

# Trafalgar Golf Club

## Strategic Plan



Written & Prepared by:



**GippSport  
Community Solutions**

# Trafalgar Golf Club

## Strategic Plan

### Acknowledgments

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The Trafalgar Golf Club acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government in the development of this strategic plan through the Latrobe Valley Authority's Latrobe Valley Sport and Active Recreation Strategic Planning Grants Program.



The Trafalgar Golf Club committee would like to thank GippSport Community Solutions who coordinated the strategic planning process and members who have supported this project.

We also acknowledge the staff at Baw Baw Shire Council, Golf Australia and other important stakeholders for providing background information and support for this planning project.



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### Introduction

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The picturesque Trafalgar Golf Club, is regarded as one of the best country courses in Victoria, located approximately 5km north of the township of Trafalgar in Baw Baw Shire. The Trafalgar township is a 1.5 hour drive East of Melbourne along the Princes Highway and has a current population of 3,466.

The community golf club has around 250 members and is operated by a dedicated group of volunteers with support from a paid course superintendent and some part time house staff.

The facilities are in good condition and the club is striving to improve membership and sustainability in a rural setting.

Engagement with club members during this planning project has been excellent, with high participation in the member surveys and workshops. The executive committee have openly explored all opportunities with excellent support from the Golf Australia Regional Development Officer.

This year the club has been working to develop both the women's and junior programs which are receiving very positive feedback and attracting new members to the club. This plan explores the options to build on these new program areas as well as other areas of strengths, also aiming to ensure that all members feel welcome and included in "their club".

The ability of the club to raise capital to improve facilities will continue to be a challenge, so a realistic plan for course and club development is being formulated, with a focus on ensuring that all proposals have a carefully considered business case to justify investment.

The club's vision **"To be considered one of Gippsland's great all-weather championship golf courses, which conserves the bushland environment and encourages great social, health and wellbeing experience's for all members and the broader community"**.



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### About the Trafalgar Golf Club

The land in which the Trafalgar Golf Club is located was donated and a detailed history of the facilities can be found in the appendix. After many years of hard work, the course is rated as one of the top 10 public access courses in Victoria by golf journalist and SEN radio presenter, Mark Allen.

The club house has catering and full bar facilities available and welcomes social and corporate functions. In 2009 the Trafalgar Golf Club celebrated its centenary year. Throughout its history the Club has undergone numerous renovations and relocations, always with the aim of providing a leading golfing experience for country Victoria. Meandering across the foothills of the Baw Baw ranges and with an abundance of native plants and wildlife, Trafalgar provides a true test of golf in a beautiful natural environment.



Trafalgar Golf Club plays as part of the West Gippsland region which comprises the following clubs:



- Warragul Country Club
- Drouin Country Club
- Traralgon Golf Club
- Morwell Golf Club
- Churchill/ Monash Golf Club
- Mirboo North Golf Club
- Yallourn Golf Club
- Moe Golf Club
- Garfield Golf Club
- Pakenham Golf Club

There are opportunities to play pennant and tournaments as part of this local Association.





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### Club Membership Numbers

Class	2016	2017	2018	2019
Aged/Pension	19	15	33	39
Beginner	3	6	7	1
Country	27	21	10	10
Full	105	106	90	91
Honorary	2	3	3	3
Junior	6	8	2	7
Life	9	8	8	9
Leave of Absence	7	8	5	7
Nine Hole	30	32	17	22
Patron	1	1	1	1
Six Months	9	13	13	9
Social	0	0	0	1
Sponsor	1	0	2	2
Over 65	20	19	See Aged Category	
Over 70	32	36	42	36
Over 80	11	11	15	19
Working Junior	3	2	See Junior Category	
<b>Total</b>	<b>285</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>257</b>

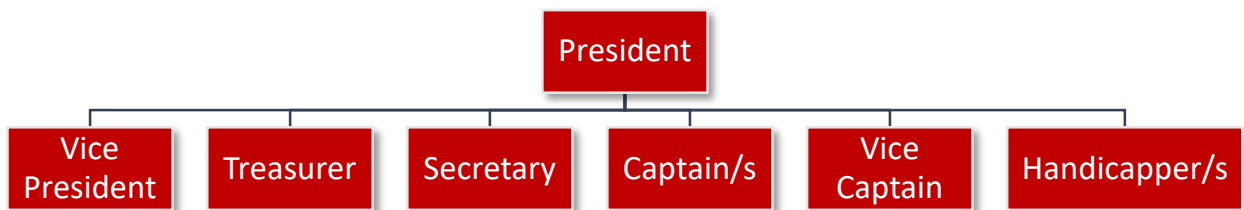


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### Organisational structure

The clubs volunteer structure is as follows:



Other roles/ sub committee's:

- Other committee members
- Grants & Project Co-Ordination
- Greens
- Match and Play
- Social
- Sponsorship
- Assets

In addition to the volunteer roles, currently there is a full time Course Superintendent and part time staff who work in the club house.

