



# CASE STUDY NOT-FOR-PROFIT NAMBOUR RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL CLUB



**Combining ecoBiz expertise and a little dedication, the Nambour Rugby Union Club, a non-profit community group, has scored Australian firsts for eco-innovation as part of tackling its running costs.**

## TEAM EFFORT

With just under 200 members and 500 social media supporters, the Nambour 'Toads' Rugby Club is not glitzy. Unlike some sports clubs with liquor licenses, pokies and restaurants the Toads just have a clubhouse, canteen, dressing sheds and a few fields. It does have two things in common with those other clubs: bright lights and good vision.

Victory Park, the Toads' home ground is the first LED-lit sports field in Queensland. The decision to install the low-energy, high-brightness lighting came as part of the leadership of the then club president Don Parry who also just happens to be an ecoBiz coach.

"Any organisation has got to have vision," Don says.

"I informed the club about what might be possible and asked, 'Can we set up a low-cost club?'"

## PLAYING HARD IN THE FIRST HALF

Within the clubhouse, the members quickly plucked the low-hanging fruit: rainwater collection, recycling, strong turn off policy when not in use and low-energy lighting.

"That was innovative five to 10 years ago," Don says.

With the easy wins done, Don and the club looked out and up. Across five seasons the club strove to make its fields as water and chemical efficient as possible, culminating in official accreditation as the country's first (and possibly only) certified organic sports field. Judicious mowing controls clumping grasses, higher-growing weeds and the resulting healthier grass, with its deeper roots, is not attractive to pests. The club uses no pesticides or herbicides and no artificial fertilizers. They found that high nitrogen artificial fertilizers tended to attract lawn grubs.

## NAMBOUR RUGBY UNION CLUB

A modest community organisation that has pursued ecoBiz principles to achieve some innovative Aussie firsts.

## ECOBIZ OBJECTIVE

To use eco-sustainable principles to reduce the club's environmental impact, improve player health and decrease outgoing expenses.

## ACTION PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

- Organically certified playing field – an Aussie first
- LED field lighting – another first
- Low-energy clubhouse lighting
- Recycling programs
- Rainwater storage
- Premiers Sustainability Award Winner 2015

## SAVINGS

- \$6000 (20%) decrease in field maintenance costs
- Field lighting performance increase of 87%
- Zero chemical and artificial fertiliser use



The installation of the LED field lights came of a discussion between Don and a committee member who is an auto electrician.

"He's seen what LEDs can do in his world, I've seen what they can do in my world. We replaced halogen lights with LED lights and what a difference it has made!"

It was considered by councils an unproven technology at the time but the club did its due diligence and set its game plan. The result lives up to its place name, Victory Park.

## TO WIN THE SECOND HALF

While increased mowing has driven fuel bills up, wiping pesticide and herbicide bills off the books has resulted in an estimated yearly saving of \$6000. Frequent mowing promotes deeply established roots and so the grass also needs little irrigation. When it does, the club uses 100% reclaimed rainwater from on-site storage tanks.

Field lighting electricity costs have come down from nearly \$10 per hour to \$4 per hour. For that reduced cost, by using LEDs the brightness has increased from 80 lux to more than 150 lux – far more than most suburban grounds or the Australian Standard of 100 lux. The club received financial assistance from the QLD Government, two local councilors and a donation from a local business so it had no cost to the club. Now with much lower running costs and a three year warranty the club has created a huge saving with no payback period.

Don points out this has had the unexpected result that Victory Park is now in hot demand to host night games and training for schools and junior representative programs, pushing total energy costs a little higher that are then recouped in hosting fees or allowing the club to support junior development at a very low cost to the club.

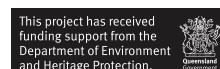
"We are delivering more benefits to our members and other rugby stakeholders and spending less money doing it," Don said.

"There's an environmental upshot to it as well." The vision has paid off and the club won a 2015 Premier's Sustainability Award (Community Award).



THE ECOBIZ TEAM IS ALWAYS  
AVAILABLE TO HELP YOU.

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