

Croquet Victoria

Annual Report 2022/2023

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Annual Report 2022/2023

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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 3051 individual members belonging to 88 clubs in 14 Regional Associations throughout Victoria and in southern NSW.

It is governed by its State Council, consisting of 14 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 *Mallet News Victoria* magazine and social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and the Croquet Victoria website)
- providing publicity resources and support
- developing and implementing 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.

President's Report: *Kate Patrick*

After the disruption caused by the COVID pandemic, croquet returned to a more normal state in 2022/23.

Congratulations to the many clubs that have increased their membership – we currently have a total of 3054 members, 200 more than at the start of the pandemic. Tournaments have resumed, and the Victorian Croquet Centre hosted the MacRobertson Shield for the first time (deferred from 2021). The Australian team did us proud, a worthy runner up to England. It was also great to see the Player Development Program successfully implemented across Croquet Victoria, with host clubs including Bairnsdale, Charlton, Boort, Mildura, Warrnambool, Ballarat, Beechworth, Ringwood, Brighton, and Elwood.

Three big issues have faced us this year:

- We have battled all year without an ongoing appointment to the position of Secretary. Thanks to Maurice Cevaal-Hewitt for acting as Interim Secretary and to Sarina for supporting him. We have subtracted some administrative tasks from the Secretary's role, contracting Diana Dib Barbar to undertake them for us, and we have established that it would be constitutional for Croquet Victoria to pay a Secretary. The Secretary has a crucial and responsible role – hopefully a member with governance experience will step forward in June.
- The Victorian Croquet Centre Futures working group has been following up the 2021 report commissioned by Council after the “mothballing” of the VCC. The working group plans to provide a discussion paper on options for the future of the VCC early in the second half of this year.
- Another working group has been tasked with revising the constitution of Croquet Victoria. The group was asked to prepare a new constitution with a smaller Board (up to 11 members) elected by all members. Work on this has stalled with the departure of the working group coordinator. I am advised that working group members intend to re-start the work shortly.

As the incoming President, I have an ex officio role in many of the activities of Croquet Victoria. This has involved

- chairing meetings of Council and of the Committee of Management. These meetings moved on to Zoom as part of our response to the pandemic, and have generally continued on Zoom (apart from the Annual General Meeting and the December Council meeting, which are face to face). Thanks to the Directors, including our seven new Directors, for their willingness to contend with this format.
- attending numerous meetings of Council committees and working parties
- representing Croquet Victoria at functions hosted by the Governor and by Sport and Recreation Victoria
- representing Council at club and regional celebrations and events – for instance at the centenary celebrations at Horsham Croquet Club, the 30th birthday of Macedon Ranges Croquet Club, and the Association Croquet Country Regionals.
- presenting badges to new awardees: Life Membership to Daphne Alcorn (Brighton); a President's Service Award to Rosalie Newman (Ballarat Western) for her editorship of *Malletsports* over the past 12 years.

I have also been involved in ongoing discussions with other Presidents / Chairs of the Australian state croquet associations. Since the appointment of Mel Woosnam as Croquet Australia Chief Executive Officer, these discussions have morphed into a monthly Zoom meeting to discuss matters of common interest, including

- the development of a centralised croquet database and website. Previous work on this has been carefully scrutinised by our Webmaster; following discussion with the other

states and the Croquet Australia Board, the Board has decided to develop a new approach.

- the organisation of national and international tournaments
- management of complaints under the new National Integrity Framework. Victoria is arguing that the current spaghetti of ACA policies needs to be simpler and clearer.

Finally, on behalf of Croquet Victoria, I'd like to thank all our volunteers for their work: supporting Council, keeping the Victorian Croquet Centre open and functioning, officiating at tournaments, and contributing to all our clubs and regions. It's wonderful to be part of such a strong croquet community.

Interim Secretary's Report: *Maurice Cevaal-Hewitt*

I have held the position of Interim Secretary since the August 2023 Council Meeting.

The duties of the State Secretary are listed in both the Croquet Victoria Constitution and By-Laws.

Meeting Agendas and Minutes have been distributed within specified timeframes.

Our membership remains above 3000.

The following Croquet Victoria policies have been amended since the 2021-2022 Annual Report:

- Appointees Sub-Committees & Working Group Policy
- Selection Policy

The following Croquet Victoria Terms of References have been adopted or amended since the 2021-2022 Annual Report:

- VCC Futures Working Group (adopted)
- Guide for Club Secretaries Working Group (adopted)
- Marketing & Publicity Sub-Committee (amended)

During the year, elected Directors' attendance at CoM and Council meetings from the Council Meeting in June 2022 to the Committee of Management Meeting in May 2023 was:

Kate Patrick, President	12/12	Paul Coughlin	7/12
Stephen Forster, Vice-President	10/12	Lynne Roberts	0/12
Maurice Cevaal-Hewitt, Interim Secretary	9 /10	Mike Cohn	0 /12
Claire Keating, Treasurer	12/12	Janet Leckie-Brunton	7/12
Helen Worladge	12/12	Eileen Gough	8 /12

and Regional representation at Council meetings was:

Ballarat	7/7	Goldfields	3/3	South Eastern Metro	5/7
Bayside	7/7	Goulburn Valley	4/7	South West	5/7
Eastern Metro	6/7	Murray Valley	3/7	Western Metro	7/7
Geelong	4/7	Northern Districts	6/7	Wimmera	7/7
Gippsland	4/7	North Eastern District	7/7		

Sub-Committee and Working Group members can be found at this link on the Croquet Victoria website.

