

Heritage

LONG POCKET – THE MOVE

Indooroopilly Golf Club opened its original 18 hole golf course at St Lucia in 1926 (see St Lucia – The Beginning section).

During the early years of the nineteenth century Long Pocket was chiefly comprised of dairy and lucerne farms. Families such as Lalor, Redhead, Meiers, Birr and Mahony were prominent.



View from Marley Grange farmhouse on Harts Road looking towards the Brisbane River. The Lalor family owned the farm on the site of the present Red 5th & 6th holes adjacent to Bougainvillea Gardens.

The dam in the photograph was filled in by the Club in 1967.



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In 1962 the Club obtained a twenty one year lease of about 180 acres at Long Pocket. Sydney course architect, Al Howard, designed an 18 hole course and head greenkeeper, Jack Surman, directed most of the course construction. A modest clubhouse was completed and the new complex was opened by the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Alderman Clem Jones, on Sunday 8 March 1964.



Clem Jones opens the Long Pocket course in 1964.



At the opening of the Long Pocket clubhouse in 1964.
L-R: Barbara Pyle, Sylvia Jones, Lord Mayor Clem Jones
& Club President, Jack Pyle



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The new course allowed a considerable number of new members from the waiting list to be absorbed and the Club could also comfortably handle the Council tender provision, which provided for the public to play there eight hours a week. It also allowed a Business Girls Group to obtain a block of Saturday morning tee times.



The original Long Pocket clubhouse in the late 1960's

The early days at Long Pocket saw a course of wide fairways with few trees and no bunkers. It was affectionately known as “The Ponderosa” after the ranch in the popular television series “Bonanza.

In 1973 the Club agreed to exchange the St Lucia course and clubhouse for 200 acres of freehold land adjoining the existing Long Pocket layout on which to build another 18 holes with a new clubhouse. At the same time the lease of the original 18 holes at Long Pocket was extended to 2058. Council agreed to fill a 700 metre long and 8 metre deep gully on the freehold land by using it as a rubbish tip over a two year period.



Meiers Road under construction below the dam (June 1975) looking toward the site of the new clubhouse



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Course Architect, Bob Green, from Sydney was appointed to design the new complex in 1976. This was to include changes to the existing course with four loops of 9 holes, each returning to a central clubhouse. The project was so big that retired member, Hal Whillans, was co-opted as honorary clerk of works for three years. Course Architect, Ross Watson was appointed to take charge of the development in 1983.



Jack Surman (head green keeper) & Bob Green (course architect) on the New Course in 1976

The architect chosen to design the new clubhouse was Club member, Patrick Moroney, and construction of the building commenced in November 1984. Club President, Trevor Davies' experience in project management proved a major benefit during the building project.



1985 view of the construction



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The building was opened on Sunday 15 December 1985 by Queensland Governor and Club Patron Sir Walter Campbell.



President Trevor Davies & Sir Walter Campbell (right) at the opening of the new clubhouse



The Coat of Arms of the Club (pictured above) can be seen in various areas of the new clubhouse. It was designed by Club member, Ian Ferrier, in 1969 in response to a call for a suitable identity symbol for the Club.

- The green band represents a golf course.
- The wavy bar represents a river which when superimposed upon the green band, evokes the concept of two golf courses on the banks of the Brisbane River. Whilst they were designed with the St Lucia-Long Pocket courses in mind, they are equally appropriate to the new complex of 36 holes.
- The Maltese Cross, being the badge of Queensland, identifies the Club with this State.
- The plate represents a golf ball and the wings symbolize the aspirations of golfers to make the ball soar through the air.
- The laurel leaves are traditionally symbolic of athletic prowess.
- The banners represent the flags on the greens.



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An economic downturn and soaring interest rates created financial pressures on the Club. A levy on members towards the end of 1986 caused a great deal of member unrest. The subsequent strategy to trade the Club out of debt by increasing the public's usage of the East course and attracting commercial functions not only stabilized the budget but provided finance to fund course improvements.

In April 1989 floodwaters again inundated the course.



It is interesting to note in the photograph on the right that it shows two features no longer visible on the landscape – the starter's box and the Tennyson power station.



Aerial view of the clubhouse early morning December 1994



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The fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II in 1995 saw the Club dedicate a commemorative fountain to those members and associates who had served in war. It replaced the memorial terrace beside the old St Lucia clubhouse which had been opened in 1947.



Opening of commemorative fountain
Women's President, Noela Gunderson & Club President, David Crombie

The original courses were known as the Old Course and the New Course. These were later renamed the West Course and East Course. Composite courses were then introduced and during the late nineties the different nines came to be identified by colours.

- The West Course comprised the Red and Gold nines.
- The East Course comprised the Green and Blue nines.
- The Presidents Course comprised the Red and Blue nines.
- The Captains Course comprised the Green and Gold nines.
- The Long Pocket Course comprised the Red and Green nines.
- The River Course comprised the Gold and Blue nines.

A proposal to sell part of the Club's freehold land for residential development in November 2004 was passed by a majority of Club members, but the rezoning application was later rejected by Council.

Equal membership was introduced in 2005 and for the first time women members were entitled to vote and the Board had female representation.



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A major renovation of the Members Bar was completed in May 2006. Two hundred & eighty members enjoyed the opening of the new Poinciana Bar on a brilliant night with a full moon & spectacular fireworks.



Members Bar renovations in 2006



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In accordance with the course master plan major changes to the West Course commenced in September 2006. A major benefit of this redesign was an increase from 25 megalitres to 75 megalitres in our water storage capacity.



Clubhouse & surrounds June 2008



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The 2011 Brisbane Flood

In January 2011 the Brisbane flood wreaked havoc on both courses. Eight and a half metres of floodwater resulted in a damages bill in excess of \$1 million. Sixty percent of the East and West courses were inundated including seventeen greens on the West course.



