

**The Senior Golfers Union of South Africa Tour of Eastern
Australia**

Queensland, Victoria, and New South Wales

8-28th October 2022



TOUR REPORT



Introduction

Due to the Covid Pandemic the return tour to Australia was re-scheduled to October 2022. The initial enthusiasm was tempered as the time drew near with information that Eastern Australia was experiencing heavy rains and flooding. Before the tour began, we were told that our original riverside hotel in Brisbane had been flooded but was scheduled to re-open in September. This proved to be over-optimistic and the Queensland Seniors had to come up with Plan B. Fortunately this worked very well and we were accommodated in the Royal on the Park beside the Botanical Gardens.



The other concern, prior to the start of the tour was that parts of the Eastern Coast had already surpassed their annual rainfall since records began and there was still 3 months to go. Predictions for October and November were also for more rain.

Somehow, due to some miraculous conditions, the rain stopped to allow play and only restarted at the end of each week – I'm sure our hosts wished we could have stayed longer! Result was that a few players only experienced rain on a couple of holes during the whole tour.



The Team

Photo by Chris Campbell.

Back: Peter Wilson, John Brownrigg, Rob Wassenaar, Penny Cronin Richard Jelley, Robyn Jelley, Patrick Cronin, David Horak, & Ian Forbes.

Front: Cheryl Brownrigg, Janet Wilson, Jetske Kingsma, Barbara Wassenaar, Irene Campbell, Daphne Forbes, Helen Theron, Wessel Theron, & Gordon Odgers.

8TH OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 1 Arrival in Brisbane, Queensland

The tour was scheduled to start in Queensland on 8th October. A number of the group had arrived earlier to catch up with family and friends while others arrived in Sydney, on Saturday 8th October, collected their luggage and golf clubs, before catching the connecting flight to Brisbane. Some were held up at customs in Sydney but there was another flight so we all managed to arrive in Brisbane and met by Don Fraser, Queensland Tour Coordinator, who greeted us warmly. We then all travelled by coach, to our hotel in Brisbane, 'Royal on the Park' - minus John and Cheryl's golf clubs. Fortunately, the golf bags turned up later and we were all set to start the tour.

We then settled in before gathering in the bar for introductions over drinks and snacks.

9TH OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 2 Free Day with Drinks & snacks at Don Fraser's

Sunday was a free day before the tour started in earnest and after a hearty breakfast most started to explore Brisbane, including the Botanical Gardens just across the road from the hotel.



Later we all walked to the river pier, to catch the City Cat ferry for our scenic ride to Brett's wharf. Rob Thatcher had organised for us to have a casual meet and greet at Don and Lindy Fraser's house, which is set on the hill with stunning views of the river.



We were completely spoilt, with wonderful company and plenty of canapés and refreshments.



Fulvio Toniotti, the Queensland President, presented John Brownrigg, the SA Tour Captain, with a magnificent trophy, which was made by the Queensland Captain, Les Nathanson. This was to be competed for during the three legs of the tour.

Les explaining the woods used for the Trophy

10TH OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 3 Brookwater Golf Club

An early start for the golfers, fortified with a good breakfast, left by coach for Brookwater Golf Club.



Brookwater GC Entrance.

A very pretty but challenging golf course. The fairways are the best place to be. It is a cart only course, and you soon realize why I think it is quite easy to get lost!



Gordon at 1st Green with Ashleigh Barty's house in the background.

This was also where we had our first taste of Australian wildlife with a couple of kangaroos lounging behind one of the greens but seemingly not too impressed. Later Gordon Odgers also lost his marker on one of the greens due to a thieving local, possibly a Satin Bowerbird. However, it stills remains a mystery as no one saw it happen.



The golf finished with prize presentations, including the presentation of a silver salver to Brookwater's Captain as a memento of our day. A quick snack and refreshments before boarding the bus back to our hotel.

Evening at The Queensland Club



A quick wash and change to formal wear and we were ready for a walk to The Queensland Club nearby. This was for the Welcoming Dinner hosted by Don Fraser and the Queensland Seniors and wives.

The Queensland Club is very English, 170 years old, in very good condition, considering it survived a fire in 1870.

The service and the food were outstanding, and truly lived up to its reputation. A most enjoyable evening was had by all



11^H OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 4 Hope Island



Early breakfast at 6.00 clock, and everyone ready to leave by coach at 9.00clock for the gold coast.

