

Club History

Shoalhaven Heads Golf Club 1978 – 2014



Where it all began in 1984, area of first three holes now 10th, 11th and 12th holes.

Proposal

The concept of a golf course at Shoalhaven Heads was originally proposed at a meeting of the then Shoalhaven Shire Council Town Planning committee in 1978, by Chris Neal of the Nowra Crown Lands Office, when plans were drawn for a Crown land sub-division for 312 residential housing blocks, which left a large area of undeveloped land between the sub-division, the beach and the nearby Seven Mile Beach State Recreation Area, as it was known at that time.



1st (now 10th) fairway at time of survey.

The Courses

The question of use of this land was raised and Chris Neal suggested that it could be made into a golf course to accommodate storm water drainage from the proposed subdivision and other areas of the town. This concept was then taken up in March 1979 by the Shoalhaven Heads Tourism Committee's secretary Colin Gumley via correspondence with local State Member Bill Knott who pursued the matter with the Minister for Lands Mr. W.F. Crabtree. The succeeding secretary Robyn Flack continued negotiations with further correspondence beginning April 3rd 1980 with Mr Knott, the Lands Board Office, the Minister for Lands Mr. A.R.L. Gordon and Shoalhaven City Council as it had then become.

It was not until 1981 that a serious effort was made to bring the concept into reality when a meeting was held in the Progress Hall on September 16th leading to the formation of a steering committee which met the following evening at which it was decided to call an Inaugural Public Meeting of the Club on October 22nd to discuss the options of either high rise development or a scenic golf course occurring on the beach front. The first Golf Club committee was elected, those first members being:- President – Mrs. Marion

Gray – Secretary – Mrs. Jill Gumley – Treasurer – Mr. Brian Kinlyside, Committee – Mr. Ian Whiteoak, Mrs. Jean Whiteoak, Mr. Colin Gumley, Mr. D. Boucher, Mrs. Bev. Smith, Mr. J. Sandiford, Mr. Fred Leach and Mr. B. Cronin. (Marion Gray resigned in June 1982 and was succeeded as President by Mrs. Jean Crannage.) The meeting also agreed that the Golf Club should become part of the Bowling and Recreation Club and from then until the time golf began to be played on our first three holes the members travelled to other courses such as St. Georges Basin to play.

A membership drive had resulted in 400 members joining at \$1.00 per annum by December 1981 growing to 560 in March 1982 and correspondence with various organisations such as Kingsgrove RSL, the Postal Institute and others established a need for this facility to be established in this area.

Subsequent dealings with various Local and State Government parties led to a further meeting on December 3rd 1981 in the Community Hall in Celia Street with Fred Leach as Chairman, to which representatives of State and Local Government, as well as local organisations, had been invited. Also present were David Lamb and Colin Bice from Nowra Golf Club who had been appointed by the Nowra Club Board of Directors to investigate possible sites for a second golf course in the general area, Nowra and St. Georges Basin then being the only golf courses between Kiama and Mollymook.

David resided at Jaspers Brush and worked as a dental surgeon in Bomaderry and had spent ten years in England as a dentist during which time had played golf extensively in England (where he had attained a handicap of four at Wentworth in Surrey), Scotland, Europe and America and whilst serving as a Councillor on East Hampstead District Council in Berkshire he had a member of a committee that created the Downshire golf course in Bracknell which is now rated in the U.K. top 100 courses. Colin was a Nowra resident and Estate Agent in Nowra who had the distinction of achieving two holes in one in the same round of golf at the Nowra course).

Despite several inspections of likely sites for this new course nothing was forthcoming until they met with Russ Evans, Council's Town Planner who suggested that it may be worthwhile taking an interest in the newly formed group from Shoalhaven Heads who were negotiating for a golf course to be built beside Seven Mile Beach. Hence their attendance at the meeting where

the main point of concern was how to proceed from concept to reality and Fred Leach pointedly questioned Shoalhaven Shire Councillor Trevor Kilner "What's Council going to do about it?" to which Trevor replied "Nothing" meaning the ball is in your court and future progress depends on efforts by the Club to achieve their aims.

