

# Croquet Victoria

## Annual Report 2015/2016

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# The Victorian Croquet Association Inc.

## **Croquet Victoria: Supporting members to play and enjoy the sport of croquet.**

The Victorian Croquet Association, trading as Croquet Victoria, is a not-for profit, volunteer State Sporting Association formed and incorporated in 1914. The Association purchased a property in North Brighton in 1948 as its headquarters and playing venue.

In 2002 the Association sold its North Brighton headquarters to provide funds for a new headquarters at Cairnlea in Melbourne's Western Suburbs, to provide financial security for the future, and to fund a full time Administration Officer.

Croquet Victoria is a service provider for 2690 members belonging to 90 clubs in 13 Regional Associations throughout Victoria and southern NSW, with a club forecast to close during April 2016. The members are the stakeholders.

State Council, consisting of 13 Regional Directors and 8 Committee of Management Directors administers the Association. Volunteer members and committees provide a range of services to members whose core activity is to play a range of games socially and competitively.

The key executives are mostly retirees with experience in business, club and regional administration. The services to members include training coaches and referees, organising tournaments, maintaining a handicap system, communicating with members through the Website, *Malletsports Victoria* magazine, and developing policies to ensure member protection & effective business systems.

Croquet Victoria's customers are men and women aged between 8 and 80+ who are students, people in employment, and retirees.

The Association is competing against a growing list of sports and recreational activities. Croquet's advantages are that membership is very affordable, men and women play with and against each other, and participants have four versions of the game that can be easily mastered. Croquet is a non-contact sport where the games involve hitting a stationary ball, not a moving ball, and where members can choose to play socially or competitively.

## **President's Report:** *Mike Cohn*

Croquet Victoria had another good year in elite competition. Victoria regained the Interstate Association Croquet Teams Championship (Eire Cup), and retained the Interstate Golf Croquet Teams Championship (WCF Shield).

Congratulations to all our leading players.

Overall membership increased, especially in Golf Croquet, which has been a financial saviour to many clubs. However, there is a major concern that the croquet population is aging. Most clubs seem to have an average age of over 70

Croquet Victoria had recognised that its Strategic Plan was written largely to suit the wishes of the Sport and Recreation Department. New officers there recognised that the plan was far too demanding for an association of our size. A streamlined Strategic Plan was developed and approved by Council. A major focus of the plan is to focus on recruitment in the 30-60 year age group sector.

Council had determined that in future our Constitution should facilitate an elected Board structure for management, rather than the current two-tiered arrangement of Council and Committee of Management. A revised Constitution was prepared for acceptance at a vote at a Special General Meeting in April 2016. (*Note: The revised Constitution was not accepted at that meeting.*)

Croquet Victoria has accepted the opportunity to host the 2017 WCF World Golf Croquet Championships in February 2017. This will be a major event, requiring 23 courts, and a working group has been formed to prepare for a successful tournament.

The Victorian Croquet Centre is a great venue for major competitions. Catering during tournaments continues to be managed by an external company. Players and volunteers have been complimentary about the food served at tournaments. Linda Brushfield continues in her role as key Barperson, taking the lead role in serving at functions.

Throughout the year, I have been helped by a band of hard-working volunteers.

Secretary Jim Clement has been a power of strength and support for six years, working hard for the interests of Croquet Victoria. Due to limitations on the length of tenure required by the Constitution, he must retire from this role at the 2016 Annual General Meeting. His dedication and expertise in Governance has set a high standard for his replacement.

Vice-President, Kenn Boal, brought great experience and retired from the position in June 2015 to be replaced by Kate Patrick. Brian Rowe has brought strong business experience to the role of Treasurer and has adapted quickly. Jim Saunders, Gwen Hamilton (to June 2015), Wilma Freeman, Trish Watts and Serena Cevaal-Hewitt (since June 2015) have all contributed well to the Committee of Management. Our Administrator, Sandra Kastanaras, has continued to be the centre of all administrative matters in Croquet Victoria, and takes on the role of de facto Victorian Croquet Centre manager. Our Caretaker at VCC, Lubi Bosevska, who does not have a croquet background, continues to keep the centre immaculately clean; everyone appreciates her efforts and her friendly manner.

Brian Reither has continued to manage ACA events held at VCC. John Grieve has performed well managing VCA Association Croquet events, and chairing the Fixtures and Tournament Committees. Lorraine Gutcher, Jim Saunders and Jim Clement have all taken turns with managing Golf Croquet events. Kevin Beard has assisted. Phillip Brown managed Gateball. Thank you, all.

Brian Foley and John van der Touw oversaw the coordination of referees in Association Croquet and Golf Croquet respectively.

John Grieve, Lorraine Gutcher and Phillip Brown have been enthusiastic State Coordinators of Association Croquet, Golf Croquet and Gateball respectively. James Hood, Greenkeeper, has the courts in magnificent condition, and Jim Saunders continues keenly in the role of Director responsible for the Courts. Brian Rowe has assisted with the management of maintenance projects on building. Various people, including Brian Reither, Stephen Forster, Kevin Beard, Marie Calthorpe, John Grieve, Chas Quinn and others, have ensured that the courts are ready for use. Doron Gunzburg, Neville Pope and Ian McKee have been responsible for Handicapping. Stephen Forster, John van der Touw and Eric O'Donnell undertook the coaching of the State and Development Squads.

Our magazine, *MalletSports Victoria*, continues to be edited by Rosalie Newman and printed locally. Jean Deacon continued to ensure distribution after the magazine is printed. The arrangement is working well.

Gareth Bushill has managed the website in his usual enthusiastic manner. A lot of enhancements have been made.

Of course, there are many others who have made the year successful. Directors, many of whom travel far, devote much time in meetings for Croquet Victoria. Furthermore, there have been many referees and assistants, plus the members of the various sub-committees. Thank you all.

## **Secretary's Report:** *Jim Clement*

This is my final report as Secretary, as I will complete the maximum allowable six years in the position at the completion of the AGM.

I wish to record my thanks to Mike Cohn who, as President, gave me my head on many matters, only tugging on the reins when he thought I was going too far. Mike and I had evening phone calls to keep each other up to date on an average of five days of each week. If the phone didn't ring between 5 and 6 pm for 3 or more evenings, my wife would ask if Mike was away!

I also wish to publicly thank Sandra Kastanaras who, as Administrator, has taken much of the load that my predecessor, George Latham, carried, especially in regard to the meeting of day to day requirements of our clubs and individual members.

Thanks go also to my fellow members of the Committee of Management and to Appointed Officers and Sub-committee members who, over the six years of my incumbency, have worked hard to ensure the smooth running of all aspects of Croquet Victoria and our sport.