The ladies were dropped off at Pacific Fair, for a morning of retail therapy, and the men went onto Hope Island golf course.

This course proved to be a good mixture of water, bunkers, and fairways, which the men found a good test of their golf.



Wessel & local company.

The men encountered a number of spectators but they didn't appear to be very impressed by the golf and just continued either grazing or dozing.



The ladies enjoyed a relaxed morning visiting the shops, and realising our Rand doesn't buy very much! The bus returned and picked up the ladies to take them to lunch at Sanctuary Cove, beautiful views and a stunning lunch at George Paragon's restaurant, this was really enjoyed by all the ladies.

The ladies rejoined the players back at the golf club in time for drinks, prize giving, and the presentation of the silver salver from the South Africans. We then boarded the bus for the trip back to the hotel. On the return journey a comfort stop was required.

12TH OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 5 Lone Pine Sanctuary

A free day for everyone, a day to relax and enjoy one of Brisbane's tourist attractions, the Lone Pine Sanctuary.



Brisbane River

After a leisurely start we wandered across the river to the Cultural Centre pontoon to catch the cruiser 'Miramar' for a wonderful cruise up the river, passing some of Brisbane's older and most exclusive homes.



Houses along the bank.

The sanctuary had a great selection of Australia's wild life, which we all enjoyed. Among them are koalas some that are still traumatized after the bush fires that occurred recently.

We caught the cruiser for the return trip back and arrived at our hotel about 4.00pm.



A rescued koala



Irene handling a snake.



On the return journey it was suggested that we all go for a meal together after we got back. A Chinese was suggested and Ian Forbes volunteered to go and look for a suitable restaurant.

Ian announced later that he had found something nearby and they had even given us a private room as we were a party.

What a night! We arrived at Madam Wu's restaurant on the riverside and were treated to a magnificent feast with the food and drink flowing.

13TH OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 6 Royal Queensland Golf Club

Thursday morning was another early start for an 8:00 am shotgun start at the Royal Queensland Golf Club. This was being prepared for the Australian PGA Championship that we could later enjoy on TV after we had returned to SA.



Patrick & Chris with opponents



Ian & David with opponents



Rob & John with opponents



Peter & Richard with opponents

The Club House and the course were stunning, but many of the golfers found lots of hidden 'traps', which they found quite testing, especially with the wind blowing, local knowledge was definitely an advantage.



Drinks and snacks on the terrace.



Richard presenting the salver.

After golf, we were treated to an amazing spread of snacks, and drinks, and Richard Jelley presented a silver salver on behalf of the South African Seniors.

14TH OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 7 Indooroopilly Golf Club



Friday and our last day of golf in Queensland. The bus departed for Indooroopilly golf club at 9.30am for tee off times from 11.00am. Our bus arrived with a bang but fortunately there was not too much damage to the foyer roof or the bus! With no halfway house for those used to one, we were provided with lunch boxes for sustenance during the round.

A few had played the course previously in 2005, and Peter remembered the hordes of bats hanging in the trees by the river, but this time they seem to have moved on. Possibly due to the recent flooding or perhaps another reason. One change was definitely the yacht marooned against the trees at the back of one of the greens! A sign of the recent floods.



The sad end of “Miss Freelove” stranded after the March floods



The SA team and their hosts after a day of golf



The SA Ladies

We were once again treated to tasty snacks and drinks, and after the prize giving and the presentation by Captain of the Day, Patrick Cronin, of a silver salver and a statue of a Rhino. Fulvio Toniotti, the President, then bid us farewell on behalf of the Queensland Seniors.



Patrick with the Indooroopilly Captain



and with Fulvio Toniotti and Rhino

Rob Thatcher, Les Nathanson, Don Fraser with their wives, and all the other players and hosts, plus our wonderful drivers, all deserve a huge thanks from the South African players and their wives, for spoiling us.

Saturday 5TH OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 8
Farewell to Queensland and welcome to Victoria.

Everybody was up early, to catch the bus for Brisbane Airport and our flight to Melbourne. Once we found our way to the Group Bookings counter the remainder of the journey was uneventful.



Melbourne and the Yarra river, AND Blue Sky!

