



# Croquet Victoria

## Annual Report 2020/2021

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**VICSPORT**

*Patron: The Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria*

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# Annual Report 2020/2021

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# The Victorian Croquet Association – 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. Its target clientele are students, people of working age and retirees, both men and women, who wish to play croquet.

Croquet is a non-contact sport which involves hitting a stationary ball, not a moving ball, and where members can choose to play socially or competitively. 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 Victoria aims to grow croquet, updating its image and developing the resources and capabilities available to members.

Croquet Victoria has a federated structure – it is an association of regional associations. Currently it provides services for 2870 individual members belonging to 88 clubs in 13 Regional Associations throughout Victoria.

It is governed by its State Council, consisting of 13 Regional Directors and 9 Committee of Management Directors. Council members and appointed officers are all volunteers. They are mostly retirees with experience in business, club and regional administration.

Via its committees and appointed officers, Croquet Victoria provides services to members which include:

- pursuing a strategic plan to continue and grow the sport and the organisation
- training and accrediting coaches and referees
- organising tournaments
- maintaining a handicap system
- communicating with members via clubs and regions, and through the *Malletsports Victoria* magazine and social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and the Croquet Victoria website)
- providing publicity resources and support
- developing policies to ensure member protection and effective business systems
- applying for and running externally funded projects that develop the sport.

The individuals and committees that provide services on behalf of Croquet Victoria are required to report to the State Council annually. This document consolidates their reports. It also includes reports from the President and the Secretary.

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

In writing this report I have had to go back to Council meeting minutes, calendars, etc. to refresh my memory, as details seemed to merge.

The year will go down as a year of lockdowns and restrictions. Indeed, it was a rush to return to Victoria from Queensland, where I was attending the final days of the Eire Cup and representing Croquet Victoria at the Croquet Australia AGM, before border restrictions were imposed on 26th March 2020.

Since then, of course, Victoria has had various lockdowns and levels of restrictions imposed which resulted in our Secretary, Sarina, issuing what seemed to be an unceasing series of email advising of restrictions as they changed. These restrictions severely impinged on our sport, especially at the start when two people could play tennis but we couldn't play croquet, regardless of the fact that a croquet court is twice the size of a tennis court. Eventually Sport & Recreation Victoria saw the light and changed that restriction.

As a regional player, I was prohibited from playing only in times of total lockdown and such prohibition was quickly eased. I feel for our metropolitan members who had things a lot tougher than we regional residents.

A side-benefit of the epidemic and lockdowns is that Council and many members are now quite used to conducting meetings vis technology, with concurrent savings in time and travel costs.

In December 2020, *Malletsports Victoria*, which had not been published for six months, re-appeared as an online publication.

Three clubs attained their century during the year; Eastern Park, Bairnsdale and Korumburra were presented with commemorative plaques.

A highlight of the year for me was attending an afternoon tea organised by Belmont Croquet Club to farewell Anna Miller who has laid aside her mallet. Although attendance was restricted, some of those who worked or played with Anna gathered to celebrate Anna's 40+ years involvement with croquet, both on and off the courts.

I could not complete a report such as this without thanking those who volunteer and thus ensure that Croquet Victoria continues to function and serve its members: I normally don't name these as I have no wish to offend by inadvertently omitting a name, but this year I do wish to refer to two by name:

- Sarina Cevaal-Hewitt has had an extra load placed on her by the Covid epidemic and the resultant Restricted Activities Directions, issued by the Chief Health Officer, which regulate what we can or cannot do at any particular time.
- Claire Keating, who took over the Treasury in June 2020, and has since worked tirelessly to ensure that our accounting system meets all statutory requirements and accurately reflects our position.

To all those others who serve as directors, committee members, Appointed Officers or general volunteers, whether at state, region or club level, thank you for keeping our sport functioning.

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## Secretary's Report: *Sarina Cevaal-Hewitt*

The duties of the Secretary are outlined in both the VCA Constitution

### 11.1 Secretary to Keep Register of Members

The Secretary shall keep and maintain a register of Members in which shall be entered the full name, address, category of membership and date of entry of the name of each Member. These duties are capably undertaken by Gareth Bushill (Webmaster).

and the By-Laws.

### Additional duties detailed in By-Law 7.4

To ensure and promote good communication between Council, Committee, sub-committees, Regional Associations, affiliated Clubs and players as appropriate.

More specifically

- to attend to the daily administrative tasks and to all correspondence;
- to prepare agendas and keep minutes of all Council meetings, Committee of Management meetings and General Meetings;
- to provide administrative support to the President and other committee members as appropriate.

Duties relating to preparation of Agendas and Minutes have been accomplished within the timeframe specified. Malletsports Management Reports have been provided as requested. Thank you to Region and Club Secretaries who have supported the role of the Croquet Victoria Secretary and promoted good communication between Croquet Victoria and their region or club. Regional Directors have provided a yearly report to Council.

There have been no club closures during since the 2020 Annual Report and our membership post COVID-19 hovers around 2900.

The following Croquet Victoria Policies have been amended since the 2020 Annual Report:

- Appointees, Sub-Committees & Working Group Policy
- Council Charter

The following Terms of Reference were amended or adopted:

- Marketing & Publicity Sub-Committee
- Finance Sub-Committee
- VCC Sub-Committee
- Child Safety Sub-Committee
- Selection Sub-Committee
- Tournaments & Fixtures Sub-Committee

During the year, elected Directors' attendance at CoM and Council meetings from the Council Meeting in August 2020 to the Committee of Management Meeting in May 2021 was:

Jim Clement, President	10/10	Lynne Roberts	10/10
Stephen Forster, Vice-President	9/10	Lorraine Gutcher	8/10
Sarina Cevaal-Hewitt, Secretary	10/10	Janet Leckie-Brunton	8/10
Claire Keating, Treasurer	9/10	Lyndsay Neilson	9/10
		David Johnston	9/10

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and Regional representation at Council meetings was:

Ballarat	5/5	Goulburn Valley	5/5	South West	5/5
Bayside	5/5	Murray Valley	3/5	Western Metro	5/5
Eastern Metro	5/5	Northern Districts	3/5	Wimmera	3/5
Geelong	4/5	North Eastern Districts	4/5		
Gippsland	5/5	South Eastern Metro	3/5		

I have represented Croquet Victoria in many discussions with local government authorities who are undertaking Strategic Plans, advocating for a croquet presence in their local government area. I have attended numerous VicSport Zoom meetings to remain up-to-date with the everchanging COVID-19 restrictions as they apply to our croquet clubs. Thank you to all clubs who have followed the guidelines, to date no croquet club was identified as a COVID hotspot.

