

2025 VISIONARIES



Celebrating the extraordinary work of Golf Australia's 2025 Visionaries promoting gender equality in Australian golf clubs



A sport where women and girls are inspired to participate, feel welcomed and nurtured throughout, and empowered to achieve their goals.



Visionary *noun*

plural noun: visionaries

*a person with original ideas about what
the future will or could be like*



Vision 2025



Be inspired and learn how you can implement exciting changes at your facility. 2025 Visionaries contains information and examples about how you can:

- Ensure your honour board events are fully accessible for everyone
- Use the Australian Human Rights Commission's 'Guidelines for the promotion of equal opportunity for women and girls in golf' (AHRC Guidelines) to minimise the likelihood of a successful discrimination claim being made under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth) (Sex Discrimination Act)
- Offer age, gender and ability-appropriate entry level and participation pathway opportunities
- Engage female coaches at your venue
- Implement gender-neutral membership and competitions
- Revise committee structures to empower more women into leadership positions

**Adopting the approaches outlined in this booklet will not protect you from a finding of unlawful discrimination but rather they represent practical ways clubs have worked towards compliance with the Sex Discrimination Act and promotion of inclusion and equal opportunity.*

Thank you to our Vision 2025 partners



Welcome

Building the foundations for growth is the mantra for the first steps of Golf Australia's national female engagement strategy - Vision 2025: The Future of Women and Girls in Golf.

Our key Vision 2025 efforts in 2019 focussed on building the understanding of golf industry staff and golf club leaders of the impact of gender inequality on our culture, our clubs, and the engagement of women and girls in the game. These initiatives include:

- **The Vision 2025 Roadshow, which delivered 51 presentations to nearly 1500 golf club leaders across Australia;**
- **The publication of the Australian Human Right Commission's Guidelines for the Promotion of Equal Opportunity for Women and Girls in Golf;**
- **A whole of industry gender equality training for staff;**
- **The development and delivery of the Even Par Gender Equality Club Support program, piloted across three regions of Victoria; and,**
- **Participation in the Male Champions of Change (Sport) Program by myself.**

Conversations have started across the golfing community on what we all need to do to bring more women and girls from all walks of life to the game across their lifespan. The case studies outlined here showcase how clubs and individuals are now taking their own steps to help transform the sport of golf into one that is highly engaging, accessible, and fully inclusive for women and girls.

Common themes across these stories are:

- **Persistence, acknowledging that change takes time and some effort, but the rewards are easier to achieve than you might think;**
- **Having a go, with the support of golf industry staff; and**
- **The importance of communication of club gender equality commitments to general members and staff.**

We would also like to thank one of our major partners, Marsh, for their belief in Vision 2025 and support in bringing these case studies to life.

We congratulate all community clubs across Australia who have committed to Vision 2025 and encourage those who have yet to do so to join in.

We have been inspired and excited by the efforts of our clubs and are delighted to be able to share a snippet of the work being done to make golf a sport where women and girls are inspired to participate, feel welcomed and nurtured throughout, and empowered to achieve their goals.



Stephen Pitt
Chief Executive Office

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Useful resources

- To learn more about Golf Australia's Vision 2025 and Even Par Programs visit www.golf.org.au
- Sign-up to Golf Australia's national participation programs (including Get into Golf, MyGolf and the Community Golf Instructor program) via www.golf.org.au
- Download the AHRC Guidelines – www.humanrights.gov.au
- Office for Women in Sport & Recreation (Victoria) – www.changeourgame.vic.gov.au
 - Women in Sport Recruitment & Retention Guidelines
 - Women in Sport Communication & Marketing Strategies
- Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth)– www.vichealth.vic.gov.au
 - Resources & Publications
- Victoria University Women in Sport Research Centre - www.vu.edu.au/about-vu/university-profile/women-in-sport

Contact Golf Australia

For further assistance or to request templates and resources, contact your Regional Development or Club Support Officer via

www.golf.org.au/clubsupport or email clubsupport@golf.org.au

Tell us about the good work your club is doing, let us know what other topics you want to see covered or ask us for assistance to implement your Vision 2025 strategy via

clubsupport@golf.org.au

Summary of the Australian Human Rights Commission Guidelines

As a part of the Vision 2025 Strategy, Golf Australia engaged the Australian Human Rights Commission to develop Guidelines for the Promotion of Equal Opportunity for Women and Girls in Golf (AHRC Guidelines). These have been endorsed by the R&A.

These Guidelines have been developed to ensure golf clubs are informed about the equal opportunity rights of members, and that they're not held liable under the Sex Discrimination Act.

The AHRC Guidelines provide:

- information about the operation of the Sex Discrimination Act in relation to unlawful and permissible discrimination on the basis of sex
- practical guidance for promoting equal opportunity for women and girls in golf clubs.

The AHRC Guidelines focus on four areas for the promotion of equal opportunity:

1. Membership and membership categories
2. Golf course access
3. Competition structures (premium times and booking systems)
4. Governance (board participation and operation of women's committees)

Both an individual or an organisation who discriminates against an individual, and a person who aids or permits the unlawful discrimination, can be held legally responsible under the Sex Discrimination Act. (*Refer to AHRC Guidelines. (2019). p. 24*). It is recommended that clubs work through the AHRC Guidelines and follow the guidance provided.

In accordance with the AHRC Guidelines, a club may consider introducing a special measure to promote equal opportunity for women and girls in golf. A special measure is a positive action used to promote equality for disadvantaged groups. They are often referred to as 'positive discrimination' or 'affirmative action', and address the unequal position of two groups of people (for example, women and men) by implementing a practice which favours the disadvantaged group. (*Refer to AHRC Guidelines. (2019). p. 18*)

Download the AHRC Guidelines – www.humanrights.gov.au

Ensure your honour board events are accessible for all

KEW GOLF CLUB, VICTORIA

Persistence pays off – how Kew Golf Club implemented the multiday club championship

The Club:

The Kew Golf Club (GC), located 10km north-east of Melbourne CBD is a private course open to members and their guests. With a membership base of 1,525 people, 28% being female, the club has an onsite General Manager and PGA Professional. There are 77 female members aged between 18 -59 (18% of the club's female membership)

Local Demographic:

- Population: 24,725
- Median age: 39 (national average 38)
- Children aged 0-14 years: 16.1% of the population (average 18.7%)
- People aged 65+ years: 17% (average 15.8%)
- People born in Australia: 64.9% (average 66.7%)
- Full-time workers: 58% of the population (average 57.7%)
- Part-time workers: 30.4% (average 30.4%)
- Median household weekly income: \$2,205 (average \$1,438)

Background:

As a part of the Vision 2025 Strategy, Golf Australia engaged the Australian Human Rights Commission to develop Guidelines for the Promotion of Equal Opportunity for Women and Girls in Golf (AHRC Guidelines). These have been endorsed by the R&A.

They have been developed to ensure golf clubs are informed about the equal opportunity rights of members, and that they're not held liable under the Sex Discrimination Act.



Women's and men's club champions

The AHRC Guidelines acknowledge that the experiences of women and girls in golf have been very different from those of men and boys. (*Refer to AHRC Guidelines. (2019). p. 27*). This has limited women and girls' access to the game in different ways, including access to weekend play. A remnant of this historical experience is that many women still play only during the week or only have memberships that do not give them Saturday playing rights. As such, in many clubs, women's Honour Board events are traditionally scheduled midweek to accommodate this cohort who often make up the majority of women in community golf clubs.

The Story:

"Flexibility and opportunity to play golf on days that fit in around your life." This is the mantra that Andrea Moore, the Captain at Kew GC adopts. "Times have changed, women now work, and girls study, so we need to provide them with an opportunity to participate on weekends."

As at many other clubs, Kew GC has experienced a slow decline in weekday women's competitions and club championships, traditionally conducted over five midweek days.

Andrea is left to ponder these questions: “How can we attract the next generation of female members if we limit their opportunity to participate in club events? How can we ask them to pay the same fees for less access to club competitions and expect them to take five days of leave or skip school to play in our club championships?”

“ *How can we attract the next generation of women members if we limit their opportunity to participate in club events?”*

Kew GC ran its first multi-day club championship (A, B and C grade) in October 2019. The format comprised:

- Two weeks of qualifying rounds where women could participate on a weekday (Tuesday, Thursday) or weekend (Saturday, Sunday);
- Followed by match play finals conducted over two weekends – Sunday, Saturday, Sunday;
- The finals for all three grades run in conjunction with the men’s club championship final round on the Sunday.



Crowds come to watch the final days play

“We are extremely excited to make the final day a totally inclusive club event and engage with all playing groups (men, women and juniors). We are planning a sausage sizzle, drinks and quite simply a celebration of our club,” Andrea said.

The excitement of the multi-day club championship was not without its trials and tribulations. To date, it has been 10 years since Andrea and others first started advocating that their women’s club championship be conducted on a weekend.

Challenges and Solutions:

In many situations, majority rules. This belief created a challenge when attempting to change the women’s championship to the weekend at Kew GC. “It is a natural instinct for humans to be resistant to change, especially when the current situation favours the majority,” explains Andrea.

“ *A key strategy was getting our board to commit to the AHRC Guidelines and asking the golf committee to review golf events and work out how to make them more accessible for all.”*

“In the beginning, our committee members resisted change, because most women members play midweek. Success can be achieved by communicating to members that there is an opportunity for growth of potential new members, if competition play is also offered on days that are not preferred by current members.

“A key strategy was getting our board to commit to the AHRC Guidelines and asking the golf committee to review golf events and work out how to make them more accessible for all.”

Andrea’s persistence eventually paid off and the flexible multi-day championship was approved.

“It is important to get committees involved and make them part of the solution. To get to the end point, you may need to find a compromise. For us it was finding the balance between ensuring our current mid-week players could still participate, while at the same time getting to where we want to be in the future.”

Another challenge is many women at the club are only “intermediate” members – that is, they only have access to the course six days per week. Luckily, Kew GC has an extremely supportive General Manager and flexibility has been granted for these women to participate in the club championship qualifying rounds on the weekend and for the quarterfinals to be played on a Saturday.

The event is now in the club syllabus. “We are mindful however that board and committee members come and go, so we are working hard to ensure the event is sustainable into future years,” Andrea said. “The key is to ensure our first weekend championship is a success and to develop clear and solid guidelines. Once our guidelines are implemented, we hope to see an increase in championship participation numbers, creating sustainable future growth for the club.”

Learning:

- There will often be resistance to change. The key is to think of different ways to compromise while having the end goal in mind.
- A common concern regarding dual qualifying is that competitors will play on different days and in different conditions. The answer to that – the British Open holds qualifying rounds at different venues in different conditions in different countries. Golf accepts that differences in playing and weather conditions can occur within a single day of play and affect competitors’ results depending on when they play their round. Accepting that we might have differences in playing conditions between days is consistent with this philosophy.
- Consider tee times of women on Saturdays. Keep in mind that some women (especially higher handicappers) can feel anxious and nervous playing among a full field of men.
- Persistence pays off. Campaigns for change can be a slow burn, but stick to your guns, slowly build up your allies, and, in many cases, change is inevitable.

Request Golf Australia’s multiday club championship guidelines via clubsupport@golf.org.au



Presentations of the women’s and men’s club champions on the 18th green

Ensure your club's policies and procedures are consistent with the AHRC Guidelines

HUNTINGDALE GOLF CLUB, VICTORIA

A member is a member – everyone is equal

The Club:

Huntingdale Golf Club (GC) is located in the heart of Melbourne's world famous 'sandbelt' region, just 20km south-east of Melbourne's CBD. One of Australia's most prestigious private golf courses, it has 1,239 members, 20% being female and a General Manager and PGA Professional onsite.

Local Demographic:

In the 2016 Census, there were 9,261 residents in Oakleigh South where Huntingdale GC is situated, however most club members come from other suburbs around Melbourne.

