

THE 'G' IN PRISTINE CONDITION FOLLOWING FOOTBALL BREAK

By Aimee Dawson, MCC

Although the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) has sat empty for the last two months, plenty of work has been happening behind the scenes to ensure the stadium remains in top condition.

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the postponement and cancellation of events scheduled to be held at the MCG, including the first half of the 2020 AFL Premiership Season, Melbourne City Mission's flagship Sleep at the 'G' fundraising event, as well as the temporary closure of the popular MCG Tours and the recently redeveloped Australian Sports Museum.

However, despite the absence of events and crowds, the dedicated staff of the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC), ground managers of the MCG, have been hard at work in order to maintain the 'G and the surrounding Yarra Park.

The sudden and unforeseen cancellation of events due to the pandemic resulted in a surplus of food and beverages at the stadium, which would otherwise have been consumed by the tens of thousands of spectators in the opening rounds of the AFL season.

In April, volunteers from the MCC, EPICURE, the MCG's catering partner and Coca-Cola Amatil emptied the fridges and storages of the MCG, donating approximately \$100 000 worth of products to Second Bite, a national food rescue organisation which redistributes collected food to local charities and non-profits.

Throughout the extended break the MCG Arena's team have continued to maintain the 'hallowed turf', keeping it in pristine condition.

MCC Executive Manager – Turf, Michael Salvatore, said his team have been kept busy over the past few months, fertilising and mowing the grass in preparation for football's return.

'I've never seen the coverage or the health of the ground this good. Basically, it's a giant lawn at the moment and we just get to pamper it,' Mr Salvatore said.

'From a purely turf side of things it has been fantastic. It doesn't have any wear and tear.'

The MCC team have also been managing the upkeep of the heritage-listed Yarra Park which surrounds the MCG, with ongoing maintenance as well as some staff working bees to ensure the park can be enjoyed by the surrounding neighbourhood.

The recent and welcome return of football at the 'G brings a return to some normalcy, although the stadium is still without crowds for the time being.

Collingwood and Richmond were the first teams to return to the MCG since the final match of Round 1 back in mid-March, with the historic match resulting in an equally historic draw!

The MCC is working with industry organisations, Government and the relevant health authorities to develop guidelines that will allow people to return safely to sport and events, and hopes to welcome fans back to the MCG in the near future.

For updates, visit the MCG website – mcg.org.au