[Sub-Committees | Croquet Victoria](#)

VCA Website Manager's Report: *Gareth Bushill*

VCA Club Survey

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

Content changes

The Golf Croquet and Ricochet landing pages were revamped and now include videos.

ACA National Player Database

For the second year in a row, almost all of the work done to the VCA website this year was in relation to the new ACA National Player Database.

Two platform versions were provided to VCA for integration with our existing website and database. Both were tested thoroughly, and neither one was found to be suitable for VCA's needs. Neither one has been deployed, and ACA is now working on a third version.

Admin function enhancements

Numerous improvements were made to the function in the "One Stop Shop", the single portal for making changes to the website used by VCA officers and the Tournaments/Fixtures committee.

State Coordinator of Ricochet Croquet Report:

Maurice Cevaal-Hewitt

A State Ricochet Croquet Championship was scheduled for March 2023, however there was insufficient interest for this to proceed.

The past year has seen a National Ricochet Championship at Tempe NSW and some clubs throughout Victoria have held competitive Ricochet Croquet events.



Ricochet Coaching at Hamilton Croquet Club

I have travelled to several clubs introducing and demonstrating Ricochet Croquet.

I passed the accreditation Exam to become the State Ricochet Referee Tutor Examiner. Judy Stewart of Warrnambool and Graeme Jones of Maryborough have accredited as Ricochet Croquet Referees and Graeme Jones has accredited as a Ricochet Level 1 Coach.

There is a Division 3 Ricochet Croquet Championship scheduled for September 2023 and a Division 2 Championship in May 2024, hopefully there will be a bit more interest as players become more confident with their abilities.

I will continue the introduction and demonstration of Ricochet Croquet to any club that requests it.

State Coordinator of Association Croquet Referees Report:

Brian Foley

The 2022-23 croquet season was marked by the full resumption of tournaments at club, regional, national and international levels. Many of these events had not occurred in the previous two seasons due to Covid restrictions and lockdowns.

In Association Croquet, all the major state level championships resumed although numbers of players were below normal in some events early in the season. In addition to the regular annual events, in November Victoria hosted the MacRobertson Shield international teams event contested by England, New Zealand, USA and Australia. Also in March, Victoria hosted the Eire Cup national teams event contested by each of the six states. The ACA Men's and Women's Championships and the ACA Gold and Silver Medal events were also held in the weeks prior to the Eire Cup. In total, there was a total of 60 days of Association Croquet play in these major events compared with just over 30 days in other seasons. It has been a very busy time refereeing all these events.

Our number of fully accredited and active Association Croquet referees has reduced over recent years as many have retired due to age, poor health and other causes. As a result, Mike Cohn and I did most of the refereeing at these major events. We did have other local referees for some events and help from interstate referees for the ACA events and the MacRobertson Shield. For the latter event we also had Graeme Roberts from New Zealand. Some of our more experienced referees are also active referees and some of these officiated at times. I was unavailable for several weeks early in the season due to health problems. I thank Mike Cohn for taking on my responsibilities at that time.

We currently have 26 fully accredited Association Croquet referees and four umpires. No new referees were accredited during the past season although we have some 15 potential referees in various stages of training. We expect some of these to be qualified over coming months. One difficulty in the training program is the lack of experienced tutor referees. Mignon Johnston and Charles Quinn have been appointed as tutors this season and are now running programs. They are both active players so much of their training activity is outside the playing season. There are also over 60 other referees who do not meet the current ACA accreditation requirements but can officiate in their own clubs.

I conducted a number of information and training sessions covering most aspects of refereeing. Some of these sessions have been face to face while others were on Zoom. Both existing and prospective referees have attended these sessions.

Version 7 of the Laws of Association Croquet were introduced from 1 July 2021 and have now operated for two seasons without any major problems. All active players and referees seem to be familiar with the laws.

State Coordinator of Golf Croquet Referees Report:

John van der Touw

Coordinating the training, accreditation and reaccreditation of Golf Croquet referees in Victoria

Training and accreditation

Two new referees were accredited after attending a course run by Graeme Jones in the Goldfields region.

I ran an online referee accreditation course in the second half of 2022. So far only one of those who attended the course has passed. Two more have attempted the final exams

but failed. It's likely that they will reattempt the exam and three others will attempt the exams before the end of the year. I started two parallel online referee accreditation courses in March this year with 23 attendees in total.

