

# In the Region

**Superintendent:** David Warnaar

**Golf Course:** Warrnambool Golf Club

**Staff structure:** Four staff including David, 2IC Matthew Jewell, Mechanic Ian McDonald, Apprentice Tom Mahony

## **Give us an overview of your course and some of its unique characteristics.**

The course is located on the south western side of the township and is built into the dune complex. At its closest point, it is only 300 metres from the ocean. The best holes on the course are characterised by scarred sand dunes and dense tortured Tea Tree.

## **Take us through your turf management operations there and how they may have changed during your time as Superintendent?**

During my time as the Super here, we have made many improvements to operation and the infrastructure, installing a drainage system that harvests excess water from holes 10, 11, 12, 17, and 18 and delivers it to our water storage facility, has had a big impact on the playability of the course through the wetter months. In my first two years before the drainage, weeks of golf on these holes were lost. Since the undertaking of the design and install of the system no days of golf have been lost on these holes. Overall though in the eight years I have spent here we have just become more refined and consistent with all maintenance tasks, ensuring our routines are efficient and beneficial.

## **What course improvements/alterations have you been involved in during your time at your course?**

The conception and enhancement of the "Shipwreck Bend" a run of three holes (4, 5, and 6) has been a great success in marketing the course, the scarring and landscaping that has been added to these holes has seen the course elevated in course rankings and published in magazines.

## **What is the one piece of machinery you could not live without?**

I see all our machinery as necessary but in particular I love our Toro Triplex greens mower, only because I see the greens as the most important part of the course and it is a good rig.

## **What are the pros and cons about being a Superintendent at your course?**

Not just being a Super but working here in



general. Winter here is wet and miserable. But the hardest thing about being a Super here is scheduling spray jobs which is a nightmare as the forecast is never predictable. It can be clear skies and no rain forecast one minute and, by the time you've filled the tank to spray three greens, it's bucketing down. And it's always windy, so that of course provides obvious spray concerns. On the other side of the coin, the members at Warrnambool Golf Club are loyal to their Club and religious about their golf. Golfing numbers at our course are brilliant - rain, hail and shine. Our members just love golf. And the Club is strong and resilient because of that.

## **In adjusting to COVID-19 restrictions, what have been the most notable effects on course operations, you and your staff?**

For us, it has obviously meant a massive drop in revenue as with every course I'm sure but, from a maintenance point of view, it gave us a free run at work with no golfers, no tee markers, no flags. Everything became more efficient and we were getting loads more done. We normally start at 5am to get more work done before the golfers arrive but, with no golfers and/or timetables, we went to a 6am start until golf returned. We also got a new car park while the golfers were away which just happened to be good timing.

## **Describe your management style. With this, what particular strengths have you drawn upon during the recent months?**

My management style I guess is generally pretty understanding to the staffs' needs and I'm always happy for them to put forward their views and ideas. So, we did have a lot of discussions and generally our decisions were made together.

## **If you could change one thing about your job what would it be and why?**

I would go on holidays on the first day of winter and I wouldn't return until the first day of spring. Winter in Warrnambool is no fun!

**The past 12 months have been a huge challenge for many Australians – from the devastating bushfire season into the COVID-19 pandemic. In face of these setbacks, have there been any positive outcomes, lessons learnt and/or achievements unique to this period worth noting?**

The biggest thing I feel our staff got from the entire pandemic situation is that the Committee at our Club has been good enough to consider us first and foremost at every turn. I personally felt protected and considered through the whole thing, and we thank the Club for their thoughtfulness. For me, however, it has taught me that there is no time like the present to make the changes you need to or want to. Once you have made the decision to do something, DO IT!

**As the coronavirus restrictions are eased, how do you see the next 6-12 months on the road back to ‘normality’. With this, what do you consider will be the new normal?**

Originally when this started, I thought it could be the beginning of a real downturn for golf in Australia but, now that golf is returning and we can all see how crazy for golf the members of our clubs have been and are, I think golf has a real chance to jump ahead from where it was previously and will become much stronger in Australia.

**In reflecting on your career so far, what is most pleasing/rewarding moment during your time as a Superintendent?**

The most rewarding part of my career so far, and what I will take away from being a Super, is the good friends I’ve made and the great people I’ve met. I have made friends that I will have for life at every course I have ever worked at. The best moments are when one of my old mates calls me for a chat.

**Favourite spot on your course?**

The 5th Fairway. It’s total surrounded by dunes covered in Tea Tree and Bearded Heath.

