



# FAIRBAIRN GOLF CLUB, CANBERRA

## COURSE MASTERPLAN REPORT

NOVEMBER 2023

PREPARED BY  
CONTOUR GOLF DESIGN GROUP



**CONTOUR**  
GOLF DESIGN GROUP

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**Masterplan principles and priorities**

- To gradually upgrade all course features including greens, bunkers and tees
- To establish a course layout that best uses the available land
- To minimize the distance between greens and the following tees wherever possible
- To establish a course that is fun to play for golfers of all standards
- To gradually reduce the number of exotic trees (Pines and Cypress) and increase the number of more appropriate locally indigenous trees
- To widen many of the playing corridors
- To better exploit the potential for distant vista towards Canberra's natural and built landmark hills and features

NOTE 1: proposed new or rebuilt putting greens for this 5-10 year plan are:

- The 1st, 7th and 9th.
- The 10th (new hole), 11th (current 10th), 15th (current 14th), 16th (current 15th).
- The current 16th is eventually removed from the course layout.
- The priority will be the 9th and new hole to establish 19 holes to avoid the need for temporary greens.
- The remaining greens also need to be rebuilt but this can be planned for at a later date.

NOTE 2:

- A new green refers to a completely new designed and built green in a new location
- A rebuilt green refers to a rebuilt green in the same location - expanded in size but requiring less work than a new green
- For further details on all recommendations, including tree removal, refer to the accompanying MASTERPLAN REPORT



Indicative scorecard

Hole	Black	White	Yellow	Par	Green	Par
1	230	214	219	4	187	4
2	308	290	282	4	254	4
3	370	360	284	4	184	4
4	368	352	305	4	164	4
5	324	300	485	5	440	3
6	170	160	120	3	135	3
7	315	300	295	4	260	4
8	181	162	162	3	135	3
9	490	475	460	5	425	5
	2954	2818	2632	36	2154	36

Hole	Black	White	Yellow	Par	Green	Par
10	150	135	125	3	80	3
11	410	395	380	4	355	3
12	145	135	120	3	105	3
13	478	465	410	5	395	3
14	155	140	135	3	95	3
15	350	340	330	4	280	4
16	365	345	330	4	310	4
17	430	410	390	4	350	3
18	375	360	355	4	310	4
	2858	2725	2575	34	2230	36
	2954	2818	2632	36	2154	36
	5812	5543	5187	70	4384	72



# Fairbairn Golf Club, Canberra

## COURSE MASTERPLAN

### (5-10 YEAR PLAN)

November 2023



## 1. ABOUT CONTOUR GOLF DESIGN GROUP

Contour Golf Design Group (Contour Golf) is a specialist Golf Course Design company that provides a range of services including Golf Course Architecture, Masterplanning and Landscape Design within Australia and the Asia Pacific region. Based in Canberra, Contour Golf has developed an enviable and broad client base over the past 12 years, with completed projects spanning the full spectrum of the industry.

Ben Davey is the Director of Contour Golf. Ben's career started at Melbourne-based Cashmore Golf Design in 1996. In 2009, Ben left Cashmore Golf to set up Davey Shearer Golf Design with an initial focus on the Chinese market. With Ben as the lead Golf Course Architect and former pro-golfer Bob Shearer as Design Consultant, Davey Shearer completed to acclaim five golf courses across China over seven years - more than any other Australian golf course architecture company during that time.

Following on from the success of Davey Shearer Golf Design, Contour Golf Design Group evolved in 2016. With a stronger focus on the Australian market, Contour Golf now has clients across the country in Victoria, WA, the ACT, NSW and Tasmania.

## 2. ENGAGEMENT BACKGROUND

Fairbairn Country Club (the Club) is a member-orientated club located adjacent to Canberra airport in the A.C.T. The course has evolved over the years with various Australian Defence Force personnel and well-meaning members recommending changes and additions in what has been a rather ad-hoc manner. No long term agreed vision for the golf course has ever really been adopted.

As a result, around June 2023 the Club decided that a golf course architect should be engaged to prepare a course Masterplan with the goal being to develop an agreed plan for the development and upgrade of the golf course over the next five to ten years. In September 2023, Canberra based Contour Golf Design Group (Contour Golf), was engaged to prepare this Masterplan.

The Masterplan we have prepared is based on what we believe the Club should undertake in order to have a plan and document that can guide the Club over the next 5-10 years of course improvements and upgrades, considering the finances and available resources of the Club.

## 3. PREAMBLE

Throughout September and October of 2023 Ben Davey, Director of Contour Golf, visited, played and walked the course on more than six occasions. During these site visits he studied all aspects of the course, including but not limited to;

- The course layout, landforms, topography and how well the golf holes fit the land.

- How well the course flows and the transitions from one putting green to the following tees.
- The design quality, size shape and hole locations on the greens.
- The size, shape and location of tees.
- The design, location, number, challenge, and strategy of the bunkers.
- 'Fairness' for shorter hitters who generally hit the ball lower to the ground.
- Maintenance practices, including mowing patterns, short and long grass areas around greens.
- Access, wear areas, paths and circulation around the course for golfers and maintenance staff.
- Vegetation management, trees, shade issues, views within the course and of the surrounding landscape.



*A recent 2022 aerial photo of the site*

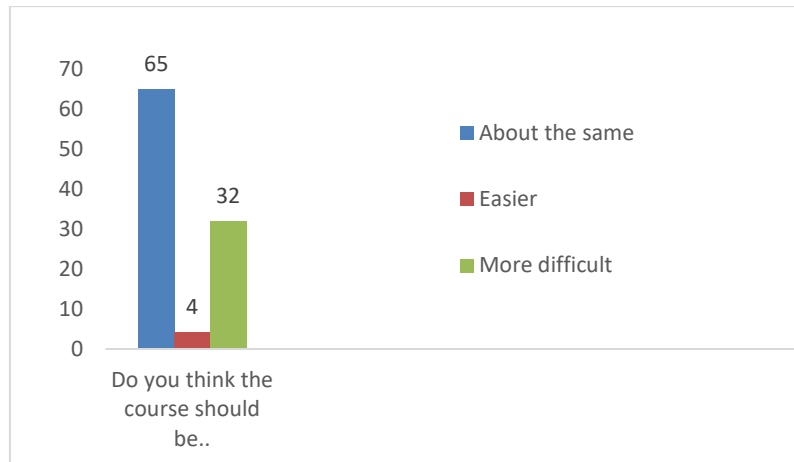
## 4. SURVEY RESULTS

In order to gather as much information from the members as to what they like, and don't like, about their golf course, in September 2023 a member survey was conducted. The survey was sent out to all members and a total of 101 responses were received. Members were also asked what their current Australian golf handicap is and of the 101 members; *(percentages are approximate)*

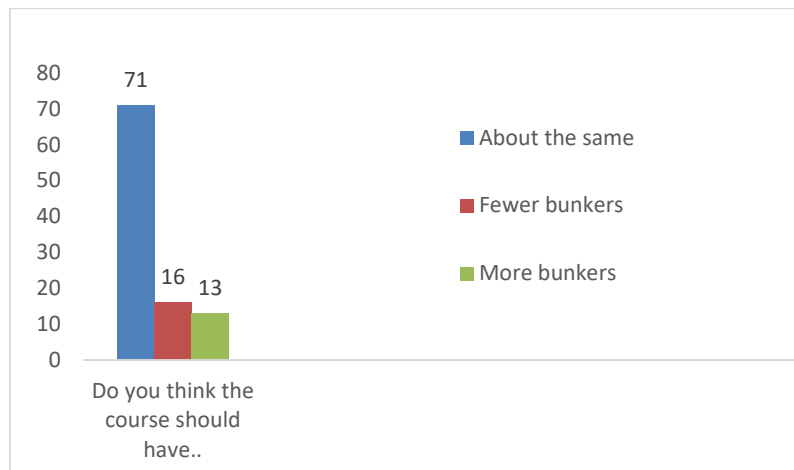
- 11 (11%) had a handicap of less than 10.
- 43 (43%) had a handicap between 10 and 18.
- 22 (22%) had a handicap between 19 and 27.
- 9 (9%) had a handicap between 28 and 54.
- 17 (17%) had no handicap or are a Social Member.

The questions asked, and results of the Survey follow.

