with the Toro Cup held in the morning followed by lunch and the AGM.

Finally, it was with sadness to hear of the passing of **Lin Hambleton** in June. Lin had a positive influence on many of our members in their turf careers and he will be fondly remembered.

NEIL GRAHAM
PRESIDENT, GCSAWA



Dr Frank Rossi gets intimate with the profiles at Wembley Golf Complex during his recent 'walk 'n' talk' session

TURF AUSTRALIA



Domain Stadium will be among the venues delegates will visit as part of the Turf Australia NxGen Forum in late August

Instead of a single national conference and field day event, in 2016 Turf Australia is holding a series of state-based forums, which will be half day events comprising of presentations that cover:

- Using social media;
- Using your accountant to understand real turf farm profitability;
- Implementing precision turf farming;
- Learning how the turf levy is being used to improve industry profitability;
- Determining future levy-funded research and development initiatives; and
- Understanding how to identify and influence different personalities.

The 2016 forum dates and locations are:

- **Qld:** 27 July, The Sebel, Pelican Waters, Sunshine Coast
- **NSW:** 16 August, Oakville House, Oakville (near Windsor)
- **Vic:** 25 August, venue TBC, Melbourne
- **WA:** 31 August, Ambrose Estate, Wembley Downs

The cost is subsidised by the turf levy, via Hort Innovation, with matched Federal Government and Turf Australia (TA) funding. The forums are only \$55 for TA members and \$75 for non-members. Registration is essential and can be organised by contacting Rachel Layt on (02) 4588 5735 or email admin@turfaustralia.com.au.

NXGEN FORUM

For the fifth year in a row, Turf Australia will be hosting its 'NxGen Forum', the industry's own 'professional development' programme designed specifically for the next generation of turf growers.

This year's NxGen Forum will be held in Perth from 28-30 August and will give participants the opportunity to see some of Australia's newest sports stadiums, biggest public green spaces, learn how WA growers are handling water restrictions while

still growing top quality turf and visit one of WA's best turf farms.

One of WA's most recognisable horticulturalists and garden designers, **Josh Byrne** will kick-off proceedings for the forum, with other presenters to include **Will Pearce** (STRI) and University of Western Australia's (UWA) **Dr Louise Barton**. UWA has been conducting a number of research trials on its turf trial area into the most effective irrigation methods and how soil amendments can improve irrigation efficiency and the results have surprised many.

As tendering for commercial jobs with local government is making up a big part of turf farms' business, **Warren Stephens** (City of Belmont and chairperson of the UWA Turf Industries Research Steering Committee) and **Hugh Gardner** (City of Swan and STA WA treasurer) will present information about how turf suppliers can interact and correctly tender for such projects.

A visit to one of Australia's most iconic public parks, Kings Park in Perth, will highlight how turf can be managed in large spaces with high patronage. Park manager **Viny Kapur** will explain some of the issues and solutions with managing turf in a space continually shared by the public and the importance of managing any turf issues, in particular sting nematodes.

Participants will also inspect some of WA's newest sports complexes as part of the activities and hear how growers like **Adrian Pitsikas** (Greenacres Turf) have helped push the use of hybrid turf in stadiums. The recently redeveloped surface at NIB Stadium has attracted glowing praise internationally after the surface put on a spectacular performance at a Socceroos match last year.

There will also be the opportunity to visit NIB Stadium and talk turf with turf manager **John Lockyer**, along with Perth's other major stadium Domain Stadium. Domain Stadium turf services manager **Nathan Saville** will be on hand to discuss how the turf at one of WA's premier sports stadiums is managed and kept to a high standard.

Rounding out the programme will be a visit to Bullsbook Turf farm which features an innovative overhead irrigation system more commonly seen in South Africa. The Maas family have been growing turf at Bullsbook for nearly 20 years and **Nathan Maas** will provide a farm tour and overview of the operations and pressure from the urban sprawl and how increasing environmental regulations are being handled by the business.