As I recorded in my Annual Report last year, my aim as Secretary was to make the governance of Croquet Victoria more transparent to all members. This was a thing that my predecessors in a pre-website era had encountered difficulty in doing, but with a much improved website and the development of other communications such as better email, I believe that we have gone a long way towards achieving that goal. All minutes, of General Meetings, Council meetings and Committee of Management meetings are available from the Croquet Victoria website, as are Policies, Procedures, Committee's Terms of Reference, Appointee's Job Descriptions and profiles of Committee of Management and Council members.

During the year our Administration Assistant, Joanne Reick, left to accept a position with more hours. Given the downturn in use of VCC for functions, which had previously taken up a lot of Sandra's time, the decision not to advertise for a replacement was taken. When Sandra took annual leave in January, her emails were diverted to me and a message put on the phone answering machine directing callers to call me if the matter was urgent. This worked well, as it had in the years previous to Joanne's hiring.

Another change is that James Hood, our greenkeeper, has accepted extra work and now looks after all the mowing at VCC, including non-playing areas and also assists Tournament Managers in preparing courts for play by putting out hoops, centre pegs and required accessories. This takes a good half day's work off our Tournament Managers and is in line with our policy of moving away, as far as possible, from reliance on volunteers.

On the matter of Tournaments, my thanks to Brian Reither, John Grieve, Lorraine Gutcher, Kevin Beard and Dot Dickson for being TM and Brian Foley, Mike Cohn, John van der Touw, Lynne Roberts and Jim Saunders for being TR at events over the year and to all those who gave up their time to officiate at these Tournaments, both Victorian and Australian.

The Croquet Victoria centenary celebrations during 2014 and 2015 were a huge success. All regions visited VCC, with a total of 673 members attending. The feedback has been very good, with the aim of making members aware of their asset being achieved. My thanks to all involved at the regions and especially to Sandra and Lubi (Caretaker and cleaner) at VCC for the efforts that they put in.

During the year, elected Directors' attendance at CoM and Council meetings was:

Mike Cohn, President	12/12	Gwen Hamilton, member	2/2
Kenn Boal, Vice-president	3/3	Sarina Cevaal-Hewitt, member	10/10
Kate Patrick, Vice-president	9/10	Wilma Freeman, member	7/12†
Jim Clement, Secretary	12/12	Jim Saunders, member	10/12
Brian Rowe, Treasurer	12/12	Trish Watts, member	10/12

† *Wilma Freeman apologised for three absences due to a hip operation.*

and Regional representation at Council meetings was:

Ballarat	6/6	Goulburn Valley	4/6	South West	4/6
Bayside	6/6	Murray Valley	6/6	Western Metro	6/6
Eastern Metro	6/6	Northern Districts	6/6	Wimmera	3/6
Geelong	6/6	North Eastern Districts	6/6		
Gippsland	6/6	South Eastern Metro	6/6		

## **Administrators Report** *Sandra Kastanaras*

Unfortunately, I lost my Administration Assistant Joanne Reick who had working alongside me one day per week since October 2014, and a part time person is no longer needed as the functions have decreased.

Therefore, on my last Annual Leave in January 2016, Lubi, the Caretaker, handled all functions bookings and enquiries off the street, which worked well. Emails were diverted to Jim Clement and the answering machine message changed to reflect that I was on leave, with those wishing to view the centre to call Lubi's mobile number, or to call Jim if the matter was urgent. Croquet Members were all informed that I would be absent for the month of January and to call the Secretary for urgent matters.

Payroll was done in advance; wages, administration of the centre and co-ordinating the bar staff and caretaker all need to be taken into account before I go on my next annual leave.

### **Functions:**

Functions were very quiet for 2015/2016 and were almost halved from the previous year. Our usual busy months of June, July, August, and September which last year had 2 - 3 bookings, had 1, 1 2, and 0 respectively this year. There were no bookings for December, when we usually have 3 or 4.

I registered the Victorian Croquet Centre with Venuemob. For every event they book, they take 10% commission when a customer books our venue that's payable to Venuemob 14 days after the events been held. Normally initial listing fee is \$399 but as part of our deal they have waived this fee and offer a **FREE** listing to all the croquet clubs in Victoria. They claim **"Put simply, if we don't bring you new function bookings then we don't make any money."** To date I have had only 2 enquires from this group and no bookings.

### **Gardens:**

Gardens beds along courts 11 and 12 and garden beds next to Greenkeepers Shed were done throughout the year and the extra bark on site also filled up other garden beds at no



charge extra. Colonial Landscape are the new gardeners that I have been using for the last year and are now coming in once a month doing the gardens and spraying; this is working well.

Lubi Bosevska, the current Caretaker, has now worked alongside me now for the last 4 years. Her standard of cleaning is still excellent, and her personality and courtesy towards all, including croquet members, is a joy. She is my backbone for the centre as well taking on basic administration now for the centre while I am annual leave.

### **Club matters:**

Clubs please continue to update the database so that it is always current; not only is this important for the new address book to be correct when it goes to print; but also for your club's invoicing to be correct.

Thank you to those clubs who have set up generic email address. Generic email address enables various office bearers to access them. By using this generic email neither I nor the Secretary have to change email contacts as office bearers change after your AGM or go on holidays. Please make sure your email address is updated on the website, as this ensures that your club receives tournament notices to your email address. Ensuring that your club's website page is up to date and setting up a generic email address are really important for me and next Office Bearers and Secretary.

### **Finally:**

A thank you to Treasurer, Brian Rowe, as I am still working harmoniously with him over a year on, which is fantastic. Thank you also to Jim Saunders who has been a great support to me during the year, making communications and working with James Hood, the Greenkeeper, easier, to the benefit of the Victorian Croquet Centre and Croquet Victoria. And thank you to other members of Committee of Management for your support in 2015/2016.

Lastly, I would like thank Mike Cohn with whom I have worked since 2007 as Vice President and since 2010 as President; and Jim Clement, Secretary since 2010. Both Mike and Jim are the longest serving President and Secretary that I have worked with at the Victorian Croquet Association in my nearly ten years of employment with the Association. Their support over the years has been wonderful and will be missed, with a big hole to fill.

## **Webmaster's Report** *Gareth Bushill*

### **Summary**

2015-2016 was another active year for the VCA website as it continues to rapidly increase in popularity. This report provides details about the new features added this season, and statistics about website usage and activity.

### **Feature Enhancements**

#### **Malletsports Victoria Magazine**

Since July 2015 a digital version of the magazine has been made available for free download from the website, one issue in arrears from the print edition.

The webmaster recommends making the digital version edition available at the same time as the print edition.

## News reporting

The news reporting feature has been overhauled to make it more functional and easier to use. Regular contributions from tournament managers across Victoria have been a major factor in attracting more visitors to the site.

## Honour boards

Honour boards have been added to display historical winners of Victorian events (both codes).

## Facebook Page

A Victorian Croquet Association Facebook Page has been created. It is currently being managed by Sarina Cevaal-Hewitt and operates in parallel with the pre-existing Victorian Croquet Centre Facebook Page.

