

Marion Golf Park Marketing Plan 2021- 22



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STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The *2021 Marion Golf Park Marketing Plan* is a sub-plan of the *2020 – 2023 City of Marion Marketing and Communications Plan*.

Both plans are aligned with the City of Marion's strategic objectives.



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *2021-22 Marion Golf Park Marketing Plan* has been created by the City of Marion to help promote the course and its available facilities. It is understood that the course has had very little promotion or investment for a considerable period of time, and yet the fact it is attracting over 15,000 annual rounds, indicates a desire for the product and opportunity for growth.

This plan aims to attract more people to play at this beautiful hidden gem.

Currently the only form of marketing and communications for the course is the website and a Facebook account. Currently there is no process to collect data about the customer base and there is little advertising or marketing.

In its current condition, there are certain limitations to marketing the course, as the current entrance to the course and main buildings are in poor condition. Unfortunately, this undersells how good the course is, and provides a very negative first impression, followed by a poor last impression (as there's no food and beverage facility for after the game).

For the course to maximise its success and sustainability, a range of physical upgrades and improvements are required to ensure a positive experience for visitors and members which results in repeat visitations.

This plan will comprise of strategies and actions that can commence immediately, and those that can occur following an upgrade to course infrastructure (should that occur).

2. INTRODUCTION

Established in 1980, the Marion Golf Park (MGP) is a public 9-hole golf course located in Seacliff Park, South Australia. The course is ideally located with spectacular 270-degree views of the coastline and Adelaide plains, which makes the course unique for such an accessible location.

Being a public course, the MGP services the wider community and is also home to the Marion Park Golf Club. Fees are priced at community rates.

The site is partially owned by Council and encompasses the area occupied by the carpark, clubroom facilities and a section of land that is currently not used for any purpose. Boral Limited owns the remainder of the site, which primarily constitutes the playing surfaces. Belair Turf Management (BTM) hold the current agreement with Council for the management of course operations and maintenance.

The MGP has served the City of Marion and surrounding Councils for the past 40-years, however, the course and infrastructure are now looking tired. Council wants to invest in the course to ensure the current users can continue to enjoy the golf course, as well as increase utilisation and participation outcomes.

The ideal location of the course offers a great opportunity to develop new marketing strategies, expand the range of services and produce a sustainable operational model. The course also links to other opportunities including the new - residential development of Seacliff Park and expanding population.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the 2021-22 Marion Golf Park Marketing Plan is to create an effective strategy to further promote the course and maximise its use within the community.

To support this, the following objectives have been developed:

- 1. Increase public rounds to over 20,000 (by the end of 2023)**
- 2. Increase the profile of the course**
- 3. Improve the reputation of the course**
- 4. Increase visitor satisfaction levels**
- 5. Increase memberships of the Marion Park Golf Club to over 150 members (by the end of 2023).**

4. THE BRAND

The course itself currently has no individual branding but is known as Marion Golf Park (or Cement Hill). The current branding shown on the website is for the Marion Park Golf Club. It is a basic design used consistently across the different platforms (website and Facebook account) to promote the course and club. The branding is outdated and there is an opportunity to improve the branding as part of an upgrade to the course, and to create a greater profile and reputation. The Golf Club has indicated an interest in updating their brand in line with any change.



5. PUBLIC V PRIVATE GOLF

There are a range of golf courses located in and around Adelaide, which are differentiated by their location, terrain, quality, difficulty, accessibility to public, and pricing. It is a competitive industry and has traditionally been focused on driving loyalty through memberships. The golf industry is facing many challenges with the traditional model no longer completely fitting the needs and lifestyles of the wider public. In past years, there was a desire to be a member of a private club, however, there is a growing change towards public access courses that can offer lower cost, flexible options. 9-Hole courses are also increasing in popularity as they take less time to play, fitting in with busier lifestyles and demands.

6. POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

The Marion Golf Park is a smaller local course suitable for all ages, and perfect for visitors. It is a hidden gem that is not well-known, but it has huge potential to grow and develop.

The course's unique characteristics include:

- Ranked in Top 20 public 9-hole Golf Courses in Australia
- Spectacular coastal views – ideal location that will attract golfers
- Only 9-hole public course in Southern Adelaide (surrounding population 407,277) offering a unique golf experience
- Affordable membership options and pay as you play options
- Location of the planned new Cement Hill housing development (600 new dwellings)

This course is suitable for beginners, those who can't afford a private club membership, those who can't commit to a full year annual membership, and those who only want to play on the odd occasion.

7. THE FACILITY

The Marion Golf Park is a beautiful 9-hole course, located on top of the hill in Seacliff Park. It has stunning coastal views and is suitable for all different playing levels.

