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1. Executive Summary

The City of Maroondah is in Melbourne’s eastern suburbs, about 22 kilometres from the Melbourne CBD. Its Council provides facilities, services and experiences to around 114,000 residents and to many visitors to the region.

Council owns and operates two golf courses for public use – Dorset Public Golf Course (Dorset) and Ringwood Public Golf Course (Ringwood). The facilities are collectively known as Maroondah Golf.

Council now wants to ensure golf within the municipality is sustainable into the future by undertaking a strategic review and future direction study of Maroondah Golf.

WellPlayed Golf Business Consultancy, in conjunction with Crafter + Mogford Golf, (the Project Team) was engaged by Council to assist.

This report details the Project Team’s findings from Stage 1 and provides Council representatives with the opportunity to determine the future directions and strategies for Maroondah Golf, and ideas to be further explored in Stage 2.

Strategic Directions

Two strategic directions have been identified for Maroondah Golf:

- Strategic Direction 1 – Improving Sustainable Performance
- Strategic Direction 2 – Building Contemporary Experiences

The directions respond and align to Council’s current strategic framework. Maroondah Golf has an important role to play in both activating Council’s open space areas, and evolving its facilities, services and experiences to meet the future of sport participation and encourage an active community.

Dorset and Ringwood golf courses experience high levels of golf rounds visitation, with Ringwood considered a high-volume facility and is ranked the busiest public golf course in metropolitan North East Melbourne.

Historically both Ringwood and Dorset have contributed operating surpluses to Council, after allocation of internal overheads. But results are generally insufficient to fund future capital expenditure and provide a dividend to Council.

WellPlayed recommends that short to medium-term effort from Council be focused on improving and delivering sustainable performance via maintaining and growing golf rounds visitation and yield.

It is important for golf facilities to continue to provide golf experiences for the traditional market, but there is a clear opportunity for golf facilities to be market-focused and provide different golf experiences to target broader audiences and larger markets.
Traditional trends within sports participation are being challenged and contemporary golf facilities are responding in innovative ways. There are many examples of golf facilities that have diversified and broadened their offerings, and successfully engaged with a wider audience.

It is opportune that Council owns two 18-hole golf facilities. This provides for maintaining a ‘traditional’ golf experience at one facility and creating ‘contemporary’ and golf entertainment experiences at the other. Evolving and diversifying Maroondah Golf’s facilities, services and experiences will increase visitation and deliver improved financial outcomes.

Facilities identified by the Project Team for consideration in the concept ideas include:

- New short-format golf course
- New golf driving range
- New premium mini-golf
- New golf pavilion and precinct
- New virtual golf lounge

Given the constraints of available land at each golf facility, any introduction of new facilities at either Dorset or Ringwood will result in the use of land currently used for golf holes. The Project Team view this consequence as a positive opportunity to reduce the number of golf holes from 18 and create a short-format golf course comprising a reduced number of golf holes e.g. 12. This responds positively to one of golf’s participation barriers ie. ‘time’ and creates a new, innovative and distinctive short-format golf offering within the local market.

The traditional golf driving range experience is evolving from a focus on game improvement to become a form of golf play and golf entertainment. Golf driving ranges provide valuable golf participation opportunities and can broaden and increase the potential customer audience. The Project Team recommends developing a new and contemporary driving range experience that provides a mix of ‘traditional’ and ‘premium’ bays (a concept to encourage non-golfers to the driving range for a golf, hospitality and entertainment experience).

It is apparent that mini-golf is experiencing a resurgence in the golf facility market. Some of Australia’s leading public-access golf facilities are either operating relatively new mini-golf facilities or planning to construct new ones. A mini-golf facility naturally complements a golf facility’s golf course and/or driving range and provides a participation and visitation pathway to these facilities. They also broaden a golf facility’s catchment demographic from mostly golfers to include non-golfers seeking entertainment experiences, particularly 18-35-year-olds, children under 18 years, families and corporate participants.

The provision of high-quality food and beverage service is a valuable offering for golf facilities. As demonstrated, the Mister Fox café at Ringwood Golf Course contributes to driving additional visitation by non-golfers and provides an enhanced food and beverage experience to golf customers.

There is an opportunity to enhance the hospitality offering at both golf facilities, and incorporate an expanded food, beverage and functions / events service. The resident golf clubs are an important customer group and ways in which to incorporate their needs, with multi-purpose areas, must be addressed in any future development plan.

The golf simulator and indoor golf centre market is rapidly evolving via purpose-built virtual golf lounges incorporating food, beverage and hospitality. These environments advance the customer experience beyond game improvement to hi-tech golf entertainment. The rapid growth of eSports will continue to support the growth of the virtual golf experience.
Maroondah Golf’s Current Performance + Position

In response to the wider sports participation and golf industry trends, for golf facilities to remain viable and successful in meeting the needs of a declining, changing and competitive market, WellPlayed have created the following ‘6 Key Challenges and Opportunities for the Contemporary Golf Facility’:

1. Golf facilities must be **market-focused** and adapt to stay relevant to succeed in today’s changing sport, recreation and leisure market.

2. Golf facilities must be **customer-focused** and need to become **friendlier to women, families, younger generations, diverse groups** and **social golf clubs**.

3. Golf facilities should focus less on competition golf and introduce **social, short-format** and other **golf-entertainment** participation options.

4. Golf facilities will need to consider **new business models** to ensure **greater facility visitation** and **revenue diversification**; and deliver **high-quality customer experiences**, especially **hospitality**.

5. Golf facilities must develop the expertise to actively and regularly engage with customers via **better communication and marketing**; and take advantage of **technology** to assist.

6. Golf facilities must continue to provide valuable **social, community, environmental and economic** benefits; and **actively engage** with their local community to create a **community hub**.

The strategic directions for Maroondah Golf have been developed with reference to these key challenges and opportunities, together with the key findings and observations arising from the comprehensive situational analysis:

- Sites Assessment
- Stakeholder Consultation – Maroondah Golf Leadership and User Groups
- Stakeholder Consultation – Maroondah Golf and Customers + Community
- Performance Snapshot – Maroondah Golf
- Peer Benchmark Performance – Maroondah Golf

**Evolving Ideas**

Subject to review and feedback by Council representatives, the Project Team will develop concept designs and prepare a detailed business case for the preferred ideas.

The business case will include detailed development and analysis of the financial model (visitiation, revenue and expenditure), whole of lifecycle costs, potential funding models for capital investment, management model, opportunities to enhance service levels and strategic partnerships.
2. Introduction

The City of Maroondah is in Melbourne’s eastern suburbs, about 22 kilometres from the Melbourne CBD. Its Council provides facilities, services and experiences to around 114,000 residents and to many visitors to the region.

Council owns and operates two golf courses for public use – Dorset Public Golf Course (Dorset) and Ringwood Public Golf Course (Ringwood). The facilities are collectively known as Maroondah Golf.

Council now wants to ensure golf within the municipality is sustainable into the future by undertaking a strategic review and future direction study of Maroondah Golf.

WellPlayed Golf Business Consultancy, in conjunction with Crafter + Mogford Golf Strategies, (the Project Team) was engaged by Council to assist.

Key activities undertaken by the Project Team include:

1. Stage 1
   - Complete comprehensive situational analysis
   - Identify sport participation trends, golf participation trends, golf industry trends and golf facility innovation
   - Develop strategic directions

2. Stage 2
   - Develop design concepts
   - Prepare a detailed business case for the preferred ideas

This report details the Project Team’s findings from Stage 1. It provides Council representatives with the opportunity to determine the future directions and strategies for Maroondah Golf, and help inform the design concept ideas to be explored in Stage 2.

2.1 Acknowledgements

The Project Team acknowledges the valuable assistance and contributions in the development of this strategic plan from identified Council Officers and representatives from the user groups.
3. Situational Analysis

To understand the current performance of Maroondah Golf a comprehensive situational analysis has been completed, which considers the following:

- Strategic Context
- Sites Assessment
- Stakeholder Consultation – Maroondah Golf Leadership and User Groups
- Stakeholder Consultation – Maroondah Golf and Customers + Community
- Performance Snapshot – Maroondah Golf
- Peer Benchmark Performance – Maroondah Golf

3.1 Strategic Context

Council’s relevant policies, strategic plans and objectives, together with the local planning structure, establish the broader strategic context within which Maroondah Golf operate.


The Physical Activity Strategy noted that majority of Maroondah residents do not undertake enough physical activity.

To address this, and to make physical activity an easier option, the strategy focuses on four key Council priorities:

- Active Travel
- Activating Open Space
- The Future of Sport
- Schools and Workplaces

Maroondah Golf has an important role to play in both activating open space, and evolving its facilities, services and experiences to meet the future of sport participation.

Golf’s participation, relative to other popular sport/recreation/leisure activities, were reviewed for both % participation and relative ranking across Maroondah and adjacent municipalities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Golf</th>
<th>% Part.</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maroondah</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knox</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manningham</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monash</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whitehorse</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: each Council’s relevant recreation, leisure or physical activity strategy

Please note that Maroondah’s survey occurred during mid-winter and it is accepted that golf (predominantly a warmer weather activity) is not accurately reflected.
3.2 Sites Assessment

Site investigations have been undertaken for Dorset and Ringwood to identify the issues and opportunities.

3.2.1 Site Assessment – Dorset

The main issues identified for Dorset are grouped as follows:

- Way-finding: ‘back street’ location with long-access from Mt Dandenong Road
- Bike/pedestrian connections: good connection via immediately adjacent Dorset Recreation Trail
- Car-parking: currently 120 spaces; these do not satisfy peak-demand times; recent beautification of entry and car-parking has improved arrival experience
- Golf building: ageing building (approx. 1,200m²) providing golf shop, community room, administration, storage, change/toilet amenities, and adjacent outdoor BBQ and seating area
- Golf course: 18-holes, 5,131m (men) and par 69 (men); is a good public-access standard for course maintenance, presentation, interest and challenge; progressive implementation of bunker master plan
- Course water: irrigation system in good condition; enough on-site water storage (40ML); water sourced via storm-water capture
- Maintenance facility: upgraded in 2013/14
- Practice range: restricted-length range (120m) only for short to mid-iron golf club use
- Landfill boundary: land previously used as a tip-site (prior to golf course construction) which may affect any new building construction

The issues have been noted in the plan as per Section 7.1 Appendix 1 – Site Analysis + Opportunities Plan (Dorset).

The main opportunities identified to improve Dorset include:

- Car-parking: increase number of car-parks
- Golf building: improve facilities to a contemporary standard
- Golf course: improve playing conditions in winter with improved fairway drainage
- Practice range: potential better use of land area

3.2.2 Site Assessment – Ringwood

The main issues identified for Ringwood are grouped as follows:

- Way-finding: ‘high street’ location with immediate access from Canterbury Road and close to the East Link corridor; prominent signage adjacent to Canterbury Road and southern slip lane to East Link
- Bike/pedestrian connections: poor connections
- Car-parking: currently 282 spaces servicing the golf course and The Rings; these do not satisfy peak-demand times; recent beautification of entry and car-parking has improved arrival experience
- Club building: visually unattractive and blocks view from Canterbury Road to the existing golf building
• Golf building (main): small building (approx. 600m²) providing golf shop, high-quality café, administration, storage, toilet amenities and adjacent outdoor seating area
• Golf building (secondary): small building (approx. 250m²) providing storage, change/toilet amenities, meeting room and indoor practice nets (2)
• Golf course: 18-holes, 5,407m (men) and par 70 (men); is a high public-access standard for course maintenance, presentation, interest and challenge; continued investment in course upgrades and improvements
• Course water: irrigation system in good condition; small on-site water storage (24ML); water sourced via storm-water capture
• Maintenance facility: upgraded in 2013/14
• Practice range: restricted-length range (110m) only for short to mid-iron golf club use

The issues have been noted in the plan as per Section 7.2 Appendix 2 – Site Analysis + Opportunities Plan (Ringwood).

