



MEN OF LEAGUE

FOUNDATION



CARING FOR THE
MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN
OF THE RUGBY LEAGUE COMMUNITY

ACES



LICENSED UNDER COVER DRIVING RANGE BAR • FUNCTIONS

Aces Sporting Club • Springvale Rd & Hutton Rd, Keysborough
Ph. 9701 5000 • acessportingclub.com.au • [f /AcesSportingClub](https://www.facebook.com/AcesSportingClub)

LOOK FORWARD
TO REOPENING
SOON



— PRESENT THIS FLYER —
IN THE DRIVING RANGE FOR
200 BALLS FOR \$10

Can not be used in conjunction with any other offer. Terms and Conditions Apply.

IN THIS EDITION

OUR COVER

Introducing our newest board member Katrina Fanning and recently announced life member Tony Durkin.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 5 McCloy Group corporate membership
- 6 Tony Durkin
- 8 Lionel Morgan
- 11 Katrina Fanning
- 14 Socially connecting
- 16 Try July
- 17 Arthur Summons
- 18 Keith Gee
- 21 Mortimer Wines promotion
- 22 Noel Kelly
- 24 Champion Broncos 20 years on
- 26 Ranji Joass
- 34 Philippa Wade and her Storm Sons
- 28 Q/A with Peter Mortimer
- 30 League's lost stadium dream
- 32 Bruce Olive
- 34 Tom Searle
- 36 Kev Embrey
- 38 Ian Templeton
- 40 Lionel Williamson

THE REGULARS

- 39 Helping Hand
- 42 Committee news
- 48 Tributes

THE MAGAZINE

Editor: Neil Cadigan
(magazine@menofleague.com)
Design: Daily Press
Ph: (02) 9007 7500 | www.dailypress.com.au



CARING FOR THE
MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN
OF THE RUGBY LEAGUE COMMUNITY

MEN OF LEAGUE FOUNDATION DIRECTORY

NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairman:
Professor The Honourable
Stephen Martin
Deputy Chair: Helen Wood Grant
Patron:
The Hon. John Fahey
Honorary President:
Ron Coote
Directors:
Brad Howell
Alan Sullivan QC
Geoff Thoroughgood OAM
Ian Gatenby
Katrina Fanning



FROM THE CHAIRMAN

PROFESSOR THE HONOURABLE STEPHEN MARTIN

brings enormous experience to our board as a former Jillaroo, having played 26 Tests for Australia and held the roles of president of the Australian Women's Rugby League Association, chairperson of the Australian Rugby League Indigenous Council and a director of the board of the Canberra Raiders. Welcome Katrina!

We were delighted to partner with Sportsbet through their generous TryJuly promotion with \$85,000 donated from player try celebrations in the NRL. Thank you Sportsbet. We hope this can be part of an annual promotion.

I'm very glad too to confirm BMD's continuing sponsorship of our Queensland wellbeing program for a further four years. They have been and remain a wonderful partner.

I am absolutely delighted to report that that discussion with Peter VLandys as chairman of the ARLC has been extremely positive with regard to continuing financial support for your Foundation. There is a genuine acknowledgment of what the Foundation does, the untiring commitment of our volunteers and the support we give to those less fortunate rugby league supporters.

We will present to the Commission in late August and advise members of the outcome in due course.

Finally, thank you as always to our dedicated volunteers, staff, sponsors and my fellow directors for your efforts during these most difficult of times.