## Growing Croquet Resources

A new section was added to the website to distribute material (created by the Marketing and Publicity sub-committee) that provides advice and guidance on growing a croquet club.

## Under-21s

Clubs can use the website to register players as Under 21 years of age in order to receive a discount on affiliation fees.

## Statistics

### Website usage by visitors

Website usage continues to trend steadily upwards. The website received more than 5000 unique visitors in a single month (for the first time ever) in January 2016.

The web hosting plan has been upgraded to remove the 6Gb monthly bandwidth cap and replace it with unlimited bandwidth.

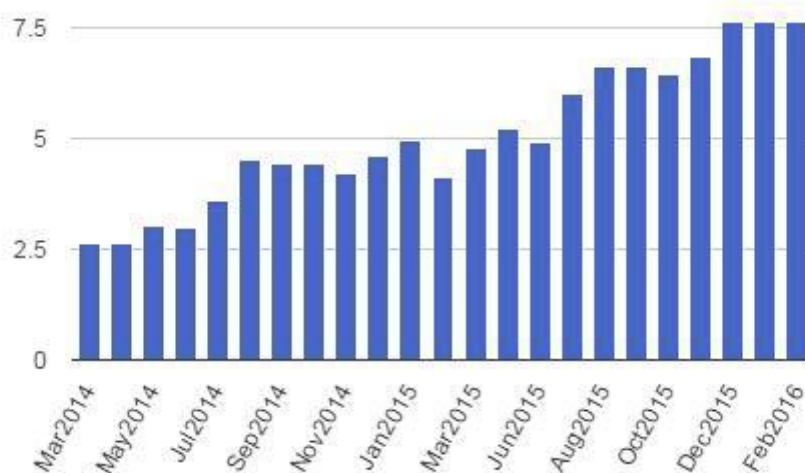
### Website usage by clubs and regions

Between 1 Jan 2016 and 8 Mar 2016

- 26 clubs updated their club web pages using the website.
- 44 clubs updated their membership lists.

### Monthly Website bandwidth (Gb)

There are 614 photos on display in the photo gallery (increased from 401 last year). 47 clubs and 4 regions are using the gallery (up from 37 clubs and 3 regions last year)



## **Malletsports Victoria Editor's Report** *Rosalie Newman*

One more year gone by and I feel I am becoming something of a permanent fixture although I wonder if I will ever become totally familiar to being editor or will different things continue to take me un-aware.

Thankfully one thing that doesn't change is the steady flow of articles, tournament results and photos that continue to arrive, mostly via my computer. My heartfelt thanks to all contributors as you all make our magazine possible and my job easier.

I have met quite a few contributors and I hope that any of you that see me around the traps will take the time to say Hi...it will be nice to put faces to the articles and clubs.

Just a month ago my husband and I said 'goodbye' to Maryborough and relocated to Ballarat. So far so good! Although not fully settled in yet (everything we can't find must be in the diminishing group of boxes still to be unpacked) at least it has done away with the one hour each way twice weekly trips to play croquet at our chosen club in Ballarat. You would think there would be a visible something to show for those 4 hours per week saved wouldn't you?

Malletsports has been available on-line for some months now...I wonder how well it is received and how many prefer to get their copy that way compared to a hard copy.

## **Courts Director's Report** *Jim Saunders,*

This position was established by the Committee of Management (COM) during 2013, the concept being to establish a communication protocol with the Greenkeeper, James Hood, and to delegate certain courts related matters for action/resolution.

Meetings have regularly taken place with the Greenkeeper on an as needs basis. These have ensured that the courts works are overviewed and that reports are provided on a timely basis to both COM and the VCA Council. I can report that an excellent working relationship exists with the Greenkeeper. In consultation with the Greenkeeper budgets have been developed for

both expenditure and work programs, and provision made for equipment maintenance and replacement as needed. The Greenkeeper has carried out his duties in a most efficient and satisfactory manner.

The courts have been maintained in accordance with the approved work program. Feedback from players was that our complex played really well and that Cairnlea looked as good as it ever had. Most satisfying for all concerned

Our Greenkeeper has recommended that, in order to maintain the integrity of the courts, a program of laser top dressing be instigated. Courts 11 & 12 were treated last December with a most satisfying outcome. It is absolutely clear that following such treatment the courts concerned require spelling for up to 12 weeks depending on the season. It was originally planned to treat three or four courts each year but it would appear that no more than three courts at a time is the prudent way to go. With the World GC Championships being held at Cairnlea early in 2017 it has been decided to defer continuation of the program till December, 2017.

The opportunity arose to purchase a suitable second hand Toro mower earlier this year and this was achieved within budget. It is planned to retain the old John Deere mower as a reserve machine. It has little resale value and will be used for clean-up purposes following the regular maintenance programs which leave sand and grit on the lawns.

## **State Coordinator of Association Croquet Report** *John Grieve*

In attempting to provide a "face" for AC in Victoria, I have attended both country and metropolitan clubs during the season. Among these - Hamilton, Swan Hill, Phillip Island, Ballarat, Bendigo as player and spectator. The success of the inaugural Bendigo Festival of Croquet was a very strong highlight of the program for last season. The clubs in Bendigo provided a great week of play in both AC and GC. Country Week in Swan Hill was a success and we look forward to building that again in 2017 as we will be returning there again. It was unfortunate I was unable to play at Hamilton as their Division 1 event was canceled but the opportunity to meet with people from the Western District was much appreciated. We do understand how hard it can be in small country clubs and the dedication and commitment of members, players and officials is to be applauded.

The Melbourne clubs seem to be holding their numbers well in regards to tournaments. The top level players are so committed to Australian and Victorian events we are finding less of them entering club events. But the levels below are holding up reasonably well. Clubs work hard to encourage players to attend their tournaments.

All tournaments conducted at Cairnlea and others under the auspices of the VCA (Country Week) were managed and conducted in accordance with the expected standards. My thanks to Brian Reither and Kevin Beard for their assistance in management of events. We have developed an excellent working relationship to ensure all events are well managed.

Brian Foley, Mike Cohn and I regularly speak to ensure all aspects of the tournament management and refereeing are of the highest possible standards. Brian has excelled in his role as State Coordinator of Referees. Victoria is in good hands in this regard.

My working relationship with Brian Foley and Brian Reither ensures all aspects of management of tournaments under the auspices of VCA are conducted with the regulations.

I have liaised with Brian Rowe as needed to provide level of funding required to meet the operations of the program for the VCA

### **Highlights of 2015-2016**

The highlight of the season for Association Croquet was the winning of the Eire Cup. The preparation and support the team had was excellent. Stephen Forster captained and coached the

team in a very strong and positive manner. All members of the team are to be commended for their preparation and application. The support the players received from non-team members of the State Squad was an indication of the strength of Association Croquet at the top level in Victoria.

It is also fair to say this strength does not extend down the line to all levels of our sport. A number of clubs cancelled events this season due to poor entries and others modified the conduct of the tournaments to accommodate lower numbers.

