

Keeping it Green



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AUSTRALIAN GOLF ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVE NEWSLETTER

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If you have any editorial or photos you would like to submit for publication in Keeping it Green, please contact AGCSA environmental agronomist John Geary jgeary@agcsa.com.au or phone (03) 9548 8600

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In this second issue of **Keeping it Green** we focus our attention on the golf industry's key environmental award - the AGCSA Claude Crockford Environmental Award - which be a part of the AGCSA Awards handed out at the 25th Australian Turfgrass Conference in Hobart in July.

Thirteen years after winning the inaugural award Rodney Fenton has written an entertaining article highlighting the impact climatic change is having on Queenscliff Golf Club, while also touching on the impact winning the award has had on him personally. We also thought it prudent to explore the legacy Claude Crockford has left on the Australian golfing community. In response, we have republished an article written by Graeme Grant which gives a wonderful insight into the man.

Cultural and natural heritage consultant Andrew Richardson has also contributed an interesting article on interpretation techniques golf clubs could adopt to increase environmental awareness of their surrounds.

Don't forget, if you have a project on the go or a story of interest, please contact John Geary at jgeary@agcsa.com.au or 0412 293 125.

“A t a time when the high cost of energy, water and labour taunt today's golf courses to suffer huge annual maintenance expense; when the trend to return to a less complex and costly approach to golf course turf management gathers increasing necessity worldwide, Claude Crockford's superb work may afford the modern golf course superintendent a practical alternative for consideration.”

These are the words of arguably Australia's greatest golfer Peter Thomson when in 1993 he wrote an introduction to Claude Crockford's book entitled *'The Complete Golf Course Turf and Design'*.

Such tributes to Mr Crockford are commonplace and it is little wonder that in 1996 the AGCSA named its environmental award in his honour. Below is an article written by Graeme Grant, which was published in Paul Daley's *'Golf Architecture, A worldwide Perspective, Volume Two'*, entitled...

WORKING WITH 'CROCKY'

(Claude Crockford, Course Manager - Royal Melbourne Golf Club 1935 - 1975) by Graeme Grant, Golf Course Architect (formerly course superintendent - Kingston Heath Golf 16 yrs. Kingswood Golf Club 9yrs.)

It was mid 1967 when I first met Claude Crockford. I was 17, still at school and about to face my first job interview. My father would allow me

PRINCIPAL PARTNERS

Bayer Environmental Science



RMGC view of 13th West green



RMGC view of 15th West green



to pursue a golf course management career but only at Royal Melbourne under Mr Crockford who was the doyen.

He was a man who went about his business in a professional manner, more a supervisor than a manual worker – unusual in those days. He had the respect of both the golfers and his peers with streams of requests for advice coming from all quarters. Having *Poa annua* free bentgrass greens and a golf course managed in tune with nature, his turf and playing surfaces were internationally recognised.

The interview went well and my first and everlasting impression of him was the immense pleasure and satisfaction he gained from his life's work. His encouraging words to one so young and unsure have never been forgotten. The stigma attached to golf course work in those days was profound but

this wise and considered man convinced a young boy and his father that for anyone willing to work and study it could be as enjoyable and satisfying as one could wish for.

I began work in November 1967 and so began my sojourn into golf course management and architecture. His first piece of advice to me was to immediately gain whatever formal greenkeeping qualifications were available but treat the tutors' theories with extreme caution. They were too concerned about the colour of the grass believing anything less than verdant green was a sign of unhealthy turf. At Royal Melbourne the greens were more brown than green. Mr.Crockford strived to provide firm, fast and true playing surfaces and this could not be done on lush turf. Just as importantly this hungry turf would be *Poa* free.

He was reluctant to put heavy machines on his greens and hollow tyning was anathema to him; even worse than liberal fertilising. In his desire to keep the greens stress free he changed to lightweight floating head mowers which gave a superior cut. As with many methods he employed, others would try them but, unless they reduced fertiliser applications as well, their turf became too spongy and they had to revert back to heavy machines to cut into the turf.

This was a time between the horse drawn mowers and the complete mechanisation of today. Apart from the fairways all other areas were mown on foot. We didn't push the mowers but miles and miles were walked each day. Luckily greens were only mown twice per week in the growing season and not even weekly in the depths of winter.

