

ESVGA History

1. The Early Years 1984 – 1988

The ESVGA was originally organised by Bob Saunders who had served on the committee of the Melbourne District Vets. As the number of members was becoming too large he approached the VVGA for permission to establish an Eastern Suburbs association. Permission was granted and after visiting several clubs and receiving an enthusiastic response a meeting was held at Croydon Golf Club on 7th November 1984. 107 members signed on and elected steering committee to proceed with the establishment of the ESVGA and to organise the inaugural AGM one month later. The ESVGA became the seventeenth Veterans Golf Association in Victoria

The meeting took place on 7th December 1984. A committee was elected with Bob Saunders as president. Their objective was to set up the Association's first game of golf. They achieved this on the 11th February 1985 at Box Hill Golf Course with 127 players. The game was successful although the Box Hill captain did complain about the slowness of play. At that stage the membership had reached 176 represented by Box Hill (51), Churchill Park (49), Eastwood (31), Croydon (25), Waverley (11), Amstel (1) and miscellaneous (5). A temporary freeze was placed on membership and a waiting list was established. By June though this had been lifted and a cap of 250 placed on membership by which time there were 220 members. The next game was held at Waverley on 11th April 1985 followed later in the year by games at Croydon, Amstel, Churchill Park, Box Hill and Eastwood. The first championship was held at Amstel on 3rd December.

An Extraordinary General Meeting was held at Croydon on 10th May 1985 at which the ESVGA constitution was approved.

The first annual dinner dance was held at Eastwood on 17th November 1985.

The program for 1986 included games at Eastwood, Croydon, Waverley, Cranbourne, Amstel, Churchill Park and Beacon Hills. By mid 1986 the membership cap had again been lifted to 300 and there were 286 members represented by Box Hill (72), Churchill Park (68), Eastwood (38), Waverley (35), Croydon (33), Eastern (10), Amstel (1) and miscellaneous (27). An annual supper dance was held at Box Hill in November.

In 1987 games were held at the same clubs as the previous year except Cranbourne which had become too expensive. The year also saw a further increase in membership with 333 members and a further 27 on the waiting list. Consequently, in

November the membership cap was raised to 400. The annual dinner dance was held at Croydon in November.

1988 saw the introduction of a game at Eastern and the reintroduction of Cranbourne. By the end of 1988 there were 340 members. At that stage Bob Saunders retired from the committee and was rewarded for his work in establishing the ESVGA with honorary life membership. The annual dinner dance was held at Waverley.

2. The Next Decade 1989 - 1998

The next few years saw games played at the regular venues of Box Hill, Waverley, Eastwood, Eastern, Churchill Park and, Croydon with Healesville and Montuna added in 1994 although Montuna was deleted in 1997. In 1989 the decision was made to restrict fields to 136 players.

The annual dinner dances continued to be held until 1996 at Eastern, Churchill Park and Box Hill until 1996 at which time it was changed to an annual luncheon.

During this period the membership gradually declined. By 1991 it was down to 270 members with an average attendance over the 8 games during the year of 77 players. By 1995 the game day attendance was down to an average of 75 players and at this stage the association began seeking new members by advertising its activities in local newspapers. The drive to find new members continued over the next few years and surveyed members in 1997 to find the reasons.

In 1993 the association sought sponsorships from businesses including K Mart with a degree of success although this had ceased by 1998.

Members were very active during these years participating in state championships, the country championships as well as tournaments in Kilmore, Cobram, Barooga, Howlong, Rich River, Cohuna, Clifton Springs, New Zealand and Fiji.

During this period honorary life memberships were presented to Bob Williams, Eric Davey, John Flewellen, Arnold Nuske and Ted Baker. At the 1998 AGM framed certificates of appreciation were presented to Sid Smith and Clive Foster.

3. The Later Years 1999 – 2014

During these years games continued to be played regularly at Box Hill, Waverley, Eastwood, Eastern, Churchill Park and Croydon. Healesville was deleted in 1999 but reintroduced along with Chirnside in 2001 and occasional games were held at Amstel. In 2007 a game was held at Ringwood and in 2009 Croydon moved to Yering

Meadows. In October 2011 the first game was successfully held at Warburton with 45 players.

The annual luncheons continued to be held although the interest in them gradually declined. The last luncheon was held in 2004.

During this period the membership and the game day attendances fluctuated but in general they declined. In 2005 there were 177 members and by 2010 there were 154. Game day attendances varied significantly but towards the end of this era were averaging 70 players per game.

In 1999 there was a discussion by the committee about the inclusion of female membership, however, the matter was deferred indefinitely. The criteria for honorary life membership was also discussed but left to the discretion of the committee.

In 2001 the annual raffle prize of a Parmaker buggy was first introduced.

At the 2003 AGM Jack Melki was awarded honorary life membership and at the 2001 AGM Frank Walsh was presented with a framed certificate of appreciation.

4. The Life Members

- **Bob Saunders**

Bob Saunders was the founder of the ESVGA. He set up the steering committee to establish the ESVGA in November 1984 and was elected inaugural President one month later when the association was formed. He then went on to serve as President until the end of 1988 when he retired and was granted honorary life membership. Without his work the ESVGA as we know it may not have existed.

- **Bob Williams**

Bob Williams was a founding member of the ESVGA and was elected Vice President at the inaugural meeting in December 1984. He continued to serve as Vice President until the end of 1988 when he was elected as President. He continued in this role until the end of 1993. In 1996 he was made an honorary life member.

- **Eric Davey**

Eric Davey was a founding member of the ESVGA. He served as both Secretary and Treasurer from December 1984 until 1988. He then went on to serve a further five years as Secretary until the end of 1993. He was made an honorary life member in 1996.

- **John Flewellen**

John Flewellen joined the committee of the ESVGA at the inaugural meeting in December 1984 and served as a committee member until the end of 1988. From 1989 until the end of 1994 he served as Treasurer and then for two years as Vice President until the end of 1996. He was made an honorary life member in 1997.

- **Ted Baker**

Ted Baker joined the committee of the ESVGA in 1988 and served on the committee until 1993. He then went on to serve as President for five years until the end of 1998. Upon his retirement as President he was made an honorary life member.

- **Arnold Nuske**

Arnold Nuske joined the committee of the ESVGA in 2000 and served for a year before becoming Vice President for seven years until the end of 2007. He was awarded honorary life membership at the end of 2007.

- **Jack Melki**

Jack Melki joined the committee of the ESVGA in 1994 and served on the committee for five years. In 1999 he was elected President and went on to serve five years in that position until the end of 2003. Upon his retirement as President he was made an honorary life member.

- **Tom Tarrant**

Tom Tarrant joined the committee of the ESVGA in 2000 and served on the committee for nine years. In 2009 he was elected President and went on to serve a further seven years in that position until his retirement at the end of 2015. He then continued to serve on the committee in 2016. His overall years of service on the committee are greater than any other member of the ESVGA. He was awarded honorary life membership in 2015.

Compiled Alan Teather (March 2016)