The entry levels around the state is a cause for concern. The stalwarts are still supporting their sport and entering; the lower levels (old Div 3 and 4) often have good numbers but there are very very few young players among them and even less players willing to commit to playing extensively.

I commend the program underway at Brunswick Croquet Club. The introduction of Monday Night social play has been a great success. The numbers of established players is high, the

excitement around the club with new members and others investigating AC is great to see, and the atmosphere at the club is positive and progressive. Well done Brunswick.

Clubs are doing good things to promote their club and our game. Possible lighting of MCC courts; the enthusiasm of the Essendon Club; the establishment of new clubs along the Murray River; the revival of AC at Mornington and the wonderful success of the AC Regional Championships all provide positive signs for the future of a great game.

We must all be aware of the challenges we face from other sports and continue to take whatever opportunities we can to foster and develop the game in our area.

Clubs are welcome to contact me and discuss their issues - and I assure you I will endeavour to find the ways and means to assist.

It is a pleasure to be involved with our sport and I have made many friends around the clubs. I do appreciate the support.

### **State Coordinator of Golf Croquet** *Lorraine Gutcher*

2016 has been a busy year on the croquet calendar, commencing with the opening on the 5<sup>th</sup> August 2015.

Most of our Tournaments have been well attended by enthusiastic and competitive players from most of our regions.

Country players make up the majority at many of the games played at Cairnlea, this is a shame as I feel Metropolitan members, being closer, could take advantage of the excellent facilities at Cairnlea.

The Seniors Day had a full book of entries and is very popular with both AC and Golf, so we are looking forward to October

Jim Clement and I Officiated at the ACA Golf Handicap Doubles and Singles Tournament in early November, we were disappointed with the entry and thank the Deniliquin Club for their hospitality.

Australia Day was well attended and enjoyed by all with all lawns full.

VCA Tournaments are all well attended and some really hard fought games played in good spirit are seen.

VCA Regionals were a busy time and I thank Lynne Roberts for her assistance on the day. This is a challenging day.

I have also refereed at a number of Tournaments at Cairnlea and in Gippsland, this enables me to see any up and coming players.

I also attend the Selectors and Tournaments & Fixtures meetings regularly.

The support and assistance of the Administrator, Green keeper, AC Coordinator, Greens Director and VCA Secretary has been appreciated and I commend them for their patience.

### **State Coordinator of Gateball** *Phillip Brown*

Gateball continues to be played to a very high standard in Victoria. The Victorian Championships in May displayed very high skill, despite trying weather conditions. A Victorian team, Kew, won the NSW championships in November. Victorian players also participated in the National Championships this year.

The tournament at Terang was once again held as part of the Melbourne Cup long weekend. It was also won by Kew.

At the Victorian Championships 6 teams and 12 pairs competed across two days of competition. The players ranged in age from 10 to around 80. There were around 40 players participating. The winner of the teams competition was the Cougars (a

composite team mainly of Queenslanders though with one Victorian player also). The Pairs competition was dominated by pairs from Canberra, with Bryan Johnson and Gilon Smith eventually victorious.

However, the skill of the best players is, in some ways, a detriment to encouraging the overall adoption of the game. Total numbers playing appear to have flat-lined at best, and may be trending slightly lower. Gateball is a game of strategy and not easily handicapped to allow weaker players to play against stronger players. Players who begin playing need a pathway to competition that does not necessarily involve playing against established players too early.

We have attempted growing the grass roots with visits to Eaglehawk near Bendigo, who have begun playing the game occasionally. We have left some spare equipment and a scoreboard at Eaglehawk. We also have attempted to reinvigorate the game at both Essendon and Brunswick, where participation has been falling off.

Planning has begun for a low-key tournament to be held in September under the “hi-lo” system (pairing new players with experienced ones to make a team). The idea is to create either a Pairs or Triples competition to allow new players to both learn the game but also to compete against other teams of similar ability. Hopefully, a less formal and less intimidating tournament will encourage more participation by “fringe” or “occasional” players and so lead to greater participation overall. We note this formula has been used successfully in both Canberra Croquet Club and Wagga Wagga, too.

## **Coaching Report** *Jim Clement*

The position of State Coordinator of Coaching has been vacant since June 2014, with no nominations received during the past two years and Council unable to find an appointee, despite approaching several members.

During the year, Stephen Forster was appointed as the Coach for the AC Team Squad, for the Eire Cup Team and for the AC Development Squad; John van der Touw was appointed as the coach for the GC Team Squad and the WCF Shield Team, while Eric O'Donnell was appointed as the GC Development Squad Coach and Lester Hughes appointed as Eric's assistant later during the year.

Croquet Australia adopted a new, competency based coaching program, which has a core common to Association Croquet, Golf Croquet, Ricochet and Gateball. The new framework is to run from Assistant Coach (the current Levels B and O) through Levels 1 to 5. Introduction was initially to be in February 2016 but this has been delayed to May.

In the meantime, Level 2 Coaches Stephen Forster and Kenn Boal, along with Level 1 coaches, continue to accredit coaches under the current, soon to be superseded, framework.

In the absence of a State Coordinator I have assumed the responsibility of issuing certificates and badges to those members who are accredited as coaches. I have also, after a lengthy delay, been able to obtain a large supply of badges from Croquet Australia and issue these to members who were accredited in the past but never issued with badges or certificates. At the April 2016 Council meeting I distributed certificates and/or badges for seventy-six members to Regional Directors, for on forwarding to the members concerned.

## **State Coordinator AC Referees Report** *Brian Foley,*

The past season has been again busy for referees with a range of state and national title tournaments held at VCA headquarters, Cairnlea, culminating in the ACA Gold medal, Men's and Women's Championships and Eire Cup competitions in March 2016. Referees have also

officiated at many regional and club events around the State. Referee refresher days have been undertaken in several regions. Three new referees were qualified and several candidates are in training.

There is a downward trend in the number of referees actually officiating that parallels the reduced numbers still playing AC. Those referees who play regularly in competitions often have little chance to officiate. Others are no longer available due to illness or advancing age while some do not wish to travel beyond their home clubs. Again during the past season, the main burden of refereeing for the major championships at Cairnlea fell on a small group of about six to eight referees. During the ACA events in March, the numbers were augmented by three interstate referees. Player referees were also used on some occasions and these were very welcome.

The ACA referee accreditation process continues to be rolled out at refresher training days and other training sessions. As well as attracting new referee candidates, we are trying to identify suitable experienced referees in regions who are prepared to be tutors and examining referees so that training and accreditation can be undertaken locally.

## **State Coordinator GC Referees** *John van der Touw*

### **Summary**

I contacted as many Victorian croquet clubs as I could in order to correct mistakes that may have crept into the referees' database. Apart from making corrections, 10 newly qualified referees were added to the list and six referees were promoted: three from referee to tutor and three from tutor to examiner.

