

# **Submission to Jobs and Skills Australia – CSOL Consultation 2025**

From: Lake Karrinyup Country Club

Subject: Reinstatement of Sports Turf Manager/Trades Worker (Greenkeeping) on the Core Skills Occupation List (CSOL)

## **Club Profile**

Lake Karrinyup Country Club was founded in 1928 and is located in Perth, Western Australia. We are recognised nationally and internationally as one of Australia's most prestigious clubs, with approximately 2,000 members and hosting around 60,000 rounds annually. The club employs over 80 full-time equivalent staff across turf management, golf operations, hospitality, and administration. We have a proud history of hosting the Australian Open, European Tour events, and numerous top professional and amateur tournaments. Beyond championship golf, we play an important role in the community through junior development programs, women's introduction to golf pathways, and several high-profile charity days. Our reputation and contribution depend directly on maintaining world-class course standards, which in turn requires a fully staffed, highly skilled turf management team.

## **Labour Market Challenges**

Despite comprehensive local advertising and recruitment efforts, we continue to face major difficulties in sourcing qualified greenkeepers: - In 2024, we advertised one full-time turf role and received zero suitable applicants. - At present, three core turf roles remain unfilled. - To cover the shortfall, we are forced to rely on four unskilled casual employees. This situation is not sustainable. Until October 2024, the option to sponsor skilled international greenkeepers provided an essential safety valve. With the removal of Sports Turf Manager/Trades Worker roles from the CSOL, that pathway is closed, leaving clubs like ours unable to plan workforce needs with confidence.

## **Operational Impact**

Staff shortages directly affect the presentation, consistency, and resilience of the golf course. Reduced staffing levels have: - Limited our ability to maintain optimal mowing and bunker presentation. - Increased reliance on unskilled labour, resulting in inconsistent course quality. - Forced delays to planned course upgrades and ongoing improvement works. - Placed additional strain on existing staff through overtime and reduced leave flexibility. These pressures are compounded during peak growing months (spring through autumn), when demand on turf operations is greatest.

## **Environmental Benefit of Golf Courses**

Golf courses, when managed to best practice, contribute significant environmental benefits. Turfgrass, trees, and shrubs act as natural carbon sinks, improve local air quality, trap dust and particulates, and provide important green space in urban environments. Lake Karrinyup actively

integrates native plants, manages significant areas of bushland, and provides habitats for birds and pollinators — enhancing biodiversity across 100 hectares. A well-maintained course also serves as a natural buffer, cooling the local microclimate and improving sustainability outcomes for the broader community.

## **Economic and Community Contribution**

Lake Karrinyup Country Club is a high-profile employer, event host, and contributor to the local economy. We generate significant annual turnover, employ 80 full-time equivalent staff, and host multiple major events each year. The economic and social reach of our operations extends well beyond our membership. We attract domestic and international visitors, generate tourism spend, and deliver community outcomes through development programs and charity fundraising. If our ability to maintain world-class playing standards is undermined by labour shortages, the consequences extend beyond our membership: - Reduced visitor rounds and green-fee income. - Diminished capacity to host professional tournaments that bring prestige and economic benefit to WA. - A weaker pipeline of golf participation and development outcomes for the community. The inability to access skilled overseas greenkeepers therefore has broad implications for sport, tourism, and community wellbeing.

## **Skills and Training**

Turf management is a specialised trade requiring expertise in: - Agronomy and plant science - Irrigation and water conservation - Pest, weed, and disease management - Machinery operation and maintenance - Sustainability and environmental stewardship This skillset cannot be substituted by general horticulture or untrained labour. While Lake Karrinyup is strongly committed to apprenticeships and developing local staff, the domestic pipeline cannot meet current demand. With experienced staff continuing to leave the industry for councils, contractors, or other sectors, the shortage is becoming more acute.

## **Request**

We strongly urge Jobs and Skills Australia to reinstate Sports Turf Manager/Trades Worker (greenkeeping) roles on the Core Skills Occupation List. Doing so will: - Provide clubs with a sustainable pathway to secure skilled staff. - Safeguard the quality and international reputation of Australian golf courses. - Protect the economic and community contributions of the golf industry. - Ensure clubs can continue to deliver safe, sustainable, and environmentally responsible facilities. Lake Karrinyup Country Club stands as one of Australia's leading clubs, and the top in Western Australia by a considerable margin. Our ability to maintain that standing is directly threatened by the current workforce shortage. We urge Government to recognise the critical role of skilled turf professionals and restore greenkeeping to the CSOL.