

Attn:

Company: Mollymook Golf Club
Mollymook, NSW

Date: 8th November 2022

Re Mollymook Golf Club - Hole 9 Safety and Design Solution Review

My name is Harley Kruse and I'm a practicing golf course architect with over 30 years of industry experience in the design and development of new golf courses and remodelling existing ones. I am a member of the Society of Golf Course Architects (SAGCA) and served four years as President until June 2022.

I have been approached to make a review of the current 9th hole at Mollymook GC in relation to safety and possible solutions. Hole 9 currently a par 3 hole of some 166 metres in length (measured using Nearmap see image below)



Hole 9 and Clubhouse Mollymook GC

Existing 9th Hole

Upon reviewing this hole on Nearmap, along with a provided survey plan, I can advise that the extremely tight dimension between the midpoint of the existing 9th green and the edge of the clubhouse path (at only 24.5 metres) presents a considerable safety risk.

At least 40% of winds at Mollymook are onshore with the strongest of these coming from a North East direction typically during the summer months. Stronger winds from this direction, if affecting play, will tend to impact ball flight towards the clubhouse.

I am currently not aware of the statistics of errant balls hitting the clubhouse, Or even more seriously the number of errant balls nearly missing or directly striking a person located outside of the clubhouse, but in this case the dimensions are so tight that the safety risks are very high. It is not a matter of will the clubhouse or somebody be hit but when.

In today's golf climate where golf courses are doing rounds of higher than previous years the safety risks will higher with the increased patronage.

As we can appreciate an errant golf ball, even played from a mid length par 3 like the current 9th hole, can strike someone and cause serious personal injury or even worse. This risk is unacceptable in modern golf course design and should also be unacceptable in golf course operation.

Sometimes it is difficult for clubs and boards to accept the safety risks and dangers of their existing course. Often driven by an expected and genuine fondness for their course and keeping things the way, they are. "It has always been like this" or "we have never had a problem before". However, problems tend to exist and it is typically the general manger, or golf operations personnel, whom will be more likely have a greater awareness of safety incidents and the need to fix things.

