



**HERITAGE
COUNCIL**
OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

REGISTER OF HERITAGE PLACES

Assessment Documentation

Permanent Entry

11. ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

The criteria adopted by the Heritage Council in November 1996 have been used to determine the cultural heritage significance of the place.

PRINCIPAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORIC THEME(S)

- 3.23 Catering for tourists
- 8.1.1 Playing and watching sport
- 8.1.3 Developing public parks and gardens
- 8.1.4 Enjoying the natural environment
- 8.5.4 Pursuing common leisure interests

HERITAGE COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA THEME(S)

- 104 Land allocation & subdivision
- 311 Hospitality industry & tourism
- 405 Sport, recreation and entertainment
- 409 Environmental awareness

11.1 AESTHETIC VALUE*

Albany Golf Course is a well-composed example of an early twentieth century public recreation reserve and a links style golf course. The place successfully utilises and enhances the natural topography and vegetation of the site to create an attractive and challenging course and establishes vistas to the surrounding scenic hills and coast. (Criterion 1.1)

Albany Golf Course makes an important contribution to the aesthetic qualities of the suburb of Middleton Beach and forms an important backdrop to the dunes of Middleton Beach, a popular suburban swimming and recreation beach in Albany. (Criterion 1.3)

Together with the public recreational reserves at Ellen Cove and Middleton Beach, *Albany Golf Course* forms a precinct of late nineteenth and early twentieth century recreational parklands. (Criterion 1.4)

11.2 HISTORIC VALUE

* For consistency, all references to architectural style are taken from Apperly, R., Irving, R., Reynolds, P. A *Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde, 1989.

For consistency, all references to garden and landscape types and styles are taken from Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991, with additional reference to Richards, O. *Theoretical Framework for Designed Landscapes in WA*, unpublished report, 1997.

Albany Golf Course was one of the earliest golf courses established in Western Australia and the first links style course and has been favourably compared to the best of the traditional links courses in Scotland. (Criterion 2.1)

Albany Golf Course was a drawcard for summer tourists and an economic asset to Albany, with numbers playing the course quadrupling in the summer holiday season, and has continued as an attraction to the town since 1900. (Criterion 2.2)

Albany Golf Course was associated with prominent people in Albany who were responsible for the establishment of the place, including resident medical officer Dr Thomas Robinson, lawyer Samuel Johnson Haynes and surveyor William Henry Angove, and later with C. H. Wittenoom, and J.F.T and A.Y. Hassell and their daughters Kathleen, Ellen, Grace and Honoria, who were among the early Associates. (Criterion 2.3)

Albany Golf Course attracted top golfers from around the country and overseas as well as nurturing some home-grown champions. The course record is held by West Australian international golfer Graham Marsh. (Criterion 2.3)

11.3 SCIENTIFIC VALUE

In association with the Lake Seppings wetland, *Albany Golf Course* provides a green belt associated with both the coast and islands in the bay and is an important habitat for more than one hundred species of water and bush birds. (Criterion 3.1)

11.4 SOCIAL VALUE

Albany Golf Course is highly valued by the Albany community for its recreational associations in a seaside location and by the local and wider golfing community for the picturesque course and the challenge it presents. (Criterion 4.1)

Albany Golf Course contributes to the community's sense of place as a landmark open and greened landscape between Lake Seppings and Middleton Beach. (Criterion 4.2)

12. DEGREE OF SIGNIFICANCE

12.1 RARITY

Albany Golf Course is the oldest established links course in Western Australia, being one of only three of its type, and is the oldest established course at the same location in the State. (Criterion 5.1)

12.2 REPRESENTATIVENESS

Albany Golf Course is a good representative example of a links style course despite later management to suit modern golfing expectations. (Criterion 6.1)

12.3 CONDITION

Albany Golf Course is in good condition and is well maintained through a management programme that carries out regular maintenance.

12.4 INTEGRITY

Albany Golf Course has a high level of integrity as it continues to fulfil its original intended purpose. A new Clubhouse has just been completed and, although not included within the current curtilage, demonstrates the intention to continue to use the place as a golf course for the foreseeable future.

12.5 AUTHENTICITY

Albany Golf Course has a medium to high level of authenticity because the original concept of the place has remained largely intact as a links style course with holes set out in a mostly natural, seaside landscape. While vegetation is replaced regularly, due to the natural lifespan of plants, the original landscape concept is still clear. Also while the course has been extended several times, this tends to have been additive and the extent of the original course is still obvious.

The maintenance area, including a shed located about halfway along the old section of Golf Links Road, has low authenticity.

13. SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The documentation for this place is based on the heritage assessment by Irene Sauman, Historian and Kelsall Binet Architects in May 2006, with amendments and/or additions by Office of Heritage staff and the Register Committee.

13.1 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Albany Golf Course is an eighteen-hole links style golf course, established in 1900 with nine holes and enlarged in the 1960s.

As the chief port in Western Australia until the end of the nineteenth century, Albany received almost 30,000 visitors a year at the peak of the gold boom. It was also a popular holiday venue in the hot summer. As the town prospered, interest turned to sport and recreation. An English golfer visiting Albany suggested the land at Middleton Beach, beside Lake Seppings, as ideal for a nine-hole 'links' course, as the best golf courses were those on traditional links on seaside land.

The Old English word 'hlinc' has been reported as describing 'connected areas of sandy ground, level or undulating, covered by scrub, turf and course grass, ranging along a seashore like links in a chain'.¹ Dictionaries also credit the word 'links' as deriving from 'hlinc', meaning 'ridge' and applied to the ridged boundary where cultivated and uncultivated ground met. From this, the word 'links' came to mean undulating sandy turf-covered ground usually along a shoreline (boundary), and from there, to a golf course on such land.²

The idea of a golf links at Middleton Beach was made public by the *Albany Advertiser*, whose editor, W.F. Forster, was a proponent of the game. Other promoters of a golf links were also leading citizens, among them resident medical officer Dr Thomas Robinson and businessmen Charles Russell and F.W. Strother. They formed a Committee with the idea to have the government grant a suitable piece of land and in return the committee would develop a course that would attract visitors to the town.

