



# 97<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL REPORT

1 MARCH 2023 – 29 FEBRUARY 2024

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## OFFICE BEARERS & COMMITTEE

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President	Shane Greenhill	Sorrento Golf Club	01/03/2023 – 29/02/2024
Vice President	Travis Scott	Riversdale Golf Club	04/05/2023 – 31/07/2023
Acting Vice President	Jeff Powell	Ballarat Golf Club	31/07/2023 – 29/02/2024
Treasurer	Adam Lamb	Barwon Heads Golf Club	01/03/2023 – 29/02/2024
Secretary	Travis Scott	Riversdale Golf Club	01/03/2023 – 04/05/2023
Secretary	Tay Wilson	Koorringal Golf Club	04/05/2023 – 29/02/2024
Committee	Tay Wilson	Koorringal Golf Club	01/03/2023 – 04/05/2023
Committee	Nicholas Douglas	Cranbourne Golf Club	04/05/2023 – 29/02/2024
Committee	Geraldine O'Callaghan	Sandringham Golf Links	04/05/2023 – 29/02/2024
Committee	Jeff Powell	Ballarat Golf Club	01/03/2023 – 31/07/2023
Committee	Clint Raven	Yarra Yarra Golf Club	01/03/2023 – 29/02/2024

## STAFF

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Mary Napier	Chief Executive Officer	VGCSA Inc	01/03/2023 – 29/02/2024
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## LIFE MEMBERS

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John Bayliss	Retired
Vic Blunt	Retired
Richard Forsyth	Director of Courses - Royal Melbourne Golf Club
Michael Freeman	Course Superintendent – Huntingdale Golf Club
Peter Frewin	Former Superintendent
John Geary	Course Superintendent - Cape Wickham Links Golf Club
Steven Hewitt	Course Superintendent – Thirteenth Beach Golf Links
Ray Keane	Retired
Bill Powell	Retired
Colin Winterton	Course Superintendent - Medway Golf Club

## PRIZES & AWARDS

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Kyle Wilson - Moonah Links	2023 Powell Trophy / Greenway Turf Solutions Prize – VGCSA Championship A & D Class
William Stewart – David Golf	2023 President's Shield - Trade – Stableford
James Robilliard - Yarra Bend Golf	2023 Toro Cup – A & D Class - Stableford
Darren Wardle - Royal Melbourne GC	VGCSA 2023-24 Golf Turf Apprentice
Kyle Wilson - Moonah Links	VGCSA 2023 Superintendent Recognition Award
Gavan Hegan - Nuturf	VGCSA 2023 Trade Recognition Award



## VGCSA PRESIDENT REPORT

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In my fourth and final term in office as President, I present to you the 97<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the VGCSA. This period, while the Association did encounter a small number of fluctuations in program targets, the impact was minimal. From March 2023 to February 2024, VGCSA operations achieved positive results overall.

### Meetings

The March Education meeting is renowned for being a popular event with members. In 2023, it was held at The National Golf Club with well over 100 registrations leading to 90 attendees on the day. The smaller attendance was due to short notice cancellations attributed to illness or staff shortage. Meeting feedback was well received, recording that attendees were satisfied or very satisfied with the course presentations, content and format. We also received positive comments about the day as a whole, with particular mention to guest speaker, Alastair Clarkson, who presented a talk provided by co-sponsor Greenway Turf Solutions.

It was apparent in the early part of 2023 that cancellations reflected either illness or Superintendent commitments due to sudden short staffing. Replicating the occurrence in March, numerous late cancellations for the 96<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting at Sorrento Golf Club led to a final attendance of 88 members. There was however an enthusiastic response to the meeting survey. The majority of members who completed the survey were very satisfied with all components of the day. In asking how important aspects of the meeting were to members, prominent factors included: social golf with colleagues; visiting another course; networking; and being part of an Association.

The VGCSA Course Staff Education meeting held at Koorinal Golf Club in early June introduced a new format of three seminars on the topics of dusting, sands for greens construction and soil structure and drainage, which attracted an attendance of 103. From the feedback received, responses ranged from very satisfied to neutral. Amongst positive comments on the day's content, a couple attendees thought the sessions were too long.

The VGCSA Country meeting took place at Rich River Golf Club Resort at the end of July / start of August. 117 members attended the two-day event and, from survey responses received, the majority were satisfied to very satisfied with event format, speakers, presentations and content. The start of day two's program schedule and live webinar with US guest speaker, Shawn Askew, was however delayed due to internet issues which was a learning curve in planning future live webinar events. Attendee ratings also reflected that the Country meeting was helpful to very helpful in achieving the following: acquiring helpful advice and knowledge; learning new trade innovations; networking; maintaining connections; and exchanging turf talk with industry colleagues.

