

History of Southern Golf Club

Southern Golf Club is a very proud Club. It is a Club that has always been admired for its friendliness and feared for its competitiveness and fighting spirit. And this spirit was evident from day one of the Club. Our founding fathers, most of whom had just returned from the Second World War, decided that they wanted their own Club and own course. Along the way they were confronted with many obstacles, but none too big to deter them from their objective. (Mike Hedge, author of "Crossing the Road" 1998)

On a wintery Saturday morning in August 1937, a group of Brighton regulars started sounding each other out about banding together and forming their own Club. This group became the Brighton Golf Club, the forerunner of Southern Golf Club. One of the main organizers was Vic Harrison, and his idea was so popular that within 2 years there were 35 regular players and around 50 Members.

Harrison and his successor as Secretary Peter Timmins decided that they should move their Club to a renowned Sandbelt area in Melbourne's south east, so began examining sites. They found 60 acres on one side of Centre Dandenong Road and 40 acres on the opposite side. The Keys family sold the land for the new course for 9,000 pounds. This was a bold investment by the group who in 1947 had a mere 740 pounds to its name.

A lot more money was needed before the golf course could be carved out of the old dairy farm and this was raised from joining fees and 25 pound debentures, as well as borrowings. There was a flood of applications to join as no new Club had been built in many years and the public were golf hungry.

The Brighton Members formed their first committee at Keysborough in September 1948 and the new Club officially came into being with Vic Harrison (President) and Peter Timmins (Secretary). In 1949 it had money in the bank, more than 500 Members, a golf course and a Clubhouse called "Emily". (Picture below)

Crossing the road became a game of Russian roulette, but after many years of plans and ideas, in 1976 the MMBW advised that it would do a straight swap of the 40 acres on the northern side, but Southern still had to purchase 30 acres from the McMahon family to enable it to build the new nine holes. This was at a cost of \$360,000 and a further cost of \$205,000 to build the new nine holes and redevelop the existing 11 holes on the "Clubhouse block" into the nine hole layout which now exists.

To all the faithful Members who stuck with the Club after the decision to "cross the road" was taken, the course suffered and many outsiders referred to it as a "goat track". The Club struggled both financially as well as on the course, but the Members who stayed on through those years now form the backbone of the Club and are now being rewarded for their loyalty.

The course is in magnificent condition, a pleasure to play on and with the friendliest and welcoming Members possible. So come along and have a game at Southern.

