



## Preface

This discussion paper is a starting point for Croquet Victoria to determine the future of the Victorian Croquet Centre.

It is being distributed to all clubs and regions, and subsequently to other stakeholders, for discussion before any decision is taken.

The document outlines options but does not make any specific recommendation. We are looking to members, clubs and regions to provide feedback to enable a clear recommendation to be formulated, for consideration by regional delegates at the Annual General Meeting in June.

We encourage feedback over the next eight weeks. We are also inviting interested members to participate in one of two online Zoom discussions of questions that anyone has about the document. Anyone interested in attending, please contact the Secretary for the Zoom appointment – [secretary@croquetvic.asn.au](mailto:secretary@croquetvic.asn.au).

The timeline we envisage is as follows:

Week of 8 January	Distribution of discussion paper
20 February, 2.30 pm	First online forum
21 March 7.30 pm	Second online forum
Sunday 31 March	Deadline for feedback
Saturday 6 April	Summary of feedback circulated to Council, with a proposed resolution to be submitted to delegates
15 April	Council meeting finalises wording of resolution
Week of 13 May	Notice of resolution circulated with AGM papers
17 June	Annual General Meeting to include discussion of the resolution.

We look forward to hearing from members with their thoughts on this discussion paper.

VCC Futures Working Group

Russell Worland (chair); Paul Coughlin (secretary); Janet Leckie-Brunton, Julie Beasley; Kate Patrick, Claire Keating (ex officio)

Feedback to [coughlin8888@gmail.com](mailto:coughlin8888@gmail.com) please.

## 1.0 Introduction

The Victorian Croquet Centre Futures Working Group is pleased to be able to present this paper. We believe that this paper gives a basis for Croquet Victoria and its member organisations to debate the options for the future of the Victorian Croquet Centre (VCC) at Cairnlea.

The directions that Croquet Victoria might take are relatively clear and there are three principal options, although it should be noted that each of the three options has significant challenges and complexities.

## 2.0 Three Options

The three principal options for VCC are to:

- continue in the same way as we have over the past two years, with volunteers contributing to the maintenance of the croquet lawns
- to sell the VCC or
- to retain the VCC and endeavour to share the use and costs of owning and maintaining the VCC with other organisations.

Each of these principal options is considered below.

### 2.1 Option One: Continue

#### SUMMARY

The revenue yield from Croquet Victoria's investments will be sufficient to operate and maintain the VCC as a croquet centre for the foreseeable future, provided that:

- The current mix of volunteer staff and paid workers continues
- Croquet Victoria does not return to employing three close-to-full-time staff
- Our investments continue to produce a modest income of at least 3% a year and to grow in value in real terms.

After providing for the maintenance of VCC there might be a small residue of income which could be reinvested or applied to support the development of croquet.

#### DETAIL

The VCC has historically been funded from the income arising from Croquet Victoria's investments. The investment fund itself is a product of the remaining proceeds of the sale of the Croquet Victoria's former centre in Brighton – after paying for the acquisition and construction of the Cairnlea facility. The balance in the investment fund is currently around \$5million. As shown in the attached long-term budget, it would be realistic to expect the investment yield from the fund to continue to support the operations of the VCC, including an element of professional greenkeeping.

In early 2020, when Council decided to mothball the VCC and consider options for its future - and for the previous several years - our investment income was not sufficient. Capital was being called on to fund recurrent expenditure, including the costs of maintaining the VCC and the employment of staff both directly connected with VCC and more broadly with Croquet Victoria administration. The result was a significant diminution of our investment capital.

Following the dismissal of Croquet Victoria employees, the transfer of administrative tasks to volunteer office-bearers (the Secretary and Treasurer), and the reactivation of VCC with the assistance of voluntary labour, the erosion of the investment portfolio has been reversed. Voluntary office-bearers continue to undertake administrative tasks. Volunteers, coordinated through the VCC Committee, have maintained the lawns of the VCC, undertaking mowing, fertilising and other lawn maintenance tasks. There has been less call on the resources of Croquet Victoria. The investment yield over this period has consistently exceeded costs.

The attached five-year budget assumes that some volunteer labour will continue to be available. It includes a realistic forecast of maintenance costs, and the employment of some professional greenkeeping and other assistance. Running costs and maintenance (including the scheduled replacement of some heavy equipment as well as maintenance of the clubhouse) are likely on average to consume no more than 87% of the yield of the investment portfolio, at a conservative projection of \$170,000 a year. This means that Croquet Victoria may either allow the body of the investment fund to grow more quickly with reinvestment of the remaining 13+% of the yield, or else some or all the remaining 13+% can be used to support the broader mission of the association.

In short, the current situation of the VCC is sustainable. Moreover, if we decide to continue with the current course Croquet Victoria will retain a flagship croquet centre. VCC is the largest croquet centre in Australia (and indeed is one of the largest in the world) and it will continue to be the venue for statewide, national and international competitions.

The implications of this option are well understood, and risks are of a low order. However, it does imply that the association's assets, and the related investment income streams, will to a large extent be committed to supporting the VCC, rather than toward other options to support and promote the sport of Croquet and to relieve voluntary office-bearers of some responsibilities. It should also be noted that while continuing with ownership Croquet Victoria might seek to improve its position by enhancing the yield it receives from renting the clubhouse for community events, and by enhancing the contribution from Croquet Australia for what is essentially a national sporting centre. It could perhaps rename VCC as the "Australian Croquet Centre" in return for a greater contribution to its upkeep.

## 2.2 Option Two: Sell

### SUMMARY

The second main option is to maximise the value of the site by selling to a developer for residential purposes.

- This would have very significant preparatory costs and time commitments in terms of soil testing, seeking planning permits and soil remediation.

A variation on the sale option is selling to a similar user as is for use as a sporting centre or the like.

Selling would result in

- Terminating the operations of the current VCC
- Relocating current activities, including tournaments and/or practice and coaching sessions most weekends
- Realisation of the value of the site (noting impediment costs)
- Net sale proceeds added to the current investment pool, and additional revenue streams generated.

