

# GEO Certified® Independent Verification Report



**Golf Facility: Jack's Point Golf**  
**Prepared by: Kristine Kerr**  
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## Executive Summary

Jack's Point is located near Queenstown, New Zealand's outdoor and adventure capital, a destination known for its spectacular beauty and virtually year-round recreational and tourism activities.

Sited on a plateau above the shores of the magnificent Lake Wakatipu and adjacent to the superlative mountain range and ski resort, The Remarkables, the course provides a stunning transitional landscape between the two.

Opening in 2009, Jack's Point is a privately owned 'destination' course, 18 holes, par 72 with practice area. Buildings include clubhouse, maintenance facility, half-way house and 'temporary' office buildings. A number of luxury private homes are dotted through the course and the housing subdivision is within the Jack's Point development area.

The climate is very 'dry oceanic', borderline 'cold, semi-arid', with distinct seasons: a cold winter, relatively hot summer and generally very little rainfall throughout the year. Jack's Point was previously farmland, and as such fences and rock walls have been retained and / or re-purposed to retain that pre-existing character. The alpine setting of the course is reflected with native variety plantings of the immediate surroundings and the region. There is beneficial aspect in relation to the sun (for vegetation growth) and views, and in winter the course is closed for 7-8 weeks, which reduces pressure on turf and allows management to establish plans and projects.

## Nature

The staff have an excellent knowledge, awareness and understanding of the landscape of the site and the way in which the course fits into it.

There aren't any designated or protected areas that have an overseeing monitoring authority, however within the course there are stated naturalised and re-vegetated native planting areas that enhance biodiversity and provide habitat for birds.

Monitoring and recording of wildlife could be improved with a more formal survey / audit produced, and this is also true for the mapping of habitat areas, which would help to demonstrate the site as valuable habitat balanced with high quality turf playing surfaces.

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## Independent Verification Report



While there is no written policy for lethal means of wildlife control, the course contracts a professional pest controller to eradicate pests, in conjunction with the Department of Conservation and Queenstown Lakes District Council, including possums, hares, feral goats, rabbits, ferret, magpies (which are a problem for native birds). This along with the new created habitats are resulting in a noted increase in abundance of new birdlife on the course, including around 10 rare, white fronted tern, quail, as well as native frog species.

The turfgrass species established are very well suited to the climate and location and with soil rich in nutrients very small quantities of chemicals and fertilisers are used.

There is a very good balance of maintained turf with large swathes of naturalised out-of-play areas. Out-of-play fescue grasslands are mown approximately once / annum to maintain quality and ability for golfers to find balls and encourage speed of paly. Other areas are naturalised with native plantings and reflect planting of the local region.

“Blow out” style bunkers without distinct edges are minimal maintenance and naturalised with fescue grasses and other plants such as sand coprosma species.

In terms of compliance the club uses suppliers and materials and applies chemicals / fertilisers all conforming to required standards.

There are 5m buffer zones / no spray areas adjacent to water bodies. There is one lake on the course and other water channels are either grass-verged or heavily vegetated as wetlands to filter run-off water.

Preparation and timing of fertiliser and chemical applications are in line with best-practice – set out in a course management operating handbook – and the maintenance team operates a ‘scout and monitor’ procedure.

Staff are STMA members, qualified in Grow Safe and attend conferences and professional development courses. There are toolbox talks every morning.

The maintenance area is spacious, tidy and well-organised with storage and disposal of hazardous materials being compliant with best practice and regulations. There are spill kits and accident reporting procedures.

Machinery washing areas use hand watering with hoses and specialised drainage into 2 large tanks with 3 filtering chambers.

Waste water is treated on site, disposed of to ground on site and tested at same point to comply with Otago Regional Council consents.

The facility has a large organic dump area for placement of green waste and grass clippings. Cores, clippings and scarifyings are piled, turned over and composted.

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## Independent Verification Report

### Resources



Irrigation and potable water supply comes from the adjacent Lake Wakatipu per Otago Regional Council consents. Consumption data is reportedly below allowance. Records are kept and audits done per consents from the Otago Regional Council.

The Toro irrigation system is a modern, efficient valve-in-head system where sprinklers can be individually controlled either in the field or remotely, with handheld controls and also phone app. Fairways have 4 rows where centre rows are 360deg and outside rows are adjustable to avoid over-throw and / or wasting water.

