

Planning for Golf in Victoria Discussion Paper

Stakeholder submission template

The Victorian Government is undertaking public consultation on the Discussion Paper – Planning for Golf in Victoria. You can access the discussion paper at www.engage.vic.gov/planning-golf-victoria

Golf is one of Victoria's most popular organised recreational activities. More than 300,000 Victorians played golf in 2015 at 374 golf courses across the state.

But golf is in transition, and facing a number of challenges such as changing demographic and participation trends. Club memberships are in decline, and it is difficult for clubs to meet escalating operational costs. These challenges have seen some clubs fold, merge or relocate.

Plan Melbourne is our 35 year strategy for a sustainable Melbourne. It includes an action to develop a state-wide golf courses strategy.

This strategy will help golf navigate the issues facing the sport, such as pressure to rezone golf course land for residential use. The strategy will support golf to be sustainable and grow into the future. We are seeking feedback on the discussion paper, which will inform the final strategy.

The discussion paper summarises five challenges facing golf in Victoria - participation, membership, supply and demand, land use, and governance.

If you would like to comment on the discussion paper, please complete this form and upload your submission at www.engage.vic.gov.au/planning-golf-victoria or email your submission to bainbridgebenjamin@delwp.vic.gov.au

Alternatively, hard copy submissions can be sent to the following postal address:

Planning for Golf Task Force
Attn: Benjamin Bainbridge
Planning Implementation
Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning
PO Box 500
Melbourne VIC 8002

If you have any questions about the submission process, please contact the Planning for Golf Task Force team via email at bainbridgebenjamin@delwp.vic.gov.au or visit <https://engage.vic.gov.au/planning-golf-victoria>

Submissions must be received by Monday 14 August 2017.

Privacy Collection Statement

Submissions and survey responses made by individuals are confidential, and will not be published. Submissions can be made anonymously. They will be held by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. Submissions will be reviewed and incorporated into the strategy provided to the Minister for Planning, where appropriate

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1. Submitter details

Name:	Shannon Walker
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Phone:	03 9320 2655
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I am a: (Choose one and delete others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Golf industry professional (Please note, ASGA represents golf equipment and apparel brands and retailers)

We'd like to understand your level of support for 15 ideas across five themes from the Discussion Paper.

Theme 1 - Participation

2. Participation Idea 1: Train local clubs to deliver participation and inclusion programs

Agree:

Disagree:

Why have you provided this response?: ASGA supports the upskilling of local golf clubs – metro, rural and regional – to deliver participation and inclusion programs. We encourage the Victorian Government to set aside funds to enable golf organisations (Golf Australia, Golf Victoria, Professional Golfers Association of Australia (PGA)) to deliver this training to Golf Club Managers, PGA Club and Teaching Professionals and their staff.

According to the recent Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport 2017 by the Boston Consulting Group "92% of Australian adults have an interest in sport, 11 million adults and 3 million children participate in sports each year... and competitions exist across the country that are supported by 1.8 million volunteers."

Nonetheless, participation rates are falling, particularly in organised sport. An analysis of ABS data shows a drop of 5 per cent (from 65 per cent to 60 per cent) in sport and physical recreation participation from 2011-12 to 2013-14.

The likely result of this, and other, trends in sports participation is that, according to the Boston Consulting Group, adult participation in sport could fall by around 15 per cent by 2036.

People don't have the time or inclination to make large time commitments to their sporting activities. This is particularly true of 'destination' sports, that can only be played/practiced at dedicated facilities, like golf. Individual golf clubs must acknowledge the way Australians are undertaking sport and physical activity in the modern age has changed. The government should work with Golf Australia and other golf leadership organisation to assist clubs in delivering new forms of the game, whether that based on the amount of time required to participate, the number of players required, the level of competitiveness, or the types of facilities necessary to participate.

Golf clubs have a great opportunity to play a stronger role as a hub of community sporting and social activities. The golf club, in many cases, has club house facilities for meals, games, meetings and grounds for activities such as walking and games, in addition to the activity of golf. Local government could work closely with golf clubs to assess activities which will be beneficial to the community and the viability and optimal resource use of their local golf clubs.

3. Participation Idea 2: Partner new initiatives and embrace new technology in local golf courses

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Agree:

Disagree:

Why have you provided this response?: Clubs must be given the skills they need to participate in the Sporting Schools program run by the Commonwealth government, which will have the added benefit of helping integrate the club into the local community.

Golf should consider looking outside traditional sports for inspiration, to activities like Parkrun, to see how they organise and use technology to facilitate participation, volunteering and competition.