Although a recommended practice worldwide, Mr Crockford saw hollow tyning as a means of destroying the smooth true putting surfaces he worked so hard to create. His means of renovation was to “lift greens”. The turf would be cut into lengths 1.8metres long, 300mm wide and 25mmthick rolled up and put aside. The root mat (a build up of undecayed root material) was removed down to free draining soil; fresh soil was then brought in and levelled ready for relaying the turf. This was a painstaking task, with each sod checked with a straight edge before the next one was laid. The end result was a near perfect surface ready for play one week after laying. All greens were treated in this way at least once between sowing in 1929 and 1975.

There was a time however, when hollow tyning did become necessary. A drought in 1967/68 was so severe that at its peak town water for golf courses was restricted to application by hand held hose for ½ hour per day in the early morning. This exceptional time meant that all run-off of the precious water had to be avoided therefore hollow tyning had to be carried out but only by hand – each staff member was equipped with a golf shaft. All 37 greens were done - approximately three hectares of turf.

During this time bores were sunk in order to find water to supplement the town supply. Although Royal Melbourne covers a vast acreage only meagre quantities were forthcoming. Crocky’s hopes were constantly dashed, as each new site proved no better than the previous one. However just enough water was found to be useful if pumped for 24 hours each day into storage tanks. This meant a new irrigation system was necessary to keep the MMBW town supply separate. Trenches for this system covering the two courses were dug by hand and all pipework installed in house.

Apart from some of the better couch varieties in the fairways, the only turf to survive this harsh period was that on the greens. Even this was unrecognisable as it was allowed to grow to a height that resembled green surrounds. If the greens were not pure bent grass it is doubtful they would have survived.

Some seven months after the drought broke Royal Melbourne was to host the Eisenhower Trophy. It was testament to Mr Crockford’s turf nurturing skills that he was able to literally bring the course back from the dead to host this international event.

Apart from the drought this was a traumatic year. Some three to four weeks prior to the tournament a freak accident occurred in my company. Occupational health and safety would have a field day these days but in that era if a recoil starter on a machine broke you simply substituted a piece of rope. In this case a piece of electric flex was used to try and start my mower. I guess Crocky thought it too dangerous for me so he had a go. As he pulled, the knot slipped and flicked up into his right eye. I had never before seen anybody writhing in such pain. He was admitted to hospital and spent the next month there but was never to regain the sight in this eye. The dedication of his staff and

their respect for him meant the course preparation went on, as he would have expected.

Although Royal Melbourne was his first love and turf management his forte, Claude Crockford was sought after for his design expertise and was a contemporary of Vernon Morcom. Whilst Morcom found the time to pursue this profession Crocky could not do both and had to make a choice. Luckily for Royal Melbourne, Australian golf and the turf management profession he chose to make the golf courses in Black Rock his shrine. He used his design skills to great effect at Royal Melbourne and although the credit for changes to the 7th, 11th and 12th west are accorded to Ivo Whitton and Alex Russell, Claude Crockford was the one to implement, as he put it, “their sketchy ideas”.

Few would be aware that the contours of the MacKenzie greens were altered substantially by Crocky to effect proper surface drainage. I well remember the pride he took in the greens’ ability to shed excess water quickly after storms and become playable almost immediately the rain had stopped. He showed great annoyance that the organising committee of the 1972 World Cup did not recognise this fact choosing to cancel the second day’s play before observing the drainage qualities of the greens.

As a young golfer I was interested in not only the greenkeeping side of things but also course design, as I think most golfers are. This interest was engendered when Mr. Crockford lent me two classic golf architecture books – Golf Architecture by MacKenzie and Golf Architecture in America by Thomas. Until this time I believed all the subtle undulations and folds in the land at Royal Melbourne occurred naturally. As well as books he gave me knowledge through the spoken word and the practical application of his skills when the greens were lifted and re-laid or bunkers had to be repaired because of erosion. Bunkers were to be formed as if the wind had blown them out in a concave manner and deep back lips were unnecessary.

The maintenance of bunkers played an integral part in playing characteristics. He insisted they be raked up the slopes and left firm on the faces only as far as to allow the ball to roll away from the lip in order to gain a backswing. This meant a range of shots had to be played. It is a pity that more are not aware of this important maintenance practice.



View from behind RMGC 17th West green

RMGC view of 6th East green



RMGC view of 6th East green



Royal Melbourne was famed for the greens but there was much more to Mr Crockford's course maintenance. He had a unique appreciation of the heathland flora once so abundant around Port Phillip Bay. This was at a time when others around him were despoiling the indigenous scrub turning even remote areas of the golf course into grasslands that required constant mowing.