#### DETAIL

The sales option is the most complex of the options before us, the least well understood, and the one involving the most risk. This is the option which, if pursued, would dominate the activities of Croquet Victoria for years to come.

A consultant's report submitted to Croquet Victoria in 2020 indicated that the land on which the VCC is situated is within a residential zone and could be sold for residential redevelopment. The consultants estimated a sale value of \$5m. We have not to date sought confirmation of this value from real estate agents.

The complicating factor is that the land on which VCC is located is the former site of an explosives factory. As such the land is contaminated by trace elements connected with its former use. The presence of contaminants is one reason why the purchase price of the VCC site was relatively modest.

As part of the remediation works connected with the preparation of the site for sale to Croquet Victoria 1.5m of fill was added to the site. This has protected users of the VCC from contaminants, however it will result in complications if the site is to be sold.

Since Croquet Victoria bought the site environmental standards have been tightened, and it means that further remediation of the site would have to be conducted should the land be made available for sale for redevelopment. The Consultants' report in 2020 contained a "guesstimate" that remediation would cost around \$1m. We would need to conduct a drilling program across the site to obtain a current and accurate reading of the level of contaminants on the site. With that information we could then seek planning permission to remediate the site, and if given then call tenders for the remediation of the site.

This means that Croquet Victoria would need to outlay tens of thousands of dollars to determine the level of contaminants, and possibly spend millions of dollars getting the site ready for sale. This process would, most likely, take several years and absorb the attention of Croquet Victoria office bearers during that period.

There is also the issue of what to do with the current pavilion/clubhouse.

On the positive side the "sale" option may eventually free up several million dollars in funds which might be used to increase our investment fund and related revenue. As things stand the VCC essentially has first call on Croquet Victoria resources.

Increased revenue from the investment fund might be used to professionalise the administration of the sport in the way other sporting organisations have done, and this could provide a variety of advantages. Enhanced revenue might also provide for the possibility of providing assistance to clubs in their programs of lawn maintenance, refurbishment or expansion.

However, it is unlikely that sale of the Cairnlea site will provide enough money to build a similar centre in a more convenient location (should a convenient location be agreed upon).

Perhaps one of the regional centres could be augmented, but that is uncertain and it is not clear as to which locations would be acceptable. The lack of a large croquet centre will impede competitions and seems likely to inconvenience the clubs that make their facilities available for competitions. This is already the experience of other state associations. Holding statewide and national competitions would require several clubs at one time giving up their facilities to host these competitions. This will certainly inconvenience and may severely impact the clubs involved, and it will make the organisation of events much more complex. A review of Appendix F indicates an annual 93 days of matchplay for various scheduled competitions was held at VCC over the course of the year. Re-locating these events to club lawns would be a significant burden.

Similarly, the use of VCC for potential promotion of the sport, through student coaching and competition, will not be possible. Selling the facility will also increase the difficulty in organising international competitions in Australia.

## 2.3 Option Three: Ownership / partnership

### SUMMARY

The third main option is to retain the VCC but find a compatible sport or community partner that is interested in sharing the venue.

Possibilities include:

- School sports – perhaps on Wednesdays when the VCC is rarely used.
- Sports played on turf such as, bowls, tennis, lacrosse, archery.
- Indoor sports, such as table tennis, using the club house.

Benefits:

- Share the maintenance costs.
- Greater usage of the facility.
- If successful, enable a greater proportion of investment income to be devoted to other projects for the promotion and support of Croquet.

Drawbacks:

- Reduced access to VCC for croquet play.
- Possibly fewer courts – some might need to be lost to the partner sport, or in reconfiguring the site to meet the needs of other sports.

## DETAIL

This option is essentially a variant of the first “retention” option. This option recognises that the current situation, while sustainable, still means that the bulk of our investment income is directed towards a centre that is comparatively lightly used and which most members do not use, and do not want to use.

While usage of the centre has improved since it was recommissioned and a local club – the Brimbank Croquet Club – is based at the site, there are relatively few days in which the site is fully utilised.

This option envisages sharing use of the site with a local institution or statewide sporting organisation pursuing compatible lawn-based sports such as bowls or lawn tennis. Another option might be to share use of the pavilion with other indoor sports such as table tennis.

There is also the possibility of allowing local community groups and event organisers to use the pavilion in order to generate revenue.

The aim of these various possibilities would be to share the costs of maintaining the site and thus making more of our investment income available to support and promote Croquet.

To date preliminary enquiries have been made to institutions such as Victoria University, Melbourne Cricket Club, Pickleball Victoria and others. It is likely that to identify an appropriate partner and reach a satisfactory site sharing agreement will take some time, possibly years. Moreover, it may mean compromises to our site. For example, making Cairnlea a dual bowls and croquet site would mean constructing bowls-compliant lawns which will reduce the number of croquet lawns.

### 3.0 Issues to be noted.

The following issues deserve consideration:

- The current policies associated with the investment portfolio need to be reviewed. Under each of the options above there are implications as to how yields might be deployed. We can see that some past assumptions were fantastic (2005) or unsustainable (2015) (see Appendix C items 4,5)
- The Working Group has actively explored ways in which the assets might be used for additional commercial activity. Croquet Victoria has acted to secure a variation in planning use via the planning authority to enable the use of the clubhouse by local community groups. Some follow up to develop commercial activity needs action.

7 January 2024

VCC Futures Working Group

Russell Worland (chair); Paul Coughlin (secretary); Janet Leckie-Brunton, Julie Beasley;  
Kate Patrick, Claire Keating (ex officio)

# Appendix A – Terms of Reference

Victorian Croquet Centre Futures Working Group Terms of Reference.

## Authority

1. These terms of reference are issued under the authority of the Croquet Victoria Association, Sub-Committees and Working Groups policy 17 June 2014, as amended 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015 and 23 April 2018.