### Consultation Findings

The development of this strategic plan would not have been possible without the extensive input of the committee and members. The detailed survey results can be found in the appendix and several workshops were held with members to work through the SWOT analysis.

The club faced challenging questions around

- what sustainability means,
- the balance between maintaining a beautiful natural setting against golf course requirements,
- how everyone would all work together to truly achieve a welcoming and inclusive club with only very limited volunteer and paid staff resources.



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### SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis was developed in consultation with the Committee after review of the survey results and stakeholder feedback.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated and experienced committee</li> <li>• Social media following increasing</li> <li>• Good number of sponsors</li> <li>• Hard working grounds team</li> <li>• Female member participation is above national average</li> <li>• Dedicated volunteers</li> <li>• Committee fundraising</li> <li>• Increasing population in Trafalgar over time</li> <li>• Beautiful natural setting</li> <li>• Course availability for members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complex issues being faced by a volunteer committee</li> <li>• Financial constraints</li> <li>• Limited golf program opportunities</li> <li>• Outdoor facilities for social functions</li> <li>• Limited paid staff resource/ reliance on volunteers</li> <li>• Ideally membership numbers would be higher to ensure sustainability</li> <li>• Ageing membership</li> <li>• Some feedback about club being exclusive</li> <li>• Limited financial capacity to invest into the development of facilities</li> <li>• Club owned facilities</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible opportunities for partnerships with other golf clubs or other sporting clubs</li> <li>• Clear priorities for facility development/ future plans with supporting documentation</li> <li>• New member mentoring/ welcoming packs</li> <li>• Membership growth</li> <li>• Modified programs/ events/ formats</li> <li>• Improved marketing &amp; promotion</li> <li>• Grants/funding to support facility development</li> <li>• Clinics with the local schools</li> <li>• Opportunities for short format games</li> <li>• Review or creation of new social membership type's</li> <li>• Partner with local community organisations, service providers for seniors/ active ageing programs</li> <li>• Protection/ enhancement of the natural environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Declining golf participation and membership numbers</li> <li>• Major investment needed if facilities deteriorate</li> <li>• Other recreational opportunities detracting from golf clubs</li> <li>• Lack of volunteers/paid staff</li> <li>• Club not continuing to be inclusive of females</li> <li>• Staff or experienced board members leaving club</li> <li>• Difficulty in accessing club professional or coach to run beginner programs</li> </ul>





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#### **Vision:**

**“To be considered one of Gippsland’s great all-weather championship golf courses, which conserves the bushland environment and encourages great social, health and wellbeing experience’s for all members and the broader community”.**

#### **Goals:**

Trafalgar Golf Club will strive to be a well-managed community golf club by:

1. Attracting new members and visitors to the Club by providing an inclusive and welcoming experience to all;
2. Maintaining the integrity of the course through the enhancement and presentation of the facilities to the highest possible standards;
3. Ensuring that the Club’s core values are upheld;
4. Environmental stewardship;
5. Providing a comprehensive range of golf services to enable members, guests and visitors to enjoy, develop, play and compete;
6. Sustainable financial performance underpinned by stable governance and staff, whilst operating the Club in a transparent, compliant manner;
7. Utilising technology to promote, communicate, save costs, manage business information and derive revenue wherever possible.

#### **Club Core Values:**

- Foster a welcoming, friendly and inclusive environment for members, families, guests and visitors;
- Recognition and support for the traditions of the Club and the game of golf;
- Foster communication between members, staff and stakeholders;
- Responsible governance to ensure ongoing sustainability of the committee, facilities and club.



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### Implementation Plan

Following is a series of actions that have been developed in line with the Trafalgar Golf Club's values to be implemented over the coming five years.

Actions have been given a priority ranking scale using Very High, High, Medium or Low. In some instances, ongoing has been allocated as these tasks are required on a regular basis.