Arriving in Melbourne we were met by David Field, the President of the Senior Golfers Society of Victoria, and were taken by coach to the RACV Club. After settling in we had the remainder of the day to relax and explore our new location.

16TH OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 9

We all enjoyed a relaxed morning, and spent the day exploring the city, in and around the CBD.

In the evening we were invited to a cocktail party in the RACV building, by members of the Seniors Golf Society of Victoria and their wives.

We also met up with Gary Lee, the Honorable Secretary of the Senior Golfers Society of Australia who was the Main Coordinator of our tour.



A great evening to get to know our hosts.

17TH OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 10 Royal Melbourne Golf Club

This morning we had a leisurely start, with a late breakfast before our start at 11.00am. A coach ride to Royal Melbourne Golf Club in the morning sun. The West Course is rated No.1 in Australia and in the top 5 in the World.



Royal Melbourne Golf Club, what a beautiful setting, stunning clubhouse, with plenty of memorabilia.



We were treated to a superb buffet lunch, which set us up for the match.



2 groups of players and Peter Wilson presenting the Memorial Salver to David Field

The course proved to be challenging, with bunkers all in strategic places, knowledge of the course was definitely an advantage although Peter, the Touring Captain of the Day, had a net gain of 5 balls, by the time he finished! The crows here are a problem, and one was seen landing on a golf bag, opening the zip, and stealing an energy bar! After drinks and snacks, and prize giving, David Field was presented with a silver salver on behalf of the South African Seniors.

18TH OCTOBER 2020 - DAY 11 Metropolitan Golf Club

Another relaxing morning, with time to catch up with some chores, before the men joined the coach for the 30-minute ride to the Metropolitan Golf Club.



We were met by the Senior golfers and some wives and after a light lunch, we all teed off from 1.00pm.



Lunch in the beautiful clubhouse that has large vistas of the course.

This was another fabulous course on The Sand Belt. The practice facilities are high quality and they have a large junior golfing section, who are well looked after, which is a good sign for the future.

The golf course is well manicured, but with plenty of bunkers to catch you.



Drinks and a sumptuous dinner, was well received, and the prize giving included the handover of the Tourist's silver salver by Captain of the Day, Chris Campbell, to Metropolitan G.C. President.

The bus departed late for the RACV club and everyone was pleased to see their beds, after a great day of golf, and fellowship.

19th October 2022 - Day 12 The Yarra Valley

A free day for us all, and a great trip organised for us to the Yarra Valley.

A nine o'clock start from the RACV with a full day in store heading out of the city and into the countryside with beautiful fields of vines, rolling hills with farm animals, and some stunning views.

Our first visit was to the Yarra Valley Chocolaterie and Ice Creamery.



In the Rocky Road Mixing Room



Robin with a metre of chocolate

Not only did we make our own mixture of chocolate and sweets, but we had time to visit the shop to buy goodies to take home.

Next it was onto the wine tasting, firstly at Soumah of Yarra Valley where we also enjoyed an al fresco lunch and an opportunity to buy some of their wines.



Happy faces at Soumah Vineyard

This was followed by a visit to the Tokar Estate for more wine tasting. This estate has some wonderful gardens and we had time to meander through them and enjoy the scenery.



Tokar Estate

Then it was back on the coach for the return trip to the hotel.

20TH OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 13 Kingston Heath Golf Club

Today the coach fetched us at 10.30am for our trip to Kingston Heath Golf Club, where we had been invited to play in their regular monthly meeting. After pre-lunch drinks we enjoyed a tasty lunch organized by their Captain, Peter Clark, before our afternoon tee offs.



Kingston Heath GC pre-golf lunch

Once again, we were presented with a well-manicured golf course, and not too difficult if you kept to the straight and narrow. By now, some of the golfers were getting used to large sand bunkers and understood why this was called The Sand Belt.

A quick refreshment and change before being driven to the historic West Brighton Club where everyone met for the Victorian Seniors Annual Dinner.



The West Brighton Club

This was a wonderful meal, worthy of such an occasion.



Guest Speaker Mike Happell



Patrick Cronin giving a vote of Thanks

We also enjoyed an after-dinner speaker, Mike Happell, the CEO of the MCC, who gave us a very interesting speech, telling us how they turned Melbourne Cricket Club into an international ground, which proved very informative.