## Membership

2. The Victorian Croquet Centre Futures Working Group is to consist of at least 3 and up to 5 members, at least two of whom should be members of Council. These numbers do not include the President or Treasurer, who will be ex officio members.
3. Clubs and regions will be invited to provide nominations for membership of the WG. Nominees are to provide a statement of their relevant experience and capability.
4. Members of the WG are appointed by Council and may be members or non-members of Croquet Victoria. The WG may propose additional members for co-option, to be endorsed by Council.
5. The WG will appoint its own convenor and secretary.

## Duration

6. Unless otherwise decided by Council, the term of the WG will expire following the December 2023 meeting of Council, or when a Special General Meeting has approved an option for the future of the Victorian Croquet Centre, whichever is sooner.

## Responsibilities

7. The VCCF WG is responsible for:
  - 7.1 Developing a plan and timeline for resolving the future of the Victorian Croquet Centre
  - 7.2 Preparing an options paper, drawing on
    - The SGS Consultants and Planning Report v3 (December 2020)
    - 2022 data on costs, income and activity related to the VCC
    - Advice from the VCC sub-committee

To be provided for consultation early in 2023

## Procedures

8. The WG will meet as necessary face to face or via teleconferencing.
9. Minutes of meetings will be provided to the Secretary, Croquet Victoria, within 7 days of each meeting.
10. The WG will report to Council at each meeting.

Approved by Council 17 October 2022.



## Appendix B – The Working Group

Russell Worland (Warrnambool; Regional Director SWCA): Convenor

Paul Coughlin (MCC; CoM): Secretary

Julie Beasley (Warragul)

Janet Leckie-Brunton (RnB)

Kate Patrick (Brunswick; President) – ex officio

Claire Keating (Williamstown; Treasurer) – ex officio

# Appendix C – Summary of background and key issues

## 1. History

The Victorian Croquet Centre in Cairnlea officially opened in November 2009.

There are still members with very positive memories of the former croquet headquarters, a five court venue at Warleigh in Brighton. It was the sale of Warleigh (decided on in 2004) that funded the development of VCC and provided the investment capital to support running costs.

At that time the Croquet Victoria Secretary George Latham anticipated that income from these investments would be sufficient to fund VCC running costs, a part-time administrator, and some investment in regional developments. Over time, Croquet Victoria relied increasingly on paid staff – ultimately a close to full time administrator, a full-time greenkeeper, and a caretaker/cleaner.

## 2. The site

The Victorian Croquet Centre is built on the site of an explosives factory which closed in 1986

The site was cleared and covered with 1.5m of clean fill, and recent soil tests at the surface have been clear.

However, the soil beneath the fill is recognised as significantly contaminated, particularly in an area extending from the eastern boundary across the middle of the courts to the western side of the centre courts. Excavation below the fill level in this area requires Government permission.

Since the site was purchased from a state government agency, the law has changed so the onus is now on the seller of contaminated land for development to remediate it prior to sale. Moreover the standards for decontamination have been made more stringent.

## 3. The building

Some defects in the building appear to have continued from the time of handover from the builder – in particular, the roof has leaked – but these defects have now been repaired.

In 2018 building consultants advised that there was a crack across the concrete pad on which the building sits. More recent advice is that this issue most likely arose because trees in the area had been removed just prior to construction. The building appears now to have stabilised.

## 4. Running costs

By 2014 the auditor was advising that running costs (including staff) were greater than could be supported from Croquet Victoria's investment income, and that the budget was being met by drawing on capital. There were continuing efforts to generate income from external hires, but in 2019 the Treasurer of the time advised that these hires were costing more than they brought in and they were discontinued.

In 2020 Croquet Victoria Council decided to "mothball" the site and make staff redundant.

It was subsequently agreed to maintain activity at VCC with support from volunteers. Following the COVID period, in the past eighteen months, normal activity at VCC has been maintained primarily with volunteer effort. Some assistance has been hired-in for maintenance and greenkeeping, but the costs have been contained well within income from the investments. No functions have been held, as it was learnt that these were not consistent with the planning permission approved by Brimbank Council.

Brimbank Council has now approved a change in the planning permission for VCC to include permission for it to operate as a function centre. This provides an opportunity for generating income during periods when the centre is not used for play.

## **5. Usage**

The VCC's 12 courts provide the largest croquet venue in the world outside the United States, and it is valued as a venue for Victorian and Australian competitions. Most Croquet Victoria members play socially rather than competitively, and have not attended VCC in large numbers.

Analysis of attendances over the post-COVID year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 shows that

- the VCC was used for competition on most weekends, and for club play by a small number of members on most Tuesdays and Thursdays
- the social events held at VCC attracted relatively small numbers.
- around 150 individual Croquet Victoria members played in competitions at VCC – about equal to the number from the rest of Australia and internationally.

See Appendix F.

## Appendix D - Summary of reference documentation

1. Croquet Victoria Strategic Plan (Approved 13 December 2021) The plan provides for determining upon the future of VCC.

2. Building Inspection Report – BSS Group (November 2020) (37pp)

This report provides an engineering assessment and reviews previous reports and quotations in relation to building performance and risk. The report is essentially reassuring. Past movements in the slab (measured in 2018) have stabilised. Previously suggested structural improvements are judged “expensive and unnecessary”. Minor works are identified (eave repairs, flashing upgrades, balcony drainage). These works have been carried out via the VCC Sub-Committee.

3. Planning Advice - SGS Economics and Planning (December 2020) (36pp)

This report reviews all purchase documentation, outlines relevant planning policies, assesses the development potential of the site, and covers off on the risks associated with the environmental overlay (contaminated zone). The report looks at a range of alternative land uses (both public and private). The report indicates processes to be followed should there be interest in disposing of all or some of the site (land valuations, estimated costs of remediation, development fees and charges). The estimates of 2020 will need to be revisited.

4. Report on Funding Options for Budget Deficit 2020/2021 (Brian Rowe)

This report from the Treasurer of the day gives valuable insight into the history of the establishment of VCC. Assumptions about financial stability and details of the genesis of the investment portfolio are clearly presented. The report also provides base line data as to levels of usage and costs in 2019 which are now able to be verified or challenged. Some of the financial imperatives which drove this report are also able to be queried following the major reductions in operating costs which occurred in part because of this report.