**Goal 1 - Attracting new members and visitors to the Club by providing an inclusive and welcoming experience to all.**

- |     |   |           |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 1.1 | Clarify the new members process and welcoming procedure.  | Very High |
| 1.2 | Review the Saturday competition structure to ensure everyone feels welcome and has someone to play with. Trial new strategies to find the one that works.   | Very High |
| 1.3 | Consider how the course and competitions are structured to make the game easier for new players. This may consider the renaming of events.  | High      |
| 1.4 | Ensure that the club promotional materials, club house and information is easy to read and reflects a broad demographic of users.   | High      |
| 1.5 | Continue to try new strategies to welcome community members to visit the club as a destination, not just for golf. This could be through facility hire, alternative programs or events.                             | Medium    |
| 1.6 | Continue to refine, strengthen and embed strategies to increase new member participation in golf e.g. junior program and Tee Up @ Traf. including a transition strategy from clinic or programs to club membership. | High      |





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**Goal 2 - Maintaining the integrity of the course through the enhancement and presentation of facilities to the highest possible standards.**

- |     |   |        |
|-----|---|--------|
| 2.1 | Develop a course improvement master plan with justification and planned expenditure. This might require external technical advice.  | Medium |
| 2.2 | Review the condition of the club house facility and plan likely future maintenance work that will be required to plan ahead. This might require external technical advice.      | Medium |
| 2.3 | Provide regular training opportunities and/ or seek external advice where needed to ensure industry best practices are used to maintain the course within the budget available. | High   |
| 2.4 | Plan for the replacement of all club equipment valued over \$1,000.   | Medium |





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### Goal 3 - Ensure that the Club's core values are upheld.

- |     |  |           |
|-----|--|-----------|
| 3.1 | Review all club documentation to ensure that it represents the clubs culture and values. This includes an update of the constitution.  | Ongoing   |
| 3.2 | Continue to recognise and celebrate the club's history in ways that the club continues to grow and change over time. Perhaps the club could appoint a historian volunteer role and provide regular updates to members. | Low       |
| 3.3 | Communicate the club's vision so that members have realistic expectations about how the club can be managed and developed in the future.   | Very High |

### Goal 4 - Environmental stewardship.

- |     |  |        |
|-----|--|--------|
| 4.1 | Partner with local community organisations or stakeholders who are experts in environmental management to ensure club practices enhance the natural environment. Determine if they have opportunities to support projects at the club. | High   |
| 4.2 | Create educational opportunities and promote the work being done by the club to enhance and preserve the natural environment. This could be through signage or member updates.   | Low    |
| 4.3 | Apply for grants that will assist the club to reduce the amount of water and electricity to ensure responsible use of resources.   | Medium |





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**Goal 5 - Providing a comprehensive range of golf services to enable members, guests and visitors to enjoy, develop, play and compete.**

- |     |   |           |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 5.1 | Partner with golf professionals, Golf Australia, GippSport, program providers or other clubs to deliver a broad range of golf offerings to suit the local need.   | Very High |
| 5.2 | Keep track of current trends in Golf to redefine competition structures so that they match expectations as well as cater for the members preferences.   | High      |
| 5.3 | Explore other options for physical activity or community programs that can make use of the club facilities i.e. Baw Baw Runners, Active Ageing Programs.  | Medium    |
| 5.4 | Develop and promote membership options that encourage partners, family members and locals to support the club i.e. Baw Baw Golf Membership, reciprocal rights with other local clubs, social members or a multi visit pass/ voucher system. | Medium    |
| 5.5 | Through consultation, it was agreed that social functions at the club would have the focus of club building rather than income generation.  | Ongoing   |
| 5.6 | Develop a coaching/ mentoring structure to enhance the club in district and intra-club events. This could encompass a sponsored coaching program that is financially supported by the club.   | High      |



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**Goal 6 - Sustainable financial performance underpinned by stable governance and staff, whilst operating the Club in a transparent, compliant manner.**

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|-----|--|-------------------|
| 6.1 | Ongoing education of the members about the club's financial position so that they can support future strategies to improve financial performance. Development of financial triggers to ensure effective decision making.   | Very High         |
| 6.2 | Ensure all expenditure is matched with a detailed business proposal.   | Very High         |
| 6.3 | Establish and document the staff profile required, in line with industry standards and the club's financial capacity. Review every 6 months to ensure that the paid staff roles align with the club's requirements.  | High              |
| 6.4 | Develop role and responsibility statements for paid staff and volunteers to ensure that their workload is clear, realistic and achievable and aligned to the club strategic plan. Recognise and value the contribution of all staff and volunteers. Consider the appointment of a volunteer coordinator to monitor and support all work completed by volunteers. | High              |
| 6.5 | Benchmark fees against similar clubs, increase with CPI and develop diverse income streams to maximise revenue in line with what it costs to operate the club.   | High              |
| 6.6 | Utilise the Strategic Plan to make future decisions and measure performance annually. Formally update the plan after 5 years.  | High              |
| 6.7 | Monitor industry and Council policy, programs, procedures, strategies and plans that provide opportunities for Trafalgar Golf Club and implement where possible to strengthen club operations.   | Ongoing as needed |





