

### Course Update March 2009

Currently the course is experiencing some good rain with 50mm (2 inches) falling this month to date. The previous 2 months 10mm fell and combined with an average daily temperature of 32 degrees the course was under enormous pressure.

Water supply is critical during the summer periods and especially during the grow in of a golf course and our supply was halved due to Melbourne waters river flow policy where all water users are required by law to restrict pumping to maintain the health of the Yarra River.

To comply with we had to restrict our output or we faced trucking in water at a very large expense to the club. The management plan for our water prioritized all putting surfaces and immediate surrounds while tees and fairways received up to 70% less of daily requirements and at some stages fairways did not receive any water depending on the 3<sup>rd</sup> 9 holes requirements.

Rough lines and the practice fairway watering programs were sacrificed to allow us to maintain storage levels and good conditions for play remembering the course is less than 12 months old and grass maturity is yet to be achieved.

Growing in the 3<sup>rd</sup> 9 holes under heavy water restrictions has slowed the growth we would normally expect but given the extreme conditions the final 9 holes is progressing well.

As you will have seen drought cracks have appeared throughout the site mostly where turf has not yet covered or Irrigation is minimal.

As most of the course had large amounts of soil moved throughout construction, movement and settling will occur especially in long hot dry periods.

We will be topdressing and grassing these areas and overtime they will not be an issue.

Weed control and the large amounts of weeds on the site is part of the ongoing management plan of the course. Being an existing farm site with little or no weed control programs a heavy weed burden in the soil was always going to be part of any maintenance program.

The site underwent many extreme changes and applying water and fertility to the site combined with turning the soil over was the perfect ingredient to weed production.

The key to weed eradication is timing and the use of herbicides using best practice.

We are in a very sensitive area within the Yarra Valley with Grapes and water ways surrounding us along with our new and very young turf and landscape.

This program is currently underway and will continue until we have completed it to a level we can be satisfied with.

Turf quality on this site continues to improve and careful management of the soil is critical in achieving this.

With low Ph and low organic content on most parts of the site modifying soils will also take time to achieve.

Once again this is part of a maintenance program and we will see the turf areas further improve.

Bunkers will also continue to improve as we settle in to maintaining the course and over winter we will spend time fine tuning sand depth and turfing those areas that struggled during the grow-in stage.

Landscape will continue to evolve as we move forward and to think this site had barely any trees and shrubs on it to start with and see it now after 18 months of planting generates excitement to see it in a further 18 months.

The walnut trees are progressing very well with excellent growth and most of the root stock has now been budded with the grafts from specific walnut tree varieties.

We currently have a unique golf course that is continually improving and the foundations have been set to be truly a standout course that will be the envy of clubs around Melbourne and beyond in the near future.

**Gary Bass**  
Course Manager.