I hope to run at least one two-day (on-court) Rules Courses in the second half of this year.

Plans are in progress with the Wimmera region for one of them. I also plan to hold one or two sessions in country regions with the aim of appointing new Golf Croquet referee examiners and, possibly, new tutor referees.

Coordinate running of Golf Croquet Referee Refresher Days throughout Victoria on annual basis

Reaccreditation

Because there have been quite a number of important rule changes in the 2018 and 2022 editions of the Golf Croquet Rules, referees were required to pass an Open Book exam in order to remain accredited.

Referees were allowed to have multiple attempts over about a twenty-week period. If an attempt was unsuccessful, detailed individual feedback was given to help with referees the next attempt. Many referees said that although the exam was tough, it was a useful exercise, and they learned a lot from it.

In October 2022 there were 109 accredited referees, but many were no longer active referees. This is the current situation after the deadline for submitting attempts.

- 67 passed the exam.
- 4 referees were given an extension for medical or compassionate reasons.
- 24 referees had resigned.
 - 21 said that they did so for health reasons or because they had not refereed for a long time and/or had not kept up with rule changes.
 - 3 expressed a degree of annoyance, either because they felt the rules were changed too often or they thought the Open Book exam was too difficult or time consuming.
- 13 referees failed the Open Book exam.
 - 10 did not submit any attempts.
 - 3 submitted at least one attempt but did not pass.
- One referee died between October 2022 and April 2023.

The 3 new referees (accredited after October 2022) did not have to do the reaccreditation exam.

Some referees from the Wimmera region did not resign but complained (to the VCA, not to me directly) that they should not need to do an exam to show that they understood the rules. Those who failed the exam or did not attempt it were removed from the list of accredited referees.

Normally referees gain reaccreditation by attending a Referee Refresher Day at least once every two years. The Open Book exam has not replaced that process and Referee Refresher Days will recommence later. Some will be run by me and some by tutor referees in other regions.

Appointing referees and acting as Tournament Referee for VCA and ACA events

I appointed referees for the following Golf Croquet events:

VCA Men's and Women's Singles Championships (August 2022),
VCA Selectors Invitation (August 2022), Owen Edwards Cup (November 2022),
VCA Hcp Singles and Doubles (December 2022),
Australia Day Event (January 2023*),
VCA Open Singles and Doubles (January 2023),
ACA President's Eights (February 2023*) and VCA Bronze and Selectors Events (April 2023).

I was Tournament Referee for two of those events (as indicated by the asterisks).

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

I have continued to receive and answer questions about the Golf Croquet rules. The 20-minute video I produced on the main changes in the 6th edition Golf Croquet Rules has had 4,738 views.

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

During the past year I have answered several questions on the Golf Croquet handicapping system and advised Club Handicappers how to assign a handicap for a new player.

A Golf Croquet Handicapping Workshop was delivered at the Queenscliff Croquet Club with nine attendees from five clubs. The workshop included a discussion on a **skills matrix** that assists the Club Handicapper to assign the correct handicap.



Golf Croquet Handicapping Workshop at Queenscliff.

I have requested that each Club provide me with the name of their Club Handicapper/s.

Each Region will be offered a Handicapping Workshop so that the Club Handicapper will understand their responsibilities.

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.

OVERVIEW

In 2022 play got back on track after the restrictions of COVID.

Croquet Victoria is committed to implementing the new Child Safe standards, which were introduced by the Victorian Government from 1 July 2022. Vicsport have awarded us a consultancy worth up to \$20,000 and are developing on-line resources to help clubs implement these standards. In the meantime, clubs have been invited to nominate a child safe champion to participate in a set of on-line webinars produced by Vicsport.

1 Recruitment

Encouragingly, a couple of clubs have recruited new under 21 members, but the number of members across Croquet Victoria is still small, and membership at Casterton has dwindled further.

2 Inter-school activities

It was great to see Goulburn Valley bring back its inter-school Golf Croquet team competition – hopefully this will provide a model for other regions in the future.

3 Connections between interested members

The Under 21 network of affiliated members established in 2020 continued to meet monthly in 2022. Now that travel is possible again, these members have begun to arrange to meet directly.

Our Facebook group *Croquet - the next big hit* continues. This is a closed group for Under 21s



and their families, where stories about young players in action and relevant information can be shared. It is moderated and maintained by Sarina Ceva-al-Hewitt and regularly includes posts from some of our junior members.

4 ACA Under 21 Gold Medal

In December 2022 four Victorian members played off in the ACA Under 21 Bronze Medal (Victoria). George Walker (Beechworth) won and subsequently represented Victoria at the national Under 21 Gold Medal competition.

All four contestants played in both the Australian Under 21 Golf Croquet Doubles and the Australian Under 21 Golf Croquet Singles. On handicap they were ranked lower than the contestants from other states, but they all won at least one game.