STAFF

Chief Executive Officer
Stephen Lowndes

National Manager Membership and Marketing
Todd O'Kelly

National Manager Wellbeing
Jessica Macartney

Wellbeing Lead
Roxanne Moates

Financial Controller
Kevin Moore

Marketing and Membership Executive
Joe Bokeyar

Volunteer Development and Administration Officer Paula Feagaiga

Membership and Database Executive
James Rayment

National Events Manager
Joanne Baxter

NSW State Manager
Bruce Walker

QLD State Manager
Andrew Blucher

QLD Administration
Belinda Perry

Email
admin@menofleague.com

Telephone
National/NSW office 02 8756 7180
Queensland office 07 3367 6080

YOUR MEN OF LEAGUE FOUNDATION LOCAL CONTACTS

NEW SOUTH WALES

Canberra Monaro

President: Ernie Maclay
Secretary: Steven Troth 0407 182 410

Central Coast

President: Eddy Johnson
Secretary: Trevor Andrews 0412 694 857

Central West

President: John Lasker 02 6852 2477
Secretary: Norm Cook 0458 658 827

Far South Coast

President: Colin Clarke 0412 764 740
Secretary: Sheldon Wykes 0408 649 611

Illawarra

President: Ian Bray
Secretary: Bob McKellar 0408 393 040

Macarthur/Sth Highlands

President: Andrew Hicks 0438 423 753
Secretary: Sue Dawson 0407 927 907

Mid North Coast

President: Brian Atherton 0427 523 818
Secretary: Kevin Rayment 0427 533 644

Mid West

President: Royce George 0408 635 011
Secretary: Deborah Mina

New England

President: Lindsay Snell

Newcastle Hunter

President: Garry Leo 0400 421 767
Secretary: Peter Corcoran 0413 453 473

North Coast

President: Peter Barrett 0414 227 068
Secretary: Wendy Barrett 0419 894 432

North West

President: Don Pascoe 0477 132 456
Secretary: John Campbell 0408 421 065

Northern Rivers

President: Phil Chesham 0402 305 498
Secretary: Tony Cicchinelli 02 6621 3096

Northern Sydney

President: Trevor Bailey 0414 843 600
Secretary: Jim Phelan 0419 414 759

Port Stephens

President: Chris Kelly 0418 652 857
Secretary: Peter Arnold 0404 872 018

Riverina

President: Kel Tilden 0457 319 700
Secretary: Stephen Lawler 0413 573 537

South Coast

President: Murry Conran 0407 318 343
Secretary: David Blunden 0412 869 814

Southern Monaro

President: John Bedingfield
Secretary: Tom Herbert 0419 215 103

Southern Sydney

President: Terry Hughes 0447 488 052
Secretary: Bruce Thompson 0419 475 465

Sydney Metro

President: Henry Morris OAM 0418 115 706
Secretary: Seamus O'Connell 0411 126 060

Tuggerah Lakes

President: Neville Glover 0403 011448
Secretary: Matt Smith 0407 924 188

Tweed District

President: Greg Hodge 0407 275 718
Secretary: Tom Cassin 0407 457 661

Upper Hunter

President: Paul Medd 0409 482 297
Secretary: Erica Edwards 0429 485 121

Western Region

President: Martin Cook 0414 393 703
Secretary: Ross Tighe 0428 289 324

Western Sydney

President: Steve Winbank 0412 280 162
Secretary: Garry O'Donnell 0418 699 257

QLD & AFFILIATED STATES

Brisbane

President: Ian Gatenby 07 3367 6002

Bundaberg District

President: Greg Pershouse 0414 484 911

Far North Queensland

President: John McAllister 0409 722 455
Secretary: Megan McAllister

Fraser Coast

Secretary: Jeffrey Bacchi 0419 729 857

Gold Coast

President: Lloyd Evans 0439 979 250
Secretary: Ian Amos 0417 005 180

Goondiwindi

President: Ernie Silcock 0429 724 699
Secretary: Peter Sullivan 0427 653 679

Gympie

President: Ross Groundwater 0408 825 466

Ipswich

President: Pat O'Doherty 0400 797 541
Secretary: Anthony Breeze 0417 927 449

Moreton

President: Peter Affleck 0414 445 630
Secretary: Terry Webb 0400 715 715

Roma

President: Owen Lingard 0400 496 507
Secretary: Julie Walton 0437 721 527

Sunshine Coast

President: Don Oxenham 0409 849 161
Secretary: Barry Marsden 0402 654 231

Toowoomba Region

President: Tony Coonan 0407 124 302
Secretary: Jackie Stephson

Townsville

President: Mark Williams 0409 894 427
Secretary: Terry Feeney 0488 000 899

Victoria

President: Peter Foreman 0439 533 171
Secretary: Greg Warren 0412 368 078

Western Australia

President: James Sullivan 0414 733 083
Secretary: Justin Reid 0403 012 252

OLD STATE COMMITTEE

Chairman: Andrew Blucher

Committee: Pete Psaltis, Tony Woodgate, Darryl Foster, Wally Fullerton Smith, Dan Whitmore, Peter McWhirter, Shane Boyes

MCCLOY GROUP A VALUED CORPORATE MEMBER

Jeff McCloy, chairman of McCloy Group, has been a generous supporter of the Men of League Foundation for many years.

Jeff is a former player for Lakes United in the Newcastle competition who made many representative teams before moving to Sydney where he played for Ryde-Eastwood before returning to finish his career with Lakes.

While his career focus swung from rugby league to business, his passion for the game never died. Throughout the 'Super League War', Jeff wanted to ensure that the Newcastle region continued to be represented, with his wish inevitably granted. Briefly he was chairman of the Hunter Mariners.

When asked why he decided to become a corporate member of the Men of League Foundation, Jeff replied that he feels the organisation is a wonderful vehicle to provide support to those in the rugby league community from juniors through to senior level.

The Men of League Foundation greatly appreciates the support of the Jeff and the McCloy Group.

To find out more about corporate memberships and partnership opportunities, please email membership@menofleague.com or call 02 8756 7190.



MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Men of League Foundation would like to thank all the 6700 members that have continued to support the organisation throughout 2020.

With a few months remaining in 2020, we encourage all our member to remind friends and family that it isn't too late to sign up or renew.

For any enquiries, please contact the membership team on 02 8756 7190 or via email at membership@menofleague.com



building Hunter communities
for over 50 years



“

The McCloy Group are not just selling land, they are building a real community.

Sharon Bretherton, resident of McCloy Communities



mccloygroup.com.au

ON YA 'DURKO'

**IRREPRESSIBLE QUEENSLAND MEDIA PERSONALITY
TONY DURKIN HAS BEEN A TIRELESS WORKER FOR
THE SUCCESSFUL SUNSHINE COAST COMMITTEE. HE
HAS BEEN HONOURED FOR HIS EFFORTS WITH LIFE
MEMBERSHIP OF THE FOUNDATION.**

NEIL CADIGAN

Ageless rugby league personality Tony Durkin could never be accused of doing anything in his career, or life for that matter, in half measures. And that is certainly the case with the effervescent media man's devotion to Men of League Foundation over 13 years.