At the meeting of the Albany Town Council on 8 December 1898, it was reported:

Councillor James said he had seen it advocated in the *Advertiser* that golf links be made at Lake Seppings. He thought golf links would prove an attraction to the town. He moved that the matter be referred to the Finance Committee. Seconded by Councillor Gee. Carried.³

On 15 August 1899, the Committee advised the Council it had raised £100 for construction of the golf course by sale of £10 debentures and formally requested the lease of 50 acres (20ha) of land between Middleton Beach and Lake Seppings. Moir Road (later Golf Links Road) ran north-south between Lake Seppings and Middleton Beach. The land west of Moir Road and immediately surrounding Lake Seppings had been gazetted Botanic Gardens Reserve 1299, while the land east of Moir Road was Reserve 1303, for parklands. The Council duly requested that the Minister for Lands grant the Reserve lands to the Council with the right to lease portions for recreation purposes. The Under Secretary for

¹ Johnson, Les, *Albany Links: a history of the Albany Golf Club*, Albany Golf Club, 1998, p. 17.

² *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed, Houghton Mifflin, 2000; www.britannia.org/Scotland/scotsdictionary.

³ Johnson, Les, op cit, p. 19, quoting report of Council Meeting in *Albany Advertiser*.

Lands was against giving the land to the municipality and instead suggested it be placed under the control of a board.

While these details were being ironed out, the golfing Committee went on with its agenda. At a meeting on 2 September 1899, 'The Albany Golf Club' was formed, with lawyer Samuel Johnson Haynes as president, land developer and MLA Albert Morgans as vice president, Dr Robinson as club captain, and civil servant Charles Keyser as secretary. At the time of its formal creation, the Club already had 38 members, all male, who paid one guinea a year membership. The membership fee for ladies was a half guinea, but they were to have no voice in administration.⁴

Surveyor William Henry Angove, who undertook government contracts in the region and also had a private practice, volunteered his services and made a rough survey of the course. He calculated 35 acres had to be cleared to provide a course 1.25 miles long with a cleared space 50 yards wide on each side of the line from tee to hole. Nine holes were planned with various distances from 80 to 240 yards. Costs involved in the establishment of the course included: clearing at just under £57; supply of turf for the greens at 10 shillings per 100 feet; and, making and lining the holes and erecting flags at £2. A mowing machine and iron roller was a major expense at £16.⁵

By the end of 1899, players were practising on the course but not playing into the holes in order to give the greens turf time to establish. There was some problem with balls bouncing off tree stumps left during the clearing work, but this was considered relatively minor.

On 17 October 1899, the Lands Department announced the two Reserves were to be amalgamated as Reserve 1299 for the purpose of 'park lands' for recreation, to be known as 'Albany Park', and the Council would sit as a board under the Parks and Reserves Act when dealing with the land. The Council in return proposed that the Governor appoint a board for the control of the Reserve, submitting Council's choice of members, and this was accepted on 25 January 1900. The members of the new board of management of Albany Park were all golfers and members of the Club committee. The Parks and Reserves Act provided for a small share of funds toward the cost of improvements to parks and the new board welcomed this.⁶

On 3 February 1900, president Haynes formally declared Albany Park links open.⁷ The Park and the board were officially gazetted on 7 February 1900. The first woman joined on 13 June 1900, but there were still only 3 female members by 1903 and no record of them playing in tournaments, although the 'lady friends' of members provided the requisite afternoon teas during competitions.⁸

An early issue for golfers on the course was straying cattle. The milk cows of Albany residents were taken each day to graze on the flats below Middleton Road and often wandered onto the open fairways. This was eventually resolved when the Road Board could afford to fence the grazing area. During 1900 the

4 Johnson, Les, op cit, pp. 21-23.

5 Johnson, Les, op cit, p.23.

6 Johnson, Les, op cit, p.24; DLI Reserves Index, Reserves 1299 and 1303.

7 Johnson, Les, op cit, p. 17. It is not known for how long the place was referred to as Albany Park.

8 Johnson, Les, op cit, p.26.

club shed was erected by contractors Josiah Norman & Sons. It was located halfway along the course, near Golf Links Road (formerly Moir Road) on the west side.⁹

In 1901, to mark Federation, a handicap tournament, known as the Albany Golf Club Cup, was established to be played in March-April. It carried a handsome trophy donated by club president Haynes. Other competitions included 6 medal matches, 'an American tournament' for the president's cup and two matches played against golfers from the visiting Royal Navy cruisers *St George* and *Juno*, which were escorting the *Ophir*, chartered for King George V and Queen Mary for the opening of the first Federal parliament.¹⁰

The course was 'greatly improved' by the work of the Road Board and the club in the first several years, but what this entailed is unclear. Grazing sheep were introduced on the fairways to keep down grass and undergrowth, and also contribute to Club funds with agistment fees. Weekly press reports of events in the Albany golfing round began to appear in the *Albany Advertiser*, with a comment in June 1903 that 'The Golf Club promises to become as popular an institution as the Bowling Club is in summer'.¹¹ Golf quickly grew in popularity along the Great Southern Railway route, and the first inter-club match at Albany was played in August 1906, against Katanning. The weather played a part in the decision of the Club to change the start of its playing season from September to March.