5 Future plans

Next season the ACA Under 21 Bronze Medal (Victoria) is to be held at Cairnlea on the first weekend of December. The ACA Under 21 Gold Medal competition follows in January at Maitland Croquet Club, preceding the national Under 21 doubles and singles championships.

Hopefully with COVID no longer constraining competition, it will be possible to build more local activities for juniors. Around a third of the clubs in Croquet Victoria are currently engaged with schools. This should enable the development of more inter-school competition, which has been used so successfully in New Zealand to springboard the development of junior croquet.

State Coordinator of Coaching Report: *Maurice Ceva-al-Hewitt*

I have travelled extensively throughout the State delivering coaching courses on behalf of the Together More Active Program Player Development Project - Golf Croquet (as assistant to John van Der Touw and/or as lead coach). I have also delivered coaching eleven workshops beyond that project.

The Coaching Program Introduced in 2021 has now begun its third year and all coaches have been required to attend a coach refresher after two years, only a few coaches still need to attend a refresher. There has been a number of new coaches accredited for various levels in all codes including Gateball.



Golf Croquet coaching at Shepparton.

Over the past three months there has been a number of coaches surrendering their accreditation. This has added to the burden on the few remaining Level 3 coaches.

The next step is the training of coaches. This will begin at the 2023 Golf Croquet Squad Training Sessions where accredited coaches have been invited to attend with the understanding that they will be given instruction on how to coach in line with the Coaching Manuals.

This year I will be acting as Golf Croquet Squad Coach as no other Level 3 experienced coach came forward to take this duty.

Our Strategic Plan has an aim is to have a coach for each code played at each club. I consider this to be a monumental task as some members of clubs prefer to coach without any accreditation.

I am pleased that the term of Appointed Officers has been extended to two years as it allows time to follow up on projects that have begun.

As the State Coordinator for Coaching, I intend to continue the development of coaches and the understanding of the correct interpretations so that all coaches can join the network and gather and share information as required.

The following tables list the number of accredited coaches in each code.

Association Croquet	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Accredited Coaches	4	13	2	1
Presenter Assessors	1	4	0	2

Golf Croquet	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Accredited Coaches	31	9	6
Presenter Assessors	0	0	4

Ricochet Croquet	Level 1	Level 2
Accredited Coaches	3	0
Presenter Assessors	0	2

Gateball	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Accredited Coaches	3	1	1
Presenter Assessors	0	2	0

State Handicap Recorder Report: *Ian McKee*

I have had very few problems in the last year. I still do not receive AHS1 forms from all tournaments, including pennants. I have had several enquiries about handicapping matters that indicate that people are not aware of the ACA handicapping rules, or perhaps do not know where to find them.

Marketing & Publicity Sub-Committee Report:

Rita Jenkins and Heather Dawn

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 June 2022 to date were Heather Dawn (Northern District) (convenor), Rita Jenkins (Goulburn Valley) (secretary), Julie Barber (Murray Valley) and Kate Patrick (ex officio). 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.

The Sub-Committee which normally has six members has been operating with only four members

Achievements - Livestreaming of events

We continue to coordinate live streaming events. We have developed a commentary kit including sample player profiles, notes for commentators, and a format for practice sessions to induct inexperienced commentators.

Livestreamed events:

Australian Golf Croquet Open Singles, final
3 days 13 to 15 May 2022

Brian Reither Association Croquet
Challenge Cup 10/11 September 2022

Owen Edwards Golf Croquet Challenge
Cup 5/6 November 2022

Australian Golf Croquet Presidents Eights
10 to 12 February 2023, final three days live
streamed.

Australian Golf Croquet Open Singles, final
three days 12 to 14 May 2023

Livestreaming of these five events was
funded and organised by Croquet Victoria with Contribution from Croquet Australia for the
Australian 2023 Golf Croquet Open Singles.



*Livestream from Victorian Croquet Centre 13 May
2023*

MacRobertson Shield, November 2022 Live streaming funded by Croquet Australia -
special thanks to Parbery.

Commentating coordinated by Croquet Victoria with contributing commentators on the
spot and from across the world.

Special thanks to Gareth Denyer who continued to play a role in the commentary and
who also developed a strategy for providing progress scores across all matches in real
time.

Achieved audiences of over 1000 per day worldwide.

Live stream video of all the Croquet Victoria events can now be viewed via the Croquet
Victoria YouTube channel, along with a set of highlights reels from the different events.

