

The History of the North Eastern District Croquet Association Inc

An overview with highlights.

The Inaugural Meeting of the North Eastern District Croquet Association was held at the Wangaratta Clubhouse on Saturday 15 October 1960 at 2.30 pm. Members from the Wangaratta, Bright, Albury, Corowa, Greenfields and Yarrawonga Croquet Clubs attended. Many of these Clubs had been in existence for decades prior.

The history of the years 1914-1980 is included in the history of Croquet in Victoria compiled by Joyce Ridley.

The following is the history of the North Eastern District Croquet Association Inc from 1980 to 2015 compiled by Mrs Robyn Hodder of Wangaratta.

At the 1984 Annual General Meeting the member levy was raised to 50c. Congratulations were extended to Mr Frank Dodd (first mention of a male) on his win at Country Week. Clubs could not field enough players for a Pennant Competition but social days held instead.

In 1985 the Yarrawonga Croquet Club was to cease operation as from 17 July 1985, due to high maintenance costs and being unable to recruit new members to the Club. Soon after the Croquet section of the Yarrawonga and Border Golf Club was officially opened on 15 September 1985.

At this time there was much discussion on 3 hours games versus 2 hours games for Association Croquet. Wangaratta and Yarrawonga were among the first Clubs to incorporate and NEDCA was seeking information as to whether the Regional Association should become incorporated.

At the 17 January 1989 Meeting the following motion changed the governance structure of NEDCA. 'Received on a motion by H Elleray, seconded Frank Dodd 'that the office of President and Secretary of NEDCA rotate every two years between the Clubs in the Association, each affiliated Club to take their turn'. All Clubs except Cobram accepted the motion. Mrs Gladys Walter of Wangaratta became the first President under this format and the NEDCA Clubs were to take their turn in reverse alphabetical order. Greenfield Park Croquet Club closed in 1989.

In August 1990 all Club Secretaries were asked to write to the VCA protesting the rise in the affiliation fee for the coming season. At the same Meeting it was decided to play unofficial tournaments instead of Pennant.

The VCA Delegate in his Report to the 1991 Annual General Meeting noted the proposal to computerise the handicap system, the beginning of the end of the regular Handicap Meetings held by NEDCA to reset players handicaps.

In November 1993 it was noted that Benalla had not yet affiliated with NEDCA but had held an excellent opening day.

In 1994 Bright reported it would not close but remain as a Social Club, not affiliated with NEDCA. Benalla was now affiliated with NEDCA. Beechworth provided the Executive positions for 1994/1995.

The August 1994 General Meeting noted that the Winter Competition could not be held due to lack of players. This was becoming a recurrent theme.

Albury provided the personnel to fill the Executive positions 1996/1997. Clubs were now beginning to grapple with the terms of insurance policies and the need for guidelines for new members and whether non-affiliated croquet players could enter Tournaments etc.

At the August 1995 Meeting Correspondence Inwards included a request from Euroa Croquet Club to affiliate with NEDCA. This request was accepted and passed with acclamation. The need for more referees was becoming apparent.

In November 1995 it was noted that the NEDCA Constitution was in need of an update.

In February 1996 it was recorded that the Myrtleford Croquet Club was accepted as an affiliated Club with VCA and they were invited to join NEDCA. A discussion paper circulating criticised the restriction on Social Days and Tournaments placed upon Clubs by NEDCA as many Clubs felt they should be allowed to hold additional events to generate income. After discussion regarding players who cancelled after paying to attend a function, it was passed that money would not be refunded.

NEDCA had applied to host Country Week in 1998 as there were excellent facilities at Benalla.

Both Euroa and Wangaratta Croquet Clubs held 90th Celebrations in 1996 with special days.

At the February 1997 Meeting it was noted that VCA had now extended insurance cover for players aged 75 to 85 years. This begs the question what the situation was previously, ie was nobody over 75 years covered by insurance.

A Special General Meeting was held at Wangaratta on 13 May 1997 where it was explained that a Manager and a Referee-in-Charge would have to be appointed before Benalla Croquet Club could be granted permission to hold Country Week in 1998. Yarrawonga/Border stated that their Club had

voted against Benalla being granted Country Week at the last NEDCA Meeting and wished to reiterate the vote against the proposal. Cobram Croquet Club stated that this decision should be held at the next NEDCA Meeting on 27 May and be put on the Agenda. They also stated that the VCA had informed Cobram Club that the VCA will meet on 6 June so there was no need for this Meeting on 13 May 1997. Lastly that NEDCA is ALL Clubs, who have the right to discussion and decision. A vote was taken and sixteen voted for Benalla Croquet Club to hold Country Week with six against.