The facility features:

- Irrigated 9-hole golf course
- A Pro Shop - a basic facility providing a simple retail outlet
- Maintenance sheds and Greenkeeping facility
- A transportable building used as a Club House
- A rubble car park area

Location

The MGP is located on Clubhouse Road in Seacliff, with a large part of the course running alongside Ocean Boulevard. More than 33,000 vehicles pass the course each day, as Ocean Boulevard is a main thoroughfare for city commuters. There is a bus stop located on Ocean Boulevard Road directly across from Gardenia Street, which goes directly to the Golf Park (5min walk).

A Clubhouse at this location has the potential to attract a lot of community use due to its high visibility, volume of passing traffic, and stunning views.

On-site parking is available for all visitors, albeit in poor condition.

8. HOW THE GOLF COURSE OPERATES

Belair Turf Management is the company appointed to manage the course for the next two years. They are responsible for all operations including bookings and site management / maintenance.

Currently there is no food and beverage facility available to the public, however, in the Pro Shop there is a small fridge selling some soft drinks and sweets.

The site is open seven days a week from 6.30am until late during daylight savings, and until 5pm all other times.

The Marion Golf Club also operates out of the facility. The club has operated out of a small, portable "Atco" hut that has a bar managed by volunteers, who serve up to 60 members during competition times.

In 2019, over 15,000 rounds of golf were played at the MGP for casual, tournament and social rounds. Research has indicated that, with a course upgrade and improved marketing efforts, the current 15,000 rounds played per year can increase to 25,000 to 30,000 rounds.

An investment into the infrastructure upgrades provides the greatest opportunity to increase participation and can be aligned with a major marketing campaign to reinvigorate the course as a key sporting asset for the region.

9. CURRENT MARKETING ACTIVITIES

There has been limited investment into marketing the course in recent years, and as such there is little to no materials available. Currently, the only marketing resources the course has is the website, which is outdated and needs to be reviewed. There is also a Facebook page which is used regularly to inform the community about recent competitions and results.

10. STRENGTHS WEAKNESSES OPPORTUNITIES THREATS

This SWOT analysis has helped shape the tactics that will deliver the marketing and communications plan.

| Strengths | Opportunities |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable facilities Easily accessible and located near public transport Attracting around 15,000 rounds a year with limited marketing A course suitable for beginners and social players Perfect for tourists or visitors as you do not need to become a member to play Recognised as one of the top 9-hole courses in Australia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce a booking and CRM system Residential development in Seacliff Park Local population suitable to this target market Improving the website to be more user friendly and engaging Establish more of an online presence through social media Improving the sites physical availability by having clear signage Investing in a TV Screen for promotions New partnership opportunities 50-year lease extension |
| Weaknesses | Threats |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course and facilities now reaching end of life cycle | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of investment in assets Competition from other golf clubs |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> and require a major upgrade Not fully utilising the course to its full capacity Website is outdated and is not user-friendly Lack of customer-service standards Limited social media presence Lack of signage and promotional materials No online booking system Course visibility is low from major streets Lack of loyalty programs No marketing materials in the Pro Shop No traditional food and beverage clubhouse facilities No internal TV screens for promotions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in state developments and impacts on small sites |
|---|--|

11. MARKETING ACTIVITIES

The *2021 Marion Golf Park Marketing Plan* proactively promotes the club to the broad community and target groups.

Specific tactics are listed based on their timelines (short-term and long-term strategies) and by financial year under each objective:

1. Attract new customers by raising the profile of Marion Golf Park and its offerings
2. Strengthen loyalty among existing customers
3. Build a brand that is embraced and valued by the community

4. Look for opportunities to attract external funding where possible

Positioning

The main purpose of this marketing plan is to attract more people to play at this venue and use its facilities.

This golf club is perfect for those who want a fun social hit and looking for a quick round of golf (9-holes rather than 18-holes). It will be positioned in the market as a 'hidden gem', which is in a beautiful coastal location. Being an all-inclusive venue perfect for tourists and social players looking for something to do on the weekend. The focus will be primarily on attracting new visitors to the site and provide them with a great experience and to encourage repeat visitation.

How the plan will be delivered

The City of Marion will work with Belair Turf Management and Marion Park Golf Club to deliver the plan.

Council is currently seeking grant funding to undertake a major upgrade to the course and its facilities. Once completed, a broader marketing plan can be implemented to accommodate these changes. Until then it is recommended this plan be implemented focusing on short-term improvements. After six months an analysis should be conducted on the effectiveness of these changes, then if further funding becomes available, some long-term strategies can be implemented.

12. BUDGET

Funding could be allocated towards the marketing plan between Council and BTM. Based on the short-term recommended strategies

an initial budget of up to \$10,000 is required to boost the profile and marketing of the course.

