

Past Presidents

VGCSA Feature: Trade member
Mark Prosser, Living Turf



Association involvement

VGCSA Member since 1999

Time on Committee

Committee member: 2003-2007

Vice President: 2004-2005

President: 2005-2007



Mark Prosser with Royal Melbourne GC ground staff crew, some of which included well-known names in the industry today - Niall Martin, Troy Cashman, Scott Balloch, Jim Porter, Mike Love & Doug Challman.

Turf career

35 years in the turf industry

- 1986 - Commenced on the ground staff at Royal Melbourne Golf Club under Peter Williams and later Jim Porter
- 1994 to 1995 - Assistant Superintendent, Royal Adelaide Golf Club to John Northcote
- 1995 to 1999 - Superintendent, Royal Adelaide Golf Club which included the 1998

Holden Australian Open won by Greg Chalmers

- 1999 to 2018 - Course Manager, Commonwealth Golf Club including the 2010 and 2011 Ladies Australian Opens
- 2018 to 2019 - ADE Turf Equipment
- Current - Living Turf

Give us an overview of your current role

I have now been in my role as a Technical Sales Representative with Living Turf for just over 12 months. To meet with turf managers in a variety of positions and different industries is interesting and rewarding. It has been a steep learning curve, with the training and understanding of resources available to pass on to assist with improving general turf management. What I have learnt so far from within the organisation and the companies we deal with has made me better understand turf and be aware of the tools to present a more efficient surface.

Being a Superintendent has prepared me for my current role on the road as I have a good understanding of the issues that confront a Superintendent and other managers within the turf industry on a daily basis. The demands of the turf quality required and the pressure that is put on turf managers often needs immediate attention or detailed information to have a successful outcome.

Describe your management style

Being approachable in a team environment leads to successful communication. This only works when it's a two way street i.e. listening to others and then getting your views across clearly. In this industry, you have to be versatile in communication as you meet with a variety of people including general managers, committee, members, peers, suppliers but, most importantly, your staff.

You never stop learning in this industry. I believe you must keep trying new initiatives to be proactive and then the one-percenters keep on improving.

What inspired you to join the VGCSA committee?

To have a say in a formal way. Past President, Michael Picken, approached me and I am glad he did as I was thinking about getting on board to contribute directly. That was the push I needed. Thanks Michael.



VGCSA at the Commonwealth GC. Facilitating educational meetings is all part of the course as a committee President.

Most pleasing/rewarding moments during your time on the committee

1. Working with the committee, especially Brett Chivers and his wife Stella, in presenting a new style magazine that allowed member contributions, trade advertisements, articles and plenty of glossy photos for enjoyable reading. Hats off to the current committee as it keeps getting better.
2. The committee discussed that there had been significant turf trials over the years and thus we should contribute in another area. We decided to produce a OH&S video that is in many sheds today and I believe still available. It might time to put it into some other form of media to move with the times. Special thanks should go to Michael Freeman as he really ran with the idea.
3. Relationships that you form with peers - some who I continue to work with in the industry and others who have moved on and still keep in contact with.

Overall, working closely with Superintendents and Trade sponsors (especially preparing for a meeting) makes you learn more about turf outside your patch and see things from the trade perspective. You learn to appreciate and understand the industry more.

Have there been any notable changes to the Association since your time on the VGCSA committee?

The country meeting has really grown. It was originally a one-night event and we had no fees other than accommodation, etc. to get the numbers to attend. This event has now grown to be over two nights and is one of the most popular events on the calendar.

Any advice to someone considering taking on a committee role?

Don't wait for the push or phone call - just do it. I guarantee you the reward you get out of it will assist you with your day to day working environment. You will learn very quickly from close relationships with other Superintendents on how to improve yourself.

OFF THE JOB

Age 57

Family

Wife Maree (30 years of marriage, she thinks she is the luckiest woman in the world and has been a great support through the highs and lows). Three boys Billy (27), Rhys (25) and Jack (24). Wow they have grown up quick.

Hobbies & interests

Spending time with the family and continuing to watch my sons develop. Am playing golf now that I am not working on a course and, boy, do I have some work to do. Oh, and watching Richmond win the 2017 premiership and the 2019 and the 2020. That's eight in total so far.

Greatest sporting moments

Two golfing events that I have been lucky enough to be involved with - the first was the 1988 Bicentennial Classic at Royal Melbourne which was my first tournament experience as a ground staff member. Rodger Davis defeated Fred Couples in a playoff. The field was one of the best ever assembled in Australia which included Jack Nicklaus and Ben Crenshaw.

The second was the Australian Open at Royal Adelaide in 1998, won by Greg Chalmers on even par. To be involved in a great sporting event and witness a sense of achievement for the whole Club was pretty special.

Favourite Golfer Greg Norman



PHOTO: Staff - 2010 Ladies Australian Open