The older groundsmen who had been part of the construction crew in the 1920's and 30's were also aware of the value of these plants to the ecology of the area. They were, in their own way, naturalists and awakened an interest in this young man surprised at and appreciative of the knowledge they gave so freely.

As it was conveyed to me there was little of the now abundant tea tree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*) and very few of the taller eucalypts present on the original land. Consequently vast areas of the golf course could be seen from any one point. Apparently tea tree became more prolific during WWII and needed to be removed by hand from among the dwarf heathland plants or it would soon smother the less invasive dwarf plants.

Staff numbers were minimal however substantial areas of the heathland were maintained and survive today providing a wonderful contrast to the manicured grasses as well as a link with the way the landscape would have been before urbanisation.

The plants now provide seed stock for propagation and eventual use off the course in the local area. If tournament times coincide with the flowering season, the turf surfaces, the golf and indigenous flora combine to make Royal Melbourne a special place for spectators and players.

Throughout this essay I have made reference to Crocky as Mr Crockford. He was always that to me even as a mature adult and his insistence to be called by his first name was not enough. None of his staff ever called him by his first name, even those his age or older who had been with him from the beginning. For me this was a sign of respect but it was

strange for older men to defer in this way. He always wore a collar and tie to work which was both a sign of his desire to raise others perception of the golf course "curator" and of the era he came through in golf. Players even wore a coat and tie in earlier times. I believe he felt more comfortable when dealing with members and administrators when dressed as they were.

The term used to describe his position – course manager – was the impetus for the title of the turf manager of today and a means of gaining respect for the profession. Curator was the accepted title then and before that Greenkeeper. It was obvious he felt more a manager than a keeper of the green.

In 1972 Kingswood Golf Club was the first to recognise the value in calling for a more professional person to care for their course and advertised for a course manager. Suffice to say John Spencer, later of Huntingdale Golf Club fame, was the successful candidate. This title although appropriate did create some confusion with the title club manager and as a consequence course superintendent has been settled on.

This is but a brief extract of the time I spent learning my profession so many years ago from a modest and reserved man who was a genius in his chosen field. I based my career on the principles he taught me and I have passed these onto others under my influence who have in turn used them successfully. The legacy left by Crocky has been profound and has benefited many more golfers than he could ever have imagined.

We have progressed in many areas of our course management during the past 35 years. Chemicals we use now are less toxic, Occupational Health and Safety regulations have given course staff a safer work environment, improved turf grass species are available and fairway surfaces are more likely to be pure couch but there have never been purer putting surfaces than those prepared by Claude Crockford at Royal Melbourne.

INAUGURAL CLAUDE CROCKFORD ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD WINNER, RODNEY FENTON – 13 YEARS ON

When I was asked to revisit my winning of the inaugural AGCSA Claude Crockford Environmental Award some 13 years ago I can't help but reflect on what was the best time in my professional career and an experience that helped me grow as a person.

In 1996, I had already served 10 years as course superintendent of Queenscliff Golf Club located on Swan Island, Victoria. However, looking back on this period I was very insular, I hardly ever travelled to Melbourne, only rarely attended state superintendent association meetings and as Queenscliff Golf Club is only a small club, the thought of attending the national turf conference was not even considered.

As a result, I knew nothing about the upcoming Claude Crockford Environmental Award and it was only after some of the local turf sales reps suggested that I should apply, given the work practices that had been implemented at Queenscliff. So, kicking and scratching and with much help from the local reps, fellow staff members, club members and the club committee a written presentation was submitted for the Victorian section of the award in April 1996. A couple of days later the club was informed that we had won the Victorian section which meant I now had to make a further presentation for the national award in July. It was a great thrill to win, but the thought of an oral presentation did worry the hell out of me.

To help me prepare, the local Chipco rep organised a breakfast for the staff at Geelong Golf Club with the aim



Aerial view of Queenscliff Golf Club

being I could practice my presentation in front of everyone. Well, I was so nervous I nearly had two accidents on the way into Geelong. Once there, I gave possibly the worst presentation ever, my first effort at public speaking hadn't gone well and my confidence had taken a hit. The club came to the rescue organising a presentation for the lady members and then the

members which gave me two more practice runs which both went a little better. So, by the time 7 July came around when I had to present to the national judges I had even incorporated a few slides and was happy how it all went.