After many committee meetings and discussions three golf course design groups were invited to inspect the site, McKay and Sons of Wollongong, David Inglis and Frank Williams from Melbourne, who had just constructed the National and Cape Schank courses on the Mornington Peninsula (note that David Inglis was the creator of the Australian Masters Tournament and Frank Williams was to become manager of Greg Norman's enterprises) and Terry O'Donoghue Professional at the Federal Golf Club in Canberra.

All three groups were greatly impressed with the land and its potential for building a golf course, however when the cost of financing the design and construction was discussed only McKay and Sons could see their way clear to help the Club and thus Ken McKay began an official association with the project that he has maintained for 32 years during which time whenever we asked "how much do we owe you?" his reply was always "pay me when you can I would prefer to see any funds go into the course". Excepting a couple of token payments a final, very Club favourable arrangement to reimburse Ken did not come about until 2013!

Ken and his two brothers, Robert and Ross, have had a long association with golf from their childhood, growing up living adjacent to Wollongong golf course where their father Hector McKay was the Professional for many years, an appointment later taken over by Robert when he entered the Professional ranks. Ross was very much involved in the early work on The Heads course and later proved invaluable through his position as equipment manager for Cleary Brothers, who must be acknowledged for their great assistance with machinery over the years.

Hector created the golf course design and construction company McKay and Sons and it was their involvement in the construction of the Mollymook Hilltop course that introduced the young Ken to his lifetime love of the industry, his qualifications as both a surveyor with Wollongong Council and low handicap golfer serving him well over the years. Other than The Heads

course Ken has been responsible for the building of local courses Worrigea and Calderwood Valley and the re-design and construction of changes to Moore Park course in Sydney as well as many other projects.

Negotiations with the then Crown Lands Department of New South Wales proceeded for the granting of a Permissive Occupancy allowing the Club to plan and build a 9-hole course on the land.

At this time David Lamb was co-opted to the Board as Course Co-ordinator thus beginning an involvement with Board positions as President, Vice President, and Secretary until 2014.



Where it all began in 1984, area of first three holes now 10th, 11th and 12th holes.

Construction

A grand commencement of construction ceremony occurred on October 27th 1984, organised by the Board, assisted by Bob Wilson, with Local, State and Federal Government dignitaries invited as well as representatives from the Illawarra District Golf Association and NSW Golf Association. The late Mayor, Harry Sawkins driving through the ribbon driving Trevor Kilner's tractor, after it had been anointed with the contents of the "Champagne bottle" by Mrs. Knott, wife of Mr. Bill Knott, the then State Member. This bottle,

with signatures, was eventually mounted in the display case in the Clubhouse courtesy of the Rotary Club of Berry.

A great time was being had by all as Cleary Brothers' bulldozer commenced ripping through the bush on what was to become the original 1st and 2nd fairways, when the local Lands Department manager, Kevin Hopkins, asked "do you have an approval for this work to be done?"

You guessed it – in our naive enthusiasm we had not even considered that a D. A. was needed, particularly as Bob Wilson had been a previous President of the Shoalhaven Shire Council and should have been fully aware of the processes to be followed. So, everything eventually came to a halt until development approval was obtained from Council but not before several more days work was undertaken thanks to the generous loan of the bulldozer by John Cleary, after a request by Ken McKay had been met with the reply "if you've got someone to drive the f.....g thing, OK". Ken's brother Ross who was course superintendent at Wollongong golf course then became the approved operator. During this period some threatening correspondence was received by the Club and Cleary Brothers, from the previously mentioned Lands Department official regarding unauthorized clearing of native vegetation.

After approval was finally granted by Council on May 20th 1985, surveying and clearing of the area for the 9 holes began in earnest, initially with a bulldozer and driver provided by Council at nominal cost and then with Ollie Jenkins on his bulldozer, both being directed by Ken McKay. Ollie did a fantastic job, and soon great piles of felled trees were put to the torch. The many hours of his time and use of his machine that Ollie donated in those early days set the scene for the tradition of voluntary work that has become the trademark of this Club.