The main opportunities identified to improve Ringwood include:

• Bike/pedestrian connections: create improved connections; consider connection to Dandenong Creek trail through the golf course
• Club building: re-locate club activities to a multi-purpose space as part of an enhanced (or new) golf pavilion
• Golf building: create a new and larger multi-use golf pavilion and precinct
• Golf course: continue with course upgrades and improvements (including bunker master plan)
• Course water: increase onsite storage capacity
• Practice range: potential better use of land area
• Landfill boundary: land previously used as a tip-site (prior to golf course construction) which may affect any new building construction
3.3 Stakeholder Consultation – Maroondah Golf

Consultation, via separate meetings, was undertaken with key stakeholders involved with Dorset and Ringwood golf courses:

- Maroondah Golf leadership team – identified Council employees
- Maroondah Golf user groups – representatives from key user groups
- Maroondah Golf service contractors – representatives from Mister Fox and Golf Professional

The feedback from each consultation was captured via a SWOT analysis. This feedback has been amalgamated to create a master SWOT as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dorset</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dorset</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course: good greens, flat land, suits all standards, more ‘interesting’ layout</td>
<td>Course: poor winter conditions, poor drainage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operations: good availability of tee-times (less busy)</td>
<td>Location: ‘back-street’, difficult to find, poor signage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities: availability of community room and outdoor BBQ</td>
<td>Hospitality: poor F&amp;B offer and supporting facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting: picturesque, adjacent to ‘mountain’, lakes on-course</td>
<td>Market: poor perception and reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Precinct: car-parking capacity is low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ringwood</strong></td>
<td><strong>Ringwood</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course: established setting, mature vegetation, consistently good condition, continued course improvements</td>
<td>Course: mature vegetation (requires more maintenance), hilly terrain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality: hi-quality F&amp;B via café,</td>
<td>Operations: poor pace of play, too many user-group entitlements (tee-time dominant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market: good course reputation, no nearby F&amp;B competition, no local event spaces</td>
<td>Practice: poor facilities, no long-game area, no short-game area, small-sized putting greens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location: premium, residential and accessible</td>
<td>Facilities F&amp;B: only 1 dedicated events space (restricted size - not reaching full potential), restricted kitchen facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Customer: golfers not purchasing as much F&amp;B e.g. Ringwood GC members use clubrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Precinct: car-parking capacity is low (particularly weekends)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities</td>
<td>Threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dorset</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course: develop all-year playing conditions, improve drainage</td>
<td>Course: poor winter conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities F&amp;B: improve F&amp;B offer, seating and social areas, kitchen facilities, difficult location for 'standard' café - create 'destination' offer e.g. micro-brewery, challenging to create functions/events areas (view to vegetation not 'sweeping')</td>
<td>Facilities: not providing a contemporary F&amp;B offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer: promote better integration b/w clubs e.g. group tournament and matches</td>
<td>Competition: from driving ranges, member-based clubs (competing for public players), more challenging golf courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market: increase advertising and awareness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community: improve engagement, create community hub, increase community ‘space’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs: develop junior golfers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ringwood</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course: continue drainage program</td>
<td>Course: constrained property e.g. fairways, creek, houses and boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf shop: improve layout, create golf-feel and create repairs workshop adjacent</td>
<td>Club: membership decline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functions: &quot;clearly demand&quot; for increased functions &amp; events e.g. weddings 140-170pax</td>
<td>Competition F&amp;B: Ringwood GC - biggest competition for on-site café</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities golf: upgrade indoor coaching facilities (carpet and paint), create outdoor teaching area (driving range), improve short-game practice area and putting green, create high-quality short-game practice area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities F&amp;B: create flexible space and diversify F&amp;B revenue (cafe, bar and functions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities F&amp;B: enhanced kitchen facilities - wider offer - more pax</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities events: lawn area (function pad) for outdoor events e.g. outdoor cinema</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities: create golf &amp; community hub (location, location, location...)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club: improved clubrooms e.g. promote functions, create outdoor deck with views and encourage community use e.g. multi-purpose space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing: encourage off-peak play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market: engage with young families and other diverse community groups e.g. Asian influence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maroondah Golf</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trends: less-time, ageing population, diminishing golf relevance, not engaging with younger audience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation: declining kids interest in golf (no junior program), perceived to be expensive, perceived lack of ‘time’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People: maintaining quality leadership, management and staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific feedback from each stakeholder group is identified as per Section 7.3 Appendix 3 – Stakeholder Consultation.
3.4 Stakeholder Consultation – Customer + Community

Detailed research, via survey, was undertaken to better understand relevant behaviours, opinions and the facility aspirations of Maroondah Golf’s current customers and immediate local community.

The objectives of the research were to obtain insights into customers’ and the local community’s current attendance activity at each Maroondah Golf facility, participation drivers, satisfaction / importance with current facilities and services, and facility and service aspirations.

Charts depicting all relevant results from the survey are included in Attachment 1 – Customer and Community Survey.

3.4.1 Methodology

The following methodology was adopted:

- Data Collection via quantitative research: online + manual survey
- Research Period: Thursday 3 November to Sunday 27 November 2016
- Distribution & Promotion: E-mail (Maroondah Leisure members and Maroondah Golf user groups), letterbox distribution to nearby homes and actively supported by Council communications and onsite promotion

3.4.2 Respondent profile

389 respondents | There were 389 respondents in total (target = 400). Of these, 287 had visited either Ringwood or Dorset to play golf in the preceding 12 months, split evenly between those who played Ringwood most frequently (“Ringwood golfers”) and those who played Dorset most frequently (“Dorset golfers”).

79% were golfers | Overall 79% of respondents indicated they had played golf or used a driving range in the preceding three years. The balance of non-golfers were directed away from questions relating to golf facilities.

85% were Intermediate standard golfers | Of the 306 golfers, the majority identified as “intermediate” golfers - those who typically play 18 holes of golf in 10-30 shots over par (259 people, 85% of golfers).

78% were Maroondah Leisure members | 304 respondents (78% of the total) were members of Maroondah Leisure, of which 81 people had a golf membership package. This indicates the survey is weighted towards the views of existing Maroondah Leisure members.

Resident golf clubs well represented | With 39% of respondents’ members of a resident club at either golf course, there is also a slight bias towards these groups.

Where relevant throughout the survey results, we analysed the result by drilling down into factors including gender, or whether the respondents are Ringwood golfers or Dorset golfers.
The general profile of all respondents is outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>231</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>15 - 24</th>
<th>25 - 44</th>
<th>45 - 64</th>
<th>65 and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent of children &lt;18?</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>236</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Golf Ability</th>
<th>Advanced (can play 18 holes)</th>
<th>Beginner (just learning the game)</th>
<th>Intermediate (can play 18 holes)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dorset Golf</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringwood Golf</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ML Members</th>
<th>LifeStyle (access to all venues)</th>
<th>Golf access to Ringwood and RL</th>
<th>Aquatic (access to gym, etc.)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dorset</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringwood</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did not play golf at a Maroondah?</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dorset Golf</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringwood Golf</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.3 Key findings

A detailed breakdown of findings is provided in Attachment 1 – Customer + Community Survey. We note the following key findings and observations:

3.4.3.1 Net Promoter Score (NPS)

Both Dorset and Ringwood are well-regarded by their customers, receiving positive Net Promoter Scores of 46 and 28 respectively (out of 100). NPS measures the willingness of customers to recommend Ringwood or Dorset’s products or services to others and is used as a measure of both satisfaction and loyalty to a company.

Ringwood golfers did not hold a positive view of Dorset (an NPS of -36) nor did Dorset golfers hold a positive view of Ringwood (an NPS of -21) suggesting a strong divide between the customer groups. An opportunity exists to improve these views and further explore the drivers of this result.

3.4.3.2 Motivators for playing golf

Consistent with other industry research, respondents indicated that **fun and enjoyment** remains the principal motivator for playing golf. Women also indicated accessing the **outdoor natural environment** was a primary motivator.

Traditional drivers (**competition golf** and **business networking**) were less important motivators.
3.4.3.3 Competing facilities

Respondents were loyal to Dorset and Ringwood: Ringwood golfers played 6.2 rounds per month at Ringwood and 2.6 times per month at Dorset whilst Dorset golfers indicated they played 6.4 times per month at Dorset and 2.2 times per month at Ringwood.

No other specified local course featured as a regular destination, with both Dorset and Ringwood golfers indicating they played Morack less than 1 time per month:

Source: Customer + Community survey, WellPlayed analysis

With respect to driving ranges, Heathmont Driving Range was the preferred location for all respondents, followed by Maroondah Golf Park. Morack Driving Range was not identified as a regular location for respondents.

3.4.3.4 Perceptions of quality – by season

Respondents were asked for their views on the quality of the golf experience in both the warmer and dry period of the year, and the cooler and wet period. Ringwood golfers considered Ringwood outperformed Dorset in both seasons, and similarly Dorset golfers considered Dorset outperformed Ringwood (albeit by a lower margin).

Ringwood is perceived to outperform other local courses in both the warmer and cooler months. However, Dorset is seen on average to be about the same as other local courses across both seasons.

3.4.3.5 Priority mapping

A series of priority maps were prepared matching respondents’ views on the importance of features of each facility against their satisfaction levels. These maps allow us to identify features needing maintenance (to continue performance) versus those requiring attention (considered opportunities for improvement):
• Priority Maintenance = higher levels of satisfaction and higher levels of importance. Important attribute that must continue to perform
• Secondary Maintenance = higher levels of satisfaction and lower levels of importance. Not so important attribute that must continue to perform
• Priority Opportunities = lower levels of satisfaction and higher levels of importance. Important attribute that must improve its performance
• Secondary Opportunities = lower levels of satisfaction and lower levels of importance. Less important attribute that must improve its performance

Both Dorset and Ringwood perform extremely well across a range of issues. No priority opportunities for improvement were identified, and priority maintenance areas include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility overall</th>
<th>F&amp;B / Operations</th>
<th>Retail offer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Golf course</td>
<td>Car parking</td>
<td>Customer service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value for money</td>
<td>Accessibility</td>
<td>Customer communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall experience</td>
<td>Change room facilities &amp; toilets</td>
<td>Tee-time availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro shop</td>
<td>Beverage choices / options</td>
<td>Tee-time booking procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice facilities</td>
<td>Food choices / options</td>
<td>Pace-of-play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; beverage</td>
<td>Social areas – indoor</td>
<td>Retail – value for money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social areas - outdoor</td>
<td>Retail – product range</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The relative measure for each item is shown in the charts in Attachment 1 – Customer & Community Survey.

Respondents were asked about their views with respect to key features of the golf course across the warm/dry and cool/wet seasons. The results indicated that both courses perform similarly well in the dry season, with the highest-priority items performing best (greens and fairways).

Dorset underperforms Ringwood in the wet season, with the high-priority items (including fairways) showing lower satisfaction levels than the dry season, and the overall golf experience showing lower satisfaction levels than Ringwood. Drainage is considered important for both courses, but rates below the midpoint of satisfaction at Dorset, requiring attention.
3.4.3.6 Golf retail behaviours

Respondents were asked where they purchased most their golf retail purchases (excluding golf green fees). The results indicated Dorset’s golf shop has a relatively larger share of wallet compared to Ringwood, which has a 25% share of its golfers’ retail spend:

![Table showing golf retail behaviours]

Source: Customer + Community survey, WellPlayed analysis

When asked how much they spend annually, respondents indicated they spent $452 on average in 12 months on golf retail purchases.