The winner was to be announced at the conference dinner and presentation night, which was scheduled to be held at the World Congress Centre in Melbourne. So apart from doubling my normal visits to Melbourne in the one week, I had to borrow a jacket and tie and on 11 July my wife Jennifer and I attended the presentation night where the club and I were lucky enough to be presented as the inaugural winner of the AGCSA Claude Crockford Environmental Award.

It started a great couple of years for me with Chipco sending Jennifer and I to Singapore for the 1997 Asia Pacific Turf Show. As a result of winning the award I was also asked to give a number of presentations, speaking at an environmental conference held at Monash University, to local environmental groups as well as to the NSW Golf Course Superintendents Association and a number of local schools. There were also a number of articles published in the local media and trade publications highlighting Queenscliff Golf Club and its environmental policies.

Through all this the main theme of the original presentation was that a small, not very financial club could make a difference environmentally to a golf club and its surrounds. Queenscliff Golf Club is in a unique situation in the middle of the Swan Bay Reserve, which is the most intact wetland and marine ecosystem within Port Phillip Bay with the whole reserve listed under the Ramsar Convention on wetlands as being of international importance. The golf course is the main wintering site for the Australian Orange Bellied Parrot, one of the rarest and most endangered species in the world. Only 150 individuals still exist and in the winter of 1996, 31 individuals were counted at the club.

The golf club worked with government departments to protect vital habitat. This included building a fence from



From left, Queenscliff superintendent Rod Fenton, assistant Rick Webb and apprentice Mitch Hoyer

Queenscliff Golf Club wetland area



tee to green along the edge of the 7th fairway, signage and included a local rule on the score card stating that balls must be abandoned when lying outside the boundary fence. We assisted and encouraged bird watchers and environmental groups, trapped and eradicated feral cats and foxes from the island and tailored any chemical spraying around the parrots arrival and departure. We also created wildlife corridors with only native flora indigenous to the island propagated by the staff and members while implementing a programme to remove all non indigenous plants from the island.

These initiatives led the club to draft a document detailing a long term strategy for the landscape flora and fauna which became official club policy that can only be changed by a members vote at an annual meeting. All of this was done at virtually no extra cost to the club and with no sacrifice to the quality of the golf course playing surfaces.

So how do we stand 13 years on? I am glad to report we are still adhering to our long term environmental strategy making slow but steady progress. With regard to the Orange Bellied Parrot the numbers sited on the course since 1996 have steadily declined. It is my belief that this is due to the varying climatic conditions we have experienced in recent years, which have dramatically altered the character of the golf course and its surrounds.

Average rainfall has dramatically reduced and since 1996 we have had only a dozen months of average or above average rainfall. For example January 2009 has been the second driest on record with 0.4 of a millimetre of rainfall for the month with the first week of February smashing all existing temperature records.

As a result of these climatic conditions, many of the grasses that were in seed during the winter and spring that the parrots fed upon (such as native fescues, *Poa annua*, chickweed and prairie grasses) have either completely disappeared or are greatly reduced. This has happened over the past 13 years but in particular the last four years, which has seen the number of wintering birds decrease to only two this last winter.

Another major influence which has led to the decline in the number of parrot sightings is the number of kangaroos currently on Swan island. Currently there are over 200 roos on Swan Island when in 1996 there were only 10. Point 8 of the club's long term strategy drafted in October 1995 states: "There are a small number (approximately 10) of kangaroos

on the golf course. These Kangaroo's arrived via the Defence Department. We would hope that the Defence Department would control the numbers of kangaroos allowed on Swan Island and not let the numbers get to large."

Apart from the constant damage they do to greens and bunkers they have wiped out almost all of the native grass landscaping. Parts of the native grasses the parrots feed on (such as flax leaf lilly, small Poas, and wallaby and kangaroo grass) cannot be found anywhere. The Defence Department have had public relations problems in other areas regarding the control of kangaroo numbers and yet they still keep avoiding the problem.

I am an animal lover and would hate to see a culling of kangaroos however they are damaging the flora to the point where it is affecting all of the surrounding fauna. This situation is still unresolved and while speaking to our landlords, the Defence Department's attitude to the golf club has completely changed since the 2001 9/11 attacks.

Security has increased to the point were it has had a financial impact on the golf club and the once excellent standing the club held with bird watchers and environmental groups has been strained. This is due to the new Defence Department demands on people coming onto the island. Written applications and signed indemnity forms are some of the demands now placed on coming over to the island and some have been refused entry all together. I won't even start on the difficulties the club has encountered to make ourselves less reliant on potable water or even just surviving five years of severe water restrictions.