Having known, and worked with, the 70-year-old for nearly four decades, I can testify to his seemingly boundless energy and 'can do' attitude during his time as the Queensland face of Rugby League Week magazine during its heyday, throughout his seven years as Brisbane Broncos media manager and for the past 13 as one of the Foundation's hardest workers.

'Durko' as he is universally known, was conveyed life membership of the Foundation at the annual general meeting in March in recognition of him being the tireless driving force behind much of the Sunshine Coast's activities, especially their fund-raising events. He was one of the catalysts – along with inaugural president Bob Hagan – for the foundation of the Sunshine Coast committee in early 2007. Current members Don Oxenham and Ian Smith were also foundation committee members.

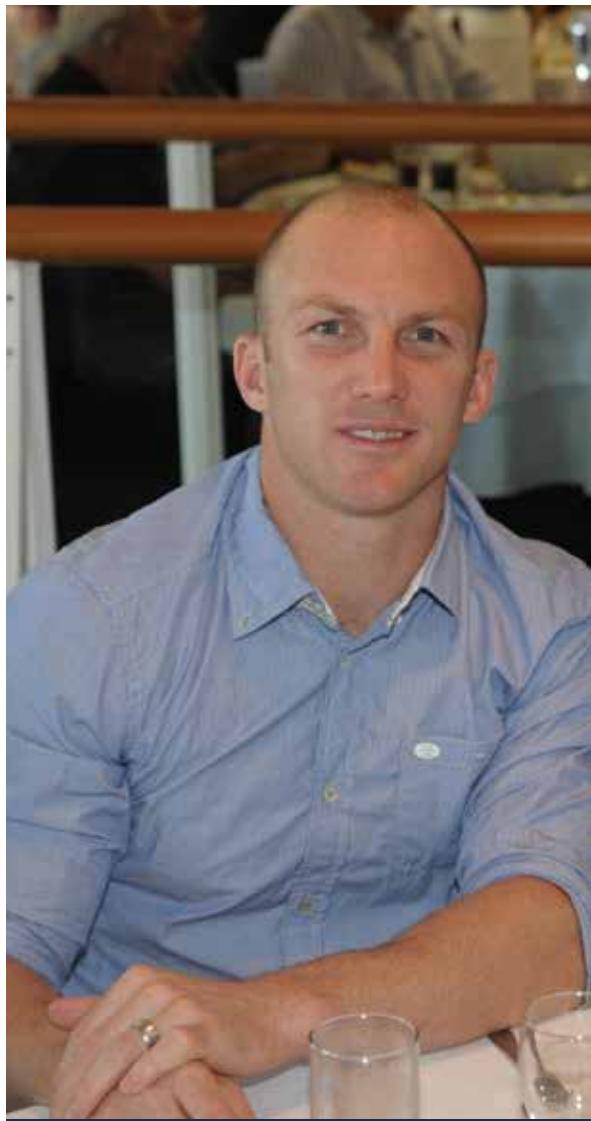
'Durko' never held an executive position but was considered the driving organising force behind the many hugely-successful functions during his 13 years on the Sunshine Coast committee.

As well as organising guest speakers, raffle and auction items, he was MC at all but two of the local functions in those 13 years. The first luncheon, held in 2007 with Ray Price, Steve Ella, Kerrod Walters and Michael Hancock as celebrity guests, attracted 56 people. The last lunch he organised and compered, before Christmas 2019, drew about 300.

After hosting a luncheon and a golf day in 2007, the Sunshine Coast event calendar grew to eight annual events before COVID-19 intervened.

Tony used his contacts from his two decades as an RLW journalist (he was Queensland editor and eventually editor) and TV and radio commentator to bring a who's who of high-profile guests to the Sunshine Coast. They included Mal Meninga, Wayne Bennett, Phil Gould, Craig Bellamy, Cameron Smith, Norm Provan, Arthur Summons, Steve Mortimer, Peter Sterling, Graham Lowe and Wayne Pearce.

Guests were not just rugby league personalities. Among others were



With legendary Bronco Darren Lockyer.



Successfully attracting a smile from Wayne Bennett at a Sunshine Coast Kick-Off Club.



'Durko' interviewing Shane Webcke.



With wife Angela after being recognised as Queensland's volunteer of the year.

Olympians Julie McDonald and Raelene Boyle, journalist Yvonne Sampson, commentators Ben Ikin and Andrew Voss, netballer Geva Mentor, cricketers Ian Healy and Jimmy Maher, dual rugby league international Brad Thorn, golfer Ian Baker-Finch and Queensland Police Superintendent Ian Stewart.

Not one special guest in those 13 years charged an appearance fee.

The Sunshine Coast committee is regarded as one of the most successful committees throughout Australia and Tony was named the Queensland volunteer of the year in 2016. The Foundation board described Tony's contribution as "outstanding service and accomplishments to the Foundation".

"Your contribution to our Sunshine Coast Committee since its inception in 2006, until your recent retirement from active duty at the end of 2019, has been most significant," said Men of League CEO Stephen Lowndes in the life membership citation.

"The Sunshine Coast committee has consistently been one of our best-performing in terms of funds raised to support the men, women and children of the rugby league community throughout Australia and the substantial support it continues to receive from the local rugby league and business community.

"Tony's tremendous leadership and involvement in driving this outstanding success over such a sustained period has been recognised by all his colleagues on the Sunshine Coast, by the Queensland administration and by the national board of directors."

