

COURSE COMMITTEE

MARCH 2022 UPDATE FOR MEMBERS



STAFF

- On behalf of the members, I would like to start by acknowledging the amount of work currently being done on the course and thank Chris, Joe and Roger for their efforts in improving our golf course every single week. They are all very committed to providing members and visitors a great facility every time they play.
- Joe has taken on serious responsibility while Chris has been travelling to Sydney each weekend for pennant and has had the course in great shape each time Chris has returned. Joe will start TAFE at Melbourne Polytechnic soon and we wish him well as he begins his studies. Joe will attend Melbourne 1 day/week from now until the end of Spring.
- We have had lots of positive feedback from visiting chemical and machinery suppliers about the course and the improvement over the last 8 months.
- Chris Atkinson has resigned due to ill health. We thank Chris for his work at Axedale during his employment.
- Roger Connor has been appointed as our third staff member and has settled in well. Roger joins us from Robinvale Golf Club with a wide range of machinery and irrigation experience. We welcome Roger to the team and look forward to his contribution.
- Having many weeks in peak season with just two staff has impacted on some of the planned works, which will need to be carried over until after Winter.
- Chris continues to have his eyes on everything and has done a great job keeping our course in good health through the Summer. As the days cool down, our attention can start to turn to other areas.
- While Chris has a keen eye on the short-term needs of the course and infrastructure, we are also having lots of discussion regarding long term plans in the areas of fairway grasses, irrigation, tee surfaces, green surfaces, vegetation and machinery.
- Our greens are in the best health, at the end of the summer period, that they have been for many years. We look forward to the stability of Autumn and the benefits this will bring to our course.



GREENS

- Chris and team have the greens in great condition, with true surfaces at a perfect speed. The greens are a nice firmness, holding a well hit shot without being too soft.
- A wide range of products have continued to be added to increase plant and soil health.
- Wetting agents have been too successful, encouraging the soil to hang onto too much moisture in some spots.
- Close inspections of the greens show that the healthiest part of all the greens is the regrowth in the core holes, emphasising the need to continue a vigorous renovation program.
- Our greens will be 'mini-tined' immediately after Rd. 3 of the Club Championships. Tines will be 5mm solid tines. The greens will be dusted immediately, and the work will be almost unnoticeable after a week, depending on the weather.
- The 1st green has been partially sprayed with Toppersan to begin the removal of couch from our greens. The recent blue patches on the green were the areas sprayed.
- Regular/daily hand watering has been completed to address drier areas and has helped to keep our greens and surrounds in great shape. Daily hand-watering has been in place for approx. 70 days during Summer. Thanks Chris, Joe, Roger and volunteers.
- Our 3rd green has had soil tests, indicating pithium is our main issue at the front of the green. We will put a 12-month program in place to improve the soil health. Part of this will include regular coring/tining of the 3rd green to introduce healthy soil into the profile.

19th GREEN

- Our 19th green is now well established.
- Members are reminded the 19th green is open for chipping practice from the closely mown area around the green

NURSERY

- Thank you to our willing band of helpers on Tuesday 22nd, we sprigged the new nursery area between the pavilion and the 19th green in tif tuf couch.
- We await to see lots of green shoots popping up soon (fingers crossed) and we hope to get 8-10 weeks growth before the night temperatures start to drop.
- This area will be ready for sodding by the end of November. It will allow us to patch fairways, patch bare spots and lay new tee surfaces for little upfront cost.
- We will also look to establish a couch green adjacent to the practice bunker that will provide a few bunker shot options.
- A big thanks to Sean for an enormous amount of volunteer work and machinery help to assist to get this project to this point. Thanks also to Joe for keeping it all wet in Week 1 and to the Course Committee for lots of preparation works.