5. Correspondence between auditor Bruce Warlow and Croquet Victoria (27 May and 1 August 2014)

This correspondence deals with a slew of issues ranging from minor administration issues through to the management of the investment portfolio. What is clear is a pattern of dependence by Croquet Victoria on annual earnings from the portfolio and realisation of assets being generated to fund the VCC and associated staff. This means that the investment portfolio must invariably outperform inflation if it is to achieve the policy direction of maintaining real value.

6. Flyer “About Cairnlea” (16<sup>th</sup> April 2005)

This four-page document produced by the then Secretary George Latham aimed to dispel some misgivings expressed about the risks of establishing VCC. Financial sustainability was linked to access to investment returns. While the investment portfolio was to maintain real value and to contribute towards the operations of VCC, the prospect of additional funding support to clubs across the state was also canvassed. Some useful base line data regarding usage levels is provided.

## Appendix E – Five Year Forward Look – Capital Expenditure

The VCC Sub- Committee has produced a 5 year forward projection. The VCC SubCommittee believes that the subsequent 5 years will not involve surprises. Sustainable funding of the items listed in the projection below appears achievable without the need for drawdown of the principal of the investment fund.

Note that many of the items listed align with historical maintenance and other non-capital expenditure and are covered off on an annual basis.

The current Croquet Victoria budget (see Croquet Victoria web site) does not propose the drawdown of investments (over \$4m). It is expected that net maintenance costs can be covered by the yield on our investment funds.

Areas		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Budget	
<b>General Repairs and Maintenance</b>								
<b>Building interior:</b>	Maintain/repair sliding glass doors	\$5,000					\$5,000	Urgent quotes needed.
	Fix cracks and plastering in function centre, etc	\$1,000					\$1,000	
	Concrete polished floors repairs to cracks					\$1,500	\$1,500	
<b>Kitchen</b>	Maintenance of Fridges/Freezers	\$1,500	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$5,500	
	Flooring		\$500		\$500		\$1,000	
	Air Conditioning Units Maintenance	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$10,000	
	Grease trap	\$1,000		\$1,000		\$1,000	\$3,000	
<b>Flat:</b>	Resolve Balcony water problems	\$2,000					\$2,000	If water problems unresolved.
	Carpets				\$1,000		\$1,000	
	Maintenance kitchen and bathroom		\$1,000		\$1,000		\$2,000	
<b>Lift:</b>	Replacement of hydraulic ram and upgrade of emergency phone to NBN	\$7,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$11,000	Up front fix, ongoing maintenance
<b>Grounds:</b>	Repair and make safe the concrete paths	\$5,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$13,000	Review issue between courts 6-7 on east side
	Maintain Irrigation System	\$3,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$11,000	All 105 sprinklers need review.
	Resurface carpark		\$2,000				\$2,000	
	Upgrade fences		\$3,000			\$3,000	\$6,000	
	Maintain security lighting system		\$5,000				\$5,000	

Areas	Items	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Budget	Notes
<b>Maintenance Shed</b>	Paint toilets	\$1,000					\$1,000	
	Reseal floors of back toilets (tile, paint or epoxy)	\$3,000					\$3,000	
	Upgrade Shelving in Maintenance Shed		\$2,000				\$2,000	
<b>Storage Shed near Letter Box:</b>	Shelving/Storage		\$1,000				\$1,000	
<b>Shelters:</b>	Repair / Replace Seats		\$2,500			\$2,500	\$5,000	
<b>Upstairs Balcony:</b>	Lights / Power Points	\$1,000					\$1,000	
	Sound Baffles		\$800				\$800	
<b>Upstairs Conference Room:</b>	Powerpoints to assist live streaming	\$1,000					\$1,000	
<b>Furniture:</b>	Office Furniture / Whiteboards	\$1,000		\$1,000		\$1,000	\$3,000	
	Total repairs and maintenance Annual budget	\$34,500	\$25,800	\$10,000	\$10,500	\$17,000	\$97,800	
	Contingency available within budget (offset below)	\$1,500	\$10,200	\$26,000	\$25,500	\$19,000	\$82,200	2024 approved, 2025-28 proposed

**Other Ongoing building running costs (excluding repairs and maintenance)**

2024 approved budget. No adjustment to following years.

Alarm	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$7,500
Cleaning Materials	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$10,000
Cleaning/Carpets/Windows	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$6,500	\$32,500
Fire Extinguishers	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$1,000
Gardens	\$7,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$39,000
Insurance - Cairnlea	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$70,000
Regns. subs. Licences	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$10,000

Areas	Items	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Budget	Notes
	Electricity	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$20,000	
	Gas	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$7,500	
	Rates - Council/65	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$50,000	
	Rates - Council/65A	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$7,500	
	Water - building	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$5,000	
	Sanitary Bins	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$500	\$2,500	
	Waste Disposal	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$12,500	
	Sundry/Equipment	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$7,500	
	Total VCC BUILDING	\$55,700	\$56,700	\$56,700	\$56,700	\$56,700	\$282,500	
<b>Total building running costs</b>		<b>\$91,700</b>	<b>\$92,700</b>	<b>\$92,700</b>	<b>\$92,700</b>	<b>\$92,700</b>	<b>\$462,500</b>	



**Ongoing court maintenance**

Permanent part-time greenkeeper	\$14,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$94,000
Fuel Mower	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$12,500
Scarifying and court renovation (6 courts per year)	\$6,000	\$6,000		\$6,000	\$6,000	\$24,000
Levelling Courts		\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$40,000
Turf Machinery Repairs	\$5,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$9,000
Fertilizing	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$40,000
Controlling weeds and pests	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$25,000
Line marking, hoop setting	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$5,000
Watering	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$70,000
Line Marker					\$1,000	\$1,000
Cleanup of Back car park/waste disposal	\$4,000	\$3,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$13,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$59,500</b>	<b>\$70,500</b>	<b>\$63,500</b>	<b>\$69,500</b>	<b>\$70,500</b>	<b>\$333,500</b>