Tony is the Foundation's ninth life member and the fourth Queenslander to be bestowed the honour. He joins Ron Coote, AM, and Jim Hall (2011), Peter Simons (2013), Steve Calder (2014), John Fahey, AC, (2015), Noel Kelly, OAM, (2016), Greg Veivers (2016) and Darryl Van de Velde (2017).

"I am absolutely honoured by this gesture and thank all those involved in the decision to elevate me beside the former recipients," Tony said. "While my involvement with the Men of League Foundation over the 13 years was time consuming and at times demanding, even stressful, it was enjoyable and rewarding.

"And, as has been the case during my four-decade association with rugby league, I have met some wonderful, down-to-earth people.

"Obviously, I feel proud to have been involved in some way with the success of the Sunshine Coast committee but that accomplishment would never have been possible had it not been for the outstanding support of our many sponsors, generous benefactors and unselfish guest speakers."

Many phone chats with Durko inevitably end with his sign-off of, "on ya Caddo" which I'm sure he would have replicated in many other conversations with mates and colleagues.

So, there was no more appropriate headline or sign-off for this story ... "on ya Durko!"

AN INDIGENOUS ICON

LIONEL MORGAN'S PLACE IN RUGBY LEAGUE HISTORY MAY BE A LITTLE UNDERSTATED YET HE HOLDS, FOREVER, THE PROUD MANTLE OF BEING THE FIRST INDIGENOUS MAN TO REPRESENT AUSTRALIA IN EITHER RUGBY CODE – HALF A CENTURY AGO.

STEVE RICKETTS

There was no great fanfare surrounding the selection of Lionel Morgan for his rugby league Test debut for Australia against France at the Brisbane Exhibition Grounds in 1960.

In a matter-of-fact way, The Courier-Mail reported that Morgan was one of three Queenslanders in the team, the others being Bobby Banks, from Cunnamulla, and Elton Rasmussen, from Toowoomba. Morgan, who like Banks, originally came from New South Wales, was playing club football for Wynnum-Manly at the time.

It didn't appear to be a big deal that Lionel was the first indigenous man to represent his country in either rugby code. In fact, he was not even referred to as an indigenous player.

Former Australian representative Jack Reardon was the chief league writer for The Courier-Mail and had a great respect for indigenous footballers, having grown up at Lismore in Northern NSW and having played inter-district football against the Tweed, which boasted a host of indigenous stars.

Reardon said Walter Slockie, who coached Morgan at Tweed Heads, was one of the best wingers he had seen. "Given

an opportunity, I think Walter could have been an international," Reardon wrote.

Lionel Morgan had fitted into the rugby league culture of the time. He did not court controversy and let his football do the talking. He deserved selection on his form for Queensland and that was that. The colour of his skin didn't really matter as far as Reardon was concerned.

But of course, it did, in the eyes of some opponents, spectators and no doubt, some teammates at different stages of his career.

Lionel Morgan, who turned 82 in August, signed with Wynnum-Manly in Brisbane after starring for Tweed All Blacks in their 1958 Tweed first grade grand final victory over Murwillumbah Brothers, whose captain-coach was future Gold Coast Titans chairman Paul Broughton.

Morgan was Wynnum's captain-coach in the 1965 and '67 seasons and each year after the Indigenous Round in the Queensland Cup, the man of the match receives the Lionel Morgan Medal.

In 'Voices from Brisbane rugby league', published in 2009, Morgan told author Greg Mallory that he had encountered "a fair bit of racism" during his playing career.

Lionel Morgan on the charge for Queensland in an interstate match against New South Wales.



"I don't think they cop today what I copped," Morgan said. "I not only copped it from the players, I copped it from the spectators. I spent two Saturday nights in hospital in Ipswich after Bulimba Cup [inter-city] games."

"Playing at Ipswich, the spectators were about a metre away from you. On one occasion I beat the Ipswich defence and I was just strolling down, thinking, 'I've got this try scored and I'll go in under the posts and then I'll kick it'.

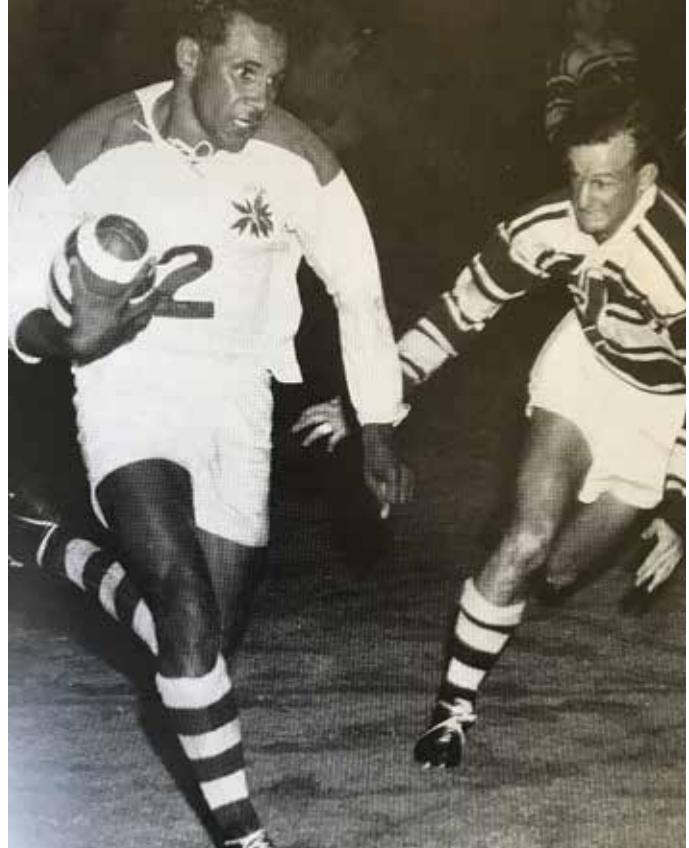
"Next minute, I felt bang on the side of the jaw. This bloke said: 'You rotten black b....' and jobbed me, and down I went. I played out the game but the jaw was all swollen so they took me to Ipswich Hospital for x-rays.

