

Catalina Golf Club

A weekend golfer at Catalina Golf Club will mostly enjoy his or her 4-hour leisurely round of golf in the parkland setting of a course recently described by tourist advisor *gday.com.au* as boasting "twenty seven of the best championship holes that you will find on the South Coast of NSW".

Catalina's greens in particular are regarded by members and visitors alike as a good test of golfing skill, being maintained at a consistently high and challenging standard. A momentary lapse in putting concentration will quickly add an additional stroke onto the day's score. Many a golfer will tell a clubhouse story of the putt that should have gone in.

Today's golfing has come a long way since the early days of 1956 when Batemans Bay's first golf course was carved out of a wetland area that doubled as a racecourse and market garden. It was originally a course of just 5 holes. Our first golfers putted on oil saturated sand greens. Local rules required golfers to smooth out all signs of footprints and ball tracking, and to empty the cup of excess sand.

Many of Batemans Bay's first families were involved in establishing and developing the early Catalina Golf Club. This small dedicated group of men and women included Fred Ladmore (founding member), Errol and Joyce Lassau (founding members and life members), Bill Burns (founding member) and Brian Connell (President).

In the first of a series of astute decisions over the next 30 years the Board of Catalina purchased sufficient surrounding land to begin planning for a new 9-hole grass green course, officially opened in 1961. The course was extended to 18 holes 6 years later.

In the 1980s the Board decided to address the issue of uncertain and irregular local rainfall. The idea, ahead of its time in those days, was to render the course drought proof. In a joint operation with Council, treated effluent was sourced through a series of pipelines from Surf Beach. A large 40-megalitre dam was constructed to accommodate this valuable water supply.

The golf course was extended to 27 holes in 1993 with the purchase of additional land to the southwest. Catalina now owned and operated three championship courses spread over 66 hectares in the heart of one of the fastest growing coastal communities in NSW.

The course was named Catalina after the distinctive World War II Catalina Flying Boat that would occasionally land in the Bay during the 1950s.

Course Superintendent, Tony Fogerty, has been part of the development of the course for the past 34 years. Tony describes the 66 hectares as his "patch" with over 30 hectares requiring maintenance at any one time.

Catalina, now widely recognised as a first-class golfing venue, annually hosts the PGA National Futures Championship and the Jack Newton Junior Golf Foundation. Both tournaments attract the cream of junior and emerging golf talent from across Australia.

The Catalina Golf Club is an established institution within the growing community of Batemans Bay and is one of the region's major employers. Its success has paralleled that of Batemans Bay and will continue to do so into the future.

(All published articles in the Our Town Our People series can be viewed at www.ourtownourpeople.com)

Next Week– The Wray Family