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TM

Curlewis Golf Club's resident goat 'Morwood' (aka Knackers) looking quite chuffed with himself a day after bailing up professional Zac Morwood at the 2016 Curlewis Golf Club Pro-Am

Getting on your goat

As Rob Bradley writes, Curlewis Golf Club on Victoria's Bellarine Peninsula is on the up. Membership is booming, it's climbing up the rankings list and plans are afoot to make it one of regional Victoria's golfing gems. Then there's the goat...



When I received an email from Australian Turfgrass Management editor Brett Robinson about making a contribution to this edition of the journal, I excitedly thought 'Great! People will finally get to know where Curlewis Golf Club is!'

My thoughts quickly turned to writing a superintendent literary masterpiece about the club's new owners, the exciting plans we have to make it a must-play destination on Victoria's Bellarine Peninsula and our continual march up the course rankings list. Alas, no. Rather than talking about what it's like to work at the fastest growing golf club in Australia (due to massive membership growth), the editor wanted me to write about our famous (or should that be infamous) goat!

Where do I begin? It was one of those 'Rob Bradley moments' when it seemed like a good idea at the time. The thinking was highly logical – goat, mounds, grass... what could possibly go wrong?! It was a good plan (stop laughing) and having done the research there were many other golf courses around the world that had successfully deployed them, many that were higher ranked and with steeper hills than ours.

In the beginning it was a perfect marriage. He would walk around the course with you, playfully run through freshly-raked bunkers or even play nine holes of golf with you (not actually play golf as we are yet to get some clubs cut down for him). All was going along swimmingly until one corporate day 'golfer' (expletive deleted) fed him at the clubhouse and it all went downhill from there.

The thing with goats is that they are ratbags – give them an inch and they'll take a mile and they have mastered the fine art of really getting on your goat (pun intended). The wilder you get the more enjoyment they seem to derive from it and will grin mischievously at you just like a troublesome member of your ground staff!

So rather than copping the wrath of the goat and later on facing allegations of character assassination, fabrications, tall stories and ultimately litigation for defamation, he allowed me to take some time out of his busy day to interview him (which is now quite full due his media commitments).

Rob Bradley: What's your name?

Goat: Was 'Knackers', because someone stole mine. But in a recent turn of Curlewis wisdom, I'm having my name changed by Deed Poll next month to 'Morwood'.

RB: Why are you having your name changed?

Goat: You know full well why Bradley! Keep this up and I'm off to head-butt your car.

RB: Calm down. You are having your name changed because during the 2016 Curlewis Golf Club Pro-Am you broke out of your enclosure and chased PGA professional Zac Morwood around the 6th green. Readers can view the 'incident' on the club's Facebook page.

Goat: That's rubbish and you know it Bradley!

RB: Well, how about I say that after a 'misunderstanding' at our Pro-Am this year and your increased profile on Facebook as a result, our club manager feels it will be easier to market you in the future with an appropriate name?

Goat: And they say I haven't got balls?! Wow, you are so lame. I'm happy to tell ATM readers that when I'm a superstar the name Knackers will cause damage to my brand and will have people believing I'm uncouth.

RB: Enough! Vital statistics please...

Goat: I stand 215cm on my hind legs and weigh in at a bit under 100 kilograms, so the same height as Aaron Sandilands in the AFL and I reckon I could



With in excess of 40,000 hits on Facebook after his Pro-Am antics, 'Morwood' has become a star of social media

pack the second row in State of Origin. The ground staff used to carry me around under one arm when I first arrived; I dare them to try that cutesy-pie stuff now! It takes two of them to drench me.... cowards!

RB: Tell us about your background.

Goat: Should I be on the couch for these questions? Okay, I came to Curlewis Golf Club as a raw, virile, two-year old fresh out of a children's petting zoo into a job I knew not much about.

I was initially employed by you to keep your shed mounds manicured; I quickly expanded that skillset to include manicuring fruit trees, pine trees, cypress trees, olive trees, rare plants, hydraulic plugs and keys. This may explain why you now keep me in the 'smaller' paddock. I used to have 63 hectares to maintain but due to ongoing 'misunderstandings' I now only maintain the shed block of some 5000m – and that's if I'm lucky!