The first women's competition was held over two days on 15-16 October 1908, and was made possible by female membership increasing to 11 in that year, from only two the previous year.¹² On the second Saturday in July 1910, the new Clubhouse was opened. Constructed by Josiah Norman & Sons beside the shed used for the previous decade, the building was timber with a red painted iron roof. It was 9.4 metres in length and comprised two rooms of almost equal size. The building cost £140 and had been financed with debentures of £10 each.¹³

At the annual meeting of the Club on 3 April 1912, the president suggested that as Albany shops, guest houses and hotels were doing well out of the visitors the Club attracted to the town, some financial support from them might be forthcoming. Three donations of £50, £10 and an undisclosed amount were received as a result. Annual golfing tournaments were introduced, leading to the establishment of the Wittenoom Cup, Albany Open and Albany Classic. In 1913, the Albany Week sporting program was extended to a six-week event due to its popularity in attracting visitors to the town, and in the last week it offered the Albany Golf Club Carnival, which became a fixture despite the later demise of Albany Week.¹⁴

Between 1912 and 1916, improvements to the course required the purchase of turf, clover and couch seed, potato and whale manure, phosphate and bone dust, 12 hundredweight of worm killer, loam, water, and the services of a labourer to plough, roll, harrow and plant.

⁹ Johnson, Les, op cit, pp. 28-30.

¹⁰ Johnson, Les, op cit, pp. 28-30.

¹¹ Johnson, Les, op cit, pp. 30-34.

¹² Johnson, Les, op cit, p. 38.

¹³ Johnson, Les, op cit, p. 34.

¹⁴ Johnson, Les, op cit, pp. 34-36.

On 3 February 1915, a portion of Reserve 1299 that was the site of the golf course, was gazetted Reserve 15879 for recreation. In 1916, the Government abolished the Board of management and vested both Reserves – Lake Seppings Reserve 1299 and the golf course site, Reserve 15879 – in Albany Town Council. This made it possible for the Council to lease the land directly to the Golf Club.¹⁵

In 1916, Albany Golf Club decided to promote women's golf, with the establishment of a women's tournament and their own day of the week – 'the right of the links on Thursdays'. Several of the daughters of John F.T and Albert Y. Hassell – Kathleen, Ellen, Grace and Honoria – were prominent among the female golfers at the Club. A.Y. Hassell was himself president from 1912-17, and in 1919, at the first annual meeting of the Associates, his wife Ethel (Clifton) was elected their president. In 1920, of the 89 members of the Club, there were six life members, 22 country and 29 ordinary members and 32 lady Associates.¹⁶

The installation of a water supply in the early 1920s cost £250, with most of the funds being donated by members. The water was used to irrigate the greens and the tees. A full-time green keeper, nurseryman Bob Jarvis, was employed in 1920 and the course quickly reflected his care and skill. He remained in the position for many years. By 1922, the improvements had brought praise from past and current Australian golfing stars and increased the number of visitors to the course.¹⁷

With the improved course, the start date for the season was moved back two months to 1 January to attract the summer holiday players. This proved a mixed blessing as during the summer months, the local average of 50 players was outnumbered three to one by visitors and the course and facilities were congested. Golfers travelled considerable distances from throughout the southern region to play at *Albany Golf Course*, and regular visitors included the WA Governor, Sir William Campion, who brought a team down each year to play the Wittenoom Cup against the locals in the 1920s.¹⁸

To ease the congestion, it was proposed to extend the course to 18 holes by adding three new holes at a time, beginning with the area immediately west of Golf Links Road. The Club requested a lease of more land from the Lake Seppings Reserve, but local residents lodged a petition on the grounds the land was granted for parks and gardens. In March 1922, the purpose of the Reserve was changed from 'park lands' to 'park lands and recreation' to allow Council to lease it out, with the argument there were plenty of other public parks and recreation reserves in Albany. A 21-year lease for a section of land between Golf Links Road and Lake Seppings was entered into in August 1923.¹⁹

The extension of the course onto the newly leased area did not occur immediately for reasons unknown, but in 1927 Cottesloe Golf Club professional David Anderson, a Scot who had played links courses in Britain, drafted plans for an extension of *Albany Golf Course* to 18 holes, with the following comment.

-
- 15 Johnson, Les, op cit, p. 24; DLI Reserves Index, Reserves 1299 & 15879; Lands & Survey file, Reserve 15879, SROWA WAS 211 CONS 3640 Item 1914/4486 Vol. 1.
- 16 Johnson, Les, op cit, p. 42; Erickson, Rica, *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, Perth, UWA Press, 1988, pp. 1397-99.
- 17 Johnson, Les, op cit, pp. 54-56.
- 18 Johnson, Les, op cit, pp. 58-69
- 19 Lands & Survey file, Reserve 1299, File 10234-1899-02RO.

I am of the opinion that the residents of Albany do not know how fortunate they are in possessing land absolutely of the finest golfing country, and it is with pleasure and without hesitation that I say I have never seen better golfing territory outside a few links in the Old Country. The contour of your land is the nearest approach to Prestwick, Scotland (recognised as one of the three best golf links in the British Isles) that it could be possible to come across. The possibilities of Albany with this excellent contour and ideal climate must be unique as far as Australia is concerned.²⁰

Lack of funds during the Depression restricted development but some progress with planting on the new area had been made by the late 1930s. As the popularity of golf increased, the WA Golf Association was divided into regional bodies. The Lower Great Southern Golf Association was created in 1938, and on 22 February 1940, the Club became The Albany Golf Club Incorporated. During the war years, Club income was greatly reduced as members joined the services and maintenance of the course suffered. The greenkeepers position was reduced to part-time and plantings made for the course extensions were abandoned. The work of volunteers meant that the nine-hole course survived but an estimated 75% of the couch grass was lost.²¹

