

23 September 2025

Jobs and Skills Australia  
The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

**Re: Support for Australian Sports Turf Managers Association Submission – Inclusion of Unit Group 3425 Sports Turf Managers and Trades Workers on the Core Skills Occupations List (CSOL)**

On behalf of The Grange Golf Club in Adelaide, South Australia, I am pleased to express our strong support for the Australian Sports Turf Managers Association's (ASTMA) submission seeking the inclusion of Unit Group 3425 – Sports Turf Managers and Trades Workers (and all associated occupation titles) on the 2025 Core Skills Occupations List.

Sports Turf Managers and Trades Workers play a vital role in ensuring that Australia's sporting facilities are safe, sustainable, and maintained to world-class standards. These highly skilled professionals underpin the delivery of major events, community sport and recreation, tourism activity, and regional economic development.

As context for this submission, it is important to highlight the scale and significance of The Grange Golf Club within both the Australian golf landscape and the broader community.

Founded in 1926, The Grange Golf Club is recognised as one of the nation's premier private clubs. With two championship courses, we accommodate more than 2,600 active members across a range of categories, including over 1,800 playing members, and host approximately 111,000 rounds of golf annually. The Club employs more than 100 staff across turf management, golf operations, hospitality, and administration.

Our reputation is built on delivering world-class tournaments and events. Most notably, The Grange is home to Adelaide's record-breaking LIV Golf tournament, named the World's Best Golf Event of the Year at the World Golf Awards in both 2023 and 2024. We have also hosted the 2016 and 2019 Women's Australian Open, the 1976 West Lakes Classic, and the 1992 Australian Junior Championship.

Beyond tournament golf, The Grange makes a strong contribution to the community through programs designed to grow participation and support pathways in the game. These include our junior development clinics and initiatives to encourage women into golf, such as Chip & Sip Clinics and the Give Golf a Go membership.

The scale of turf maintenance required to manage two championship golf courses is significant. In 2023/24, our turf team spent 5,115 labour hours cutting greens and 7,216 hours raking bunkers. In 2024/25, these figures reduced to 2,148 and 5,700 hours respectively. This was not due to a reduction in course needs, but because of workforce shortages that limit the labour we can allocate to essential tasks.

THE GRANGE GOLF CLUB INC.



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Despite ongoing investment in staff development and training, local supply of qualified turf staff is unable to meet demand. In 2024/25, The Grange Golf Club advertised two turf positions and received only 21 suitable applicants. At present, three roles remain unfilled, directly impacting our ability to upgrade and maintain the course to the standards expected by members, guests, and international tournaments.

The Club currently employs 28 staff in various turf management positions including 8 qualified greenkeepers, 10 unqualified staff, 5 apprentices, and 5 specialised positions. During peak growing seasons, we are forced to rely on unskilled casuals and international greenkeepers engaged on short-term visas. These arrangements provide only temporary relief and do not offer a sustainable solution. Over the past three years, The Grange Golf Club has relied on 8 international greenkeepers on short-term visas (with two more due to arrive in October and December 2025) and more than 30 unskilled casuals, many of whom have since moved on.

The removal of Sports Turf Manager and Trades Workers from the CSOL has closed an essential pathway for securing experienced overseas staff. Without access to this pool of qualified professionals, clubs like ours face growing challenges in maintaining world-class playing surfaces and planning for long-term sustainability.

Golf courses deliver wide-ranging benefits to their communities and to the state economy. The Grange Golf Club is a leading example of this impact.

From an economic perspective, we have hosted LIV Golf Adelaide for the past three years, an event that has brought substantial returns to South Australia. Independent analysis estimates the tournament generated \$64.9 million in economic impact in 2023, \$71.1 million in 2024, and a record \$81.46 million in 2025. These figures highlight the role that golf facilities play in attracting international visitors, showcasing South Australia globally, and contributing to tourism, hospitality, and related industries.

Environmentally, The Grange Golf Club provides and maintains significant green space within metropolitan Adelaide. The Club manages extensive wetlands, supporting biodiversity and sustainable water practices. We injected 92.4ML of water into our wetlands in 2022/23, 66ML in 2023/24, and 138ML in 2024/25, helping sustain the local ecosystem. We also planted 4,498 native plants in 2023/24 and a further 700 in 2024/25. Some species found at The Grange Golf Club are unique to South Australia and are not recorded anywhere else.

Our contribution to the community extends beyond golf. We provide Seaton High School students with access to our wetlands for water sampling and fieldwork, offering valuable educational opportunities. We have supported local wildlife rehabilitation, including caring for an injured koala until it could be safely released back into the wild. Programs such as junior development clinics, Chip & Sip Clinics, and Give Golf a Go memberships ensure the game remains accessible and inclusive, encouraging participation across all ages and abilities.

These examples demonstrate that golf clubs, and the skilled professionals who maintain them, provide outcomes that are economically, environmentally, and socially beneficial not only to South Australia, but to Australia as a whole.

Turf management is a highly specialised profession requiring knowledge of:

- Agronomy and plant science
- Irrigation systems and water conservation

- Pest and disease control
- Sustainability and environmental stewardship

These skills are not interchangeable with general horticulture or unskilled labour. Qualified greenkeepers bring unique expertise that cannot be substituted by casual or untrained staff.

While The Grange Golf Club is committed to training apprentices and developing local staff, the pipeline alone cannot meet current demand, particularly as experienced greenkeepers continue to leave the industry for other sectors. Access to skilled professionals from overseas is therefore essential to ensuring golf courses can be maintained to international standards while also providing the time and mentorship needed to develop the next generation of local staff.

Our organisation has observed first-hand the growing and persistent workforce shortages in these occupations. Despite competitive wages and significant recruitment efforts, employers across both metropolitan and regional areas are struggling to source suitably qualified staff. This shortage directly threatens the quality and safety of sporting surfaces and limits Australia's capacity to host competitions at all levels.

We therefore endorse ASTMA's request for inclusion of these occupations on the CSOL. Enabling access to skilled migration pathways, alongside domestic training efforts, is essential to address the structural workforce gaps in this sector. We believe such action is in the national interest and will protect Australia's sporting reputation and infrastructure for years to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this important submission. Please

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