After the Pro-Am misunderstanding with Zac Morwood, landing some big sponsorship deals were looking up with over 40,000 views on the club's Facebook page, more on the PGA's site and various media networks. I thought my future was set!

After failing to gain an endorsement agreement with David Golf (even though I fully endorsed their backlapping paste – it tasted so good, all 8kg of it!) I also applied for some groundsman jobs at a couple of courses but I missed out, maybe because of my short work history. My big chance with Toro was ruined by you playing golf with their business manager which destroyed any chance I had of being a rep. Thanks for nothing!

With Curlewis Golf Club having new owners there was considerable concern over my tenure here. The owners have differing opinions on me – Lyndsay loves me, but David sees me as marinated goat chops.

RB: So what have been some of your greatest achievements during your time at Curlewis?

Goat: I hold the Curlewis tyre dragging record (600 metres up to the clubhouse) with a +10kg weight handicap. I also hold the Toro Workman jumping record – not over but into three on the move! I still await my Zoolander moment though...

RB: Any other achievements you want to add before we wrap this up?

Goat: I think it's time that I cleared the air about some of these so-called 'misunderstandings'. The whole Zac Morwood thing was certainly the highlight of my time here. I know you were not impressed, but apparently everyone else thought it was great! Two weeks in the pen with four car tyres chained to me to make sure I would not get out was pretty rough. I had a lot of selfies taken over the next fortnight by loads of groupies.

The video clip of the 'misunderstanding' taken by Zac is far too short and of poor quality, so I'm thinking I might have a proper dip again next year. Then again, I get the feeling that I will have all of the shed's equipment tied to me before that event!

Other achievements? Four tail lights broken, three of them on your ute, one a visitor – pretty happy with that. Then there is the other one that I have been wrongly accused of. I was just standing there when the Barwon Heads Golf Club mechanic reversed into me! He smashed his boss's tail light and chipped my horn as well!

The three 'uninvited' visits inside the clubhouse were also a lot of fun, two occasions when it was full of ladies. The third was the best though. I made it into the lounge and was having a ball jumping over the tables looking for a snack. Your face was priceless when you found me!

I also crashed a cracker of a trade day BBQ – and I really do mean crashed it. I thought it was 'help yourself' and I couldn't reach the food, that was until I tipped the tables over! Everyone thought it was funny and I thought so too until you showed me the marinated goat recipe from the manager.

I also escaped one Melbourne Cup Day and found a golfer with their car boot open as they were getting their clubs out. When they weren't looking I jumped in their car and thought I would escape this place once and for all. Unfortunately, you spoiled my fun. Another week in the pen and another goat chops recipe emailed through.

The great tea bag robbery from the smoko room was gold! I opened the door myself and ate all the teabags and anything else I found. I would have got away with it if only I had swept up afterwards. 🍵



How things change... Morwood arrived at Curlewis as a two-year-old straight out of a children's petting zoo. Now he is a 100kg, 215cm weapon



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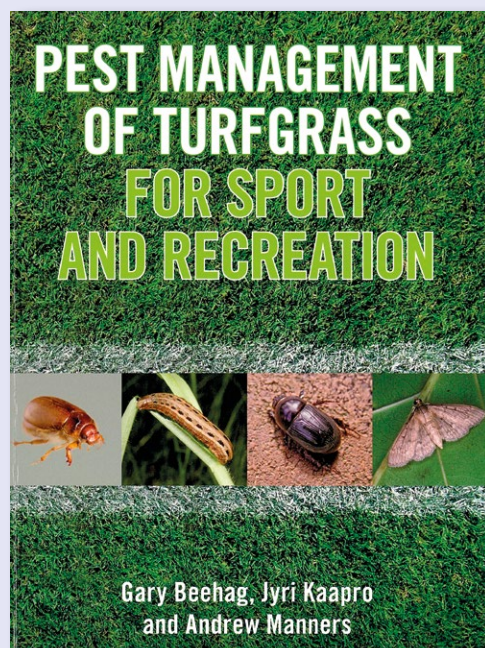
There are very few, if any, recently published Australian reference books devoted entirely to insect and mite pests. As authors Gary Beehag, Jyri Kaapro and Andrew Manners pen in their Forward to this 312 page book, their aim is to “fill a long-felt need in Australian turfgrass circles for an informative account of the wide range of insect and mite species that regularly cause serious, and at times catastrophic, damage to lawns and sports turfgrass”. As such, this publication is a great addition to the industry and a fantastic reference for all Australian turfgrass managers.