On 10 September 1945, a seven-man deputation attended a meeting of the Albany Town Council to explain the need for assistance in extending the course to eighteen holes. It was argued that Albany would lag behind if it continued to offer only a 9-hole course. Professional golfers had placed Albany in the top three in Australia for locality, but not for facilities, and Bunbury was already developing an 18-hole course. The catchcry, taken up by the *Albany Advertiser*, was 'We must concentrate on the tourist trade'. Another reason for extending the course was the improvements in equipment, including the introduction of steel-shafted clubs and improvements to balls. These innovations had increased the distance of the best shot from 220 yards (200 m) to 300 yards (275m), and the Albany course was now too short a course to attract the best players.²²

The Council declined funding and the Club was forced to look for private finance. This was not as difficult as first thought owing to the booming State economy, both in mining and agriculture. Reserve 15879 was extended northwards and the landholding of *Albany Golf Course* was considerably increased with a lease of a portion of this land.²³

Opening on 24 September 1955, a new Clubhouse was built at the southern end of *Albany Golf Course* on four acres of freehold land acquired by the Club in the late 1930s.²⁴ The extension of the course to eighteen holes took a little longer. In March 1956 a Course Planning Committee was appointed and in May 1957 it was decided to establish the 18-hole course with an immediate start on earthworks, clearing and pasturing. Funds were short, as usual, but a farmer donated the use of a bulldozer and another donated clover seed to hold the drifting sand on the seaside holes. Kikuyu grass was introduced and fertilised

20 Comments by David Anderson, quoted in Johnson, Les, op cit, p. 74.

21 Johnson, Les, op cit, pp. 72-75.

22 Johnson, Les, op cit,

23 DLI Reserves Index, Reserve 15879; Lands & Survey file, Recreation reserve 15879, SROWA, WAS 211 CONS 3640 Item 1914/4486 Vol. 1.

24 Johnson, Les, op cit, p. 78.

with residue from the Albany sewerage farm prompting the comment that 'the stench was horrific... but the grass shot up'.²⁵

On 25 May 1963, Club patron and former president C.H. Wittenoom officially opened the extended 18-hole Albany Golf Course, followed by an evening party with buffet tea and dancing.²⁶ The new course included three holes on the west side of Golf Links Road as well as the northern extension. The entire site of *Albany Golf Course* was re-gazetted as Reserve 27629 for 'recreation golf links', vested in the Town of Albany and leased for 21 years to the Club.²⁷

Leasing of the site was an ongoing issue, as the Club wanted a fifty-year lease for security instead of the 21 years, which was the longest period the Council was authorised to provide. The shorter lease presented problems when development funds were required as banks and other lenders wanted a more secure asset for their loan. This problem was obvious in the latter half of the 1960s when extensions to the Clubhouse were planned. At that time, various proposals were put forward to raise the necessary money when the Club's own bank refused to assist. Careful management eventually resulted in a successful outcome with the Clubhouse being considerably enlarged and facilities improved, but the issue of long-term security of tenure remained.²⁸

Having a road through the course presented real problems with stray balls hitting cars. When a ball bounced off a police car it was time to find a solution. This came in the form of realigning the road to run on the west boundary of the course, closer to Lake Seppings.²⁹

The social aspects of golf were as important as the game and the enlarged course and Clubhouse provided the best of both for members. As well as the pleasure of playing with other golfers and spending time in the Clubhouse, there were golfing competitions, visitors from other clubs and visits to other clubs, the Annual Club Ball and fundraising events. The female Club members, known as Associates, were responsible for much fundraising for the Club and for charity, with jumble sales, raffles and stalls, among other activities. They raised funds for furniture for the 1960s Clubhouse extensions and set up a furnishing committee. In 1971, a sub-committee of Associates launched a scheme of planting of trees and shrubs for protecting the Clubhouse and the course from the ever-present winds.³⁰

Lake Seppings was a significant coastal wetland and together with *Albany Golf Course* with its largely indigenous flora and lack of development, provided a popular habitat for coastal bird life. *Albany Golf Course* acted as a corridor between the Lake and the sea and was attractive to walkers and birdwatchers as well as golfers. This bird life habitat and greened space became more important as Albany continued to grow and residential development extended along the coast.

25 Johnson, Les, op cit, pp. 81-84.

26 Johnson, Les, op cit, p. 84.

27 Lands & Survey file, Recreation golf, Reserve 27629, SROWA WAS 211 CONS 3640 Item 1958/0342 Vol. 2.

28 Johnson, op cit, pp. 85-86; Correspondence, 27 May 1982.

29 DLI Survey Diagram 62848, 16 June 1953, updated 1959.

30 Johnson, Les, op cit, pp. 46-47.

Albany continued to campaign quietly for a longer lease, despite some opposition from those who considered the Club should not have such recourse to public lands. During the 1970s it became apparent that income from fees and charges was only sufficient to maintain current amenities and not to develop into the future. A country club resort was proposed but the issue of land was always a stalling point. It was another ten years before a land exchange deal was brokered which involved the Club agreeing to exchange its four acre freehold Clubhouse site for crown land at the northern end of *Albany Golf Course*, and another decade before planning on the new resort Clubhouse was completed.³¹ The Minister for Lands gave the Club a 50-year lease commencing in 1990, which made the development proposals attractive to investment.³²

In 1996, a new water supply was sourced from Yakamia Creek, three kilometres away. This water was piped to the course and an off-peak electric pumping system installed to water the grounds during the night.³³ In 1998, the Albany Golf Club celebrated its centenary. The Club is the oldest in WA still on its original site.³⁴

The development of the resort Clubhouse went ahead in the late 1990s, and the new building was opened in 2000. As well as providing top-class facilities for members, the new Clubhouse is a venue for dinners, conferences, meetings and private functions including weddings and is fully booked for much of the year.³⁵

The driving range, situated northeast of the car park, between Barry Court and Griffiths Street, was developed at the same time as the new Clubhouse.³⁶

The resiting of the Clubhouse to the opposite end of *Albany Golf Course* necessitated a change in the order of the holes to accommodate starting and finishing at the northern end. Another result of that change has been that instead of starting each nine-hole end with the southwest wind behind, the golfers now start their game playing into the wind, which has had some initial adverse effects on handicaps. Regardless of changes in the course and the advances in the technology associated with the game, professional golfers continue to have a high regard for the course owing to the undulating landscape and the coastal winds. Proof of this can be seen in the club record which was set in 1967 by West Australian champion golfer Graham Marsh with a round of 65 – 7 under par – and which has not been bettered since.³⁷ Another professional golfer, Craig Parry, has been often quoted as saying ‘Albany is my favourite Australian golf course. It’s a great course by the ocean, which plays hard and is never the same’.³⁸

A tradition with true links courses is the naming of the holes and Albany has kept up with the tradition. The names have been included in this document within the physical description, as they are descriptive of the features of each hole.