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### **Goal 7 - Utilising technology to promote, communicate, save costs, manage business information and derive revenue wherever possible.**

- |     |   |           |
|-----|---|-----------|
| 7.1 | Investigate online options to collect revenue and collect statistics about green fee players at the club.                             | Very High |
| 7.2 | Consider electronic options for recording data about all participation types at the club that is easy for volunteers to manage.       | Very High |
| 7.3 | Complete regular updates to the website and ongoing use of social media platforms to promote the club and facilities.                 | Very High |
| 7.4 | Continue to communicate to all members and stakeholders, especially good news stories via a succinct newsletter.                      | High      |
| 7.5 | Consider options for external bookkeeping or financial tracking software packages to ensure budgeting and ongoing regular monitoring. | Medium    |
| 7.6 | Investigate cloud based software for filing and record keeping to enable volunteers and staff to work flexibly and remotely.          | Medium    |



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### Appendix

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1. Summarised Survey Results
2. Strategic Plan Implementation Plan Monitoring Tool
3. Supporting information

#### Trends in Golf Participation

In July 2018 Golf Australia released its 2017 Golf Club Participation Report. Through analysis of the data it is evident that Trafalgar Golf Club exhibits very similar participation characteristics to the National and Victorian averages. This represents some opportunities for the club moving forward. It provides some clear participation growth targets being able to be supported by the state and national body.

Some key statistics of interest are as follows:

- Victoria experienced a 1.7% decline in course-based clubs.
- Victoria experienced a 1.8% decline in club playing members which was the most significant decline out of all states.
- Victoria's region participation rates showed their regional members and participation rate are higher than their metro members and participation rates.
- Victoria's social club playing members was way above every other States at 11,485 with the second highest at 5,867 (Western Australia).
- The average age of male and female golf member was 56 and 64 respectively.
- There is a total of 321 registered Social Golf Clubs. 117 of these are registered in Victoria.
- The 55+ age group segment, whose overall participation in sport is low, represents the largest golf club membership cohort at 53%.

#### Methodology

The following key steps were completed during the development of this Strategic Plan:

- A start up meeting was conducted with Trafalgar Golf Club Committee in April 2019.
- Research, consultation and an industry review were completed.
- A site inspection was conducted.
- Consultation including numerous meetings were held with club members, Baw Baw Shire Council, Golf West Gippsland, Golf Australia and other key stakeholders to discuss the project and identify key issues and opportunities.
- A draft Strategic Plan was provided to the committee for input.
- The final Strategic Plan will be adopted.





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### Trafalgar Golf Club History

The Trafalgar Golf Club has a rich and proud history dating back to the beginning of last century. Through the hard work and commitment of Club Members and associates, Trafalgar has been transformed into the impressive course golfers enjoy today.

The first golf course at Trafalgar was on a property called O'meara's. The late Harold Perrior said it consisted of nine holes with grass greens. Golfers played the 1st hole over Contingent Street and the 9th came back over the same street to the green near the 1st tee (61-63 Contingent Street).

This course was used from approximately 1909 – 1814.

Following a brief 3 year period where the club went into recess, a new course was created in 1916 on the properties belonging to G. Wall, G. O'Connell and the Perrior brothers at Sunny Creek. The new course was set up by Father Shanahan, the Perrior brothers, Jack Wall, John O'Connell, Andy Wall and Harry Maxwell.

The new course consisted of 9 holes with grass greens, 2706 yards in length and par 38. It was extended to 18 holes in 1925.

After a very wet 1934 (The year of the big flood), construction of nine holes on C. Murray's property (now L&R Davey's) commenced in 1935. Some of the keener golfers played on the Warragul Golf Course that year which was on Killarny just east of Warragul. They moved onto Murry's in 1936.

The course was changed in 1946 to modify the 1st and 2nd holes, which were rather steep and include 4 holes more in Ashby Brothers. This took the course to 13 holes in total. Golfers played the first 5 holes a second time to make 18 holes.