Background:

As a part of the Vision 2025 Strategy, Golf Australia engaged the Australian Human Rights Commission to develop Guidelines for the Promotion of Equal Opportunity for Women and Girls in Golf (AHRC Guidelines). These have been endorsed by the R&A.

They have been developed to ensure golf clubs are informed about the equal opportunity rights of members, and that they're not held liable under the Sex Discrimination Act.

The AHRC Guidelines acknowledge that the experiences of women and girls in golf have been very different from those of men and boys. This has limited women and girls' access to the game in different ways, including access to weekend play. A remnant of this historical experience is that many women still play only during the week or only have memberships that do not give them Saturday playing rights. As such, in many clubs, women's Honour Board events are traditionally scheduled midweek to accommodate the

women and girls in this situation because this cohort often make up the majority of women in community golf clubs. (Refer to AHRC Guidelines, (2019). p. 27)

The Story:

Huntingdale GC prides itself as an equal opportunity club. "A member is a member – everyone is equal," said Alex McGillivray, the club's General Manager.

"It is also great to see a very positive, progressive and inclusive culture at our club. We have been proactive for some time having advocated for the women's pennant to move to a Sunday, having all our competitions open to women and men and enabling our women to be full members since the mid-1980s.



*A member is a member
– everyone is equal"*

"Also, on a Saturday competition day, men and women can put their name down in any time slot, no reserved times for any gender. While we are proud of what we have achieved, it has been valuable working with Golf Australia on Vision 2025 to identify further areas for improvement."

Management, a very supportive club committee, and membership and women's sub-committees have been leading their club forward with Vision 2025 strategies to grow female participation by making changes reflective of the AHRC Guidelines to provide equal opportunity for women and girls.

"The club's strategic direction is to seek and attract female members, so we have introduced some special measures to achieve this," Alex said.



Enjoying pennant on a weekend – Huntingdale's Division 1, 2019 women's pennant team winners

These special measures are:

- Changing the constitution to give the club committee the power to change membership processes to encourage more women into golf and full membership
- Revising women's B & C grade championship rules of competition to enable women to participate either on a weekday or weekend, depending on their needs

This case study demonstrates the work Huntingdale GC has done to achieve equal opportunity along with challenges and learnings along the way.

Challenges and Solutions:

"We knew how important it was to allow all female members (studying, working and non-working) the opportunity to participate in our club championships. This needed to happen to achieve equal opportunity and to further grow our female membership base," Alex said.

"Upon revising our championship terms and conditions, we did face some complications but have worked collaboratively to overcome these. For example, we needed to identify how to fairly run quarter and semi-finals where a participant who plays on a weekend may need to compete

“ We knew how important it was to allow all female members (studying, working and non-working) the opportunity to participate in our club championships. This needed to happen to achieve equal opportunity and to further grow our female membership base, ”

against a participant who plays on a weekday. Our decision has been a "play by" rather than a "play on" format – that being a pair may choose to conduct their match on any day within the week. If the mutually agreed day is a day that a 5- or 6-day member cannot usually access, an exception will be made.

"In terms of making our women's club championships a multi-day format, the biggest task was the need to sell the concept to our female members. Women were concerned it was unfair to run the event on different days that bring different conditions. We used examples of how conditions can change between morning and afternoon tee times in major tournaments around the world (e.g. The Open Championship) and events such as the Australian Amateur and World Amateur have qualifying rounds on different days on different courses.

“We were eventually successful in obtaining a consensus, have been lenient with membership playing rights and are now looking forward to hosting the club’s first multiday championship in November! To date, the members who have entered to play on the weekend are working women and are over the moon they can now participate in the event.

“Without discounting our product too much, we believe we have managed to find a good balance to provide a steppingstone for women to become full members.

“Rather than coming from a top-down approach (like we initially did), it has been very promising and reassuring to now have our women’s committee initiating conversations about our other board events held midweek. I think Vision 2025 has been a good tool to educate and empower our members and committees to make positive changes”

At the club’s 2019 AGM held in July, members voted in favour of changing the club’s constitution to give the committee power to create categories of membership. One such category put forward as an example was one that would attract and nurture female golfers on a pathway to full membership.

The club has since introduced a women’s introductory membership. This membership enables women to play up to 25 rounds of golf per year with a reduced entrance fee and an annual payment equivalent to 77% of a full membership fee.

“Without discounting our product too much, we believe we have managed to find a good balance to provide a steppingstone for women to become full members. This has only very recently been implemented but our male members are already expressing an interest in signing up their

partners. We are very happy with this outcome as we strive to create a family atmosphere at our club. Our next challenge is to create an easily understood pathway for women from beginner to full membership.

“Long term, we are working to eradicate our 5- and 6-day membership categories. In the future, we want both men and women to simply be full members with equal and full-time access to the course and our competitions.”

Learning:

- Bring your members along on the Vision 2025 journey by educating and inspiring them about the opportunities it will create. If they understand the bigger picture and how it can benefit the club long term, they will be more likely to support your proposals.
- Clubs can create their own Vision 2025 strategy to review policy, practices and pricing to encourage more women and girls to play golf.
- Greater access to playing, introductory programs and introductory memberships, more weekend board events and more leadership positions in the club are just a few areas a club can include in its strategy.
- Golf Australia can assist with your club’s Vision 2025 strategy and now has templates to help clubs modernise their constitutions.

For further assistance or to request templates and resources, contact your Regional Development or Club Support Officer via www.golf.org.au/clubsupport or email clubsupport@golf.org.au

Download the AHRC Guidelines – www.humanrights.gov.au

Ensure your club's policies and procedures are consistent with the AHRC Guidelines

TORQUAY GOLF CLUB, VICTORIA

Working with the Australian Human Rights Commission Guidelines if your policies and procedures run contrary to the requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act



Views of the Torquay Golf Club at the east end of the Great Ocean Road coastal drive.

The Club:

RACV boasts highly regarded golf courses in beautiful surroundings, one of those being Torquay Golf Club (GC) on Victoria's surf coast, near Geelong. While the course is owned and managed by the RACV, the members elect a club committee to run all golf operations. The course is open to RACV members and guests and its membership base comprises 1200 members, 22% of whom are female.

Local Demographic:

- Population: 18,362
- Median age: 39 (national average 38)
- Children aged 0-14 years: 22.8% of the population (average 18.7%)
- People aged 65+ years: 14.8% (average 15.8%)
- People born in Australia: 82.6% (average 66.7%)
- Full-time workers: 54.3% of the population (average 57.7%)
- Part-time workers: 36.1% (average 30.4%)
- Median household weekly income: \$1,625 (average \$1,438)

Background:

As a part of the Vision 2025 Strategy, Golf Australia engaged the Australian Human Rights Commission to develop Guidelines for the Promotion of Equal Opportunity for Women and Girls in Golf (AHRC Guidelines). These have been endorsed by the R&A.

They have been developed to ensure golf clubs are informed about the equal opportunity rights of members, and that they're not held liable under the Sex Discrimination Act.

Golf clubs have a level of legal responsibility under this Act, so it is recommended that clubs work through the publication and follow the guidance of the AHRC.



Once we read the AHRC Guidelines, we realised our club needed to get on the front foot and manage the agenda rather than reacting to it."

The Story:

"It was black and white," said Peter Oliver, club committee member at Torquay GC.

"Once we read the AHRC Guidelines, we realised our club needed to get on the front foot and manage the agenda rather than reacting to it.

"Some issues had previously been tabled in our committee meetings, but not with huge urgency. However, upon reading about the discrimination case at a club in Queensland, followed by the release of the AHRC Guidelines, we knew it was time to act."

This case study outlines how Torquay GC used the AHRC Guidelines as a tool to navigate their self-assessment and lead themselves to become lawful.

“We realised that some of our policies and procedures ran contrary to the requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act. We were not only being unlawful, but also not working to our ‘one club’ philosophy - to provide equal golfing experiences for both men and women.”

Challenges and Solutions:

Upon revising the AHRC Guidelines, the club undertook an audit of its procedures and practices to identify areas where they may not have been fully compliant with the requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act.

"We realised that some of our policies and procedures ran contrary to the requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act. We were not only being unlawful, but also not working to our 'one club' philosophy - to provide equal golfing experiences for both men and women," Peter said.

Following this realisation, steps the club took to create change were:

- Develop a set of recommendations based on the AHRC Guidelines
- Propose these recommendations to the general committee
- Send recommendations to the RACV for sign-off.

“We needed to balance the gap between the law and our club policies, all while keeping our club membership onside and happy.”

"There were originally three members of the club's committee who met with senior representatives of Golf Australia to undertake a desktop audit of our practices by using the AHRC Guidelines - a member of the women's committee, the club vice-president and myself.

"However, we wanted to establish a working group of key people at the club to work on this project, so the club sent our vice-captain and lady captain to Golf Australia's Vision 2025 roadshow.

"Proposed changes were communicated to members in several ways:

- By correspondence to each member, setting out the rationale for the changes.
- At meetings with members, such as annual meetings.
- Individually to those seeking more information.

"The Sex Discrimination Act is not a guideline; it is the law, so it really wasn't a hard sell to make changes," Peter said.

"Our main challenge was practically implementing these changes. We needed to balance the gap between the law and our club policies, all while keeping our club membership onside and happy.

"The changes we needed to make were in the operational areas of golf course access, competition structures and governance.

Playing Days

"The AHRC Guidelines assist golf clubs to promote equal opportunity and minimise the likelihood of a successful discrimination claim. Members should be able to have equal opportunity to access the course on the same number of days that their membership rights entitle them to. This was an issue that we needed to address."

The former offering was:

- A five-day member (male or female) could not play in a Tuesday competition (traditionally women's day) and not at all on a Wednesday or Saturday (traditionally men's day). They could only get on the course for a game on Tuesdays after 1pm.
- A six-day member (male or female) could not play at all on Saturdays and had the added complication that a male could not play in the Tuesday women's competition and did not gain access to the course until 1pm or a female could not play in the Wednesday male competition and could not gain access to the course until 3pm.
- A seven day member (male or female) supposedly could play every day of the week, but had the added complication that a male could not play in the Tuesday women's competition and did not gain access to the course until 1pm or a female could not play in the Wednesday male competition and could not gain access to the course until 3pm.

"Scarily, our circumstances mirrored those of the Royal Queensland GC* that was found to be discriminating against female members after one took action against them," Peter said.

So, the strategy the club adopted to make it compliant included:

- Wednesdays are no longer for male-only competitions. It is open to all 6 and 7-day members.
- Tuesday morning has been protected as a "special measure" for women.

* *Barnett v Royal Queensland GC (2018)*

Playing rights

The AHRC Guidelines assist golf clubs to promote equal competition playing rights for all members, irrespective of gender.

"Our only competition that is exclusively gender based now is the women's Tuesday morning competition. This is protected as a "special measure" under the Act," Peter said.

"In order to add value to those members who may feel this is unfair, we made some adjustments."

These were:

- The latest tee time for the Tuesday women's competition is set at 10.00am so 5,6- and 7-day members can play in the afternoon (both male and female) in an optional afternoon competition.
- Three tee slots in the morning for those women wanting to only play nine holes – because of time or physical constraints. This is designed to keep encouraging participation.
- All competition days can have a gender specific competition played on that day providing there are four players of both genders in the field. This is designed to encourage women who may feel intimidated playing with men in their group to still enjoy a round with other women.
- In a mixed competition, the Golf Australia formula to adjust women's scores for "prize allocation purposes" is applied. In simple terms, this adds two to a woman's stableford score and is designed to encourage women to play against the men as their chances of success are increased.
- An overhaul of prize structure so that only one now exists and applies to all competitions.
- New female members are offered 5 or 6-day memberships upon joining. The advantage of taking the 6-day option is that they can play in the Tuesday morning women's competition.

"We are currently reviewing a change to this policy with the RACV such that a 5-day member be allowed to play in the Tuesday morning women's only competition as a further encouragement for women to join the club."

Governance

The AHRC Guidelines assist golf clubs to promote equal opportunity in their governance arrangements.