Having said this, Queenscliff Golf Club still remains one of the most unique golf courses in Australia. Many of our present problems were unseen 13 years ago but as we have done for the last 100 years we will continue to work through these problems and I am certain that in hundred years time it will still be a unique place to come and play golf.

As for the AGCSA Claude Crockford Environmental Award, the trophy still takes pride of place in the club's trophy cabinet. I feel it helped me become much more confident in dealing with committees and members in general. I have had nothing but support from the various committees and members in the ensuring years.

In my personal life I became much more involved in my children's schooling and sporting activities where I am still involved as a coach and committee man at the local athletics club. To my own detriment, I still don't go to many state superintendent meetings while I avoid travelling to Melbourne like the plague. I did enjoy through, travelling to Melbourne to attend last year's AFL grand final, watching the mighty Hawks win the premiership.

Rodney Fenton
Golf Course Superintendent
Queenscliff Golf Club

QUEENSLIFF GOLF CLUB GREENS COMMITTEE LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR NATURAL LANDSCAPE FLORA AND FAUNA

In Rodney Fenton's previous article he mentions Queenscliff Golf Club's long-term strategy for landscape flora and fauna. What follows is a copy of that policy which can only be changed by a members vote at its annual general meeting.

"Because of the changing greens committees and superintendents from time to time, it is the current greens committee's aim to implement a long-term strategy that can be put in place for future superintendents and greens committees to be guided by. Without this long-term plan in place we run the risk of wasting resources and time with poor planning.

It is not my or the current greens committee's place to determine the future strategy for landscape, flora and fauna of the Queenscliff Golf Club, but I offer the following for your perusal and comment so as we can work towards a formal long term plan together.

With this in mind it is common knowledge that gold club survival in the district is becoming harder each year which is evident by our own club's financial problems.

The greens committee's feeling is that we should aim the focus on the long term planning on making the Queenscliff Golf Club more unique to the golfer. These same comments came out of both special meetings conducted during the year to look at the future direction of the Queenscliff Golf Club. To enable us to make the Queenscliff Golf Club more unique we must build on our natural landscape, position and water views. The feeling of playing golf on an island should be cultivated where possible.

The following goals should from the basis of the Queenscliff Golf Club's aims for its long term planning.

1. Low lying salt effecting fairways will need to be lifted to increase the standard of the fairways. This can be done given time as the 3rd fairway has proven. The effected fairways are: practice fairway, 4th, 11th and 12th.

To do this we plan to enlarge the water hazard on the 7th hole back towards the east to include an island and natural beautification to encourage birdlife. This fill will be used to lift the practice fairway. A further water hazard would be put in around the 11th and 12th tee area to provide further fill for the 11th and 12th fairways, this would also improve the golfers challenge playing the 10th



The 8th tee is being used by the Department of Sustainability and Environment to automatically track the local movement of three varieties of shore birds which have been radio tagged. The species are: Bar-Tailed Goodwits, Grey Plovers and Red-Necked Stints. These migratory birds, which travel from Siberia, are being studied on their feeding and roosting habits to ensure their protection

and 11th fairways as well as beautifying and encouraging greater birdlife to this area of the course.

2. We should aim to make the routine cutting of rough as easy as practical without losing any of the natural features. This will involve clearing of trees that are stand alone trees without any real purpose for the golf hole. Mass planting or clumps of trees are to be encouraged in the future so as these only require cutting around the perimeter.

Good examples of this can be seen at recently developed

golf courses where they are able to cut there rough very easily back to natural tree line therefore enabling staff to more constructively use there man hours preparing the course to a higher standard.

I am not suggesting that we go straight in and pull out trees everywhere, what I am suggesting is that we start thinking this way and slowly start working towards this long-term goal.

3. Native grasses should be utilised where possible so as to give a natural look about the course, care must be used when placing these grasses so as to not become a problem to the golfer.
4. Conservation of the flora, fauna and natural landscape values should be a major objective of the greens committee.
5. Revegetation with the indigenous species is recommended, the collection of these species should occur from local populations. Plant species that have been planted on the island and are known not to be indigenous to the island should be progressively removed and replaced with indigenous plants to the island. (Realistically this will mainly occur through natural attrition with the exception of buckthorn and boxthorn.)
6. Immediate restoration works should focus on the preservation of least degraded areas, most vulnerable plant populations and the worst weed species and populations. Examples are *Rhamnus*, *Alaternus* and *Lycium Ferocissimum*. (Italian buckthorn and boxthorn.)
7. **Weed control:** Because of the extent of the weed problem it will remain a dominant Greens Committee issue. Consistent monitoring of the weed flora is essential to identify new weed species and to monitor the success of the weed management programs.