"When we (Queensland) played New South Wales in Sydney, I didn't think spectators could throw a beer bottle very far but I found out differently down there. I scored a try in the corner and NSW were leading 21-20. Barry Muir said: 'Can you kick it?' and I said: 'No sweat'.

"So, I've gone 'bang' and put it through (this was Lionel's interstate debut) and I'm just ambling back, looking at the clock (at the SCG).

"Next thing, swoosh! I've looked and here's a full bottle of beer. I heard someone say: 'You rotten black b....', and that was from 'The Hill'."

To mark the 60th anniversary of Morgan's selection for Australia, The Courier-Mail's Leanne Edmistone wrote a feature article about



Morgan flies down the touchline playing for Brisbane against Ipswich.



The historic Australian team photo of 1960. Back row (from left) Bob Bugden, Ken Irvine, Clive Churchill (coach), Frank Drake (reserve), Bill Rayner. Middle row: Ron Boden, Harry Wells, Elton Rasmussen, Lionel Morgan, Gary Parcell (reserve), John Raper. Front: Reg Gasnier, Norm Provan, Keith Barnes (captain), Rex Mossop, Brian Hamby.

the rugby league icon with Lionel's son Earl advocating his father's elevation to the Rugby League Hall of Fame.

"There will be indigenous players forever and a day but there will only ever be one person who was the first ever," Earl said. "That's worthy of recognition."

They named a motorway after Welshman Clive Sullivan in England, in honour of his achievement as the first black man to captain Britain in any team sport - in 1972 - when Great Britain won the World Cup in France.

Morgan scored two tries in his Test debut against France, on 2 July 1960, in Brisbane as Australia belted the tourists 56-6 (then the biggest score in Test football), with Morgan's former NSW Primary Schools' teammate Reg Gasnier also getting on the score sheet.

Morgan beat three defenders to score his first try. For the second, he got through tough French prop Marcel Bescos.

Morgan told Greg Mallory he always had a burning desire to represent his country.

"When I left the Tweed [in 1959], I said to my mates that they'd all come and watch me play for Australia and they had a laugh and a joke, and said, 'If you do, we will. But we don't think you will. You'll only last in Brisbane football a couple of weeks and then you'll be back home'.

"So they had 20 busloads of people come up to watch the Test."

Incredibly, France won the third Test 7-5 in Sydney a fortnight later for the series to finish a drawn affair, with the first Test an 8-all result.

At the end of the season, Morgan was chosen for Australia's World Cup tour to England and France and played in the first match, against France at Wigan, which Australia won 13-12. Morgan's opposite Raymond Gruppi scored two tries and Lionel was dropped from the side. That proved his last Test for his country, although he turned out in the green and gold for a match against St Helens, when the World Cup tournament was over.

He was named Australian's man of the match against the Saints and was presented with beer glasses from the famous Pilkington Glass Works, a financial backer of the English club.

"The World Cup was an incredible experience," Morgan said. "I was like a little boy lost in the company of men like Reg Gasnier, Johnny Raper, Harry Wells and Ken Irvine."

Brisbane Telegraph league writer Harry Jefferies, in his 1959 yearbook, described Morgan as the greatest draw card since the post war days of the 'turn-on-a-penny' winger Len Kenny.

"Lionel Morgan has captured the fans with his speed and elusiveness and backs up his electrifying pace with solid defence," Jefferies wrote. "A lay preacher, Lionel neither smokes nor drinks. He is modest in his outlook and plays football because he likes it. His first concern is for his club."

Although Morgan did not play for Australia again after that break-out 1960 season, he played 11 more matches for Queensland, including games against Great Britain (1962), South Africa and New Zealand (1963). Morgan was named Queensland's best back in 1962.

In the third match of the 1961 interstate series, Morgan scored two tries in Queensland's 15-2 win over NSW at the Exhibition Ground, showing great positional play and pace. He scored the first try after excellent lead-up work by forward Jim Paterson, while his second came after Elton Rasmussen broke through the line and linked with Ken Day and Dud Beattie. Morgan then stepped inside rival winger Eddie Lumsden to finish a sublime move.

Queensland won the fourth match 20-17 at Lang Park to level the series, with Morgan again scoring two tries.

In 1964, he played for a Gold Coast-Tweed selection against France at the Tweed Heads Recreation Ground, where he played his early football for the All Blacks and Tweed Seagulls. The match was staged in a bid to revitalise football on the Gold Coast, with Morgan selected because of his association with the region, even though he was still contracted to Wynnum-Manly.