“We noted that the women were not adequately represented in our committee structure,” Peter said.

So, the following changes have been made:

- The club committee the peak body for running golf on behalf of members, added the “Lady President” and “Lady Captain” to its structure, giving women three of the nine positions (33%) on the committee. Women represent 22% of the club’s membership base.
- The match and greens sub-committee had the Lady President and Lady Captain included as voting members. Women now constitute 33% of this sub-committee.
- A communications and events sub-committee was added to handle these two aspects of operation and this has been structured with equal male and female participants.

““ The AHRC Guidelines have been designed specifically for golf and there are experienced Golf Australia staff who are readily available to assist clubs through the process.”

“We are proud that our club has taken a lead in this area of work and that our members have been supportive. Of our 1200 members, we only had five members voice their disapproval.” Peter said.

“While words such as legislation may seem overwhelming, it isn’t as hard to implement change as it sounds.

“The AHRC Guidelines have been designed specifically for golf and there are experienced Golf Australia staff who are readily available to assist clubs through the process.

““

The more clubs ensuring they are set up to treat women and girls fairly, the better for golf as a whole.”

“This is why I suggest other clubs start looking at the AHRC Guidelines, too. The more clubs ensuring they are set up to treat women and girls fairly, the better for golf as a whole.”

Learning:

- Don’t be afraid and don’t defer from making change. The sooner you address any gaps between the law and your club policies, the less “at risk” your club will be.
- Change is best introduced gradually. If you focus task by task, you will achieve small wins along the way which will build confidence, trust and a groundswell of support from your members for future change.
- Make decisions as a group. It is good to get several key people at your club involved.
- Come up with strategies for change while also trying to keep your club membership onside and happy. You may need to come up with compromises.
- When advocating for change, in many instances you can start your statement with, “The law says ...” – who can argue with that!
- Use the staff at Golf Australia – they can help your club to revise policies and procedures using the AHRC Guidelines.

For further assistance or to request templates and resources, contact your Regional Development or Club Support Officer via www.golf.org.au/clubsupport or email clubsupport@golf.org.au

Download the AHRC Guidelines – www.humanrights.gov.au

Ensure your club's policies and procedures are consistent with the AHRC Guidelines

ROYAL FREMANTLE GOLF CLUB, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Achieving substantive equality for women at our club

The Club:

The Royal Fremantle Golf Club (GC) is a private championship course situated 20km south-west of Perth city. There are six PGA Professionals and a General Manager on site. The membership base comprises 1013 members, with 17% female.

Local Demographic:

- Population: 8,211
- Median age: 41 (national average 38)
- Children aged 0-14 years: 10.5% of the population (average 18.7%)
- People aged 65+ years: 17.7% (average 15.8%)
- People born in Australia: 56% (average 66.7%)
- Full-time workers: 55.3% of the population (average 57.7%)
- Part-time workers: 32.1% (average 30.4%)
- Median household weekly income: \$1,548 (average \$1,438)

Background:

As a part of the Vision 2025 Strategy, Golf Australia engaged the Australian Human Rights Commission to develop Guidelines for the Promotion of Equal Opportunity for Women and Girls in Golf (AHRC Guidelines). These have been endorsed by the R&A.

They have been developed to ensure golf clubs are informed about the equal opportunity rights of members, and that they're not held liable under the Sex Discrimination Act.

In accordance with these Guidelines, a club may proactively discriminate in favour of the group

with which it seeks to address an imbalance. The club may also act to provide a "special measure" for women under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 by means such as "offering reduced fees for new women members or waiving introductory fees and charges" (*Refer to AHRC Guidelines. (2019). p. 18*).

The AHRC Guidelines also acknowledge that there has been historical gender discrimination in golf. This has limited women's access to the game in different ways, including women's access to 7-day play.

The Story:

"Given we were dealing with 114 years of history, last night was incredibly important to achieving substantive equality for women at our club."

These were words sent to Golf Australia from Gavin Burt, General Manager at Royal Fremantle GC following the club's extraordinary general meeting in July 2019.



All of these committees had individual agendas, and, because of this, the club was very disconnected.

"We could just sit here and do nothing, but we want to be the leaders in this space (gender equality) and lead by good example," Gavin said.

Upon starting his role at the club in mid-2018, Gavin identified several inefficiencies and challenges. "We were basically operating as three clubs within the one entity," he said.

“We had a strong men’s club, but we also had a women’s and junior committee that weren’t integrated within the operations of the club.

“All of these committees had individual agendas, and, because of this, the club was very disconnected.

“It was also evident that our club membership was aging and our constitution, in my view, was out of date and prejudiced against women.

“We needed to change and move forward. We, the board and I, wanted to become one club with a one-club philosophy.”

So, the club persisted with two main aims:

1. To disband all existing committees and improve the governance model of its board
2. To create new member categories available to all members with equal voting rights

This case study demonstrates how the club successfully implemented this change.

Challenges and Solutions:

“Fortunately, the board was very open to change,” Gavin said. “However, the challenge for us was navigating how we do this and how we alter our constitution.

“We wanted our members to choose a membership category based on suitability to their lifestyle, not their gender.”

“There were some robust discussions among the board initially, but as we progressed, we moved forward as one shared voice.

“The changes we wanted to make to our membership structure was to take out gender and open up our 4, 5, 6 and 7-day membership to both male and females with equal voting rights.



Allison Adams who is a new 7-day member wins the Geoff Smith perpetual trophy on a Saturday

“We wanted our members to choose a membership category based on suitability to their lifestyle, not their gender.

“Traditionally our main competition days had been men’s competition on a Thursday and Saturday and women played on a Wednesday and Friday. So that competition play matched our proposed membership categories, we also needed to open our weekly club events to both male and females.

“We assumed that if we were to have any backlash it would be from some of our male members, but surprisingly it also came from women who were resistant to change.

“It seemed that they somewhat felt they did not want to rock the boat. They were happy to remain in their familiar and comfortable all-female environment and keep their four-day (associate) membership.”

The club implemented a special measure so that Wednesday and Friday mornings remained as women’s competition days.

“We wanted to ensure our current female members still had an opportunity to play in an all-female environment where they felt comfortable, but holistically we wanted to create an inclusive environment throughout the week,” Gavin said.

"Once our board had an agreed approach, our second step was to engage our members. We did this by holding numerous information sessions that were coupled with a memorandum outlining information about the changes that we were wanting to make. We provided details of the revised constitution including mark-ups so people could easily identify these changes.

FF *It was very heartening to know that the majority of our members supported this change"*

"While most of the time, it seemed we were making progress, there were a few people who were quite vocal about their disapproval. It was easy to get caught up with their opinions and this made us nervous leading up to the vote. We were also concerned that we may not meet our quorum - which is at least 50 members to vote.

"However, on the night of the extraordinary general meeting we had 165 members attend, which was fantastic! We presented once again on the proposed changes to the constitution and gave members time for 'question and answer' to ensure people felt fully informed to vote.

"In the end, 92% of members voted in favour of the revised constitution.

"It was very heartening to know that the majority of our members supported this change.

"Our new membership structure took effect just two months ago. In this short time, we have already seen many benefits to the club both financially and culturally.

"A significant number of women have broken away from their previously restrictive 4-day associate membership and have taken up 5,6 or 7-day membership. This has not only increased club revenue through larger memberships but is bringing in additional revenue on other days of the week.

FF *We are really excited about the direction we are now heading and recommend that other clubs look at doing the same."*

"Our shared competition experiences are also creating a wonderful atmosphere in the clubhouse and it was fantastic to see a new 7-day female member win a perpetual trophy on a Saturday recently.

"Our club members recently voted in an additional female director to the board. She joins a team of six others including one other female who was instrumental in getting the constitution passed among our female members.

"We are really excited about the direction we are now heading and recommend that other clubs look at doing the same."

Learning:

- Be as transparent as you possibly can and bring your members on the journey.
- You are not going to satisfy or please everyone. Trust that you are doing the right thing and don't let the minority who are often most vocal jeopardise your decision making.
- Your female board members may be a good catalyst for change among your female membership base.
- Golf Australia can assist with your club's Vision 2025 strategy and now has templates to help clubs modernise their constitutions.

For further assistance or to request templates and resources, contact your Regional Development or Club Support Officer via www.golf.org.au/clubsupport or email clubsupport@golf.org.au

Download the AHRC Guidelines- www.humanrights.gov.au

KAPUNDA GOLF CLUB, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

How to be adaptable and cater for what young people and women need from golf

The Club:

Kapunda Golf Club (GC) is located 80km north of Adelaide. With a membership of 256, 15% being female, it is a 9-hole public course, run by volunteers.

Local Demographic:

- Population: 2,917
- Median age: 45 (national average 38)
- Children aged 0-14 years: 18.1% of the population (average 18.7%)
- People aged 65+ years: 21.3% (average 15.8%)
- People born in Australia: 82% (average 66.7%)
- Full-time workers: 51% of the population (average 57.7%)
- Part-time workers: 36% (average 30.4%)
- Median household weekly income: \$1,009 (average \$1,438)

Background:

As a part of the Vision 2025 Strategy, Golf Australia engaged the Australian Human Rights Commission to develop Guidelines for the Promotion of Equal Opportunity for Women and Girls in Golf (AHRC Guidelines). These have been endorsed by the R&A.

They have been developed to ensure golf clubs are informed about the equal opportunity rights of members, and that they're not held liable under the Sex Discrimination Act.

The Guidelines include information to help golf clubs evaluate their current course access and competition structures, including premium times such as Saturdays, for both men and women.



Glennis Warrior is the first female winner of the C grade championship - now open to men and women

The Story:

Peter Morrison, club President at Kapunda GC, had always believed it wasn't fair that women who played on a Saturday (traditionally men's day) were never able to be a part of the main competition. This was despite them paying the same membership and competition fees as men, who were eligible to win prizes and the monthly medal.

So, Peter took the initiative to change all gender-specific competitions – excluding women's day – to member competitions, open to both men and women.

The resistance he faced, however, was not what he expected

Challenges and Solutions:

As he began the push for change, Peter was surprised that the group of people he thought he was advocating for turned out to be the group that was initially most resistant.

“Surprisingly it was the female members who were reluctant to adopt this notion,” Peter said.

“I believe their initial reaction was because of intimidation. And I don’t blame them; it would be confronting to play golf in a male-dominated environment when you are one of few females. The women believed they could not compete with the men, despite the handicap system and women’s tees being in place.”

“Persistence was the key to change”

A few women had been playing Saturdays in an unofficial sense, so despite the hesitation, the concept was passed, and the Saturday competition opened to all members.

“Persistence was the key to change,” Peter said. “Along with the reassurance that it was simply an option for women to play on a Saturday and that they were indeed good enough to play alongside the men. We recently had our first female win the monthly medal and another take out the C Grade club championship which is open to both men and women. These wins have been fantastic and has helped this agenda immensely.”

To help integrate women into Saturday competition and get them feeling more part of the day, the club organised two mixed-sex fun ambrose events.

“We had 12 women (a mixture of those who play midweek and those who play largely at the weekend) playing together on a Saturday. However, for two weeks, we drew out names (ensuring one female and one male A grade

player were in each team) to create teams. We hoped that by mixing up the sexes and getting members playing with others that both men and women would better integrate.

“We want to ensure more women, especially those who cannot play during the week, know about the opportunity to play on a weekend,”

“While there was a little resistance from some of the members (who played golf elsewhere for those two weeks), most members were happy to enjoy a fun ambrose game and get to know others in the club.”

Peter said the outcomes from this have been:

- A friendly club environment. While most of the women have gone back to playing with each other, you can see more chat and banter between the sexes each Saturday.
- An increase in confidence and knowledge by women that they can compete on an equal basis with the men.
- No animosity if a woman wins the weekly Saturday competition. Relationships have been formed and people are genuinely happy for whoever wins.

“We want to ensure more women, especially those who cannot play during the week, know about the opportunity to play on a weekend,” Peter said.