Many meetings and much correspondence later, the Club became incorporated in December 1985, Shoalhaven Heads Golf Club Limited becoming an organisation in its own right, leaving the original Club structure to continue as the Social Golf Club section of the Bowling and Recreation Club.

Subscribers to the original Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Club were members of the Board at that time Fred Leach, Roma Watts, Marj.

Bradd, David Lamb, Trevor Kilner, Jean Whiteoak, Colin Gumley, Clive Medley and Alfred Newnham.

Meanwhile development of the 9-hole course was put on hold, except for the first three holes, which were played for the first time in a 9-hole competition (three times around) on October 22nd 1994. This was made possible by a small band of dedicated workers headed by the late Arthur Simmons and David Lamb who, from 1986, had actually mowed the first fairways and rough areas with Victa lawn mowers!!!! Also, great assistance was provided by the Bowling and Recreation Club who had donated funding for the original pump which made the installation of a computerised irrigation system possible for these holes. At this time cheap town water was used for the irrigation and two large concrete tanks were donated from a property at Yalwal and installed underground near the intersection of Staples and Scott streets (they are still there). Ison and Co. donated a crane and low loader to move and install these huge tanks for us.

In January 1990 an approach had been made to the Bowling Club regarding an amalgamation between the Clubs and after a lot of legal advice as to procedure a meeting was arranged at the Bowling Club on Saturday 27th to put the proposal to members of that Club. Due to a hostile reception by several members where they accused the Golf Club of having ulterior motives and attempting a takeover of the Bowling Club the vote for amalgamation was lost by seven votes. The Golf Club then wrote that in response to this antagonistic attitude the offer of amalgamation was withdrawn. Looking back on how the Golf Club has developed in its own right, it is probably fortunate that this amalgamation did not proceed.

Some years later amalgamation with Nowra Golf Club was also considered, but due to unreasonable expectations by some members of the Nowra Club Board, this did not proceed, again as things turned out they probably did us a favour.

On completion of clearing for the 9-hole course in 1988 it had become obvious that if additional land could be acquired an 18-hole course could be accommodated on the site and negotiations were commenced with the Lands Department and Council to achieve this extension utilising an extra parcel of adjoining land around the sewage effluent ponds located between

Lovegrove Street and the National Park boundary. On August 31st 1989 a meeting was arranged between the Director General of the Department of Conservation and Land Management Mr. Stan Day, representatives of the Club and a Nowra solicitor/property developer, Mr. Bill Goodman (who, acting as our Club solicitor, had arranged for the incorporation of the Club and preparation of our original Memorandum and Articles of Association) to discuss a proposal for the site. Mr. Day's response of "let's run with it" resulted in the Department preparing a tender document for a combined residential, hotel and golf course development on what is now the golf course and all the adjoining bush land between Scott Street and the National Park boundary. Six developers submitted plans, the most impressive coming from Cleary Brothers via Ken McKay and Bill Goodman's company Caravon which had commenced negotiations with the Club for a joint venture agreement for this project.

However, a change of Director of the Department occurred at this time with Stan Day being replaced by Michael Ockwell (who we were warned by Tom Phillips, Tourism Promotions Officer with Shoalhaven City Council, was a "greenie plant") saw this development initially rejected by the Department. However, a delegation to the Minister, Garry West, saw the granting of extra time for further developer comment despite which the project was then scrapped with the reason being given as "insufficient financial return to the Government" and a great opportunity for Shoalhaven Heads was lost.

Following this rejection of the proposals, on 9th September 1991, the Department wrote with an undertaking, signed by Michael Ockwell, "to set aside sufficient land for construction by the Shoalhaven Heads Golf Club Limited of an 18-hole championship standard Golf Course. This land will include generally that previously identified in Permissive Occupancy 1984/12 with such additional area reasonably required for the Golf Course and Clubhouse up to approximately 40 ha." To this day, even with the additional land obtained for the last 4 holes, the actual course area has not reached 40 ha or 100 acres. The reduction in course area and subsequent design restrictions imposed by the imposition of "wildlife corridors" has meant that we can't achieve the length of course (6,000+ metres) that would qualify us as for "championship standard".