3 rain gauges and weather station monitor rain over the whole golf course (variable as it is 8km in length) and when there is more than 5mm of rain, the irrigation system automatically cuts out.

The main energy sources used are non-renewable grid electricity and petrol / diesel fuel for vehicles and machinery. Wood (from on-site) fires provide another seasonal source of heating in the clubhouse. Consumption details and records were not the easiest to locate during the site-visit, but this is easily addressed by staff communication and ensuring everyone is collaborating towards sustainability. Data provided and reviewed in the facility's OnCourse profile.

The maintenance building and clubhouse are both designed and oriented to maximise sunlight and natural ventilation. Insulation provides warmth in winter with shade and protection from wind offered by planting and mounding. After a damaging clubhouse fire incident, the clubhouse was rebuilt with insulation in roof.

Lights (LED and sensor controlled in places) are not switched on all the time and staff are encouraged to use natural ventilation and lighting first.

While ethical / environmental policies (codes of purchasing, supplier / contractor preferences), are not written down, in speaking with staff it was clear that the company ethos is to buy locally and sustainably where applicable, to support local businesses and provide seasonal fresh produce sourced both locally and regionally. Such a policy should be stated publicly with brief bullet points about the actions taken internally and in collaboration with the facility's supply chain.

There are separate bins for recycling and landfill, and the clubhouse / office operations recently changed recycling collection company to be assured that appropriate waste was being recycled. Used fat and oil waste from the clubhouse are collected for recycling by a specialist contractor.

There are separate bins on the golf course also for recycling and landfill, and the golf course creates its own compost soils and reuses / recycles many of the timbers, gravels etc on site for signage, paths and tee markers.

The clubhouse has a Nordaq filter system in the clubhouse providing filtered water for customers in reusable glass bottles.

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## Community

While the club does not have a dedicated sustainability administration or working group, environmental and social responsibility is clearly in practice as a natural extension of day-to-day management.

There is multi-recreational accessibility as well as good community relations, with popular walking and cycling trails through the property, open to the public year round and part of the wider "Wakaitpu Trails Trust". The club has staged fun and competitive runs as well as National Age Group Triathlon championships. The large Lake Tewa adjacent to 18<sup>th</sup> fairway and clubhouse is used for fishing and for initiatives promoting fishing to youngsters. The clubhouse restaurant is open to the public and has hosted charity fund raising events.

The club provides a staff induction handbook and welcome pack. Employing training and continuing professional development opportunities are offered in all areas, though there are some obstacles with transient staff in the less senior roles due to the resort destination nature of the location.

## Conclusion

I, Kristine Kerr, independent accredited verifier, recommend Jack's Point Golf Course to be awarded the GEO Certified® ecolabel following a strongly demonstrated approach to sustainability and regard for the environment.

The techniques of the course maintenance team to present high quality playing turfgrass surfaces with low levels of input are noteworthy in the challenging climate and environment.

The maintenance team works closely with a dedicated on-site horticulturalist, and native species are propagated in an on-site nursery and greenhouse to vegetate and naturalise large areas of the golf course. The introduction and re-introduction of native plant species with pest eradication have seen numbers of rare native birds increase, as well as enhance the biodiversity and distinctive character of the course, allowing it to blend seamlessly with the spectacular natural surroundings.

The maintenance staff transforms driftwood and old timbers from the site into attractive bins, benches, tee markers, cart paths, signage, bringing the benefit of recycling and further enhancing and appealing character. Recycled timbers are used to broaden cart path ends to minimise wear at high traffic areas. A stunning example is the 6th hole where a new path of timber sleepers is routed to pass through the native vegetation and engage the golfer with Lake Wakaitipu.

In terms of staff, community and charitable spirit, an outstanding example is a steel warratah statue on the course, made locally, dedicated to 'two Marks', former staff

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## Independent Verification Report

members. One of these was Mark Hills, an assistant superintendent sadly passing away very young, and Jack's Point held a charity golf day in his name.



While energy consumption and an overall sustainability policy in the clubhouse and offices are not overtly documented, all the staff I spoke with had an understanding of the company's core ethos of sustainability, including by minimising waste, energy usage, recycling, buying from local suppliers and looking into re-usable water bottles.

Jack's Point has its own waste water treatment facility on site, thereby not impacting public infrastructure.