“We encourage the pre-existing players to ask their friends along. We are also starting a summer twilight night. This has a very social and non-competitive atmosphere and is a good way to attract and introduce working women to our club (with a view that they may someday extend to our weekend competition play.)”

The club has been pleasantly surprised at the uptake, by both men and women, on a Saturday including the ambrose events. "It forms part of our club and committee's ethos to create a culture that is friendly and a place where everyone can come to enjoy their golf," Peter said.

Learning:

- If you want to improve golf for women, it is not just on women or an individual to make change, it needs to be a group effort. You need the club to get behind your initiatives. Change does not happen overnight, and it may take some persistence.

FF *You are either a golf course or a golf club. To be successful, you need to be a golf club – that is be a place that is friendly and where people enjoy spending time."*

- Clubs need to be flexible to adapt to the needs of players. We need to be adaptable and cater for what young people and women need from us.
- Running a fun ambrose event to launch your 'open Saturday' competition is a good way to integrate women into the day. If women feel too intimidated to be the sole female player in an ambrose team, pair them with another female to make a team of two women and two men.
- You are either a golf course or a golf club. To be successful, you need to be a golf club – that is be a place that is friendly and where people enjoy spending time.

For further assistance or to request templates and resources, contact your Regional Development or Club Support Officer via www.golf.org.au/clubsupport or email clubsupport@golf.org.au

Download the AHRC Guidelines – www.humanrights.gov.au

Revise committee structures to empower more women into leadership positions

STRATHMERTON GOLF CLUB, VICTORIA

The amalgamation of committees - a natural progression

The Club:

Strathmerton Golf Club (GC) is a small, volunteer-based club located three hours' drive north of Melbourne. With no watering system, the club has sandscape greens and is only open during the winter months. Its membership comprises many shift workers from the local Bega Cheese factory, transport/trucking company and nurses, along with retirees. Membership is 35 with 37% being female.

Local Demographic:

- Population: 1,052
- Median age: 38 (national average 38)
- Children aged 0-14 years: 23.4% of the population (average 18.7%)
- People aged 65+ years: 12% (average 15.8%)
- People born in Australia: 81.4% (average 66.7%)
- Full-time workers: 61% of the population (average 57.7%)
- Part-time workers: 26.4% (average 30.4%)
- Median household weekly income: \$1,219 (average \$1,438)

Background:

Golf has historically been a sport played by men. As a result, many clubs have been established and managed using a main club committee (usually comprised of men) that manages men's golf affairs, and a women's committee (often a sub-committee) that takes care of women's golf affairs.

In many cases, women are therefore reluctant to sit on the main club committee as they feel



Male and female members enjoying a round together (with a near hole in one!).

it is not their space. This has resulted in a lack of women in positions of leadership.

As clubs begin to modernise and address gender inequality, it is recommended that a club committee manages men's, women's and juniors' golf business.

There are many benefits that come along with the amalgamation of committees, some which are outlined in this case study.

The Story:

In 2018, Strathmerton GC operated as separate men's and women's clubs. The club however soon became aware of the benefits of amalgamating its committees and worked with their Golf Australia Regional Development Officer (RDO) to achieve this.

Challenges and Solutions:

Like many regional clubs, Strathmerton GC's men's and women's membership was small (about 15 members each). As there were two committees managing two separate groups of members, both were struggling to fulfil committee positions and keep up with their workload.



The amalgamation of our two committees was somewhat a natural progression

"The amalgamation of our two committees was somewhat a natural progression," said Kay, a committee member. "The men were struggling to attract a secretary, so one of our female members put her hand up to help. From that, it was just a common sense move to amalgamate and share resources.

"We did not experience any resistance from either side towards merging - both parties wanted it which was good."



It is important to get committees working together as one club

Upon agreement, the two committees worked with local RDO Megan Carr to:

- Establish a working party that comprised a combination of men's and women's committee members.
- Identify what the sticking points were and work through these.
- Develop a new constitution and bylaws using a template supplied by Golf Australia.
- Ensure there were numerous opportunities for club members to provide their thoughts and feedback towards the new constitution and bylaws.
- Run a special general meeting to vote in new committee members and pass the new constitution.

"It is important to get committees working together as one club," Megan said. "We need to get men and women supporting each other to grow the game.

"For clubs looking at amalgamating their committees, there are templates available through Golf Australia to help you do so. They will help you work through various items such as the merging of competitions, committee structures, sponsorships, bank accounts, etc."

Now, six months on, Megan was thrilled with the feedback from the club about their amalgamation experience.

"I can only speak positively about the amalgamation," Kay said. "The club has not looked back."

The benefits experienced include:

- Shared responsibilities and resources ("We now have a bigger base of people to recruit committee members from and more hands making lighter work.")
- Coming together has given the opportunity to learn from each other.
- With a unified leadership group, the club now has a louder voice and has already been more successful in obtaining grants.
- Competitions are stronger as they are now open to both men and women so more people can play.
- A greater capacity to concentrate on new initiatives such as attracting more juniors and beginners to the game to further grow the club.



First day of play following amalgamation

Learning:

Megan suggests:

- Make sure the process of amalgamation is transparent.
- Ensure there are opportunities for everyone (men and women) to have a say. Share your new constitution with members and allow them to provide feedback.
- It is very important to communicate with your members, so they fully understand what you are doing and why you are doing it.
- Contact Golf Australia to access templates and assistance if you want to amalgamate your committees.

Kay suggests:

- It is worth looking at amalgamating your men's and women's committees as the benefits are immense.
- Keep your constitution broad initially so you can address issues that arise which are difficult to foresee in initial stages.

- Ensure both parties (men and women) are very welcoming and accepting of each other. It helps to promote the benefits that each group will enjoy.
- Your local Regional Development Officer (RDO) or State Development Officer is a terrific resource to help you through the process of amalgamation.
- When combining men's and women's competitions, you may need to revise your sponsorship and prizes that have historically been awarded. In our case the men had been awarding free pots at the local pub which did not appease our women so much!

For further assistance or to request templates and resources, contact your Regional Development or Club Support Officer via www.golf.org.au/clubsupport or email clubsupport@golf.org.au

ROYAL HOBART GOLF CLUB, TASMANIA

Providing relevant participation opportunities for girls to teenagers to women

The Club:

Royal Hobart Golf Club (GC) was founded in 1916 and is known as Tasmania's premier members' club. The 18-hole championship course is situated a half-hour drive east of Hobart city and has a General Manager, PGA Professional, a trainee Professional and Community Instructor onsite. Club membership sits at 951, with 25% female.

Local Demographic:

- Population: 222,356
- Median age: 40 (national average 38)
- Children aged 0-14 years: 18% of the population (average 18.7%)
- People aged 65+ years: 17.8% (average 15.8%)
- People born in Australia: 79.8% (average 66.7%)
- Full-time workers: 53.2% of the population (average 57.7%)
- Part-time workers: 35.2% (average 30.4%)
- Median household weekly income: \$1,234 (average \$1,438)

Background:

It is imperative that golf offers age, gender and ability appropriate entry level and participation pathway opportunities throughout a person's lifespan.

All major sports in Australia offer adolescent girls the opportunity to play with and against other girls of similar ages, life stages and developmental abilities. In golf, however, there is a shortage of offerings for adolescent girls.

Golf Australia's Vision 2025 strategy has identified that golf needs to introduce and retain more women and girls in golf. This can be done by

offering innovative, inspiring, needs based, and age and gender appropriate programs and pathways, and access to quality coaching.

Teen Golf is therefore being developed to:

- Fill a gap in the participation pathway for beginning teenage girls in golf;
- Allows golf to enter the highly competitive female adolescent sports participation market; and,
- Begins to shift the positioning of golf towards being a sport for a more diverse community.

Teen Golf has been piloted at numerous venues throughout Australia in 2019. The program will be evaluated and adjusted accordingly before its expansion as part of GA's Vision 2025 strategy.

The Story:

Community Instructor and ALPG and Symetra Tour player Courtney Docking does not shy away from a challenge.



When I was their age, I was often the only girl in class. It can be difficult feeling like the odd one out but by running these girls and teen girls' classes, they can all enjoy learning together."

In April 2018, at 36 weeks pregnant, she followed her husband, PGA Professional Matt Docking from the Gold Coast to establish a new life in Hobart.

"The opportunity for Matt to run his own business within the Royal Hobart GC was too good to resist, so we made the move," Courtney said.



Teen Golf participants enjoy making new friends and learning the game

Eighteen months on, Courtney's family of four - including two girls aged one and two - is now settled so Courtney has started her next endeavour - getting more girls, teenagers and women playing golf.

"My motivation to encourage girls to start golf comes from my own experience. When I was their age, I was often the only girl in class. It can be difficult feeling like the odd one out but by running these girls and teen girls' classes, they can all enjoy learning golf together."

In July 2019, Courtney, who had gained her Community Instructor accreditation three years earlier, joined her husband at Royal Hobart GC and started running numerous programs for women and girls including MyGolf Girls, Teen Golf and beginner women's clinics.

Challenges and Solutions:

Ask a non-golfer in your local community if they think they can learn golf at your club. Often the answer will be "no". A common perception is that you need to be a member and already know how to play golf before you enter the gates of a golf club, especially ones with the 'Royal' moniker.

This, coupled with another common perception that golf is a sport for older men, can make getting more women and girls playing golf a challenge.

"Playing on tour myself, I am aware that getting more women and girls playing can be a challenge - so this is something I have always wanted to do," Courtney said.

“It is important to provide relevant participation opportunities for girls through to teenagers and through to women. Up until recently we had not been doing this. Teen Golf and MyGolf Girls were something new – the club had never had anything like it before, so this was exciting.

“The hardest part I have found when starting a new program and engaging a non-traditional target market is putting yourself out there.

“You will always be unsure if you will get a response, but you need to give it a go. Even if you only attract one or two girls in the beginning, that is an extra couple of girls that didn’t know golf before you started.

““ *It is important to provide relevant participation opportunities for girls through to teenagers and through to women.*

“When Matt and I started at Royal Hobart, there were only two girls playing. We persisted and soon attracted nine new girls to our MyGolf Girls program and eight teenage girls to Teen Golf. This shows that there generally is an interest by girls in golf, and that we just need to provide relevant opportunities for them to give it a go!

“Now, after running MyGolf Girls for four months, we have an average of 12 girls playing each week.”

The club’s MyGolf Girls program runs at 2pm each Saturday, followed by TeenGolf at 3:00pm.

“This works well as it creates a fun atmosphere at the club. We often combine the start and end of each session, so girls interact and play together. It is good for the younger girls to see the teenage girls playing as this is a common age for girls to drop out of sport.”

With some positive momentum in the female development space, Courtney then started a 5-week beginner women’s clinic. “We attracted 10 participants, many of whom were friends or wives of members.

““ *This shows that there generally is an interest by girls in golf, and that we just need to provide relevant opportunities for them to give it a go!*

“We are now starting to get the girls and women from our various clinics out on course. Knowing there is quite a leap between beginner clinics and club membership, we are offering clinic graduates the opportunity to come down on a casual basis each Sunday, pay a small fee and learn how to play on-course. We have modified the course to make it shorter and offer equipment loans for free.

“We have also put forward some ideas to the club board on different beginner memberships we would like to introduce.

“At this stage, our clinic participants do not have to be members to participate in our Sunday 6-hole program. However, with over half of the girls and women now having purchased new clubs, they seem keen to continue with their golf, so we need to work towards offering a relevant membership for them”.