The use of social media or phone messaging to contact the Croquet Victoria Secretary is increasing. No longer is email or phone call the preferred option.

### **VCA Website Manager's Report:** *Gareth Bushill*

This report provides details about activities relating to the VCA website this season.

#### **VCA Club Survey**

The annual club survey was refreshed and additional questions were added.

#### **COVID-19**

Over the course of the year the website was regularly updated with eighteen versions of the "Return to Croquet Guidelines", providing current and relevant guidance to clubs and members during the pandemic.

#### **Admin interface**

Following the loss of the full-time administrator position, the website database interfaces were extended to provide additional function to assist VCA committee and officers.

Changes were made to help with reporting of statistics, invoicing of affiliation fees, monitoring of player handicaps, and tracking of coaching and refereeing accreditation.  
Content changes

The Homepage and the Gateball page were updated and restructured with improved layouts, fresh content, and the ability to display videos.

Honour boards were added for VCA Life Members.

#### **ACA national player database / WCF global player database**

ACA developed and released its new website. The Australian Coaching Academy website is due to be released later this year, to supplement the features of the former. I was informed by ACA in April 2021 that work to construct a National Player Database is still in progress. The WCF also convened a working group to drive development of a Global Player Database.

Major redevelopment of the VCA website performance awaits the outcome of these activities. In the meantime we continue to make ongoing improvements within the existing infrastructure.

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## **State Coordinator of Association Croquet Report:** *Brian Reither*

I previously occupied this position but at that time I was Chairman of an under resourced T & F Committee. This meant I did not do justice to the Co-ordinator role so I step down. After inducting John Grieve into the leadership of T & F, I was then able to take a long wished for break from administrative duties.

Soon after, John had to have surgery and I found myself back in T & F supporting him. Prior to last AGM I decided that I should continue supporting T & F. I then decided that if I nominated for AC Coordinator, I would be a member of T & F and allow someone else to become a member of T & F Committee.

Well what a year it became. The Centre was mothballed so there was no play at Cairnlea which put the future of the sport in jeopardy. My efforts become focused on the Use Cairnlea Group, followed by the Save Cairnlea Group. Then along came Covid19 and all attempts to rejuvenate Cairnlea were stopped because of lockdowns. Finally we got approval to open and conduct events at Cairnlea and then the task of running as many as possible of the postponed tournaments. Then the biggest disappointment was the passing of John. This further locked me in to what all my time was being spent doing. Then the VCC Sub-committee was also formed.

Apart from the many words of wisdom I impart to the many callers who contact me, I make no apology for my poor performance as AC Coordinator. I also believe that the responsibility of the position should be more about promotion and less about T & F involvement. This would allow the right skilled person to full fill the position. Of my 20 years involvement with VCA, this has been one of the most stressful but also the most satisfying. As long as I am able, retaining the VCC will be my goal.

## **State Coordinator of Ricochet Croquet Report:**

*Maurice Cevaal-Hewitt*

I was pleased to provide Ricochet Coaching to Castlemaine and Charlton Croquet Clubs. I am happy to travel throughout the State to demonstrate or coach Ricochet Croquet. Expressions of Interest have been received from three clubs to host an Inaugural State Level Ricochet Croquet event tentatively planned for September 2021. This is the focus of my attention at the moment.

## **State Coordinator of Association Croquet Referees Report:**

*Brian Foley*

The 2020-21 season was seriously disrupted by lockdown of most croquet facilities due to the Coronavirus 19 and subsequent cancellation of all ACA and many VCA and regional and club tournaments. In addition, the VCC facility at Cairnlea was "mothballed" from April to November 2020 when it re-opened.

When play resumed in December, the first VCA event was the ACA Bronze Medal (Victorian Section) event was held at Traralgon. Other VCA events followed between December and February including the Doubles and Singles, VCA Bronze and Silver and the VCA Gold Cup and Silver Shield. In April, a successful Country Regionals Tournament was held at Portland. Referees officiated at all these events together with some other regional and club events around the State

It was not possible to conduct most of the usual referee refresher days, including both on-court and laws issues, due to the lockdowns. One full refresher was at Portland in April for referees officiating at the Country Regionals. In the October - November period, five



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on-screen refreshers were held using Zoom communication software to re-connect with referees and update on several issues. These were well attended by some 40 referees.

No new referees or umpires were accredited during the year. However a number of prospective referees are in various stages of training and it hoped that many of these will have the opportunity to complete their qualification over coming months.

Currently there are 32 AC referees and four umpires in Victoria who fully meet the ACA requirements for accreditation, i.e. they hold the Australian Sports Commission *Community Officiating General Principles* certificate, have attended recent fresher days and officiate regularly. There are approximately 60 other referees who do not meet the full requirements for accreditation to officiate at major events. However, most of these can still officiate within their own clubs.

During the worldwide lockdown on croquet activity, work continued on refining the earlier consultation draft of Edition 7 of the Laws of AC. In August 2020, the WCF International Laws Committee released a further draft that was discussed via a Zoom meeting with the National Committee in October and further comments were passed on to the ILC. The World Croquet Federation formally approved Edition 7 of the Laws of AC Croquet in January 2021 and it was subsequently approved by the Australian Croquet Association to take effect from 1 July 2021. Copies of the updated laws have now been printed and distribution to clubs has commenced together with a series of information sessions for referees and players.