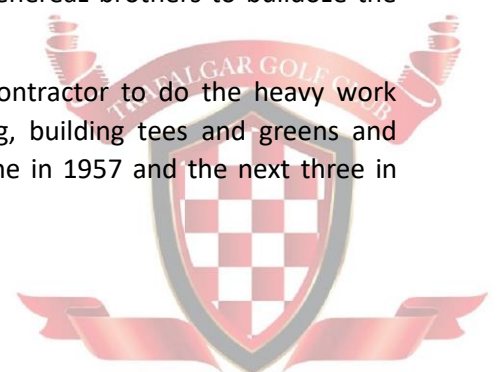
The Club House was moved to the top of the hill on Ashby's where it stayed until 1953. It was then moved again to the present golf course location with a working bee. Here it was used until the existing Club House was completed in 1964.

In 1949 a special meeting was called to form a constituted club and buy a property for the Club. The Members agreed to buy the present property, which came up for auction in November 1949. The upset price was 4 pounds 10 shillings (\$9 per acre).

After completion from one other bidder who wanted to plant pine trees, it was knocked down to the Club for 7 Pounds (\$14 per acre) for the 100 acres. Stan Charlesworth, a keen Member, was the debenture seller and loaned the Club the money for purchase.

The course was designed by Club Members who worked under George Brown and plotted the fairways, green and tee positions. The Club then employed the Denereaz brothers to bulldoze the fairways at a cost of about \$1,400.

Years of working bees with Members, associates and the odd contractor to do the heavy work followed. Vic Wilson donated many hours of his time bulldozing, building tees and greens and burning off. The club opened another six holes on the second nine in 1957 and the next three in 1958, completing the 18-hole course.



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The first water scheme was set up by voluntary labour under the supervision of Basil Ashby. It was opened in December 1960 at a cost of about 1,800 pounds (\$3,600).

In 1961 the Club decided to engage a course architect, Vern Morcom, to design a new course and he presented the plans in June 1962.

Morcom made changes to the first green, 4th tee, 6th green, 7th tee, 10th hole, 12th green, 13th new hole, 14th tee, 15th tee and green, 16th tee and green, 17th green and the 18th tee. This plan brought about the beautiful course we all share today. The current water scheme was set up and officially opened in 1974. The current Club House was completed in 1964 by Ron Ireland who was made a Patron Member for his efforts and a liquor licence was granted in September 1965.

Over the past 40 years although the layout has remained unchanged, many improvements have been made. Fully reticulated water system utilise subterranean bore water pumped into a holding dam adjacent to the 10th fairway. This water is then used to irrigate greens and tees, keeping the playing surfaces in optimal condition, whilst significant sub-surface drainage systems have also been installed across the course.

In consultation with acclaimed golfer Michael Clayton, modifications were made to the 5th green and bunkers. More recently under the guidance of the Greens Committee and turf professionals, the fairways have been sown with Santa Ana couch grass providing fairways comparable with many leading metropolitan courses.

The Committee remains dedicated to ongoing maintenance and capital works programs and strengthening the status of the Club as one of the leading golf courses in country Victoria.

### Demographics

Baw Baw has a population of 48,626 people with 48.6% being Male and 51.4% being Female at a median age of 42. The highest percentage of age group in Baw Baw is 55- 59 which makes up 7.1%. The region is experiencing rapid growth which is going to present ongoing opportunities for sporting clubs throughout the Shire.

Trafalgar is a small town in the Baw Baw Shire, located in the West Gippsland region east of Victoria. Trafalgar has a current population of 3,466 people, which is made up of 47.6% male and 52.4% female at a median age of 40. Children aged 0 - 14 years made up 20.4% of the population and people aged 65 years and over made up 20.8% of the population.





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### Disclaimer of liability

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The information contained in this report is intended for the specific use of the key stakeholders that have provided input into this planning project. All recommendations by GippSport are based on information provided by or on behalf of the committee, Golf Australia and Council and it has relied upon such information being correct at the time this report has been prepared.

Readers should note this report might include implicit projections about the future, which by their nature, are uncertain and cannot be relied upon. They are dependent on potential events or technical assessments, which have not yet occurred.

### References

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The following references have been used in the development of this report:

- Government websites – Planning scheme data and maps, grant information.
- Baw Baw Shire Council website and relevant planning documents.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics – Population data.
- Other Recreation studies and strategies as identified in the document.





# **Trafalgar Golf Club**

Gibson Rd, Trafalgar VIC 3824

[www.trafalgargolf.com.au](http://www.trafalgargolf.com.au)

Written & Prepared by:



**Community Solutions**