The next progression was to a 6-hole course and it was not until 1997 that we eventually reached the point where the 9-hole course became playable. An opening ceremony was held on April 6th with Joanna Gash Federal Member for Gilmore playing a magnificent drive down the first (now 10th) hole in her bare feet using a 3-wood borrowed from Ken Smith (he still has the club and ball)

At the same time the introduction of the Native Title Act in 1993 created further problems with two claims coming forward from the local Jerrinja tribe and the Wadi Wadi group. It took ten years for the High Court of Australia to dismiss these claims and in 2003 our Development Application for the course extension to 15 holes was approved by Council.

Concurrent permission for clearances for a re-alignment of the 4th fairway and the subsequent creation of the "Super 9" was also obtained and work commenced. As Cleary Brothers bulldozer was on site a decision was made to begin clearing for the extension – regrettably.

Certain conditions of the D. A. were overlooked and following complaints a stop work order was placed on the Club. A Council investigation brought forth letters of objection from various green organizations and individuals (some even suggesting that the project be terminated) followed by a fine of \$600.00 for unauthorised clearing. There followed more negotiations and the imposition of much more demanding and expensive conditions involving flora and fauna studies, mulching of felled timber, bird boxes to replace any hollows in trees felled (never used) – the most damaging new condition was the creation of a "wildlife corridor" between the National Park and the bush land behind Scott Street, resulting in a greatly reduced area for the new holes. The list of conditions attached to the D.A. had now grown from six pages to sixteen!

However work was allowed to proceed and the Club had now, after 28 years of determination and hard work, against what had seemed insurmountable odds, extended the course from three to fifteen holes. The progression from nine holes to fifteen holes was achieved with substantial financial assistance by way of Federal Government funding from the Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTAR) for \$83,880.00, Local Government funding from Shoalhaven City Council, a ClubBIZ grant of \$20,000.00 and the

donation and planting of couch and zoysia grasses by Turfco. This would not have been possible without the huge contributions of labour and machinery by John Greenaway, Sam McMullen and our dedicated team of volunteers. Again, Joanna Gash was on hand to perform the opening of this course extension on February 5th 2006.

Negotiations now proceeded for the approval for the last holes, unfortunately involving the Club in more expenditure in unnecessary flora and fauna surveys and consultants' fees to prove the non – existence of things that we as locals knew did not exist, such as the leafless tongue orchid, long nosed potteroo, powerful owl, gang – gang cockatoo etc. etc! – cost to date around \$70,000.00

Finally, on December 21st 2010, our DA was approved by Council, we now had to meet the conditions attached to that Development Consent, the most important being a comprehensive Vegetation Management Plan which cost in the region of \$10,000.00, a detailed landscape plan and surveying and marking the area to be cleared etc. etc. At last, our operational consent was approved by Council on 1st June 2011, and we all hoped that the progression to 18 holes would be achieved by early 2012. With initial clearance of the land commencing August 22nd 2011, contouring and irrigation was completed ready for grass to be planted beginning November 15th. It had only taken 33 years to reach this point!!!!!!

February 2nd 2012 – the planting of tees, greens, fairways and rough had been very successful with excellent growth due to the ideal growing weather experienced. The problem now was to keep up with the extra mowing workload to prepare for the grand opening day. Our thanks to Turfco for their continued support in regard to the supply, planting and advise for the establishment of the fairway and rough grasses.

April 2012 – we received a grant from The State Government, under the Community Building Programme, for \$40,000.00 and this had been matched by Shoalhaven City Council with an additional \$40,000.00, thanks to the efforts of Gareth Ward M.P. (Member for Kiama and Shoalhaven City Councillor) in representing our case, these funds helped us to complete all tasks needed to bring our course to completion, at last.