Learning:

- Run relevant programs for specific target groups:
 - Women are often looking to get to know other beginner golfers so make sessions interactive and provide a social aspect, such as coffee and cake at the end of each session
 - Teen Golf provides age & gender appropriate participation opportunities for teenage girls in golf

- Games-based learning works well with children. Information on how to run games-based sessions are provided in the MyGolf manual.
- Adopt a “whole-of-club” approach. The pro shop has worked closely and collaboratively with the club and General Manager to ensure the success of these programs.
- Tap into relevant community events, e.g. International Women’s and Girls Day, Mother’s Day or breast cancer awareness days to run female-specific events and programs.
- Promote within your club to recruit wives, partners, daughters and granddaughters of members. Also promote externally through social media and local post-box flyer drops.
- Have a resilient attitude - don’t be deterred if there are smaller numbers at the start – this will build over time.
- Girls can tend to be more comfortable with a female figure, so engage a fun and friendly women at your club to become a Community Instructor.

Sign-up to Golf Australia’s national participation programs - including Get into Golf, MyGolf and the Community Golf Instructor program via www.golf.org.au

**Community
Instructor**



Age, gender and ability appropriate entry level and participation pathway opportunities

CAIRNS GOLF CLUB, QUEENSLAND

Developing players, not just clinic players



Ladies Lets Golf participants and graduates now enjoy getting out on course!

The Club:

Cairns Golf Club (GC) is an 18-hole course centrally located just minutes from the centre of Cairns in far North Queensland. The Club has a fleet of 60 motorised carts, is open for social play 7 days a week and has a full-length floodlit driving range. There are four PGA Professionals and a General Manager on site. The Cairns membership base comprises of 666 members, 22% being female.

Local Demographic:

- Population: 240,190
- Median age: 38 (national average 38)
- Children aged 0-14 years: 19.8% of the population (average 18.7%)
- People aged 65+ years: 15.2% (average 15.8%)
- People born in Australia: 70.8% (average 66.7%)
- Full-time workers: 56.6% of the population (average 57.7%)
- Part-time workers: 30.3% (average 30.4%)
- Median household weekly income: \$1,226 (average \$1,438)

Background:

Female golf membership around Australia has significantly diminished – from 34% of total memberships in 1970 compared to just 20% in 2019. There are numerous reasons for this, including people’s assumptions and perceptions about golf (that it is a sport for men) and the lifestyles of women dramatically changing overtime (however our golf product remains the same). We need to now work to change people’s perceptions about golf and offer products that appeal to today’s women who are often time-poor and may have a career.

The Story:

In terms of developing grassroots golf, Cairns GC is rightfully one of Australia’s “pin-up” clubs with flocks of women having swarmed to their beginner “Ladies, Let’s Golf” clinics in the past few years.

“We are getting better at being more aware of how golf has traditionally been seen – rigid, old-fashioned, for men and boring – and we are working to not be that,” explains Matt Bolton, the club’s General Manager.

The club has been extremely proactive with its local marketing including a brilliant Facebook page – see @cairnsclub and Instagram – but has also implemented some simple things at the club to ensure women feel welcome. These include playing music on the driving range and relaxing the dress code through to upgrading bathroom facilities and installing a women’s changeroom in the pro shop.

“We are getting better at being more aware of how golf has traditionally been seen – rigid, old-fashioned, for men and boring – and we are working to not be that,”

Challenges and Solutions:

While thrilled with the number of women attending clinics, Matt and his team began to realise a shortfall. “In hindsight, we probably lost some of our beginners as we had not been offering a complete participation pathway. One thing we have learnt is that you need to develop players, not just attract clinic players. You need to listen to your customers – and they have told us they want to get out on course and play the game.”

“One thing we have learnt is that you need to develop players, not just attract clinic players.”

The club now runs special on-course events for graduates and participants of the Ladies, Let’s Golf program. “Our first event was a great success! It was a beautiful sunny day and the 35 participants had a ball! They were given two hours to play as many holes in an ambrose format as they liked before enjoying drinks and nibbles. At the end of the day, we couldn’t get them out

of the clubhouse with all the laughter and new golfing friendships that you could see were being formed!

“Initially it can be more work getting beginners out on course, rather than simply running clinics, but it’s worth the investment as you will have more success retaining players in the long term,” Matt said.

“We (our staff) must be open to new concepts and ideas including establishing an on-course experience for our clients.”

Learning:

- It is crucial to be proactive and targeted with the marketing of your participation programs.
- To recruit women into their participation pathway, the Cairns GC team:
 - Promotes through its Facebook page
 - Engages with women who have either children or partners playing at the club
 - Emphasises that there is no pressure when they play. (“Our on-course days are a fun day out with golfing buddies followed by a relaxed drink and nibbles.”)
 - Uses word of mouth which is becoming powerful as more and more women start playing.
- The club knows it must develop “players”, not just clinic attendees.
- The club also knows it’s important to educate its client base not to expect everything for free. Instead, it provides a really good experience. “We charge women \$25 to participate in the on-course events. The charge covers their golf, motorised carts, a drink and some nibbles after golf.”

Sign-up to Golf Australia’s national participation programs - including Get into Golf, MyGolf and the Community Golf Instructor program via www.golf.org.au

LATROBE GOLF CLUB, VICTORIA

Women's and girls' pathways at Latrobe Golf Club

The Club:

Established in 1948, Latrobe Golf Club (GC) is an attractive riverside course, just 10km north-east of Melbourne's CBD. A semi-private club, Latrobe GC has 1,183 members, 19% being female. There is a General Manager and PGA Professional onsite.

Local Demographic:

- Population: 5,080
- Median age: 38 (national average 38)
- Children aged 0-14 years: 16.3% of the population (average 18.7%)
- People aged 65+ years: 12% (average 15.8%)
- People born in Australia: 74.6% (average 66.7%)
- Full-time workers: 58.2% of the population (average 57.7%)
- Part-time workers: 33.6% (average 30.4%)
- Median household weekly income: \$1,208 (average \$1,438)

Background:

The 2017 Golf Participation Report states a national attraction rate of 5.4% and an attrition rate of 6.8% of members in golf clubs.

While clubs need to implement strategies and programs to attract new players to the game, it is also vital to ensure that participants continue to play the game.

A special emphasis needs to be placed on progressing participants from clinic to on-course play, followed by membership and then membership retention.



Junior girls getting involved with club pennant presentations

The Story:

Three years ago, Latrobe GC began a process of benchmarking itself. Data showed that, like many other clubs, it had an ageing population of its members, particularly among its women. It became evident that without clear action, there would be a very significant drop in female membership in the next 10 years.

“ *The programs are designed to be fun and social to develop friendships – a key indicator of sustained participation,* **”**

In response, a Vision 2025 working group was established. The group has been working towards achieving three goals:

1. Attract new women and girls to golf
2. Increase female membership, including girls
3. Retain current female members and enrich their playing experiences.

Club PGA Professional Tony Craswell and the membership committee have overseen the newly established pathways and are confident the club's approach is right. "The programs are designed to be fun and social to develop friendships – a key indicator of sustained participation," Tony explained.

Junior Girls' Pathway to Play

The club encourages and nurtures girls' golf using the following strategies:

- Introducing girls to golf through its MyGolf and MyGolf Girls programs.
- Collaborating with two local driving ranges with the concept that girls learn golf at the range and then learn to love golf playing at Latrobe GC. Girls are introduced to golf through Latrobe GC's short course (including 18-inch cups). This opportunity has developed girls' confidence and also helped enhance the local ranges' junior development programs.
- Girls gain experience playing on course through 'Girls that Golf Latrobe'. This program works through a progressive 3-4-hole ambrose, nine holes, then 18-hole singles format. The club has put in forward tees: - an orange course for those who are so far unable to hit past 100m, and a purple course for those who cannot yet hit past 150m.
- The club also has a scholarship program that subsidises \$200 on juniors' \$390 cadet memberships. The fund was originally established in memory of a generous member and is now funded through an annual "100 hole in a day" fundraiser the club runs.

Latrobe GC's girls' membership has gone from one in 2015 to 14 in 2019. The club is now able to field a junior girls' pennant team. Members love seeing that this is a game for all ages.

Women's Pathway to Play

The club encourages and nurtures women's golf using the following strategies:



New golfers and new friends – Swing Fit participants enjoying lunch together

- Introducing women to golf through Swing Fit – a women's introduction to golf program. This is offered on the same day as the main women's competition so beginners can have lunch with the women members to feel part of the club and take away any intimidation they may feel.
- Swing Fit Weekend offers participation opportunities for women who work during the week.
- The Swing Fit program's schedule dovetails into the club's Get-on-Course program, which gives women access to the 18-hole course through a package incorporating membership. Participants can obtain their handicap and play with the aid of a mentor who introduces rules and etiquette progressively. As women gain confidence, they have the option to become full members and participate in club competitions.

The Latrobe Yarra Course – the Club's Short-Course Option

The club understands that people new to golf need somewhere to play that:

- is not intimidating;
- is length and time appropriate; and
- caters for all abilities.

So, the club decided to upgrade its back-practice area to a five-hole short course named the Latrobe Yarra course. "Our focus needs to be on developing more golfers, rather than members," Tony said. "Members will eventually come from this pool of golfers."

The idea for the short course was very simple – to develop a place that provides a genuine alternative to the club’s traditional 18-hole course.

“We’re confident that it works, so it has given us reason to invest and develop a new short course that will be properly designed with quality greens and fairways. This is due to open in February 2020. In time we will also include an aqua range (a water hole with floating targets) for added family fun.”



Our focus needs to be on developing more golfers, rather than members,”

Latrobe GC wants to create more opportunities and reasons for members to spend time at the club. The short course is intended to be a place where:

- Beginners can learn to play before graduating to the main course.
- Families can spend time together: it’s the aim to have mums, dads and kids playing together and getting around the course inside an hour.
- Time-poor members with young families can come and play a quick 10 short-hole competition early on Saturday morning and be home by 9:30am for children’s sport, etc.
- Golf Fitness whereby golfers will have speed-golf as an aerobic component.
- Older members can enjoy playing and stay part of their golfing community of friends when the main course becomes too long.

To access the short course, practice facilities and clubhouse, a “social playing membership” has been created, which is just 20% of a full playing membership.

If people then want to play traditional golf, they can then upgrade to traditional memberships and have access to the main course.

Challenges and Solutions:

Following up from the Vision 2025 Roadshow, Tony and the membership committee worked through a

checklist to consider what the club’s strengths were and where they needed to improve. The process helped the club recognise that a lot of what they had put in place was right, and things were working well. However, some issues still needed to be addressed, including:

- Developing policies around equal opportunity and ensuring members’ human rights are protected.
- More marketing and better communication with the wider community.
- Reviewing competitions so that women who work midweek, plus school and university students also have opportunities to participate. The club is altering its ‘Conditions of Play’ so that the 2020 club championship will not exclude women and girls who can only play at weekends.

These items are in the club’s Vision 2025 action plan.

Learning:

- Engage current members – explain to them that clubs need new members to survive, and give them responsibilities for welcoming and including new members.
- Nurture an environment that ensures the club culture is female and family friendly.
- Provide the right environment for engagement and friendship. People come to play golf, but they keep coming back because of their friends. Running the Swing Fit and Get on Course programs so they overlap (all participants have lunch together) has been a good strategy to achieve this.
- Keep thinking outside the box – benchmark regularly to enable the club to be proactive and open to new ideas and ways of doing things
- Reach out to Golf Australia, driving ranges and other clubs for support and ideas; we’re all in this together.

Sign-up to Golf Australia’s national participation programs - including Get into Golf, MyGolf and the Community Golf Instructor program via www.golf.org.au

Age, gender and ability appropriate entry level and participation pathway opportunities

FORSTER TUNCURRY GOLF CLUB, NSW

Who makes up your local community?

How Forster Tuncurry Golf Club caters to their local population.

The Club:

The Forster Tuncurry Golf Club (GC) incorporates the Forster and Tuncurry golf course. The club is in the Great Lakes area on the NSW mid-north coast, a three-hour drive north from Sydney.

With a current golfing membership of around 1,121, competitions are run seven days a week and visitors are welcome to join a competition or play socially when tee time slots are available.

There are four PGA Professionals and a General Manager on site. 24% of members are female.