## **State Coordinator of Golf Croquet Referees Report:**

*John van der Touw*

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

Nothing to report.

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

#### **Training and accreditation**

Referee accreditation courses were suspended due to Covid-19 but June Hoge (Goulburn Valley) has recommenced one she started early last year, and others courses are expected to commence soon.

Some people have expressed an interest in doing an accreditation course online using Zoom. This is likely to be done, although part of the course would have to be face-to-face and on the court.

Three candidates were examined in late April and early May this year. Two passed and one failed. The one that failed wants to have another attempt soon.

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

#### **Reaccreditation**

There have not been any face-to-face Referee refresher Courses since May 2020, but I ran 19 one-hour Zoom online GC Refereeing/Rules workshops sessions in late 2020 and early 2021. These consisted of nine topics with two sessions per topic (except for the first topic where there were three sessions). The total attendance was over 40 people per topic. The topics were:

1. Wrong ball play (the common ones)
2. Wrong ball play (the less common ones)
3. Faults (mostly double taps)
4. Other faults, and action after a fault

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5. Interference
  6. Offside balls
  7. Refereeing Regulations and some other things
  8. Marking balls and overlapping play
  9. Miscellaneous other rules.

Feedback I received suggested that people found these sessions to be interesting and useful, but some were disappointed that they did not count towards satisfying some of the requirements for formal reaccreditation. It is likely that some Zoom session could be held later this year that could count towards reaccreditation. Some technical issues need to be worked out such as having a record of attendance, but initial investigations suggest that the technical issues will not be difficult to solve.

With Covid restrictions not being as tight as for much of last year, there will be some face-to-face Referee refresher Courses later this year.

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

I am still maintaining VCA database of accredited referees.

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

There have not been many for golf croquet events played at VCC since May 2020, and referees were appointed for only one of them: The Bronze Medal & Selectors' Invitations. I contacted referees beforehand, and Ian Matthews was Tournament Referee. There were not many volunteers and on two of the three days, three referees had to look after 12 games between them for each the six or seven rounds played each day.

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

I have continued to receive and answer questions about the GC rules.

## **State Coordinator Under 21 Croquet Report: *Kate Patrick***

### **BACKGROUND**

The task of the State Coordinator of Under 21 Croquet is to create and deliver a state program aimed at people under the age of 21 that will encourage, nurture and develop players in the sport of Croquet.

I was appointed to this position in August 2020.

Activities since that time include:

#### **1 Data collection**

- a survey of clubs asking about their involvement in junior croquet. 36 have some interest in this; they are being followed up
- analysis of the current Under 21 membership, showing that
  - 26 affiliated members are listed as aged under 21
  - two thirds are male
  - threequarters are aged 12 to 17, one is younger, the others older
  - 17 have an active GC handicap: 11 between 8 and 12, one lower, the remaining five higher. None of them has an active AC handicap.
  - nearly half belong to Casterton Croquet Club, with the others scattered across eleven different clubs in seven regions.

#### **2 Connections between interested members**

- establishment of a planning group comprising interested grassroots members. This meets monthly via Zoom. Meetings are currently attended by three Directors in addition to the initial invitees. This group shares information about their activities and discusses plans for progressing Under 21 croquet. Many thanks to everyone who has participated in this group.

- establishment of an Under 21 network of affiliated members, also meeting about monthly via Zoom. This is an opportunity for younger members to connect with each other and with experienced players (by invitation). Thanks again to all participants.

### 3 Resources to support clubs and increase awareness of croquet as a sport for younger players

- images of young players (with permission) are now regularly included in Croquet Victoria publicity and resource materials, including the Croquet Facility Guide, the trifold flyer, the banner on the Croquet Victoria Facebook page, and the slideshow on the front page of the Croquet Victoria website.
- resources for clubs interested in connecting with schools and/or individual young players have been added to the Growing Croquet section of the Croquet Victoria website.

### 4 Resources and activities to support under 21 players

- a dedicated (closed) Facebook page has been set up for Under 21s
- information about financial support for attendees was circulated to all under 21 members prior to the coaching session provided by Greg Bury at the Victorian Croquet Centre in March 2021 (pictured left – all participants provided appropriate consent to photographs)
- sponsorship is being sought to help school students who are not currently affiliated attend the upcoming September weekend.



### 5 Plans for the future

Following discussions with both the planning group and the Under 21 network, an Under 21 Croquet Weekend is planned for the middle week of the September holidays, 24 to 26 September 2021. The aim is to recruit participants from schools that play croquet, as well as from current affiliated under 21 members. A poster for the weekend (left) has been distributed to all clubs reporting involvement with schools, with a message encouraging them to coach small squads of interested students to participate in the weekend.

Follow up is planned during Term 2.

## Under 21s weekend

### 24-26 September 2021

CROQUET: the next big hit

**WHAT'S ON – approx times**

**Fri 24 Sept** Coaching 1 pm – 5 pm  
Be coached by leading Victorian players

**Sat 25 Sept** GC doubles 9 am – 5 pm  
Play doubles with leading Victorian players

**Sun 26 Sept** GC singles 9 am – 4 pm  
Show what you can do! Players to be grouped by age and/or experience.

**WHERE**  
Victorian Croquet Centre  
65 Nobel Banks Drive, Cairnlea, Victoria 3023

**WHO CAN ENTER**  
Interested players aged between 12 and 21 as at 1 January 2021.

**COST**  
\$20 for the three days.

**WHEN TO ENTER**  
Entries close Friday 3 September.  
Expressions of interest welcome now!  
Entry form from Kate Patrick, Under 21 Coordinator,  
[u21coordinator@croquetvic.asn.au](mailto:u21coordinator@croquetvic.asn.au)

**SMALL PRINT**  
Competitors aged under 18 at the time of the tournament must provide parental/caregiver consent with their entry.  
Refreshments will be available. You will need to BYO lunch.  
Requirements for Working with Children checks will be fully complied with.

