



Victorian Croquet Association

Growing croquet in Victoria

Resources for clubs and regions

Overview

The VCA Council's Marketing and Publicity subcommittee has developed a set of resources to support clubs and regions in their local publicity efforts, as part of a concerted attempt to attract new members to croquet. This follows through the subcommittee's task of promoting the sport of croquet across Victoria.

These resources are outlined below.

More information and copies of each resource are available online, via <http://croquetvic.asn.au/GrowingCroquet>. Your region also has hard copy.

Additions and suggestions are welcome - contact the subcommittee by phone at 0403 108 215 (m) (Kate Patrick) or via our email account marketing@croquetvic.asn.au.

Overview of resources

1. Why does your club need to grow?
 - New members strengthen and revitalise the club
 - New members share the load and keep your club viable
2. Strategic planning
 - List your club's strengths and weaknesses. What do you want to maintain and / or develop?
 - Set yourself a timeframe to implement your goals
 - Share out the responsibilities for action
 - Check out the VCA Strategic Plan – see croquetvic.asn.au/governance.php.
3. Networking: raising your club's profile in the community
 - Who are the key contacts in your community? Think schools, health, learning centres, University of the Third Age, social clubs.
 - Consider giving them information about croquet or inviting them to a social event. Check out this handout for allied health workers.
4. Club promotion
 - To promote your club, you need to be positive, upbeat, and grasp every opportunity you can to keep up your profile in the community.
 - Appoint a publicity officer. Someone who will
 - get to know the local media – people, deadlines, preferences
 - maintain contact with key people
 - communicate effectively and systematically
 - Think about functions where you can involve the community in croquet activities: eg fundraising for a good cause, season opening, youth program.
 - Several clubs produce their own brochures. Examples are available.
 - Hard copy CroquetVic leaflets and bookmarks are also available.
 - Use your club website! A [promotional video](#) has been made by Twin City CC – you might like to link to it, or make your own?
5. Writing a press release [tips from the Public Relations Institute]
 - Put on a journalist's hat
 - Lose the superlatives
 - Include some salient quotes
 - Keep it short
 - Put your contact information in a prominent place

Source and more information: <http://www.pria.com.au/priablog/5-tips-to-follow-when-writing-press-releases>

An annotated sample croquet-related press release is available from <http://croquetvic.asn.au/growing/VCAResourceKit.php>.

A listing of newspapers with contact details is also available for each region.
6. Promotional events
 - Focus and plan your promotion:
 - Decide who you need to involve

- Get to know your local media
- invite your local newspaper to do an article about the event
- Local radio may provide free slots
- Conducting your promotion
- Opening of the season (example programs available)

7. Social days

- for clubs or regions
 - Schedule days (monthly / bi monthly?) where members celebrate and play together
 - Bring players together in hi/low games or challenges
 - Share a BBQ, afternoon tea or drinks and nibbles.
- as community events
 - Run croquet games accessible to all – eg Aussie Croquet; Helter Skelter, Eggs in a Basket, Croquet Bobs, Gateball Tunnel, Croquet Tunnel, Skittles, Tennis, Best of 13, Speed Croquet, Bulls Eye (details available)

8. Use courses for recruitment

- Croquet is an exciting, complex, challenging (and frustrating) game
- Running courses for prospective members introduces them to more aspects of the game than come and try sessions and gets them more involved.
- Courses also help develop essential croquet skills for prospective, new and current members.
- Outlines are available for the courses run by several clubs, some focusing on AC or Aussie, others with a GC focus.
- The rules of Aussie Croquet are available online.
- Qualified coaches are listed by region and club on the VCA website – see <http://www.croquetvic.asn.au/refscoaches.php>. Hard copy is available as part of this resource.

9. Sharing the GC and AC codes

- In some clubs and regions Golf Croquet and Association Croquet players rarely meet. Many recent members have joined as GC players and have had little opportunity to learn AC. Around the world this has become an issue which croquet clubs are starting to tackle.
- Try holding a social day bringing the codes together. You could play an AC doubles game pairing an AC player with a GC player, where the AC player takes the two-ball croquet shots.
- Your region could hold ricochet events or tournaments.
- Regional coaching sessions in AC could specifically target GC players (a couple of regions are having success with this).
- Start a competition involving GC and AC play as at the Meadows Croquet Club in Scotland.

10. Develop a youth program

Many established players first played croquet as children. If your club would like to establish a youth program, Casterton CC has some pointers:

- Leadership and commitment are important.

- Get your club's support. Roster in a group to help.
- Everyone involved needs a Working with Children Certificate (free for volunteers).
- Plan your advertising and links with Council and schools.
- Rope in your local newspaper.
- Get sponsorship so you can offer prizes.
- Involve outside coaches to inspire the students.

11. Club visitors and insurance

All clubs affiliated with the VCA hold public liability insurance. Questions often arise about the scope of this when events for non-members are planned. Essentially, all visitors are covered no matter how often they come, whether or not they pay, and whether or not you record their names.

12. Growing our club: Queenscliff's experience

Between 2013 and 2015 the number of members at Queenscliff CC increased from mid twenties to low forties. Their strategies included:

- Being more visible to passers by
- Encouraging newcomers and beginners with an introductory course, a welcome pack, and a club mentor
- Being a very friendly club.

13. Growing our club: Plimmerton's experience

Between 2001 and 2012 the number of members at Plimmerton CC (NZ) doubled, from mid-50s to mid-90s. Recruitment is now limited by court capacity (they have 4 A courts). Their strategies have included:

- respect for GC and AC
- support and respect for member needs – competitive and social
- positive two-way communication
- enabling leadership
- encouragement for enthusiasm and ideas of new members
- coaching for new and established members
- sustained efforts to achieve external publicity.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Resources under each of the above headings are available from your region, or from the VCA website via <http://croquetvic.asn.au/GrowingCroquet>.