



## The Hawthorne Club

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020

It is with much satisfaction that I submit my first Chairman's Report. The 2019 AGM was held on December 10<sup>th</sup> and after serving the maximum term as Chairman since 2017, Mark Queenan stepped aside and retired from the Executive Committee. For 2020 the Committee and their roles were: **Chairman:** Rowan Burgess, **Treasurer:** Al Stace, **Secretary:** Hennie Du Plooy, **Members:** Richard Jones and Steve Barretto. Welcome to Steve Barretto, who replaced Tony Cade and Al Stace as new Committee members. Al has previously served on the executive committee and his commitment to The Hawthorne Club is greatly appreciated.

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 upon funding from membership fees, sponsors and functions to fund its operations. THC would like to contribute more to local rugby in all aspects, but the level of contributions available are dependent on funding that we are able to glean from activities and the support previously mentioned.

Never has this model been as challenged as it has been in 2020.

In spite of the challenges, the executive committee has attempted to stay engaged with the THC membership throughout the year. THC has still been able to support our Referees, Juniors and of course The Hunter Wildfires including two Senior Mens' teams, Colts and our Women's Jack Scott Cup team.

In relation to support for the Hunter Wildfires, I would like to congratulate the membership for its decision to support the Hunter Wildfires in this year's Shute Shield and subsequently the Women's Jack Scott Cup. The voting of the membership in the plebiscite was encouraging and the carriage rate of the proposal at 98% spoke both of a generosity towards local Rugby and a desire to be of practical assistance of which the membership can be truly proud.

The executive committee has made great efforts this year to develop and maintain good relationships with Hunter Rugby (formerly known as NHRU). We feel that this commitment is matched by the efforts of all at Hunter Rugby and augurs well for next season. This strong relationship is in part responsible for Newcastle becoming a Tri Nations Test venue. The more that Hunter Rugby is able to provide a united voice to decision makers, the more seriously it will be taken and the more benefits that will flow to the region, our young people and clubs.

*I refer members to the Financial Report for details of 2020 year.*



## The Hawthorne Club

### MEMBERSHIP

In 2020 we inducted 5 new members Jono Bourke, Craig Wellings, Howard Davies, and Tim Owens. 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. The number of Foundation Fellows is 31 down from the original 64. Total membership is 102.

A number of members are entering retirement phase and congratulations to them. They have made an enduring contribution to our society and we hope that they will remain active members of THC. From a practical perspective, this sometimes means that contact details change. If this is the case for you, would you mind contacting either [chairman@hawthorneclub.com.au](mailto:chairman@hawthorneclub.com.au) or [secretary@hawthorneclub.com.au](mailto:secretary@hawthorneclub.com.au) with your updated details?

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 8 years. The annual renewal fee of \$75 is now due.

### 2020 MEMBERS BRIEFINGS and DRINKS

A 2020 the initiative of a 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 2020 member's drinks were held at the Newcastle Club on Thursday February 13th and a number of members took the opportunity to gather and share a beer and some stories and opinions on the Rugby in 2020. Due to Coronavirus restrictions, no further member's drinks took place, but the first will be planned for February 2021. It would be great to see as many members there as possible.

### RUGBY SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Rugby Support Program (RSP) remains the centre-point and delivery model for all things rugby within THC vision of promoting the game in the Hunter. This year it has been turned on it's head due to Coronavirus and the resulting restrictions on crowds and other requirements which would have allowed the Club competition to operate with a Covid safe environment. As a result there has been no funding for The Hawthorne Cup, Premier 1 Major Premiership, John Hipwell medal and Hawthorne Rugby Academy 7s.

Funding, in spite of the considerable difficulties faced, has still been made to support the **Hunter Wildfires first and second grade teams, Colts and Women's Jack Scott Cup team.**

Funding has also been made available in support of our **Junior competitors and Referees.**

In addition, the decision has been taken in support of our local clubs, whereby THC will not run a function at the beginning of the season (the previous season opener). This is aimed to give clubs the opportunity to put on their own functions and generate their own funds without competition from THC events. Our second function ( after the



## The Hawthorne Club

member's drinks) for the year will then be in April/May and we will develop a schedule of functions depending on how things look for the 2021 season.

### 2020 LUNCHEON EVENTS

**March 27<sup>th</sup> 2020 - Season Launch** was to be held at Merewether Surfhouse on Friday March 27<sup>th</sup>. GOH was to be David Campese. Thank you to David, Morgan Turinui who arranged David's appearance, Gerry Collins who had agreed to be our MC and James Gardiner who had agreed to do our coach interviews. Unfortunately, due to significant conflicts with other local Rugby events it was decided to cancel the function. Thank you, however to all those members, friends and sponsors who committed to attend the function.

**August 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 - Mid Season** at The Newcastle Club was limited to 60 attending, GOH was Scott Wisemantel who was a brilliant speaker and should be commended for his efforts to engage with all attendees after the completion of the main function. Thank you to Collaborative Building Solutions, our printer Craig Wellings at Hunter Signs, Tony Cade from Hunternet, Peter Drayton and Peter Lucas from Peter Drayton Wines and Jeff Hughes from Forsythes IT who all contributed raffle and auction prizes. Thanks also to Richard Jones, James Lawrence and Jason Bourke from Westpac Rescue Helicopter for running the raffles so professionally in this Covid-19 environment and our MC and auctioneer Jono Wilson who worked tirelessly. It was an enjoyable and successful afternoon. Thanks to Ian Baker and his team at the Newcastle Club.

**November 27<sup>th</sup> 2020 Hawthorne Club Test Luncheon at West NEX and co organised with Hunter Rugby and Westpac Rescue Helicopter**

### SPONSORSHIP

Wade Dean, Tooheys, Jeff Hughes, Forsythes IT, Hunternet and Collaborative Building Solutions, continued their ongoing long-term support and for that we are truly thankful. Craig Wellings and his company Hunter Signs and DWF Law were wonderful as more recent supporters of the THC and our functions.

Special thanks to Richard Jones OAM and his team at the WHRS. They are our community partners and have been since the inception of THC. We look forward to continuing our support with them.

My thanks to the committee who once again worked very hard this year. Hennie Du Plooy, Secretary has done an excellent job getting our website and payment portal operational, Al Stace did a great job with our finances along with Richard Jones and Steve Barretto providing continual support and enthusiasm for our work. The work required 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. This year there have also been significant decisions to be made addressing issues related to Coronavirus, our support for the Hunter Wildfires and the November Test matches. Your committee has worked tirelessly for THC over the past year and deserve your support.

I believe that this has been another productive year for THC in spite of the difficulties faced. We have addressed some issues, had some outstanding Guests of Honour and achieved results. 2021 will be another challenging year, though.



## The Hawthorne Club

In my inaugural year as Chairman I want to thank our sponsors, members and hardworking committee for their support and efforts. I believe THC's reputation has been enhanced, financially we have had a good year, considering the challenges that we have faced and have strengthened relationships with the Hunter Rugby, Referee's, HJRU and I am looking forward to 2020 when we will hope to continue and perhaps increase our level of support and for the local rugby community.

I appreciate the confidence THC members in 2020 have shown in electing me as the 9<sup>th</sup> Chairman. I hope to maintain the high standards set by previous Chairman and leave THC in a better position for my Chairmanship. Please have a happy, healthy and safe Xmas and Holiday period. I hope to see you in 2021

Thank You

Rowan Burgess  
Chairman