May 25th 2012 – volunteers who had worked so hard over the years to make this all possible became the first golfers onto the course playing the first nine holes of the new lay out. After this much speech making took place and then the opening ceremony was performed on the 1st tee with Gareth Ward, Matt Brown (former Member for Kiama), Greg Watson (Shoalhaven City Council) and President Terry Lillie as ribbon cutters (Joanna Gash was an unfortunate apology). Also present for the celebrations were representatives from Shoalhaven City Council, the Lands Department and the Jerrinja people in the person of Tribal Elder Gordon Wellington. All in all a great day was had by all.

January 2013 – with the new holes in operation playing membership had increased by over 100 since last January, with a corresponding increase of around 30% in participation in competitions and general social play. Modifications to the course have occurred with a new 6th hole constructed to accommodate demands for an increased width of wildlife corridor at the North – west end of the course, as well as a new green and lengthened fairway for the 3rd hole, and extended tee for the 4th. Changes to the 16th hole (Womens' forward tee to reduce to Par 4) and 17th hole (lengthened plus new tees to increase to Par 5 for both) have been completed and the final layout of our course is now a reality.

However, there will always be an ongoing commitment to maintenance and improvements, our next major task will be the completion of replacement and upgrading of the irrigation grid, some early sections of which were showing the effects of over 30 years of constant use and have already been replaced thanks to further Government funds obtained through an application supported by Gareth Ward and again with great work by Paul Davies, Bruce Warfe, Jim Kovacs and team of workers to follow up Parrish Plumbing and Lee Maddinson after excavation and installation of the new main lines. An extension to the golf cart storage shed is under way and modifications to the Clubhouse are also envisaged. Never a dull moment!!!!

The Clubhouses

Our original Clubhouse was a converted shipping container (which is still in use for storage of members' golf carts) with a slot and honesty box for green fees. It also served as our machinery shed, Board and Committee meetings being conducted while seated on various mowers. This was replaced by the donation of a large garage moved from John Greenaway's new property in River Road, which, with the addition of a new amenities block, kitchen and storeroom by Neil Lord (Lord & Gleeson) for \$44,400.00 served us well until some low life set fire to it in September 2000, with complete destruction of the building and everything in it. Unfortunately, although insured, the Club's broker, Maceys, had for some unknown reason, failed to include cover for loss due to fire in the policy. This oversight finally led to changes in the Board with Terry Lillie being elected as President, taking over the position from David Lamb.

Also donated around this time was a very large shed from the Hose family at Coastal Palms which became our existing machinery shed and workshop.

After the fire debris was cleared our Clubhouse was the Cafe de Wheels (a converted bus) loaned by Tall Timbers Caravan Park and members recall happy times under the attached awnings. Around that time Albatross Golf Club had been forced to close due to operational problems with the air strip at HMAS Albatross and their Clubhouse was listed for demolition. We were fortunate to have members who had come over from that Club who were able to negotiate with the Navy for the removal of that Clubhouse to our course. It was cut and moved in three sections (at a cost of \$37,589.00) and re-erected with the great assistance of Neil Lord, Bob Hansen, Merv. Jones, John Yabsley, Kevin Huckel, Ken Smith and a team of very amateur carpenters and bricklayers. Reproduction of the previous amenities block involved another \$48,840.00. Many additions and modifications have taken place since then and will continue to be undertaken.

Catering began with the opening of the first holes, on a BYO basis, for barbecues after the games and what convivial times they were! Our first official caterer was Lisa Logan, wife of then Captain of the Club, Evan Logan. She was followed by Club member Robert Anderson, then ?..... from Jamberoo, succeeded by Stuart Priest with his Hooks and Slices Bistro. Next came Heidi Gulliver who changed the name to Bunkers Bistro and now we have Rob Shilton in the Good Slice Bistro.

Many changes have occurred in the kitchen over the years with equipment upgrades and extensions. The bar has advanced with installation of a new cool room/keg room to replace a motley collection of refrigerators as well as

an up-to-date beer delivery system (all associated work again carried out by volunteers).