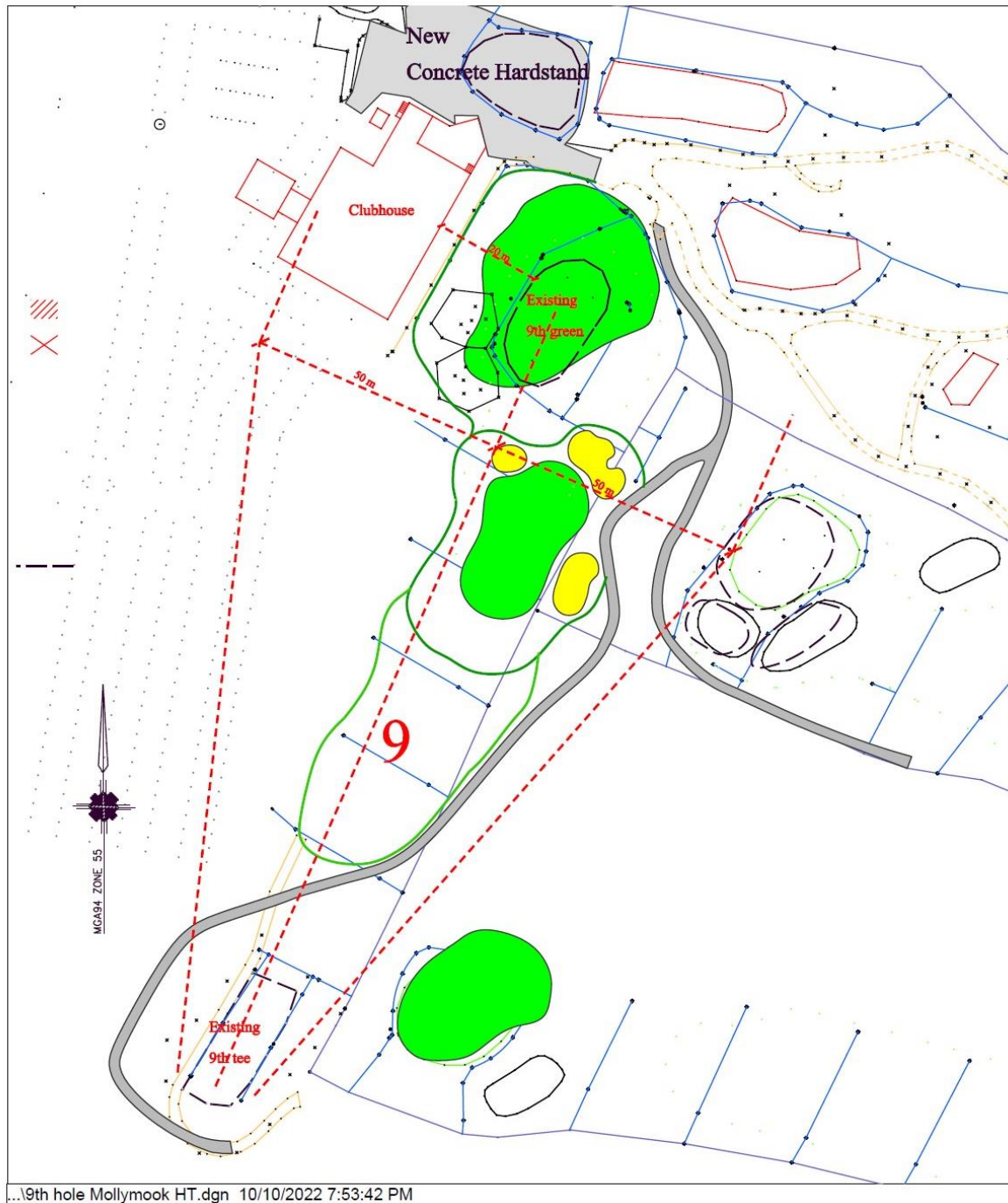
Design Solution

In the absence of erecting safety netting between the 9th green and the clubhouse which would be an unsightly solution and pose considerable cost directly, the 9th green needs to be moved to a safer distance away from the clubhouse. This is certainly the more attractive, less costly and better golfing solution

Yes, it will need to be a shorter Par 3, but with good design it can be an even better par 3 than what the club currently has. Every club needs a good short Par 3. The 10th hole at Kingston Heath at only 110 metres is often considered one of the greatest Par 3s in Australia.

Proposed New 9th Green

My review of the design solution by Justin Trott (SAGCA) of Turnpoint is a new hole design that considerably much safer than the current unacceptable situation.



The green has been well located away from the clubhouse and the current shared pedestrian and cart path adjacent to the clubhouse.

The proposed green is effectively mid-way between the golf course and carpark boundary to the west of the hole, and the mid-point of the green to the east of the hole. A total distance of 97metres. This in turn has allow the new design to achieve a 45- 50m safety distance between the mid-point of the proposed green and the carpark to the west, and also similar distance between the midpoint of the green to the east.

This is all achieved with a shorter hole requiring slower swing speeds as golfers are typically using more lofted clubs. Shorter Par 3 holes are less prone to the errant shots. And certainly, ones of high-speed ball flight and therefore these holes pose a reduced safety risk.

For this new design the existing mature vegetation to the west of the hole also continues to assist with protection of the cars and people in the carpark

The design of the new green with its two bunkers to the rear and bunker right will reward a precise shot of length and accuracy. The larger and longer green will also provide a greater range of pin positions for more interesting shot making and putting. It will also help spread wear and tear which is important on a busy course like Mollymook.

The other upside for the club is Justin has now been able to locate a sizeable Practice Putting Green in front of the clubhouse. The prime location size of such a sizeable practice green should be a great and popular asset for the club.

Conclusion

The location of the existing 9th green is dangerous. The design solution by Justin Trott is a sound way of mitigating the current safety risk. Despite being a shorter hole, the new design actually creates a better par 3 than the existing 9th hole.

Harley Kruse

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