3.4.3.7 Café visitation

Respondents were asked about their visitation to local cafes. Responded indicated they purchased F&B items from cafes in the local community 4.6 times per month, whilst they purchased F&B items 2.8 times per month from their preferred Maroondah Golf course. Ringwood golfers were more frequent purchasers than Dorset golfers.

The opportunity exists to obtain a greater share of wallet in this area. Ringwood customers were more frequent in purchasing F&B items from Ringwood Golf Course – likely due to the enhanced offer presented by Mister Fox.

3.4.3.8 Golf round preferences

Respondents were asked whether they mostly played 9-holes, 18-holes or a similar amount of both. The results indicate around 60% of Maroondah Leisure member rounds are mostly 18-holes, whilst non-members were 70%. These results are opposite to the analysis conducted on rounds data as per Section 3.5.1.2 Round type: 9 vs 18 holes.
3.4.3.9 Potential Upgrade options

Respondents indicated a preference for course drainage at Dorset over other upgrade options. A new driving range and a new café at Dorset were also well supported.

Respondents that did not play at a Maroondah golf facility indicated a higher interest in a mini-golf facility and a new driving range.
3.5 Performance Snapshot – Maroondah Golf

An analysis of available information was undertaken to assess the current and historical performance of both Dorset and Ringwood. This analysis focused on:

- Visitation
- Green fees
- Profitability
- Capital expenditure
- KPI performance
- Audience analysis
- Market presence

3.5.1 Visitation

The primary measure for visitation at each facility is golf rounds. Whilst we believe Mister Fox drives visitation to Ringwood through casual café visits and functions, no data was available on the numbers of people attending. Both courses experience high levels of golf play, with Ringwood considered a high-volume facility and is ranked the busiest public golf course in metropolitan North East Melbourne (see Section 3.7).

Since 2004 trends indicate flat growth at Ringwood, with a peak of 85,680 rounds in FY2010, and a long-term growth line at Dorset with a peak of 63,027 rounds in FY2014. Ringwood has shown growth since FY2015, and Dorset has rebounded significantly in the most recent financial year. Annual golf rounds for the financial years 2004-2018 are shown:

Source: Maroondah Leisure performance data, WellPlayed analysis
Both courses see a significant decline in attendances in the winter months, consistent with the broad golf market. Dorset experiences a wider spread of attendances month-by-month, due to a larger reduction in attendances in the winter months.

Peak periods at both courses are the summer months, December to February. Courses that support greater corporate visitation (for golf days and corporate hospitality) would typically see peak periods in November and March, months traditionally popular for corporate events.

3.5.1.1 Maroondah Leisure members

Certain categories of Maroondah Leisure memberships entitle members to golf rounds. This impacts visitation as the membership is excellent value: current price is $49.50 per fortnight, or $24.75 per week. With a standard green-fee priced at $32 midweek and $36 on weekends, anyone playing an average of one game per-week or more would see significant savings from this option.

Over time the introduction of this option has seen a greater proportion of rounds at each course be taken up by Maroondah Leisure members, with a greater impact at Ringwood:

Source: Maroondah Leisure performance data, WellPlayed analysis

Ongoing review of the Maroondah Leisure membership offer should be undertaken to ensure the growth of players in this category does not cannibalise higher-margin public green fee revenue and negatively impacting profitability.
3.5.1.2  Round type: 9 vs 18 holes

Both Dorset and Ringwood experience a higher-than-expected ratio of 9-hole golf:

Dorset 9 vs 18 holes, Source: Maroondah Leisure performance data, WellPlayed analysis

Ringwood 9 vs 18 holes, Source: Maroondah Leisure performance data, WellPlayed analysis

As rounds by Maroondah Leisure members are not recorded separately as either 9 or 18-holes, the data may be impacted by excluding that segment from the analysis. Notwithstanding this, looking at public rounds only there is a 60/40 split in favour of 9-hole golf at both facilities. Refer Section 3.4.3.8 Golf round preferences for member preferences.
The trend in recent years has been towards 9-hole rounds. Generally, we would expect an inverse result: around 40% of rounds played as 9-hole rounds. As both courses are 18-holes there is no apparent reason for this, but historical results show a consistent 9/18-hole profile at both facilities.

Short-format golf responds well to modern sport participation trends and drives greater visitation numbers, so the split between 9 and 18-hole rounds is a positive aspect of both facilities. This also indicates a customer base that is predisposed to playing shorter-format golf.

3.5.2 Green fees

Both Dorset and Ringwood operate with a traditional “rack-rate” approach where green fees are set annually by Council and adjusted for midweek/weekend days. This represents an inflexible approach to pricing and does not maximise utilisation, where peak demand within days or even particular hours of the day would support more variable pricing to drive yield.

We recommend an evolution of pricing towards a more dynamic approach that adopts principles of value-based pricing: the intention is to offer flexible rates and enable management to vary prices to better target the different value that customers place on tee-times.

A comparison to local market peak weekend rates indicates both Dorset and Ringwood’s 18-hole rates are below the local market average:

Source: WellPlayed analysis

We note that (in general) course conditioning and design are key drivers of price, and that both facilities sit in a broadly appropriate position in the market, based on a subjective assessment of their relative condition and design. There is therefore no evidence supporting an immediate increase or decrease in rack-rates, however as noted above a more flexible pricing strategy could help drive yield, especially where both courses experience high levels of demand (evidenced by high visitation).
3.5.3 Profitability

Historically both Dorset and Ringwood have contributed operating surpluses to Council, after allocation of internal overheads. We note the results are generally insufficient to fund future capital expenditure and provide a dividend to Council.

Over time both facilities have shown income growth generally matched by growth in expenses, with Dorset showing losses in some periods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>1,058,854</td>
<td>1,022,247</td>
<td>1,261,447</td>
<td>1,252,947</td>
<td>1,314,937</td>
<td>1,289,839</td>
<td>1,272,616</td>
<td>1,207,366</td>
<td>1,309,933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>1,192,110</td>
<td>1,167,006</td>
<td>1,185,193</td>
<td>1,205,765</td>
<td>1,294,096</td>
<td>1,300,412</td>
<td>1,247,061</td>
<td>1,302,894</td>
<td>1,324,156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus/Deficit</td>
<td>(133,256)</td>
<td>(144,759)</td>
<td>76,254</td>
<td>47,183</td>
<td>20,841</td>
<td>(10,573)</td>
<td>25,555</td>
<td>(95,527)</td>
<td>(14,225)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dorset financial performance Source: Maroondah Leisure performance data, WellPlayed analysis

Ringwood’s performance shows consistent profits:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>1,541,361</td>
<td>1,532,823</td>
<td>1,646,859</td>
<td>1,609,546</td>
<td>1,652,048</td>
<td>1,847,358</td>
<td>1,665,989</td>
<td>1,733,889</td>
<td>1,756,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>1,337,320</td>
<td>1,410,968</td>
<td>1,411,775</td>
<td>1,357,774</td>
<td>1,390,765</td>
<td>1,723,519</td>
<td>1,592,274</td>
<td>1,541,892</td>
<td>1,586,394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus/Deficit</td>
<td>204,041</td>
<td>121,854</td>
<td>235,083</td>
<td>251,772</td>
<td>261,283</td>
<td>123,839</td>
<td>163,715</td>
<td>191,997</td>
<td>169,882</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ringwood financial performance Source: Maroondah Leisure performance data, WellPlayed analysis

Across both facilities, revenue from sale of tee-times (whether as public green fees or Maroondah Leisure membership income allocations) constitutes 81.5% of all revenue, indicating a strong reliance on this income for overall profitability. The facilities are therefore not well diversified in their revenue stream:

![Revenue Breakdown Diagram]

Source: Maroondah Leisure performance data, WellPlayed analysis

Whilst Ringwood earns rental income from the Mister Fox café, this is not a significant value. We understand from Maroondah Leisure management that the allocation of income from Maroondah Leisure memberships is set annually according to an internal budget process.

We recommend this allocation be monitored to tie as closely as possible to actual performance (in terms of golf rounds by Maroondah Leisure members) and a reasonable internal price be allocated per-round. This will ensure that (over time) the income from Maroondah Leisure members playing golf is an accurate reflection of course utilisation.
On the expense line, maintenance expenses are the largest item:

Source: Maroondah Leisure performance data, WellPlayed analysis

3.5.4 Capital expenditure

The forward-estimate capital expenditure (CAPEX) plan provided outlined expenditure on the golf facilities for the 10-year period from FY2020 to FY2029 inclusive. In our experience, it is unfortunately not common to have a comprehensive plan for anticipated CAPEX on golf facilities, and the existence of this plan is a strong positive. Due to the long investment cycle at public golf facilities, it is common to see CAPEX implemented in an ad hoc fashion, leading to unanticipated investments and often difficulty funding urgent works.

The breakdown of capital expenditure for the 10-year period shows significant total expenditure of $9.394M with a spike in FY2023 caused by the renewal of the Eastlink fence at Ringwood ($267k):

Source: Maroondah Leisure performance data, WellPlayed analysis
The expenditure items listed include the following aggregate spend over the 10-year period:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capex Item</th>
<th>Spend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Golf Courses - Pathways</td>
<td>2,535,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf Courses - Tee Renewal</td>
<td>862,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf Courses - Fairway drainage improvements</td>
<td>970,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf Courses - Renewal of major irrigation components</td>
<td>1,035,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf courses - Renew fairways</td>
<td>810,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorset Golf - Compliance with EPA requirements</td>
<td>1,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf Courses - Perimeter Fencing</td>
<td>530,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf courses - Renew bunkers</td>
<td>585,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringwood Golf - Renew Eastlink Fence</td>
<td>267,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,394,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Maroondah Leisure performance data, WellPlayed analysis

We note the following:

- The list covers principally golf course works and excludes the buildings;
- Expenditure allocated to drainage responds well to the findings from the various stakeholder consultations.

### 3.5.5 KPI performance (2016)

In reviewing the performance data from 2008-2016, we focused on two key performance indicators: average fee per player and on-spend per-player.

#### 3.5.5.1 Average fee per player

Both Dorset and Ringwood showed reasonable growth in green fees per-player for public rounds (excluding Maroondah Leisure members) reflecting an annual price increase policy:

Source: Maroondah Leisure performance data, WellPlayed analysis
Whilst we noted above that an annual price review limits flexibility and can reduce yield overall, ensuring prices are increased annually (at least in accordance with CPI) will lead to revenue growth where flat player numbers would otherwise prevent growth. The compound annual growth rate achieved at each facility reflects a consistent price increase strategy.

Revenue per-player from Maroondah Leisure members shows a spike in FY2013 which we understand resulted from a different approach to allocating membership revenue in that period. Due to the complexity of evaluating all Maroondah Leisure member attendance data, distribution of income from memberships is based on an annual review of historical performance. Based on advice from Council this membership income distribution is 95% accurate.

3.5.5.2 On-spend per player

An important measure of operational success is spending on ancillary purchases by golfers: kiosk (F&B) spend and golf retail spend. Kiosk spend per player (incorporating sales of F&B items) shows a decline since 2013 at both facilities:

Source: Maroondah Leisure performance data, WellPlayed analysis
Ringwood shows a steeper decline, reflecting the success of the Mister Fox café which would be expected to cannibalise food and beverage sales from the Golf Shop. Notwithstanding this, both facilities show a poor absolute result as reflected in the Peer Benchmark Performance analysis (refer Section 3.6).

Both golf shops have a relatively simple F&B offering and attention should be applied to improve both range and execution of sales to drive on-spend on F&B items.
In terms of retail spend per-golfer Dorset again outperforms Ringwood, and a positive trend indicates improving performance, but neither facility performs well for retail sales with Dorset peaking at $2.61 per golfer in FY2015:

![Graph showing retail spend per-golfer for Dorset and Ringwood](image)

Source: Maroondah Leisure performance data, WellPlayed analysis

We understand from discussion with management that improvements in retail merchandising have taken place in the last 12 months, showing significant improvements in sales performance, and ongoing attention is being applied to this area. Refer to Section 3.6) for further information of relative performance against the peer set.