1 day/week over a year

Areas	Items	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Budget	Notes
	Annual budget	\$63,500	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$363,500	2024 approved, 2025-28 proposed
	Contingency available within budget (offset below)	\$4,000	\$4,500	\$11,500	\$5,500	\$4,500	\$30,000	
	Total building and courts - operating budget	\$155,200	\$167,700	\$167,700	\$167,700	\$167,700	\$826,000	

		All figures are 2023 estimated prices and this is a rolling 5 year plan						
Capital items not included in ongoing operating budget								
<b>Building Interior:</b>	Painting of the function centre including toilets, kitchen, passageway/laundry etc			\$10,000			\$10,000	
	Replace carpets in function centre and 2 offices				\$4,000		\$4,000	Reinvest income from event hires -
	Blinds			\$4,000			\$4,000	Reinvest income from event hires
	AV System - for events		\$2,000				\$2,000	Reinvest income from event hires
<b>Kitchen:</b>	Crockery, cutlery, utensils, bar glasses		\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$4,000	
	Replacement of Fridges/Freezers(Kitchen and Bar)				\$10,000		\$10,000	
	Ovens & Hot plates				\$3,000		\$3,000	
	Hot water systems			\$2,500			\$2,500	
	Coolroom					\$5,000	\$5,000	
	Exhaust Fan		\$2,000				\$2,000	Replace fan in existing hood
	Dishwasher					\$10,000	\$10,000	
<b>Furniture:</b>	Trestle tables and chairs		\$3,000			\$2,000	\$5,000	
<b>IT:</b>	Computer Equipment / Software Office and TM	\$3,000					\$3,000	5 yearly replacement of computers
	Project Tournament Manager computer to Display TV for competitors		\$1,000				\$1,000	
	Upgrade security system		\$5,000				\$5,000	

Areas	Items	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Budget	Notes
<b>Grounds:</b>	Water Tank/Pump				\$5,000		\$5,000	
<b>GreenKeeping Equipment:</b>	Ride on Mowers				\$20,000		\$20,000	
	Toro Truck		\$28,000				\$28,000	? cheaper 2nd hand one
	Spray Unit	\$7,600					\$7,600	Already purchased and in use
<b>Shelters:</b>	Replace Roofs on outer Shelters			\$20,000			\$20,000	Seek Grant for this.
<b>Maintenance Shed:</b>	Motion Sensor Security lighting and cameras	\$2,000					\$2,000	
<b>Croquet equipment:</b>	Hoops	\$1,000		\$1,000		\$1,000	\$3,000	
	Mallets/Pegs/Clips	\$3,000	\$1,000	\$3,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$9,000	
	Balls & boxes			\$12,000			\$12,000	Replace all balls to same version 12*2*500 = 12000 estimated cost.
<b>Total</b>		\$16,600	\$43,000	\$53,500	\$44,000	\$20,000	\$177,100	
Contingency available in Repairs and Maintenance (see above)		\$1,500	\$10,200	\$26,000	\$25,500	\$19,000	\$82,200	
Contingency available in Court Maintenance (see above)		\$4,000	\$4,500	\$11,500	\$5,500	\$4,500	\$30,000	
Total contingency available		\$5,500	\$14,700	\$37,500	\$31,000	\$23,500	\$112,200	
Shortfall contingency over capital items		\$11,100	\$28,300	\$16,000	\$13,000	\$(3,500)	\$64,900	

Areas	Items	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Budget	Notes
<b>Total operating and capital</b>		<b>\$166,300</b>	<b>\$196,000</b>	<b>\$183,700</b>	<b>\$180,700</b>	<b>\$164,200</b>	<b>\$890,900</b>	
<b>Revenue</b>								
	Brimbank Contribution Fee	\$3,200	\$3,200	\$3,200	\$3,200	\$3,200	\$16,000	Based on current year budget, doesn't include any growth assumptions or potential new income e.g., from venue hire or grants
	Courts	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$150	\$750	
	ACA Courts Hire	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$22,200	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$82,200	
	Premises	\$5,600	\$5,600	\$5,600	\$5,600	\$5,600	\$28,000	
	Tournaments - revenue	\$12,400	\$12,400	\$12,400	\$12,400	\$12,400	\$62,000	
	Tournaments - Expense	(\$7,350)	(\$7,350)	(\$7,350)	(\$7,350)	(\$7,350)	(\$36,750)	
	<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$29,000</b>	<b>\$29,000</b>	<b>\$36,200</b>	<b>\$29,000</b>	<b>\$29,000</b>	<b>\$152,200</b>	
	Operating and Capital less revenue	(\$137,300)	(\$167,000)	(\$147,500)	(\$151,700)	(\$135,200)	(\$738,700)	Based on current budget, doesn't include any growth assumption
	Revenue	\$170,200	\$170,200	\$170,200	\$170,200	\$170,200	\$851,000	
	Investment income							
	<b>Investment income available</b>	<b>\$32,900</b>	<b>\$3,200</b>	<b>\$22,700</b>	<b>\$18,500</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>	<b>\$112,300</b>	
	% of income	19%	2%	13%	11%	21%	13%	

Notes:

1. The 5-year capital expenditure includes a number of large items which are not required every 5 years such as Toro Truck (\$28k in 2025), Ride on mower (\$20k in 2027) and Shelter Roofs (\$20k in 2026) and hence tends to overstate average expenditure.
2. Non-essential expenditure can be delayed or only spent if grant money is available.
3. Revenue doesn't include any additional amounts which may be earned from functions or through partnership with ACA. A number of items included in expenditure above assume reinvesting event hire income and hence any revenue earned would require little incremental spend and would add to income available for other purposes.