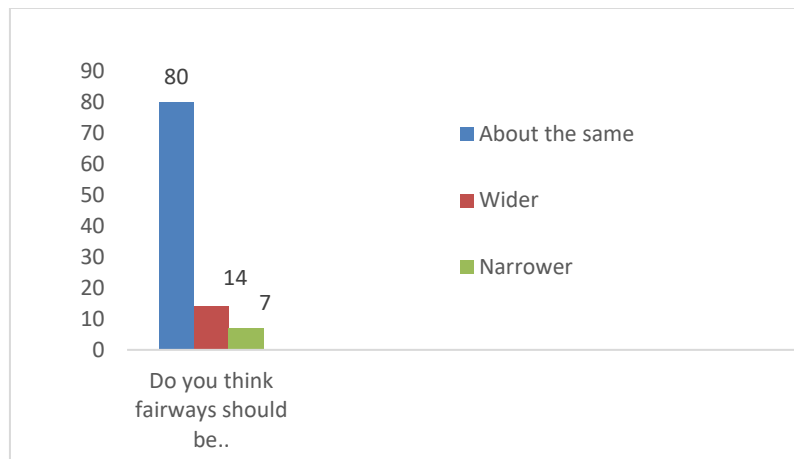
*Question: Do you think the course should be a) more difficult, b) easier or c) about the same.*



*Question: In relation to bunkers, do you think there should be a) more bunkers, b) fewer bunkers or c) about the same.*

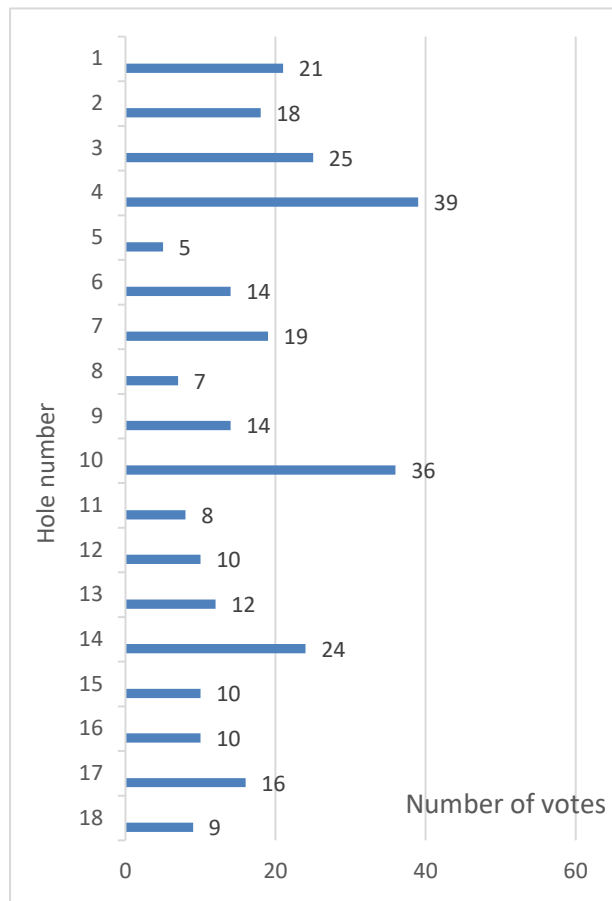


*Question: In relation to fairways, do you think they should be a) wider, b) narrower c) about the same.*

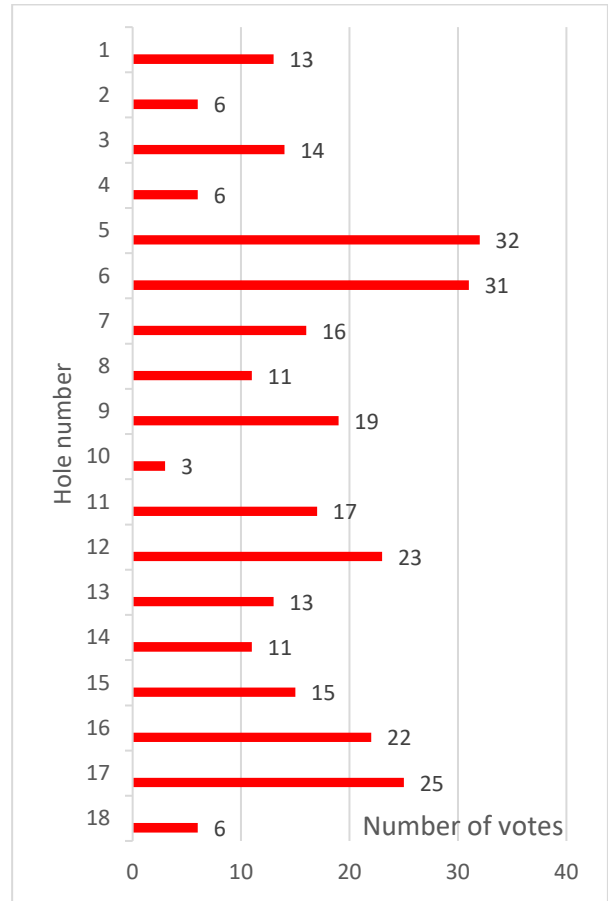


Members were also asked what their **three favourite** and **three least favourite holes** are. The results of this question are summarised below. *(Note: not all members voted in both categories)*

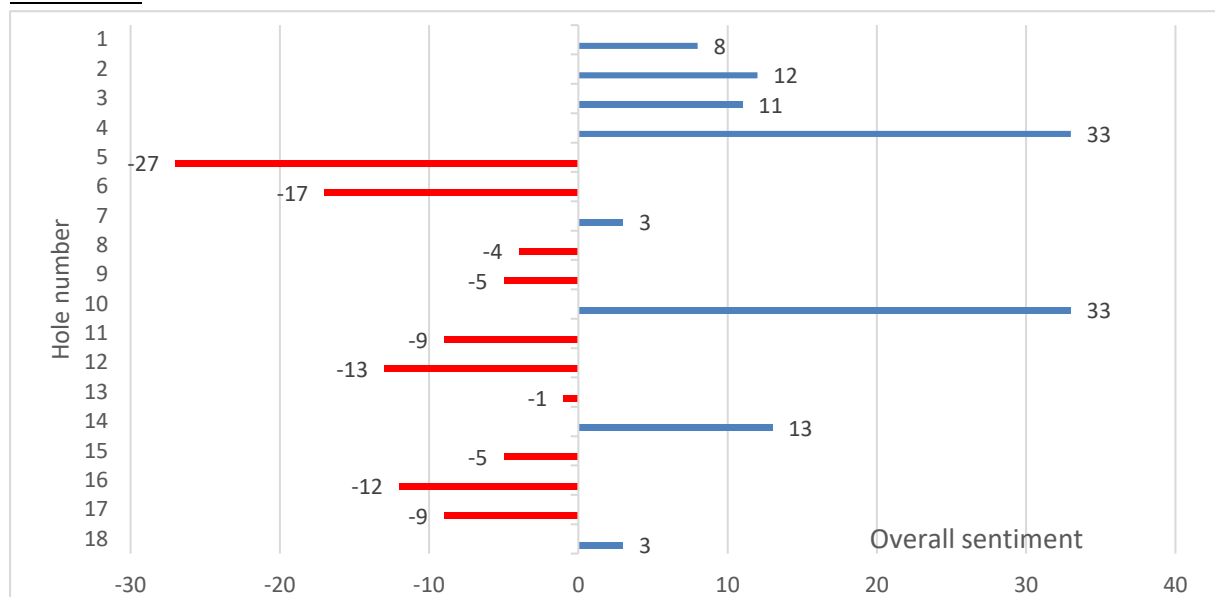
**MOST FAVOURITE HOLE: TOTAL VOTES**



**LEAST FAVOURITE HOLE: TOTAL VOTES**



**COMBINED TOTALS: HOLE PREFERENCE**

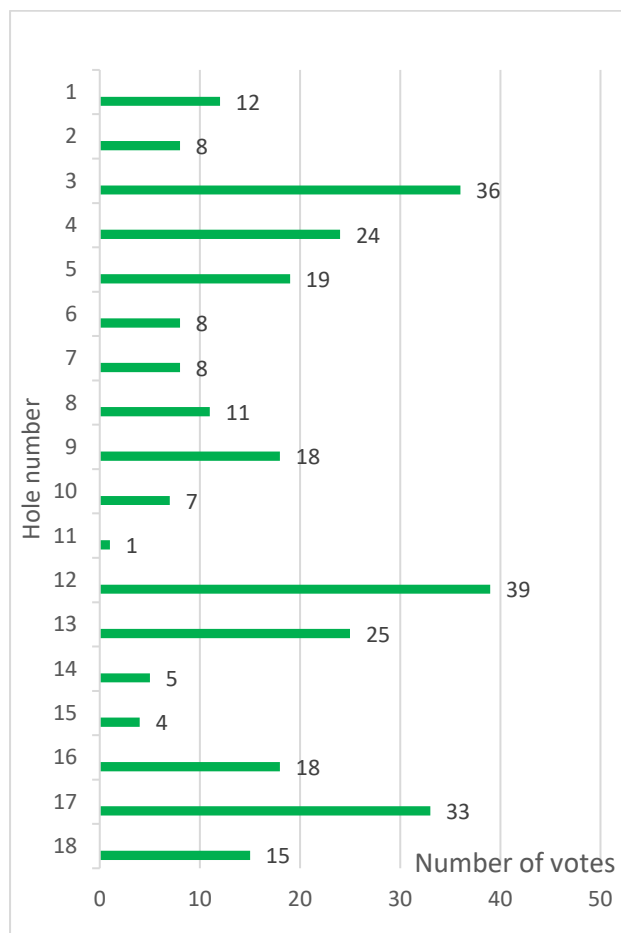


The results of this survey question revealed the following;