Golf Shop / Pro Shop

The completion of additions to the garage-based Clubhouse saw the first Golf Shop, run by Ron McFarlane, come into existence until the 2000 fire. Ron then continued to operate out of a rented demountable until the relocation and additions to the Albatross building. He provided golfers with a limited range of golfing gear, food and drinks as well as collecting competition and green fees. When Ron retired from this position in 2003, the Board engaged the Club's first professional, Shane Cochrane, to take over but this arrangement did not work out well and he quit the scene in 2004.

The Club was then very fortunate to engage Cec and Maureen Montgomery in July 2004. They had been members since 1996, Cec having served on the Board as Captain for many of those years. Before joining the Club, Cec had been a manager with the State Bank and Maureen was employed as an assistant at a Pharmacy in Dapto, where she continued for several years after Cec. took over the Shop, until she retired to help with the rapidly expanding business.

As the demands of running the Shop increased, Jim Butt, a PGA professional who was conducting coaching clinics at Jamberoo and Gerringong approached Cec. and Maureen regarding joining them and so a partnership was formed with Jim and his wife Leonie in July 2007 which continued until 2011 when ill health forced Jim to call it a day.

Enquiries for a replacement for Jim and Leonie brought to the Club a young PGA professional from Narrandera, Greg Collins, who, with his wife Joanne, blended seamlessly into the life of the Club and have now taken on complete ownership of the business following Cec. and Maureens' retirement in 2013.

Volunteers and Greens Staff

The principle of volunteering was established right from the very beginning when Cleary Bros. donated their bulldozer at the commencement ceremony. In the years prior to the introduction of play on the first three holes the area was maintained by Arthur Simmons and David Lamb with Victa lawn mowers (most times a phone call to Arthur at his home was answered by his wife Jean with the reply "he's up at the paddock!" and both he and David were told often "why don't you take your beds up there!" Arthur passed away in 2003 and is remembered by way of the Balkwill-Simmons Shield, the annual interclub competition between The Heads and Callala golf clubs. The Victa

company actually donated a shield with a Victa emblem to be used by the Club but unfortunately this was lost in the 2000 fire. These two were responsible for the creation of what is now our 11th (original 2nd) hole as Ken McKay's plans showed only two holes in this section of the course and thus was born the idea of playing 3X3 to achieve the 9-hole competitions that began play on the course in 1994.

Trevor Kilner also assisted greatly by donating the use of his tractor and slasher to keep the remaining cleared areas under control, a task later taken on by John Greenaway who, over the many years, has contributed an inestimable amount of time and machinery use to course maintenance and development.

Our first official green keeper, Merv. Jones joined us in 1994. He was a retired policeman living in John Greenaway's Mountain View Caravan Park spending most of his time annoying John so much that John, in desperation, suggested he offer his services to the Club. This he did and so "Old Grumpy" became part of the team and worked tirelessly for many years for wages consisting only of his daily beers (which were many).

Also coming on board at that time was Alan (Biffa) Beveridge who contributed invaluable time and use of his back hoe in the installation of our first pump stations, spear points, main lines and power cables for the irrigation system of subsequent holes, with the assistance of a band of workers led by Ken (Smurf) Smith, a semi-retired electrician who continued in the role of Club "sparky" until his retirement to Queensland in 2014, that role now being assumed by Bruce Warfe and Jim Kovacs.

Smurf, Cec. Montgomery and David Lamb were involved in a bizarre incident with our original pump, when, due to a newly fitted hose blowing off, the pump was submerged completely inside its septic tank housing. Cec. phoned the other two and on arrival they found that although the pump was under water it was still running!! After switching it off, the tank was pumped out and the drowned motor removed – what to do now?. Smurf recommended that the motor be dried out, but how?, that's when Ken's wife Barbie's hairdryer came into use and many hours (and a few beers) later the motor was re-fitted, switched on and started!! It continued to run for many years thereafter.