31 Johnson, op cit, pp. 93-99.

32 Certificate of Title, Vol. 3117 Fol. 229, 18 February 2000, Lease dated 23 January 1990.

33 Johnson, op cit, pp. 99-100.

34 Information provided by Paul Breuker, Albany Golf Club Professional.

35 Albany Golf Club website www.albanygolfclub.com.au

36 Personal comm: Robert Browne, proprietor of pro-shop at Albany Golf Club, and Irene Sauman.

37 Information provided by Paul Breuker, Albany Golf Club Professional; Albany Golf Club website www.albanygolfclub.com.au; Johnson, Les, op cit, p. 95.

38 White, Michael & Cuss, Natalie, *The West Australian Golf Guide*, WA Newspapers, Perth, 1998, p. 21.

In 2006, *Albany Golf Course* is a functioning and popular golfing and social venue.

13.2 PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Albany Golf Course is an eighteen hole links style golf course (1900, 1963, 2005) located beside Middleton beach in Albany in a landscape of vestigial indigenous coastal thickets and woodlands, reinforced by plantings of indigenous, native and exotic species.

Albany Golf Course is located in the suburb of Seppings beside Middleton Beach. This area is separated from the Albany town centre by the large granite topped hills of Mt. Clarence and Mt. Adelaide. The area has traditionally been a popular recreational area for locals and a seaside resort for holidaymakers. As Albany has expanded in the post war era, *Albany Golf Course* has been gradually surrounded by suburban development.

The suburb focuses on Ellen Cove, which is nestled into the rocky headland formed by Mt. Adelaide at the south end of Middleton Beach. The Ellen Cove beachfront has been developed in a similar fashion to Cottesloe Beach in Perth, but on a smaller scale, and has landscaped lawns planted with Norfolk Island Pines (*Auracaria heterophylla*) and a set of grassed terraces set into the side of the hill. A modern surf club building stands at the northern end of the landscaped area and beyond that the natural primary dune formation stretches along the sandy beach as it extends north-eastwards in a wide curve towards Emu Point at the entrance to Oyster Harbour. The foreshore at Emu Point has been formally landscaped with lawn and exotic trees and the suburb of Emu Point has developed around the former holiday shacks and caravan park in this area.

Albany Golf Course is a long narrow strip of land situated between the primary dunes of Middleton Beach and the Lake Seppings Reserve. Golf Links Road separates the golf course from the reserve.

On the eastern side of the golf course is the Lake Seppings Reserve, a natural wetland vested in the City of Albany. The reserve contains a permanent lake surrounded by remnant indigenous vegetation. The Lake is home to more than one hundred species of water and bush birds and these can be viewed from the Lake Seppings Bird Walk. The walk around the Lake contains viewing platforms and bird hides. Commonly seen water birds include Musk Duck, Blue Billed Duck, Australian Pelican, Black Swan, Hoary Headed Grebe, Eurasian Coot, Darter, White Faced Heron, Australian White Ibis, Yellow-billed Spoonbill and several species of Cormorant. Purple Swamp Hen, Spotless Crake and Buff-branded Rail can be found in the reeds as well as the rare Clamorous Reed Warbler and Little Grassbird. Bush birds found around the Lake include New Holland Honey Eaters, Red Wattlebirds, Western Spinebills, Red Capped Parrots, Western Rosellas, Silvereyes, Thornbills, Fantails, Golden Whistlers, White Breasted Robins, Red Winged Fairywrens, Red Eared Firetails, Welcome Swallows and Tree Martins.³⁹

Albany Golf Course extends for almost half the length of Middleton Beach and its vegetation provides a natural (unbuilt) backdrop to the primary dunes. A dual use pedestrian / bike track has been constructed between the dunes and the golf course to link the suburbs of Middleton Beach and Emu Point.

39 Albany Bird Group 'Birdwatching at Lake Seppings'.

The site of the earlier Clubhouse at the southern end of the golf course has been excluded from the curtilage, and adjoins the popular beachside suburb of Middleton Beach. This suburb contains the substantial Esplanade Hotel Complex and a number of low rise motels, guest houses and short term accommodation units mixed in with remnants of the earlier suburban bungalow development.

The new Clubhouse for the golf links, also excluded from the curtilage, stands at the northern end of the course. The area to the north of the course is currently being developed into a residential area and consolidates some earlier housing on large blocks in this area.

Albany Golf Course falls into the category of Recreational Park.⁴⁰ These landscapes began to be established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in response to growing public interest in health and sporting activities. As such, *Albany Golf Course* is linked to the Ellen Cove landscape, which was established in the late nineteenth century as a popular place for swimming and promenading.

In England the earliest public parks from the mid-nineteenth century were developed in established towns on poor land, but in the new Australian towns, parks were often developed on prime locations. This change is paralleled in golf course development where the first golf courses were developed on non-arable, windswept seaside land because it was the only land available but later courses were chosen for their scenic and 'healthy' locations.