This was not the end of the surprises, as each couple were presented with a copy of "Great Golf Down Under 2", which is full of beautiful photos of Australian and New Zealand golf courses, a lovely memento.

By the time we all got back to the hotel we were truly exhausted.

Many thanks to Peter Clark and all the Victorian Seniors, who helped to make this a very special day.

21 OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 14 Flinders Golf Club

After a much-needed rest, we left at 9.15am, for the long drive to the coast and Flinders Golf Club.



We were met at Flinders by Bill Richardson, the Captain, who had arranged snacks and drinks for us, before we teed off at 12.30pm.

The golf course reminded Peter of a Southern Cape coastal course, with endless views along the coast, and with good weather, it proved to be a pleasant round.



After golf, we were treated once again, to drinks and snacks, and during prize giving Ian Forbes presented the silver salver to the club, on behalf of the South African Seniors.

Our thanks must go to Bill and his team at Flinders Golf Club, for a very enjoyable day.

Saturday 22ND OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 15
Farewell to Victoria and welcome to New South Wales.

It had been another wonderful week of good golf and fellowship and without any rain until we were approaching the hotel on the Friday evening when the heavens opened and Melbourne was soaked again. The following Tuesday was the annual running of the Melbourne Cup and it was later announced that it was the coldest, wettest meeting for many years. We had been truly blessed with a small window in the wet weather conditions.

Saturday morning saw us driving to Melbourne airport in the rain to catch our flight to Sydney, New South Wales. There we were welcomed to Sydney by John Foulsham, the New South Wales President, and taken to the Raddison Blue hotel, in the centre of Sydney.

We had the remainder of the day to unpack, freshen up, and explore some of Sydney's many restaurants.

Sadly, Jetske and Gordon had to return to South Africa, after news that Jetske's mother had been taken to hospital after a bad fall. It was sad to see them go, but later the news was that she had a successful operation and was recovering well.

23RD OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 16 Sydney Tour & Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron

A free morning in Sydney, such a beautiful town with so much to enjoy. The Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Opera House so majestic in real life, they are breathtaking.



Sydney Opera House with Sydney Harbour Bridge in the background.



Bondi Beach

Later, we were picked up by our coach for a tour of Sydney, which was quite an eye opener, so many skyscrapers, and high-rise buildings, not only company offices, but accommodation as well, when you see the views, you can understand why everyone wants to be near the Harbour.



Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron

Our destination that afternoon was the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, where we were given a welcoming party by the Seniors of New South Wales and their partners. More wonderful views of the river and of course the Harbour. Such a magnificent building which matched the hospitality given to us.



The SA Seniors players and partners (minus Gordon & Jetske)

24TH OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 17 Elanora Country Club

An excellent buffet breakfast awaited us this morning, before we travelled to Elanora Country Club.



On the road to Elanora but the weather improved by the time we reached the club



Elanora Clubhouse.



Unfortunately, heavy rains had affected the course, so no electric drive carts were allowed. Peter and his partner Clark Gibbons, the Captain of New South Wales Seniors, both with back problems, found 9 holes were enough, and unfortunately had to call it a day.

Clark Gibbons, Robert Scott & Peter Wilson

Fortunately, Peter had played this course in 2005, on a previous tour, and was really looking forward to playing it again, but he had to admit after 17 years his body, after a few operations, wasn't up to it, but the golfers who managed to finish really enjoyed it.



No problem, after a shower, they retired to the bar, and with the help of Chris sorted out the world's problems.!!

Peter & Janet Wilson with Clark Gibbons



David Horak & Clark Gibbons plus the Salver presentation to Elanora CC.
When everyone finally finished, a delicious supper was served, and prize giving followed.

25TH OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 18 Concord Golf Club

A leisurely start this morning, arriving at Concord Golf Club about 11 o'clock.



The Concord Clubhouse.

Unfortunately, the rain had affected the course here too, and no carts were allowed.

The course looked excellent and their facilities were first class. The Club House gardens, were exceptional with everything well pruned and ready for the next wedding photo shoot.



Wessel and David getting ready to play.



The 1st tee at Concord GC

Most of the players managed to play and the Australian Seniors had arranged for the non-players to visit the Featherdale Wildlife Park a short distance away.