**USEFUL INFORMATION and CONTACTS**

Conditions of play  
Funding support  
Entry form  
Billing  
Kate Patrick, Under 21 Coordinator, email  
[u21coordinator@croquetvic.asn.au](mailto:u21coordinator@croquetvic.asn.au)  
Local motels  
<https://croquetvic.asn.au/accommodation.php>

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## **State Golf Croquet Handicapper Report:** *Maurice Cevaal-Hewitt*

I have received ongoing requests for a skill set for each handicap. I have provided the list workshopped by my own region (NEDCA). There has been generally positive feedback for this skill set.

I am currently reviewing Advantage Croquet, which does not use extra strokes for Handicap Play but instead gave the weaker player an advantage in the form of a certain number of hoops. Unlike the current form of handicap Golf Croquet, this version does not require different tactics from the level game and it was believed that this made it easier for new and improving players to develop.

## **State Coordinator of Coaching Report:** *Ruth Duffy*

### **ACA National Coaching Programme roll out in Victoria.**

Originally, we were to be first cab off the rank, but Covid-19 brought about fluid changes to our plans. On reflection and attending the Canberra sessions, I can say we gained from being last as Greg Bury (ACA National Coordinator of Coaching) continued to develop his presentation after reflection on each session he ran.

Successful is an understatement. Wow what a week.

Greg Bury (ACA NCC) was in Victoria to train as many of Victorian existing coaches as possible and train Victorian Presenter/Assessors, so that Victoria is set up for coaching success.

It was a huge success; the material and boundless energy Greg Bury (ACA NCC) brought can be surpassed by very few. His love for the sport is contagious. His belief in what he has worked 1000's hours to bring together and produce (14 coaching manuals) in such a short time frame radiates from him.

Listening and watching Greg present at the Coaching Conference, re-certification, Academy, how to improve your game in AC and GC and the Under 21's day, one cannot help but be engaged in the positivity and fun of the process.

I believe that we the VCA family owe Greg a huge thanks, for he has given more of himself than anyone individual should be expected to give. Especially when on 15-hour contract with ACA and using his long service leave and holiday entitlements to achieve this dream. Even then, I would think not many would give so much of themselves, their employment status, and financially to achieve so much for Croquet coaching.

His skill in networking and bringing professionals outside of the Croquet community on board, to help achieve his vision for coaching (bringing it into this century and beyond) via graphics and design, (designing videos and ball movements on screen) which those that have seen them can concur with me, are all most excellent.

### **Coaching Conference:**

We had 21 in attendance, Greg Bury NCC shared the developments in ACA coaching programme.

### **Overview of Reviews**

The reviews I received from coaches were for the most part positive.

Though comments re: less levels presented each day, and more on court coaching skills. One of our most respected coaches verbally commented "The best Coaching material and accreditation that they had ever attended....." No higher praise can be given.

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## **How to Improve your game sessions**

Sadly, these sessions were mis advertised on the ACA flyer, as it was hoped by Greg that all the recertified coaches would have attended, so that they saw the drills he has developed in practice.

**AC** we had 11 players in attendance, 6 of whom are current coaches.

**GC** we had 20 players in attendance, 6 of whom are current coaches

**FEEDBACK** was extremely positive, and attendees felt they had gained so much from the session.

## **ACADEMY SESSION**

18 members attended, and Greg shared his plans for the development and use of the Academy on ACA website.

## **COACHING U21**

9 attended and thank you to their parents and carers that travelled with them. Great fun was had by all.

## **My thanks go to:**

All of those named below for their support and others that just got in and completed something that they could see required dealing with. My heart felt Thank you.

Thank you, Paul Lund (President Williamstown CC) for allowing the use your TV for the event.

Thank you, Claire Keating, for learning how to connect multiple TVs and what equipment to purchase, for your support, guidance, hot chocolate, domestic tasks and taking care of the morning/ afternoon tea.

Thank you, Kate Petersen, for driving from Geelong 3 days to be the welcoming person and QR code person extraordinaire. Along with Domestic tasks and your care of me. Thank you, Ian Petersen for being a meet and greet person welcoming the new members to VCC, and your care of me.

Thank you, Kate Patrick for the hot chocolate, being the welcome person for U21's and QR code controller, reimbursement form person, taking photos of and helping at the end of the week with domestic tasks, and your positive feedback of how the week was run.

Thank you, Kevin Beard for coming out in the pouring rain, to give me the rundown of what the VCC Subcommittee had put in place (TV set up, black out blinds, furniture rearranging and the Key). Also, for assisting Greg on the How to improve your game day. Thank Lester Hughes, for your coaching assistance with Greg during the How to Improve your GC game and U21 session, (taking the blackout curtains down and helping me get the venue back in order, delivering Williamstown TV back to them safely). Huge hug for helping me pack my car at end of week.

Thank you, Owen, and Janet Dickinson, for allowing me to share your lovely home and Charlie, for feeding me and making sure I was okay. Owen thank you for all the support you gave me (lifting hoops, setting hoops, packing up, and being a welcome person to those that attended and engage them in conversation).

Thank you, Stephen Forster (Vice President) for collecting Greg and Francesca from the airport, being front and centre introducing Greg, being a bundle of positivity and fun throughout. Assisting Greg with the How to Improve your Game GC and AC. (Being the TV go to guy and getting it working with Kevin and Claire, also the blackout curtains).

Thank you, Robert Jury for washing the mugs. Thank you VCC Subcommittee for being there.