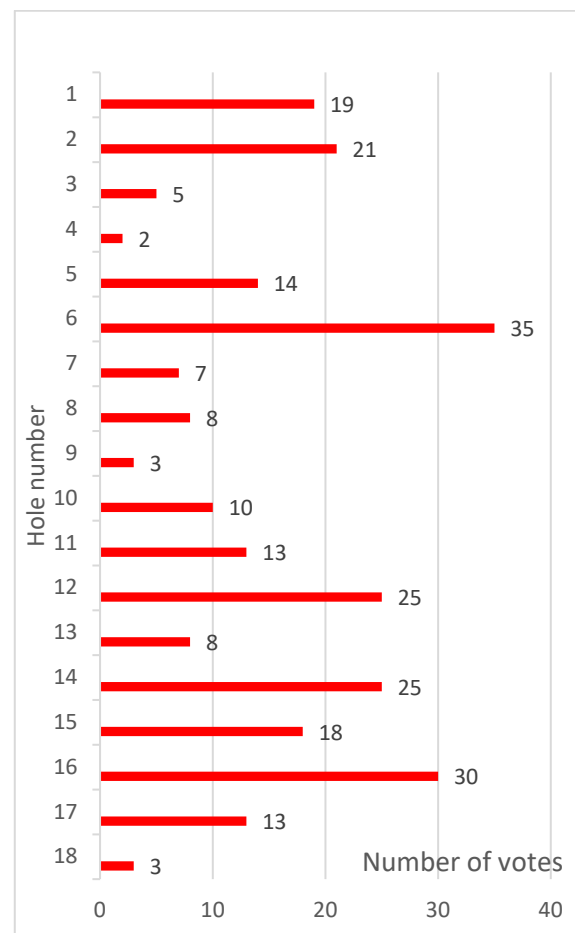
- The three most liked (favourite) holes on the course are the 4<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> (in that order). Two mid length par 4's and a short par 5. Interestingly, two of the three (the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> play partially downhill, while the 4<sup>th</sup> is the only hole with water in play,
- The three most disliked holes on the course are the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> followed closely by the 12<sup>th</sup>. Three of these are par 5's, while the 6<sup>th</sup> seems especially disliked by shorter hitters for reasons we will discuss later.
- The 10<sup>th</sup> hole received the fewest negative votes and the second highest positive votes.
- The 18<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> holes received the fewest overall votes (15 and 18 votes).
- The front 9 holes received 162 favourable votes and 148 negative votes.
- The back 9 holes received 135 favourable votes and 135 negative votes.
- Considering the combined preferences, the first four holes are all viewed favourably, but from the 5<sup>th</sup> hole to the 18<sup>th</sup>, 10 of the remaining 14 holes received more negative than positive votes.

Members were also asked what their **three favourite** and **three least putting greens** are. The results of this question are summarised below. *(Note: not all members voted in both categories)*

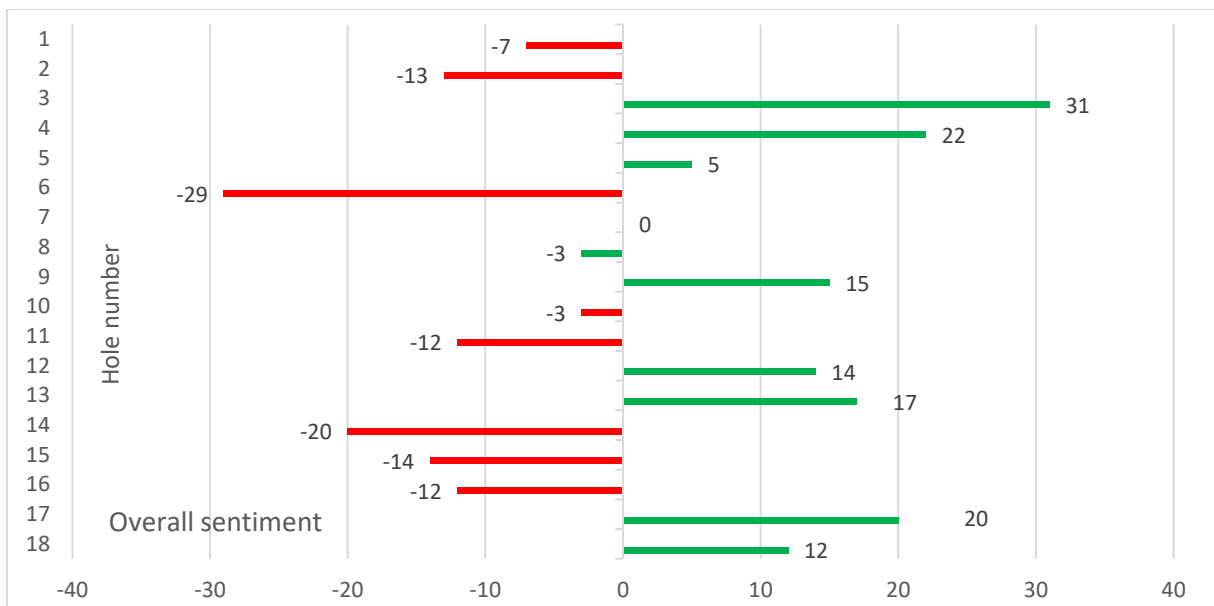
#### **BEST PUTTING GREEN: TOTAL VOTES**



#### **WORST PUTTING GREEN: TOTAL VOTES**





**COMBINED TOTALS: PUTTING GREENS**

The results of this survey question revealed the following;

- The 3rd, 12<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> greens received the most positive votes, followed closely by the 13<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>.
- The 6<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> greens received the most negative votes.
- The 12<sup>th</sup> green received by far the most overall votes receiving the second most positive votes and the equal third most negative votes. It is either loved or loathed!
- The 11<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> greens received the least number of overall votes (14 and 15 votes respectively).
- Despite the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> holes being viewed favourably (especially the 10<sup>th</sup>), their greens were not.

In the hole by hole commentary and recommendations section of this report, we will discuss these results more specifically in relation to each hole.

## 5. COURSE REVIEW AND COMMENTARY

### 5.1 THE COURSE – A BRIEF HISTORY

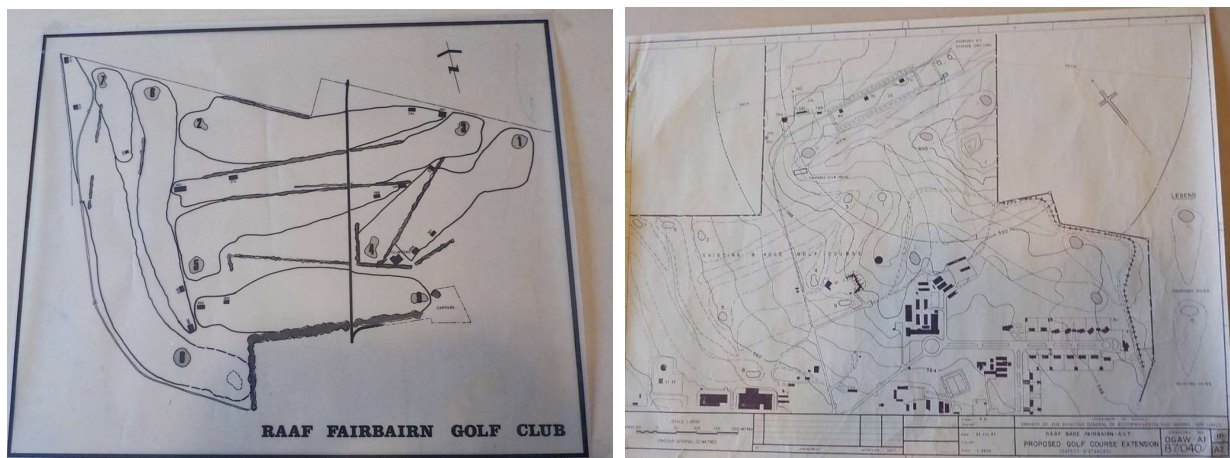
The Fairbairn course layout has evolved from what was originally a 6-hole course with sand greens, developed in the 1950's and expanded to 9-holes in the 1960's. It remained a 9-hole course until 1988. In that year Squadron Leader Glen Toscan, CO of 28 Squadron and also an avid golfer, instigated a major upgrade of the course, incorporating the existing 9-holes with the addition of nine new holes to take it to a full 18 holes. He arranged for the Australian Army Engineering Construction Squadron to come to RAAF Base Fairbairn with their heavy earth moving equipment to construct the fairways and the greens and tees, as a training exercise.