## Appendix F - Current VCC usage – emerging from Covid

### WORLD AND NATIONAL EVENTS

The Victorian Croquet Centre, with its twelve courts, is the largest purpose-built croquet facility in Australia. Since it opened in 2008 it has hosted a considerable number of international events. In recent years these have included the Women's GC Worlds, the GC Worlds, the Under 21 Worlds, the AC Worlds, and the MacRobertson Shield (the World Croquet Federation's Tier 1 AC team event). It is not scheduled to host any imminent world events but could be considered for events from 2026.

In terms of Australian events, the Victorian Croquet Centre has become the preferred venue for the annual GC and AC Presidents Eights, and the Open Doubles and Singles in GC and AC. These events draw a large number of entries, which for other states means that a number of clubs need to be willing to vacate their courts.

Every three years it is Victoria's turn to host one of the interstate team events (the Interstate Shield and the Eire Cup) along with the competitions that precede it: the Croquet Australia Gold and Silver Medals and the Men's and Women's. We hosted the AC Eire Cup in 2022 and we are due to host the GC Interstate Shield in 2025. Once in six years it is our turn to host the suite of Croquet Australia Under 21 events: the Gold Medal, Doubles and Singles. These are due to be hosted by Victoria in January 2025.

### ACTIVITY AT VCC IN 2022/2023

Detailed usage information is available for a full year from 1 April 2022 to 30 March 2023. No events during this period were cancelled due to COVID restrictions. The preceding two years were significantly affected by COVID and we are not reporting on them.

#### 1. How often was VCC used?

Based on the sign-in book\*, VCC was in use on 220 days of the year – about 60% of the time – with just under 5000 total attendances.

In terms of activities, as shown in this table, usage was predominantly for active play.

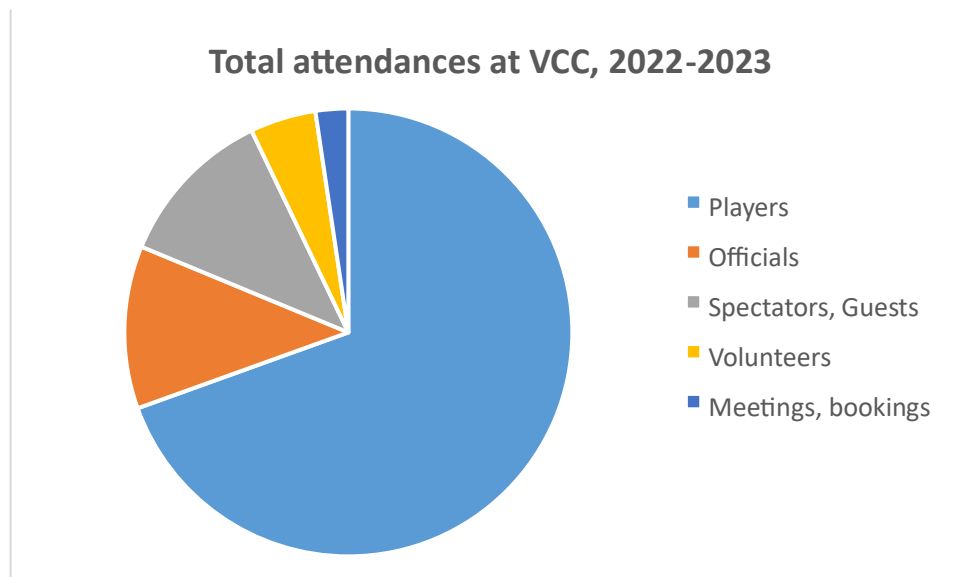
	<b>Number of activities</b>	<b>Days of play</b>
Scheduled events (results on Croquetscores)	38	93
Practice or coaching	20	29
Brimbank Club	78	78
Maintenance (excl mowing)	58	
Meetings or bookings	8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>200</b>

\* The sign-in book was in the clubhouse. Some Brimbank members used the back gate to enter for individual practice and did not enter the clubhouse. Similarly, mowing days in general are not recorded in the sign-in book.

This table counts the days in use for each activity separately. Some activities took place at the same time, e.g. the Men's and Women's Opens; Selectors' events and AC or GC team training; Brimbank Club days and maintenance.

Over 80% of those whose attendance was recorded were players or officials. This is shown in the table and graph below.

<b>Attendances</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>%</b>
Players	3418	69%
Officials	578	12%
Spectators / guests	572	12%
Volunteers	234	5%
Meetings	116	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4918</b>	



## 2. How were activities distributed across the week?

This table shows how many days VCC was in use for any kind of activity. When different activities occurred on the same day the day has only been counted once.

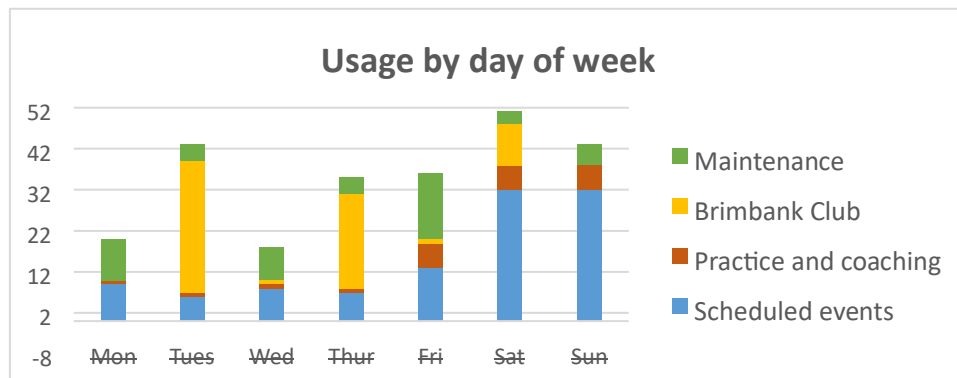
<b>Day</b>	<b>Days in use</b>	<b>% usage</b>
Monday	20	38%
Tuesday	43	83%
Wednesday	16	31%
Thursday	37	71%
Friday	29	56%
Saturday	42	81%
Sunday	33	63%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>61%</b>

Days with least activity were Monday and Wednesday.