Some of Lionel's greatest moments in football were playing alongside his brothers Maurie and Paddy, who had stints with him at Wynnum where Lionel remained a loyal servant. Lionel scored three tries in his premiership debut against Wests in 1959 and was a shining light for the club from that moment. He played in the centres many times and displayed punishing defence as well as his usual attacking thrust.

Morgan was noted for playing the game in the right spirit but was once sent off, in a club match against Brothers at Lang Park, for "using abusive language towards a touch judge". The send-off almost caused a riot, with irate Wynnum fans hurling abuse at referee Jim Wallace and his touch judges.

The charge was dismissed by the judiciary. It turns out all Morgan had said was: "Why don't you keep your eyes on both teams, linesman?"

Lionel and Laura, his wife of 60 years, settled at Wynnum, rather than return to the Tweed, and it is something he has never regretted. He is a life member of the Wynnum-Manly club and was named in their 'Legends' team. For many years he mentored indigenous youth on the Brisbane's southern bayside and on Stradbroke Island.

In 2010, an indigenous side defeated an NRL selection in the inaugural All Stars match, played at Skilled Park on the Gold Coast. The match was the brainchild of popular Titans fullback Preston Campbell and Gold Coast CEO Michael Searle, with Campbell crediting Morgan for inspiring him to use his profile to benefit indigenous communities. On a night of goodwill for the code, and on the second anniversary of the Australian Government's apology to the Stolen Generation', the All Stars game proved a smash hit.

Lionel Morgan, who was named in the Indigenous Team of the Century in 2008, was involved with the All Stars' promotions, in particular the Queensland (Murri) under-16 side, for which he was a coach and mentor.

Campbell told The Courier-Mail he had first met Morgan in the 1990s but didn't learn much of his history in the game until later.

"I have always admired Uncle Lionel's humility and the way he was willing to work in the background to achieve change," Campbell said. "He has been a mentor to generations of young kids coming through the game and to young indigenous leaders. He has encouraged all of us to look at indigenous communities in a different light and realise the importance of the game to our peoples, in making a difference."

Lionel is a strong supporter of the Men of League Foundation and has been a regular at Brisbane Kick-Off Club lunches at Broncos Leagues Club.

In 2015 he was interviewed at one such lunch by noted radio and television commentator John McCoy. He told McCoy his selection for Australia "upset the apple cart", given he was the first indigenous international, although there had been many fine indigenous players before him.

At the time of his selection, Aboriginals were not deemed Australian citizens. Strings had to be pulled in Canberra for Morgan to get a passport and join the Kangaroos in England and France for the World Cup trip.

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

As a cadet journalist at the Tweed Daily News in 1971, the very first story I wrote was about a fund-raiser for Lionel's brother Maurie who had died in an accident in country NSW not long after signing a contract to be captain-coach of a local side. I played against the Tweed All Blacks in 1973 and they were always fast, free flowing matches with little spite. I also had the honour of playing against Paddy Morgan, late in his career, when he was contracted to the Burleigh Bears. I interviewed Lionel many times over the years and on one occasion arranged a photograph of him with Brisbane Broncos indigenous star Steve Renouf. I also covered several matches involving Lionel's son Bradley who was a fine fullback for Wynnum-Manly, and sadly, died in July 2011.

PIONEERING WOMEN'S LEAGUE

LEGEND JOINS THE BOARD



Men of League Foundation has welcomed a new member of its board of directors, Katrina Fanning, who began her duties in early July.

Katrina is a Wiradjuri woman from Junee in New South Wales who has lived and breathed rugby league as a player and administrator from the Junee Diesels juniors to the Jillaroos (player #6). She was five-eighth in the inaugural Jillaroos side in 1995 and went on to represent Australia 26 times during a 14-year career.

A former NSW Country and NSW captain, she was also a captain-coach of the Gungahlin Bulls in three premiership winning seasons in the Australian Capital Territory competition.

Away from the field, she held the role of president of the Australian Women's Rugby League Association and is currently president of the ACT Women's Rugby League Association, chairperson of the Australian Rugby League Indigenous Council and a director of the board of the Canberra Raiders. She is a director of Coolamon Advisors, an indigenous and majority-owned and managed consultancy devoted to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people creating and leading their own solutions.

Katrina has worked to create participation and elite pathways for many in the game including women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and is proud that the premier schoolgirl rugby league competition in Canberra and surrounding NSW districts is named the Katrina Fanning Cup.

"I am absolutely delighted that someone of Katrina's

reputation, experience and knowledge of rugby league has accepted this important role," said Foundation chairman, Professor the Honourable Stephen Martin.

"She is a champion for inclusion in our game and brings to our board unique expertise and tremendous commitment to serving the broad rugby league community."

Katrina has also been recognised for her community contribution in areas such as the prevention of family violence, child protection, homelessness and addressing disadvantage faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. She was selected as the ACT's Australian of the Year in 2020, Canberra Woman of the Year 2014, received a Public Service Medal for outstanding contribution to indigenous affairs as a senior executive in the Australian Public Service and was chosen as ACT's NAIDOC Person of the Year in 2014.

"I understand the difference rugby league makes in the lives of many Australians," she said. "I have seen so many dedicated people give so much to the game to ensure people like me could play."