New Initiatives

Any questions? – New webpage (listed on the *Resources* tab) where members
can send in any questions for the State Coordinators and other members to
discuss. [Any Questions? | Croquet Victoria](#)

Manage your club page – a new field has been added so that clubs can monitor
their net membership increases since January 2022 in order to see what they may
gain from the \$50 per head increase from Croquet Australia

Image

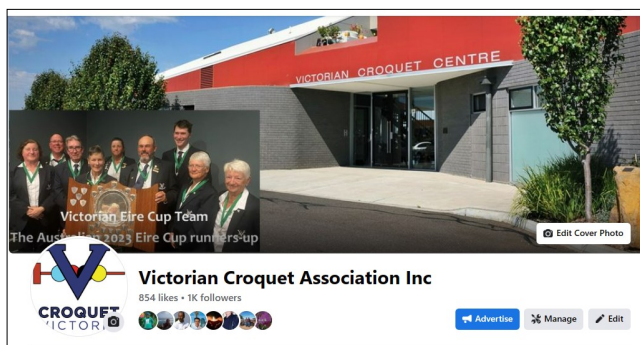
We continue to support a network of club publicity officers with a monthly newsletter
(copied to club secretaries where clubs do not have a publicity officer). A Zoom workshop
for publicity officers is planned each quarter.

Publicity resources We will continue to refresh the **trifold publicity leaflet** and just
designed a **new A4 Poster (Looking for a new sport?)** and this has been in demand
from around the country and will feature in the Croquet Australia Magazine. Clubs can
put their own club details in or by entering your postcode, will come up with clubs near
you and a contact number. Our stock of
high resolution photos is growing.

A Youth Poster – small stocks of this
poster remain.

Social Media

We continue to be active on Facebook,
Instagram, and Twitter. Audience statistics
revealed: Total Facebook followers 1082,
with 855 likes in May 2023. Facebook
followers are made up of 58% women,
mainly over 65; men 42%, again mainly



[Croquet Victoria Facebook banner](#)

over 65. Instagram followers are 60% men and are more evenly spread across the age range 18 to 65+. Twitter has 69 followers.

You Tube Croquet Victoria has 113 videos and channel analytics show us with 244 current subscribers and 1.2K views. Our original health videos are still attracting interest.

[Youtube channel](#)

Branded pens, with stylus, was still 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. These have sold well and supplies are now low.

Bumper stickers, CROQUET - These did not sell as well as expected but some clubs did purchase small quantities to include in welcome packs for new members.

Croquet Victoria Calendar, after an absence of 2 years due to Covid, the 12 month calendar made its return featuring excellent photos from around the state. Sales were lower than expected due to adverse weather conditions/floods affecting many regions. M and P promoted the calendar in social media outlets, Croquet Victoria webpage, and in the public arena. Feedback from members: they were not aware of having a 2022/2023 calendar again published.

Bookmarks – stocks were exhausted during the year.

Publicity activities We continue to refresh the front page of the Croquet Victoria website. It currently provides a link to the *Hit for Health* video targeted at health professionals. We also maintain a regular flow of news items on the front page.

Monthly Newsletters continue to roll out covering various topics from updates on live streaming, news from other clubs, child safety updates, Publicity Network Zoom workshops, Croquet events such as the MacRobertson Shield, Carnival of Croquet. Sale of calendars, pens etc. plus new initiatives.

MacRobertson Shield 2022 – held at Cairnlea. We pushed promotion of the event. It was promoted on the Visit Victoria website with a link to the history of the MacRobertson Shield. Various articles were promoted across local community radio, Vic sport website, Brimbank Council website. The Croquet Victoria Facebook Page usually has over 1000 followers; it reached almost 8000 during the time that the MacRobertson Shield was on.

Mallet News Victoria -The name change from Malletsports to **Mallet News – Victoria** was approved in July 2022 by the Committee of Management and this was formally registered (ISSN 265-6447 online) (1-NDU3R39 ASIC) in August 2022. A review of web data revealed 9% of croquet players download Malletsports from the web and 31% looked at some pages without downloading from the web. Marketing & Publicity were guest editors of the first edition (July 2022) of Mallet News. So far it has been unsuccessful in attracting an editor or editors to keep this publication going.



*Open Day January 2023
Government House Victoria*

2023 Government House Open Day. After a two year hiatus during Covid-19, Croquet returned to the lawns of Government House on Australia Day. Thanks to a team of twelve volunteers who helped over the day, to give 148 visitors a very positive experience of croquet. "Fun" was the single most common comment!

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. [Growing Croquet | Croquet Victoria](#)

The *Croquet Facility Guide* was last updated in February 2021, 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 were provided on request. Copies have also been provided to clubs.

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.

The *Croquet Facility Guide* wasn't re-issued this financial year. We have exhausted our printed stock of the February 2021 edition (still available online).

Feedback and suggestions for updating the *Guide* would be welcome.

Marketing plan

In March 2023 the Sub-Committee updated the marketing plan aligned with the Croquet Victoria Strategic Plan 2022-2026. 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.

Key internal clients were identified as publicity officers and the club secretaries. This framework was used to generate the targeted marketing strategies which were included in our proposed budget for the year 2023/2024.

During the year a survey of new members was initiated to gather information about the background and interests of new members. The number of responses is still small, but the results are interesting: almost all the new members responding have played at least one other sport, and most of them have come to croquet fairly recently (only a few are returning to croquet after a long gap). Our latest recruitment poster was developed with this in mind: it targets people who are thinking of finding a new sport.

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 and those who attend the Publicity Officers Zoom Workshops.