### 3.5.6 Customer analysis

#### 3.5.6.1 Resident clubs

Management provided information in relation to the resident golf clubs that utilise each of Dorset and Ringwood (there are four clubs at each facility with differing playing habits). Data is not recorded on specific golf rounds played by resident clubs' members (noting that many would be expected to hold Maroondah Leisure memberships given their frequency of attendance).

Based on data provided by management with respect to the resident clubs and their regular bookings, we estimate that resident club players account for:

- 18% of all rounds at Dorset (10,600 rounds per annum)
- 30% of all rounds at Ringwood (22,800 rounds per annum)

The resident clubs are clearly significant user groups and therefore represent an important stakeholder in future planning for both facilities.

Certain user groups currently enjoy reserved access to premium tee-times on Saturdays at both facilities. Our observation was that management took care in ensuring the resident clubs utilised their reserved times (through monitoring any unused times and follow-up on any late cancellations or no-shows) and anecdotal feedback from resident clubs indicated high levels of satisfaction with the service provided by Maroondah Golf to them.
We recommend a system be implemented to better track golf rounds by resident club members to maximise utilisation of the in-demand tee times typically reserved for resident club use.

3.5.6.2 Catchment and age profile

We were advised that little data is captured by either Ringwood or Dorset in relation to personal details or demographic data for public golfers. Whilst it is not unusual to see little data capture in public facilities, we recommend systems are developed to better capture basic demographic data on customers to define each facility’s catchment area.

From market experience the primary catchment for public golf facilities is within a 10km radius: we would expect to see 80% or more customers residing within this catchment.

We were provided with a list of Maroondah Leisure members who had attended either Ringwood or Dorset in the preceding 6 months (dated September 2016). From this data, we note that the catchment was (as you would expect from Maroondah Leisure members) predominantly local. 79% of Maroondah Leisure members who played either facility lived in suburbs within 10km of Ringwood and 72% lived within 10km of Dorset.

The breakdown of the top 20 suburbs of Maroondah Leisure members (along with their visitation to the golf courses) is shown:

Source: Maroondah Leisure performance data, WellPlayed analysis

The average age of Maroondah Leisure Members who attended either golf facility was 56 years of age.
3.5.7 Market presence

The golf facilities have a distinctive and related brand:

These brands offer a unique, contemporary identity for each golf facility, and sit well within the Maroondah Leisure umbrella brand:

Including golf within the leisure offer at Maroondah is a positive innovation and enables Council’s strength in operations and promotion of its leisure assets to be applied to golf. It is not common to see golf included as part of a Council leisure offer, with the City of Yarra’s similarly designed program (Yarra Leisure, incorporating Burnley Golf Course) a prominent local example.

3.5.7.1 General marketing

Based on our observations and discussions with management, we make the following observations with respect to marketing:

- Marketing of the golf facilities is based principally on leveraging Maroondah Leisure’s membership database, incorporating monthly e-news and advertising via Council’s owned media and channels. This includes digital displays in Maroondah Leisure facilities, some social media e.g. Facebook, and Maroondah Leisure’s website at www.maroondahleisure.com.au/.
- Golf marketing outside the Maroondah leisure audience is via digital marketing activity (social media, website, SEO, digital display and Adwords). The current data capture of contact details for public golfers is poor. Golf facilities increasingly capture contact information from visitation to enable low-cost direct marketing, and with high visitation levels at Maroondah Golf this is an opportunity that should be pursued.
Occasional special promotions have been undertaken, including via digital marketing activity and the Crazy Golf Deals platform (www.crazygolfoffers.com.au). These voucher-based offers can be used to drive new visitors to golf facilities but will come at considerable expense and promote heavily discounted green fees. This can lead to conflict with existing customers where loyalty is not rewarded with similar discounts.

- In-store promotion is well-executed with prominent and well-designed signage and an uncluttered counter and golf shop floor.

### 3.5.7.2 Online presence

Both Dorset and Ringwood have contemporary websites on the Maroondah Leisure domain (http://www.maroondahleisure.com.au):

![Maroondah Leisure Website](image)

Whilst managing each under one domain may be effective for Maroondah Leisure there is some potential for confusion as a Google search shows results for Dorset Golf Club (http://dorsetgolfclub.com.au/) and Ringwood Golf Club (http://www.ringwoodgc.com/) ahead of (or proximate to) Maroondah Leisure.

Currently the pages on Maroondah Leisure’s website are information-focussed with no booking or sign-up functionality. Emphasis is placed on becoming a Leisure Member, and an opportunity exists to offer bookings and/or contact details capture.

Focussing on Facebook presence, assessed against a peer set of competing golf facilities, Ringwood has relatively few followers and Dorset less so. Enhancing the Facebook presence is a recent focus of management and building this audience is an ongoing process. Whilst total followers (or “page likes”) is typically a target KPI for social media activation, engagement is a more useful measure of success.

When total interactions (measured as likes, comments or shares of material posted by the golf facility) are assessed, Gardiners Run leads the market (for the four weeks from 24 April 2017), notwithstanding a smaller group of followers.
Comparing total followers to interaction, Ringwood performs relatively well:

This results in a “share of audience” over the same time-period as follows:

Source: Facebook Inc., WellPlayed analysis

Social media activation, including generating content and monitoring the posts that perform well (in terms of interaction) is increasingly a core component of golf facility marketing.
A cross-platform digital engagement strategy represents both strong opportunities for customer engagement and cost-effective direct marketing. As most of the golf play is via repeat visitation, engaging with existing customers via social media is an important and cost-effective approach.

Online presence is an ongoing task requiring active management of both owned media (website) and social platforms.

Facebook remains the dominant platform, however golf facilities are also active in Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. Active management of profiles on Google and Tripadvisor also enable audience interaction, and industry verticals (such as iseekgolf.com.au) provide further opportunity to engage with existing customers and attract potential customers.

Current listings with our observations are outlined below. We recommend ongoing benchmarking of social reach online.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Presence?</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Ongoing activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>Recommend establishing a profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>Recommend establishing a profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snapchat</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>Recommend establishing a profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google (places)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Place claimed but no active management is evident (i.e. responding to reviews, managing content). Note:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ringwood has 27 reviews, 4.4★ (/5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Dorset has 7 reviews, 4.3★ (/5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripadvisor</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>• Ringwood has 17 reviews, 4★ (/5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Dorset not listed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iseekgolf</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>• Ringwood has 19 reviews, 3★ (/5), but listed as “Ringwood Golf Club”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6 Peer Benchmark Performance – Maroondah Golf

A key component of the situational analysis undertaken was a benchmark study of leading high-volume Government and privately-owned publicly accessible golf facilities, focusing on facilities in the immediate competitive market around Dorset and Ringwood. Our focus was on assessing similar facilities in terms of:

- Course: the peer group featured 18-hole facilities;
- Operator: the peer group included a mix of Council-operated and other facilities with professional golf/leisure operators in situ.

This has provided valuable insights and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) by which WellPlayed have assessed the performance of both Dorset and Ringwood. At the request of participants, concerned to protect the confidentiality of information provided, we have not identified the participating courses. All facilities in the peer set are public access and of similar profile. Two courses are more than 20km away (outside catchment) but were selected as they have similar profiles to Dorset and Ringwood.

The performance of Dorset and Ringwood has been assessed against these facilities, addressing both quantitative and qualitative measures. The findings have informed recommendations throughout this report. Detail for all measures reported is provided in Attachment 2 – Peer Benchmarking Review.

3.6.1 General observations

Whilst there has been a growing emphasis in the public access golf industry on maximising visitation and revenue through diversification of attractions on-site, beyond simply the golf course, the facilities visited did not offer significant innovation or activity in this respect.

Where a private operator is engaged to manage golf operations, long term leases are typically in place, often up to 20 years, to offer a strong incentive for the operator to invest in the site for a long-term return.

Marketing and communications was an increasing priority for all facilities, however execution remain poor at many sites. Areas for improvement identified across the peer set included:

- On-site signage, including in some cases for direct revenue generation with commercial sponsorships and advertising
- Direct marketing, managed via e-mail and customer relationship management tools
- Use of online bookings systems for golf
3.6.2 Quantitative observations

3.6.2.1 Total visitation

For golf visitation, Dorset and Ringwood were amongst the busiest facilities in the peer set, with Ringwood a standout at 77,279 rounds for FY2016. Whilst not specifically measured, due to lack of comparable data, we believe Ringwood experiences a higher rate of 9-hole golf than the peer set, which allows for higher visitation and better utilisation of the golf course. This is a strong positive feature of Ringwood’s operations.

![Bar Chart]

Source: Benchmarking data, WellPlayed analysis

Historical performance indicates the peer set has experienced a declining trend in visitation over the 4-year period FY2013 to FY2016. Ringwood is an outlier, showing growth from FY2015 to FY2016.

3.6.2.2 Average fee per player

At $17.63 and $17.90 respectively Dorset and Ringwood were the lowest performers for average fee per-player, some $10 below the highest level. However, we note:

- We did not consider the value proposition at rack-rates was inconsistent with the nature of the offer at Dorset and Ringwood (considering course condition and design);
- With higher 9-hole rounds driving visitation it is expected to see a lower fee per-player; and
- The results are also impacted by allocations from Maroondah Leisure for membership income, as the calculation in this context is based on total golf revenue divided by total rounds. Where Maroondah Leisure members play more frequently the average fee per round will be diminished.
3.6.2.3 Retail sales

Ringwood underperforms on retail sales per golfer (total retail sales reflects strong visitation numbers). Overall there is significant variation for retail sales, with higher results achieved through larger shop size and ability to provide services e.g. club fitting on driving range.

3.6.2.4 Food and beverage sales

Ringwood F&B sales expected to be lower due to Mister Fox (rental return is not considered in the KPI). Both Dorset and Ringwood are underperforming the market on sales, indicating there is an opportunity for improvement the offer and execution at both sites.

Source: Benchmarking data, WellPlayed analysis
3.7 North East Melbourne Golf Rounds Performance

In late 2018, the following 18-hole public golf facilities participated in an analysis of golf round performance of North East Melbourne’s major public golf facility market:

- Bundoora Park Golf Course (City of Darebin)
- Dorset and Ringwood Public Golf Courses (City of Maroondah)
- Freeway Public Golf Course (City of Boroondara)
- Glen Waverley Golf Course (City of Monash)
- Ivanhoe Public Golf Course (City of Banyule)
- Morack Public Golf Course (City of Whitehorse)
- Yarra Bend Golf Course (Victorian Government)

WellPlayed’s observations of the market performance:

- Overall the sample indicates a slight decline (-1%) in golf rounds between the year ended Sep 2015 and Sep 2018.
- All facilities reported significant improvement in the Sep 2018 quarter compared to the prior year and is on average 25% better.

Source: WellPlayed analysis

Based on golf rounds volume and growth performance between the year ended Sep 2015 and Sep 2018, Ringwood and Dorset are ranked 1 and 2, and are clearly North East Melbourne’s public golf facility market leaders.
4. Golf Market Insights

Golf is one of Australia’s most popular participation sports. It delivers valuable wellbeing, social, environmental and economic benefit to local communities.

In recent years nearly 2.1M Australians have ‘swung a golf club’ at a golf course, driving range, mini-golf course or virtual golf lounge.

Traditionally the health of Australian golf has been viewed by many through the lens of ‘golf club membership’. Whilst this segment of the golfer population has experienced decline since the mid-1990s, consistent with other organised sports, it only represents 34% of the golfer market (played a round of golf) and 20% of the broader golf participant market (swung a golf club).