Albany Golf Course is a traditional 'links' style course. The site has dramatic views across Middleton Beach to the islands in the bay as well as views to Lake Seppings and its backdrop of granite-topped hills.

The ruggedness of the seaside site was important and is linked to romantic notions of the traditions of golf. The aesthetic of this type of course is based on the earliest courses, which were established on coastal land in Scotland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In this type of course the natural topography and vegetation is left largely unaltered and the landscape is open, rugged and windswept.

The influence of the eighteenth-century English School of landscape design can also be seen in this type of golf course. This School sought inspiration from the *genius loci* of individual landscapes and enhanced the natural or existing landscape by adding or removing plantings and structures to create 'naturalistic' parklands of trees with grand vistas and picturesque focal points. In a links style course the natural topography is retained, part of the natural vegetation is cleared to create fairways with long vistas between the teeing ground and the hole and natural elements are enhanced to create features such as sand traps and sometimes water traps.

The evolution of *Albany Golf Course* can be read in the existing landscape. The north end of the course, nearest to the suburb of Middleton Beach, was the first section to be developed. This area is noticeably more open than the rest of the course with fewer trees and thickets of indigenous Peppermint trees (*Agonis flexuosa*). This area is also more open to the sea with the sweeping views across the coastal heath to the bay unimpeded by Peppermint thickets that are usually

⁴⁰ Ramsay, J. *Parks, Gardens and Special Trees: A Classification and Assessment Method for the Register of the National Estate*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1991.

located behind the primary dunes. There were originally nine holes in this early section of the course but most of these have been modified several times to suit the evolution of the game and the extension of the course. The holes have also recently been renamed when the new Clubhouse was constructed at the other end of the course so that the 1st and 18th holes can be beside it. Only the fairways of the original 1st and 2nd holes (now holes 14 and 13) remain and these have been reversed so that the teeing ground and the hole have been exchanged.

There is no evidence of the site of the 1910 Clubhouse. The site of the recently demolished 1955 Clubhouse, excluded from the curtilage, can be clearly seen beside the car park. Some foundation plantings have survived as have a number of mature trees around the area.

The earlier alignment of Golf Links Road, which originally formed the eastern boundary of the course, is still clear because it is in use as a service road and is lined on both sides with mature trees. This road runs from the original bitumen entrance road to a point approximately halfway up the existing course where it connects to the new Golf Links Road.

The maintenance area, including a shed, is located about halfway along the old section of Golf Links Road, but it is well camouflaged with trees.

In the 1960s the golf course was extended from nine to eighteen holes. Three new holes were established on the east side of Golf Links Road beside Lake Seppings. The existing holes were modified and new holes were established further to the north on new land. In the newer sections of the course belts of trees and undergrowth have been retained between fairways and on the edge of the primary dunes. Golf Links Road was not relocated until some years after the establishment of the 18-hole course and it is still used as a service road.

Some form of irrigation has been in use since the 1920s and it has been upgraded several times. However, the water has only been used to maintain the fairways, greens and teeing ground. The rough, remnant indigenous trees and plantings of exotics are generally not watered by this system.

To describe the landscape of *Albany Golf Course* in greater detail we shall follow the route of the 18-hole course. This course now starts near the recently constructed Clubhouse at 2 Barry Court and follows the first four holes down to the site of the 1955 Clubhouse. The course then turns around and runs back beside Golf Links Road with the 9th hole positioned beside the car park of the new Clubhouse. The second half of the course starts beside the practice putting area behind the new Clubhouse and follows the primary dunes of the beach down to hole 13. A short 14th hole leads across to the site of the 1955 Clubhouse and holes 15 to 18 run back to finish at the new Clubhouse.

The foundation of the landscape at *Albany Golf Course* consists of the remnants of the indigenous vegetation reinforced with plantings of indigenous species and embellished with specimen plantings of Australian native plants and exotics. The indigenous plants are typical of coastal vegetation in the south west of Western Australia and the non-indigenous plants are hardy, drought tolerant species that can survive the harsh coastal environment. Many of the plants are stunted from the effects of wind and salt.

The vestigial indigenous vegetation is typical of coastal vegetation patterns and reflects the changes in soil type and exposure experienced as you move away from the sea. In the sea, meadows of seagrass grow in the sandy shallow waters

of the protected Middleton Bay. Pioneer Strand plants colonise the beach margins and low Coastal Heath is established on the primary dunes behind the beach. The low heath gives way to taller Peppermint tree (*Agonis flexuosa*) thickets on the consolidated dunes, which in turn merge into woodlands. Communities of wetland plants are established around the lakes and wetlands within the dune system.

Albany Golf Course is set on a ridge of consolidated dunes behind the primary dunes and the vegetation, as for the dunes in general, consists mainly of Peppermint tree thickets giving way to woodlands on the more sheltered eastern side beside Golf Links Road. The terrain slopes steeply downward from the golf course to the road and the sheltered low-lying area that contains Lake Seppings and other wetlands.

Generally the landscape of each hole of the course is fairly consistent with some variation in the degree of openness. Basically each hole has a manicured teeing ground, sometimes with a second teeing ground for ladies, a closely mown fairway surrounded by the coarser rough and a manicured green surrounding the hole. There are often windbreaks of trees around the teeing ground and the green and the sides of the fairway are defined by trees and shrubs, either dense belts of remnant indigenous vegetation reinforced by later planting or linear plantings of trees and in places low plantings of shrubs. In places clumps of trees have been specifically planted as an obstacle and sand traps have been created in lower lying areas around holes.

The lineal nature of most of the fairways and their flanking established plantings and remnant trees create strong vistas across the course to the surrounding landscape. These vistas are reminiscent of the grand avenues that ran through the parklands of the English School of landscape design and linked the parklands to landscape features beyond using them as 'borrowed landscape'.

