

Green Loop project – Landscape works

FAQs

What is the purpose of the project?

This project is the redevelopment of one of IGC's four nine-hole loops, to:

- Address the Green loop infrastructure and course elements that have reached the end of their useful life.
- Increase recycled water storage capacity
- Redesign holes around new Somerset retirement village lease site
- Tackle ongoing issues and limitations on the old Council land-fill portion of Green loop
- Raise the golf course and landscape quality of Green loop to that of the balance of the course through a proactive and structured plan
- Continue to enhance the outstanding natural values of the 131ha overall site by supplementing five decades of tree-planting and habitat enhancement

What is the scope of the project?

The 10-month construction project extends across approximately 30 ha of the total 131 ha site. It's a redesign and complete rebuild of 40-year-old greens, tees, fairways, irrigation and drainage. It's a 50% expansion the Club's main recycled water receiving dam and the reuse of soil across mainly the eastern portion of the loop to stabilize and transform the area of an old poorly capped Council land-fill site. It's an expansion and enhancement of some of the least and poorest quality vegetated parts of the site and reduction of Council-designate weed trees. The detailed landscape plans for the project specify the planting of 2,930 trees among a total of 28,314 plants selected from 214 species and cultivars. The designated landscape areas will represent about 30% of the project area. This will have the dual effects of significantly increasing vegetation cover and reducing turf footprint.

The replacement tree planting significantly exceeds Council's permit requirements for offset planting and contribute to Council's aim for greener and cooler inner urban neighbourhoods.

What/when are future Stages?

The Perrett Webb 36-hole concept masterplan sets a roadmap for potential future improvements to the course to address areas of ageing infrastructure, water security, flood resilience and member needs. However, implementation is very long term, with other priorities including ground floor clubhouse refurbishment next on the list. No further significant works are currently planned.

Across the balance of the course, the near-term commitment is to continue to maintain a best in class golf course within an outstanding natural setting, promoting biodiversity and ongoing vegetation management.

How many trees will be removed to accommodate the new work?

Of the 1,010 existing trees above 150mm in trunk diameter surveyed across the Green Loop, 253 trees will be removed and 775 retained. All retained trees have already been fenced off from all earthworks. The balance of the course includes at least another 7,000 trees and extensive areas of multi-strata vegetation. Of the 253 trees removed, 108 are weed trees, mostly Cadaghi gum, Tipuana, African Tulip and Chinese Elm.

Why do so many trees need to be removed?

Council-designated weed trees and trees in poor health have been especially targeted for removal. The approach taken to the redesign and earthworks is to optimize retention of vegetation and, through further plantings, to improve diversity, resilience and performance of replacement trees. Tree removals for major earthworks zones for dam expansion or land-fill site stabilizing and filling were minimised through an iterative design process. The redesigned nine-hole layout is primarily within existing fairway corridors, away from existing trees, but some new holes around the retirement village and across large areas of fill across the old tip site needed to be reshaped, unavoidably impacting on some trees.

How will impacts on habitat values and wildlife be managed?

With more than three quarters of the existing vegetation closest to the tree removals being retained, plus extensive tree cover and other vegetation nearby in other parts of the course, immediate impacts on wildlife have been minimized. Pre-design ecological assessment has identified a single remnant Brushbox tree of high habitat value on the Green Loop, that has been fenced off to ensure its protection. A fauna spotter-catcher has assessed the site pre-clearing, planned for directional clearing to allow fauna to move towards available refuge retained within the Green Loop and elsewhere on the course. The fauna-spotter catcher will be on site during clearing to ensure tree removal is sensitive to wildlife.

Habitat values will be enhanced significantly in the longer term by the landscaping program.

What is planned for replacement trees and landscape works?

Our Course Architects Perrett Webb, who are also landscape architects, included a Landscape Concept Plan in their early planning to articulate their landscape vision outside of the golf play area. Our consultants Arbor Australis Consulting carried out a detailed survey of trees and impact analysis of the golf design. Our Ecologist and Landscape Architect David Hassall has combined the structural landscape elements of the Perrett Webb concept, the map of tree locations and a preliminary plant schedule compiled by Arno King Landscape Architect, to develop a series of 49 detailed planting plans. These plans have in turn informed a master plant schedule that has been sent to production nurseries to undertake growing contracts.

What will the landscape look like, what types of vegetation and how quickly will it take shape?

The golf course landscape will predominantly appear as a series of open and closed forests framing the fairways, similar to the current appearance around the Gold and Red loops. Smaller contiguous areas of medium shrubs and small shrub/ groundcover plantings will enhance the visual amenity of the golf course. Drifts of macrophytes (aquatic plants) planted around the ponds and wetlands will enhance both visual amenity and water quality. Most plantings will use large tube-stock whose success in broad-scale plantings has been widely demonstrated. Given effective establishment maintenance specified in the landscaping contract, and the previous experience using more than 90% of the species on-site, we expect quick growth that will be monitored over a three-year period. Trees will grow to provide a significant canopy after five years, when further plantings of smaller strata may be undertaken in selected areas. The Club horticulturalist and support staff will manage the on-going maintenance of all landscape areas, some of which will also be specially irrigated.

What's going on over the rest of the site re vegetation management? What is the overarching landscape philosophy for the entire site?

The learnings from the Green loop golf construction and landscaping will be applied to the on-going development and maintenance of the balance of the site. An integrated vegetation management plan will ensure a consistent design approach is taken, based on the history of site stewardship over more than 60 years. This is documented as a work-in-progress on our website under the heading of 'Natural History'. We currently enjoy a site with more than 700 species of Flora, Fauna and Fungi, representing a wonderful example of what can be achieved in a site so close to a large city centre. We are proud of our natural heritage and the Green loop works will contribute in a significant way to our future enjoyment and satisfaction.