8. **Kangaroos:** There are a small number (approximately 10) of kangaroos on the golf course. These kangaroos arrived on the course via the Defence Department. We would hope that the Defence Department would control the numbers of the Kangaroos allowed on Swan Island and not let the numbers get too large.
9. **Rabbits:** Are an ongoing concern with the environmental damage they are causing. The club can no longer use 1080 poison because of effects on birdlife. We have since used Pindone with limited success. Rabbit shots are held periodically and it is hoped that the Calicivirus disease currently spreading throughout the country will be released in Autumn '96 when it will have its best effect.

10. **Orange-Bellied Parrot:** Every effort must be made by the golf club to protect the parrot's habitat and ensure the long term survival of the species. We will co-operate with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and bird watching groups in a combined effort to ensure their survival."

RODNEY FENTON,
GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT
KELVIN PETTIGROVE, GREENS CHAIRMAN
OCTOBER 1995

2009 AGCSA CLAUDE CROCKFORD ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

Presented in partnership with Syngenta, the AGCSA Claude Crockford Environmental Award recognises golf course superintendents for their commitment to sustainable land management, long-term environmental planning, community involvement and overall environmental stewardship of their golf course. Nominations are now open for the 2009 award.

The award, which is one of four the AGCSA presents at the annual Australian Turfgrass Conference, is named in honour of Claude Crockford who was superintendent at the world-renowned Royal Melbourne Golf Club between 1937 and 1975. While Royal Melbourne is famed for its greens, it was Crockford's championing of golf course environmental management which he is most remembered for within the industry. That legacy continues today through the Claude Crockford Environmental Award.

In these times of heightened environmental awareness and regulation, the AGCSA Claude Crockford Environmental Award takes on great significance. With golf courses now under increasing public and legislative scrutiny, environmental management and responsibility has become a primary concern for the modern day superintendent.

This award has become one of the most sought after at the annual presentation ceremony and always attracts a highly competitive field of nominees. Winning the AGCSA Claude Crockford Environmental Award provides a huge fillip for the superintendent and his or her crew, and is something that the entire club can take pride in.

Selection Criteria Nominees for the AGCSA Claude Crockford Environmental Award must be a current AGCSA superintendent member and members of the AGCSA's Environmental Initiative. Selection criteria include the demonstration of a commitment to sustainable land management, long-term planning, community involvement and overall environmental stewardship of the golf course and its surrounding environment. Protection of indigenous plant and animal populations, restoration of habitat and a desire to protect sensitive areas are also highly regarded aspects of this award.

Requirements:

- In no less than 1000 words please detail or send a dossier demonstrating how the nominee has displayed a commitment to sustainable land management and the environment. Please make sure the following key judging points are covered:
- Description of the current environmental management plan or system in place.
- Demonstrate the commitment to the protection of the existing natural environment, environmental best practice and environmental stewardship.
- Description of the overall objective for environmental change.
- Description of the current course environment.
- Demonstrate the commitment to land management and sustainability.
- Demonstrate the process being undertaken to protect native flora and fauna and the protection of environmentally-sensitive areas.

AGCSA Claude Crockford Environmental Award Past Recipients (click on a name to read their profile)

- 2008: **Kenton Boyd** (Magenta Shores Golf and Country Club, NSW)
- 2007: **Stuart Moore** (Southport Golf Club, QLD)
- 2006: **Peter Donkers** (Long Reef Golf Club, NSW)
- 2005: **Scott McKay** (North Lakes Golf Club, QLD) and **Ben Marshall** (Club Pelican, QLD)
- 2004: **David Warwick** (Avondale Golf Club, NSW)
- 2003: **Spiros Skaftouros** (Growling Frog Golf Club, VIC) and **Darren Watson** (Horizons Golf Club, NSW)
- 2002: **Jeff Austen** (El Caballo, WA)
- 2001: **Andrew Baker** (Sanctuary Cove Golf Resort, QLD)
- 2000: **Ben Tilley** (Beerwah Golf Club, QLD)
- 1999: **Mick Russell** (Werribee Park Golf Club, VIC)
- 1998: **Kevin Wellard** (Nelson Bay Golf Club, NSW)
- 1997: **Jon Penberthy** (Gainsborough Greens GC, QLD)
- 1996: **Rodney Fenton** (Queenscliff Golf Club, VIC)



Golf Course Interpretation

by Andrew Richardson

Factoring in education and interpretation techniques into the game of golf is neither a new nor novel idea and clubs will often utilise signage as a means of highlighting hazards or to alert its patrons to maintenance works that are in progress around the course.