The landscaping of the first hole ('Whaleback') is fairly typical of the areas added to the golf course in the 1960s. The teeing ground is located near the Club House and the fairway creates a vista to Mt Clarence beyond. Lining both sides of the fairway are belts of remnant indigenous plants reinforced by later plantings of predominantly indigenous plants and a few hardy exotics. Peppermint Trees (*Agonis flexuosa*) and Albany Woolly Bushes (*Adenanthis cuneata*) with an understorey of and Coastal Sword Sedge (*Lepidosperma gladiatum*) form the basis of these sheltering belts with some Warty Yate (*Eucalyptus megacornuta*), Bald Island Marlock (*Eucalyptus conferruminata*), Coastal Mort (*Eucalyptus platypus*) and the odd Cut Leaf Banksia (*Banksia Praemorsa*). Several Monterey Pines (*Pinus radiata*) have been planted on the east side and they provide a contrast to the indigenous plants with their dark green foliage and pyramidal form.

Towards the far end of the fairway the plantings open up allowing views to adjacent fairways. Linear plantings of Warty Yates and Coastal Mort allow views under the tree canopies. More open areas have recently been planted with Norfolk Island Pines (*Araucaria heterophylla*) and indigenous shrubs such as the purple flowering Showy Honey Myrtle (*Melaleuca Nesophila*). The green is sheltered by clumps of Peppermint trees and Woolly Bushes and several young Norfolk Island Pines highlight the area.

The remnant vegetation around the teeing ground to the second hole ('Memorial Drive') has been reinforced with Monterey Pine, Rottneest Island Pine (*Callitris preissii*), Tasmanian Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*), Cut Leaf Banksia and

Warty Yate as well as the shrubs Guinea Flower (*Hibbertea striata*), Baxters Kunzea (*Kunzea baxteri*) and Bottlebrush (*Callistemon 'Kings Park Special'*).

A row of recently planted Norfolk Island Pines stand before the denser windbreak planting around the green to the second hole. There are clumps of dense Peppermint Trees, a linear planting of four Warty Yates as well as mature New Zealand Christmas Trees (*Metrosideros excelsa*) and Coast Teatree (*Leptospermum laevigatum*).

The third and fourth holes ('Peppermint Hill' and 'The Old Clubhouse') are located within the earliest part of the golf course. They are quite open on the east side of the fairway affording views of the sea from the high ground and are contained on the west side by plantings that line the former road that runs through the course. The plantings that line the road are predominantly Peppermint Trees with some Monterey Pines, Woolly Bushes and Showy Honey Myrtle, Rottnest Island Tea Tree (*Melaleuca lanceolata*) and New Zealand Christmas Trees.

The teeing ground to the third hole is well protected with Monterey Pines, Cut Leaf Banksias and Warty Yates reinforcing the typical Peppermint Tree thickets. The green is fairly exposed with only a small planting of Coastal Tea Tree and a Warty Yate with an understorey of Mirror Plant (*Coprosma repens*) separating it from the next hole.

The teeing ground for the fourth hole is built up with a small laterite retaining wall. On lower ground between this teeing ground and the former road there is a small service area. The service area contains a large corrugated iron shed with a low pitched gable roof and a smaller fibrous cement clad shed with a low mono pitch roof. Equipment and landscape materials are stored around these sheds. The entire area is fairly well concealed from the course by mature Peppermint Trees and some Monterey Pines.

The planting on the east side of the fourth fairway is sparse and includes Guinea Flower, Showy Honey Myrtle, New Zealand Hibiscus (*Lagunaria pattersonii*), Monterey Pine, Cooks Pine (*Araucaria columnaris*) and Norfolk Island Pine.

A windbreak of Monterey Cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) has been planted near the fourth hole along with some Coastal Tea Tree. The site of the recently demolished 1955 Clubhouse is located behind the fourth hole. The site has been completely cleared but a number of foundation plantings remain including Monterey Cypress, New Zealand Christmas Tree, Bottlebrush sp., *Grevilla sp.* Westringa (*Westringia fruticosa*) and Japanese Shore Juniper (*Juniperus conferta*).

Near the site of the 1955 Clubhouse is the car park. Some of the larger Norfolk Island Pines on the golf course (~50 years) are planted beside this car park as well as large New Zealand Hibiscus Trees, Monterey Pines, Peppermint Trees, Rottnest Island Tea Trees, Sweet Bay (*Pittosporum undulatum*), Warty Yates, Banksia sp. and Coastal Tea Trees. It would appear that most of these plants date from the construction of the second Clubhouse in 1955. A short access road leads from the former car park to Golf Links Road. The plants lining the access road are similar to those around the car park and would appear to be contemporaneous.

Holes 5, 6 and 7 ('Links Road', 'The Old Road' and 'Seppings View') are all constructed on the narrow strip of land between the former road and the current

Golf Club road. These holes are some of the most protected and enclosed on site as they are contained on both sides by well-established trees.

Trees lining the old road include Peppermint (mostly), Japanese Pepper Tree (*Schinus molle*), Monterey Pine, New Zealand Christmas Tree, Rottneist Island Tea Tree, and an understorey of Woolly Bush and Coast Sword Sedge. Small flowering shrubs have been established in front of these trees including Showy Honey Myrtle, Bottlebrush sp., Baxter's Kunzea, Pin Cushion Hakea (*Hakea laurina*) and Yellow Gum (*Eucalyptus leucoxalyn* 'Rosea').

On the west side of the fairway the topography slopes steeply to Golf Links Road. This bank is largely covered with remnant vegetation such as Peppermint Trees and Marri Trees (*Corymbia calophylla*). In front of this at the top of the bank are recent plantings of Coastal Tea Tree, Peppermint Tree, Banksia sp., Red Flowering Gum (*Corymbia ficifolia*).