The September Education meeting was held at Commonwealth Golf Club. An extensive course tour and educational talk delivered by Course Manager Adam Lamb examined the golf course restoration works as part of the Commonwealth Golf Club stage one and two masterplan. Attendance was less than anticipated for this event with 58 attendees and 13 late cancellations. Feedback, however, demonstrated that attendees were either satisfied to very satisfied with the course tours and presentations with 93.8% indicating that they would be interested in visiting the course for another educational tour when the Commonwealth Golf Club stage two masterplan was completed.

### Training

In July, two Irrigation training days were delivered by Tees & Greens, Rain Bird and Toro Australia, to cover both early to advanced level learning. The classes were popular with a waiting list for both. Due to previous demand, two Turf Equipment Management training sessions in Cutting units and Sprayer maintenance were also delivered by Toro Australia at their Braeside premises in July and August. Following the success of the 2022 Fungal/Nematode Microscope Masterclass, the VGCSA in conjunction with Melbourne Polytechnic, held a one-day Disease Identification workshop presented by Dr Phil Ford PhD in August.

Both the Irrigation and Turf Equipment training programs received a positive response in both attendance and feedback. Class numbers for the Disease Identification workshop were slightly lower than expected, which could have been attributed to the time of year being the early spring season. With the majority of VGCSA workshop students being enrolled by Superintendents, we highly encourage that all survey invitations are passed on to students as requested to ensure direction of future training programs.



## **Host Clubs, Sponsors & Speakers**

As every year, the VGCSA meetings and activities rely on the valued relationships with our host clubs; ability to secure professional speakers in delivering educational content; and the ongoing sponsor support from VGCSA trade members. The Association is very grateful to everyone involved in our ongoing event programs.

## **Financials**

The Association continues to remain in a solid position. At the start of each year, our CEO Mary Napier presents a conservative budget forecast which serves to outline the potential of over expenditure and less than anticipated revenue across the year. This year's activities presented an increase in revenue and decline in expenditure resulting in an overall modest surplus. When comparing to the budget forecast targets, areas of increased revenue included meeting sponsorship and attendance, and digital advertising.

## **Trial Research**

Stage one of the VGCSA Creeping Bentgrass trials commenced in spring at Cranbourne Golf Club. The trials conducted by Turfgrass Agronomist John Neylan will continue throughout 2024 with members receiving regular updates and progress reports.

## ***ON COURSE: Victorian Golf Course Superintendents Association Quarterly***

The 2023 VGCSA magazine production included one winter 44 page edition and three 40 page publications in autumn, spring and summer. Acknowledgements must go to all our contributors who wrote entertaining and instructive articles and content for the VGCSA quarterly issues. We highly appreciate all the information provided by golf turf industry experts, host club Superintendents and sports turf education staff, along with Superintendents and Assistants who keep us connected across the regions through course reports.

## **Enews**

The monthly member enews continued throughout 2023 with member news and events, regional Superintendent profiles and special interest articles.

## **Membership**

2023 showed an increase in membership numbers as from the mid-year. Further information will be provided in the membership report below.

## **Sponsorship**

The VGCSA annual sponsor packages were launched in mid-September with an enthusiastic interest in sponsor participation at VGCSA meetings. Print advertising targets were not met by 31 January, however, sponsor booking sales have reflected a greater demand for digital advertising in comparison to 2022.

## **Scholarship**

Following a successful inaugural scholarship residency in April, the VGCSA in partnership with John Deere Ltd (JDL) and Brandt Pty Ltd invited applications again for the VGCSA - JOHN DEERE - BRANDT Scholarship in late 2023, with shortlisted applicant interviews taking place in mid-February 2024. Open to Assistants, Third in Charge, Turf tradespersons and apprentices, two scholarship candidates – Nick Skicko, Metropolitan Golf Club and Kate Rainsbury, The Dunes Links - have been appointed to undertake a one-week work experience residency at Te Arai Links and Tara Iti Golf Club, New Zealand in April/May 2024.

## **Education**

TAFE nominations for the VGCSA Golf Turf Apprentice of the Year were received in November 2023, upon which four candidates were invited to present to the VGCSA interview panel in mid-February 2024. The selection outcome appointed Darren Wardle from Royal Melbourne Golf Club as the winner of the VGCSA Golf Turf Apprentice Award. Nominated by Melbourne Polytechnic, Darren will represent Victoria as State finalist for the 2024 ASTMA/Toro Graduate of the Year. He will also be joining the above two scholarship candidates as the third recipient of the VGCSA - JOHN DEERE - BRANDT Scholarship residency in April/May 2024.