The construction of the additional 9-holes was done in two stages. Six new holes were originally added, followed shortly after by the last three holes to take the course to a full 18-holes. The last three holes, completed in the late 1980's were the 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> holes. The new 18-hole course was officially opened by Air Vice-Marshal Richard Bomball on 11 August 1990.

A thorough overview of how the course has evolved, compiled by current Club President Brian Depree in *Fairbairn History 1953-2022*, can be found [here](#).

### 5.2 THE COURSE LAYOUT/ROUTING

The initial six holes - later expanded to nine holes, are all located on the western half of the site. These original holes now make up most of the back nine, plus the 1<sup>st</sup> hole. This nine basically played as the current holes, 1, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, although the 12<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and possibly 10<sup>th</sup> greens are not originals. Most of the back nine is therefore more than 20 years older than the front nine, and that is evident if one looks at the age of the trees, but also some of the original greens on the back nine are amongst the smallest and simplest from a design perspective.



*The original plan for the 9-hole course(left), most of which is now the back nine, and the late 1980's plan for the 18-hole course (source Fairbairn History 1953-2022).*

The course routing takes the golfer off to the east initially with the front nine completing a rather convoluted clockwise loop, following the boundary for holes 2-4, then heading back uphill towards the centre of the course and one of the highest points (the long par 5 5<sup>th</sup>). The 7<sup>th</sup> plays up over a hill and then 8 and 9 play back towards the west along the northern boundary. Despite the fact that several holes play close to the boundary, the Club is fortunate that the lack of development does not make this an issue – as it does at many other Club's.

The main criticism I have in relation to the routing of the holes is the transitions between holes. The holes feel somewhat disjointed, and the flow of the course is often interrupted by long walks between greens and tees. This applies between the 1<sup>st</sup> green and 2<sup>nd</sup> tees, 3<sup>rd</sup> green and 4<sup>th</sup> tees, and also between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> tees (the latter two are not as bad). A guiding principle of golf architecture is that there should be a natural flow and transition between golf holes, so the golfer feels as though they are on a continuous journey moving forward and this is one of the skills of laying out an 18 hole course. Long walks, especially back-tracking interrupts this journey.

After the 9<sup>th</sup> green, another long backwards walk of nearly 150 metres is needed to get to the 10<sup>th</sup> tees. The back nine continues west, with the 10<sup>th</sup> hole followed by a series of back and forth holes until the 15<sup>th</sup>. The transitions between the 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> holes are all fine, but the 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> tees again requires a long walk back. The 13<sup>th</sup> hole – an original from the 1960's – feels as though it has been squashed in between the 1<sup>st</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. The 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> again involves a 100 metre walk sideways, to a tee and a hole that plays straight back past the previous green, with a crossover of the 18<sup>th</sup> hole. From the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> this happens again. From there the course flows nicely doing an anti-clockwise loop back to the clubhouse.

This review of the routing may sound overly critical, and a little pedantic, but that is because I place a high value on how a course is laid out, how the holes connect and the transitions between holes. This is a skill of golf architecture that the great designers of the past all exhibited. It may be something members have become used to, or perhaps it doesn't bother them. It is, however, a remnant of the fact the course went from six, to nine, to fifteen and then 18 holes and was put together in a piecemeal way without a complete starting vision. Given the original designers were in fact just regular golfers too, with no experience in how to layout a golf course, they did a reasonable job - all things considered.

When this five to ten year Masterplan is complete, I think this aspect of the design will be dramatically improved, with the potential to further improve it beyond then.

### 5.3 COURSE LENGTH AND PAR

The course length is short by contemporary standards at just 5,638 metres (black markers). It is slightly shorter than a decade ago due to the shortening of the 17<sup>th</sup> hole. The course has a par of 70 and the Masterplan proposes it remains 70. There is a strong argument that perhaps holes such as the new 11<sup>th</sup> (current 10<sup>th</sup> but shortened), or 17<sup>th</sup> should be par 5's from the White and Yellow tees, but that is for the Club to decide.

The Masterplan indicates that the Black course will have an approximate length of 5,812 metres (when completed) or an increase of approximately 170 metres. This has been achieved by utilising more of the Club's land (behind the 9<sup>th</sup> green), combining the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> holes, and lengthening the 18<sup>th</sup> hole.

From the White tees the Masterplan indicates a length of 5,543 (compared to the current 5,273), from the Yellow a length of 5,187 (compared to 5,020) and the Green a length of 4,384 (compared to 3,561). Many of the current green tee markers are currently not in use though, or in poor condition.

The Masterplan indicates several new tees, especially forward tees. These new forward tees need to be correctly constructed and large enough for golfers to want to use them. Many of the current forward tees look like after thoughts.

Hole	Black	White	Yellow	Par	Green	Par
1	230	219	219	4	197	4
2	308	290	282	4	254	4
3	370	360	284	4	184	4
4	366	352	305	4	164	4
5	524	500	485	5	440	5
6	170	160	120	3	115	3
7	315	300	295	4	260	4
8	181	162	162	3	115	3
9	490	475	460	5	425	5
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Hole	Black	White	Yellow	Par	Green	Par
10	150	135	125	3	90	3
11	410	395	380	4	355	5
12	145	135	120	3	105	3
13	478	465	410	5	335	5
14	155	140	135	3	95	3
15	350	340	330	4	280	4
16	365	345	330	4	310	4
17	430	410	390	4	350	5
18	375	360	355	4	310	4
	<b>2858</b>	<b>2725</b>	<b>2575</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>2230</b>	<b>36</b>
	<b>2954</b>	<b>2818</b>	<b>2612</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>2154</b>	<b>36</b>
	<b>5812</b>	<b>5543</b>	<b>5187</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>4384</b>	<b>72</b>

*The indicative scorecard for the revised 'Masterplanned' course when completed.*

#### 5.4 PLAYABILITY AND COURSE DIFFICULTY

The course must be playable for golfers of all standards. That means a single handicap player should be challenged and enjoy the course, but the 45 handicap golfer who hits the ball short and low, must be able to get around too. The current course has several holes where the entry into the green is very narrow and maintained as rough. Holes 2, 5 and 12 come to mind. Others such as the 11<sup>th</sup> have very limited options, with a forced bunker carry (or play away from the green). For low markers these are fine, but for the older men and women or kids, it can be impossibly difficult. The Masterplan aims to address this issue.

In nearly all cases when designing a new green on a course such as Fairbairn, I would only bunker the green on one side, always leaving about half the green open to which shorter hitters can play to.

#### 5.5 PUTTING GREENS

The putting greens on the back nine are generally older than the front nine because of the history of how the course evolved. The current 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> are all believed to be originals, dating back to 1967. There is a question mark about the 10<sup>th</sup> too, which may or may not have been rebuilt when the 11<sup>th</sup> hole was added in the 1980's. The 12<sup>th</sup> green (originally the 3<sup>rd</sup>) was also moved approximately 80 metres further back when the course went to 18 holes. The 17<sup>th</sup> green was moved due to stray balls in the early 2000's, then again in 2022.

On the front nine, the 1<sup>st</sup> green is part of the original pre 1988 nine hole course, so it is assumed it's an original also dating from 1967. All the other greens on the front nine were built in the late 1980's when the course went to 18 holes, meaning they are the newest, but still approximately 35 years old. The 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> are the most recent with the exception of the 17<sup>th</sup>.

The Fairbairn greens are generally small, averaging no more than about 350m<sup>2</sup>. There is quite a large variation though, with some being little more than 200m<sup>2</sup>, and others being closer to 500m<sup>2</sup>. The smallest greens tend to be the oldest, such as the 1<sup>st</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Some of the largest are the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and the new 17<sup>th</sup>. None of them would be classified as 'large' though if compared to other golf courses.

Most of the greens are generally flat, with a simple tilt back towards the direction of play, although some are far more interesting. The 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> all have interesting movement, and coincidentally were amongst the most popular in the member survey. They also tended to be the most controversial with greens such as the 12<sup>th</sup> being both liked and disliked by a large cohort of members surveyed.