Three referee refresher days were held, several rules courses were run or are in the process of being run and two groups of referee candidates were examined. Three of four other rules courses are in the planning stage. Some of these were run by me and some by other tutors or examiners.

I updated the "Golf Croquet Rules Course" written in 2007 by Graham Howie and Jim Clement. Changes were needed due to the introduction of the 2013 edition of the Golf Croquet Rules. I recommend the Rules Course document be used by anyone running a GC rules course in Victoria.

### **Representing Croquet Victoria on the Croquet Australia Referees Committee**

There has not been a meeting of the Croquet Australia Referees Committee since I was appointed Victorian coordinator of GC referees.

### **Co-chairing the Croquet Victoria Referee and Laws Committee**

Brian Foley and I have planned to hold a meeting of the Croquet Victoria Referee and Laws Committee but we have not had one yet. I have discussed rules matters by email or in person with members of the Croquet Victoria Referee and Laws Committee.

### **Coordinating the training, accreditation and reaccreditation of GC referees in Victoria**

#### **Training and accreditation**

I have addressed the imbalance between regions in the number of referees (see the table below). Further improvement is needed, but progress has been made.

The following table shows the number of referees in each of the thirteen regions (four metropolitan and nine country) expressed as a percentage of the number of players in the region. This ranges from less than 1% for Bayside and South Western, through to nearly 10% for Wimmera and Ballarat & District.

Region	Location	Referees/ Player
Bayside	Metro	0.57%
South Western	Country	0.68%
South East Metro	Metro	2.62%
Northern District	Country	2.79%
North Eastern	Country	3.29%
Gippsland	Country	3.77%
Geelong	Country	4.42%
Murray Valley	Country	4.48%
Eastern Metro	Metro	4.66%
Western Metro	Metro	7.81%
Goulburn Valley	Country	8.37%
Wimmera	Country	9.65%
Ballarat & District	Country	9.89%

I asked as each croquet club listed on the VCA website if any of their members wanted to do referee training, or were already doing so. Usually the answer was “no”, but I did find about some who wanted to become referees, including a couple who had started the process and given up because they did not know how to proceed.

**Bayside and South East Metro** regions: Alan Jenkins has said he would run a GC Rules course for players in these regions. I have had discussions with him for some months and given him material to help run the course. I am disappointed that he has not started the course yet. My plan at this stage is that, if he has not started by the time I return from overseas in June, I will

run the course myself.

**South Western:** Despite having few GC referees, they were distinctly uninterested at in changing that.

**Northern:** I offered help but their response was lukewarm. I’ll try again.

**Northern Eastern:** NEDCA ran a successful Rules course (already in progress when I became ref coordinator). I examined six candidates in December and passed five of them.

**Gippsland:** Jim Clement is active in that region with Rules courses and Refresher days. Jim ran GC Rules courses at

- Bairnsdale 1 & 2 Feb 2016 (12 attendees) (first part of GC Referee Training Course),
- Sale on 17 & 24 Feb 2016 (around 12 attendees),
- Phillip Island 2 & 3 March 2016 (around 20 to 24 attendees), and
- Lakes Entrance 20 April.

These were not specifically accreditation courses, but some of the attendees indicated they were interested in continuing to train as referees.

**Geelong:** I asked Anna Miller to run a GC rules course for players at Belmont and Eastern Park clubs. She started the course in November with about a dozen people. Some are ready to do their exams soon.

**Murray Valley:** Referee numbers are reasonably good, and there were no requests for help.

**Eastern Metro:** Referee numbers are adequate.

**Western Metro:** Referee numbers are good, largely because of Shirley Hallinan’s efforts.

**Goulburn Valley:** Kenn Boal completed the running of a Rules course started by Eric O’Donnell.

**Wimmera:** Horsham requested a GC Rules course. I gave a two-day course to get things started and Fay Pearson agreed to complete the running of a course.

**Ballarat & District:** Referee numbers are good. I guess that is largely because of Eric O’Donnell. Eric ran a Rules course at Eaglehawk (Northern District) in March. I gather that it was for non-referees, but was not an accreditation course, and that it went well.

### Reaccreditation



Apart from coordinating and running GC Referee Refresher Days and recording when people have last attended a RR Day or are due for reaccreditation, I'm not sure what my role is with regard to reaccreditation. Please advise.

## **Appoint sufficient Tutor and Examining Referees and oversee their performance**

### **New appointments**

After discussing things with other members of the Croquet Victoria Referee and Laws Committee and with Gordon Matthews (National Director of Refereeing) I made the following appointments:

Jim Clement (Sarsfield, Gippsland) promoted from Tutor to Examiner  
 Kenn Boal (Rich River, Goulburn Valley) promoted from Tutor to Examiner  
 John van de Touw (Monash, Eastern Metropolitan) promoted from Tutor to Examiner

Alan Jenkins (Rosebud Village Glen, Eastern Metro) promoted from Referee to Tutor  
 Hamish Menzies (Drouin, Gippsland)) promoted from Referee to Tutor  
 Lorraine Baker (Golden Square, Northern District) promoted from Referee to Tutor

### **No longer tutor/examiner**

Eight referees asked to be removed from the list of accredited referee, generally for age or health reasons. Ruth Stevenson, from Korumburra (Gippsland), asked to have her status changed from Examiner to ordinary Referee.

## **Coordinate running of GC Referee Refresher Days throughout Victoria on annual basis**

The following GC Referee Refresher Days were run:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Run by</b>	<b>Attendees</b>
16/7/2015	Monash	John van der Touw & Lynne Roberts	22
16/11/2015	Sale	Jim Clement	6
5/3/2016	Beechworth	John van der Touw	5

### **Maintaining a list of accredited GC referees within Victoria**

I suspected that official list of referee might not be accurate. In order to update it I contacted each of the 90 croquet clubs listed on the VCA website – by email where possible, otherwise by post. About 70% of the clubs replied. Many clubs replied to say that the information I had was correct, but almost half of the clubs that replied gave me names that could be removed from or should be added to the list. Seventeen names were removed from the GC referees list in August, and nineteen names were added. Ten names have been added subsequently because of having become accredited recently. There are now 132 referees in the list (some are mentioned twice because they are members at two clubs). I have email address for 83 of them.

### **Acting as, or appointing, Tournament Referee for all Croquet Victoria GC events**

I often play in VCA golf croquet events and therefore am not able to act as Tournament Referee for those events. Fortunately, Victoria has some very capable and experienced referees who are willing to take on that role. The following table lists the Tournament Referees for VCA golf croquet events played in the past twelve months.

