



The Hawthorne Club

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2018

It is with much satisfaction that I submit my 2018 Chairman's Report. The Hawthorne Club (THC) is a volunteer organisation whose Charter is to support the various organisations within the Newcastle and Hunter Rugby Union Zone, it is reliant on funding from membership fees, sponsors and Luncheons to fund its operations. THC would like to contribute more into local rugby, but, the level of support it is able to provide to these organisations is limited to the level of support THC receives via Sponsorship and our Luncheons.

After 22 years we have reached the \$ 800k investment mark in local rugby and we can only continue with this level of investment with your support, which in 2018 is just under \$40k. THC operations and costs are self-funded from membership subscriptions, fines and donations. 100% of monies raised at events, raffles auctions and from sponsorship are directed to our Rugby Support Program activities.

This year we have had a deficit which can be attributed to reduced sponsorship and an increase in the Rugby Support Program with Referee's, Women's and the Hawthorne Club Challenge as new initiatives. The Club Challenge did not achieve its objectives and will not continue in 2019.

I refer members to the Financial Report for details on 2018.

MEMBERSHIP

In 2018 we inducted 6 new members Oliver Connelly, Tony Cade, Cathy Burgess, Andrew Fisher, Matt Dumbrill and Annika Jamieson. The level of new membership interest is high which I believe is a reflection of the club's reputation and standing within the rugby community. Sadly, for a variety of reasons a number of members elected not to renew their membership. The number of Foundation Fellows is 29 down from the original 64. Total membership is 74.

THC is acknowledged as one of the best rugby fraternities in Australia and is the envy of many other club, zone and state bodies. Members are encouraged to promote this opportunity to those who you think are committed rugby people and would contribute to The Hawthorne Club and its Charter. The Membership Application Form is available on the website.

Membership fees have remained at the same level for the last 5 years. The annual renewal fee of \$75 is now due.

TOM MADDERN OAM Life Member and President passed away in July, Tom was the heart and drive of THC. His contribution to THC and local rugby is significant and much of the money raised by THC came from his efforts, the No.2 Sportground redevelopment was his baby, plus his contributions to Wanderers Rugby Club and Newcastle Referee's. He is greatly missed.

Tim Morton replaced Tom as President and is continuing to provide the guidance and support as per the standards previously set, he is proving an invaluable resource for myself and the committee with his knowledge of THC.



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2018 MEMBERS BRIEFINGS and DRINKS

2018 continued the members briefing with drinks and finger food as a means of updating members on the THC activities and to reinvigorate the comradery for which the THC is famous. The first of the 2018 member's drinks was held at the Brewery Hotel and over 30 members took the opportunity to gather and share a beer and some stories and opinions on the fortunes of the various clubs in 2018. The next gathering was held at the Albion Hotel and although not as well patronised Macca ensured those that did attend enjoyed his hospitality and the last was at the Newcastle Club in the redeveloped Bar 40 Below and again numbers were very good.

RUGBY SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Rugby Support Program (RSP) remains the centre-point and delivery model for all things rugby within THC Charter of promoting the game in the Hunter. This year it has comprised the following:

The Hawthorne Cup and Club Challenge in Premier 1 saw Southern Beaches start 2018 with the Hawthorne Cup, they were unsuccessful in their 1st defence losing to Maitland who then defended the cup on 3 occasions until they lost it to the Nelson Bay Gropers. Gropers lost it the next week to Merewether Carlton, who then defended on 4 occasions before losing the Cup to Hamilton who retained it for the rest of 2018, Hamilton will start with The Hawthorne Cup in 2019.

The Club Challenge was a new initiative in 2018. Maitland beat Southern Beaches in Round 1 to win the Challenge and held it until Round 3 when they lost to 2:1 to Hamilton who held onto the Club Challenge for the remainder of 2018.

Premier1 Major Premiership funding prize \$2,000 went to Hamilton with a win in the 1st grade grand final.

NHRU Senior and Colts representative teams were given grants through the NHRU for assistance with their Country Week campaigns. The Newcastle Wildfires Seniors were runners up in the Caldwell Cup at the NSW Country Championships at Warren, the Colts were defeated in the Final.

John Hipwell Medal to the Premier Rugby 1st Grade Grand Final Man of the Match. The winner's performance reflects the spirit of the award, which includes the qualities of strength, integrity, passion, solidarity, discipline and respect. The winner in 2018 was Tom Coupe of the victorious Hamilton team.

The Hawthorne Rugby Academy 7s The Hawthorne Academy has continued to work at a low-key level focussing the program in 2018 on U/19's and extending the program to include U/17's so as to give talented players additional skills in 7's rugby. This has taken the form of a 7's squad selected from players in the Hunter to go into an off-season programme.