**COACHING STATUS IN VICTORIA END MARCH 2021  
TABLES TO DATE OF:  
SUMMARY OF COACHES RECERTIFIED TO DATE**

	AC	GB	GC	Ric
Level 1	20	3	19	4
Level 2	17	2	17	2
Level 3	5		8	
Level 4	3			

**PRESENTER/ASSESSORS**

	AC	GB	GC	Ric
Level 1	3	1	4	1
Level 2	3	1	4	1
Level 3	2		4	
Level 4	2			
Total	3	1	4	1

**OLD SYSTEM COACHES APPLICATIONS RECEIVED TO RECERTIFY**

F L1 coaches to recertify	AC	GB	GC	Ric
Level 1	3		5	
Level 2	4		5	
Level 3			1	
Level 4				

**NEW COACH APPLICATIONS RECEIVED**

New Coaches	AC	GB	GC	Ric
Level 1	6		18	

**RETIRED COACHES**

Resigned Coaches	AC	GB	GC	Ric
Foundation Level 1	7	0	15	2

*\*ill health/ age / left VCA/or club politics*

Written in Good faith

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## **State Handicap Recorder Report:** *Ian McKee*

The year was quiet but is now picking up. As said in last year's report a major problem remains that many clubs do not report handicap changes as is requested.

An innovation in this reporting period was the action by Gareth Bushell, which now picks up inconsistent handicap values and index points. This includes typographical errors, and is a great help to me. It also allowed a lot of previous errors to be located and corrected.

The work load is not onerous probably between one and two hours per week in the busy season.

## **Club Development Officer Report:** *Kate Patrick*

### **BACKGROUND**

The Club Development Officer is a voluntary officer of Croquet Victoria, appointed by the Council of Croquet Victoria at the meeting following the Annual General Meeting, for a two year term. Key tasks to be undertaken by the CDO are:

- work with affiliated clubs to help them strengthen their membership base and overall functionality
- bring together and lead a group of members to collaborate in this work
- provide the Treasurer with an initial budget within two months of appointment.
- 

### **1. Work with affiliated clubs**

#### **(a) Initial contact**

Contact has been made with the clubs whose Regional Director indicated that they were concerned about their membership post-COVID.

All clubs approached have been positive. One adverse response has been received from a Regional Director; the approach letter has been modified to take account of their comments.

Almost all clubs have indicated that they appreciate the offer of support but are not seeking to be visited for the time being. I have been in further discussion with officers of four clubs and I am planning visits during the winter months, which provide an opportunity for reflection and planning.

#### **(b) Prioritising clubs to approach**

Council has approved the following working criteria:

- fewer than 10 members [currently three clubs: Wycheproof, Sarsfield and Cobram]
- direct request by the club [Brimbank has requested help in the future]
- recommendation from Regional Director/ Regional Association [Goulburn Valley has suggested that each club in the region be separately approached].
- 

#### **(c) Examples of support to be offered**

The range of Croquet Victoria support which the CDO might help clubs access includes:

- Open-ended discussion of opportunities in the club environment
  - Help in conversations with local council
  - analysis of Health and Wellbeing plans
  - suggesting avenues for approaching council
  - providing Croquet Facility Guide and 2020-2030 Infrastructure Plan to support case with LGA for improved club facilities
- Strategies for recruiting groups of people
- Help with using Zoom
- Publicity materials

- 
- Video featuring young players
  - Assistance in understanding roles of club executives
  - Access to coaching and refereeing (via the relevant coordinators).

As meetings with clubs progress, it will be clearer what help is likely to be useful. I have started by collecting together LGA Health and Wellbeing Plans and checking for the opportunities they offer for developing involvement in croquet locally.

## **2. Establishment of a support group**

Several members from different clubs have agreed to provide support for planning club development activities. In late 2020 two meetings were held via Zoom. Further meetings will be convened as necessary later in the year.

My thanks to these members for their support.

## **3. Budget**

A budget for the position was endorsed by the Treasurer and approved by Council at its meeting in October 2020.

## **Complaint Officer Report: *Hetty Veldman***

Following the most extraordinary year most of us will experience in what remains of our lives, the lockdown hiatus of almost eight months has resulted in my claiming to have had a very peaceful year during which the only complaint with which I had to deal was erroneously levelled at me!

There is no doubt that the majority of issues between players, club and/or committee members can be minimised or even avoided by open, honest and appropriate communication with the people most directly involved. Nothing can be more guaranteed to lead to an unnecessary escalation of an incident to global proportions than discussing an issue of concern with everyone but the folk who most need to be in the first line of communication. Simply put - if you think I can do better - tell me - I'm the only one who can do something about it.

I am hopeful that the year of Covid, which challenged pretty well every aspect of our lives, including our values, may have resulted in a better appreciation of what it means to be mindful of each others individual rights and given rise to a new level of restraint that will leave room for greater respect and reduced volatility both on and off the croquet court.

Complaint Officers deal with a wide range of matters from the real to the imagined, the vexatious and irritating to those of earth shattering proportions that beggar belief and are potentially matters for civil and legal intervention.

When members choose not to behave in a way that positively enhances and supports the reputation of their club and the VCA by honouring relevant Codes of Conduct more in the breach than the observance, the level of complaints that come my way rises exponentially. Conversely when they treat each other, and, indeed, themselves with due care, positions like mine will ultimately not exist - along with visions of flying pigs!

For the year just past, I am relieved to have been the Complaint Officer in name only.



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## Marketing & Publicity Sub-Committee Report: *Kate Patrick*

### Terms of reference

The Marketing and Publicity sub-committee's role is to promote the sport of croquet across Victoria and southern NSW.

### Membership

Members of the subcommittee from August 2020 to date were Kate Patrick (Western Metro) (convenor), Sarina Cevaal-Hewitt (North Eastern), Heather Dawn (Northern District), and Rita Jenkins (Goulburn Valley). Robert Smallwood (Gippsland) and Noel Gilcrist (Bayside) joined the committee in October 2020, but were unable to continue as members in 2021.

During the year we met via Zoom around once a month.

We have provided updates on our work at every Council meeting and most Committee of Management meetings.