Aerial view showing extent of floodwaters



Red 5 with the flag just showing

As flood waters receded 10 cm of clay based silt was left, spread over the vast majority of the courses. More than 200 members joined staff in working bees to save the grass on tees and greens by removing the mud. This was achieved in eight days and all 36 holes were back in play within two months.



Some of the Mud Army of member volunteers clearing mud from practice green



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More Mud Army warriors. Charlie Giffard & his ground staff were joined by golf shop, catering & office staff. CEO Dale Durant can be seen seated far left in front row.

Retirement Village Lease

At a Special General Meeting (SGM) in November 2017 members voted overwhelmingly in favour of leasing 2.5 hectares near the 5th and 6th holes on the Green nine to Aura Holdings to build and operate a retirement village. The proposed lease was for a period of 60 years in consideration for an upfront payment of \$20,115,455 (exclusive of GST) after the Development Application was approved by the Brisbane City Council. The Club would also receive an ongoing share of deferred management fees each year. At the end of the lease the Club would have the option to acquire the retirement village for \$1 or grant the lessee a further term of 60 years in consideration for a further upfront payment.

A resolution was passed at the SGM authorizing the directors of the Club to apply some monies from the funds received from Aura Holdings Pty Ltd in respect of the project (a total of not more than \$8 million exclusive of GST in aggregate):

- (a) In recouping or paying, accounting, legal, valuation and other consultants' fees incurred by the Club incidental to the project, and costs incidental to this meeting and costs incurred in compliance with the agreements for the development and lease;
- (b) On course construction and reconstruction, including design fees, resulting from the proposed lease and the retirement village use;
- (c) To pay down the Club's bank debt from time to time; and
- (d) To pay for all or part of rectification works arising from any unforeseen and/or extraordinary event(s), such as flood or severe storm, which may occur from time to time.

The SGM also passed a resolution to provide protection of the relevant funds by incorporating clause 25 into the Constitution which detailed the formation of an Investment Advisory Committee and the requirement for not less than a 60% member approval to use those funds.

The DA was approved in August 2019 and the upfront payment received in mid-September. The 5th and 6th holes were closed prior to the leased site being handed over to Aura Holdings and temporary holes installed until new holes could be constructed away from the retirement village site.



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Perrett Webb

New course architects were appointed in 2019. Ross Perrett had previously teamed with legendary golfer Peter Thomson in the firm of Thomson Perrett. His new partnership with champion golfer Karrie Webb AO (Perrett Webb Pty Ltd) was given the task of developing a masterplan for the whole site.



Coronavirus pandemic

The pandemic in 2020 was a major disruption to normal life throughout the world.

- From the beginning of April the clubhouse was closed and staff numbers drastically reduced.
- Non-competition golf only was played in pairs from one tee with strict social distancing restrictions in place. Cups on the greens were upturned so balls could be removed from the hole without touching the flagstick. Rakes were removed from bunkers.
- Medley competition resumed in late April and gender-based competition in May. Two tee starts and play in groups of four followed by the end of May.
- The clubhouse reopened in June with social distancing restrictions.
- Normal fixtures (including honour board events & perpetual trophies) resumed in July.



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The 2022 Brisbane Flood

Constant heavy rain during Summer culminated in another major flood in Brisbane in late February 2022. The Brisbane River broke its banks and inundated our golf course. The ground staff moved \$3million worth of machinery to higher ground around the clubhouse before the maintenance shed became submerged. The pump station was under water and the Club's underground fuel tanks were contaminated with water.

Despite the floodwaters being 400 mm less than the 2011 flood, extensive damage occurred to the course. A 10 metre sailing boat washed from the river and came to rest near the green of Blue 2 and a pontoon was visible on the right side of the fairway on Gold 3. As flood levels dropped, layers of silt and debris over fairways and greens were revealed. A decision was made to bring in commercial bobcats and operators to remove silt and sludge so the grass could be exposed to sunlight and oxygen.

A week later we had 36 greens cleared and flood waters off the course. Meiers Road and the Clubhouse were open and a pitch & putt competition was organized by Golf Operations staff. The next weekend normal competition golf resumed on red and green nines with a few holes opened for play on blue and gold nines.

The normal programme of golf continued but above average rainfall made extraordinary demands on our ground staff. A common refrain heard amongst members was "Poor Ben" in sympathy with popular Course Manager, Ben Grylewicz. There was further minor flooding from the Brisbane River in mid-May but thankfully major damage was avoided. Bunkers remained out of play for some months. The blue nine bunkers were refurbished and were back in play by the beginning of June.

The Club's insurance claim to the limit of its \$1mill cover was promptly met, but the 2022 event cost well in excess of that. The agronomic impact on playing surfaces was felt for the balance of the year. On a positive note, the flood provided a catalyst to invest in course infrastructure to better handle future storms and floods. Specifically, the pump station was rebuilt with submersible pumps, above ground relocatable fuel tanks were purchased and a programme to review and rebuild the West course bunkers with capillary concrete to minimize wash-outs was begun.



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The Brisbane River has inundated Gold #3



Standing at the top of cart path from Gold #9 looking towards Red #9



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The 10 metre sailing boat “Miss Freelove” came to rest near the green of Blue #2.



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Green Loop Development

A Special General Meeting of members held in December 2021 had approved expenditure from Relevant Funds to allow for redevelopment of the green nine and expansion of the main dam adjoining the Retirement Village in accordance with the Course Master Plan. After Brisbane City Council approval was obtained and contractors appointed, the green nine was closed in mid-May to allow works to proceed. Membership had closed in the middle of 2021 because of this planned reduction to 27 holes.