## **Committee & Staff**

I would like to commend the following committee members for their ongoing commitment and contribution to the Association across the year: past and current executive officers, Adam Lamb, Travis Scott, Jeff Powell and Tay Wilson; and committee



members Nicholas Douglas, Geraldine O'Callaghan and Clint Raven. I would also like to acknowledge the continued hard work and dedication of our CEO Mary Napier, who once again helped guide the Association to another successful year. In my last report as President, I would like to encourage all members to consider joining the VGCSA committee. It has been such a rewarding experience to be involved with other passionate Superintendents contributing in running this great, vibrant Association.



**SHANE GREENHILL**  
**VGCSA Inc. President (Honorary)**



## VGCSA TREASURER REPORT

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In my fourth and final term as VGCSA Treasurer, I am pleased to present the financial report for the period of 1 March 2023 to 29 February 2024 which will summarise key activities and highlight areas of expenditure and revenue.

### Financial Position

A conservative budget forecast was presented at the start of the financial year to safeguard against any decline in participation rates and revenue. This approach was influenced by previous program instabilities that occurred due to COVID-19 in recent years. Based on budget targets, the Association's overall expenses were less than forecasted, along with being complemented by a higher than expected income stream. Key components influencing the revenue increase included meeting sponsorship at \$33,177; digital advertising sales at \$8,809; meeting attendance at \$68,058; and term deposit bank interest at \$6,400.

The Association maintained a modest yet steady financial position with an overall surplus of \$9,332 recorded in the 2024 Annual Audit. The surplus was lower in comparison to 2023 which achieved a surplus of \$11,394.

For this period, the committee expenditure came to the total of \$9,206. This category includes all committee and staff expenses in relation to governance and strategic planning meetings in metropolitan and regional areas, along with the annual committee appreciation dinner. The total amount was higher than the initial budget target of \$8000, with the expenditure increase attributing to accommodation requirements and meal allowances for both committee and staff at some regional governance meetings.

Awards and gifts amounting to \$5,674 across the financial year included the annual VGCSA Superintendent and the Trade Representative Recognition Awards; golf prizes; Golf Turf Apprentice winner attendance and accommodation at the ASTMA Conference; and VGCSA representation at the Victorian Golf Industry Awards dinner.

The VGCSA contributed annual donations to the following charities: \$500 allocated to Beyond Blue; \$600 to the Cancer Council Victoria and \$400 to White Ribbon Australia.

Magazine publication expenses were \$28,440, showing an increase to 2023 expenses at \$26,117. Similar to the previous year, there was a standard rise in design, print and mailing service charges plus associated magazine insert print costs. Print advertising generated a revenue of \$30,036 in comparison to the amount of \$41,559 in 2023. This period demonstrated a shift in type of advertising space bought, with the number of quarter page space bookings outweighing the demand for half and full page size. Although as at 29 February the target quota of magazine advertising had not yet been reached, the majority of space was filled. Among our ongoing regular advertisers, the *ON COURSE* Quarterly generated new interest from trade companies wanting to advertise with the VGCSA. The VGCSA Quarterly is a publication which the Association takes pride in presenting high quality content and articles of interest for our members. We are grateful to all trade companies who identify its worth to VGCSA membership and continue to support the publication through advertising.

By diligently ensuring the Association's financial position has remained in the black over recent years, this has provided a nest egg and stability for the VGCSA to allocate further expenditure to broaden professional development and educational initiatives. I would like to conclude by thanking all members and members of the Committee and of course our CEO, Mary Napier, for her persistent efforts in maintaining a high level of communication to the membership and keeping the Association and your committee on track.



**ADAM LAMB**  
**VGCSA Inc. Treasurer (Honorary)**



## VGCSA MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Membership Category	1 March 2023	29 Feb 2024
Life	12	10
A Class (Superintendents)	126	125
D Class (Assistants & Ground staff)	87	92
E Class (Trade representatives)	114	115
G Class (Individual / Retired)	2	3
Honorary (TAFEs, other associations)	20	21

The table below alphabetically lists club, company and individual members who applied to join the Association across the 2023-24 annual period either as a first time new member or someone who has been appointed at new employment.

