



Queensland Communities in transition

Nambour Rugby Union Club - Creating a 'road less travelled' with Australia's first organically certified sporting field

Sporting clubs play an integral role in the well-being of local communities. The Nambour Rugby Club is no exception. Over several years, they have embarked on a campaign to reduce their environmental impact as well as a conscious effort to engage their local community.

This has produced some outstanding, award winning results that could be replicated by other grass-based sporting clubs.

In 2010 Club President, Don Parry started seeing social media, news articles and research out of the USA and Europe about parents becoming ever increasingly concerned about chemical (pesticide, herbicide, fungicide) exposure to their children. He also wondered, after watching the oval being sprayed for lawn grubs and birds coming in to eat the dead poisoned grubs, whether he was, in turn, watching the poisoning of these birds. Research was also starting to emerge about soil health being 'the answer' around regenerative agriculture and Don saw that there might be a link.

HIGHLIGHTS

- First sporting field in Australia to be organically certified
- \$6,000 p.a. savings in field upkeep costs
- LED Field Lighting on main oval to 150 Lux
- Clubhouse lighting switched to LED lighting
- Rainwater harvested to tanks
- Drink cans recycled
- Strong 'switch off when not in use' strategy
- Fridge seals replaced
- Energy efficiency key selection policy when purchasing catering & other equipment
- Assisting local environmental group with adjacent creek revegetation projects



The club began reducing its chemical and artificial fertiliser use to see what would happen to their 1950s to 1980s clay capped council landfill site. Instead of pesticides and herbicides, very regular mowing was used as a weed control. Artificial fertilisers were replaced by the addition of organic fertilisers (chook poo) plus the quarterly application of a 'new' soil additive called AgriRem which adds microorganisms to the soil.¹

When the soil became healthy the worms returned (a great source of natural fertiliser); and the subsoil retained water with the result that the field no longer needing irrigation, fertiliser or other chemicals. These changes in processes saved the club around \$6000/p.a. in chemical, fertiliser and water pumping costs.

Project partner, AgriRem Earthcare, paid to have the oval Third Party (to the parts per million) Organically Certified and the club won the 2015 Queensland Premier's Community Sustainability Award.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY & SUBSTANCIAL SAVINGS

After installing more efficient LED lights for the field and clubhouse and improving the efficiency of several appliances (e.g. fridge seals), the club achieved a 44% reduction in electricity from 2015 to 2016 when looking at average kWh per opening hour. The club also reduced waste to landfill through improving separation of recyclables such as cans, plastic bottles, paper and cardboard.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The club is well-known for community engagement initiatives which include donating some of the field upkeep savings to Wishlist (Hospital Charity), giving free access to the oval for some groups and supporting the local Catchment Care group.

VISION STATEMENT

To explore, plan and implement change to make 'The Toads' more economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.



Organically certified oval saving \$6000 p.a.



150 Lux LED field lighting