Tony Orford, a Club member since 1985, succeeded Merv. Jones as green keeper inand has supervised all aspects associated with conditioning and maintaining the course in top condition since taking over, his official title has now been upgraded to Course Superintendent. Tony's previous employment had been as a palliative care nurse at Karinya in Berry, however his prior farming experience around Berry and Shoalhaven Heads served him well in

the transition. His dedication to the job is reflected in the fact that the only comments on the condition and presentation of the course, especially the greens, received from visitors are always complimentary and that he has to be ordered by the Treasurer to “take his holidays”. He is also a regular golfer, which is certainly a great asset for a green keeper.

Many apprentices have been employed under the State Apprenticeship Scheme which provides attractive financial allowance packages to the Club for taking them on and seeing them through their 4-year courses.

Our first apprentice was Russell Libbis who served his time under Merv. Jones and despite showing a great flair for the job, on completing his time, he decided to follow a career in the Air Force.

Then followed Scott Garrett, Joel Perrin and Matt Reid, up to the present time when we now have Troy Pieper and Lachlan Maddinson going through their apprenticeships.

Brendan Dunphy, a fully qualified green keeper, joined the Club as a playing member in 2006 and several years later joined the staff full time as head green keeper, Tony then being promoted to Course Superintendent.

The Club has been very fortunate in that our staff are all active golfers who have a great pride in the standard and presentation of the course.

Aboriginal Land Claims

The passing of the Native Title Act by Federal Parliament in 1993 created a big problem for the Club as the Lands Department used the Act as an excuse to put negotiations for the expansion of the course to 18 holes on hold, although work still proceeded to go from three to six, six to nine and then to fifteen holes on the area of land originally allocated.

The local Jerrinja aboriginal tribe, as well as the Wadi Wadi people lodged claims on the land following an advertisement by the National Native Title Tribunal in July 1996 of a Notice of Claimant Native Title Determination Application for expressions of interest by interested parties. The Wadi Wadi withdrew but the claim by the Jerrinja eventually reached the Federal Court where it was dismissed on June 23rd 2000.

However, in 2007 the Club was again involved in another claim, lodged in May 2002, by the NSW Aboriginal Land Council under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983 which involved all the golf course and surrounding Crown land. The Minister for Crown Lands, Tony Kelly, had concluded that the land was not

claimable within the meaning of the Act, so the Land Council then referred the claim to the Land and Environment Court. In November 2007 the Land Council withdrew that part of their claim involving the existing golf course land but maintained their claim on the land being an extension of Staples Street that the Club had used for access to our car park from the very beginning as well as it providing public parking for access to the beach, also an area of land around the Council sewage effluent ponds to the North of Lovegrove Street. The judgement, by Judge Jagot, in January 2008 to allow the claim on these two parcels of land has had a profound effect on the Club. Ownership of these two parcels was transferred to the NSWALC in 2009 who then passed it to the Jerrinja Local Aboriginal Land Council

The Club had always regarded the Lovegrove Street land as an area that would be utilized for the eventual 18-hole design and Ken McKay had prepared plans accordingly. Council had also drawn up a proposal to accommodate these holes by re-designing the layout of the ponds (this is why the 5th green is so large, Ken had designed it as a double green to also serve a hole coming from the West). The Club then had to negotiate long and hard to acquire the land for the additional holes which we were able to complete in 2012.

The Staples Street extension has become the subject of ongoing negotiations with the Jerrinja representatives. A lease agreement for use of the land is currently in place while Shoalhaven Heads Golf Club Ltd, Jerrinja representatives and Shoalhaven City Council explore the option of a future land swap which will be beneficial to all parties.

Life Members

In 1984, to raise funds, an offer was made to members for the purchase of Foundation Life Memberships. Three members took up the offer – Fred Leach, David Lamb, and Jean Whiteoak. A further Fiscal Life Membership offer was made again in 2011, to acquire additional funds for projects. Members who took advantage at this time being Simon Rudd, Gary Bligh, John and Carol Greenaway. Tony Orford was later made a Life Member in exchange for transfer of his ownership of our coring machine to the Club.

Honorary Life Memberships have been awarded over the years to recognise outstanding service and dedication to the Club by members Jill Gumley, Ken McKay, Jeff. Symons, Ken Smith, Terry Lillie and Cec. Montgomery.