However, while using new technology and attracting new players is important, demographic changes indicate older Australians will remain a major target audience for golf. As noted in the Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport 2017 “by 2036 there will be one-third more Australians over the age of 65. Currently only 27% of Australians over 65 participate in sports related activities. If this large and growing cohort of older Australians is to remain healthy for longer, there will need to be an expansion of sport and physical activity products tailored to the needs of an older population.”

4. Participation Idea 3: Support new golf business on golf course land

Agree:

Disagree:

Why have you provided this response?: As part of our push to introduce new and more modern forms of the game, ASGA supports introducing new golf business on golf course land. New golf businesses could include (for example) building of a driving range with well-lit, undercover bays to encourage night-time activity. Courses could be re-configured as beginner / entry level locations, where a “6 or 9-hole short course” for beginners and juniors to take up the game. Activities such as group walking clubs, yoga / pilates classes, social activities, and community meetings could be new uses of the golf clubs’ resources.

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Theme 2 - Membership

5. Membership Idea 1: Adopt a regional approach to providing golf membership and programs

Agree:

Disagree:

Why have you provided this response?: Like many sports, golf clubs have seen a decline in memberships, with a 1.3 per cent drop in Victoria from 2013 to 2014. However, research by the Australian Golf Industry Council (of which ASGA is a member) indicates there is a potential to double the number of players nation-wide. Increasing players should mean an increase in club memberships. As well as adopting new forms of the game to attract new players, different types of membership categories should be tried to deliver more flexible options for potential members. ASGA notes that Golf Australia and Golf Victoria already have regional officers to coordinate programs and events. We agree the government could (and we encourage them to) fund additional officers to achieve this membership idea.

6. Membership Idea 2: Improve usage data on golf courses

Agree:

Disagree:

Why have you provided this response?: ASGA has long supported governments and sporting organisations using more data for strategic planning purposes. ASGA has been calling for a national sports participation survey since the old ERASS survey was discontinued in 2010, so we are very pleased to see the Australian Sports Commission's AusPlay research. We agree the AusPlay research should be combined with Victorian golf club participation data to inform decision making. We support the PGCA's collection of rounds data on public courses to supplement to competition rounds data already collected by Golf Australia. State Government could partner with Golf Victoria to develop a state wide survey that Victorian Golf Clubs are required to action each year with their golfers to determine what would encourage them to; A) Play more? B) Bring a friend / associate into their club C) Have members / guests encouraged to use their facilities more often? D) What do they believe their club needs to improve upon?

7. Membership Idea 3: Open up golf courses to everyone

Agree:

Disagree:

Why have you provided this response?: In general, we support this idea. According to research and recommendations by Healthy Active by Design, shared use of sport and recreation facilities are important places for regular physical activity, social interaction and the development of a sense of community. It is also cost effective to provide social and community infrastructure through integrated facilities, shared use of facilities and multiple uses of space. As noted in the Designed to Move resource Designed to Move: Active Cities: "From a city planning standpoint, the evidence presents a strong case to design cities to be more active. In some instances, that can simply be a matter of making the most of existing space – opening up school grounds for public use, for example... ASGA feels this advice can generally be applied to rural and regional towns and that 'golf clubs' can be substituted for 'school grounds' in the sentence above. The same document also says "Make existing resources active resources – Look at existing resources for low-cost, high-gain interventions, like abandoned space and after-hours access to facilities." – like golf clubs. However, we also note that this model may not be suitable for all clubs and that planners and administrators will need to work with club boards to facilitate these ideas where they are appropriate. As noted above, we generally support interventions to make the game more accessible, including the introduction of R&A type rule changes at appropriate facilities.

Theme 3 – Supply and Demand

8. Supply and Demand Idea 1: Adopt a regional, strategic and partnership approach to providing golf facilities

Agree:

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Disagree:

Why have you provided this response?: In the recent 'National Sports Plan' consultation, ASGA's submission noted the requirement for a national sports facilities audit. We believe golf facilities should be included in any such audit. If there is no national audit, Victoria should consider a sport (or even golf-specific) facilities audit. Such an audit will enable the government and other stakeholders to set a baseline of capabilities and needs in current facilities, therefore enabling better planning for future use. We support a regional facilities strategy based on hard evidence.