### 3. Which activities occurred when, and how many people were involved?

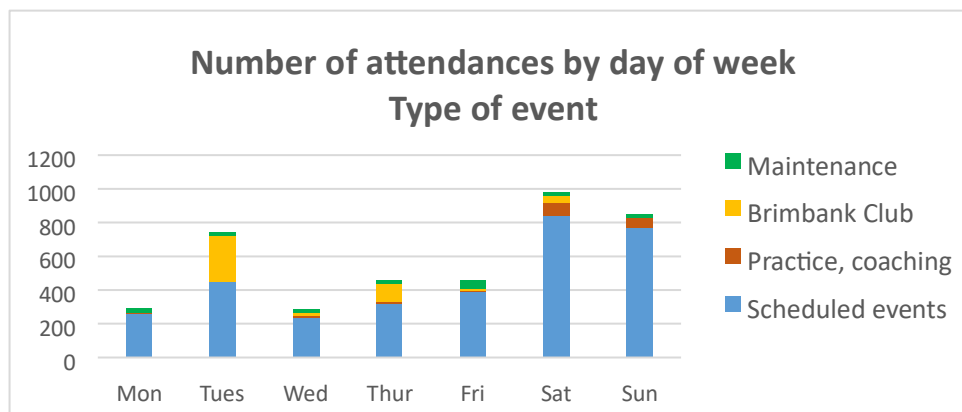
The table and the graph below show all activities.

Events: days	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Scheduled events	9	6	8	7	13	32	32
Practice and coaching	1	1	1	1	6	6	6
Brimbank Club		32	1	23	1	10	
Maintenance	10	4	8	4	16	3	5



The next table and graph show the number of attendances by day of the week and type of event.

Events: attendances	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
Scheduled events	256	447	239	316	391	839	769	3257
Practice and coaching	12	0	10	12	8	80	62	184
Brimbank Club	0	273	13	111	6	42	0	445
Maintenance	26	21	23	18	51	18	21	178
TOTAL	294	751	287	453	528	961	852	4064



This distribution of attendances across categories is approximate, pending more work on distangling figures for the 62 days when there were attendances associated with different activities (scheduled tournaments, practice, maintenance, Brimbank Club games).

#### 4. What kinds of croquet activities took place?

The table and pie charts below show the number of days and number of attendances for events at different levels.

	Days	Player attendances	Average # players / day
International	17	386	23
Croquet Australia	40	1494	37
Croquet Victoria	44	773	17
Practice, coaching	16	184	12
Regions	6	159	27
Club	67	445	6
TOTAL	190	3441	18

#### *Definitions*

International: in this case, the MacRobertson Shield.

Croquet Australia: national championships and titles; Eire Cup

Croquet Victoria: state titles and championships; Victorian Bronze competitions

Practice, coaching: state run activities not entered on Croquetscores

Regions: events open to all members (Australia Day, Season Opening, Festival of Croquet); Golf Croquet Regionals.

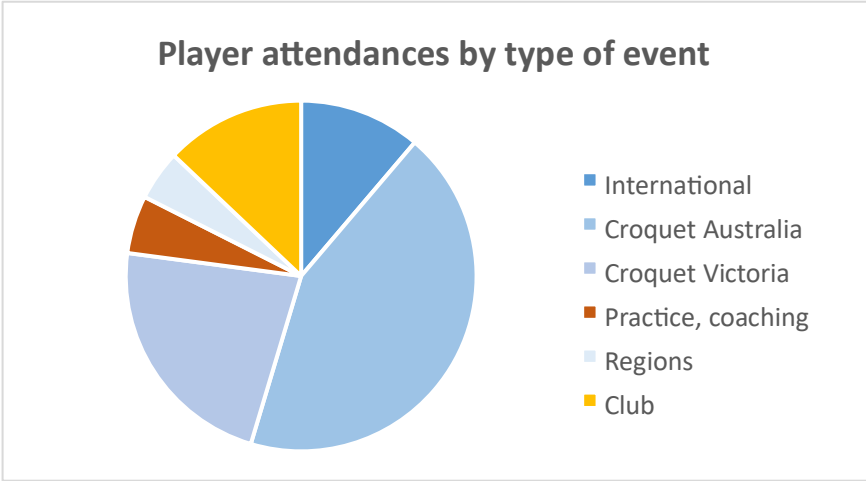
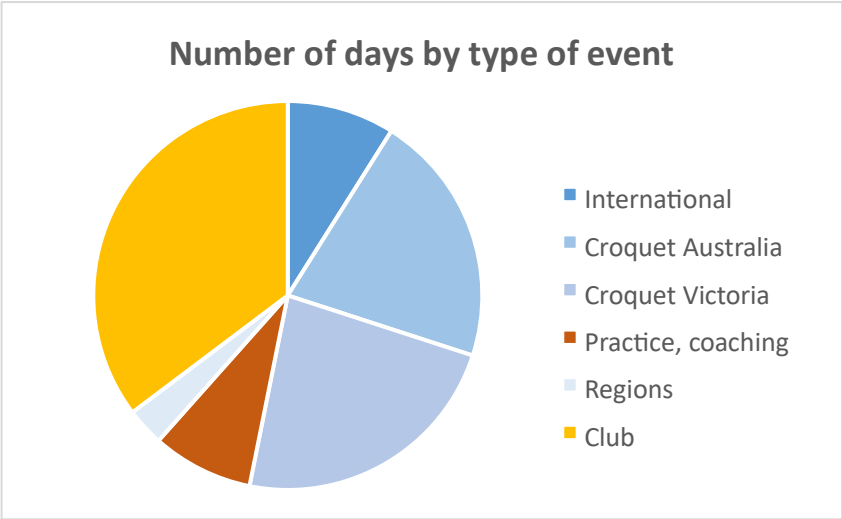
Club: Brimbank Club sessions.

Player attendances: total counting each day of an event separately

Average # players: average number of players participating per day

Officials have not been included.