There are many opportunities for golf facilities to grow their business when properly positioned to take advantage of market trends. Whilst it is important for golf facilities to continue to provide golf experiences for the ‘traditional’ market, there is an opportunity to provide different golf experiences to target broader audiences and larger markets.

4.1 Golf’s Community Impact

Based on an Australian Sports Commission review in 2015, it is evident that sport, and in turn golf, provides valuable participation opportunities which lead to a positive contribution to not only its participants, but also the wider community.

WellPlayed has summarised the community benefits from golf’s perspective:

- Golf promotes physical and mental wellbeing (particularly for older Australians) e.g. health, social interaction and self-esteem.
- Golf contributes to social and community development e.g. volunteering and inclusion.
- Golf provides valuable open and maintained green space areas e.g. flora, fauna and habitat.
- Golf stimulates local economic development e.g. financial contribution (operating surpluses), local employment, local goods and service suppliers, charitable support, and intrastate, interstate and international tourism opportunities.

In September 2017, the Australian Golf Industry Council (AGIC) released its research into the benefit that golf contributes to the Australian community across three key areas of economic, health and social.

Key findings from AGIC’s Community Impact Study:

- Golf makes an economic contribution of $3.5B.
- Golf’s contribution to health in terms of dollars saved is significant for all golfers, including a ‘lifetime health contribution’ of $4.5B.
- Participation in golf provides:
  - Regular and cross-generational social interaction across the life-span.
  - A foundation to build a strong and connected community.
  - A strong connection to the outdoors and natural environment.
  - Opportunities to teach valuable life lessons and principles such as respect, honesty, etiquette and self-discipline.

An outline of the AGIC report is included in Section 7.4.1.
4.1.1 Golf and Health – International Consensus

The ‘2018 International Consensus on Golf and Health’ has produced one of the first wide-ranging global consensus statements for a sport. It engaged leaders at the intersection of health, sport, policy and golf, to build a cross-sector agreement.

The need for a comprehensive, evidence-informed consensus summary of key issues, and key actions about golf and health, was recognised by the World Golf Foundation and golf’s global leaders.

The Consensus, published 23 September 2018, has generated various consensus statements that have been agreed upon by international experts and can be used with a high-level of confidence.

A sample of the consensus statements include:

- Playing golf is associated with mental well-being benefits which can include improved self-esteem, self-worth, self-efficacy and social connections.
- Playing golf can contribute to healthy and active ageing, providing physical and mental health, cognitive, social, functional and other benefits.
- Golf offers opportunities for intergenerational connection, for social interaction and to support communities with events of interest.

The consensus highlights what we know about golf and health, and what actions by players, facilities, the industry and decision makers can take to realise health benefits and minimise health risk related to golf.

Recommended key actions for facilities/industry and policy/decision makers. Source: Golf and Health Project
4.2  Sport Participation Trends

4.2.1  Sport Australia – AusPlay

Sport Australia (formerly Australian Sports Commission) is the government body currently responsible for tracking national participation data for sport and physical recreation via its AusPlay initiative. AusPlay is a national participation survey to help better understand sport participation trends in Australia, to inform policy decisions and guide strategy with a strong evidence base.

Sport Australia released the first AusPlay on 8 December 2016 for data collected from October 2015 to September 2016. On 31 October 2018 it released the latest AusPlay results covering data collected in the last financial year (FY2018):

A snapshot of AusPlay (FY2018) adult non-sport and sport participation results. Source: Sport Australia

Based on the most recent AusPlay results, and when compared to all activities, golf ranked the 5th most popular participation sport for adult (aged 15+) Australians (4.7%).

Golf is a popular sporting activity for older Australians. When compared to other activities, golf increases in popularity as participants age:

A snapshot of AusPlay (FY2018) age participation results (cycling, golf & tennis). Source: Sport Australia
Whilst golf is a popular sport for adult men (7.7% of the population) it is under-represented in the women’s participation category (1.7%); reinforcing the opportunity for golf to grow female participation:

A snapshot of AusPlay (FY2018) adult female v male participation results. Source: Sport Australia

Also, whilst golf is ranked 2 for club sport participation (adults and children combined) behind football (soccer), and is ranked 1 for adult club sport participation, it is under-represented in the children’s club participation category; reinforcing the opportunity for golf to grow children’s participation.

South Australia and Victoria Participation

Adult South Australians participate in golf less than the national average: 3.5% v 4.7%. Adult Victorians participate in golf more than the national average: 5.5% v 4.7%.

4.2.2 Sport Australia – Older Australians’ Participation in Sport and Physical Activity

Recognising that the health of the increasing number of Older Australians (aged 55+) is an important social and economic challenge facing Australia, Sport Australia released a report focused on Older Australians’ participation as part of the recent AusPlay results.

Key information from the ‘Older Australians’ Participation in Sport and Physical Activity’ report (2018):

- Australia’s population is ageing. By 2030 Australia will have nearly 9M residents aged 55+ (2M more than today).
- Extending a lifetime of good health enables Older Australians to continue to contribute socially, culturally and economically to the wider community.
- Sport and physical activity offer physical and mental health benefits for Older Australians and can be an enabler of their on-going community engagement.
- Overall, golf is in the top 10 sports and physical activities for Older Australians – Men = 14% (rank = 3 (with cycling)) and Women = 4% (rank = 7 (with bush walking and tennis).
- Based on the top 10 sports and physical activities for Older Australians, golf participation rates are different for different life stages.
  - Age 40-54: / Female = n/a / Male = 8.3% (rank = 6).
  - Age 55-64: Female = 3.2% (rank = 10) / Male = 11.7% (rank = 5).
  - Age 65-74: Female = 4.7% (rank = 7) / Male = 16.0% (rank = 3).
  - Age 75+: Female = 4.1% (rank = 5) / Male = 13.4% (rank = 3).

An outline of the Sport Australia report is included in Section 7.4.2.
4.2.3 Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport (2017)

In recent years, Sport Australia has observed significant trends relating to sports participation, performance and consumption. To understand these trends and their impact in the future, and to best prepare Australian sport to adapt for success, the Australian Sports Commission (now Sport Australia) engaged The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to undertake ‘The Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport (IGRS)’ (2017)\textsuperscript{vi}.

BCG concluded that trends are rapidly changing the environment in which sport operates and placing pressure on the sector to change. It proposed a new aspiration for Australian sport in 2036: \textit{for Australia to be the most active sporting nation, known for its integrity, thriving sports organisations, continued exceptional international success, and a world-leading sports industry.}

To help achieve this aspiration, and what’s most relevant to golf, is the need for sporting organisations to drive sustained participation growth among all Australians, by:

- Modernising sport participation offerings.
- Expanding the participation rates of groups that are currently under-represented – by ensuring sport is more affordable for low income families, more accessible to migrant groups and more attractive to women.
- Reducing the drops in sport participation by creating more flexible, social sports offerings that provide fun, non-competitive pathways for recreational participants.
- Developing new low time-commitment offerings with a strong fitness component.

An outline of the ASC report is included in Section 7.4.3.

4.3 Golf Participation Trends

4.3.1 Australian Golf Industry Council

In 2015, AGIC engaged Nielsen Sports to undertake a research project to define the current golf consumer, size the potential golfer market and identify opportunities to increase golf participation.

The ‘2015 Golf Landscape Research’\textsuperscript{vii} sized the golf market:

- 1.16M people who have played a round of golf in the prior 12 months.
- 2.11M people who have picked up a golf club to play or practice some form of golf in the prior 12 months (including the 1.16M who had played a round of golf.
- 3.87M people who have not played golf but would not reject playing golf in the future.

The 2.11M were considered the current ‘golfer market’. Of this group, Golf Traditionalists and Variety Seekers make-up the ‘core golfer market’ and are the segments who dedicate a higher proportion of leisure time to golf and contribute the highest proportions of total golf consumer spend.

Golf Traditionalists are those who enjoy the pure form of the game. They are frequent and avid golfers and are skewed towards the male gender. Older Golf Traditionalists are more likely to become members of a golf club because they have less family pressure and more time available for golf.
Variety Seekers are also frequent golfers who appreciate the traditional game. Most of this segment are aged under 50 years, enjoy keeping fit and have families. Time pressures and limitations mean they seek flexibility and variety around their golf experiences to fit in with their busy lives.

Source: AGIC 2015 Golf Landscape Research.

Incidental players are infrequent golfers who have stumbled onto the game of golf. For many their first exposure to golf was through the visit to a driving range or attending a golf related event of some kind. They have a higher propensity to be younger in age and are yet to make a commitment to become a regular participant in the game.

Alternates generally have little interest in the traditional format of the game and are more likely to play mini golf for the social element (generally under 50 years and mostly female).

The 4 key golf consumer segments’ relative market-size and spending contribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Market share</th>
<th>Spend share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Golf Traditionalists</td>
<td>make up 45% of the market</td>
<td>...and account for 40% of spend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidental</td>
<td>make up 24% of the market</td>
<td>...and account for 10% of spend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety Seekers</td>
<td>make up 20% of the market</td>
<td>...and account for 35% of spend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternates</td>
<td>make up 11% of the market</td>
<td>...and account for 5% of spend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AGIC 2015 Golf Landscape Research, WellPlayed analysis

In the first instance, golf facilities should prioritise engaging with Golf Traditionalists and Variety Seekers, the core golfer market. Whilst the core golfer market represents 65% of the total golfer market, they account for nearly 80% of the spend.
4.3.2 Golf Australia

Golf Australia is the Federal Government-recognised National Sporting Organisation responsible for golf in Australia.


Based on AusPlay results and previous national research, the participation report compares sports participation trends since 2001:

![Graph showing sports participation trends from 2001 to 2017]

Source: 2017 Golf Club Participation Report, Golf Australia

Whilst golf has demonstrated a decline for at least annual participation (together with tennis), it remains one of Australia’s most popular participation sports.

Relevant key findings from the participation report regarding golf club membership:

- Club membership numbers peaked in Australia in 1998 at approximately 500,000 golfers. Since then, a steady decline has materialised averaging 1.3% per annum.
- There has been a decline in the proportion of female members, from a high of 34% in 1970 down to 20% in 2017.
- The participation rate (total golf club members divided by total population) peaked at 2.8% in the mid-1990s before declining to its current level of 1.6% as a result of a growing population and declining membership numbers.
- Reported member numbers for social golf clubs have increased over the past from 18,018 in 2013 to 22,288 in 2017, representing an average annual increase of 4.3%.
- The average reported age of club members is 57.5 years. The average age of male members (56.1) is eight years younger than females (64.1).
There has been a steady decline in golf club membership since the peak in the 1990s:

Long-term golf club membership and participation rate trends since 1970. Source: Golf Australia

State and Territory Trends – South Australia

In 2017, South Australia experienced a nominal annual increase of 4 golf club members. There are now 23,733 golf club members in South Australia. The 5-year annual average movement within South Australia has been a decline of 0.4%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>1 Year</th>
<th>5 Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yorke</td>
<td>923</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>972</td>
<td>1,019</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan SA</td>
<td>13,238</td>
<td>13,153</td>
<td>12,900</td>
<td>12,902</td>
<td>13,074</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>-0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Eastern</td>
<td>1,759</td>
<td>1,667</td>
<td>1,650</td>
<td>1,671</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>-1.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid North</td>
<td>1,423</td>
<td>1,404</td>
<td>1,384</td>
<td>1,421</td>
<td>1,420</td>
<td>-0.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>3,408</td>
<td>3,534</td>
<td>3,607</td>
<td>3,449</td>
<td>3,427</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverland</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>516</td>
<td>-2.3%</td>
<td>-1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern SA</td>
<td>994</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>952</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>916</td>
<td>-4.6%</td>
<td>-1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murrayslands</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>665</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>-8.4%</td>
<td>-3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyre</td>
<td>1,176</td>
<td>1,179</td>
<td>1,226</td>
<td>1,182</td>
<td>1,081</td>
<td>-8.5%</td>
<td>-1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA Total</td>
<td>24,199</td>
<td>24,224</td>
<td>24,063</td>
<td>23,729</td>
<td>23,733</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Golf club membership performance trends for South Australia and its regions. Source: Golf Australia

Whilst the South East(ern) region enjoyed an annual increase of 21 golfers (1.3%), its 5-year annual average (-1.0%) is worse than the wider-market performance (-0.4%).