While this type of communication is commonplace, there is enormous scope for golf clubs to present interesting aspects of its cultural and natural heritage similar to the way that councils and government departments educate visitors as they wander the parklands and suburban reserves.

While signage in parks is normally used to present text that relates to the natural heritage of a given area, most golf clubs and courses have opportunities to expand on environmental themes as well as cultural subject matter such as club history and the architecture of its landscape. In the same way that signage can provide interesting facts about the local flora and fauna within a parkland setting, so can similar methods and techniques be utilised on golf courses to great effect while only enhancing the golfers game and knowledge at the same time.

Effective interpretation and education has become an essential tool when attempting to communicate subject matter that is often sensitive for any variety of reasons. For example, a club member, guest or visitor may not fully understand why an area has been roped off and may also view it as an inconvenience to their game. Rather than posting signage at the site briefly explaining that maintenance and/or revegetation is in progress, the same information can be presented at the tee with the inclusion of examples of flora or vegetation communities that the club intends to protect and conserve. As the golfer waits to tee off, they have the opportunity to read the signage at their leisure. This serves a dual purpose in that the patron has a clear understanding of why an area is out of play while absorbing an interesting fact about the environment they are playing in. In an age of increasing environmental awareness, this style of education can give the reader an insight into the role that golf courses play in the local and wider ecologies.

As mentioned earlier, golf clubs and courses have the capacity to provide and present a variety of informative core topics to players, with the opportunity to further expand and



divide into brief and concise texts. And while I have mostly discussed the presence of physical signage so far within this article, let us not forget that interpretation, education and communication can take many forms. Publications such as books and brochures are effective in spreading the message, as are websites and publicly accessible databases.

From research I have conducted within the golfing community, members and guests alike have indicated that they will investigate further if presented with topics of interest. The majority of Club Management has long understood this concept, often having books and publications covering the club and general golfing history available to members and guests upon request.

This is where correctly applied interpretation techniques and signage play a vital role in subtly

educating golfers while adding interest to the game. Core categories that are translatable within a golf course setting can include:

- Club History
- Architectural and design history
- Flora and fauna
- Environment and ecology

These categories can then be broken up into a number of smaller topics such as:

- How old is the club or course?
- Who designed the original course layout?
- What significant species of flora occur naturally on the course?
- Types of animals that make the course their home.
- How the course fits into the wider ecology.
- Steps that Club Management are taking in relation to conservation and preservation.

These are only some of the examples that can be expanded upon and the differing permutations are endless depending on the messages that are intended for communication.

Tips for interpreting your golf course

- Ask members that have been involved with the club for a while for information. Often there are those who have investigated the club and its history.
- Contact your local golfing historical society, or investigate whether your club has its own historian.

- State and local libraries will often have resources devoted to golfing history.
 - Find out whether the club keeps archived records. These may contain original architectural drawings.
 - Engage environmental consultants to carry out flora and fauna surveys. The resulting reports are invaluable to understanding how the course fits in to the environment and ecology. Making the reports available to members and guests will stimulate interest in the preservation and protection of outside of the golf course itself.
 - Engage a consultant specialising in cultural and natural heritage. This can save time and wasted effort when it comes to presenting collected data and information. There are strict guidelines that apply to copyright and displaying of text and images in a public arena.
- In summary, using these types of interpretation and educational techniques can be an interesting and different

way for clubs to give golfers an increased awareness of their surroundings while only adding to the enjoyment of the game.

Andrew Richardson works as a cultural and natural heritage consultant specialising in research and interpretation for parks, golf clubs and courses throughout Australia. With a strong interest in golf course ecology and having worked extensively in Natural Resource Management, Andrew also regularly writes environmentally based articles for golf magazines and publications.

For enquiries regarding research, interpretation and environmental communication for your club, please call Andrew directly on 0403 910 410 during business hours or email jrichardson@iprimus.com.au.