- With the practice fairway to sprig from and the nursery to sod from, and with our own scarifier and sod cutter, we are now self-sufficient in this area of work. A position we have never been in before.
- Do you remember what the practice fairway used to look like? Cricket nets surrounded by 6 foot high grass, dry and dusty, a long pile of soil, clay, rocks, gravel, concrete etc along the edge. We hope that by next Christmas, the whole area will be a carpet of green. A great facility for everyone

6th TEE

- In mid-January, thanks to Chris and a busy Sunday morning volunteer crew, the 6th tee was re-laid in santa ana couch. We have expanded the tee size near the tree and out to the path, hopefully sharing the wear and tear a little better.
- The irrigation around the tee will also be relocated in a more efficient layout.
- Over Winter, we are looking to establish a garden bed on the steep side of the tee, with a narrow path for pull buggies winding its way around the back of the tee to meet up with the asphalt pathway.



MACHINERY

- The HDX and new Yamaha multi-purpose vehicles are proving to be a great asset, allowing staff greater efficiency to complete a number of jobs at the same time. A simple example of this occurred Thursday morning this week. Chris was needing to spray fertiliser on the greens. To maximise this task, the greens need to be clear of leaves. Joe led the way blowing the greens off with the blower behind the HDX, with Chris following with the new mini spray unit. Job done by mid-morning! Previously this would have taken one person on a blower, one machine, a whole day, with heavier machinery having a bigger impact on greens.
- Our Cushman (utility vehicle) has had a broken back axle, with a proposed repair bill of approx. \$2,500-\$3,000, and a part needed from



England! Thanks to Steve Jeffrey, Denis Jeffrey & Peter Elvey and a few handy contacts dotted around Bendigo, they have had some parts made, used a few 'odds & ends' and the Cushman is not far away from a return. Repairs, parts and a full service totalled approx. \$1000. Thanks fellas – much appreciated.

- The 4 seat 'limousine' has also had a facelift and service – thanks Denis, Steve & Tony Lindrea. It's looking pretty spiffy!
- The new Toro fairway mower has allowed us to produce a great cut on fairways – both surface and appearance.



FAIRWAYS

- Fairway coring has stopped as we have a few important events on the way. This program will continue in Spring. The 10th, 5th and 3rd fairways in particular have benefitted from the process.
- 17th, 10th, 11th(partial), 5th (partial) & 7th fairways have been spot sprayed. This will remove the kikuyu but not the couch sitting underneath or amongst the kikuyu plant. It will also remove paspalum. The clubhouse side of the road will be our initial focus.
- The aim if this work is to have kikuyu free fairways (except 2nd & 3rd) in spring, reading for our couch promotion works.
- In regard to future fairway resurfacing, we are mindful of the improvements the current works are showing and we are discussing options for next growing season. We have two healthy tif tuf fairways to draw upon (8th & 17th), nursery options (sprigging and sodding) and significant improvements in the current fairways to consider. Whatever the eventual decisions are, Chris' determination and knowledge will ensure it is a success.

TEES

- Our tee coring works were put on hold during January and February.
- All of our teeing areas will be cored and top-dressed next season. Again, this will allow water to penetrate the surface and encourage the grass to develop deeper, stronger root systems.
- This process will provide minimal disruption to play and soften and improve our teeing areas.
- The 1st and the 6th tee will be oversown with rye grass next week to provide Winter colour and cover.

CARTS

- Cart drivers are reminded that when travelling from the shed to the clubhouse and return, the expectation is that you follow the path beside the 3rd tee to the 6th tee then follow the asphalt path past 3rd green, 4th tee & 1st tee. Thanks for your co-operation.

- On the 11th hole, carts have been re-directed to the left of the green, following the 'ditch' around to a turning area near the 12th tee. The pathway that has been worn to the right of the green will be re-grown to improve the aesthetics of the hole and to stop balls going out of bounds.
- Carts have also be re-directed to the left and rear of the 4th green to join up with the path on the 5th tee.
- Please be mindful that the cart paths are there to protect your course. Where there are no paths, please be thoughtful where you drive.

