

# Tay makes the Cut

**Superintendent:** Tay Wilson

**Golf Course:** Kooringal Golf Club

**Association involvement:** VGCSA Member since 2014

## Turf career

22 years in the industry:

- Started at Kingston Heath – Summer casual 1997 then on to apprentice in 1998
- Held assistant roles at Rosanna GC 2007-2009 and then Victoria GC 2009-2016
- Superintendent at Kooringal GC since April 2016
- Tournament experience – 2000 Australian Open (KHGC), 2010 and 2011 JBWere Masters (VGC), 2014 Women's Australian Open (VGC) and the 2018 and 2019 US Masters at Augusta National GC

## Why did you decide to join the VGCSA Committee?

I won't say the many conference beers had nothing to do with it, but I am passionate about this industry and especially the way we move forward. The committee plays a significant role in this, hence why I wanted to come on board. I also feel I will become a better turf manager and leader while on the committee.

## Course overview

Kooringal GC is located in Altona, about 20 km west from Melbourne CBD. Established initially as the Williamstown Golf Club 1946/47, the name changed in the mid to late fifties with the emergence of the then Shire of Altona which later became the City of Altona.

How was the name Kooringal chosen? It is an aboriginal word meaning "by the water". Predominantly built on sand, playing surfaces are made up of Kikuyu fairways and roughs, Kikuyu/*Poa* green surrounds, Bent/*Poa* greens and Santa Ana couch tees. Legendary amateur and course designer Kevin Hartley is a life member. We have way too many trees here. Kevin thinks not. For those who know Kevin well, would understand some of our debates regarding his design philosophies and turf management. Good banter!

## Turf management operations

On the course, turf quality has been the big improver here. All surfaces have seen significant improvement. I guess I have brought more of an agronomy approach as how to best manage our surfaces and get the best out of



them. I have learnt a lot and still have more to learn!

Attention to detail is one of my passions. This has flowed through the staff and then on to the course with improved quality of work. We produce some quality surfaces here now. Recycled water is our most significant expense here other than wages, so improving our irrigation system and our water practices was hugely important to me. We have seen significant savings in water costs up to 100k per year since pre 2016.

Off the course, we have hovered between 7 – 9 staff over the four years here. Being fortunate to have spent most of my career at top clubs has enabled me to bring a more professional outlook and attitude to the day to day operations here. This has certainly rubbed off on all in the team. I would like to think that they are much better turf managers and leaders now. They have all been fantastic, and they all have embraced the change. We still have lots to do here but, so far, I could not have asked for a better team. I really appreciate their efforts.



## Most pleasing/rewarding moment during your time as a Superintendent?

Seeing the overall improvement in the course,

especially the playing surfaces. Being able to feel like you have had a real impact on the staff and how they understand and manage all sides of turf management and leadership.



### **Favourite spot on your course?**

I probably don't have a favourite spot but anywhere where we have increased shortgrass. Increased by 3 - 4 ha now and still going. This has made a huge difference in how the course feels and plays. It's made the course more enjoyable to play and given players more variety of shots they can play, especially around the greens. I love seeing members play the ball along the ground around the greens. That's something that never happened previously.