At the Annual General Meeting held two weeks after the above mentioned Special General Meeting Yarrowonga Border Croquet Club tabled a letter stating that they felt it would be better for the Benalla Croquet Club to take office (rather than themselves, thus overturning the reverse alphabetical order roster system set in place in 1989) due to the fact that this Club had been granted Country Week for 1998. Benalla was in agreement. At the General Meeting immediately following this Annual General Meeting, Benalla reported that twenty courts at the Benalla Lawn Tennis Club were available for Country Week 9 - 13 February 1998, and Benalla were given total catering rights for Country Week and a Welcoming BBQ was to be held on the Sunday evening but Channel 9 'Wide World of Sports' would not provide TV coverage. At this Meeting NEDCA affiliation fees were increased to \$1.00 per person.

Clubs were now actively seeking new members via letter drops and local newspaper promotion.

At the 1998 Annual General Meeting the Position of Secretary and Treasurer were separated and no Assistant Secretary would be appointed to bring the Executive Position structure in line with the Model Rules in view of NEDCA's impending Incorporation.

Also at this Meeting NEDCA moved towards incorporation whilst still grappling with insurance issues and a Golf Croquet Association has been formed (no other information was given). The original Certificate of Incorporation is framed and located at Wangaratta. There was also discussion at this Meeting that it was difficult to nominate Life Members who had given many years service as the Executive Positions change every two years. The motion 'that no future members be nominated for Life Membership' was carried. In addition Glad Thompson moved and John Syphers seconded 'that no players going to Melbourne to play in the Handicap or Level Championships be subsidised by NEDCA'. This motion was also carried.

In November 1998 NEDCA was advised of the closure of the Myrtleford Croquet Club.

In May 1999 it was passed that \$1.00 out of the entry fee of \$10.00 to all NEDCA events be donated to the host Club as green fees.

Wodonga Croquet Club would affiliate with NEDCA in May 2000.

In August 2000 it was decided that 'smooth soled shoes are too dangerous on wet courts so rippled soles are now allowed'.

The NEDCA Annual General Meeting was to be held at Wangaratta on Tuesday 22 May 2001, nobody wanted to take over the Chair. All the excuses in the world came forward, fortunately Beechworth took over the running of the NEDCA for the next two years. After their time a schedule was arranged and each Club has to take its turn. No excuses!! It was Cobram's turn, then Wangaratta but Beechworth duly took over, out of sequence for 2001/03.

The sequence is therefore to be Albury, Beechworth, Benalla, Bright, Cobram, Euroa, Wangaratta, Wodonga, Yarrowonga. Clubs were expected to note this order and be prepared to accept their responsibility in turn.

Congratulations were forwarded to Wodonga Club on the excellent effort in conducting their recent tournament with over sixty entries and played on sixteen courts.

The President's Report to the May 2003 Annual General Meeting asked that all Clubs running social days include a section for our increasing number of GOLF CROQUET players. The Minutes noted that the next Australian Championships would be held at Wodonga and the tennis Courts at Albury between the end of March and beginning of April 2004. The Tournament was expected to last some eighteen days.

In November 2003 Rene Bailey advised that the Cobram Croquet Club had moved to the Cobram Tennis Club and now had two 'A' sized lawns.

In February 2004 Ray Irlam (President) clarified who was entitled to vote at our Meetings. Each of the nine Clubs had two Delegates but only one was entitled to vote. The Constitution did not make it clear which particular Delegate was entitled to vote but in the event of any dispute Ray would assume that the Delegate with the longer serving membership of that Club would take this role unless or until notified otherwise by the Club Secretary.

The President's Report to the May 2004 Annual General Meeting noted that Association Croquet is not dead or dying when eighty eight players took part in the inaugural opening day to mark the amalgamation of Cobram Croquet and Tennis Clubs.

In February 2005 a 'Come-and-Try' croquet day had been held at the Milawa Bowls Club, but no Club eventuated from this day.

The President's Report to the May 2005 Annual General Meeting noted that the NEDCA Championships were conducted in December in the worst weather conditions imaginable- thunder and lightning for three days! They are now played in March not long before Regionals for Association and Golf Croquet in April.

In August 2006 Tassie Pappas reported on his 6 June 2006 visit to Corowa. The RSL Club has two bowling rinks standing vacant and a decision on their future will be made by the RSL Management late November. Corowa eventually re-established a Croquet Club at the Corowa Civic Bowling Club in 2014.