*The 3<sup>rd</sup> green (left) and 4<sup>th</sup> green (right) were amongst the most popular in the member survey and this Masterplan proposes they remain as they are for now.*

Given the age of the greens, all of them eventually need to be rebuilt over the next 10-20 years. This Masterplan considers the next 5-10 years and therefore prioritises those greens most in need of replacement. This Masterplan proposes that seven greens be rebuilt over the next 5-10 years. These greens are the 1<sup>st</sup> (a minor rebuild), 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. The 16<sup>th</sup> hole is removed from the layout and replaced with a new par 3 10<sup>th</sup> hole with the current 10<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> holes renumbered accordingly.

## 5.6 BUNKERS

The original plans do not show the location of any bunkers so it is difficult to determine how or who decided where they should be placed. What is apparent is that there has been a lot of indecision over the years. A quick scroll through the timeline on Google Earth reveals bunkers come and go, and then sometimes come again.

The 5<sup>th</sup> hole, for example, in 2002 had three greenside bunkers, including its 'Australia shaped' bunker short right of the green. The two front bunkers were filled in and grassed around 2008. In 2009 the bunker in the valley, way short of the green, and the pond appear, but the pond is located where the mound now is. In 2012 both the pond and bunker disappear, but the pond has moved further left, we assume replaced by the

mound. The bunker behind the green remains the only bunker on the hole until 2018 when the decision must have been made to convert the hollow in the valley back to a bunker, and to construct two more in front of the green. Similar ad hoc changes have happened on other holes.



*The bunkers on the 3<sup>rd</sup> hole (left) and the two 'new' bunkers (circa 2018) on the 5<sup>th</sup> hole.*

In total there are currently 32 bunkers on the course. The bunkers vary in shape and design but are generally simple oval, kidney or circular shapes. The exceptions are perhaps the bunker on the right of the 1<sup>st</sup> hole, and the new bunker on the right of the 17<sup>th</sup> green. The Masterplan proposes there be a small increase in the number of bunkers to 37. This includes retaining 22 of the current bunkers and constructing 15 new bunkers either in the fairway, or adjacent to new greens. Ten of the current bunkers are therefore either filled in or demolished, while several of the current bunkers are also made smaller, generally to widen the entrance space into greens.

As this Masterplan aims to address course improvements over the next 5-10 years, some of the bunkers that remain untouched, may in fact, in the longer term also be removed or modified.

Finally, we note that the members survey revealed members are overwhelmingly happy with the current number of bunkers, although there were slightly more members wanting more, than wanting fewer.

## 5.7 TEES

Many of the tees are not large enough to spread wear, especially as player numbers have increased over the past few years. The location of most of the tees is fine, but there needs to be a gradual improvement program put in place to make them larger and level. On several holes we have added new forward tees.

The club also needs to move away from the old tradition of elevating tees unnaturally above ground level, or if they are to be elevated, they need to tie into the surrounding landscape far better. Examples of poorly built tees are the 3<sup>rd</sup> tees and the womens' tee on the 12<sup>th</sup> hole, which both sit up unnaturally above ground level. Obviously tees need to be subtly elevated for drainage, but that is all. Generally, they should sit as naturally on the ground as possible.

Tees on par 3's, where divots are generally more likely, need to be especially large to enable wear to be spread. On long holes where driver is generally used, this is less important.

## 5.8 FAIRWAYS

Fairways are generally quite narrow, just 20-30 metres wide, averaging about 25 metres. Turf conditions are generally good. There are several areas where I will recommend fairways be widened, especially on holes where trees need to be removed, such as the 1<sup>st</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> holes. My philosophy is that wider fairways offer more choices for golfers but that one side of the fairway, perhaps where a hazard is located, should provide an easier approach shot to the green. This is the principle of risk and reward. Many of the fairways also need to be extended back towards the tee, as the carry distance is too great for shorter hitters on many holes.

## 5.9 TREES

Back in 1953 when the first few holes, of what was to become the Fairbairn Golf Club, were built, the site was completely devoid of trees. It is likely that pre European settlement, the site would have been grasslands and open woodland but at some point, it was cleared – probably for farming – and so in 1953 it was an open, treeless pasture. We know this because we have historic aerial photos that verify it.

When the course was developed, the founders decided that exotic Pine trees should be planted in very large numbers between the holes. Starting in the 1950's Pine trees were heavily planted, usually in straight rows. This continued when the second nine was added in the late 1980's.



*The heavily planted Pinus radiata on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> holes (left) and the very narrow tree lined 1<sup>st</sup> hole.*

Fairbairn was not the only Canberra Club to do this. Mass plantings of Pines was popular at other Canberra Clubs such as Yowani, Royal Canberra, Queanbeyan and Belconnen. Pine trees were very popular in Canberra in the 1950'-70's, as were other exotic trees. This was not confined to golf courses but was part of the garden city movement popular at the time as Canberra developed, and exotic trees, many of them conifers, were planted across the city.

More recently, and perhaps even more concerning, is that in the past 10-20 years, the Club has started planting masses of Cypress trees. These Cypress, mainly native to California, are relatively small at present but in time become very large trees with a dense canopy. Very little consideration has gone into the placement of these Cypress and their eventual size. If allowed to grow to their mature size, it is not over stating it to say they will ruin many of the golf holes. In addition, many of these trees hide panoramas from

the course across the broader landscape. The trees behind the 9<sup>th</sup> green are an example. The argument that I have heard – that they provide a wind break – does not stand up to any scrutiny in my opinion. Now is the time to identify the worst of these trees and remove them before they become bigger and more costly to remove in the future

There are very few native trees on the golf course. Native Sheoaks have been planted on the left side of the 18<sup>th</sup>, but unfortunately, they were planted too close to the fairway. There are a few Gum trees scattered across the course, but the vast majority of trees are the exotic Pines and Cypress. There are a scattering of new native plantings, planted in the past few years, but often little thought has gone into their placement too.

It is beyond the scope of this report to identify every tree that should be removed, and the location of all new plantings except to make the following points;

- The priority now should be to identify and remove most of the Cypress trees, especially the ones that are located in the worst positions.
- Longer term, the Pines should gradually be removed. Many of them (especially the older ones on the back nine) are nearing senescence and will start dropping limbs and become dangerous.
- A tree replacement program should be implemented. Tree planting needs to be undertaken in a coordinated manner as works to the golf course are undertaken.
- Tree planting should consist of mainly locally indigenous trees and shrubs. Planting should be mainly in groups or copses, rather than as rows of trees between holes. The Masterplan identifies some of these areas, but a long term tree planting plan is beyond the scope of this report.

## 5.10 PRACTICE FACILITIES

The Club has a very small putting green in front of the clubhouse and another adjacent to the 1<sup>st</sup> tee. When the old building behind the 1<sup>st</sup> tees are removed, there *may* be an opportunity to have a much larger (up to 700m<sup>2</sup>) putting green with more undulations in that area. This might enable an 18-hole putting course to be established so it becomes a place where one might spend an hour or two playing around having fun, rather than just a warmup area prior to a round of golf.

The Club also has a practice fairway located on the north side of the course, accessed via the track that crosses the 18<sup>th</sup> and current 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> fairways. There is a chipping green located there as well, but it is rather poorly maintained. Both the practice tee and chipping green should be upgraded and better maintained. If these areas were managed as well as the golf course, and tree planting undertaken, this whole area could be far more appealing.

A golf ball vending machine placed here would also be far better than the current honour system.

## 5.11 CREATING A 19TH HOLE

As a prelude to the hole descriptions in the following section of this report, we firstly need to explain one of the reasons for creating a new 10<sup>th</sup> hole and, eventually, removing the current 16<sup>th</sup> hole from the routing.



We will describe the new 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> holes in Part 6 (recommendations) of this report, however the concept behind establishing a new hole on a portion of unused land is to create a course that temporarily has 19 holes of golf. One of the reasons for doing this as part of a Masterplan redevelopment, is to minimise disruption to members as construction works proceed. Having 19-holes of golf means that as individual holes are redeveloped, holes can be closed without the need for the much dreaded temporary green.



*The proposed new 9<sup>th</sup> green and 10<sup>th</sup> tees would be located near the existing track (left), the current 10<sup>th</sup> green and 11<sup>th</sup> tees (right) can be moved further to the right as pictured.*

I looked at other ways of achieving a 19<sup>th</sup> hole, such as using the last part of the old 17<sup>th</sup> hole, or the land behind the 4<sup>th</sup> green, but these options did not work as well with the rest of the course routing. They would have felt like spare holes rather than part of the course, which is ultimately what the Masterplan proposes. Having made the decision that using the land behind the 9<sup>th</sup> green was the best option, I then considered which par 3 we might remove from the layout to facilitate improvements to other holes. The 6<sup>th</sup> wasn't an option because of the walk its removal would have created from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup>. The 8<sup>th</sup> was a possibility, as the 9<sup>th</sup> tees could go back, but with the green being extended too, it would be extremely long. The 11<sup>th</sup> didn't work because there were no other flow on benefits, except pushing the 10<sup>th</sup> green back (which we can do anyway). If the 13<sup>th</sup> was removed it may have meant the 1<sup>st</sup> tees could move. I considered this but on balance decided it was not the best solution. So that left the 16<sup>th</sup>, a hole with a flawed green, a long walk to the tee from the previous green, and an opportunity (if it was removed) to vastly improve the current 15<sup>th</sup> hole.