Generally extra plantings have been made around the teeing grounds and greens. Around the teeing ground to the fifth hole there is a clump of Blue Arizona Cypress (*Cupresses galabra hodgnsii*) and a row of Marri Trees with Radiata Pines beyond. Around the green are Norfolk Island Pines and Hibiscuses and New Zealand Christmas Trees with a Mirror Plant understorey.

A row of Marri separates the sixth green from the seventh teeing area. Midway down the seventh fairway on the west side large clumps of Marri, Radiata Pine and New Zealand Hibiscus project into the fairway. The green to the seventh hole is enclosed by the old road and its avenue planting.

The eighth and ninth holes ('The Devil's Ridge' and 'The Dam') are part of the 1963 extension to the course. On the west side of the fairway the planting is very similar to that around holes 5, 6 and 7. On the east side the planting is less dense. Around the eighth hole teeing area on the east side of the fairway there is a windbreak of New Zealand Christmas Tree, Coastal Tea Tree, Peppermint Trees, Cut Leaf Banksias, Woolly Bushes and Yellow Gum. The rest of the fairway and the green is quite open.

Around the teeing areas to the ninth hole are Bottlebrushes, Baxter's Kunzea and some Woolly Bushes. The east side of the fairway has a linear planting with views through under the canopy of Radiata Pines, Warty Yates and Coastal Mort, and around the Norfolk Island Pines (small), Peppermints, Woolly Bushes and the odd Showy Honey Myrtle. Around the green are dense thickets of Peppermint Trees.

After completing the first nine holes, the golfer walks past the New Clubhouse and along a narrow path cut through the remnant Peppermint thicket dune vegetation. A small timber framed gazebo stands near the teeing ground for the tenth hole. The vegetation to holes 10 and 11 ('The Keyhole' and 'Thru the Gap') consists primarily of continuous thickets of Peppermint Trees, Woolly Bush and Sword Sedge, which line the fairway on both sides. A Radiata Pine and a small Norfolk Island Pine stand beside the tenth hole and there is a small Norfolk Island Pine on the fairway of the eleventh hole beside an opening in the vegetation leading to the fairway of the 17th hole. The holes and teeing ground are well protected by vegetation.

The 12th hole ('Sea View') is very open and exposed. It is part of the original course. The Peppermint thickets on the primary dunes have been almost completely removed opening up expansive views of Middleton Beach and the

Sound. The eastern boundary of the site is defined by a star picket and wire fence and beyond this is the Coastal Sedge lining the beach. On the west side of the fairway isolated and stunted Peppermint Trees and Woolly Bushes are scattered across the undulating grassy knolls.

There are several large thickets of Peppermints between the 12th hole and the 13th teeing ground. The thickets then continue along the east side of the 13th fairway and along the south site boundary. A hedge of Showy Honey Myrtle has been planted part way along the fairway and linear plantings of Norfolk Island Pine stand near the teeing ground and the green. Warty Yates have been used to reinforce the Peppermint thickets around the 13th hole ('Breaksea').

The 14th and 15th holes ('By the Pine' and 'The Garden') are particularly open and exposed with only some small windswept plantings to help define the fairways. In contrast to most of the rest of the course, the topography in this area is particularly undulating in character. Plants include isolated Woolly Bushes, Rottneest Island Pines, Warty Yates, Showy Honey Myrtles, Rottneest Island Tea Trees, New Zealand Christmas Trees, Norfolk Island Hibiscus and Norfolk Island Pines. There is a large Norfolk Island Pine near the site of the earlier Clubhouse (the same size as those around the car park).

The 16th hole ('Woolybush') is also very open and has views to the sea. There are some scattered plantings of Peppermint Trees and Woolly Bushes with Sword Sedge under the denser clumps. There are also some plantings of Guinea Flower, Showy Honey Myrtle, Coastal Tea Tree and small Norfolk Island Pines. Around the 16th hole there are larger denser thickets of Peppermint Trees. These correspond with the boundary of the earliest section of the course.

The 17th hole ('The Gulley') is located in the section of the course added in the 1930s. The teeing ground is sheltered by thickets of Peppermint Trees on the east and west and a semi-circular planting of Warty Yates to the south. The thickets to the west are reinforced on the edges with Cut Leaf Banksia, Warty Yate, Coastal Mort, Radiata Pine and Norfolk Island Pine. The fairway then opens up with views across the course to the east and west. There are some linear plantings of Norfolk Island Pines and then the Peppermint thickets are re-established for the rest of the fairway. The planting on the east is reinforced with Radiata Pines and Japanese Pepper Trees and on the west with Warty Yate, Cut Leaf Banksias and New Zealand Christmas Trees.

The 18th hole ('Gun Barrel') has a long straight vista to the New Clubhouse. It is lined on both sides of the fairway by dense belts of Peppermint Trees, Woolly Bushes and Coastal Sword Sedge reinforced by Radiata Pines and recently planted Norfolk Island Pines. There is a small open section in the centre of the fairway allowing controlled views east and west.

13.3 COMPARATIVE INFORMATION

Of 44 golf courses, clubs or associated places in the Office of Heritage database, only one, P15822 *Sea View Golf Course Club* in Cottesloe, is entered on the State Register.

Sea View Golf Course was established as the Cottesloe Golf Club in 1909 on seaside land as a links course, and is second oldest course to *Albany Golf Course* on its original site. In WA, the only other links course is at Port Kennedy, which is of recent construction.

Royal Fremantle Golf Club is an 18-hole course established 1904-05 and has had several boundary changes, most recently in the 1980s, and Royal Perth Golf Club moved to its present site in South Perth in 1909.

Albany Golf Course is the oldest established links course in Western Australia, and the oldest established course on the same site in the State.

13.4 KEY REFERENCES

Johnson, Les, *Albany Links: a History of Albany Golf Club*, Albany Golf Club, 1998

13.5 FURTHER RESEARCH