In 2006 Euroa and Wangaratta Clubs marked their Centenaries with day long celebrations. Tassie Pappas and Rene Bailey had spent 1 1/2 days sifting through forty-six years of NEDCA documents . The criterion used in whether to keep or dispense with documents was 'would this document be of value to an historian?'

At this same Meeting Euroa Delegates announced their inability to undertake their two year turn of Regional Management commencing 27 May 2007.

In February 2007 Euroa again announced their inability to fulfil their rostered responsibility to the NEDCA. The Ballarat Region made the following request: 'That due to the severity of the current drought across Central Victoria, the hosting rotation be altered so as to allow the North East to conduct the Country Regionals in 2008 and Ballarat to conduct the Regionals in 2009' This was agreed to.

At the 2007 Annual General Meeting, Beechworth put forward the following motion:' that any Club that fails to take its due turn in providing the President and Secretary of NEDCA will be required to do so in the following term. If it again fails to take its turn, a disciplinary tribunal could take the following action, a warning, a fine, suspension or expulsion'. This motion was carried. Wangaratta assumed the Management Team duties at this Meeting. The Euroa Croquet Club subsequently affiliated with the Goulburn Valley Croquet Association.

A very successful Country Regionals was run at Wodonga with assistance from all NEDCA Clubs. Graeme Gallus as Tournament Manager with Bill Keddie Referee Manager.

At the November 2008 General Meeting it was decided to purchase twelve bottle green shirts with NEDCA logo for Championship players to wear when representing NEDCA.

The Wodonga Club filled the Management Team for the 2009/2011 term.

At the August 2009 General Meeting it was resolved to establish a Golf Croquet Championship.

Golf Croquet Championships were held at Wodonga on 27 October 2009 with twenty-four players participating but no entries in the 0 - 5 Division.

NEDCA celebrated its 50th Birthday on 10 October 2010 with a function at Wangaratta Croquet Club, the venue where the first NEDCA Meeting was held. A copy of the original Minutes of the first Meeting in a frame has been hung in the Wangaratta Clubhouse and was presented by Tassie Pappas and Mrs Gladys Walter. Mrs Gladys Walter cut the celebration cake.



Tassie Pappas and Mrs Gladys Walter with framed image of Minutes of first NEDCA Meeting.

Mrs Gladys Walter has been a part of NEDCA for many years. She was a great worker for Wangaratta. Unfortunately she passed away a couple of weeks before her 100th birthday. Tassie Pappas has been a great worker for NEDCA conducting all Association events. All Clubs attended and a number who attended gave short histories of their Clubs.

Many NEDCA Club members have contributed to the success of the Region and their own Clubs. Graeme Gallus was member of the VCA Committee of Management and a both he and Shirley Bidgood served as NEDCA delegates to VCA. Graeme Gallus was also part of the resurgence of the Beechworth Croquet Club, recognising that teaching and playing golf croquet would bring new members to the Club and ensure the viability and sustainability of the Club.

During 2011 NEDCA assisted in the establishment of a Croquet Club at Mansfield. Mansfield did not affiliate with NEDCA. Yarrawonga commenced their two year term providing personnel to fill Executive Positions. A greater emphasis was being placed on training more referees.

Albury followed Yarrawonga and provided the personnel to fill the Executive Positions. The NEDCA Constitution was again updated during this 2013/2015 period. A Golf Croquet Pennant commenced in 2013.

In 2014, forty-two members of our NEDCA Clubs undertook the bus trip to Cairnlea to celebrate the VCA Centenary, and the re-establishment of a Croquet Club at the Corowa Civic Bowling Club meant there were now nine Clubs affiliated with NEDCA. Much discussion occurred about the use of handicap cards for social doubles.

In 2014 the Bright Croquet Club marked their 110th Birthday with a town crier, birthday cake, barbeque and croquet.

Border Mail New item



It is now obvious that the number of NEDCA Club members playing Association Croquet is decreasing with some Clubs having no active Association players. To stem this trend there have been Come & Try Association Days conducted at Yarrawonga Croquet Club in 2015.

In 2015 efforts are proving successful with a Croquet Club to be established at the Howlong Golf Resort.

The popularity of Golf Croquet and the increasing numbers playing Golf Croquet has contributed to the economic viability of many of the NEDCA Clubs. Most Clubs within the NEDCA Region have stable or increasing membership.