### Achievements

The outstanding publicity enterprise for the year was the contract with FoxSports to **live stream selected croquet events** during 2021 on Kayo, the subscription sports channel. This follows through our commitment to positioning croquet as a serious sport. The licence fee paid by FoxSport funds the cost of the live streaming, including the commentary. The agreement was achieved after eight months of collaborative work involving members of the sub-committee and representatives of other niche community sports (fencing, dragon boat, and Ultimate [team frisbee]).

Other activities of the sub-committee are listed below under relevant headings from the Croquet Victoria Strategic Plan.

### Image

We continue to support a **network of club publicity officers** with a monthly newsletter (copied to club secretaries where clubs do not have a publicity officer). A Zoom workshop for publicity officers is planned for July 2021.

### Publicity resources

We continue to refresh the **trifold publicity leaflet**, which has been strongly in demand by clubs restarting their activities following lockdown.

**Teardrop banners** featuring the word CROQUET have been distributed to all regions requesting one, and have been prominent at regional and state events.

Our **health-oriented videos** are still attracting interest, with 400 more hits in the course of the year.

We commissioned and circulated **templates** for clubs to customise to advertise their recruitment events generally and World Croquet Day in particular. We also have a stock of **high resolution photographs** for clubs to use.

**Branded pens**, with stylus, are now available again for clubs and individuals to buy (and spread around the community). The pens are labelled with the slogan *CROQUET - The next big hit*, and the Croquet Victoria URL.

We commissioned a **refreshed design for *Malletsports***, which is now circulated exclusively in soft copy. Members of the sub-committee guest edited an early issue using the new format.

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### **Publicity activities**

We have updated the **front page of the Croquet Victoria website** with a slideshow featuring a range of croquet and gateball activities. We have also maintained a regular flow of news items on the front page, including update to the Return to Croquet guidelines as government requirements have changed.

We continue to be active on **social media**. Our Facebook page is updated frequently, and continues to attract new followers (currently 831) and page shares. A feed from the Facebook page goes to Instagram and Twitter.

In line with suggestions we put forward to the informal national publicity group, Croquet Australia has commissioned a series of brief **video advertisements** which are being rolled out across social media.

Activities that did not proceed in 2020/2021 because of COVID include the 2020 World Croquet Day, the 2020 Teachers Games, and the 2021 Government House Open Day. We intend to participate in these activities in the future.

### **Membership and capability**

The [Growing Croquet](#) page of the Croquet Victoria website has been maintained and extended. This is designed to provide support for clubs wishing to expand their membership and develop their capability.

We updated the **Croquet Facility Guide** to include new information about the proposed Australian Standard for lighting croquet courts. Soft copy of the *Guide* (now in its third edition) was emailed to all Victorian Local Government Areas and relevant LGAs in southern NSW, and printed copies are being provided on request. The aim is to ensure that

- 1 local government sports planning takes into account the contribution croquet can make to the health and wellbeing of the local community
- 2 planning officers have the information they need about the requirements of a croquet facility.

This approach seems to be working. Croquet Victoria has been approached by several Councils who are aware of the *Croquet Facility Guide* and wish to include croquet in conversations about future sports facilities. These requests have led to discussions involving local government / consultants, the relevant croquet clubs and region, and representatives of Marketing and Publicity.

### **Marketing plan**

In November 2020 the sub-committee drafted a marketing plan aligned with the Croquet Victoria Strategic Plan.

Key external target groups were identified as:

- juniors who are not active in other sports
- juniors who are successful in target sports
- sporty working age adults carrying an injury
- returning players
- retirees interested in a new competitive sport or a sociable pastime

The key internal clients were identified as publicity officers and club secretaries where there is no publicity officer.

This framework was used to generate the targeted marketing strategies which were included in our proposed budget for the year 2021/2022.

### **Thanks**

Many thanks to all members of the sub-committee. Also to everyone who has contributed to the publicity effort: members writing tournament reports, photographers providing high quality action pictures, club publicity officers, and club office-bearers.

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## **Strategic Plan 2021-2026 Report:** *Kate Patrick*

### **BACKGROUND**

In April 2019 Croquet Victoria Council approved the establishment of a working group to develop a new strategic plan, to succeed the 2015-2020 strategic plan. The aim was to prepare a Strategic Plan and Implementation Plan for approval by Council at or before their meeting in October 2020.

Members appointed to the working group were Sarina Cevaal-Hewitt, Charles Rees and Kate Patrick, with Jim Clement a member ex officio. Current Directors Lyndsay Neilson and Russell Worland have since adopted the WG as a Portfolio responsibility.

In the period up to February 2020, the Vision, Goals, and Strategies were approved by Council. Work on the Strategic Plan was then suspended, as a result of COVID-19.

### **ACTIVITY IN 2020/2021**

In September 2020 Council endorsed the development of an interim Recovery Year plan for 2021, to be followed by the new Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2026. Further development and consultation in relation to the elements of the plan was deferred to 2021.

The [plan for the Recovery Year](#) in 2021 was approved by Council in February 2021. The following goals were set for the year:

- rebuild membership
- help clubs struggling with post-COVID financial issues
- rebuild the tournament calendar and recruitment to tournaments
- maintain and develop the sport of croquet and gateball (including developing interest in ricochet)
- support the introduction of the new coaching system
- encourage members and clubs to engage with the new coach training system
- reschedule the Player Development Project
- support the introduction of the new AC Laws
- extend activities for Under 21s
- review governance as required by SRV (a condition of the COVID survival grant) and ensure that Council membership is at least 40% men and 40% women.

The Strategic Plan Implementation sub-committee has taken on the task of monitoring the implementation of the Recovery Year plan.

The Working Group has now recommenced work on the full Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2026.

Key activities include:

- a revised timetable for the planning process, including presentation to Council at key stages and circulation of a complete draft to Regions for comment following the August 2021 Council meeting. The timetable has been published on the website at [croquetvic.asn.au/PlanningForCroquet](http://croquetvic.asn.au/PlanningForCroquet)
- work towards a five year financial plan aligned with the Strategic Plan. The WG has discussed with the Treasurer the potential financial implications of the strategies approved by Council, and the Treasurer is now developing a a five year financial plan to align with the Strategic Plan.
- drafting outcome measures for the plan as a whole, to be presented to Council in June 2021.