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 2022-2023 were Russell Worland, Paul Coughlin, and Janet Leckie-Brunton, along with Kate Patrick (ex officio).

Since the last Annual Report, Croquet Victoria has

- begun implementing its Strategic Plan for the period 2022 to 2026
- nearly completed its activities under the Together More Active Foundation grant (due to be reported to Sport and Recreation at the end of May 2023).

1. 2022 to 2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

In February 2022 Council finalised its Strategic Plan for the period 2022 to 2026. The Croquet Victoria website has details - see croquetvic.asn.au/PlanningForCroquet.

In consultation with appointed officers and sub-committees, SPISC developed an Implementation Plan for 2022 and began preparing an Implementation Plan for 2023.

The vision underpinning the new plan is to

extend the public recognition, the development and the sustainability of croquet as a sport and a recreational activity for people of all ages and abilities.

The plan encompasses Croquet Victoria's current activities and new initiatives for the future.

During the year we have progressed towards our strategic priorities and goals for Croquet Victoria over the next five years. Examples are provided below

- Capability and sport development
 - Support the growth of all forms of mallet sports
The State Coordinator Ricochet has presented a number of workshops on playing ricochet, introducing it to some clubs and providing training at other clubs where it is already played.
We have agreed that it is our target for every club to have an accredited coach and an accredited referee in every form of the sport which they play. We are making progress towards this objective.
 - Grow croquet as a sport as well as a recreational activity
The Player Development Workshops have been targeted at players ambitious to improve their competitive play.
- Governance and management
 - Maintain commitment to good governance
We have dealt effectively with complaints that have reached us. We continue to receive positive feedback from our auditor.
 - Support and develop leadership and effective and inclusive governance
Several new members have joined Council and the Committee of Management over the past year. All have been offered mentoring and are contributing actively to the work of Council.
- Membership, recruitment and participation
 - Build membership and participation
Our membership is increasing. We are monitoring participation via our annual data collection from clubs; we do not expect to measure growth at this point, however, as there was significantly reduced participation over the COVID period.
 - Extend the demographics of participants in croquet
New members are routinely asked to complete a survey indicating how they came to play croquet and what their background was in other sports. The

Marketing and Publicity sub-committee have used this information to generate a poster directed at potential members coming across from other sports.

- Financial sustainability, funding and sponsorship
 - Use its financial resources wisely, diligently and sustainably in pursuit of its goals
Some sponsorship was achieved at the time of the MacRobertson Shield.
Over the past year we have not needed to draw down on our investments.
 - Enable investment in the development of croquet at club and regional level
Regions have been offered grants to enable clubs to undertake a recruiting activity.
- Image
 - Continue to enhance the image and build the profile of croquet in Victoria
At a state level, we continue to participate in forums with other state sporting organisations.
Clubs are monitoring and reporting their visibility on local media.
The Marketing and Publicity sub-committee continue to provide updated publicity material.
 - Croquet to be recognised as a sport by the wider community
Our live streaming program provides us with a presence on YouTube that can be promoted by other social media.

2. Together More Active Foundation grant 2020-2023

This grant supported activities in three main areas: implementation of our business plan; development pathways for officials; and implementation of our marketing plan. The underlying intent was to fund external expertise to enhance the resources available to us as a small and primarily voluntary state sporting organisation.

As described in the Marketing and Publicity report, the *marketing* section of the funding has been actively used to support the professional development of resources and to enable live streaming of croquet events.

The *officials pathway* section of the funding was used to support

- Referees: the development of a program for training referees, referee tutors, and referee examiners – this has been referred to Croquet Australia who have carriage of refereeing
- Coaches: the development and training of coaches via their attendance at coaching workshops, particularly those organised as part of the Player Development Project (see separate report).
- Handicappers. Training of handicappers had fallen into abeyance; it has recently been revived under the leadership of Maurice Cevaal-Hewitt.

It was intended that some of this funding be applied to training tournament managers, but Croquet Australia has taken responsibility for developing a training program for them, which has taken this out of our hands.

The *business planning* section of the funding was initially intended to be used to support the activities of a Club Development Officer, but this role was impracticable during COVID and is currently unoccupied. It was then to be applied to developing resources to support clubs implementing the new Victorian Child Safe standards, but this work is now being done for us by Vicsport who have allocated consultancy support to a project worth up to \$20,000.

At the time of writing this report, the balance of the business planning funding is being used to bring forward other projects which support our strategic directions: improvements to the website; video resources to assist coach training; access to legal advice (needed to

support good governance); and changing the financial platform we use from MYOB to XERO to enable better and less time consuming reporting.

Together More Active Player Development Project Report:

Tricia Devlin

Croquet Victoria's Player Development project was funded by the Victorian Government in 2019 as a project in their Together More Active program. The project aims to bring more players to competition in both Association Croquet and Golf Croquet, encouraging them to improve their skills and use them in competitive events. We want croquet to be adopted as more than a social pastime, but as a sport in which players can compete and progress.

