

## **2011 AGCSA Award for Academic Achievement Presented in partnership with PGG Wrightson Turf Tim Fankhauser, The Dunes Golf Links, VIC**

For the second year running Chisholm Institute of TAFE on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula can lay claim to producing the winner of the AGCSA Award for Academic Achievement, presented in partnership with PGG Wrightson Seeds.

Recognising an individual for their commitment to pursue further turf management studies by undertaking the Diploma of Sports Turf Management, Tim Fankhauser was bestowed the 2011 award at the recent 27th Australian Turfgrass Conference in Adelaide, making it two from two for the institute after fellow Chisholm diploma graduate Steven Johannessen picked up the inaugural award in 2010.

Fankhauser, 41, was a late starter to the turf industry, picking up a position on the groundstaff at The Dunes Golf Links on the Mornington Peninsula in 2002 after working 16 years on his family's apple orchard. Completing Certificate III in Sports Turf Management at Chisholm as a mature age apprentice, in 2006 Fankhauser was duly appointed assistant superintendent by The Dunes course superintendent Mark Gahan who encouraged him to undertake the Diploma of Sports Turf Management through Chisholm.



"Ever since starting at Chisholm as an existing worker apprentice in 2004, Tim showed the commitment and dedication that I find truly rewarding as an educator," comments Chisholm teacher Bruce Macphee. "It is rare to find such an individual who shows unwavering drive towards improving his knowledge and understanding within the turf industry.

"The standard of work submitted by Tim throughout his Diploma was always of an extremely high standard as was attested by his consistent Distinction average. He is a conscientious, respected and confident individual, who was always a consistent contributor to class discussion and participation activities, and during his time at The Dunes has gained valuable experience under the guidance of Mark."

As well as furthering his own understanding of turf management and golf course maintenance by undertaking the Diploma course, The Dunes has also benefited by having one of their senior staff members involved in ongoing education. As well as playing a key role in a number of major projects on course, including the recent rerouting and resurfacing

of two holes, Fankhauser has also been able to have a significant impact on the way in which The Dunes approaches OH&S.

“The Dunes has always taken OH&S seriously, however, it just wasn’t documented as well as it could be,” comments Fankhauser. “Since completing the OH&S unit as part of the Diploma, I have been able to document many policies and procedures for our workplace. I have been able to carry out and document hazard/risk assessments on all equipment and chemicals and put in place hazard plans.”

Another benefit came from Fankhauser’s trial and research assignment. At the time The Dunes was experimenting with growth regulator Ethephon for the reduction of *Poa annua* seedheads on greens. Although achieving excellent results, there was concern about the possible effect of it on bentgrass roots and through Fankhauser’s research project he was able to demonstrate its use was having some effect.

“Chisholm TAFE provided a wonderful opportunity to complete my Diploma,” says Fankhauser. “With fantastic teachers and mentors such as Bruce Macphee, John Neylan, Andrew Peart and John Geary, it made for a very informative and enjoyable experience.

“One of the great benefits of doing the Diploma was the networking. I met some fantastic people from great golf courses and racetracks and was able to visit some of the best golf courses and sportsgrounds in the state. We all gelled as a group and would constantly discuss what we were doing at our own workplaces and some of the different techniques and practices we were using.

“I’ll admit that during my time that the workload of a full-time job and part-time study did, at times, seem overwhelming, but now that I have completed the Diploma I feel extremely rewarded and proud of my achievements.”

