



Echunga Golf Club
Incorporated
Cnr Dolman & Hahndorf Rd, Echunga. SA. 5153



Biodiversity Plan

Introduction

The Echunga Golf Course is a picturesque site set in the Adelaide Hills of South Australia. While its primary purpose is to provide a first class facility for playing golf, the grounds of the course contain stands of native vegetation that can be preserved and/or enhanced without detracting from the golfing experience.

The Committee of the Echunga Golf Club (The Committee) takes pride in its unique setting and believes the golf course is enhanced by the flora and fauna of the area.

The land upon which the course lies is owned by Mt Barker Council but is leased to The Echunga Golf Club on a 21 year lease for use as a golf course.

This plan sets out to provide a tool to assist with the management of Flora and Fauna within the grounds of the Echunga Golf Course by maintain the golfing experience and preserve and enhance the Australian character and biodiversity within its grounds. Biodiversity can be described as a variety of plants, animals and microorganisms, their genes and ecosystems they make up in relation to a particular place.

There are three specific ecosystems on the course, native grassy woodland, cultivated lawn and tree lined fairways and the various wetlands. At this stage the focus of this plan is the native grassy woodland.

Fauna

A wide range of animals, reptiles & birds can be seen within the grounds of the Echunga Golf Club. Most visible is the western grey kangaroo of which there are regularly 30 to 50 'roos living and feeding on the course and sheltering in the scrub. Koalas are also evident in the grounds from time to time. The highlight to many course users is the bird life of the area with over 70 species of birds being noted within the leased area of the club. The club is keen to maintain and enhance its small bird habitat.

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The Committee is aware that maintaining the diversity of vegetation on the course is key to providing habitat for bird species particularly the smaller bird species. The Committee is committed to maintaining and improving the understory plants on the course where they do not impact adversely on playing the course.

From time to time the course is affected by overabundant bird species causing damage to the playing surfaces. This damage is caused by wood ducks, galahs and potentially corellas. From time to time the Committee authorises its staff to take action to deter these birds from the course to minimise such damage.

Flora

The golf course grounds contain a wide variety of vegetation types ranging from mown grass fairways and greens to stands of native vegetation. As can be imagined much of the course is maintained as a golf course with over 400 members and green fee players using the course regularly. The playing areas are adjoined by some stands of native vegetation which takes up large areas of the course grounds.

With the assistance of Environmental Consultant John Gitsham, the Club has identified and assessed 18 areas of native vegetation on the course for conservation and/or enhancement. The assessment that took place considered such as issues as

- range of biodiversity in the area
- attractiveness as a habitat (particularly small bird)
- weed control
- impact upon golf

The 18 identified areas were also assessed for their current state, recommendations and actions made. The actions were broken down into 4 priorities;

1. Action required in current year
2. Action within 2 years where funds allow
3. Action when funding becomes available
4. No action required

A table at attachment 1 identifies the areas that were assessed, recommendations & actions.

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In addition to this an assessment of the condition of the these 18 sites has now been conducted using a National Trust system of allocating the colours green, blue, orange and red to identify the highest to the lowest quality of intact and diverse remnants. The result of the assessment has also been included in the table at attachment 1.

An Action Plan has been drawn up based on the recommendations of the above assessments and is contained at attachment 2. The committee is confident that by following those actions the biodiversity of the Echunga Golf Club can be maintained and enhanced whilst striking a balance between the natural environment and the golf course.

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Vegetation Sites

KEY: **GREEN** = intact/diverse locally indigenous flora, **BLUE** = only moderately degraded, **ORANGE** = degraded and **RED** = very degraded with little to no local indigenous diversity and vegetation understorey.

Area	Description	Current Condition	Actions	When
1	Area between 1 st green and 9 th tee	Large number of mature trees some native grasses and understorey plants ORANGE and BLUE The better sections are worth hand-weeding as well as planting more canopy, particularly Sheoaks and Wattles whose leaf litter can help suppress weeds.	Some weeding & planting of canopy	3
2	Between 1 st green and 2 nd tee either side of the path	Open area some shrubs and trees RED The understorey is weedy with exotic grasses and broadleaves and therefore should be managed differently from 2A.	Further plantings of shrubs to provide small bird habitat species	1
2A	Between 1 st , 3 rd , & 9 th tees	Some mature trees, shrubs & good understorey and native grasses BLUE This is one of the best patches with good diverse understorey and canopy cover. However weeds need to be controlled near the 1 st fairway	Weed control near 1 st fairway & 3 rd tee	1

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Area	Description	Current Condition	Actions	When
		green and the 3 rd tee.		
3	Between 2 nd hole & green keepers compound	Large number of mature trees with understory & native grasses GREEN This has some of the most intact and diverse patches that reflect the high quality of vegetation in the Echunga Cemetery e.g. with many lilies, some orchids, everlastings, the blue daisy, Brunonia and Yakkas. However the weedy edges pose a threat.	No Action required	4
4	Between 3 rd hole, 8 th green, & 9 th hole	Some mature trees, shrubs & good understory and native grasses GREEN to BLUE Another excellent patch but showing the effects of boundary weed invasion. Has good Golden wattle regeneration with some of the most intact and diverse indigenous ground-cover on the course each side of the path leading from the 8 th green to the 9 th tee e.g. Vanilla, Bulbine, Fringed and Milkmaid and other lilies, sedges, grasses and flowering herbs e.g. Fan-flower, Golden guineas and Rice-flower.	No action required	4

