

Desalination Innovation

By Nadia Papotto

With its seaside nature, Lonsdale Golf Club boasts a sandy undulating course unique to other courses in Victoria. This short but well tree-lined course is located in Point Lonsdale, Victoria and has recently installed its own desalination plant.

Tim Smith, Superintendent of Lonsdale Golf Club, is new to the field having only worked as a superintendent for nine months. Prior to Lonsdale, Tim had always worked closely with the sporting aspect of golf and the players themselves, as opposed to looking after the general maintenance of the turf. Tim first began working at Huntingdale Golf Club before moving onto Warrnambool Golf Club. He chose Lonsdale purely due to its familiarity, as he grew up in the area.



Tim Smith (Lonsdale Golf Club Superintendent) and the Desalination Plant.

"I like the quietness, friendly people, and the country. The club has all those advantages in my opinion. I tried living in the city, and I didn't mind it, but it's a little easier and a bit more relaxed working out here," says Tim.

Being a small golf course, Lonsdale currently has three staff members involved in the maintenance of the course. According to Tim,

daily maintenance is basically looking after the property and the health of the turf.

"130 acres is not easy to maintain, it is a big job to assure that every aspect is attended to on a daily basis," he says.

Due to the present water restrictions in Australia, and the severe stage 3 water restrictions in Victoria alone, in 2007 the Victorian city of Geelong found itself without a ready water supply, which effectively saw Lonsdale Golf Club forced to buy in tankers of water at 28,000 litres per day just to keep the turf maintained, and as expected, this was becoming extremely expensive for the small golf club.

"Geelong water, was completely shut off in 2007, we didn't have any water at all, we had bore water but it was too salty to use on the greens. So with desalination, we were able to utilize the bore water effectively," says Tim.

Lonsdale Golf Club installed its own desalination plant in November/December 2007.

So how does a desalination plant actually work? Basically, it

forces the water through very fine membrane filters and as the salt particles are larger than the water particles, only the water particles are able to push through. Approximately forty percent of the water gets pushed through the membrane and the remainder is left over as brine.

There are obvious cost benefits to installing the desalination plant at Lonsdale, as Tim



Lonsdale Golf Course

explains, "In the long term we will save money on water because it costs less to run than what it costs to buy, that's probably the most important sales feature for us because we have a good bore water supply. I think if we use it for about five years we will actually cover the cost of the machine."

With all its bits and pieces including pipes to transport the water, and the water tanks for storage, the installation cost of the desalination plant totaled approximately \$170,000. Tim says he would definitely recommend the plant to other golf courses and schools around Australia, and is glad that Lonsdale chose to do their business with Mathew Harrison from Aqueous Solutions.

"We looked around and there were a few desalination options, however, his just looked like the best option for us," says Tim.

Lonsdale Golf Club is currently in the midst of a large development scheme, where they are planning to sub-divide one end of the golf course (approximately 100 blocks of land) and build a whole new golf course. Tim says he is hoping to play a significant role in that process.



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