

The Origins of Sunshine Coast Challenge Golf

In 2005, **Takeo Sakiyama**, a member of Twin Waters, had the original idea of running golf competitions at the best Sunshine Coast venues, at a reduced price, to raise funds to support Rotary exchange students to travel to Japan. With the assistance of **Alby Taylor, Peter Smith and Mel Jackson**, these early events were played at Twin Waters, Pelican Waters and the Hyatt Regency, Coolum. The format proved so successful that, when Takeo returned to Japan in 2006, the others decided to formalise the organisation; on 19th May 2006 the Sunshine Coast Challenge Golf was formally incorporated under the Associations Act 1981.

Other Committee Members were recruited, the membership expanded to include golfers from all over the Sunshine Coast, and new venues such as Peregrin, Pacific Harbour and Noosa Springs were added to the calendar. It was agreed that the charitable donations should be more widely distributed, with donations being made to the Daniel Morcombe Foundation, Gordon Marsden Appeal and the Premier's Flood Appeal, but eventually Wishlist became the charity of choice due to the diversity of their projects. The over-arching aim of the group was, and still is, to offer a great day of golf with like-minded players, and to donate surplus funds to charity.

Using a basic website and booking system devised by Chris Thomas, son of early Committee members Sharon & Michael Thomas, access became easier for new players, and by 2009 the membership database numbered 93 players from 15 different clubs - Headland and Horton Park players had the highest numbers.

Fast-forward to 2020, where our historic database includes 728 names! Not all are still playing, but our 2019 records show that 335 different golfers took part during the year. There were a few key moments along our 14 year history that shaped the success, and are worth noting:

- 2011 Online scoring and handicapping commenced through Golflink
- 2011 Eftpos introduced at registration
- 2012 Members Jackpot Draw introduced
- 2012 Golf prizes split into Handicap Divisions - Mens A, B, C and Ladies
- 2016 New Logo created
- 2019 New Website created with access to MiClub for Bookings

Along the way, we have sadly dropped the Hyatt (now Palmer Coolum) from our rotation, but have added Maroochy River as a popular venue. One of our founder members, Peter Smith, was made a Life Member in 2016, and still supports the group by auditing our annual accounts. We are delighted that other founder members, Alby Taylor and Mel Jackson are still on the Committee, which also includes long-time member **Rosie Glasson**, who as Secretary, is the glue holding it all together!

It is somewhat amazing to report that the cost of playing the monthly game has remained at the original price of \$75! This is despite an increase in green fees by most venues in 2019. Thanks to our sponsors, we are able to maintain our generous prize list, and with the support of the players through the raffle, we have also been able to continue our usual \$10,000 per year donation to Wishlist. (A slight Covid hiccup in 2020 means our donation has been reduced to \$7,350). Our total donations to Wishlist now stand at just under \$120,000!

As we proudly celebrate our **200th Challenge event**, we extend our thanks to all of our supporters, volunteer Committee members, sponsors, and of course players, who have been involved in our journey over the past 15 years.

Lorna Gibson, President

September 2020