

## COURSE SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT 2020

It is great to have this opportunity to report to you once again on the year that was 2020. As you all know too well it was a very tough year not only for the club but for our town, region, and entire country. We ended 2019 with fires which then continued into the start of 2020. We overcame the threat of the fires, then floods and then with Covid-19.

The way the club and its Board of Directors handled the unknown situations we were consistently facing regarding Covid-19 was, I thought, outstanding. The club continued to move forward and remain in constant communication with not only its members but the staff working at the club. The club ensured we had the opportunity to continue to work and maintain the course during the worst period of the pandemic. For me personally it was exceedingly difficult at first, but the representatives of the club were always on hand to help out where possible. I must also thank the greens staff **Damian, Chad** and **Garry** who from day one, took personal responsibility to ensure all rules and policies were adhered to and we were all kept as safe as possible to ensure we not only continued to produce a quality product but keep our jobs, members and the public safe. This period was very frustrating for the green's staff, but they never let the circumstances get in the way of producing quality work.

Unfortunately, during the worst time of the Covid outbreak we had to put a temporary stop to all volunteer work on the golf course. However, the volunteers were able to continue working on the new cart shed which they completed in late 2020. A great addition for not only Greg and his Pro Shop team, but also freeing up much needed space for the green's team and their ever-evolving fleet of machinery and work equipment.

Whilst our members were prohibited from entering the golf course for several weeks, this gave the green's team time to complete some major work while having no one on the course. Several dead and extremely dangerous trees were successfully removed from between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> fairways. **Chad Casinelli** led the way with this project with his arborist skill and experience. Chad's leadership ensured the trees were removed safely and effectively. In conjunction with the green's committee, this also sparked a way in which to make some extra money for the club by turning the felled trees into firewood to sell to our members and the public. Another volunteer driven product with the guidance of the green's staff.

Other smaller projects that took place throughout 2020 was the turfing of several tees located in shady, damp areas where maintaining adequate turf is very difficult. These tees included the men's and ladies' 4<sup>th</sup>, men's 9<sup>th</sup> and the men's 17<sup>th</sup>. The turf used was Tiff Tuff Couch, supplied by one of our sponsors Turfco. This species of turf seems to be holding up well in the conditions and the couch will handle the ever-increasing traffic of golfers and machinery, as well as requiring minimal water throughout the growing season. Other tees that were worked on during 2020 were the men's tees on 5,13,14 and both lady's and men's on 18. These tees were sprayed to remove the kikuyu and allow the native couch to take over. The back of the men's 5<sup>th</sup> tee was completely renovated with the levels being raised approximately 0.75m.

Further tree work was completed on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> holes. On both holes, from the tee looking down the left side, trees were protruding out and blocking the view of either the fairway or green. On both holes, trees were heavily trimmed back to inside the hazard lines, therefore creating an improved view and playability of the two holes.

New machinery was added to the fleet last year with a new Sidewinder to cut surrounds and recently a new Multi-Pro sprayer for applying fertilisers and pesticides across the entire golf course. Both machines are vital to the upkeep and presentation of any sports turf environment.

A new irrigation pump was installed in the southern bore pump shed. The pump it replaced was damaged during a storm when a power surge damaged the computer that controls the pump, making it irreparable and hindering irrigation practices.

In the months before finishing at the club, we were experimenting with some waste areas in various parts of the rough around the golf course. I was in favour of creating such areas to help promote definition between fairways and roughs. Whether sand waste areas are ideal for our golf course is yet to be decided by the greens committee who will seek from the members.

With the help of both **Chad** and **Damian**, we started to identify bunkers on the golf course that either required rebuilding or filling in. These options will both improve the golf course playability and speed of the game, but also assist the green's staff with maintenance requirements, budget, and free up time to complete other work. There is a 5-year plan which I am sure Damian will keep working on in conjunction with the green's committee.

There were also talk in 2019 regarding rebuilding the 8<sup>th</sup> green. It was decided no work would be done on this until after the NSW Senior Championships. **Damian** and the green's committee will come up with a time frame on when this project can begin.

Lastly, now I have the opportunity to expose myself to the industry with my new role with Greenway Turf Solutions, from golf courses, to bowling clubs, racetracks, councils etc. I am hearing from other greenkeepers what a great job Damian and his team are doing on the golf course at Shoalhaven Heads. I am proud of where Damian has got to in such a short time and I must say, at his age, becoming a superintendent is a very tough ask but Damian seems to be relishing the role and producing great playing surfaces for the club. As we all know Chad is worth at least 2 workers and would be helping guide Damian through and ensuring all work is being completed at a high standard plus assisting with the development of the two new apprentices.

I look forward to getting back out there for a game soon and a few beers on the newly renovated verandah which looks great and is a fantastic addition. Thank you all again, and I will see you on the golf course soon.

Regards,

**Keenan Hobbs**

**Course Superintendent**