<b>Date</b>	<b>VCA Event</b>	<b>Tournament Referee</b>
22-23 August 2015	VCA GC Men's/Women's Champs	Jim Clement
20-21 October 2015	VCA GC Seniors	John van der Touw
27-29 November 2015	VCA GC Handicap Doubles & Singles Champs	David Harrison
26 January 2016	Australia Day GC Challenge	John van der Touw
29-31 January 2016	VCA GC Open Doubles & Singles	Jim Clement

	Champs	
1-4 April 2016	GC Bronze Medal & Selectors' Invitations	Jim Saunders
9-10 April 2016	VCA GC Regional Championships	John van der Touw & Jim Saunders

### **Providing interpretations of, or rulings on, the Rules as required**

I received quite a number of questions about GC rules, mostly by email but also by phone or in person. Initially I replied only to the person who asked the question, but I have since asked the VCA webmaster, Gareth Bushill, to provide a link to the questions and answers on the VCA website. Gareth responded very promptly and the first two dozen questions I was asked can be seen, with my answers, on the following link: [http://croquetvic.asn.au/documents/GC\\_RulesQuestionsAndAnswers.pdf](http://croquetvic.asn.au/documents/GC_RulesQuestionsAndAnswers.pdf).

I have also written a couple of GC Rules Q & A articles for Malletsports. Some of the questions in those articles were ones I was asked, but many were question that I made up that I thought referees and players would find interesting and helpful.

### **Provide a budget for the following years activities to the Treasurer for inclusion in the Croquet Victoria annual budget**

I did not provide a budget to VCA. I need some guidance on what is required. In the 2015/16 Budget, in the Committees section, there is a line item (possibly added by Jim Clement) for State Coordinator GC Ref (SCR) at \$300

### **Other activities as directed**

I wasn't directed to do the following, but I thought it would be useful.

### **GC Rules Correspondence Course**

It might be difficult for some players to attend a rules course, so I have started creating a GC Rules Correspondence Course. So far I have completed two modules consisting of 25 questions on Rules 1 - 3 and 25 questions on Rules 4 - 6. The candidate is expected not only to answer the questions but also to state which is the relevant Rule or Regulation in each case, so by the end of the course he will have had to read every rule in the book. The correspondence course is not a complete Rules course because the practical aspects of the course require face to face interaction between the candidate and tutor, but it would cut down the amount and cost of travel required by the tutor and/or candidate.

At the moment I am running a trial of the GC Rules Correspondence Course with Anthony Dask of the Elsternwick Croquet Club.

## **Marketing and Publicity subcommittee** *Kate Patrick*

The task of the Marketing and Publicity sub-committee is to promote the sport of croquet across Victoria.

Members of the subcommittee in 2015/16 were: Kate Patrick (convenor) (WMCMA), Helen Worlidge (EMCA), Janet Richardson (Murray Valley), and Heather Strano and Lyn Goodall (Northern Districts). We have met around once a month as well as attending the regional meetings mentioned below.

Our activity in 2015/16 has included:

### **1. Growing Croquet**

A key strategy for the sub-committee has been sharing experiences and ideas across Victoria so as to help regions and clubs publicise their activities and recruit new members. The *Growing Croquet* resource was circulated in draft to a small reference group in May 2015 and the text has been progressively enhanced and extended following feedback from regions and clubs. It is now available online via the VCA website.

Over the year subcommittee members have attended regional association meetings in eleven regions to discuss *Growing Croquet*. As handouts, we brought brief summaries of the document and some full copies customised for the particular region.

We had aimed at visiting seven regions and were pleased to have additional invitations. It was great to meet so many club representatives and we found the visits very helpful in developing our understanding of the issues facing clubs. Club representatives were enthusiastic about sharing ideas. They also commented positively on the VCA's commitment to supporting clubs via the *Growing Croquet* project.

## **2. Support for selected clubs**

The VCA budget for 2015/16 included provision under Coaching to support clubs wishing to run introductory courses for prospective members.

At our meetings with regional associations, we invited the region to identify a club to participate in this activity and offered our support in the planning process. Most regions are taking up some aspect of this offer.

Bayside	Elsternwick has trained several AC playing members in GC coaching and is conducting an active recruitment campaign.
Eastern Metro	Ringwood and Lilydale are working together on a strategic plan incorporating recruitment activity.
Geelong	Colac has been identified as a club which could benefit from support. The club committee is considering how it might use the support available.
Gippsland	Drouin and Warragul have held a coaching day (not funded by the VCA) and are developing members' capacity for supporting prospective members.
Goulburn Valley	The region has trained 20 new coaches which has considerably expanded its capacity for working with prospective members.
Murray Valley	This region has no formally accredited coaches. Coach training is waiting on the introduction of the new coaching system.
Northern Districts	The Growing Croquet resource has been distributed. The region wishes to train more coaches. It is waiting on the introduction of the new coaching system.
SEMCA	We worked closely with the region to try and revive Burden Park. In the end this effort was not successful.
South Western	Koroit has been identified as a club which could benefit from support. The Koroit CC committee is going to use the winter to develop plans for recruitment in the spring.
Western Metro	Help has been offered to Brimbank.
Wimmera	Warracknabeal has been identified as a club which could benefit from support. The club officers are keen to participate.

Most regions were interested in training more coaches to support the recruitment process, however the impending introduction of the new ACA coaching system made it difficult for them to arrange this so the relevant budget allocation was barely used.

## **3. Croquet at Government House**

Following an invitation from the Governor to Croquet Victoria, the sub-committee coordinated a team of 21 volunteers from across Victoria to run croquet sessions on the croquet lawn at Government House on Australia Day. Around 150 people participated with very positive feedback.

Members helping came from Beaufort, Beechworth, Brunswick, Elsternwick, Essendon, MCC, Macedon Ranges, Monash, Wangaratta, and Wodonga. Photographs and a report of the event were published online on the VCA website and the VCA Facebook page. Thanks to all those who assisted with this event.

#### 4. Press reports of croquet competitions

Both the AC and GC metropolitan competitions have been sending results to AAP for publication in the metro dailies. In 2015 this frequently resulted in publication in the daily paper. More recently publication has been in the metro daily online sports section. We are still looking for a volunteer to harvest VCA and ACA tournament results from Croquetscores and send them to AAP.

#### 5. Online publicity

The VCA now has a Facebook page, managed by CoM member Sarina Cevaal-Hewitt. Kate Patrick as a CoM member has been maintaining a flow of news to the front page of the Croquet Vic website.

#### 6. Publicity resources

Two bookmarks in different sizes (5000 copies) have been commissioned and are being distributed to clubs running recruitment campaigns. We are working on an updated brochure.

#### 7. Summary of expenditure

	Allocated	Spent <sup>1</sup>
A PUBLICITY		
Growing Croquet resource	\$544	\$400.72
Other materials	\$4,456	\$900.35
B COACHING	\$3,600	\$512.17
C TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION		
Travel		\$406.81
Accommodation		\$510.00
Meals		\$118.50
Total	\$1,456	\$1,035.31
D Ultimate Sports Expo <sup>2</sup>	\$2500	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$12,556</b>	<b>\$3,483.15</b>

#### NOTES

1. Includes GST.
2. The sub-committee investigated the Ultimate Sports Expo and recommended against participation. Council decided to add the \$2500 allocated to the event to the M&P budget.