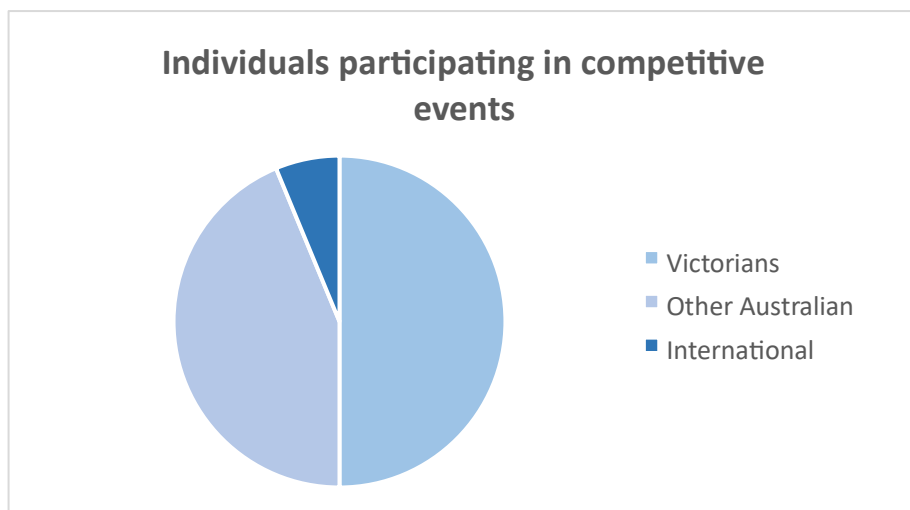


Between them, national and state championships occupied the most days and involved the largest numbers of players. There were relatively few days of competitive play open to players on higher handicaps (shown as Regions). Brimbank members attended most Tuesdays, many Thursdays and some Saturdays, but not in large numbers.

**5. How many individual players participated in events at VCC?**

Using data from Croquetscores (thank you, Tim Murphy) it is possible to identify and count the individuals who played in competitive events at VCC during this year.

Victorians	144
Other Australian	126
International	18



These figures include everyone who played in any event at VCC which was recorded on Croquetscores: the MacRobertson Shield, the Eire Cup, the various national and state championships and titles, Selectors and Australia Day events, and the GC Regionals. Many of course played in more than one event and more than one code.

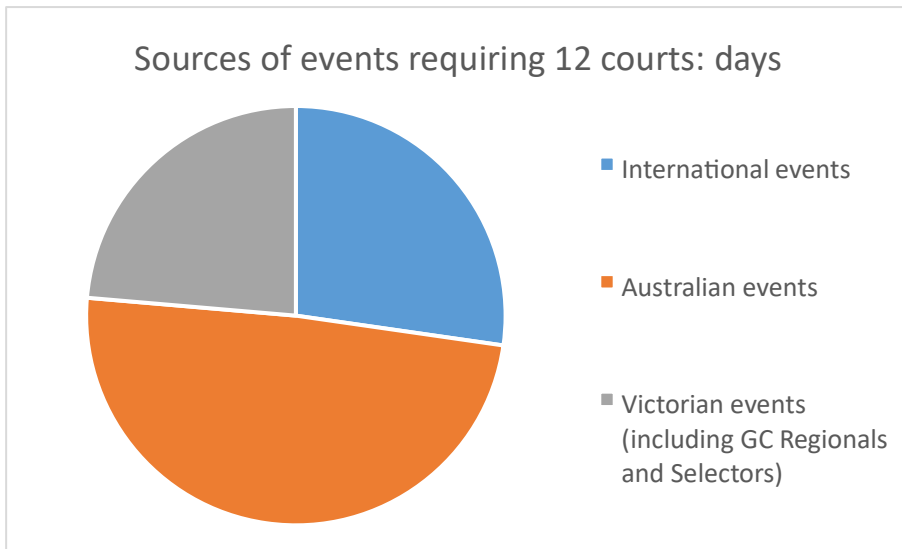
To put this number in context. In April 2021, about 1700 of our 2870 members had a record of actively competing in the previous two years. 144 Victorians constitute 8.5% of this number.

In addition, approximately 65 players attended non-competitive events at VCC, including Brimbank playing days, the 2022 Season Opening, and the 2022 Carnival of Croquet.

**6. How many events had the numbers to use all 12 courts?**

Of the 37 scheduled events, 16 events over a total of 55 days required at least twelve courts if they were to avoid double banking (not always possible):

<b>Days requiring 12 courts</b>	<b>Days</b>
International events – MacRob Shield	15
7 Australian events	27
8 Victorian events (including GC Regionals and Selectors)	13



A list of the events concerned is available.

If relocated from VCC, these events would require multiple clubs to host them.

In addition, VCC hosted 21 smaller events involving a total of 220 players over 37 days. Most of these events involved 10 or more players.

Kate Patrick  
Julie Beasley

21 September 2023

## Appendix F - Expanding VCC Usage – Contacts and Pathways

Opportunities exist for developing shared use. A secondary school is close by and a campus of Victoria University is a kilometre away. Tentative contacts have been initiated by members of the Working Group to explore partner prospects (Melbourne Cricket Club, Victoria University) and Bowls Victoria may also be a prospect. Contact with the Brimbank LGA has improved the awareness of the municipality of the role of VCC as an activity centre for the growing older demographic of the region. Other lawn based sports might find the site attractive. Sharing will involve negotiation and agreement across issues of site reconfiguration, security of tenure, management influence, financial risk and financial equity.

Introducing new users to the site should be seen as a long term project.

The right partner or partners might significantly reduce operating costs.

## Appendix G - Growing Croquet Facilities (2020 Action Plan)

This Action Plan was designed through 2018/19 and the issues as then identified are embedded in the current strategic plan. Mention of the study in this paper ensures that the broader development needs of Croquet as then articulated are not forgotten. The Action Plan was not predicated on the disposal of VCC and in general terms the needs of various clubs come across as relatively modest.