The desire to establish a 19<sup>th</sup> hole was not the only motivation behind creating the new par 3 10<sup>th</sup> though. I strongly believe that on balance the new 10<sup>th</sup> can be a far better hole than the 16<sup>th</sup> can ever be, and I also think there are flow on benefits to both the 9<sup>th</sup> and current 10<sup>th</sup> holes, and the current 15<sup>th</sup>. This will be explained in more detail in Part 6 of the report.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 MASTERPLAN OBJECTIVES (5-10 YEAR PLAN)

1. To gradually upgrade all course features including greens, bunkers and tees, prioritising those holes identified in this 5-10 year Masterplan.
2. To eventually have putting greens that are interesting, fun to play, challenging and comparable to the best in the Canberra region.
3. To establish a course layout that best uses the land available and best exploits the natural terrain.
4. To enhance transitions between greens and the following tees to improve the flow of the course.
5. To establish a course that is fair and fun to play for golfers of all standards – from beginners to more experienced golfers – always considering the members of Fairbairn.
6. To progressively reduce the number of exotic trees (Pines and Cypress) and increase the number of more appropriate locally indigenous trees.
7. To widen many of the playing corridors through tree removal and by expanding fairways to provide more options and create a more strategic golf course.
8. To enhance the potential for distant vistas towards Canberra’s natural hills and built landmark features.
9. To improve the environmental sustainability of the course so that in 20-30 years it is a haven for flora, fauna, and golfers alike.

### 6.2 HOLE DESCRIPTIONS – FRONT 9 *(all distances are from the back tees in metres)*

#### HOLE 1      PAR 4      230 METRES

##### **Description**

A very short par 4 opening hole that has remained unchanged since the 1960’s except changes to the bunkers. Obviously, the trees have matured, and narrowed the fairway corridor as well. There used to be two bunkers on the right, one near the green, the other short right of the green. Around 2009 they were joined to create one much larger bunker. The 1<sup>st</sup> hole was voted the 5<sup>th</sup> most popular in the member survey.

##### **Recommendations**

- Remove all of the trees down the left side of the hole. Most of these are old Pine trees nearing senescence in any case.
- Widen the fairway on the left by up to 15 metres giving a total fairway width of 35-40 metres. This will create a much more generous and inviting tee shot for an opening hole.

- Place a new bunker at about 195 metres from the back tee, in the centre/right of the new fairway – about 20-25 metres short of the green. There will be 20 metres of fairway to its left and about 15 metres between it, and the existing right bunker.
- Rebuild the green but leave the bunkers as they are. Make the green much larger especially on the left and reshape it to have more interesting contours. Take the edge of the green right across and behind the bunker on the left.
- This will create a far more interesting short par 4 where longer hitters have to decide whether to play left, right or short of the new bunker. Playing to its left will be safer but leave a tricky pitch over the left bunker to a larger green. Playing right brings the right bunker into play, but if well executed, leaves a simpler pitch to the new green.

## HOLE 2      PAR 4      308 METRES

### Description

A long walk takes golfers to the 2<sup>nd</sup> tees, but nothing (short of moving the 1<sup>st</sup> green further left) can address this, so it is something that can't be resolved. The 2<sup>nd</sup> hole is another short par 4 played slightly downhill and bending to the right. There used to be a very large bunker on the left side of the green, but it was grassed around 2012. It remained as grass until 2021 when part of it was converted back to a bunker.

### Recommendations

- Construct a new forward tee on the left about 25 metres in front of the current tees.
- Remove several Cypress and Pine trees on the corner of the dogleg.
- Extend the fairway back closer to the tees, shortening the pathway in the process.
- Adjust the mowing in front of the green so there is fairway cut across to both bunkers.
- For now, leave the green and bunkers as they are. This green is not great, but not a priority. It may be one of the first that needs addressing after completion of other works recommended in this Masterplan.



*The 1<sup>st</sup> Hole from above showing the green complex and bunkering, and the very good tee shot on the 3<sup>rd</sup> hole.*

### HOLE 3      PAR 4      370 METRES

#### **Description**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> hole is a mid-length par 4 that plays from elevated tees to a fairway that bends to the left. There are long rows of Pine trees on both sides of the fairway, a small pond front right of the tees, a lone bunker on the left at about 240 metres, and a flood retention berm to the right of the trees. In my opinion it has one of the best tee shots on the course, and the approach shot is quite good too. The green is surrounded by three bunkers and the green itself has a lower and an upper section separated by a small tier. The back right bunker is unseen from the fairway. The 3<sup>rd</sup> hole was voted the third most liked hole and the second best putting green on the course.

#### **Recommendations**

- Extend the fairway back towards the tee past the pond.
- Flatten the mounds behind the fairway bunker and convert this area to fairway.
- If more length was desired, there is space for a new back tee, but we have not shown it at this stage.
- This is a popular hole with a good green, so no other changes are required at this stage.

### Hole 4      Par 4      366 metres

#### **Description**

Another long walk takes golfers to the 4<sup>th</sup> tees. The 4<sup>th</sup> hole is another mid-length par 4 that doglegs quite sharply to the left around a lake. The 4<sup>th</sup> is the most liked hole on the course and has the second most liked putting green. I agree that the green is very good, however in my opinion the hole is good, but could be far better.

#### **Recommendations**

- Construct a new forward tee about 30 metres in front of, and slightly right of the current tees.
- Remove all of the trees on the left between the fairway and the lake edge.
- Extend the lake back and right as shown on the drawing, reshaping its edge so that it becomes a gentle curve following the direction of the hole. Part of the existing lake on the corner is filled in to create this curve. (This will improve the tee shot and increase water storage).
- Extend the fairway left, across to the edge of the reshaped lake. The tee shot then becomes a real risk-reward proposition and golfers can play as close to it as they dare.
- The fill that comes from expanding the lake, could be used to elevate the second half of the hole, especially short left of the green, so the fairway is above the water level in the lake.
- Remove the six Cypress trees at the far end of the fairway that screen the distant view of hills from the tee.
- As this hole is highly regarded already, I don't see these works as a priority (besides the tree removal).

## HOLE 5      PAR 5      524 METRES

### **Description**

After a stretch of popular holes, the 5<sup>th</sup> hole is the first hole to receive far more negative votes than positive. Only five members placed the 5<sup>th</sup> in their favourite three holes compared to 32 placing it in their least favourite three – more than any other hole. Personally, I don't think it's too bad, as it rolls across some of the most interesting topography on the whole property. I suspect it is especially unpopular with high handicap golfers and short hitters, as it is very long, and the green is not at all receptive for golfers unable to hit the ball high in the air. Looking at the survey results, there does seem to be that correlation.

The tee shot on the 5<sup>th</sup> is quite good and for long hitters the approach is also good, although blind over a hill. For shorter hitters though, there is a blind bunker in the valley over the hill that catches many approach shots. The approach to the green is uphill and there are two bunkers in front of the green with a very narrow gap between them. There is a further bunker behind the green.

There used to be an 'Australia shaped' bunker front right of the green, and another on the left that were filled in around 2005, and then rebuilt as they are now around 2018. The 5<sup>th</sup> seems to have undergone many incarnations over the years.

### **Recommendations**

- The hole currently plays way too long from the forward (yellow) tees in my opinion. I wonder how many of the women members can reach the green in three shots. Construct a new forward tee, to the side of the pathway about 35 metres in front of the current yellow tees.
- Remove several Pine trees on the left where they protrude into the fairway and remove all the young Cypress trees that have been planted on the right.
- Demolish the mound in the valley, fill in the pond and bunker, reinstate the natural landform and extend the fairway.
- Remove the pencil pines on the left.
- Fill in the front right bunker, and rear bunker, reshape the ground so it appears natural (not like a filled in grassed bunker!). The rear bunker seems only there to stop balls running further away – a poor reason for a bunker – and the front right bunker makes the opening too tight.
- Extend the bunker on the left about 2.5 metres further right.
- Construct a new bunker about 35 metres short right of the green. This will be in play for longer hitters approach shots to the green, but shorter hitters will be able to play around it, with the right half of the green far more open for low running approach shots. If long hitters play safely left, away from the new bunker, their pitch to the green will be over the retained left bunker.