An outline of the Golf Participation report is included in Section 7.4.4.
4.3.3 Market Overview

Based on AGIC’s research (2015), AusPlay participation data (2017), Golf Australia’s national participation report (2017) and WellPlayed’s golf facility database – golf participation in Australia is summarised:

**Golf Participation in Australia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Participation</th>
<th>Component 1</th>
<th>Component 2</th>
<th>Total Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,160,000 golfers</td>
<td>394,000 club playing members</td>
<td>766,000 casual golfers</td>
<td>1,160,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>372,500 course-based golf club members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21,500 social golf club members</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>950,000 swung a golf club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Where and How Do They Participate in Golf?**

- 1,160,000 golfers
- 33 virtual golf centres
- 89 mini-golf facilities
- 166 driving ranges
- 1,160,000 golfers

Source: AusPlay, Golf Australia and WellPlayed analysis

The golf market of 1.16M participants comprises golfers affiliated with Golf Australia, i.e. ‘golf club playing members’ (course-based and social golf club members) and ‘casual golfers’ (non-affiliated golfers). Golf club playing members only represent 34% of the overall golfer market. The market size of the ‘casual golfer’ and ‘swung a golf club’ combined = 1.71M (over 4x the size of golf club paying members).

It is clear Australians are now participating in golf in a variety of ways, and not just on golf courses. Driving ranges, mini-golf facilities and the emerging virtual golf centres all have an important role to play in providing golf participation opportunities to a broader audience.

Whilst it is important for golf facilities to continue to provide golf experiences for the traditional club playing market (including Golf Traditionalists), the big opportunity for golf facilities is to provide different golf experiences to target broader audiences and larger markets (including Variety Seekers, Incidentals and Alternates).
4.3.4 Motivators

It is useful to understand why people are choosing to participate in golf. This knowledge can assist a golf facility as it considers the strategic opportunities relating to the facilities, services and experiences it offers.

Based on the recent AusPlay and 2015 Golf Landscape Research results, and combined with specific research undertaken by WellPlayed, the main motivators for adults to participate in golf are:

- For the fun and social experience
- To get outdoors
- For the challenge (but not so much for competition)
- For health or fitness

Source: WellPlayed

It is interesting to note that ‘competition’ and ‘maintain an official golf handicap’ are very low motivators for golf participation. Historically many golf facilities, and most golf clubs, have placed a strong emphasis on competition play.

Evidence clearly supports the need for golf facilities to offer a fun and social experience with less emphasis on competitions.
4.4 Golf Industry Trends – International

There are other trends impacting the wider golf industry and its future.

4.4.1 European Golf Course Owners Association (EGCOA) – Vision 2020

Initiated in 2014 and updated during 2016, EGCOA’s ‘Vision 2020’ research project delivers insights for the sustainable performance and development of commercial golf facilities in Europe. It recommends that golf facilities should promote:

- Fun – an important foundation experience for golf participation.
- Friendship – social and community benefits from golf are critical.
- Flexibility – for game engagement and membership offerings.
- Family – important to attract families, females and juniors.
- Fore Health – pushing the health benefits of golf.
- Forever – for golf to stay profitable it must be sustainable.

An outline of the report is included in Section 7.4.5.

4.4.2 Golf Entertainment

Branded as “The Ultimate Venue for Fun”, Topgolf (http://Topgolf.com) is a golf driving range entertainment complex achieving extraordinary sales and growth in the USA and internationally.

Featuring sports bar, function spaces and lounge facilities at each driving range bay, Topgolf takes the driving range experience and converts it into an entertainment venue – driving food and beverage sales to significant levels (turnover can be as high as USD$150k per night). With around 100 bays across three levels, each site is a full-distance driving range with artificial turf outfield punctuated by large targets.

The range building incorporates a sports bar, outdoor bar, guest lounges with games tables and gaming consoles, and multiple functions spaces.
A key innovation behind Topgolf and its success is the technology allowing it to create a series of golf-game experiences for golfers. Range balls are tracked via microchips in each ball, and screens at each bay allow players to enjoy game formats for both single-person and multi-user play.

TV screens also present media content throughout the facility, creating a high-energy environment.

With visitation typically featuring 40% women, up to 85% non-golfers, and a significant proportion of 25-40-year-olds, Topgolf attract demographics often considered as 'lost' to golf. Whilst each site would require capital investment of $30M+ as a green-field installation, requiring a significant investment, principles from the success enjoyed by Topgolf can be applied to many golf facilities.

In June 2016 Village Roadshow announced it is partnering with Topgolf to open the first Australian venue on the Gold Coast. The $35M destination opened in June 2018 and is the first of 6-8 that Village hopes to open in Australia in an exclusive partnership with Topgolf. Over 600,000 visitors are expected in the first year.
4.5 Golf Industry Trends – Australia

4.5.1 Evolution of the Local Driving Range

Based on WellPlayed’s observations of both the USA and Australia golf markets, it is evident the traditional driving range experience is evolving from a focus on game improvement (practice and tuition) to become a form of golf play and golf entertainment.

_Moore Park Golf_ in Sydney has installed a giant screen on its driving range to enhance its range experience, introduce ‘gaming’ elements and provide innovative tuition options. In May 2017, it completed a refurbishment of the driving range building and constructed a new synthetic-grass and featured outfield.

Another trend in driving ranges is the development of delivery infrastructure. Range-ball automation is a feature at Wembley Golf Course, offering customers a ‘ball serving’ feature and increasing ball purchase frequency and pricing.

Visitation is also being driven by increased product development. Facilities have introduced on-range games and increased diversity of tuition formats, including clinics and school-aged activities. Outfields are being improved with the addition of targets to encourage both more refined practice and create competition amongst groups.

_**Toptracer Range**_ [https://www.toptracer.com/range/](https://www.toptracer.com/range/)

Toptracer Range is Topgolf’s technology offering to existing driving ranges to transform a traditional driving range experience to a contemporary golf entertainment one. Range balls are tracked via camera, and like Topgolf, screens at each bay allow players to enjoy game formats. Australia’s first installation opened at Golf Central BNE (QLD) in September 2018. It will be offered to the wider Australian market over the next few years.
4.5.2 Mini-Golf Resurgence

WellPlayed has visited, observed and been involved with mini-golf facilities around Australia. Mini-golf is experiencing a resurgence in the golf facility market.

Benefits of a mini-golf facility forming part of an existing golf facility:

- Naturally complements existing golf facility activities (golf course and/or driving range) and provides a participation pathway to these facilities.
- Broadens the existing golf facility catchment demographic from mostly golfers to include non-golfers seeking entertainment experiences, particularly 18-35-year-olds, children under 18 years (parties), families and corporate participants.
- Diversifies revenue from new visitation and should positively impact visitation to other on-site facilities such as the golf course, driving range and food & beverage services.

Some of Australia’s leading public-access golf facilities are either operating relatively new mini-golf facilities or planning to construct new ones.

Examples of new contemporary facilities include Curlewis Golf Club (Bellarine Peninsula), Wembley Golf Course (WA), Victoria Park Golf Complex (Brisbane), Parkwood International (Gold Coast), Thornleigh Golf Centre (Sydney), Yarra Bend Golf (Melbourne) and Golf Central Brisbane.

All are designed to attract significant interest outside traditional golf markets. The better mini-golf facilities are characterised by a high-quality built environment and landscaping, a challenging putting experience with interesting features for both children and adults, and amplified music supporting the ‘entertainment experience’. Many include high-quality food and beverage service, and areas adjacent dedicated to accommodating children’s parties and mini-golf events.

Parkwood International (2 x 9-hole courses) and 3 flags per hole (easy, medium and hard)
4.5.3 Virtual Golf

The golf simulator and indoor golf centre market is rapidly evolving. Based on WellPlayed’s facility database there are currently 33 virtual golf centres around Australia.

Australia’s two largest off-course golf retail outlets (Drummond Golf and House of Golf) are now incorporating golf simulators into their off-course stores. In-store simulators assist with game improvement (coaching) and club-fitting (hardware sales).

However, it’s the more innovative and entertainment-based approach to the use of golf simulators that is more interesting and relevant to golf facilities, via purpose-built virtual golf lounges incorporating food, beverage and hospitality. These environments advance the customer experience beyond game improvement to hi-tech golf entertainment.

X-Golf Marion (SA) is in a commercial centre adjacent in a suburb of Adelaide. It has developed a 5-bay indoor virtual golf with accompanying food and beverage service, and 12-person ‘meeting room’ with presentation facilities. It provides casual play, leagues, lessons, competitions, memberships and social functions.

From a wider-market perspective, the rapid growth of eSports will continue to support the growth of the virtual golf experience.
4.6 Golf Operator Co-investment

Recognising that local councils may not have access to funding for necessary golf facility improvements, third-party golf operator capital investment opportunities are emerging in the market. Recent examples include:

- In 2014, a council-owned golf facility in metropolitan Victoria, experiencing around 50,000 golf rounds annually, entered into a new agreement with a third-party operator who was required to invest $200,000 to build 3 indoor golf simulators (and associated golf building works) as part of a 3-year management agreement.
- In 2014, a council-owned golf facility in regional Victoria entered into a new agreement with a third-party operator who was required to invest $1M (maintenance equipment, pro shop fit-out and golf building improvements) as part of a 21-year lease agreement.
- In 2014, a council-owned golf facility in metropolitan Victoria, experiencing around 70,000 golf rounds annually, entered into a new agreement with a third-party operator who was required to contribute $1.4M towards a local storm water harvesting project, and invest $1.75M towards the golf course infrastructure and buildings, as part of a 20-year lease agreement.
- In 2010, a state-owned golf facility in metropolitan Victoria, experiencing around 50,000 golf rounds annually entered into a new agreement with a third-party operator who was required to undertake a multi-million-dollar investment program over the first 3 years (upgraded golf course, expanding the driving range and building a new mini-golf facility) as part of a 21-year lease agreement.

Generally, third-party operator investments are supported by longer term contracts and a financial model which results in an increase in revenue to the operator to fund its capital contributions.
4.7 Challenges and Opportunities for the Contemporary Golf Facility

In response to the wider-market trends, for golf facilities to remain viable and successful in meeting the needs of a changing and competitive market, WellPlayed has identified the following ‘6 Challenges and Opportunities for the Contemporary Golf Facility’:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Golf facilities must be <strong>market-focused</strong> and <strong>adapt to stay relevant</strong> to succeed in today’s changing sport, recreation and leisure market.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Golf facilities must be <strong>customer-focused</strong> and need to become <strong>friendlier to women, families, younger generations, diverse groups and social golf clubs</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Golf facilities should <strong>focus less on competition golf</strong> and introduce <strong>social, short-format</strong> and other <strong>golf-entertainment</strong> participation options.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Golf facilities will need to consider <strong>new business models</strong> to ensure <strong>greater facility visitation</strong> and <strong>revenue diversification</strong>; and deliver <strong>high-quality customer experiences</strong>, especially <strong>hospitality</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Golf facilities must develop the expertise to actively and regularly engage with customers via <strong>better communication and marketing</strong>; and take advantage of <strong>technology</strong> to assist.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Golf facilities must continue to provide valuable <strong>social, community, environmental and economic</strong> benefits; and <strong>actively engage</strong> with their local community to create a <strong>community hub</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Strategic Directions

The strategic directions for Maroondah Golf have been developed with reference to the key challenges and opportunities for the contemporary golf facility as identified in Section 4.7, together with the key findings and observations arising from the comprehensive situational analysis:

- Strategic Context
- Sites Assessment
- Stakeholder Consultation – Maroondah Golf and Customers + Community
- Performance Snapshot – Maroondah Golf
- Peer Benchmark Performance – Maroondah Golf

5.1 Strategic Directions – Maroondah Golf

Two strategic directions have been identified for Maroondah Golf:

- Strategic Direction 1 – Improving Sustainable Performance
- Strategic Direction 2 – Building Contemporary Experiences

The directions respond and align to Council’s strategic framework. As previously noted, Maroondah Golf has an important role to play in both activating Council’s open space areas, and evolving its facilities, services and experiences to meet the future of sport participation and encourage an active community.