Thanks to all members of the WG for their contributions during a trying year.

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# Strategic Plan Implementation Sub-Committee Report:

*Kate Patrick*

## **BACKGROUND**

The Strategic Plan Implementation Sub-Committee has responsibility for monitoring and reporting progress towards the goals of Croquet Victoria's strategic plans via a rolling implementation plan. The scope of the sub-committee also includes projects funded under the Victorian Government's Together More Active Foundation grant.

Members of the SPISC in 2020-2021 were Sarina Cevaal-Hewitt, Kate Patrick, and Maria Harvey, along with Jim Clement (ex officio).

Since the last Annual Report, Croquet Victoria has

- 1 reached the end of its 2015-2020 Strategic Plan
- 2 adopted an interim strategic plan for the current year (the "Recovery Year")
- 3 continued work on an officials' pathway project funded under the TMA Foundation grant.

## **1. 2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN**

In December 2020, SPISC reported to Council on outcomes of the plan overall, and achievements in the course of 2020. The Croquet Victoria website has details - see [croquetvic.asn.au/PlanningForCroquet](http://croquetvic.asn.au/PlanningForCroquet).

Status of some of the key targets for the end of the 2015- 2020 Strategic Plan:

## **GOVERNANCE**

Council members have had access to training in governance. Pilot training sessions have been held in the regions [target was training for a majority of Council, regional and club committee members].

- 40% of Council members at that time were women [target was a minimum 40%]
- 84 of our 88 clubs had a declared approach to Child Safety [target was 100%]

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Some progress.

- some clubs have set a target membership number and some have a strategic plan [target was a majority]
- in terms of demographics, the target was an additional 300 members between 30 and 60. Comparative data are not available, but in Jan 2020 club estimates suggest a total of 300 current members were aged between 40 and 60.

## **IMAGE**

Some progress.

- increased engagement with local government – mainly at state level [target was at club level]
- substantial social media presence achieved by clubs and by Croquet Victoria [target met]
- little impact on mainstream media, but new streaming agreement should assist with this.

## **CAPABILITY**

Good progress in relation to tournament managers, GC referees, AC referees [targets met]

- target was for all clubs to have access to support from a designated accredited coach, and a majority of clubs to have two members recently accredited as coaches. Not achieved. The number of recognised coaches has dropped from 205 in Nov 2015 to 52 in Dec 2020. Implementation of the new Croquet Australia coaching program is awaited (delayed by COVID)
- more clubs have lights [target was eight; actual is five]

- 
- four new clubs have been established [target was five].

## **2. RECOVERY YEAR**

On the recommendation of the sub-committee, Council agreed to add follow-up actions to the Recovery Year plan, which was formally adopted by Council in February. SPISC is now monitoring action and achievements in relation to the Recovery Year plan.

## **3. OFFICIALS PATHWAY PROJECT**

*Funded as part of the Foundation Together More Active grant*

The sub-committee is working closely with consultant Dorothy Lapham, and the coordinators for AC and GC refereeing. An agreed document now includes

- selection criteria for appointment as a referee tutor and for appointment as a referee examiner
- job descriptions for a referee tutor and for a referee examiner
- statements of the skills and capabilities to be developed in the training programs for referee tutors and referee examiners

Dorothy Lapham is currently working on designing suitable training programs.

## **4. THANK YOU**

Thanks to the members of the sub-committee for their work on the various tasks which have fallen to them, and to the various state coordinators who have assisted us by providing detail of their plans and achievements.

# **Together More Active Player Development Project Report:**

*Tricia Devlin*

## **BACKGROUND**

The TMA Player Development project, funded by the Victorian Government, has been planned since December 2019, with the interim working group first meeting in January 2020. Soon after, delays due to Coronavirus arose, with reaccreditation of coaches being held up until travel was once more possible. The timeline for this project has been twice resubmitted to the funding body for approval. The project aims to deliver quality coaching in a series of workshops in both Association Croquet and Golf Croquet, across the state.

## **PROGRESS REPORT**

With the reaccreditation of our existing coaches and training of new ones in late March 2021 we are now able to recommence work on this project. Expressions of interest had been sought from clubs who wished to host workshops and these clubs will be contacted again to establish dates, in conjunction with the calendars of the lead coaches. Travel to the Victorian venues has now become possible again.

Coaching material in the form of coach manuals at three levels have been provided by the National Director Coaching. These will be used as the major reference for our lead coaches who will recommence planning for their presentations.

In the latest timeline, July 2021 was the proposed start date for the workshops.

## **FUNDING**

Our initial application was funded for just half the \$40,000 amount requested for the complete project, so the timeline was changed to accommodate this shortfall. However, Croquet Victoria has been invited to apply for further funding in the next round of grants. Applications are due by the end of May, with results due by July. We plan to submit for another \$20,000, which would fund the full project as originally proposed.

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## **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 to March 2021, appointed members were Alan Notley, Terry O'Callaghan and David Ross.

This twelve month period has been extraordinary, not just from the health aspect but also from the projected effect on the economy. Many precipitate decisions have been made which in retrospect have been found wanting.

Portfolio reviews ceased to be face-to-face and could only be shared with JBWere via Zoom. Nevertheless, regular contact was maintained and the portfolio achieved a very impressive 3.74% and 13.54% respectively for 3 Months and 6 Months to the end of March 2021. Whilst the one year return was meaningfully impacted by the dramatic March 2020 quarter sell-off, the fact that it achieved a 26.21% return outcome is outstanding by any measure. Equally importantly the VCA longer term return of 7.33% over 5 years is an excellent result from its overall portfolio structure.

### Portfolio Valuations:

The preserved amount of the original investment CPI indexed to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 is \$4,246,085.

The portfolio valuation as at 31 March 2020 was \$3,510,811.