### AC Selection Committee Report *Tricia Devlin, Chair,*

During season 2015-2016, the Selectors chose players for two squads, the State Team Squad from which the State Team is selected and the Development Squad. Both squads are coached by Stephen Forster, who provides updates to Selectors on players' progress. Clubs are encouraged to nominate promising members for consideration for the Development Squad. This year the Selectors publicised this in Malletsports and would like a bigger response next season.

As part of our ongoing plans to streamline the meetings and selection process, the committee created an annual calendar showing the meetings and actions required to complete selections for the many events. The Women's' Invitation was rescheduled to accommodate the Golf Croquet Interstate Shield, but since it is a selection event, this may have to be reconsidered for the new season so it falls before the State Team is to be selected.

Events for which we selected players were:

- Women's' Invitation
- Australian Bronze Medal
- Victorian Silver and Bronze Medals
- Victorian Gold Cup, Silver Shield and Bronze Shield, and finally,
- the State Team for the Interstate Cup (Eire Cup).

It is pleasing to find that there is increased competition for places in the State Team. Victoria is in the enviable position of being able to field two strong 8 person teams from our top players, as was shown by the close results in the Team vs the A Team match this year.

We now need to strengthen the field of the next ranked players and we encourage very new players to seek coaching and aim for a position in the Squads.

A change to the date for winding up our committee each year has left the current Selectors in the awkward position of being unable to complete their final duty of the season, the post Eire Cup meeting in which we receive the reports from the Captain and Vice-Captain and consider the performance of the Team we have selected.

Finally, I would like to thank the Selectors, and particularly the Secretary of our committee, for their efforts in attending events and observing and reporting back to our meetings throughout the year. We are confident the Team we have selected is a strong, cohesive one, which has every chance of victory in the Eire Cup. (*Secretaries Note: The team was, in fact, victorious in the Eire Cup.*)

## **GC Selection Committee Report** *Jim Saunders, Chair,*

The Victorian Golf Croquet (GC) Team for the Interstate Shield to be contested in Launceston in September, 2015 was chosen last May and consisted of:

MEN	WOMEN
John van der Touw – Captain & Coach	Anna Miller – Vice Captain
Kevin Beard	Wendy Dickson
Lester Hughes	Anne Quinn
Darren McLoughlin	Judy Wembridge
Jim Saunders – Non Travelling Reserve	Patricia Watts – Non Travelling Reserve

Widely regarded as the premier GC event on the Australian calendar, the World Croquet Federation Interstate Shield in 2015 was played between teams from Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania, South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria at a variety of venues in Launceston, Tasmania. Over five days each State played a Test against each other with a Test comprising four Matches of mixed doubles and sixteen Matches of singles, with men playing men and women playing women. Each Match comprised two first to seven hoop games and to win a Match both games had to be won.

It will be recalled that Victoria won the Shield in 2012, 2013 and 2014 and it was expected that the going would be tougher in 2015. However, the Vics fielded a strong team and, once again, prevailed without losing a Test. This was a really tremendous effort against the best GC players in Australia. At the presentation, it was acknowledged that the standard of Golf Croquet had improved immensely in recent years and that the States had really applied themselves in preparation for the tournament.

Your selectors have worked diligently to encourage the further improvement of top level GC in Victoria by selecting a strong State GC Squad which has been training hard under the dedicated care of its Coach, John van der Touw. In addition, a State GC Development Squad, consisting of players who have the potential to develop to State level over the next few years has been working with its Coach, Eric O'Donnell and more recently, Lester Hughes. The selectors are most appreciative of the work of the State Coaches. Their efforts will further assist in improving the standard of GC in Victoria.

The Victorian Division of the ACA Bronze Medal event in April, 2016 was again complemented by two, two day, Selectors Invitation Tournaments each of which were conducted as round robin events.

The Victorian Division of the ACA Golf Croquet Bronze Medal was played over three days. John van der Touw (Monash) was successful from Gail Hopkins (Essendon) and will represent Victoria in the ACA Gold Medal in Perth in September. We wish John all the very best.

The First Selectors Invitation Tournament consisted of players from the GC State Squad who did not make the Bronze Medal field. The event was won by Jim Saunders (Belmont) from Len Twigg (Williamstown).

The Second Selectors Invitation consisted of players from the State Development Squad. The final went right down to the wire with Jim Lynch (Eastern Park) being victorious over John Murfett (Portland). This reversed the final result of 2015 in which John had defeated Jim. It was an excellent event enjoyed by all participants.

The team to represent Victoria in the Inter State Shield in Tasmania this year will be selected at the conclusion of Australian Singles & Doubles Championships to be held in mid-May

I have been most fortunate to have had a very enthusiastic committee to work with this year. My grateful thanks go to Lorraine Gutcher, particularly for her work as minute secretary, Lynne Roberts and Mike Cohn, who represented VCA. Dennis Newman resigned during the year and was replaced by Kaye Moffat. Dennis' contribution has been greatly appreciated.

## **Tournament & Fixtures Committee Report** *John Grieve, Chair*

The members of the Tournament and Fixtures Committee are John Grieve (AC Coordinator) Lorraine Gutcher (GC Coordinator), Phillip Brown (Gateball Coordinator), Jim Saunders, Kerri-Ann Organ and Brian Reither.

The Committee had one formal meeting to finalise the 2015-2016 Program of Events and met informally during the season to arrange managers, adjust dates for events and plan scheduling for the 2016-2107 season.

Although Brian Reither has taken a back step in much of the work of this committee his input is vital. His involvement with Croquet Australia Events Committee is important to keeping the planning of the Victorian calendar.

Each year the program for Victoria becomes busier and harder to satisfy all constituents. The top down approach from World, Australian, Victorian, Regional and Club events provides a lot of challenges to formulate a satisfactory schedule for the season. I thank those members of the Committee, Regional contacts and Club personnel for their support and willingness to negotiate and accommodate the busy schedule.

Lorraine Gutcher and Phillip Brown have been wonderful in their work with Golf Croquet and Gateball. We have a core of people who work with both Lorraine and Phillip to ensure VCA

events are well conducted. It is pleasing to report the addition of Val Saunders and Kate Petersen who are enthusiastic to develop their skills in tournament management and both have worked with Lorraine to assist during a number of events this season.

The Association events have been well managed with assistance from Brian and Kevin Beard (who managed the Victoria Open), Gareth Bushill (who is always such a help in solving matters related to computer issues), and the players who bring a breadth of knowledge and support to the management of the events. It is a pleasure to work with the players as they are most obliging and supportive of the work required to host these major events.