5.1.1 Strategic Direction 1 – Improving Sustainable Performance

Dorset and Ringwood golf courses experience high levels of golf rounds visitation, with Ringwood considered a high-volume facility and likely to be ranked amongst the busiest courses in metropolitan Melbourne. Both courses have experienced a small decline in annual rounds since FY2012.

Historically both Ringwood and Dorset have contributed operating surpluses to Council, after allocation of internal overheads. But results are generally insufficient to fund future capital expenditure and provide a dividend to Council.

WellPlayed recommends that short to medium-term effort from Council be focused on improving and delivering sustainable performance via maintaining and growing golf rounds visitation and yield.

Council should review and prioritise the implementation of the following actions:

- Marketing and promotion
  - Establish a system to capture customer and potential customer contact information to enable low-cost direct marketing
  - Enhance website content and functionality
    - Include references and depictions of facilities, services and experiences that promote fun and enjoyment, social experience, relaxation, outdoor natural environment, health benefits and personal challenge
    - Include golf bookings, cart bookings and contact details capture
  - Increase social media activation, including generating content, monitoring the posts that perform well and benchmarking of online social reach
- Continue leveraging Maroondah Leisure’s membership database and advertising within Council’s owned media and channels
- Promote better integration between the resident clubs at each course e.g. swap and/or inter-club days
- Other complimentary activities that drive visitation to Maroondah Golf facilities and diversify its offerings should continually be explored e.g. ideas such as food-truck gatherings, community markets and live music

- Green fees and pricing
  - An evolution of pricing towards a more dynamic approach that adopts principles of value-based pricing
  - A system be implemented to better track golf rounds by resident club members to maximise utilisation of the in-demand tee times typically reserved for resident club use

- Maroondah Leisure membership
  - Ongoing review of the membership offer to ensure the growth of players in this category does not cannibalise higher-margin public green fee revenue
  - Revenue allocation be closely matched to actual performance (in terms of golf rounds by Maroondah Leisure members) and a reasonable internal price be allocated per-round

- Golf course
  - Prioritise drainage improvements at Dorset golf course to improve cooler and wet-period conditions

- Golf retail
  - Continue to improve the golf retail offer

- Finance
  - Review of internal overhead charge to ensure it is accurate and reflects the true overhead costs applicable to the golf facilities

5.1.2 Strategic Direction 2 – Building Contemporary Experiences

Traditional trends within sports participation are being challenged and contemporary golf facilities are responding in innovative ways. There are many examples of golf facilities that have diversified and broadened their offerings, and successfully engaged with a wider audience.

It is opportune that Council owns two 18-hole golf facilities. This provides for maintaining a ‘traditional’ golf experience at one facility and creating ‘contemporary’ and golf entertainment experiences at the other. Evolving and diversifying Maroondah Golf’s facilities, services and experiences will increase visitation and deliver improved financial outcomes. These performance outcomes will be analysed in detail as part of Stage 2 of the project.

Facilities identified by the Project Team for consideration in the concept ideas include:

- New short-format golf course
- New driving range
- New premium mini-golf
- New golf pavilion and precinct
- New virtual golf lounge
5.1.2.1 **New short-format golf course**

Given the constraints of available land at each golf facility, any introduction of new facilities at either Dorset or Ringwood will result in the use of land currently used for golf holes. The Project Team view this consequence as a positive opportunity to reduce the number of golf holes from 18 and create a short-format golf course comprising a reduced number of golf holes e.g. 12.

This responds positively to one of golf’s participation barriers i.e. ‘time’ and creates a new, innovative and distinctive golf offering within the local market. Where possible, and based on a 12-hole layout, creating either a 9-hole and 3-hole loop, or two 6-hole loops, is desirable but not essential. However, it is essential to provide a high-quality short-format golf experience offering a good layout with a mix of par 3s, 4s and 5s.

5.1.2.2 **New driving range**

The traditional golf driving range experience is evolving from a focus on game improvement (practice and tuition) to become a form of golf play and golf entertainment. They provide valuable golf participation opportunities and can broaden and increase the potential customer audience. The Project Team recommends developing a new and contemporary driving range experience that provides a mix of ‘traditional’ and ‘premium’ bays.

The ‘premium bay’ terminology has been developed by WellPlayed and Crafter + Mogford Golf Strategies to describe a concept to encourage non-golfers to the driving range for a golf, hospitality and entertainment experience. Structurally a premium bay is wider (3.6m) and deeper (6m) than a regular bay (2.8m x 3m) and allows for small-group gatherings on adjacent low-level or high-level lounge / hospitality seating. Entertainment screens (sports broadcasts) and specialised range technology (entertainment and game improvement) is incorporated.

A premium bay can generate a greater customer spend per bay. Bays are ‘rented by the hour’, and as it can comfortably accommodate more than one customer at a time, an increase in complimentary spending e.g. food and beverage will be achieved. Even when operating as a traditional bay (game improvement) it is possible to increase the customer spend by utilising and then pricing access to accompanying game improvement technology (via the specialised range technology).

5.1.2.3 **New premium mini-golf**

Principles that should be considered in the design and development of a new mini-golf facility at an existing golf facility have been identified by the Project Team as follows:

- The mini-golf site (2,000 – 4,500m²) should be located adjacent to any main roads or high-activity areas to maximise visibility to passing traffic and adjacent users
- A 12-hole or 18-hole facility (2 x 6-hole / 9-hole courses with 3 flags on each course (easy, medium and hard)) is enough, but subject to high quality execution
- Take advantage of site topography to create level changes and variety
- Develop a high-quality supporting landscape environment that has amplified music, is illuminated at night and can provide shelter / heating during cooler months
- Customer access should be via a controlled entry/exit point, preferably at the golf shop, but still be in close-proximity to food and beverage service
- Provide more than 1 dedicated area, preferably overlooking the mini-golf course, to accommodate group gatherings e.g. children’s parties or corporate groups
The Project Team have adopted the term ‘premium mini-golf’ to describe a facility that incorporates the design principles as identified.

5.1.2.4 New golf pavilion and precinct

The provision of high-quality food and beverage service is a valuable offering for golf facilities. As demonstrated, the Mister Fox café at Ringwood Golf Course contributes to driving additional visitation and provides an enhanced food and beverage experience to golf customers.

There is an opportunity to enhance the hospitality offering at both golf facilities, and incorporate an expanded food, beverage and functions / events service. The resident golf clubs are an important customer group and ways in which to incorporate their needs, with multi-purpose areas, should be considered. Whilst some improvement in golf retail performance has recently been experienced, Maroondah Golf still performs poorly in this area. There is an opportunity to expand and improve the golf retail offer.

Suitable administration, change, and storage areas should be provided in any new or upgraded golf pavilion. The adjacent outdoor precinct should provide appropriate areas for golfer staging, golf cart and skate caddy staging, outdoor hospitality, play space, event lawn and car-parking.

5.1.2.5 New virtual golf lounge

As previously noted, the golf simulator and indoor golf centre market is rapidly evolving. Consideration should be given to incorporating purpose-built virtual golf lounges in the golf pavilion, incorporating food, beverage and hospitality. These environments advance the customer experience beyond game improvement to hi-tech golf entertainment.

5.1.2.6 Specific Improvements for Dorset and Ringwood

In addition to the development of new facilities, there are improvement opportunities specific to Dorset or Ringwood.

The opportunities to specifically improve Dorset include:

- Golf course: continue with course upgrades and improvements, particularly drainage and bunker master plan
- Car-parking: increase number of car-parks
- Facilities golf building: improve facilities, services and experiences to a contemporary standard
- Facilities F&B: improve the F&B offer and accompanying seating and social areas, and kitchen facilities; alternatively create a high-quality ‘destination’ offer e.g. micro-brewery as part of a significant upgrade with supporting golf retail, functions/events and multi-purpose areas

The opportunities to specifically improve Ringwood include:

- Golf course: continue with course upgrades and improvements, particularly bunker master plan
- Bike/pedestrian connections: create improved connections; consider connection to Dandenong Creek trail through the golf course
- Golf building: create a new and larger multi-use golf pavilion with supporting golf retail, functions/events and multi-purpose areas, and adjacent precinct with player gathering, golf cart staging and lawn area for outdoor events

Subject to review and feedback by Council representatives, the Project Team will develop design concepts and prepare a detailed business case for the preferred ideas.

The business case will include detailed development and analysis of the financial model (visitation, revenue and expenditure), whole of lifecycle costs, potential funding models for capital investment, management model, opportunities to enhance service levels and strategic partnerships.
7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1 – Site Analysis + Opportunities Plan (Dorset)
7.2 Appendix 2 – Site Analysis + Opportunities Plan (Ringwood)
7.3 Appendix 3 – Stakeholder Consultation

Consultation, via separate meetings, was undertaken with key stakeholders involved with Dorset and Ringwood golf courses. The feedback from each consultation was captured via a SWOT analysis, with specific feedback from each stakeholder group as follows.