Local Demographic:

- Population: 14,267
- Median age: 54 (national average 38)
- Children aged 0-14 years: 14.1% of the population (average 18.7%)
- People aged 65+ years: 34.9% (average 15.8%)
- People born in Australia: 81.7% (average 66.7%)
- Full-time workers: 46% of the population (average 57.7%)
- Part-time workers: 39.5% (average 30.4%)
- Median household weekly income: \$871 (average \$1,438)

Background:

Who makes up your local community? Do you have a young or an aging population? Do you have a transient community or are you in a new estate where young families are moving in? Perhaps you are in an area where new Australian's are resettling?

It is important that golf facilities across the country are aware of who lives locally so they can cater for and offer relevant programs to their target population.

The Story:

With the median age of its local population 16 years above the national average, the Forster township has proved to be a popular place for people to retire.

In attracting people to club membership and competition, retirees can be 'low-hanging fruit'. Having delivered 'Budding Birdies' – a program aimed at female retirees who want to learn how to play and move into club membership and competition play, Forster Tuncurry GC has ensured this fruit is in fact being picked.

"I keep thinking surely this year will be quieter but each year the program continues to grow," said Robyn Baker, a key volunteer who runs the program. "When I took over the program nine years ago, we had about eight women participating. This year we already have 35 enrolled to start their golf journey in 2020!"

"Everyone is working together. Our resident PGA Professional Daniel Newton runs lessons and six-week clinics called Get into Golf – for Seniors so women and men can learn the basics. He then refers women to our club program and our team of 30 volunteers then take these beginners out on-course each Saturday afternoon.

"Most of us are not spectacular golfers but we show the women how to navigate their way around a course, how to score, basic etiquette and so forth. We always keep in mind that their experience needs to be fun and not to overload them with too much information.



Budding Birdie participants at their Christmas breakup and graduation day

“When I started golf, all I had was a few private lessons and was then was thrown straight into competition – it was horrendous. I am pleased we offer the Budding Birdies program as it is a good steppingstone to play.”

To access this program, all women need to do is sign up as a social member (costing \$12 per year) and then pay green-fees when they play. There are also golf clubs available to borrow, donated by club members.

“Each Saturday afternoon the girls play nine holes of individual stableford. Once they start having decent and consistent scores, we encourage them to graduate from our program. This may take them anywhere from six months to one year before they take up a form of club membership that suits them.”

The club’s General Manager, David Kleemann, is also very supportive of the program. “We are the biggest self-retired area in NSW, so this program makes sense. It is also a great way to engage the wives of the male members we have. They get to taste the wine as such, like it and then filter into something more substantial if they wish”.

Challenges and Solutions:

“The program has only survived for over 10 years because of our volunteers”, said Robyn. “In the beginning, I was helping every Saturday afternoon and was burning out. It has been wonderful to now have a larger base of volunteers as this means we only need to do one shift per month which is not too onerous”.

The large base of volunteers at the club has stemmed from:

1. The club having a large membership base to draw from
2. A continuous cycle of Budding Birdie graduates returning to help (about 12 graduates of the program assisted in 2019).

“Like myself, our volunteers do it because they simply enjoy it. There is nothing quite like seeing beginners improve and getting so excited when they score their first par etc. You just keep coming back! It has been a lovely way for women to meet new friends to start their golfing journey with, as well as meet women who play in the club’s main competition days.

“We also run a big Christmas Budding Birdie party where participants provide lunch for the volunteers who have helped them during the year. It is always an amazing spread of food and we celebrate those women graduating from the program.

“It can be difficult to get a program up and running but persistence pays. Year by year the program has grown to a point where nearly all participants are recruited by word of mouth now as it is just known around town.

“Everyone is in on it – from the club board, to the pro, our General Manager and our members – we are lucky to have full club support”.

Learning:

- Starting any kind of new program can be difficult, but persistence pays. Even if you start with small numbers, keep on pursuing as overtime your program should grow.
- Many women lack the confidence and knowledge to progress from lessons to on-course play. Assisting beginners to transfer skills learnt in lessons to on-course is a program all clubs should be supplying in one form or another.
- Find out who makes up your local community and cater accordingly. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) site provides a good summary of your local demographic – www.abs.gov.au Some questions to ask are:
 - Are there lots of young families in your area? Run a MyGolf program
 - Is your club in a retiree area? Think about the Get into Golf for Seniors program
 - Is there a significant number of people that have migrated from another country and who speak another language at home? Speak with Golf Australia about getting marketing materials interpreted.

Sign-up to Golf Australia’s national participation programs - including Get into Golf, MyGolf and the Community Golf Instructor program via www.golf.org.au



ABOUT MYGOLF GIRLS



Why MyGolf Girls?

As a part of our commitment to Vision 2025, Golf Australia is striving to increase the number of girls participating in MyGolf and beyond by working with MyGolf centres to offer girls-only participation opportunities.

In 2019 there are only 2,179 junior girls who are members of golf clubs across Australia compared to 10,599 boys. And, of the 23,797 juniors who

participated in MyGolf in 2018/2019, fewer than 25 percent were female.

Research shows that many girls prefer an all-female participation experience when playing and learning the game. In fact, 70 percent of participants from MyGolf Girls programs in 2018 reported they prefer to play and learn with other girls. Despite this, throughout 2019 just 4.5 percent of MyGolf programs offered by local MyGolf centres were MyGolf Girls.

Most other sports offer female-only learning and playing experiences, so it is vital that golf adopts this approach to remain competitive.

The following two case studies outline the amazing job both Joondalup Resort Golf Academy in Western Australia and Gove Country GC in the Northern Territory are doing in this space.

Learn more about MyGolf Girls via www.golf.org.au

Age, gender and ability appropriate entry level and participation pathway opportunities

JOONDALUP RESORT GOLF ACADEMY, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Our philosophy is to give children a fun experience



PGA Instructor, Ackzel having some fun with MyGolf Girls

The Club:

The Joondalup Golf Academy runs out of the 27-championship course Joondalup Golf Course and resort. The course is located 28km north of Perth CBD, is public access and has an onsite café, restaurant, hotel and function centre.

Local Demographic:

- Population: 3,641 in Connolly
- Median age: 44 (national average 38)
- Children aged 0-14 years: 16.1% of the population (average 18.7%)
- People aged 65+ years: 14.9% (average 15.8%)

- People born in Australia: 45.3% (average 66.7%)
- Full-time workers: 54.2% of the population (average 57.7%)
- Part-time workers: 34.5% (average 30.4%)
- Median household weekly income: \$2,198 (average \$1,438)

The Story:

Ackzel Donaldson, PGA Professional at Joondalup Resort Golf Academy in Perth, has a happy problem: "Having lots of girls in our MyGolf program, we found ourselves in the position to create all-girls classes."

Ackzel knows the strategy the club is implementing is working and helping to attract new juniors.

The club currently runs two MyGolf Girls programs per week (one for girls aged 5-8, the other for those 9+). Along with a suite of mixed MyGolf programs, and his Junior Academy, coaching juniors now comprises 90% of Ackzel's business.

So how did Joondalup find itself with lots of girls? What prompted the club to set up all-girls programs and what impact has this had on girls' participation?

This case study will provide you with key tips and learnings to help you establish a successful MyGolf Girls program at your club.

Challenges and Solutions:

Like many clubs, Joondalup's junior membership comprises a smaller number of elite players, mainly boys. "We do not have the depth of new entry-level players, especially girls," Ackzel said. "Our course is quite difficult to play, and the price point has also been a deterrent to junior participation in the past."

“People want a soft entry to golf.**”**

Since starting his club contract just nine months ago, Ackzel and his team have been busy implementing changes to attract more juniors.

The key to their success is attributable to one main strategy – free weekly trial sessions. "People want a soft entry to golf. Parents are hesitant to commit to a full coaching program if they are unsure their child will enjoy it. We want to take away barriers to participation as well as create a fun and vibrant family atmosphere at the club. Therefore, we give children and families the opportunity to come and try our program, firstly at no cost."



A budding young golfer proudly displaying her scorecard

“Our philosophy is to give children a fun experience. We spruce golf up with games, music and prizes.**”**

Each Saturday morning, Ackzel and an assistant coach run the free "come and try" program for girls and boys aged 5-12. These children have access to five free classes before committing to a paid program.

"Whilst we don't generate an immediate income from the trial program, this has acted as a great business tool in terms of advertising and recruitment," Ackzel said. His return on investment is:

- Attracting 30-40 children per week which creates a fun, family atmosphere around the club
- Seeing the club café is full each Saturday morning
- The pro shop generating more business with parents buying practice range balls for themselves and purchasing junior equipment.



Girls proudly wearing their crazy socks

“In terms of a person’s first impression and experience of our club, this is the perfect scenario!” he beams.

“ I think the key is people are more likely to take the next step as we have already built a relationship with the child and family”

“Our philosophy is to give children a fun experience. We spruce golf up with games, music and prizes. The free trials have created a large base of children that now funnel into paid programs, including many girls.

“I think the key is people are more likely to take the next step as we have already built a relationship with the child and family. They have also spent time at the club and feel comfortable in our environment.”

“ We have seen them open up and be more themselves in the all-girls classes”

Seeing many girls come through the trial program, Ackzel started offering MyGolf girls programs.

“ ...these girls are tending to develop their skills at a higher and quicker rate and are staying longer in our programs”

“We began because it helps keep girls playing - especially with girls aged 10+. We have seen them open up and be more themselves in the all-girls classes. In general, the girls have more in common with each other and develop friendships, plus they tend to have more confidence to give things a go. Compared to a girl who may be the minority in a mixed sex class, these girls are tending to develop their skills at a higher and quicker rate and are staying longer in our programs.

“Now that we have all-girls’ classes on offer, they sell themselves. Word of mouth has been extremely powerful and those girls participating are bringing along their friends.”

The rise in girls' numbers has not just been organic. Ackzel, an energetic and vibrant 30-year-old coach, has ensured the girls (and mixed sex) programs engage and appeal to children.

Along with playing music, singing songs, dancing and joking around with his pupils, Ackzel implements a weekly theme to each class. "Themes we have executed are crazy sock week, beat the parents (where we get the parents to join in on challenges) and 'bring-a-friend' sessions," he said.

"The 'bring-a-friend' works particularly well as it gets children recruiting for us! At our last girls' session, we had the 12 girls bring along 12 of their friends. Suddenly, we had 24 girls playing golf! Our ethos is to show the girls a fun time and provide them with clear information on how they can continue to participate. It is too soon to tell, but I sense we will see some of these girls return."



High fives all round!

Learning:

- Think outside the box, go against the grain – we need to try new concepts to grow our game
- The free trial concept has worked very well and can easily be adopted at other clubs
- Spruce up golf. Play music, sing and dance – do whatever you can to build a fun association for kids with golf.
- Engaging a young coach may also be a good way to build a rapport with children. Do this through the Community Instructor program.

- Offer MyGolf Girls programs. This is definitely a good way to engage and retain girls in golf.
- It is not just the right thing to do, juniors make good business sense. "You can charge \$100 for a one-hour private lesson or have six juniors paying \$30 for the hour. Not to mention the families children bring along," Ackzel says.
- Access MyGolf Girls marketing resources through Golf Australia. Upon activating a MyGolf Girls program via the MyGolf website, your club will have access to posters, brochures, media release template and digital assets.

Learn more about MyGolf Girls at www.golf.org.au



Age, gender and ability appropriate entry level and participation pathway opportunities

GOVE COUNTRY GOLF CLUB, NORTHERN TERRITORY

Bucking the trend - we have more girls than boys!

The Club:

Known as Australia's top golf course, Gove Country Golf Club (GC), is Australia's most northern based golf club. Situated in the north-eastern corner of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory, the club is over 1,000km from the closest capital city, Darwin. The public access course and club is primarily run by volunteers and has no PGA Professional nor General Manager on site.

The club has a total of 85 members (21% being female) and 51 junior members (49% female).