Further long-term strategies to improve the marketing for the course will be taken into consideration after an initial six-monthly review has been conducted. Additional budget will be required if the course undergoes an upgrade to infrastructure, to promote the improved course and facilities, and to improve the profile, utilisation and commercial return.

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES (3 - 6 MONTHS)**1. ATTRACT NEW CUSTOMERS BY RAISING THE PROFILE OF THE COURSE**

| ACTION | DETAIL | BUDGET | WHO | PRIORITY | DATE (M/Y) |
|--|--|---------------|------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Digital Marketing 1. Online Booking System / CRM | Purchase an online booking / CRM system which will help improve the booking process and capture key data about the users. | \$5,000+ | BTM | HIGH | 03/21 |
| 2. Review and Update Website | Review the website design, layout, images and content. Improving the layout to showcase the club's unique points of difference through clear and high-quality images, aerial course fly-over videos. Improve the BTM website user experience and also include a booking system to attract more users. | \$1000+/- | CoM & BTM | HIGH | 03/21 |
| 3. Social Media Strategy | Establish an Instagram account for the site and review the Facebook page. Create a simple social media plan outlining who will manage the accounts, what content will be shared and the tone of voice etc. | Nil | CoM | MED | 05/21 |
| 4. Promotional Video | Create a simple overview video for the site including the surrounding views and beautiful greens. The video to be included on the website and on other digital channels. If funding available, drone footage would be ideal. | \$500+ | CoM | HIGH | 03/21 |

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| Promotional Materials 5. Brochure and flyers | Create brochures / flyers promoting the course and including important details such as pricing, opening hours, contact details etc. | \$2,000+ | CoM | MED | 09/21 |
| Advertising 6. Social Media | Trial some Facebook ads to promote the course and its facilities. This should only be conducted after the platform has been reviewed and refreshed. | \$500+ | CoM | MED | 04/21 |
| 7. Local paper advertising | Trial a small local business advertisement within a local newspaper and then conduct an analysis on its results to determine whether this is an effective advertising channel. | TBD | CoM | MED | 05/21 |
| 8. Promote in Golf Magazines / Large corporate Golf sites | Trial promoting a story and ads through state and country golf organisations. This could be in a golf magazine, on a golf website or through local sports promotion sites. | TBD | CoM | LOW | 07/21 |
| Service 9. Customer Service | Setting a customer service standard and training staff to provide all new and current users with great customer service. This includes having friendly and professional phone skills, in-person greetings and online responses. This quality assurance will also ensure complaints are handled to a high standard and staff understand how to best manage all enquiries. | TBD | BTM | HIGH | 04/21 |
| Direct Marketing 10. Training volunteers / club staff | Provide full training to staff and volunteers about how to best manage the courses digital communications. It will be important for the website and social media accounts to be kept up to date regularly. | TBD | BTM | HIGH | 04/21 |

2. STRENGTHEN LOYALTY AMONG EXISTING CUSTOMERS

| ACTION | DETAIL | BUDGET | WHO | PRIORITY | DATE (M/Y) |
|------------------------|---|----------|-----|----------|------------|
| 1. On screen promotion | An internal TV screen should be installed to promote all specials, competitions, upcoming events, membership information and other important information. | \$2,000+ | CoM | MED | 05/21 |

3. BUILD A BRAND THAT IS EMBRACED AND VALUED BY THE COMMUNITY

| ACTION | DETAIL | BUDGET | WHO | PRIORITY | DATE (M/Y) |
|-------------------------------|--|----------------------|-----------|----------|------------|
| 1. Customer / Client database | Start forming a strategy to collect customer / client data for analysis and use. This data will be helpful for future strategic plans and to create effective communications. Linked with CRM. | TBD (CRM) | CoM | HIGH | 03/21 |
| 2. Marketing effectiveness | Establish a system for measuring the effectiveness of the marketing plan, including responses to advertising, newsletters and social media. | Nil | CoM & BTM | MED | 06/21 |
| 3. Communications audit | Collate and assess marketing materials to ensure consistency of appearance and messaging. | Nil | CoM | MED | 06/21 |
| 4. Signage plan | Audit signage at and around club and develop a plan to improve its effectiveness. | TBD (pending grants) | CoM | HIGH | 05/21 |

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| 5. Customer survey | Ask all members and visitors to complete a survey about the course. This will help to form part of the review as to what areas of the club need upgrades. It will also help to form part of the communications strategy, so we know what the courses benefits are. | Completed | CoM & BTM | MED | 01/21 |
| 6. Branding Audit | <p>Conduct a full branding audit which will help inform some of the changes post-upgrade. Brainstorming some ideas on names and how to move away from being called "Cement Hill".</p> <p>Focusing on becoming more prestigious and located in a positively recognised area.</p> | TBD | CoM | HIGH | 04/21 |