9. Supply and Demand Idea 2: Golf Victoria lead a regional approach with local clubs and local councils to offer varied golf course types

Agree:

Disagree:

Why have you provided this response?: The simple fact is that not everyone wants to play (or has the capacity to play) a full 18 holes of golf. Other opportunities to participate in the game must be provided. Where there are two or more golf facilities with overlapping catchments, priority should be given to ensuring that a multitude of playing, membership and accessibility options are provided. It is especially important, in the perceived "time poor" western society that we live, that the community is aware that golf is an option for one hour, 1.5 hours and two-hour options, as often people think golf has to take four to five hours. As part of a strategy that provides varied golf course types we need the option for people to play three, six, nine, 12 holes in addition to 18 holes. By offering this a person has an opportunity to be involved in one to two hours. This could even be taken to the level of 30 minutes of putting and / or chipping at local clubs for guests to come and enjoy for a small fee to participant.

10. Supply and Demand Idea 3: Develop a Facility Design Guidelines to inform development and management of golf courses

Agree:

Disagree:

Why have you provided this response?: ASGA supports the development and introduction of facility design guidelines, as long as those guidelines are developed by experts within the golf sector and not imposed by the government.

Theme 4 – Land Use

11. Land Use Idea 1: The Victorian Government maintains the existing Urban Growth Boundary to protect green wedges; and a planning decision framework for golf course land development proposals be designed

Agree:

Disagree:

Why have you provided this response?: Where at all possible maintaining current Golf Clubs and Courses is going to be vital as Melbourne grows to a population of 7.9 million people by 2050. Golf Clubs are considerable value to the healthy green spaces the community lives in. The key is finding a balanced approach for Golf Clubs and the community to best optimise these great open land spaces.

12. Land Use Idea 2: Rationalise golf courses with competing membership catchments; and assess alternative use for surplus golf course land

Agree:

Disagree:

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Why have you provided this response?: As Melbourne grows to near 8 million people over the next 30 years it is going to critically important to have the green space for the community. The ongoing medium density residential planning will mean existing green spaces become of a higher premium. Given this, rationalisation should only take place if there is genuine oversupply for a region and if this does occur then the golf club is assessed to be new green wedge / sporting / healthy lifestyle precinct. This could be a combination of six to nine holes of golf and other sporting / outdoor / community activities.

13. Land Use Idea 3: Adopt the SAGCA Sustainable Golf Course Design resource as Practice Guidelines for golf course design and management

Agree:

Disagree:

Why have you provided this response?: ASGA supports the SAGCA's Sustainable Golf Course Design resource as the practice guidelines for golf course design and management.

Theme 5 - Governance

14. Governance Idea 1: Deliver a state-wide training and club support program for golf clubs

Agree:

Disagree:

Why have you provided this response?: The Government and peak body stakeholders should have a commitment and road-map to improving the capabilities of Victorian golf clubs in a number of distinct areas: Marketing (with each club understanding what best practice looks like, including a targeted focus on membership retention and strong service orientation. Given Golf Clubs are losing more members than they are gaining that "Exit Interviews" are conducted for a deeper understanding as to the services members are requiring to stay as members); Administrative and volunteer management; Funding / Financial expertise including long term Capital Works Programs; Sourcing and procurement; Sustainability; Governance and decision-making. ASGA supports the Government and stakeholders to direct funding towards technological solutions that can assist sports clubs to more effectively administer themselves and manage staff and volunteers. We recommend developing closer ties with the Australian Sports Technologies Network to facilitate these outcomes. It is also worth investigating how Australian programs like Good Sports can encourage clubs to adopt revenue streams that don't rely on alcohol sales (i.e. looking to options for venue hire including hosting community activities). In a similar vein, the New Zealand LiteClub program could be adopted to encourage golf clubs to become more sustainable and spend less on energy costs.

15. Governance Idea 2: Regional golf forums between Golf Victoria districts, clubs and local government

Agree:

Disagree:

Why have you provided this response?: ASGA supports any efforts to streamline communication between the various stakeholders in golf – it's the main reason why we are one of the founding members of the Australian Golf Industry Council. Regional forums to facilitate communication and planning seem like an excellent idea to further the sharing of best practice.

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16. Governance Idea 3: Develop the national home of golf and centre of excellence

Agree:

Disagree:

Why have you provided this response?: As part of the AGIC we already support this initiative. It would be good to see the Victorian Government assist the golf sector in securing extra funding for the project, particularly from the Commonwealth Government.

Other comments

17. Please comment on any other relevant matters below

Topic/s: Creating an online portal where "Best Practices" in the Golf Club Industry

Why have you provided this response?: Creating an online portal where "Best Practices" in the Golf Club Industry are posted by Golf Club Managers and PGA Professionals for fellow industry members to learn from. This has the potential to see information shared at a far greater pace with benefits to the Golf Clubs, the wider industry and the community as they will be receiving more of what they want

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