To achieve this aim, new coaching was to be presented as a series of consecutive workshops for enrolled players who were interested in improving their competitive play. The working group for this project received expressions of interest and approached lead coaches to develop and present training material for the workshops.

This initial project is a pilot, with a coaching programme of three two day workshops at both novice and developing levels. Clubs were asked to indicate if they would host a series of workshops and let us know how many players would be taking part. Players were welcomed to attend from other clubs.

When allocating workshops to host clubs, the working group was able to select clubs from widely spaced regions, from Bairnsdale to Warrnambool and Mildura to Elwood.



*Golf Croquet Workshop at Warrnambool (May 2022)
led by John van der Touw*

Participants attended three workshops led by lead coaches spaced at intervals of about two months, between which they were asked to complete set training drills and enter competitions to use their new skills. They were given folders of written information from the workshops and a training plan to follow. Eight clubs acted as hosts in the first two rounds of workshops, which have now been completed. Six workshops were held for Golf Croquet players and two for Association Croquet players. Note that participants were from other clubs as well, sometimes travelling a considerable distance to attend.

Golf Croquet

Novice competitors: Boort,
Warrnambool, Mildura
Developing competitors: Bairnsdale

Association croquet

Novice competitors: Elwood
Developing competitors: Charlton

The popularity of the workshops was evident, because requests for the final round of coaching came from Beechworth, Wangaratta and Howlong; Rich River and Deniliquin; Charlton, Mildura and Swan Hill; Ballarat (2 clubs); Metro clubs Kew, Monash, MCC, Ringwood, Williamstown,



*Golf Croquet Workshop at Ringwood
led by John van der Touw*

Brighton, Sandringham, RMB; Leongatha, Lakes Entrance, Phillip Island, Drouin; and Warrnambool.

Final round workshops were allocated as widespread as possible, to three regional clubs and three metropolitan clubs. Golf Croquet workshops are being hosted by Ballarat Western, Beechworth, Williamstown and Ringwood, and Association Croquet workshops are being hosted by Warrnambool and Brighton.

Clearly, with the demand for further workshops, the project has been a success. To date, the project has delivered 69 days of expert coaching in eight regions, with about 160 players participating. (Figures are not exact because not every player attended all three workshops, with some new ones entering after the first, and others unable to attend.)

Further workshops can be planned, but will be subject to funding arrangements, as discussed below.



Golf Croquet Workshop at Ballarat Western (March 2023) led by Maurice Cevaal-Hewitt

Funding

Funding for the project was applied for under the Victorian Government Together More Active grant. We applied but received only half the amount planned for. The project was to progress to the next level of training, with workshops offered in Advanced play, but given the reduced budget we have had to focus on just novice and developing competitor workshops.

Each participant was charged only \$20 for the three workshops, which offset the cost of printed material and left some funds towards continuing the project.

The largest cost in delivering the programme was in travel and accommodation for the workshops in regional areas. This amounted to approximately \$3000 per travelling coach. Although the plan initially was conceived to involve one coach at each venue, at venues with bigger numbers it was more efficient to use two. An added benefit was that the less experienced coach was able to develop their coaching skills while presenting the planned course with the coach who designed the programme. Both were paid from the grant funds for travel and attendance, but only the lead coaches provided the coaching plans, which are now able to be used for further repeat workshops with other qualified coaches.

Ultimately this will result in local coaches able to deliver the programme, eliminating the travel costs and enabling the clubs to organise coaching for a smaller cost negotiated with the coaches involved.

Using the workshops to help less experienced coaches upskill has meant that the later workshops could be partly funded from the coach training sections of the Croquet Victoria budget: our regular coaching budget, and the Officials Pathway section of our Together More Active Foundation grant.

Further

The flow on effect from the first series of workshops has meant that clubs who were aware of the project, but not included initially, have requested coaching. This has been carried out already for Golf Croquet, using the coaching material created, at Shepparton, Yarrawonga and two Goldfields region clubs, Bendigo and Eaglehawk as well as Benalla and Wangaratta and Albury. These sessions have trained around 150 players and were funded by the participants and their clubs, at no further cost to Croquet Victoria.

Another flow on effect has been within the clubs who hosted the project, where the participants are reported to be sharing what they learned with other club members, raising interest about play and competition. At least one group of participants has

organised a competition between themselves to try out the skills they have learnt. And it appears participants have come away with skills that are helping them succeed: participants in the Association Croquet workshop at Charlton, for instance, were notably successful in the recent Association Croquet Regionals.

We emphasise that this programme is a pilot, and we have learned that it is an efficient way of adding to the coaching skills of newer coaches at the same time as training players. The programme is being assessed by reports from the coaches as well as feedback from the host clubs and from the participants, which is now coming in from our feedback surveys. Some comments from Deb Newbold, Ringwood:

Participant retention has been excellent (basically full roll calls each day) The chat between players from different clubs in both the clubhouse and on court has been excellent. Participants have been engaged in the activities set. John's preparation is excellent and his enthusiasm never wanes. In addition, the helpers have attended every session and worked so hard to make everything work. I believe the set up at Ringwood has lent itself well to hosting the event. eg large clubhouse, TV for visuals linked to John's laptop, great kitchen and toilet facilities, excellent parking and of course good court space. At both committee and club level we feel privileged to have been able to host.