Local Demographic:

- Population: 3,240 in Nhulunbuy region
- Median age: 32 (national average 38)
- Children aged 0-14 years: 27.7% of the population (average 18.7%)
- People aged 65+ years: 4% (average 15.8%)
- People born in Australia: 69.1% (average 66.7%)
- Full-time workers: 71.1% of the population (average 57.7%)
- Part-time workers: 18.2% (average 30.4%)
- Median household weekly income: \$2,152 (average \$1,438)

The Story:

There are not many places where you can find as many girls hitting the golf course as boys, but that's not the case at Gove Country GC since the launch of MyGolf Girls.

"MyGolf Girls is definitely a very successful model. I would recommend it as you can just pick it up and run with it," stated Esther Rika, a dedicated volunteer who runs MyGolf at Gove GC.



MyGolf girl participants hit the golf course!

The club has experienced great success with MyGolf over the years having attracted up to 400 boys and girls to its programs since 2011. Recently, however, Esther noticed that numbers were starting to stagnate.



For the first time, we had more girls than boys participating in MyGolf

"Golf Australia approached us about running an all-girls MyGolf pilot program and we thought, 'Why not try things a bit differently?'. This format has proved to be extremely successful for us.

"For the first time, we had more girls than boys participating in MyGolf – that is 22 girls and 20 boys registered for our Term 1, 2018 programs, which was a record for our junior club.

On average, our junior girls' participation across all programs for 2019 has been approximately 50% overall."

Esther says this initial success was because of a new and attractive product being offered for

“Not many of our girls in mixed programs transferred to the all-girls options, we instead attracted a whole new audience.”

girls. “Not many of our girls in mixed programs transferred to the all-girls options, we instead attracted a whole new audience.”

Gove GC was supplied with girl centric MyGolf marketing material. The club made great use of these resources, plastering posters around the local noticeboards and schools, as well as actively promoting online.

“More girls are participating in the all-girls class than mixed. I think the girls enjoy having their own time slot and space where they can create a positive environment,”

One year on, the MyGolf Girls program offered on a Thursday after school continues to be a popular option. “More girls are participating in the all-girls class than mixed. I think the girls enjoy having their own time slot and space where they can create a positive environment,” Esther said.

Aiming to progress the girls’ development, Gove GC runs its MyGolf program so that on each alternate week, the girls play a couple of holes. The club prices the program to include membership, so every MyGolf participant automatically becomes a junior member ... this being \$36 per year plus MyGolf registration (\$50 per term).

“We then finish off the year with a big celebratory day,” Esther said. “We invite all children who have participated in MyGolf throughout the year to come and play a set number of holes (depending on their age and ability), followed by an awards

presentation. Even the five-year olds get out and play three 100m holes!”

While the club has done a fantastic job implementing the MyGolf Girls program, it has not come without its challenges, especially one year on....

Challenges and Solutions:

“We have recently experienced a decline in numbers,” explained Esther.

“Many of our younger girls are wanting to try a variety of sports, so we may lose them for some time. Or, if we are not offering a fun enough experience and being strategic with the timing of our program, we will lose them for good to the likes of dance, gymnastics and swimming.

“An added challenge is the fact we have wet and dry seasons. Many people try and cram their sport for the year into the dry season, so sport is an extra competitive space in our region.”

“The girls have been fantastic role models to the younger girls. They have both done their Community Instructor training and are not only helping to coach our beginners but inspiring them to become the next generation of female golfers.”

With the introduction of a new gymnastics program in town, the club is currently revising its Thursday 4pm timeslot.

“Continuing to be proactive with our marketing and recruitment as well as having volunteers to help run our programs has also been a challenge. Like most community sports, if you have one or two people championing and driving participation, your program will usually succeed. They key is, however, to engage a wider base of volunteers so that no one burns out.”



MyGolf graduates help younger girls to get started in golf

Sisters Katelyn (17 years) and Naomi (15 years) Esther, first learnt golf through MyGolf at the club. They are now helping out with the MyGolf Girls program at Gove. "The girls have been fantastic role models to the younger girls. They have both done their Community Instructor training and are not only helping to coach our beginners but inspiring them to become the next generation of female golfers."

Learning:

- To expand your volunteer base, engage older juniors at the club.
- Do your research. Before setting up a program, map what other recreational and sporting activities are on offer to girls around your community.
- Try not to run your program simultaneously with other popular sports for girls such as netball, dance, callisthenics and swimming. In fact, approach these clubs to see if you can develop an inter-sports relationship.

- If you are seeing girls drop out of your programs, make sure you ask why and take on their feedback.
- Access MyGolf Girls marketing resources through Golf Australia. Upon activating a MyGolf Girls program via the MyGolf website, your club will have access to posters, brochures, media release template and digital assets.

Learn more about MyGolf Girls at www.golf.org.au



Age, gender and ability appropriate entry level and participation pathway opportunities

COUNTRY GIRLS PLAY GOLF GROUP, VICTORIA

A win-win for small clubs and country women

Local Demographic:

The East Gippsland district is in south-eastern Victoria, approximately a 3-hour drive from Melbourne. It covers an area of 41,556 square kilometres and spans about 300km x 200km. There are more than 46,000 people in the area with a median age of 50 (national average 38).

- Children aged 0-14 years: 15.9% of the population (average 18.7%)
- People aged 65+ years: 28.2% (average 15.8%)
- People born in Australia: 83.7% (average 66.7%)
- Full-time workers: 47.4% of the population (average 57.7%)
- Part-time workers: 41.1% (average 30.4%)

The Story:

“There is an opportunity to play if you want to play.” This was the ethos behind Tania Holmes’ enthusiasm to create opportunities for working women and schoolgirls to play competition golf with other women and girls on weekends.

“ We played with the men for some time but did think it would also be nice to play with other women.”

In 2017, Tania, who works full-time at a local school, was frustrated that the weekly women’s competitions and honour board events were only conducted on weekdays when she was unable to play.



Country Girls Play Golf launch event at South Pines Golf Club

“The men invited my friend and I to join them on a Saturday, which was really lovely,” Tania said.

“We played with the men for some time but did think it would also be nice to play with other women. That is where we came up with the interclub ‘Country Girls Play Golf’ concept.

“The group initially developed quite organically. Rather than base ourselves at one club, I wanted to engage numerous clubs and their female members around the region. So, with the promise that I would organise where we would play, I phoned lady captains from local golf clubs and asked them to extend the invite to their members to come together and play on a Saturday once a month.

“As women were already paying membership at their clubs, my aim was to keep playing opportunities affordable.”

Tania’s other main aims for this group were to:

- Create a social environment and foster friendships between clubs; and
- Provide women with the opportunity to play stroke rounds because this is rarely offered to women at weekends.

This case study outlines how Tania successfully:

- Connected female golfers in the region;
- Created opportunities for competition golf for women together at weekends; and
- Generated increased revenue for smaller clubs in the region.

Challenges and Solutions:

“The first step was to recruit local golf clubs to provide tee times and lunch on a Saturday. It has been a challenge to involve the bigger clubs in our region as their Saturday timeslots are already busy, plus they also tend to be more stringent with the format we play,” Tania said.

“I have found that it has been easier to engage the smaller clubs in the region – plus it’s a win-

win for them. There are usually between 15-20 of us looking for a round of golf and lunch. This has given us the ability to negotiate an affordable price for our girls, but at the same time has been a good way to create additional revenue for our smaller and often quieter country clubs. Currently four golf clubs host our events spanning a 1.5-hour drive (just over 100km between them).

“Another challenge has been promoting our competitions and recruiting new women to play. It can be difficult to get your message through to members from other clubs as often messages will be lost in translation.”

To combat this, Tania runs a Facebook group among which information is shared and events promoted. “We currently have 122 members in this group; it really isn’t an onerous task administering this, nor organising the events,” she said.



We have found that having a collective group of women gives us more of a voice to speak up.”

“I try not to ‘own’ the group too much, but instead empower others to take more of a leadership role within the group or their own clubs.”

Each month, Tania picks a different member to conduct the presentations. “This is good training for women who may someday like to become a club captain or sit on a committee.

“We also realise that while we are currently catering for a group of established female golfers, we need to continuously develop new players in the region. We have therefore organised a women’s beginner golf clinic to run on four consecutive Saturdays. The clinic booked out very quickly, demonstrating that there’s an appetite for weekend golf for women.

“We will work with this group to develop their skills and assist them to start playing on course. From here, we are looking at introducing a 9-hole social format into our Country Girls Play Golf group as a pathway for these beginners. We hope that with our support, these women may become members at one of our local clubs someday.”

While Tania has created a good model for women to play weekend competition on a monthly basis, the group’s next aim is to create more regular weekend playing opportunities.



In the past year, our Country Girls Play Golf group has contributed an additional \$3,500 to clubs in our region”

“We have found that having a collective group of women gives us more of a voice to speak up,” Tania said.

“For years, our local clubs have run annual tournaments which are a lot of fun but once again, working women do not have the ability to participate in a singles event (usually only mixed events are offered on a Sunday following a men’s day on a Saturday). The group has been successful in advocating for change, so now clubs are starting to offer competition for women alongside the men on the Saturday of their tournaments.

“I have also been working with my club to make changes so that women who are unable to participate in our club championships and other honour board events during the week can play. We are in the process of adopting Golf Australia’s multi-day club championship format.

“In the past year, our Country Girls Play Golf group has contributed an additional \$3,500 to clubs in our region. This demonstrates the benefits that are not only enjoyed by women when opening weekend play opportunities, but also to regional golf club economies.”

Learning:

- Country Girls Play Golf can be a good concept to adopt in other regional areas of Australia where there is a general lack of female golfers.
- It has been a good way to connect small numbers of women at smaller clubs with a larger group of women.
- It generates extra revenue and patronage at smaller clubs
- Having a collective voice, women can advocate for further change, such as new local tournament formats.
- It is important to not only support pre-existing female golfers with access to weekend competition, but also to provide opportunities for working women and schoolgirls to start golf, too.

Engage female coaches at your venue

BRIDPORT GOLF CLUB, TASMANIA

*Building confidence and skills to coach golf –
become a Community Golf Instructor!*



Recruited from the local bar! Swing Fit participants

The Club:

Bridport Golf Club (GC) provides a picturesque nine-hole golf course in Bridport, 75km north of Launceston. The public access course is volunteer run and has no resident PGA Professional.

Local Demographic:

- Population: 1,568
- Median age: 48 (national average 38)
- Children aged 0-14 years: 15.7% of the population (average 18.7%)
- People aged 65+ years: 26.9% (average 15.8%)
- People born in Australia: 88.2% (average 66.7%)
- Full-time workers: 55.1% of the population (average 57.7%)
- Part-time workers: 34.3% (average 30.4%)
- Median household weekly income: \$969 (average \$1,438)

Background:

Community Instructors play an integral role in the delivery of national golf participation programs such as MyGolf and Get into Golf. These programs are fundamental in attracting and introducing new people to a facility and provide a pathway to increasing community involvement and membership at clubs.

The benefits of having a Community Instructor at your golf club include ...

Clubs with PGA Professionals

Even if your club has a PGA Professional, Community Instructors can still be an invaluable asset. PGA Professionals can use trained Community Instructors to support and assist with the delivery of programs at the club or in local schools. This can significantly reduce the workload and pressure on the PGA Professional, as well as increase the capacity the club has to host more programs, therefore increasing not only participation and revenue, but visitation (i.e. parents and carers, friends and family) and potential membership opportunities.

Clubs without PGA Professionals

Without a PGA Professional, clubs may not have the capacity and resources to deliver national participation programs which significantly limits its exposure within the local community. Clubs could encourage their members to acquire Community Instructor accreditation to deliver these programs, or there may already be a qualified Community Instructor in the area who may be looking to get involved with the club.

The Story:

When you think about powerhouses of golf, the names Hannah Green or Adam Scott may come to mind. Let us introduce to you a powerhouse from Tasmania's north-east – Mandy Hall.

Mandy, a club member at Bridport GC and local schoolteacher, has 'get up and go' to burn.