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES (IF FUNDING APPROVED FOR MAJOR UPGRADE)**4. ATTRACT NEW CUSTOMERS BY RAISING THE PROFILE OF THE CLUB**

| ACTION | DETAIL | BUDGET | WHO | PRIORITY | YEAR |
|---|---|--------------------------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Digital Marketing 1. Review website platform and management | Review the current website development platform and determine whether outsourcing a web designer would be beneficial for the club. Create a website strategy and full review on the website to determined how it could be updated. | To be determined | CoM | MED | 2022 |
| 2. Promotional Videos | Create two promotional videos to be used on the website, on digital screens and for other digital promotions. One will include a basic snapshot of the entire venue and the other will go into more detail about where the club is located and how its unique. | \$2,000+ | CoM | HIGH | 2022 |
| Promotional Materials 3. New signage | Conduct a full signage review and determine the best locations for signage. Create new promotional signage for outside the venue, on the street and transportable signage for promotion at events. Ensuring everything has a consistent brand identity. | Included in funding allocation | CoM | HIGH | 09/21 |
| 4. Branded on-course materials | Creating branded materials for visitors and members to use on the course, such as branded scorecards and pens. | To be determined | CoM & BTM | LOW | 2022-23 |
| Advertising 5. Trial Scoopon / Groupon special | Conduct research into Scoopon / Groupon specials and trial and advertisement for a two for one deal or group deals. | To be determined | CoM | LOW | 2022-23 |
| 6. Local business flyer drop | Giving flyers to local businesses including caravan parks and accommodation venues. | To be determined | CoM & BTM | LOW | 2022-23 |

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| 7. Local business discounts | Speak with some of the business managers about having discounts and offers for those who stay at their venue (only a select number of businesses). | To be determined | CoM & BTM | LOW | 2022-23 |
| Direct marketing 8. Course Open Day | Showcase what the venue has to offer, by inviting different hirer, sports, community, business, and social groups to attend. They can go on a comprehensive tour and trial the course. | To be determined | CoM & BTM | MED | 2022 |
| 9. Trial new programs and events for different markets | Trial new programs for juniors, beginners, women's golf and education classes. Having introduction days to encourage different groups to get involved. | To be determined | BTM | HIGH | 2022-23 |

5. STRENGTHEN LOYALTY AMONG EXISTING CUSTOMERS

| ACTION | DETAIL | BUDGET | WHO | PRIORITY | DATE |
|-------------------------------------|---|------------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Loyalty Program | Establish a loyalty program that gives members great benefits and incentivises people to sign up. | To be determined | BTM | LOW | 2022-23 |
| 2. Create a member e-newsletter | Encouraging current users to sign up to this e-newsletter and keep updated about what's going on and for special discounts, events, competitions etc. Create a basic e-newsletter linked to the CRM system. Ensure it has consistent branding and has relevant information to keep people engaged with the club. | To be determined | CoM | MED | 2022-23 |
| 3. Promotional Emails | Everyone that visits the venue should be asked if they want to receive promotional information via email. Then weekly emails should be sent out about what's upcoming, how to become a member and changes to the site. | To be determined | BTM | MED | 2022-23 |
| 4. Pro Shop Amenities and offerings | Review the Pro Shop amenities, presentation, offerings and merchandise available. Evaluate how this could be further improved and what we could offer which would be valuable for customers. | To be determined | CoM & BTM | MED | 2022 |

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| 5. Upgrades to Course | A full review should be conducted on what needs to be considered in the new upgrade. This will be used alongside a customer survey to provide evidence to council. | To be determined | CoM | HIGH | 2022 |
|-----------------------|--|------------------|-----|------|------|

6. BUILD A BRAND THAT IS EMBRACED AND VALUED BY THE COMMUNITY

| ACTION | DETAIL | BUDGET | WHO | PRIORITY | DATE |
|-------------------------------|---|------------------------|-----|----------|------|
| 1. Market Research (External) | Conduct some additional external market research with an external agency. This will help to determine the current positioning of the course in comparison to the rest of the market. Currently we do not have the resources or data to be able to conduct our own in-depth research. | To be determined | X | | |
| 2. Customer / Client database | Start forming a strategy to collect customer / client data for analysis and use. This data will be helpful for future strategic plans and to create effective communications. Linked with CRM. | To be determined (CRM) | X | | |
| 3. Marketing effectiveness | Establish a system for measuring the effectiveness of the marketing plan, including responses to advertising, newsletters and social media. | Nil | X | | |

CoM – City of Marion

BTM – Belair Turf Management (current course management company)