**To Mt Barker District Council, Environmental Grants Assessment Committee**

**Echunga Golf Club – Environmental Grants submission March 2021**

**Project plan: Biodiversity: minimum disturbance project (area 4)**

This project was developed to preserve remnant vegetation and promote the natural regeneration of indigenous plants. The work will reduce the weed threat and increase the resilience of a patch of almost intact grassy understorey with the best display of spring wildflowers found on the Golf Course.

In 2020, the Club adopted a Biodiversity Plan to assist the conservation of 18 sites of remnant native vegetation found here at the course. The sites have been surveyed and allocated into areas ranging from low to high levels of remnant vegetation. The areas with high levels of remnant vegetation, such as area 4, are the ones we have prioritised as they are the easiest to maintain. As work continues on our Biodiversity plan, areas of lower levels of remnant vegetation will be targeted. We are grateful that a plant species list exists for the Echunga Cemetery which has given us a starting point, both for identification of the indigenous species at the golf course and for revegetation of those species that may have already disappeared. It is our hope that native fauna will flourish with improvement in the level of remnant vegetation. A bird list (led by John Gitsham from Birds SA) is attached and includes 59 native species.

Two work record sheets are attached as an example of volunteer effort associated with the Biodiversity Plan. Control of woody weeds has begun, and revegetation of some degraded areas is underway. Club volunteers who will take part in May in planting about 200 seedlings to be delivered by a volunteer Trees for Life grower. The $200 fee for registration and propagation materials was paid for by the Club’s Women’s Committee from Open Day raffles. Tree guards costing $190 have also been donated.

In area 4, the ground-cover is compromised by an infestation of spring-flowering Harlequin Flower (*Sparaxis bulbulifera*) and later by the exotic grass Sweet Vernal (*Anthoxantum odoratum*). These weeds compete with and will eventually replace the many existing indigenous native lilies, orchids, low flowering herbs and perennial grasses.

Professional contractors will carry out the bulk of the work over 2 days: 1 day in early spring targeting *Sparaxis* and 1 day in late spring targeting Sweet Vernal. The minimum disturbance method will be undertaken and therefore club volunteer hours will be minimal. Volunteers will assist where possible and safely dispose of all bulbs and flower-heads off the work site. This will include work on the contractor day and a follow-up the day after. Club volunteers will establish a Photographic Monitoring Point (PMP) to record the weed infestation prior to work in 2021 and again in 2022 to monitor change as well as take informal photographs of the work. Work record sheets will be completed for all work done in the project.

Yours Sincerely,

Esther Burt

Echunga Golf Club Women’s President; Management Committee member; Junior Coordinator