## HOLE 6      PAR 3      170 METRES

### **Description**

The 6<sup>th</sup> hole received the second highest number of negative votes, but at the same time, was actually popular with some members. I suspect the 6<sup>th</sup> is a hole you probably loathe if your game requires you to be

hitting any more than about a 4 iron into this hole. For good players hitting a 6 or 7 iron, it's a very different hole. The problem is that if the ball is coming in low, anything landing on the green will most likely roll off the back, while anything landing short will kick right, down the slope towards the trees.

The 6<sup>th</sup> green was also voted the least popular, however I suspect it is not the green itself that is so unpopular, but the fact that it is so difficult to hold. I believe that can be resolved without necessarily rebuilding the entire green.

### Recommendations

- Construct a new forward tee on the right, next to the pathway.
- Import a considerable amount of fill (dirt) and fill the entire fairway to a height of about 1.5 metres on the right, starting at zero about where the pathway currently is. Extend the fairway back towards the tee.

*Note: the fairway would still tilt to the right, but nowhere near as severely, so balls would not roll off into the trees and shorter hitters would be able to land short and run shots onto the green.*

- Demolish the pathway from just past the new tee, all the way through to where it currently exits near the green. Convert where the pathway is to fairway and extend fairway part way up the slope on the left, so that shots played up high left can run down towards the green and not hang-up in the rough.
- Construct a bunker on the right, down low, to catch shots landing short right. We would shape the ground so that balls landing short of the green do not all run towards this bunker. It would mainly catch competent golfers who miss short right with a lofted club.

## HOLE 7      PAR 4      315 METRES

### Description

The 7<sup>th</sup> hole is a very short par 4 and quite a unique hole due to its unusual blind tee shot over a hill. I've seen similar tee shots on Links courses in the UK but not on an inland parkland course such as Fairbairn. Personally, I like it as it's a bit different and a little quirky. The only problem with the hole is it's probably too short and a bit one dimensional. The green is one of the largest on the course but is fairly flat and not very interesting. There is a lot of space to the rear of this green to lengthen the hole considerably, and I think it could be a much better hole with a new green built about 50-60 metres further back and to the right, closer to the boundary.

### Recommendations

- Construct a new forward tee on the left next to the pathway.
- Extend the fairway back towards the tees, over the hill, especially on the left. Shorten the pathway.
- Construct a new green, long from back to front and narrow, aligned parallel to the boundary, bunkered front left.
- Remove most of the Cypress trees on the right.
- Widen the second half of the fairway considerably on the right.
- Fill in the left bunker, and rebuild the one on the right, changing the angle of it.

- Long hitters then have a decision to make – play safely left but face a more difficult pitch, or play down the right, closer to the boundary to be rewarded with an easier pitch down the length of the green. Shorter hitters can carry the hill from the new tee and tack their way down to the new green.



*The par 3 6<sup>th</sup> hole (left) and the unusual tee shot on the short par 4 7<sup>th</sup>.*

## HOLE 8      PAR 3      181 METRES

### Description

The 8<sup>th</sup> hole is a longish par 3 played slightly uphill to one of the largest greens on the course. A bunker was added to the front left of the green around 2018. The 8<sup>th</sup> hole received the second lowest number of positive votes (three favourite holes), but also received the sixth lowest number of negative votes. The putting green also received a low number of votes in each category. This tells me it is a bit of a ‘nothing’ hole, neither particularly liked nor disliked. This makes perfect sense to me, because while there is nothing particularly offensive about the hole or the green, it certainly isn’t the highlight of the course either.

### Recommendations

- Rebuild the tees, making them much larger. This should be done at the same time as the 7<sup>th</sup> green.
- I don’t like the sandy/mulched area where the old green was, with the planted Lomandra’s. I’d prefer to just see it grassed.
- Extend the fairway back towards the tee. Mow all the little mounds as fairway cut.
- Remove the Cypress trees planted too close to the rear of the green.
- Leave the green as it is for now.

## HOLE 9      PAR 5      490 METRES

### Description

The 9<sup>th</sup> hole is currently a long par 4 of over 400 metres from the back tee. Invariably into the wind it is extremely tough for most golfers. The tee shot is reasonably good, as is the approach. The hole was rated in the middle of the pack in terms of favourite holes but received the sixth most negative votes.

*Comment prior to recommendations;*

- *Proposed changes to the 9<sup>th</sup> hole relate to the earlier discussion on creating a 19<sup>th</sup> hole for the duration of construction works and the establishment of a new 10<sup>th</sup> hole. If the Club decided not to proceed with that recommendation, then the 9<sup>th</sup> green would remain in its current location.*

**Recommendations**

- The 9<sup>th</sup> tees also need to be rebuilt, and the Spruce and Cypress trees removed. They are in very poor condition.
- Remove the Golden Cypress trees on the left side of the hole. Too many young trees have been planted on both sides of the fairway too.
- The Cypress trees behind the green completely block what could be a great view as the green is approached. Remove all of them.
- Construct a new green about 60 metres beyond the current green. The existing green can be pushed down the hill to form the base of the new green. The back of the current green would be lowered by about 1.5 metres, and the new green elevated by a similar amount.
- The approach to this green is likely to be semi-blind after the tee shot, although the flag will be visible. As the green is approached however, the green and the great view of Black Mountain in the background, will come into view.
- After putting out on this new green, a short walk would take golfers to the new 10<sup>th</sup> tees.



## 6.3 Hole Descriptions – Back 9

### HOLE 10 (A NEW HOLE) PAR 3 150 METRES

#### Description

The 10<sup>th</sup> hole is a proposed new par 3 that uses vacant land to the rear of the 9<sup>th</sup> green and to the right of the current 10<sup>th</sup> hole. The hole will be a mid-length par 3, played uphill to a green that will sit on an elevated plateau. Currently there is a lot of fill that has been dumped in the area in front of where the new green would be located, so it is a little difficult to visualise the hole, but the new green would be located just past the pathway that leads to the lady's 10<sup>th</sup> tee.

#### Recommendations

- Construct the new tees, with different tee pads to provide a variety of angles to the new green.
- Construct a new green, possibly bunkered front left, and short right as shown.



*The site for the proposed new 10<sup>th</sup> hole from the approximate location of the tees, and an aerial view. The red arrow indicates the location of the proposed green.*

### HOLE 11 (CURRENT 10TH HOLE) PAR 4 410 METRES

#### Description

From the new 10<sup>th</sup> green, a short walk will take golfers to the new 11<sup>th</sup> tees. This compares to the long backwards walk from the current 9<sup>th</sup> green to 10<sup>th</sup> tees. The current 10<sup>th</sup> hole becomes the new 11<sup>th</sup> hole, but it is shortened to become a long par 4. While the current 10<sup>th</sup> hole is good and very popular, I believe it can be even better as a strong par 4.

#### Recommendations

- The current tee shot is semi-blind, most of the fairway unseen from the tee due to the ridge 40-50 metres in front of the tees. Construct new tees on that ridge from where the tee shot is visually far better, with a clear view of the fairway and a nice downhill tee shot.
- Remove the large Pine trees and other smaller trees down the right side of the fairway.

- Construct a new green about 20 metres behind the current green and slightly closer to the boundary.

### HOLE 12 (CURRENT 11TH HOLE) PAR 3 145 METRES

#### **Description**

The 12<sup>th</sup> hole (the current 11<sup>th</sup> has undergone multiple changes over the past 20 years. In the early 2000's there were four bunkers surrounding this green, two at the front and one on either side. These were all filled in around 2005 and grassed. The hole remained bunkerless for more than 13 years and then in 2018 two bunkers were constructed at the front of the green. The green is very small and essentially requires a full carry over the bunkers to land on the green, as there is not really any other way to play the hole. This makes it very difficult for short hitters.

#### **Recommendations**

- With the 10<sup>th</sup> green moved back, at the same time, the 11<sup>th</sup> tees can move further to the right as the hole is played. From further right, the angle to the green changes making it possible to run a shot onto the green to the right of the bunkers.
- Extend the fairway back towards the tees, and increase the short cut fairway, especially to the right of the green so that shorter hitters have space to bail out.
- Lower the garden beds in front of the current tees and convert to grass.
- Following completion of the works recommended in this Masterplan, the current 11<sup>th</sup> green (proposed 12<sup>th</sup>) would then become one of the next priorities.