7.3.1 Maroondah Golf leadership team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dorset</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dorset</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Course: good greens, flat land, suits all standards, more 'interesting' layout</td>
<td>• Course: poor winter conditions, poor drainage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Operations: good availability of tee-times (less busy)</td>
<td>• Location: difficult to find</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Setting: adjacent 'mountain' and lakes</td>
<td>• Market: poor perception and reputation</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ringwood</strong></th>
<th><strong>Ringwood</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Course: established, wider fairways, mature vegetation</td>
<td>• Course: mature vegetation (requires more maintenance e.g. storm), hilly terrain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hospitality: Mr Fox experience</td>
<td>• Operations: poor pace of play, too many user-group entitlements (tee-time dominant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Market: good reputation</td>
<td>• Practice: poor facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Location: premium</td>
<td>• Precinct: car-parking reaches capacity on busy days</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dorset</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dorset</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Community: improve engagement, create community hub, increase community ‘space’</td>
<td>• Competition: e.g. Gardiners Run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Course: develop all-year playing conditions</td>
<td><strong>Maroondah Golf</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilities: install virtual golf simulators</td>
<td>• Trends: less-time, ageing population, diminishing golf relevance, not engaging with younger audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Market: increase advertising and build awareness</td>
<td><strong>Ringwood</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Programs: develop junior golfers and schools program</td>
<td>• Course: constrained property e.g. fairways, creek, houses and boundaries</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ringwood</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Facilities: create golf &amp; community hub (location, location, location...)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Market: engage with young families and other diverse community groups e.g. Asian influence</td>
<td></td>
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7.3.2 Maroondah Golf user groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dorset</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dorset</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Course: flat, shorter length - suits a certain level of golfer, improved in dry season, challenging, continuous improvement (investments)</td>
<td>• Course: winter conditions (fairways) - significant drop in playing #s, on-course toilet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hospitality: provision of BBQ facility</td>
<td>• Hospitality: poor F&amp;B offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Precinct: car-parking</td>
<td>• Practice: nets during winter (flooding), size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilities: community room (with bar access)</td>
<td>• Golf: water hazard ID e.g. RHS 4G, defined drop zones; 9-hole golfers impact at 'the turn', signs e.g. No Alcohol Beyond This Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Operations: good availability of tee-times</td>
<td>• Paths: some poor surfaces e.g. path to 10T - particularly 'hot spots'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Golf retail: has improved</td>
<td>• Facilities: F&amp;B area (non-member)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff: friendly service</td>
<td>• Golf retail: range/sizes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Price: good value (cheap – Maroondah Leisure member)</td>
<td>• Brand: poor reputation (winter conditions)</td>
</tr>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ringwood</strong></th>
<th><strong>Ringwood</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Course: consistently good condition (essential), improved drainage</td>
<td>• Operations: course works interference (give way to the grounds staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hospitality: Mister Fox hi-quality F&amp;B</td>
<td>• Golf: poor cart hire offer (particularly needed for older players), paths, pace of play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Culture: good staff (helpful, rapport), fun</td>
<td>• Practice: no long-game area, no short-game area, small-sized putting greens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social: positive via groups of women</td>
<td>• Facilities: not providing a contemporary F&amp;B offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Setting: course and environment</td>
<td>• Competition: other golf course specials e.g. Gardiners Run, membership (Eastern + Gardiners Run), Ringwood (winter), greater supply of golf courses, more challenging golf courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Location: premium</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dorset</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dorset</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilities: greater engagement of groups in community room</td>
<td>• Facilities: not providing a contemporary F&amp;B offer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Golf: participation programs e.g. Give Golf a Go, overcoming cost (equipment + rounds) barriers, school programs</td>
<td>• Competition: other golf course specials e.g. Gardiners Run, membership (Eastern + Gardiners Run), Ringwood (winter), greater supply of golf courses, more challenging golf courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Marketing: promote course improvements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Practice: improve facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilities F&amp;B: improve F&amp;B offer and area</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ringwood</strong></th>
<th><strong>Ringwood</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Course: continue drainage program</td>
<td>• People: maintaining quality leadership, management and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Programs: junior clinics</td>
<td>• Participation: declining kids interest in golf (no junior program), perceived to be expensive, perceived lack of ‘time’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Marketing: encourage off-peak play</td>
<td>• Club: membership decline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilities: develop course toilet (back 9), improve condition of front 9 toilet, improved club rooms e.g. functions, outdoor deck, views and community use e.g. multi-purpose space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Golf: conduct tournaments e.g. Holden Scramble and game improvement clinics</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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### 7.3.3 Maroondah Golf service contractors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dorset</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dorset</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course: good condition (most of the year)</td>
<td>Course: wet in winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf: upgraded golf shop</td>
<td>Practice: coaching facilities (not as good as Ringwood) and isolated practice facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting: country club feel</td>
<td>Location: tucked-away, poor signage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer: tight-knit group of regular users</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ringwood</strong></th>
<th><strong>Ringwood</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course: good condition of course (as good as any public course), continued course improvements</td>
<td>Practice: tired coaching facilities, small sized short-game practice area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market: no nearby competition (decent cafes), no local event spaces</td>
<td>Golf: workshop removed from golf shop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F&amp;B offer: cafe on a golf course - beneficial link with golf (course and customers - 50% coffee / small% cafe) - other customers &quot;all local&quot;</td>
<td>Operations: staff communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer: Sunday social groups good for F&amp;B</td>
<td>Facilities F&amp;B: only 1 dedicated events space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location: premium, residential and accessible</td>
<td>150pax stand-up (restricted size - not reaching full potential), restricted kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Customer: golfers not purchasing as much e.g. Ringwood GC members use clubrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Signage: not promoting café</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dorset</strong></td>
<td><strong>Dorset</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing: promote more (great golf course)</td>
<td>Course: poor winter conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer: promote better integration b/w clubs e.g. group tournament and matches</td>
<td>Competition: from driving ranges, member-based clubs (competing for public players)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F&amp;B offer: difficult location for ‘standard’ café, create ‘destination’ offer e.g. micro-brewery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities: challenging to create functions/events areas (view to vegetation not ‘sweeping’)</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Ringwood</strong></th>
<th><strong>Ringwood</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Golf shop: improve layout, create golf-feel and create repairs workshop adjacent</td>
<td>Competition: from driving ranges, member-based clubs (competing for public players)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functions: &quot;clearly demand&quot; for increased functions &amp; events e.g. weddings 140-170pax</td>
<td>Competition F&amp;B: Ringwood GC - biggest competition (sometimes public “end up in the club&quot; - $2 cans)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities golf: upgrade indoor coaching facilities (carpet and paint), create outdoor teaching area (driving range), improve short-game practice area and putting green, create high-quality short-game practice area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities F&amp;B: create flexible space and diversify F&amp;B revenue (cafe, bar and functions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities F&amp;B: enhanced kitchen facilities - wider offer - more pax</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities events: lawn area (function pad) for outdoor events e.g. outdoor cinema</td>
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7.4 Appendix 4 – Community Impact, Sport and Golf Participation Trends

7.4.1 Australian Golf Industry Council – Community Impact Study

In September 2017, the Australian Golf Industry Council (AGIC) released its research into the benefit that golf contributes to the community across three key areas of economic, social and health.

Key findings:
- Overall, the community contribution of golf in Australia = $3,614,409,411
- Economic benefits
  - Golf makes an economic contribution to Australia and Australian regions of $3,482,740,000
  - Golf clubs and courses are significant local businesses that strengthen the surrounding economy
- Social benefits
  - Participation in golf provides regular and cross-generational social interaction across the life-span
  - Golf provides a foundation to build a strong and connected community
  - The game of golf and golf courses provide a strong connection to the outdoors and natural environment
  - Golf teaches valuable life lessons and principles such as respect, honesty, etiquette and self-discipline
  - Australian golfers have a life satisfaction score of 7.4 compared to Australian population 7.3 and OECD countries 6.6
  - Australian golfers score 8 percentage points higher for social capital than Australian sport participants and 16 percentage points higher than non-sport participants
- Health benefits
  - The community contribution to health which golf provides in terms of dollars saved is significant for all golfers
    - Lifetime Health Contribution = $4,509,046,214
    - A lifelong contribution to reducing the healthcare burden on society through the prevention of disease

7.4.2 Older Australians’ Participation in Sport and Physical Activity (2018)

Recognising that the health of the increasing number of Older Australians (aged 55+) is an important social and economic challenge facing Australia, in October 2018 Sport Australia released a report focused on Older Australians’ participation.

Key information from the ‘Older Australians’ Participation in Sport and Physical Activity’ report:
- Australia’s population is ageing. By 2030 Australia will have nearly 9M residents aged 55+ (2M more than today).
At present, almost 90% of Older Australians participate in sport or physical activity at least once a year, 80% participate at least once a week and 60% at least 3 times a week.

Overall, golf is in the top 10 sports and physical activities for Older Australians – 14% Men (rank = 3 (with cycling)) and 4% Women (rank = 7 (with bush walking and tennis)).

Based on the top 10 sports and physical activities for Older Australians, golf participation rates are different for different life stages

- Age 40-54: Female = n/a / Male = 8.3% (rank = 6)
- Age 55-64: Female = 3.2% (rank = 10) / Male = 11.7% (rank = 5)
- Age 65-74: Female = 4.7% (rank = 7) / Male = 16.0% (rank = 3)
- Age 75+: Female = 4.1% (rank = 5) / Male = 13.4% (rank = 3)

Extending a lifetime of good health enables Older Australians to continue to contribute socially, culturally and economically to the wider community.

Sport and physical activity offer physical and mental health benefits for Older Australians and can be an enabler of their on-going community engagement.

7.4.3 Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport (2017)

In recent years, the ASC has observed significant trends relating to sports participation, performance and consumption. To understand these trends and their impact in the future and to best prepare Australian sport to adapt for success, the ASC Board engaged The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to undertake ‘The Intergenerational Review of Australian Sport (IGRS)’ (2017).

The relevant major trends identified:

- Sport in schools - sport is being increasingly marginalised in schools;
- Inactivity and obesity – inactivity and obesity (for children and adults) are rising;
- Demographic and social changes – over the next 20 years, Australians will become older, more time-poor and more ethnically diverse;
- Commercialisation of sport – some sports (particularly AFL, NRL, and cricket) are successfully growing and commercialising, many others are struggling to maintain exposure and sponsorship, contributing to a widening wealth gap between the commercial, largely male, sports and the broader sports community.

These trends are rapidly changing the environment in which sport operates and placing pressure on the sector to change. Without change over the next 20 years, Australian sport will feel the impact of these trends at all levels, including on participation rates, our sports organisations, and our ability to succeed on the international playing field.
A new aspiration proposed for Australian sport in 2036 is: for Australia to be the most active sporting nation, known for its integrity, thriving sports organisations, continued exceptional international success, and a world-leading sports industry.

To help achieve this aspiration, and what’s most relevant to golf, is the need to drive sustained participation growth among all Australians via sporting organisations, by:

- Modernising sport participation offerings;
- Expanding the participation rates of groups that are currently under-represented, by:
  - Ensuring sport is more affordable for low income families, more accessible to migrant groups and more attractive to women;
- Reducing the drops in sport participation, by:
  - Creating more flexible, social sports offerings that provide fun, non-competitive pathways for recreational participants; and
  - Developing new low time-commitment offerings with a strong fitness component.


The key participation information enables the sport to understand the current landscape and trends in golf and club membership, including:

- Club membership numbers peaked in Australia in 1998 at approximately 500,000 golfers. Since then, a steady decline has materialised averaging 1.3% per annum.
- Membership numbers across Australia were reported as 389,672. This result marked a 1.1% decline on numbers reported for the prior 12-month period, equating to a nett loss of 4,365 members.
- There has been a decline in the proportion of female members, from a high of 34% in 1970 down to 20% in 2017.
- The participation rate (total members divided by total population) peaked at 2.8% in the mid-1990s before declining to its current level of 1.6% as a result of a growing population and declining membership numbers.
- Reported member numbers for social clubs have increased over the past from 18,018 in 2013 to 22,288 in 2017, representing an average annual increase of 4.3%.
- There are currently 1,335 golf course-based clubs in Australia. There has been a decline of 4.6% in clubs over the past 10-year period, from a high of 1,399 in 2008.
- There are 321 social clubs affiliated to various state bodies, accounting for 19% of total clubs (2015: 306 social clubs accounting for 18% of total clubs).
- The average reported age of club members is 57.5 years. The average age of male members (56.1) is eight years younger than females (64.1).
- For 2017, a national attraction rate of 5.4% and an attrition rate of 6.8% was recorded. (2016: attraction rate = 7.7% and the attrition rate = 8.7%).

7.4.5 European Golf Course Owners Association (EGCOA) – Vision 2020 (2014/2016)
A research project that delivers insights for the sustainable performance and development of commercial golf facilities in Europe.

After many years of structural growth golf is in a new phase of negative growth. The goal of Vision2020 is to find answers and inspiration to turn the negative development trend in golf into a positive one.

The EGCOA project identified recommends that golf facilities should promote:

- **Fun** – an important foundation experience for golf participation
  - A fun experience makes people coming back for more. Perceived fun for non-golfers is important to make them interested in the game.
  - Facilities will have to focus on delivering a fun experience, instead of only focusing on golf. For this it is important to understand what different generations are looking for in ‘fun’.
- **Friendship** – social and community benefits from golf are critical
  - Social engagement and friendship are key in attracting & retaining golfers.
- **Flexibility** – for game engagement and membership offerings
- **Family** – important to attract females, juniors and families
  - Families in golf will increase junior and female participation.
- **Fore Health** – pushing the health benefits of golf
  - There are many benefits offered to health and fitness by golf
- **Forever** – for golf to stay profitable, it must be sustainable

Balancing the social, environmental and economic benefits of golf to ensure we can continue to enjoy golf, forever and always.
7.5 Appendix 5 – Endnotes


