

COURSE SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT 2022

In these past 12 months as the threat of Covid 19 has begun to reduce in severity it has been great to see our course golfing numbers continue to thrive. I think the way our Board of Directors handled the pandemic was nothing short of great. The way we were able to stay open in some regard all the way through the year and from my personal point of view be able to keep working on the course. We are still dealing with cases of Covid around the club and close contact isolation from this virus is still obviously evident, but I do think we have returned to some form of normality.

Just over 12 months ago as you are all aware the club decided to employ 2 new apprentices onto the greens staff team. I am very pleased with the progression I have seen from both **Nicholas Neilsen** and **Todd Mitchell**. They are both keen and willing to learn and are enthusiastic in the manner in which they take on the various set tasks they are given. I must say that **Chad**, our senior assistant greenkeeper, has helped guide the careers of both **Nick** and **Todd** since they started and he has also played a large part in helping a young superintendent, namely me, continue my development. Our green staff mechanic **Garry Hoare** has allowed me to shift some of the burden of maintaining our machinery fleet to him, thus allowing me to focus on maintaining and producing our quality golf course. **Garry** also plays a big role in ensuring that any machinery we are considering purchasing are mechanically sound and ideally will require minimal maintenance and hence less machinery down time.

In this last year we have decided to make a start on the very big job of removing the large population of Parramatta grass around the course. We have been lucky enough as a club to have a very dedicated team of volunteers led by **Rob Edgerley** who each Monday work on removing as much Parramatta grass as possible in the surrounds around our greens. Also, in an effort to reduce the impact of the Parramatta grass the Greens and Match committee decided to widen various fairways, particularly where we see golf balls feeding off the fairways and into Parramatta grass. The areas we concentrated on during the year were on the right and left hand sides of the 16th Hole and the left sides of the 17th and 18th fairways. This process of widening fairways did take a lot of time as the greens staff had to firstly push mow the rough areas to a low enough height so we could then use our fairway mowers.

During the year, the Greens and Match committee recommended to the Board that we purchase some better quality coarse grained bunker sand. The Board agreed to put \$10K towards this sand which was used to top up designated deep bunkers on the 4th, 5th, 9th and 11th holes. The Board also decided to allocate \$10k each forthcoming year for additional sand to fill other bunkers around the course.

Additionally, the Match and Greens committee agreed that the bunker on the right-hand side of the 13th hole was unfair as the fairway in that area is quite narrow and slopes towards the bunker resulting in many well hit balls rolling into the bunker. Subsequently, it was decided to fill the bunker and lessen the slope around it prior to turfing it. I am very pleased with the result of this work.

Another project we undertook during the year was the laying of three artificial grass mats on the 6th tee box. This was a consequence of the fact there is far too much shade on the tee box which severely impacts the growth of grass on it. We had trialled several different grass species on the tee prior to the

decision to go to the mats but with no success. I want to thank **Warwick Merchant** who did a fantastic job laying the concrete pads and path leading up to the tees.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all the hard-working volunteers who do a lot of work around the club and course. To the Board of Directors thank you for the great time I have had working as not only your Course Superintendent but for also allowing me to start my journey here as an apprentice over 5 years ago. I will always be proud to say I learnt my trade at the Heads starting as an apprentice at the age of 17 all the way to becoming the course superintendent at this great course. It is a fantastic club with great people around who are always willing to help out at any point. Thank you for the privilege.

Damian Spelta

Course Superintendent