Mandy only started golf five years ago, but in that time has joined a club, become secretary, gone on numerous golfing trips, obtained her Community Instructor accreditation and started running junior and women's golf clinics!

"I got into golf over a wine at our local community club," Mandy said. "Every Friday night the locals in Bridport know, if you feel like a drink and a chat just head on down. This is where I got speaking to a lady who played golf. She suggested I have a go, so I did!"

With a background playing hockey, Mandy quickly took to golf and started enjoying playing on a regular basis, balancing it with her teaching career and gig as a swimming coach.



Girl Guides earning their sporting badge through MyGolf Girls!

“

That's when I thought if I can teach the whole north-east population to swim, I can teach them how to play golf, too! This was when my life took a new and exciting direction.”

Then in March 2019, Golf Australia's Vision 2025 roadshow came to Launceston – and, naturally, Mandy was one of the attendees.

“The roadshow planted a seed in my head. Teaching children is a passion of mine and I was enjoying playing golf. That's when I thought if I can teach the whole north-east population to swim, I can teach them how to play golf, too! This was when my life took a new and exciting direction.”

Mandy completed her Community Instructor accreditation and encouraged some friends at the golf club to do the same.

“It is good to have a team of people so you can coach together or cover if someone is unavailable,” she said.

“I have good connections with four of the local schools, so I went and spoke at school assemblies, handed out flyers and recruited children that way. We ran our first MyGolf program for 15 children in Term 3 and it was great! There were not many girls enrolled, however, and we then realised that our program clashed with the local girl guides' program each Monday night.

“Coincidentally I then learned that part of the girl guides' program includes earning a sporting badge. I approached the club and offered to run MyGolf for the girls and they agreed. So we swapped our current MyGolf to another school night and ran a two-week program for the group of 11 girl guides.

“Some of the girls now want to continue to play golf which is fantastic. Funnily enough, they need

to learn how to pitch a tent in the meantime, so we will re-engage them in our school holiday MyGolf program.”

In addition to the MyGolf after-school program, Mandy and her team have been involved in the MyGolf sporting schools' program (running clinics at schools) and have also organised various come-and-try days.

It was back at the Bridport Community Club for a well-earned Friday night drink when Mandy started talking about the coaching she had been doing.

“One woman said she would like to give golf a go. Because I had the Vision 2025 thought in my head, along with the confidence in my ability to coach through the Community Instructor course, I thought, ‘Why not run a women's clinic, too?’”

“

It has been really exciting having new people at the club and coaching women has been really fun.”

“Within five minutes I had recruited an additional six women from the bar and as a result, we are now running a women's entry program each Sunday. These six women quickly grew to 10 through word of mouth which can be an extremely powerful recruitment tool, especially in country towns.

“It has been really exciting having new people at the club and coaching women has been really fun.”

Looking ahead, Mandy and the team are now setting up MyGolf holiday clinics along with a program to get women's clinic graduates out on course.

Mandy has been very noble with her approach to grassroots development: “The best part of my experience has been when you see your beginner student hit a really nice ball and how excited they get. It is very rewarding.”

Challenges and Solutions:

“Because Liz (another Community Instructor) and I are still rather new to golf, some people have questioned our ability and suitability to coach. The Community Instructor course has been influential in building my confidence and skills to coach golf. Not only have I gained official accreditation to coach at a beginner level, having accessed the MyGolf, MyGolf Schools and women’s clinic modules, I have learned how to coach golf in an extremely fun and engaging, games-based way. In fact, we have had comments from people saying they have never seen golf taught that way before and were amazed at how well the children connected and enjoyed their experience.”

Learning:

- You don’t have to be an experienced, or even a good golfer to teach beginners. Access Golf Australia’s Community Instructor program and learn how you can teach the game in a fun and interactive way.
- Encourage others to complete Community Instructor training to build a team of coaches in your local area. If there is a local PGA Professional, team up with them to guide beginners into more advanced coaching once they are ready.
- Making contact and building relationships with local schools, sports and community clubs can be a great starting point in increasing junior participation.
- Schools can apply for government funding every school term through the Sporting Schools’ program where they can book a primary or secondary school golf program that can be delivered by a PGA Professional or Community Instructor
- Your Golf Australia State Participation Manager is an excellent resource. They can assist you with training and establishing participation programs at your club.



One of Bridport’s Community Golf Instructors assists MyGolf participant

Sign-up to Golf Australia’s national participation programs - including Get into Golf, MyGolf, Sporting Schools and the Community Golf Instructor program via www.golf.org.au

**Community
Instructor**



Even Par Program

NORTHERN GOLF CLUB, VICTORIA

An all-club approach for effective culture change

The Club:

Northern Golf Club (GC) is situated in Melbourne's North-West just 15km's from the city CBD. The 18-hole course is set among beautiful river red gums on over 140 acres of land in the heart of multi-cultural Glenroy. The club is open to members and the public and has a PGA Professional and General Manager onsite. The club's membership base comprises of 814 core members, 13% being female.

Local Demographic:

- Population: 22,107 in Glenroy suburb
- Median age: 34 (national average 38)
- Children aged 0-14 years: 17.6% of the population (average 18.7%)
- People aged 65+ years: 16% (average 15.8%)
- People born in Australia: 49.2% (average 66.7%)
- Full-time workers: 55.5% of the population (average 57.7%)
- Part-time workers: 30.4% (average 30.4%)
- Median household weekly income: \$833 (average \$1,438)

Background:

Even Par is Golf Australia's Vision 2025 club support program that aims to enhance the capacity of Australian golf clubs and their leaders to facilitate greater gender equality for their members and community.

This club support program comprises a four-part workshop series and is a key deliverable in Golf Australia's "Vision 2025: the future of women and girls in golf" national strategy.

Workshops provide golf clubs with:

- A greater understanding of the ignore impact of gender inequality within sports clubs on members, their families and the broader community;
- The relationship between gender inequality and its impact on women's and men's health and wellbeing, including the prevention of violence against women; and,
- The power of sporting organisations to create greater gender equality in the broader community and positively impact the lives their members and their families and communities.

Clubs are provided with ongoing support to:

- Review existing policies and practices;
- Identify opportunities to create greater gender equality; and,
- Develop, implement and evaluate actions to facilitate gender equality.

The Story:

In terms of creating opportunities for women in all aspects of golf, Northern GC is attacking on all fronts.



Even Par has given us a clear pathway. It has given us guidance on how to go about certain things and made us (the club) accountable - this has helped us to engage many facets of the club."



Attracting younger women to golf through the state-based 'This Girl Can' campaign.

Women's Captain and board member Helen Moloney and fellow member Bev Leyden have been on a mission to stop the decline of female participation in golf for several years.

"In fact, we already had a female participation committee (previously called women's recruitment committee) established before reading about Vision 2025," Bev said.

"After learning about Vision 2025, we approached Golf Australia to seek advice about how we could enhance the work we were doing and then became part of Even Par.

"Even Par has given us a clear pathway. It has given us guidance on how to go about certain things and made us (the club) accountable - this has helped us to engage many facets of the club."

The club has created an implementation strategy to get more women playing golf and create more opportunities for women in leadership roles within the club.

These focus areas are:

1. Creating a gender balance in decision making
2. Retaining current female members
3. Improved female participation pathway
4. Improved marketing and social media presence for women

This case study outlines the work Northern GC is doing along with challenges, tips and learnings they have experienced.

Challenges and Solutions:

"Because our club is addressing gender equality from many angles, it has been important to connect with people from different areas of our club and delegate tasks," Bev said.

"Our women's committee is leading the 'keep in touch' project to retain members. The decline of weekly participation of members can easily go unnoticed, so we want to ensure we are aware of why someone might stop playing and try to re-engage them.

“Because our club is addressing gender equality from many angles, it has been important to connect with people from different areas of our club and delegate tasks,”

"We are also creating more opportunities for members to socialise and feel a part of the club. One of our members now organises a monthly winery tour which has been very popular; we

have card games following golf on a Tuesday; and another member has started an online blog to share information and foster online friendships.

“All these activities are used to keep our members connected as friendships are what often keep women in the game.”

Many clubs do not have the resources (staff or time) to run an effective social media marketing campaign along with keeping the club’s website updated. To combat this, Northern GC has engaged one of its members with experience in online marketing to assist.

“We have found that while some women may not have the time nor interest to sit on boards and committees, they are willing to contribute their skills to specific tasks. This has been another great way to get more women involved in our club and working together to achieve our Vision 2025 goals.”

It has not only been club members working on Northern GC’s Vision 2025 goals, paid staff and external organisations are also involved.



This has been a learning for us, we now need to work on developing a pool of women who feel confident and capable to put their hands up for a board position.”

“We have a fantastic front-of-house staff member (Kim) who actively promotes our beginner women’s clinics by displaying information and encouraging any new women that comes through our doors to get involved,” Bev said.

The club has also engaged Tamara Mason, Female Sports Participation Officer from Moreland City Council to sit on the club’s female participation committee.

“She has been a wealth of knowledge and it has been really beneficial to foster a close working relationship between council and our club.

“Our General Manager and board are also very supportive of what we do. It is important for our club to have a male champion of change who is in a decision-making position. In fact, Peter Randles who is our board President and also sits on our female participation committee, advocated to get more women on the club’s board.



It is important that we service the needs of our customers”

“Peter instigated the proposal for two women to be seconded onto the board should no women be elected. This motion was passed and written into the club’s constitution. As a result, one woman (Helen Moloney) now sits on the board.

“This has been a learning for us, we now need to work on developing a pool of women who feel confident and capable to put their hands up for a board position.”

In a bid to attract and introduce more women to golf, the club aims to enhance its female participation pathway, Bev said.

“We tapped into the state-based campaign ‘This Girl Can’ that promotes women and girls getting involved in sport and exercise. We used this campaign to help promote two recent women’s beginner golf clinics.

“We had a wonderful response attracting more than 30 women! We have since added another clinic attracting a further eight women in their 20s!

“These clinics would not have been possible without the generous support and expertise provided by our head professional Heath Bensted and his pro shop team.”

Now Northern GC has engaged these women, the club's next step is to ensure its pathways meet their needs. Questions that will be asked include:

- What would make you come back?
- Are you satisfied with our offering?
- What would you like us to now offer you?

"It is important that we service the needs of our customers," Bev said.

"Our current offer includes a get-on-course program (run by our PGA Professional) and a temporary membership to help progress women into club membership.

"This membership (\$99 for 3 months or \$400 for the year) gives women seven-day course access and has been an extremely successful recruitment tool for us.

"The introduction of this membership has only gained acceptance over time. It is a heavily subsidised membership and some of our full-fee members were frustrated they could not access this rate.

"But, over time, members have seen the benefits of new women playing and eventually becoming full members. They also really enjoy the vibrancy the new – and often younger – women bring to the club."

"There has been a lot of positive changes at the club during the past few years, but it all takes time. We are looking forward to seeing more success come from our Vision 2025 and Even Par projects".

Learning:

- It is important to have an all-club approach to create effective cultural change.
- Some people may have a certain skill set they are willing to use to help your Vision 2025 strategy. Create opportunities for people at the club to contribute these skills.
- Ensure staff at your club and pro shop are informed about female participation opportunities and actively promote these.
- Tap into external resources such as your local council and state or national campaigns.
- It is important to not only create opportunities for women to sit on boards, but to empower women to have the confidence and skills to do so before they get there.
- Offer non-golf social activities to help foster friendships and create a social environment at your club. This helps to retain members.
- Ask your new customers (beginner golfers) what experience and support they are looking for at your club and design a pathway accordingly.

For more information on Even Par visit

www.golf.org.au

Sign-up to Golf Australia's national participation programs - including Get into Golf, MyGolf and the Community Golf Instructor program via

www.golf.org.au



Funding and support for the development and delivery of the Even Par club support program was provided by the Victorian Government as part of their Gender Equality in Victorian Sport and Recreation Pilot Program



Vision 2025