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Changes to QLD Environmental Protection Legislation

There has been a changes made to the Queensland Environment Protection Regulation. The changes came into force on 1 January 2009. The Queensland Environmental Protection Regulation 2008 will change the way some environmental matters are managed in Queensland. The new approach is based on evidence and the potential to cause environmental harm.

The objective of the new regulation is to protect Queensland's unique environment from point source pollution while allowing ecologically sustainable development, by ensuring: effective regulation of environmentally relevant activities; effective regulation of environmental nuisance; and effective implementation of national agreements.

The key changes include: an updated list of environmentally relevant activities (ERAs) that will require regulation; a new fee structure for ERAs based on environmental emissions; and broader responsibility for local government, who will now manage matters related to environmental nuisance (from both commercial and residential) and minor water pollution. What does this mean for golf course Superintendents? It means that in principle the EPA has devolved a lot of its regulatory functions to local government.

This happened some time ago in NSW and as a result superintendents can expect to be under increasing regulatory scrutiny from local government officers who will be checking compliance and environmental management status. Be ready. Click on the link below for more information. http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/about_the_epa/legislation/environmental_protection/#gen1

e-par develops new e-par service

At e-par we understand the pressures placed on the modern day superintendents and sportsturf managers trying to

be everything to everyone. Let our e-par experts relieve some of this pressure by building or completing your e-par environmental management system for you. We call this service e-par caddie.

OPTION 1

This package is designed for new e-par members.

e-par Tournament Caddie: Our e-par experts will fully build your EMS for you. The fee includes your e-par purchase \$4700.00 + GST or \$395 monthly + GST

OPTION 2

This package is designed for existing e-par members.

e-par Caddie Hole by Hole: For existing members who may have completed some of the e-par EMS but have become time poor or they simply want their EMS completed. With this package an e-par expert will build your EMS one hole at a time. The fee is \$150.00 + GST per e-par EMS hole completed.

New addition to staff at e-par head office

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Dianne Wright as our new office manager. We are very pleased Dianne accepted our offer to join the e-par team. Dianne can be contacted at dianne@epar.com.au or by phone on (02) 4961 4060 and Fax (02) 4961 4021.

Ever wanted to know what powers e-par?

e-par runs on state-of-the-art virtualisation technology. e-par runs on what is known as a 'virtual machine'. This offers up to 30-times more energy efficiency compared to standard existing dedicated server hosting. It also offers higher reliability and server-up time, because e-par's "virtual server" runs on several physical servers and is not subject to the downtime characteristic of many physical servers.

Virtualisation technology significantly reduces power consumption by moving workloads to fewer servers. A recent survey by the Australian Computer Society www.acs.org.au found that each server removed represents an annual saving of around 3.35 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

This is due to the fact that most servers on average use only using a fraction of their full capacity, while power and cooling requirements remain constant whether a server

is using 10 per cent or 100 per cent of its total resources. Virtualisation and load-balancing technology can allow up to 30 different servers to be consolidated onto the one piece of hardware.

Supported and hosted by Ipera, e-par's virtual machine provides the highest level of control, the highest uptime and the fastest recovery time, the best security and the best scalability.

Hatching of Turtles - Wynnum Golf Club

The following photo's were sent in by Jason Adams, golf course superintendent at Wynnum Golf Club in Queensland.

The pictures were taken on the 16 December 2008 and Jason reliably informs Keeping it Green that the turtles are freshwater turtles from the family *Chelidae*.

Two species have been identified at the Brisbane course, namely the Macquarie turtle and the Snake-necked turtle which are found in the course ponds, irrigation water storage dam and also the Wynnum Creek which flows through the property.

Turtles were also sited the previous year but the eggs did not hatch until mid-January 2008. The bunkers are sand faced bunkers and the nests were dug and eggs buried about 200mm into the top third of the sand face wall of the bunker.

In the past the hatching turtles have been discovered by members of the groundstaff when raking bunkers while this time they were found by two junior members of the club.

The hatchlings proved to be a fascinating distraction for Jason's young son Jake (dressed below in his favourite Superman outfit).



AGEF Supporter Packages

The Australian Golf Environment Foundation (AGEF) has a range of supporter packages to suit corporate, club and individuals that may wish to contribute to fostering future research and knowledge into golf and the environment. For more information on how to become involved with the AGEF, contact John Geary at the AGCSA on (03) 9548 8600 or email jgeary@agcsa.com.au

The Australian Golf Environment Foundation is pleased to have as its partners the following organisations and individuals:

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