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Area	Description	Current Condition	Actions	When
5	Behind 3 rd green & 4 th tee	Open area some shrubs and trees RED Canopy but little to no indigenous native understorey.	Further plantings of shrubs to provide small bird habitat species	1
6	Area along northern fence between 4 th tee & 6 th green	Some mature trees and grassy areas ORANGE to RED This patch can be thought of as a “pan-handle” shape. The round part to the east of the dam is RED and highly disturbed by recent works. The eastern half of the handle is ORANGE as it has a good thick stand of young SA Blue gums where leaf litter here suppresses weeds. The western end has a mature mix of local and interstate species. This could benefit from planting indigenous Blackwoods, local Eucalyptus and some flowering shrubs.	Further large scale plantings would enhance the area. Plantings of shrubs & trees around 4 th dam	3 1
7	Behind 6 th green to 7 th tee	Number of mature trees and grassy areas RED No conservation effort warranted.	No action required	4
8	7 th tee to 8 th tee	Large number of mature trees with some grassy areas, little understorey ORANGE Has a good upper-storey and canopy cover but the ground is dominated by exotic grasses.	Further large scale plantings would enhance the area	3

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Area	Description	Current Condition	Actions	When
9	Between 6 th & 8 th fairways	Large number of mature trees with some understorey RED This may have been burnt and is severely disturbed.	No action required	4
10	Between 8 th tee & 9 th green	Some mature trees and shrubs RED This has been regularly mown so is an extension of the fairway with trees but no native understorey.	Area could benefit from further understorey plantings	3
11	Behind practice nets adjacent car park	A few mature trees & grassy areas. Sometimes used for unauthorised parking RED This has been regularly mown so is an extension of the fairway with trees but no native understorey	Area would benefit from better fencing to prevent vehicle access and planting with trees, shrubs & understorey	1
12	Area between 10 th fairway and Echunga Hahndorf Road	Some mature trees, shrubs & good understorey and native grasses BLUE A big patch divided by a works track. Has good grassy ground cover in places and good canopy.	Treat watsonia as required to eradicate	1-4
13	Area between 10 th , 17 th , & 18 th holes	Some mature trees, shrubs & good understorey and native grasses BLUE Another big patch with better ground cover than 12. Some mature	Treat watsonia as required to eradicate	1-4

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Area	Description	Current Condition	Actions	When
		introduced native Australian plantings of shrubs and trees at the southern end.		
14	Behind 11 th green to 12 th tee	Grassy area with wetland area RED Weeds dominate here so doesn't warrant time consuming minimal disturbance work	No action required	4
15	Between 15 th & 17 th holes	Large number of trees and shrubs with some wetland areas. Large infestation of watsonia BLUE to ORANGE The western end is weedy with some slashing but a very good cover of Microlaena (Weeping rice grass) under a good covering canopy.	Treat watsonia as required to eradicate	1-4
16	Between 14 th & 16 th fairways	Large number of mature trees slashed between trees some native grasses BLUE Good varied groundcover of Microlaena, lilies and sedges.	Treat bridal creeper to eradicate	1-4
17	Behind 15 th tee	Some large trees with some native & exotic shrubs ORANGE Could improve with several working bees and selective slashing.	Working bees for weed control Further plantings of sheoak & native pine	3
18 th	Between 12 th tee & dam	Some mature trees along dam bank RED Predominantly weedy with exotics.	Consider Plantings around dam edge	3

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Area	Description	Current Condition	Actions	When
		Best biodiversity asset here is the dam where native sedges and rushes could establish around the edges and provide habitat for waterbirds and aquatic life.		

Ranking the patches from highest biodiversity to lowest

GREEN to BLUE

3, 4, 2A, 12 and 16

Recommend using the minimum disturbance approach only to encourage natural regeneration and would benefit from professional detailed work if an NRM grant could be obtained.

BLUE/ORANGE to ORANGE

1, 13, 15, 17, 8 and 6

Again a Minimal Disturbance Approach is best suited but these areas would benefit from revegetation with trees and shrubs to increase biodiversity and canopy. Also careful and targeted hand slashing and spot spraying could foster native groundcover regeneration.

RED

2B, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 14 and 18. Could be enhanced with revegetation and weed control.

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Vegetation Action Plan

Area	Description	Actions	When
2	Between 1 st green and 2 nd tee either side of the path	Further plantings of shrubs to provide small bird habitat species	1
2A	Between 1 st green, 3 rd & 9 th tees	Weed Control near 1 st fairway & 3 rd tee	1
5	Behind 3 rd green & 4 th tee	Further plantings of shrubs to provide small bird habitat species	1
6	Area along northern fence between 4 th tee & 6 th green	. Plantings of shrubs & trees around 4 th dam Further large scale plantings would enhance the area	1-3
11	Behind practice nets adjacent car park	Area would benefit from better fencing to prevent vehicle access and planting with trees, shrubs & understory	1-3
12	Area between 10 th fairway and Echunga Hahndorf Road	Treat watsonia as required to eradicate	1-4
13	Area between 10 th , 17 th , & 18 th holes	Treat watsonia as required to eradicate	1-4

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Area	Description	Actions	When
15	Between 15 th & 17 th holes	Treat watsonia as required to eradicate	1-4
16	Between 14 th & 16 th fairways	Treat bridal creeper to eradicate	1-4
1	Area between 1 st green & 9 th tee	Some weeding & planting of canopy	3
8	7 th tee to 8 th tee	Further large scale plantings would enhance the area	3
10	Between 8 th tee & 9 th green	Area could benefit from further understory plantings	3
17	Behind 15 th tee	Working bees for weed control, further plantings of sheoak & native pine	3
18	Between 12 th tee & dam	Consider planting sedges etc. around dam edge	3

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