

In the Region – Nhill Golf Club

Superintendent: Shane Grover
VGCSA member since 2004



Turf career

I left school at the end of Year 10 to commence my apprenticeship at Wantima Country Club in Queensland where I lived. While there, I completed my apprenticeship, was promoted to Assistant Superintendent and, at the age of 19, became the youngest Superintendent in Australia at that time. After five years at Wantima CC, I left to become the Assistant Superintendent at Gailles Golf Club, Queensland for two years.

In 1994, I had a job offer to be the Course Superintendent at South Molle Island which I accepted. While on South Molle, I met some lifelong friends from Victoria and, in 1995, I followed them to Victoria to become the greenkeeper at Brighton Golf Links. I was keen to learn about the different grasses grown in cooler climates. Unfortunately, I was made redundant in 1997 and returned to Queensland to be the Greenkeeper at Nudgee Golf Club until 1999.

After a number of years out of the industry, I was keen to return to greenkeeping and, in 2004, was given the opportunity by Nhill Golf Club in Victoria. I have been here ever since.

While working at Nudgee Golf Club, I was part of the team that hosted the 1998 Queensland Open. In 2010, I volunteered as a greenkeeper for the Australian Masters at Victoria Golf Club.

Nhill Golf Club has hosted four Victoria vs South Australia Country Challenges between the seven best country players selected, following country week matches. I have represented Victoria Country in 2014, 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Nhill Golf Club

Nhill Golf Club is situated in the Wimmera and is one of the oldest golf clubs in Victoria. Commencing in 1898, it is rich in history - being the 17th club to join the VGA. The course length is 5,692m for men with a CCR of 70 and 5,167m for women with a CCR of 72. The current course record is 67 which is jointly held by myself and good friend, Trevor Polkinghorne.

Staff structure

I am the only paid employee of the Nhill Golf Club and complete the management, upkeep and improvements to the course with the assistance of many magnificent volunteers. The course and the Club wouldn't be where they are today without the volunteers.

Course Overview / Characteristics

The greens are Cobra Bent grass, the fairways are a mix of Santa Ana and Kikuyu, and the tees are Santa Ana. The large manicured greens are complemented by flat to slightly undulating tree lined fairways with beautifully shaped and positioned bunkers. There are five very different par 3s ranging in length from 120m to 178m and three challenging par 5 holes.

Nhill Golf Course is one of seven greens courses out of 31 in the Wimmera and one of six that is open all year round.

Turf Management/Operations

Nhill Golf Club has a reputation of having some of the best greens around the state. To gain this, I believe our program of coring greens twice a year has held us in good stead. I push to improve the course every year and pick out an area on the course I think I can improve to take it to the next level. I strive to develop and provide one of the best country golf courses. Access to underground water via a bore assists in keeping the course green and lush, particularly during drought years.



What course improvements/alterations have you been involved in during your time at the Club?

In 1994, prior to me being at the Club, the members voted to install grass greens. The planning and attention to detail by the volunteers at this time is testament to the quality of the greens today.

Since my time at Nhill Golf Club, a fairway irrigation system was installed, commencing in 2008 and completed in 2012 thanks to the generosity of members, the local community and government grants. I have also completed line planting of all fairways using Santa Ana couch.

In 2014, I completed an upgrade to the practice fairway with the development of a green and bunker at each end. This has created a 19th hole if ever needed.

This year, a new alternative tee was built on the 5th hole, with the water hole being enlarged and shaped to challenge the golfers to hit over the water. This has created the only water carry tee off in the district and has transformed a

dormant area into one of the most beautiful spots on the course.



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

The Toro 6700 7-gang fairway mower is my favourite piece of machinery. It has assisted in bringing the fairways up to a fantastic standard compared to the result achieved when I was using the pull behind gang mower. The 7-gang mower also reduces the mowing time by up to 50% which allows for more time to be spent on other improvements and course projects.

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

I love working with the fantastic volunteers at Nhill Golf Club and the fact that everyone is keen to want to continually improve the course and the Club. The downside is that, as the only paid employee, it is difficult to schedule work as I don't always know who will be available to assist.

Describe your management style

I enjoy teaching the volunteers and helping them learn about a job I love. I lead by example and encourage volunteers to work independently. I trust them to carry out the tasks we have discussed and am more than willing to assist if they are not sure or come across a problem.

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

If I could, I would stop golfers walking up and down the face of bunkers. I take a lot of pride in preparing and maintaining the bunkers but walking up the face damages them and is difficult to repair.

Most pleasing/rewarding moment during your time as a Superintendent

I get great pleasure out of watching people play golf and enjoying the course at Nhill. At the end of hosting a big tournament, I love hearing people comment on the quality of the course.

The praise I get from golfers from all over Victoria is very rewarding.

Favourite spot on the course

The newly completed alternative 5th tee is testament to a vision that came to fruition and now looks fantastic. My favourite hole is the 7th, a short 120m par 3 surrounded by beautiful native gum trees.

**OFF THE COURSE****Family members**

Wife, Janine and daughter Mia (7yo)

Age 49**Hobbies and interests**

Golf
AFL football
Fishing
Camping
Four Wheel Driving

Favourite food

Italian and chicken wings

Favourite golfer

Greg Norman
Current player – Jason Day

Favourite band/music

Midnight Oil

Greatest golf sporting moments

Shooting 78 at the Old Course, St Andrews – tick off the bucket list.
Winner of Nhill GC Club Champion – 2011, 2016 & 2017.

Greatest other sporting moments

Winning SEQFA premiership in 1989 and 1990 at Apsley Queensland with my brother, Darren.
Winning AFL Townsville 2002 and 2003 reserves premierships as playing coach.

Football teams

AFL – Collingwood
NRL – Parramatta
EPL – Liverpool