NRURA THC renewed sponsorship of the Referee's via the Hawthorne Scholarship program for junior referees 18 - 26 to assist in the recruitment, development and retention.

Hunter Women's Rugby were given grants to assist HWRU to assist with their representative program both 15's and 7's. THC has pledged to support local women's rugby for the next 3 years as part of the development of teams and players. I am pleased to read that the NHRU are going to include them in the Premier Division Club Championship.



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2018 EVENTS

6th April - Season Launch was held at Newcastle Racecourse. GOH was Toutai Kefu former Wallaby and Tongan Coach, Season 2018 started in great style with 250 attending the Luncheon which was held in conjunction with our community partner the WRHS. A very enjoyable day and a great way to start our year. It was a successful day both in terms of providing a marquee event, promoting rugby, THC and the WRHS.

13-16th June - Fijian 15's Women's Visit undertaken in conjunction with Hunter Women's and Wanderers RUC it included a game against the Newcastle Women's 15's and a Women in Rugby breakfast. This visit was an opportunity for local women to play an international team at home which unfortunately doesn't happen very often.

20th July - Mid Season at Newcastle Town Hall with 90 attending, GOH was Buck Anderson who was informative, honest and refreshing. Craig Hamilton was our MC and did a masterful job. Another enjoyable and successful afternoon.

14th September 2017 – Grand Final at Surfhouse, Merewether, GOH was Adam Freier a former Wallaby and Head of Marketing and Digital, Rugby Australia. THC hosted the NHRU 2018 Anderson Medal and other significant 2018 Season awards including Referee's and Hunter Women's. It was a great way to finish the year with 220 attending and from all reports although the day had a busy agenda it went well thanks to Mike Rabbitt, Rowan Burgess and the members who helped on the day.

I want to thank the Members who helped with the raffle and Jono Wilson for being our auctioneer at the various Luncheons, I appreciate your time and efforts.

SPONSORSHIP

Todd Bacon and Andrew Fisher, Collaborative Constructions, Wade Dean, Tooheys, Jeff Hughes, Forsythes IT, Linda Evans, Tyrrell's Wines and Brad Want, Hi Vis Signs continued their ongoing long-term support and for that we are truly thankful. I would like to increase the number of sponsors to ease the burden on fund raising from our luncheons, if you know of an organisation that may be interested in sponsoring THC please contact the committee.

PARTNERSHIPS

THC again worked with the NHRU in hosting the 2018 Anderson Medal and other significant awards as part of our GF Luncheon. History shows that the working relationship between the two bodies at times has been chequered and fractious. Currently it is very stable and our relationship will develop further with the Strategic Plan initiative currently being undertaken, it is long overdue. I applaud Bill Clifton for taking action and expect the outcomes will not suit everyone. 2 things happen when you consult extensively, you get some feedback that you may not like and expectations are heightened and the local rugby community will expect their thoughts delivered. A number of good people are involved and I am sure the next few years will be exciting for rugby in the Hunter. THC has a potentially significant role and we need to join the movement and support this NHRU initiative "for the betterment of rugby", which is clearly everyone's intent.

Special thanks to Richard Jones OAM, Kylie Farrugia and the team at the WHRS. They are our charity partner and have been since the inception of THC. We look forward to continuing our support with them. HunterNet have also endorsed THC as one of their community partners and I believe this will provide greatly beneficial in terms of THC profile, networking and other opportunities.



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My thanks to the committee who again worked very hard and contributed to this year. Hennie Du Plooy, Secretary has done an excellent job getting our website and payment portal operational, Bruce Cook, Rowan Burgess and Richard Jones OAM providing continual support. The work required to be completed to deliver Luncheons is wide-ranging and labour intensive. All the committee worked hard to ensure that these events are well run and deliver a great event for members and their guests. These people have worked tirelessly for THC over the past year or more and deserve your admiration and support.

I believe that this has been another productive year for The Hawthorne Club with our support continuing through the RSP in many areas including the Referee's and Hunter Women's. We have had some outstanding Guests of Honour, renewed relationships and achieved results. Again, we hosted the NHRU Anderson Medal and other awards, an initiative which I hope continues into the future. However, there is still more work to do and 2019 will bring challenges and rewards.

I want to thank our sponsors, members and hardworking committee for their support and efforts. I believe THC's reputation has been enhanced, we have strengthened relationships with the NHRU, Referee's, HWRU and I am looking forward to 2019 when we will continue and increase our level of support and interaction in the local rugby community.

Please have a happy, healthy and safe Xmas and Holiday period. I hope to see you in 2019

Thank You

Mark Queenan
Chairman
November 2018