The Regions and Clubs are most co-operative. The planning for this upcoming season has been particularly difficult with the addition of the GC World Championships being held at Cairnlea in March. A number of our clubs have had to adjust their preferred schedules and I thank them for the co-operation. This situation of a busy program at Cairnlea does impinge all the way to the clubs' schedules. We do try to accommodate each club's wishes but the support from clubs to understand and negotiate has been really helpful.

While the Committee meets infrequently the members are in constant contact during the season to ensure the program is running smoothly and to provide adequate management personnel at all events.

It has been disappointing to note a few tournaments have been cancelled due to lack of sufficient entries. Some were affected by special circumstances and we hope these will return to the program in the coming season. The GC entries are strong and tournaments have flourished. A small number of country AC events have been cancelled and others have lower entries than in past years.

We have decided to delete the Country V Metro (AC) tournament from the calendar for next season. This has proved unpopular in recent years and falling numbers have made it unworkable. We continue to monitor the program to cater for changes in players' needs.

We received a very well-considered suggestion from Bill Humphreys (Golden Square CC) supporting the introduction of more handicap events in AC. While many players shy away from handicap events Bill's arguments are sound and we will take them into consideration in future scheduling.

I thank all members of the VCA with whom I have had contact to ensure we have a solid program for our players. Sandra Kastanaras as VCA Administrator has been a wonderful support. And Lubi Bosevska makes coming to Cairnlea a pleasure - the rooms are always in immaculate condition and her attention to detail is appreciated by all.

## **Investment Advisory Group** *David Ross*

The Investment Advisory Group comprises up to three members appointed by VCA Council plus the VCA Treasurer as a non-voting member. For the period from June 2015 members were Wendy Dickson, David Ross and Brian Rowe (VCA Treasurer).

### **Portfolio Valuations:**

The preserved amount of the original investment CPI indexed to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 is \$3,831,934.

The policy is that the portfolio is CPI indexed annually as at 30<sup>th</sup> June and VCA Directors at the August Council decide, following a recommendation by the treasurer, what funds from the

increased portfolio valuation and anticipated interest and dividends are available to meet the shortfall in the VCA budget.

As at 31 March 2016, the portfolio valuation was \$3,713,624.36

As at 31 March 2015, the portfolio valuation was \$4,236,834.41.

During the year \$258,000 was withdrawn (transferred to the VCA working account). For the twelve months, this total is in excess of the capital growth and interest and dividends received for the portfolio and this level of support cannot be sustained in the current economic climate. Since the initial deposit made in June 2005, \$1,158,000 has been withdrawn from the portfolio and transferred into VCA accounts.

As at 30 April 2016, the portfolio valuation was \$3,801,825.41.

#### **Prime Purpose of the Portfolio:**

The portfolio continues to underwrite the administration of the VCA and the management of the Victorian Croquet Centre (VCC) at Cairnlea.

#### **Relationship with JBWere:**

In May 2016 we still have the advisors who started with the portfolio ten years ago. They have given excellent advice and service and the IAG always has prompt responses to enquiries and professional resources in responding to recommendations re the portfolio.

## **2017 WCF Events Hosting Working Group Report** *Jim Clement, WG Secretary,*

In late 2014, due to a mix-up in the hosting of other World Croquet Federation Championship events, bids were called for the hosting of the 5<sup>th</sup> WCF U21 Golf Croquet Championship and the 13<sup>th</sup> WCG GC World Championship which are traditionally run sequentially by the same host nation. Croquet Australia submitted a bid, naming the Victorian Croquet Centre as the main venue.

This bid was tentatively accepted, with Australia being named as the Preferred Bidder and eventually as the Confirmed Bidder. In the interval between being Preferred and Confirmed, VCA, in the absence of any direction from Croquet Australia, formed a Working Group to plan for hosting the events. Council approved the formation of the Working Group at its meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015 and its Terms of Reference on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

The Working Group comprises:

- Mike Cohn, Chair and responsible for House Management (Catering, Cleaning, Security)
- Jim Saunders, Grounds
- Brian Reither, Tournament Manager
- Jim Clement, Tournament Referee and Working Group Secretary
- Val Saunders, Player Hospitality (Accommodation, Hospitality, Merchandise)
- Brian Rowe, Finance
- Gareth Bushill, Webmaster
- Graeme Thomas, the Croquet Australia representative

The Group has held two meetings and will continue to meet as necessary to plan the events.



## Seniors Week 2015 *Graeme Gallus, Coordinator*

2015 Seniors Week has been successful for most of the 50+ clubs taking part. This number was down a little on 2014 but more new members were gained overall. A special thanks to the clubs who communicate their successes, their lack of, and the reasons for both. With this information we are getting more successful as this data is communicated to all participating clubs.

The details below show what can be achieved. Some clubs with very little effort, some with a concerted effort gained new members. Some clubs went to the expense of paid adverts, some clubs used news items, and some used letter drops. Like all advertising it can be a hit and miss affair.

The successful days were achieved by giving visitors a:

1. Very welcoming introduction to your club and members present.
2. Introducing visitors to Golf Croquet with a 1 on 1 coaching. If the visitors are not addicted by hoop 3 you are doing something wrong. After hoop 3 bring other players into a fun game. Remember it has to be FUN. No stun shots please.
3. After 40/45 minutes stop. Refreshment time. Some clubs offered bingo/cards if the day turns wet. If a morning session some clubs offered a light luncheon. BUT your day has to be **FUN. FUN. FUN.**
4. Invite all participants back for another hit at their convenience.
5. Media coverage is still a hit and miss affair. Croquet as we all know is a secret to the rest of the world therefore you have to be skilful in getting your message across. Success has results from inviting other interest groups like Probus, Men's Shed, Red Hatters, in fact any group of people in your community. One club advised of success with inviting a mother's social group with pre child care littlies.

Clubs taking part were encouraged to follow successful methods used and tried by other clubs. Having Seniors Week as a Regional Agenda item spreads the word locally. Having reports from clubs on their successes has been advantageous to other clubs and will be for those contemplating participation in 2016. This knowledge allowed them to try/ copy/ emulate/ and vary their own approaches to this event.

The funds generously provided by the Dept. of Ageing have been an incentive appreciated by all. Few people outside of our sport know Croquet clubs are run on a shoestring (a very short shoestring) with many charging their members only \$5.00 per week to play.

Most clubs have used the \$100 grant to subsidise advertising of their event/ events and it has also helped fund the cost of refreshments for visitors.

Of the reports received both verbal and written an awareness of the strengths and advantages of what our sport offers our mature aged people is increased. Playing croquet gives gentle exercise, social outlet, and fresh air, among likeminded people.

**QUESTION.** Why do so many older people play croquet at all levels of competition both nationally and internationally against all ages of competitors?

**ANSWER.** Croquet is a sport for life. If you can walk you can play. It provides all the health benefits being promoted such as gentle exercise, social activity, fellowship, friendships, competition if wanted and all the benefits of being alive and able being able to socialise.

The good news is this one event has increased Croquet Victoria membership by over 2%.