### HOLE 13 (CURRENT 12TH HOLE) PAR 5 478 METRES

#### **Description**

The 13<sup>th</sup> hole (current 12<sup>th</sup>) is a shortish par 5 with quite a tight tee shot played down a heavily tree lined corridor. The approach shot to the green is played slightly uphill to perhaps the most controversial green on the course, both loved and loathed by members, depending on who you ask! There are two bunkers in front of the green, and again, the gap between them is very narrow.

#### **Recommendations**

- If the large Pine tree was removed, the tees could be moved further to the right from where I think the angle of the tee shot is better.
- There is a large grouping of Pear trees on the right near the current 14<sup>th</sup> tees that will eventually be too large for that location.
- The approach shot to the green could be made far better if there were more options available. A new bunker short of the green on the left would make the shot more interesting, but only if the current bunker on the left is reduced in size so the entry into the green was wider. This would mean longer hitters could 'take on' the new bunker to give a simpler chip onto the green.
- Expand fairway to the right so that golfers can bail out to the right should they wish.
- Shorter hitters will have plenty of space to 'tack' their way up to the green around the bunkers, with a much wider entry into the green that should all be maintained at fairway height.

## HOLE 14 (CURRENT 13TH HOLE) PAR 3 155 METRES

### Description

The 14<sup>th</sup> hole (current 13<sup>th</sup>) is a par 3 that plays back towards the clubhouse. There is another long walk from the previous green to these tees, but there is little that can be done to resolve this. This hole feels a little cramped in between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> holes, and is quite tight, surrounded as it is, by large Pine trees. It would seem this hole is one of the originals from the 1960's, but the green is more interesting than other originals, so I wonder whether perhaps it was rebuilt at some point. The members voted this green their fourth favourite on the course, but the hole was not rated as highly – perhaps because of the awkward bunker on the left, that makes the hole very difficult to negotiate for short hitters who are unable to carry the ball high in the air.

### Recommendations

- At this stage the current 13<sup>th</sup> hole is not considered a priority, however the bunker on the left needs to be adjusted to make the hole more playable for short hitters.
- Fill in the first half of the bunker and convert it to fairway so that short hitters can run their tee shots onto the green from the left.
- Extend the fairway further back towards the tees and increase the extent of short grass around the green

## HOLE 15 (CURRENT 14TH HOLE) PAR 4 350 METRES

### Description

The 15<sup>th</sup> hole (current 14<sup>th</sup>) is a mid-length par 4. This hole has been ridiculously overplanted with trees that will eventually make it, at best, an awful golf hole and at worst, completely unplayable. The tree planting here breaks every rule of good golf course design, and understanding of what makes a good golf hole. In addition, the green is very small and lacks any real interest. I am surprised that it was voted the fourth most liked hole on the course, although the green received the 3<sup>rd</sup> least positive votes and the fourth most negative votes. I am therefore unsure what aspect of the hole the members like!

### Recommendations

- Remove all of the Cypress trees on the left corner of the dogleg, and many of the Pines.
- Replace the trees with a new bunker placed at about 230-250 metres from the back tee on the left corner of the dogleg.
- Remove all the Cypress trees from the right side as well, at the far end of the fairway.
- Remove the very large gum tree short right of the current green.
- Construct a new green about 30 metres further back, much larger, bunkered front right. This is only possible if the current 15<sup>th</sup> tees are moved forward as recommended below.
- This will make the hole far better in the long term for golfers of all standards.

## HOLE 16 (CURRENT 15TH HOLE) PAR 4 365 METRES

### Description

The proposed 16<sup>th</sup> hole is essentially a completely new hole that uses the land currently occupied by both the current 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> holes. It would use most of the current 15<sup>th</sup> hole corridor, then turn left to a new green located basically, where the current 16<sup>th</sup> green is.

### Recommendations

- Walking off the back of the new 15<sup>th</sup> green (current 14<sup>th</sup>), new tees for a new 16<sup>th</sup> hole would be a short walk away, as opposed to the long walk back to the current 15<sup>th</sup> tees. This also removes the crossover 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> holes.
- The new tee shot is similar to the current tee shot on the 15<sup>th</sup>, but the hole will start turning left about 230 metres from the new tees.
- Remove several large Pine trees on the left, demolish the current 16<sup>th</sup> tees and extend the fairway through that area to connect with what is currently the 16<sup>th</sup> hole.
- Construct a new green and a pond to its left as shown. Keep the green bunkerless with lots of space to the right of the green to play to. I think this could be an excellent mid length par 4. The new pond, with the green hard up against it, could become a much photographed feature of the course.

*Note: On balance if we consider this new hole, and the proposed new 10<sup>th</sup> hole, and compare them to the current 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> holes they replace, I strongly believe the new holes can be a significant improvement to the course. These works could also be postponed further into the future, should the Club see value in continuing to have 19 holes of golf available, however the Club would also have to live with the current 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> greens – two of the worst on the course.*



*The overplanted current 14<sup>th</sup> hole (left). The Cypress trees will eventually make this hole unplayable, and the 18<sup>th</sup> hole from the current back tee.*

## HOLE 17      PAR 4      430 METRES

### **Description**

The 17<sup>th</sup> hole is a long par 4 that was originally a par 5. The green was rebuilt in the early 2000's due to safety issues to neighbouring properties, and then rebuilt again in 2022 slightly further back.

### **Recommendations**

- Construct a new forward tee about 45 metres in front of the current tees in the location as shown.
- As this green is new, I am not proposing any other changes to the 17<sup>th</sup> hole at this stage. I also note that we have measured this hole as being 430 metres as opposed to the 410 metres posted on the current scorecard.

## HOLE 18      PAR 4      375 METRES

### **Description**

The 18<sup>th</sup> hole is currently a short par 4 with a slight dogleg to the right. It too has been heavily planted on both sides of the fairway – mainly with Pine trees on the left up towards the green and with Cypress on the right. There is a very large gum tree on the corner of the slight dogleg on the right, and the left side has more recently been planted with native Sheoaks, unfortunately, too close to the fairway. Perhaps this was done to define what used to be a practice area between the current 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> holes? The green has two bunkers, one on either side. The green has recently been modified at the back but is very close to the edge of the pathway.

The 18<sup>th</sup> hole received the fourth fewest positive votes, but also the second fewest negative votes. Likewise, the green received very few votes in the member survey.

### **Recommendations**

- With the new 16<sup>th</sup> (existing 15<sup>th</sup>) tees moved forward, the 18<sup>th</sup> tees can go back to the rear of the 17<sup>th</sup> green. The back tee can be located just off the back right of the 17<sup>th</sup> green. The current men's tee can then become the women's/forward tee.
- Several large Pine trees would need to be removed for the new tee shot.
- Remove all the trees up the left nearly all the way to the green.
- Widen the fairway on the left by about 10 metres all the way up to the track that crosses the fairway. Extend the fairway back towards the new tees as well.
- Consider placing a bunker on the right, past the large gum tree about 230-240 metres from the back tee.
- Remove all the small Cypress trees that have been planted short right of the green.
- For now, leave the green as it is. Eventually I think its needs to be rebuilt, much bigger and moved 10-15 metres away from the pathway so it has more space.

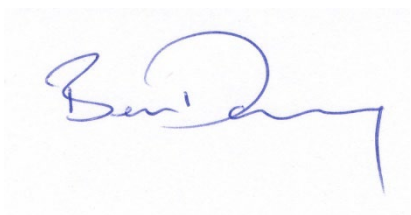
## 7. PRIORITIES AND STAGING

I think the first project needs to be something relatively small that will make a big difference. Given the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> holes are generally unpopular, that might be a good project to start with, as both holes can be made much better without the need to rebuild greens. If the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> holes were done first, at relatively modest cost, the Club would have time to reserve funds for larger projects such as the new 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> greens. This project would give the Club 19 holes, enabling holes to be closed down for subsequent projects, while maintaining 18 holes of golf and avoiding the need for temporary greens.

The Schedule shown below is one possibility, but will need to be confirmed by the Club depending on finances and other priorities.

<b>POSSIBLE WORK SCHEDULE</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>2029-31</b>
5 <sup>th</sup> hole bunker works, 6 <sup>th</sup> hole	•					
New 9 <sup>th</sup> green, 10 <sup>th</sup> hole and 11 <sup>th</sup> (current 10 <sup>th</sup> ) tees		•				
New 14 <sup>th</sup> green (current 13 <sup>th</sup> ) 15 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> tees.			•			
New 1 <sup>st</sup> green, fairway bunker and associated works				•		
New 7 <sup>th</sup> green and associated works					•	
New 11 <sup>th</sup> green (current 10 <sup>th</sup> ), and 12 <sup>th</sup> tees (current 11 <sup>th</sup> ). New 16 <sup>th</sup> green and pond.						•

Other minor works, such as tree removal, extending fairways back towards tees, and new forward tees could take place concurrently with more significant upgrades.



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