A Red-necked Pademelon and Joey



Southern Cassowary.



Laid back Koala



Dingo



We met up with the golfers back at the golf club for a delicious supper and prize giving. We were then entertained by Mick Jordan, who kept the party going with his sing-a-longs.



Ian Forbes presenting the Salver to Concord GC



Mick Jordan

Everyone had such a great time it was very sad when the time came to leave, and of course the bus was waiting to take us back to the hotel after a truly enjoyable day.

Wednesday dawned, a perfect day for our Sydney Harbour cruise.



A beautiful yacht, MV JBW, met us at Circular Quay and took us on a scenic cruise around what must be one of the world's greatest natural harbours. What else is there to be said? The drinks were cold, the delicious food plentiful, and scenery to die for.

A truly big spoil, and definitely one of the highlights of our trip.



Thank you, New South Wales Seniors, you have certainly shown us the best.

27TH OCTOBER 2022 - DAY 20 – The Australian G. C.



An early start today and on to the coach for our trip to The Australian Golf Club, a wonderful club house which overlooks a very well-manicured parkland golf course, which has lots of challenges.

This was the only course, in the last three weeks, where the rain fell during play, and that was only over the last couple of holes, how lucky have we been?



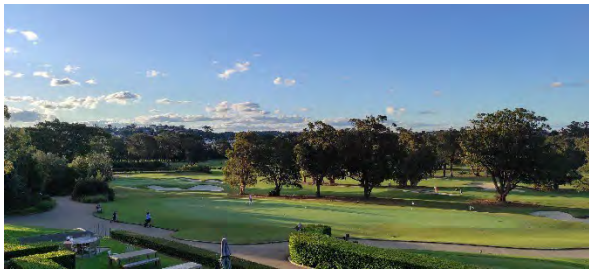
In the beautifully laid out dining room we were treated to a light lunch and drinks, followed by presentations and lighthearted speeches before we headed back to our hotel. A very memorable day.



The Manager of The Australian Club, Steven Shearer, is a South African from Port Elizabeth, who went to school and played golf with Peter and Janet's son, Stephen. It was a great surprise to see him after a number of years since their last visit.

Peter Wilson & Steven Shearer

28TH OCTOBER 2022. DAY - 21ST DAY – Manly Golf Club – Our Final Day.



Our last game of golf, here in Australia, which was played at the Manly Golf Club on the north eastern side of Sydney harbour. On arrival by coach, we were treated to a light lunch, before teeing off at mid-day on another parkland like course with a well laid out clubhouse, which was unfortunately damaged by fire recently. Fortunately, the main clubhouse had been brought back into service but the Pro Shop was still operating out of a spare room at the entrance to the clubhouse.



Phil Howard & partner with Richard & Chris



John and Ian with their opponents.

The golf course was in excellent condition, and not unlike our courses in South Africa.

After golf the wives and guests arrived for the final dinner, prizegiving and well-deserved tributes, together with presentations to the Senior Australian Golfers and their committees.



Patrick presenting the Salver to Phil Howard



Patrick presenting the Rhino to John Foulsham.



John receiving the Trophy from Gary Lee and Gary with the Trophy presented by the SA Seniors.



A big thank you to everyone involved with the organization of this trip, an unbelievable experience.

Results

Overall scores for the tour.

Queensland	South Africa	3	Australia	2
Victoria	South Africa	2	Australia	3
New South Wales	South Africa	3	Australia	2

South Africa were the overall winners 8 to 7.

A close result and a beautiful end to a wonderful tour.

List of the courses played on the Tour

Queensland

**Brookwater Golf Club
Hope Island Golf Club
Royal Queensland Golf Club
Indooroopilly Golf Club**

Victoria

**Royal Melbourne Golf Club
The Metropolitan Golf Club
Kingston Heath Golf Club
Flinders Golf Club**

New South Wales

**Elanora Country Club
Concord Golf Club
The Australian Golf Club
Manly Golf Club**

29TH OCTOBER 2022. DAY - 22ND End of Fabulous Tour



Our last day in Sydney, and to remember this wonderful city, two of our touring party, namely Janet Wilson and Ian Forbes climbed the Sydney Harbour bridge, a great finale to a wonderful trip.



A last night together before the return to SA

A gathering in the bar at The Radisson Blue, Sydney.