Club	A Class	Club	D Class
Axedale Golf Club	Gregory Hamilton	Anglesea Golf Club	Victor Morrow
Cathedral Golf Club	Rhys Hunichen	Ballarat Golf Club	Lee Cleary
Clifton Springs Golf Club	Michael Pearce	Ballarat Golf Club	Connor Patterson
Club Mandalay	Richard Coulter	Bay Views Golf Course	Braden Hyde
East Geelong Golf Club	Brendan Brown	Black Bull Golf Club	Ryan Smith
Gilgai Farm	Matthew Eddy	Eastwood Golf Club	Jordan Thomas
Green Acres Golf Club	James Stewart	Green Acres Golf Club	Adrian Marcy
Heidelberg Golf Club	Craig Brown	Heidelberg Golf Club	Brad Nicholson
Heritage Golf & CC	Jordan Dunstone	Koorringal Golf Club	Douglas Loton
Ringwood & Dorset Golf	Scott Irving	Latrobe Golf Club	Luke Bolt
Ringwood & Dorset Golf	David Phillips	Lonsdale Links	Joshua Bowen
Riversdale Golf Club	Barry Proctor	Mansfield Golf Club	Allister Bennett
Rowville Lakes Golf Course	Matthew Sutton	Mooroopna Golf Club	Reghan Smith
Sanctuary Lakes Golf Club	Joshua Lacey	Numurkah Golf & Bowls Club	Paul Collins
Warragul Golf Club	Shaun Taylor	Rosanna Golf Club	Chris Palau
Warrnambool Golf Club	Stuart Calvert	Rosanna Golf Club	Ewen Hart
Werribee Park Golf Club	Mark Findlay	Rowville Lakes Golf Course	Mark Chapple
Yering Meadows Golf Club	Timothy Vegt	Rowville Lakes Golf Course	Mitchell Mahoney
		Sandhurst Golf Club	Daniel Haycroft
		Southern Golf Club	Jack Besley
		The Sands Torquay	Matt Forder
		Warrnambool Golf Club	Brent O'Rourke
Company	E Class	Company	E Class
Anco Seed & Turf Pty Ltd	Alex Dosen	GMH Contracting Pty Ltd	Greg Harrington
Brandt Pty Ltd	Tim Fielding	Green Turf Pty Ltd	Matthew Dowlan
Brandt Pty Ltd	Nick McNally	Kress Australia	Lachlan McDonald
Brandt Pty Ltd	Travis Scott	LandHQ - John Deere	Luke Diserens
Brandt Pty Ltd	Chris Tait	Melbourne Brick	Matt Curtain
Brandt Pty Ltd	Dominique Warnaar	Rain Bird Australia	Casey Johnson
David Golf & Engineering	Jack Slobom	Syngenta Australia	Lisa Dillon
David Golf & Engineering	William Stewart	Turfcare Australia	Adrian Box
Draslovka Services	Dario Privitera		
Draslovka Services	Adam Trocha	<b>G Class - Individual</b>	
Frankston Sand & Soil	Tim Elligate	Lachlan Vassallo	



## Membership Activity

In examining the March 2023 and February 2024 figures, total Association membership numbers increased from 361 to 366. The VGCSA member database recorded a high level of activity across the year. While the above table indicates a considerable number of member applications over the period, many of these were new staff appointments replacing former members who resigned. The majority of new membership applications were processed between June and August coinciding with the VGCSA annual member period. Further applications predominantly occurred in the latter part of 2023 and early 2024. The capacity to keep accurate database records is reliant on information provided by our members. There are circumstances, however, where we are not informed of relevant changes such as staff resignations or new appointments.

Sadly, this year we lost two long term life members. Ben Nowell (joined the Association in 1963) who passed away in May 2023 and, more recently, Bill Reid (member since 1967) who passed away in February 2024. Ben and Bill, as former committee representatives, were both remarkable and influential VGCSA members.

## Membership Fees

In examining the VGCSA Superintendent/Trade member categories, records show that the last member fee increase from \$121 to \$150 was initiated in 2012. To maintain efficient operations in a contemporary economic environment, the VGCSA committee of management has proposed the following revisions to the annual fee schedule to take effect as from 1 July 2024.

- Trade member: \$175
- Superintendent (A class) member: \$175
- Club Package - 1x Superintendent and 1x Assistant: \$235  
(plus \$60 per additional course member e.g. 2IC, 3IC, ground staff, turf mechanic/technician)
- Apprentice: Free (introductory member offer - one year only)

VGCSA membership isn't simply subscription to the magazine and enews. It is about fellowship, participation and access to opportunities and education. Thank you to our many members who attended VGCSA meetings; enrolled in training days; and contributed to our publications, providing engaging news and articles. We are also grateful to members who took a concerted moment to fill in our meeting surveys and provide appreciated feedback.

Finally, congratulations to Shane Greenhill for his passionate service as VGCSA President over the past year and previous terms. I also wish to acknowledge the VGCSA officers and committee for their dedicated involvement.



**MARY NAPIER**  
**VGCSA Inc. Chief Executive Officer**