While some information is available through international reference books, the Australian climate is dramatically different. Seasons are different in the Northern Hemisphere and to add to the confusion terminology may still be in imperial measurements. This book is extremely thorough in its explanation of pests and how climate and host interact with a pest to influence damage that may be encountered.

The book, published by CSIRO Publishing, aims to provide the reader with a thorough understanding of an insect or mite and deduce whether it is indeed a pest, natural enemy or simply a benign organism. It also aims to provide an understanding of integrated pest management and the role it has in controlling pests, from cultural practices such as mowing, irrigation and nutrition regimes, through to thatch management and the use of endophyte-enhanced turfgrass. The impact of beneficial invertebrates is also explored along with the use of biological control organisms such as entomopathogenic nematodes and lastly, if needs be, pesticide usage. The book also defines insect and mite morphology and development.

Pest control can only be successfully achieved after a successful monitoring programme has been put in place and this book provides the reader with a step-by-step approach to achieving this. It outlines the importance of monitoring and recordkeeping and provides insights into monitoring techniques and economic thresholds.

Three chapters within the book are entirely devoted to specific pests that attack differing parts of the plant (i.e.: the roots, stems and leaves). Each pest is generally outlined with a brief introduction, followed by sections on description, damage and host range, general biology and management. Within the management section for some of the insects there is a table provided outlining mode of action, the active ingredient and the target life stage of chemicals that are currently registered in Australia for use against that pest.



The book also contains 11 pages of colour photographs of insect pests which always provide a great quick reference source, as well as many other images, figures and tables throughout the text that provide the reader with a very clear understanding of what is being discussed.

The book also provides a detailed chapter on modern turfgrass insecticides and miticides. It outlines types of pesticide formulations, as well as providing the reader with an understanding of how the insecticide works, its mode of action classification, as well as providing information on the categorisation of an insecticide as to whether its contact, translaminar or systemic and which active ingredients may be adulticides or larvicides. The chapter also investigates bio-pesticides including the use of bacteria, fungi and nematodes to control insect populations.

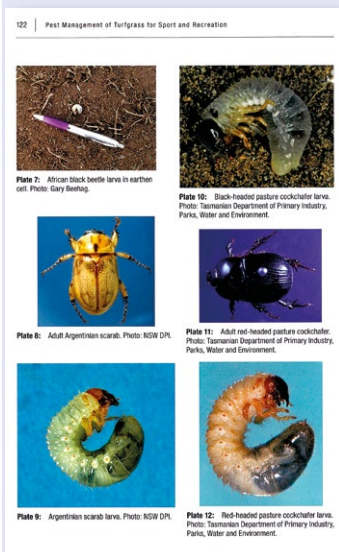
Pesticide application is the last section covered but is obviously as important as all the other information provided in the book. It covers application method, tank mixing and compatibility, the fate of the pesticide and how to avoid side effects.

The book has been extremely well thought out, is well presented and more importantly easy to read and navigate. It is not simply a publication regarding what chemical pesticide is best applied for a specific pest, but provides significant information regarding the pest's life cycle and the best way to control its presence in any turfgrass situation.

Pest and or mite damage can be very destructive and enabling turf managers to have better knowledge of how to monitor their activity and provide a clear understanding of the best control measures in Australian conditions is extremely beneficial.

- Andrew Peart

The book contains 11 pages of colour photographs of insect pests which provide a great quick reference source



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