The portfolio valuation as at 31 March 2021 was \$4,347,720.

VCA drawdowns during the year were \$80,000.

The portfolio valuation as at 30 April 2021 is \$4,463,314.

Using the valuation as at 31 March 2021, the aim over the coming twelve months would be to achieve approximately \$142,000 in interest and dividends whilst indexing the preserved value to the CPI.

### Relationship with JBWere:

Our advisers have maintained their excellent advice and service and the IAG always has prompt responses to enquiries and professional resources in responding to recommendations re the portfolio.

## **VCC Sub-Committee Report:** *David Johnston*

The membership of the inaugural VCC Sub-committee is Stephen Forster (Chair), David Johnston (Secretary), Kevin Beard and Brian Reither. The VCC S-c has communicated regularly by Zoom, email, phone and informal face-to-face discussions. Input from volunteers and professional consultants on a needs basis, advice on organisational requirements from VCA President as ex-officio member and on financial matters from VCA Treasurer when required have all been highly valued. To date this flexible arrangement has proved to be quite effective with a considerable amount of progress achieved in the half-year since the group was elected. The main areas of responsibility are the Clubhouse, lawns, surrounds and other buildings and equipment.

### **1. VCC Clubhouse**

1.1 Following Council approval, Hugh O'Brien of BSS was engaged to project manage the repairs to VCC Clubhouse as set out in the BSS report dated 27 November 2020 on a case-by-case basis.

1.1.1 The masonry repairs to the western end of the clubhouse have been completed by Helicore Structural Services.

1.1.2 A quote recommended by BSS within VCA guidelines for checking drainage

- 
- has been accepted.
  - 1.1.3 A quote recommended by BSS within VCA guidelines for repairing roof leaks has also been accepted.
  - 1.1.4 A quote for removal of trees on the northern side of the building is being sought.
  - 1.1.5 A quote for repairs to the upstairs balcony was not accepted on the recommendation of BSS and alternatives are now being explored.
  - 1.2 A number of items within the Clubhouse have needed maintenance and repairs to keep them in working order.
    - 1.2.1 The kitchen dishwasher has been repaired and its water inlet tap was replaced
    - 1.2.2 A fault in one of the urinals in the mens toilet was repaired and the others checked.
    - 1.2.3 The fan motor in the bar refrigerator was replaced and gas added by Hospitality Equipment Services.
    - 1.2.4 The kitchen refrigerator is not working due to its compressor and fan motor needing replacing (also Hospitality Equipment Services).

## **2. Lawns**

- 2.1 A team of volunteers has kept the playing lawns and immediate surrounds in good condition by mowing on a regular basis. Additional volunteers are being trained to use the mowers.
- 2.2 A professional green-keeper was consulted regarding the fertilising and spraying of the lawns.
- 2.3 Special spraying to eliminate small infestations of weeds has been conducted.
- 2.4 The lawns are in very good condition and players are consistently voicing their appreciation.

## **3. Surrounds**

- 3.1 There was an ongoing problem with littering along the VCC verge fronting Ken Jordan Drive.  
Following consultation with Brimbank City Council, the Council now regularly collects that rubbish.
- 3.2 Since the 'mothballing' of VCC, the hedges had grown to a point where they were starting to push against the fences. In parts they were growing through the fences and protruding into public spaces, thereby rendering VCA potentially liable for any injury incurred as a result. Rectifying those problems proved to be a considerable undertaking. A contractor was engaged to trim the hedges and ground cover where necessary and to remove all cuttings to the Melton rubbish dump.
- 3.3 The rear car park area was also cleared and sprayed for weeds.

## **4. Other Buildings and Equipment**

- 4.1 A self-propelled hand mower has been purchased from donations. It will be used for lawn edges and surrounding raised areas.
- 4.2 The Toro mower has been serviced and the Stihl brush cutter repaired.
- 4.3 The first aid kits located in the kitchen and office have been restocked and a new outdoor first aid kit purchased for the back shed.
- 4.4 The defibrillator battery has been checked and its expired two pad component replaced.
- 4.4 Blackout material has been purchased for use in the Clubhouse for reduction of glare for presentation purposes.

## **5. Other Matters**

- 5.1 The existing COVID responsible regime is updated as required.

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- 5.2 A roster of people who can provide access to VCC is in operation.
  - 5.3 A pool of tournament managers is being developed.
  - 5.4 The former sanitary hygiene service is resumed.
  - 5.5 Following each tournament, players and supporters conducted the internal cleaning of the clubhouse and its facilities. It is working very well with people happily helping out. However, there will need to be consideration given to engaging professional cleaners to supplement our efforts.

### **6. Usage Records**

- 6.1 VCC has been in use since November 27, 2020, but the number of events and attendances, like everything else, have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Three ACA events were cancelled (AC Doubles and Singles Championships and GC President's Eights). This was a loss of 12 days play at VCC.
- 6.2 Since the November 27 resumption until the time of writing this report (May 3), there have been 34 days of croquet tournaments including 10 GC tournaments and 10 AC tournaments.
- 6.3 There has been a Carnival of Croquet over 3 days with play at all levels and coaching in GC, AC, Ricochet and Gateball. This will become an annual event.
- 6.4 A new annual AC event (Jean Rentoul Memorial) has been established for women with handicaps in the range 10 to 20 with prize money from a bequest from Jean.
- 6.5 Brimbank CC have had 30 days of play at VCC over this period.
- 6.6 The ACA National coaching programme was rolled out at VCC over 5 days for Victorian coaches in GC, AC, Ricochet and Gateball.
- 6.7 There have been 3 Referee Laws/Rules refresher days.
- 6.8 The total number of people who have attended events at VCC is about 1,200 in this period.

### **7. Acknowledgement**

We, the VCC S-c Team, sincerely thank everyone who has supported us, and what we are trying to accomplish, with the VCC being a viable and respected establishment for playing and promoting croquet for all. Your efforts have been wonderful and for the benefit of many.



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