



HOLLAND IN AUSTRALIA

Abbie Holland, a greenkeeper from West Sussex Golf Club, tells GI about an incredible few months working at Lake Karrinyup Country Club in Australia

I applied for a working holiday visa to Australia and emailed every course I could find with my CV. Lake Karrinyup replied offering me an eight-week contract over the Perth International tournament being held in October 2012.

I packed my backpack, said goodbye to my friends and family and travelled to Australia. I started my adventure by diving the great barrier reef, swimming in the rainforest, whale watching, feeding dolphins and camping with dingos – incredible.

When I walked up to the immaculately presented gardens and lush turf of Lake Karrinyup Country Club I couldn't believe my eyes. On my first day I met the 18-strong team and was handed a uniform, safety equipment and immediately offered places to stay and any help I could possibly need. I had landed on my feet for sure!

I was soon asked to hand mow for the first time because I'm used to ride on mowers. I struggled for a bit but the supervisors all showed me different techniques and set me

loose on the practice areas! After a week I was cutting greens.

In the build-up to the big tournament I learnt how to maintain and hand mow bent collars, present bunkers by brooming the face and raking the middle and about the properties of bent, cooch and kygoogie grass. We renovated the bunkers in no time, with one person edging, two flymoing high cut and low cut, one strimming, two using back pack blowers, three raking up, and two brooming the faces, followed by a bunker rake. Before this it was beyond me how bunkers could be done so quickly and efficiently.

We scarified and top dressed the greens and cut out new aprons with triple x mowers - and I had to stop to move the long neck turtle in my way. I also helped out with mulching, weeding, tidying up the rough areas, patching the fairways and general day to day maintenance. Gradually tv crews and scaffolding went up, the course was looking superb and I felt so proud to be part of it.

We were all designated

jobs for the tournament and mine was striping the tees. The third in charge put dots on all the tees at the front and the back so I could line my reel up with them and begin burning in straight lines down the fairway. The same was done for fairways and the greens were being double cut. A few times we had to be up before the sun, but to keep my lines straight I was given a light to stick at the end of the tee. It was a bit surreal at times, especially when I'd be mowing next to a kangaroo. Due to it being so well organised we were all relaxed and had a great laugh. My plans now is stay in Perth because I really have become settled here and enjoy the climate. Pushing up bunkers, cutting holes in the frost and digging through mud is almost a thing of the past due to the sandy soils and hardly ever rains.

I would advise anyone thinking about travelling to do so. Personally, I've had such a positive and happy experience due to the people and their attitude and I hope to take my knowledge with me to my next course.

RT
rigby taylor



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