IRRIGATION

- General Committee has made a substantial investment into our irrigation system over the last six months. We have added variable speed controllers to our two pump stacks, replaced the mainline from the pump shed to the oncourse system and have installed safety valves to stop the system from over heating at any stage.
- This upgrade has allowed the system to function reliably over the Summer months.
- Chris is completing an audit of all tee/fairway/green & surrounds sprinkler heads to prioritise repairs through Winter.
- We are doing some preliminary work on costings for upgrades to the greens and surrounds heads, and to establish a suitable reserve of tee & fairway heads as currently, the cupboard in our shed is empty, as well as the suppliers!
- Treated water from the Coliban Treatment plant is being used on a regular basis as a supplement to the river water.
- We have a full water allocation for this season and we are on track to be within this allocation.

BUNKERS

- Chris has packed sand into some bunkers using a vibrating plate, then topped up with a loose covering. This has been successful in providing a better texture to hit from.
- Topping up sand is a constant task, please notify a Course Committee member if you notice an area of a particular bunker needs some attention.
- Some Geotech fabric (white cloth under the sand) is showing through in spots.
- Geotech fabric will be removed from bunker faces through the Winter.

SOIL STORAGE

- With the tidying up of all of our dirt piles on the practice fairway, Course Committee is beginning to look at options for formalising and separating our storage areas for bunker sand, top dressing sand, soil, gravel etc

GARDEN BEDS

- Thanks to Owen for his continued work on the 9th tee garden bed. It is starting to look great.
- Thanks also to David Ivey for his persistence and determination with area between the 1st & 3rd greens. David is having some success and within 3/4 years, this area should be nicely covered.
- The garden bed beside the men's second tee will be removed as we are fighting a losing battle vs. kikuyu.

COURSE CARE

- Members are reminded to carry a sand bucket with them for every round. Try to use a bucket per hole! Divots are not hard to find.
- The best repair method is to find the divot, lay it flat back on the hole, step on it to get dirt to dirt contact, then top dress with your sand bucket and smooth over so it doesn't affect other golfers.
- Please carry a pitch reparer each round. The best repair method is to try and find all of the original grass cover and bring that back to the surface, then level the area. Just lifting up the dirt and smoothing off the surface doubles the time taken for recovery.
- Cart drivers are asked to stay on paths and well away from greens.
- Bunker care – as per Captain Rod's recent email, if everyone leaves the bunker as, or better than they found it, we all benefit. If you are playing the night before a comp. round, the bunkers will likely have been prepared that day, so raking becomes even more important for your fellow members.

Volunteers sprigging out the nursery area.



VOLUNTEERS

- On behalf of members, the Course Committee would like to thank our group of volunteers who come out each Tuesday morning and on weekends to complete a range of tasks around the course.
- Our on-course volunteers complete about 50 hours/week and their work allows staff to focus on course maintenance and projects. A massive contribution.

- A special thanks to Rob Minne who is spending lots of time on the rough cutter, to Peter Elvey for bringing out his rider mower each Tuesday, to Damien Nihill who was helping out with some tee and fairway cutting when we were down to two staff, to Chris Beames whose volunteer work has a higher skill level than the rest of us, to Garry Day for some plumbing work around the place and to everyone else who pops in to help out.
- Just an amazing club to be a part of!



FEEDBACK

- It's always great to receive constructive feedback from members as we look to continually improve our course for you.
- Member feedback needs to come through the Course Committee, not the course staff. (They are however, always happy to take compliments!)
- We have hundreds of sets of eyes on the course each week and we are happy to consider and follow up suggestions/observations from members.

Your Course Committee is Course Superintendent Chris Neville, Jan Walklate, Sean O'Connor, Fred Kath, Chris Beames, Steve Jeffrey, David Ivey, Steve Lee and Lex Johnstone. As your representatives, queries, suggestions and ideas can be fed to the Course Committee via these people.