I will say I believe it has been a very successful project. In truth, only participant feedback, post sessions, will confirm or deny that feeling.

33 survey responses have been received so far, and we are chasing up other participants for our final project report. As with all surveys, we do not expect 100% responses, but comments to date have been extremely positive, with almost all participants reporting improvements in their skills and rating the workshops positively.

And finally

The working group is very grateful for the enormous assistance from the lead coaches, John Van der Touw, Maurice Cevaal Hewitt, Kenn Boal and Stephen Forster. The host clubs have been extremely helpful, offering a venue, equipment and volunteers for six days of coaching. They have all been sent certificates of appreciation.

My thanks also go to the working group for their support.

As a result of this pilot, we have been able to produce a set of coaching notes for coaches to present three two-day workshops in each of Association Croquet and Golf Croquet at two levels, novice and developing competitors. There is also a set of information sheets for host clubs, so they can prepare for the workshops in advance.

We see great value in continuing this successful and popular coaching programme of workshops in more clubs and regions, to improve the standard of competitive play in Victoria.



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 2023, appointed members were Alan Notley, Terry O'Callaghan and David Ross.

This twelve month period has again been challenging as the world adjusts to an ongoing war in Ukraine, globalisation being wound back and supply chains in many areas disrupted.

Portfolio reviews with JBWere have been held at their office at least every six months, with the provision for an urgent review if circumstances warrant one. We also have had access to a number of Webinars.

Portfolio Valuations:

The preserved amount of the original investment CPI indexed to 31 March 2023 is \$4,785,785.58.

The portfolio valuation as at 31 March 2022 was \$4,686,550.

The portfolio valuation as at 31 March 2023 was \$4,731,007.

There were no VCA drawdowns during the year.

The portfolio valuation as at 30 April 2023 is \$4,802,904.

Using the valuation as at 31 March 2023, the aim over the coming twelve months would be to achieve approximately \$192,000 in interest and dividends whilst indexing the preserved value to the CPI.

Relationship with JBWere:

We still have our long term advisers who have maintained their excellent advice and service. They monitor the VCA's policy and the IAG has prompt responses to enquiries and professional resources in responding to recommendations re the portfolio.

Victorian Croquet Centre Sub-Committee Report: *Chris Grant*

The current VCC Sub-Committee has been very successful in continuing to improve the venue and continuing the execution of its remit. Ongoing improvement and maintenance of the VCC has been achieved ensuring it continued to be regularly used for social and tournament play up to and including international events (i.e., MacRobertson Shield).

We need to give our committed hard-working volunteers a very big **THANK YOU** for donating their time, expertise and commitment.

There is much to be proud about our world-class croquet headquarters as a showcase for croquet.

Below is a list of items that have been actioned since the last AGM. (NB It is by no means all inclusive)

Clubhouse

- Determined how to access the security system recordings.

- Organise Credit/Debit Card Read for the bar and setup the associated accounts.

- Balcony

 - Carpet tiles installed.

 - Bar Stools.

 - Tables.

 - Door adjusted to cater for the carpet tiles.

Started investigation of getting sound deadening / baffles for the balcony
Key Audit
Investigate\fix the security pad as some of the numbers don't always work when selected.
Fire Extinguishers tested\serviced.
Ensure we have qualified staff for the bar, who have up to date Responsible Serving of Alcohol certificates on site.
Approach the council about being able to hold events that are not croquet related.
Currently need someone to play croquet to be able to hold an event. (i.e. Hire out the Clubhouse)
Catering discussed along with charges for renting the kitchen to supply catering.
Start process to change Liquor licensee.

Flat

Has been furnished from donations and is available for rent for use during tournaments.
Proposed costs / bond and cleaning.
Ensure was ready for use for the MacRobertson Shield

Lawns

A great team of volunteers have been diligently improving the playing lawns by mowing and maintenance on a regular basis.
Additional volunteers are gradually coming on board to help out.
A professional green-keeper is consulted as required about scarifying, fertilizing and spraying regimes.
Soil tests for the lawns

Equipment Sheds

Padlocks replaced after break in keys to the correct common key format.

Surrounds

Back car park cleaned up to enable parking during the MacRobertson Shield for Teams and Officials.
Working Bee before the MacRobertson Shield
Power washing pathways
Identify tripping hazards.
Get quotes for ongoing maintenance of Hedges Paths and Gardens

Equipment

General maintenance repairs of equipment as required, both playing and non-playing.
Get quotes for replacing the Sprayer.

General Business

Put together a budget for the next 5 years.

Acknowledgement

To all those who have so willingly supported us ...