"I consider it a great honour to join the team at the Men of League Foundation as a national director and play a role in looking after the people who came before me and people now serving the game – people who are themselves now in need."

"Many of them ensured our great game was inclusive and accessible to people from all kinds of backgrounds and we are all the beneficiaries of that."

MEN OF LEAGUE FOUNDATION EVENTS CALENDAR



SEPTEMBER 2020

11	Golf Day	Bundaberg Golf Club	Bundaberg
18	Golf Day	Brisbane Golf Club	Queensland
27	Bowls Day	Nelson Bay Bowls Club	Port Stephens

OCTOBER 2020

2	Golf Day	Cabramatta Golf Club	Western Sydney
17	Golf Day	Roma Golf Club	Roma
23	Kick-off event	Redcliffe Leagues Club	Moreton
30	Bowls Day	West Toowoomba BC	Toowoomba
30	Golf Day	St Michaels Golf Club	National office
30	Golf Day	Dubbo Golf Club	Western (NSW)

NOVEMBER 2020

01	Golf Day	Maryborough Golf Club	Fraser Coast
04	Origin Kick-off	Nerang RSL	Gold Coast
06	Origin Lunch	Club Services Ipswich	Ipswich
06	Dinner	Brothers Bundaberg	Bundaberg
11	Origin Long Lunch	Caxton Hotel	Queensland
13	Golf Day in Dalby	Dalby Golf club	Toowoomba
20	Kick-off Club	Toowoomba Sports Club	Toowoomba
20	Origin wash-up Lunch	Norths Kallangur	Brisbane
TBC	Golf Day	Goondiwindi Golf Club	Goondiwindi

DECEMBER 2020

04	Christmas Lunch	Maroochy RSL	Sunshine Coast
09	Christmas Kick-off	Broncos Leagues Club	Brisbane

"Due to the evolving health protocols in NSW, Victoria and Queensland, many events have been cancelled or are in doubt. We ask that you check with your local committee or on our website at www.menofleague.com for updates on events in the coming months."



SUPPORT THE RUGBY LEAGUE FAMILY

\$2000

UP FOR GRABS EVERY WEEK

JOIN OUR ONLINE LOTTERY TODAY



JOIN THE
DRAW FOR
JUST \$2



FUNDS SUPPORT
THOSE IN YOUR
COMMUNITY



A WINNER EACH
WEEK CLAIMS THE
\$2000 PRIZE

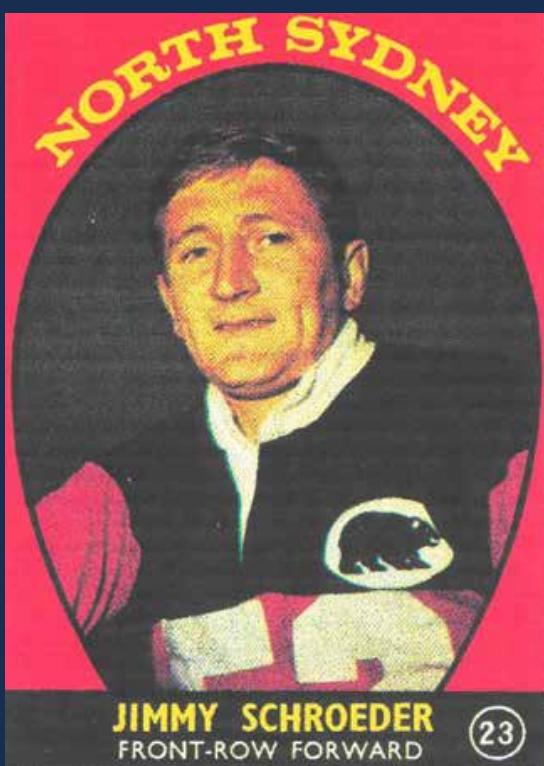
JOIN TODAY
WWW.CLUB-DRAWS.COM/MENOFLEAGUE

PHYSICALLY DISTANT, SOCIALLY CONNECTED

A PHONE CONVERSATION FULL OF REMINISCING BY LEGENDARY AUSTRALIAN FULLBACK GARRY JACK TO FORMER NORTH SYDNEY BEAR JIM SCHRODER TYPIFIES HOW THE FOOTY FAMILY IS STILL HELPING EACH OTHER DURING A DIFFICULT TIME THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.



Garry Jack, a champion of the 1980s and once endorsed as the world's best player. PHOTO: NRL Imagery.



Jim Schroder (left) during his playing days and (right) recently.

JAMES PARKER

Instead of listening to Elvis, which he enjoys, Jim Schroder

and his wife Joy were waiting patiently in his aged care facility in for the phone to ring on the 22 April. The call came, from rugby league legend, and it would help to lift Jim's spirits.

In Wollongong, Garry Jack was sitting in his backyard, relaxing on his outdoor setting with his black pug Rupert comfortably on his lap and a coffee by his side. The bright blue sky filled his view.

After a matter of moments, Garry dialled in ten digits, pressed call and the phone began to ring. For the next 27 minutes, Jim and Garry would reminisce on memories, compare players and escape the world of isolation while spinning yarns. Even though they were physically distant, they were socially connected.

Under normal circumstances, wellbeing officers would travel around their communities to help increase the mental and emotional wellbeing of rugby league family members facing hard times. Smartly dressed in navy polo shirts with embossed gold logos, they would provide smiles, lend an ear, share laughs and offer their support through heartfelt conversations with those who are doing it tough.

However, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, social interaction has been limited. Fortunately, social communication hasn't decreased.

The Men of League Foundation has established the Virtual Visitation Program to combat the inability to visit homes, hospitals and aged care facilities. The program utilises phone calls and visual tools like Facetime and Zoom so that wellbeing officers can still contact those in need. Utilising this program, ex-Bears prop Jim Schroder and former Tigers fullback Garry Jack were able to connect and reflect on their careers and their uncanny similarities.

The man receiving the phone call, a former North Sydney Bears fullback, has often been described as a "a very kind bloke and larger than life". Jim Schroder represented the Bears between 1961 and 1970, accumulating 32 first grade games. He went on to serve on the Bears' executive committee, he became a first-grade selector and was honoured with life membership.

Later, Jim moved to Tumut where he briefly came out of retirement to play for the Tumut Blues. He then transferred to Wollongong, where he coached Port Kembla's reserve grade team while Peter Fitzgerald (of St George Dragons and Sydney Roosters fame) was coaching their first grade team.

Jim would join forces with Peter to help form the Men of League Foundation committee in Wollongong. A few years ago, Jim was diagnosed with Lewy body dementia. He doesn't forget people but instead of speaking, he enjoys listening. The Foundation has helped to assist with his care and the wellbeing of his family through visits and calls, and they have previously helped renovate his home.

The man making the phone call on behalf of the Men of League Foundation, Garry Jack, was the best fullback in the world during most of the 1980s.

Reminiscing on his successful career, Garry is proud that he was able to represent his country in the green and gold, and be part of the undefeated Kangaroos tour to England and France in 1986. Even in the bittersweet moments, like the 1988 and 1989 seasons when the Tigers fell just short of winning premierships, he was thankful that he had the opportunity of reaching back-to-back grand finals.

Jack stands second on Balmain's first grade appearance record list with 244 games, behind Paul Sironen (249). He represented NSW in their first winning State of Origin series in 1985, and their first series clean-sweep in 1986. He was selected as the world's best player in 1986 and has sitting, in a custom glass box, his Golden Boot trophy. However, Garry doesn't let his successful career go to his head and enjoys giving back to his football family.

The pair, who played league two decades apart, soon found out that they shared a lot more in common than they expected. Their first encounter occurred not at a rugby league match but at a bank in Wollongong. "I've known Jim for over 30 years. He worked in the Rural Bank. I bought a unit in Wollongong back in 1987 and it was Jim Schroder who organised the loan for me", recalled Garry.

As they sat analysing the game, they began comparing players of different decades. Garry, pushing his luck, asked Jim, "What about Billy Slater? Is he a better fullback than Churchill?" Without a second passing, he heard an assertive "Nooooo!" through the phone. Garry knew the answer, but for a bit of light humour said, "What about Changa?" and just like before, he heard a "Nooo way!" from Jim. Garry said, "I can't argue with you there, Jimmy," as they shared laughs.

When Jim was a young man, his friend organised a blind date. Jim and his friend headed to the local leagues club to meet the two young ladies. In another part of town, a young lady named Joy was with a fellow nurse, and they were making their way to North Sydney Leagues Club to meet two rugby league players. This was the first time that Jim and Joy, to become his wife, placed eyes on one another.

Joy said: "I bagged the other bloke originally, but I ended up with Jim", which inspired chuckles from the pair. The date must have gone well, because they have been married for 51 years and been blessed with two daughters, two sons and three grand-children.

After hearing the story, Garry replied: "Well fancy that, the first time I saw my wife was at North Sydney Oval. She was sitting behind me. Then a few months later I met her again, and I asked her out, and here we are married 35 years later."

"In 1982, before the game, she was there with Cathy Roach (wife of Steve 'Blocker' Roach), who was a nursing sister and they did their training together." Roach had asked Garry to come along to a nurses' party, and just like Jim's blind date, Garry officially had met his future wife, also a nurse, at the same venue.

After the 27-minute conversation, Garry said that the hardest part was saying goodbye. He explained that when you speak to people, you build honest connections and it can become quite emotional saying your farewells. But he did notice that, when he ended the phone call, "Jim was in very good spirits. He was having a laugh and a joke."

"I see all these blokes who love their footy and it's nice to be remembered at this time of need," he said. "It is nice for the Men of League Foundation to give back and thank those players. Just a phone call and it means the world."

TRY THAT! \$85,000 WORTH CELEBRATING

Dragons utility Corey Norman does a 'Piggy' Riddell and applauds his own try at WIN Stadium as teammates join in his celebration ... and last gasp victory against the Bulldogs.



A wonderful promotion, a wonderful result and some tremendous 'buy-in' by many NRL players provided a windfall of \$85,000 for the Men of League Foundation, thanks to Sportsbet and the NRL.

The NRL's official betting agency - in liaison with the NRL who collaborated with Sportsbet and the Foundation to develop the wonderful concept - backed the Foundation in the Try July promotion, in which Sportsbet donated \$5000 for every NRL try celebration during the month.

And it was certainly a case of turning back the clock to the early 2000s when quirky try celebrations by players were prominent, encouraged by Channel 9's The Footy Show.

And St George Illawarra's utility back Corey Norman certainly married up the two eras when he replicated Dragons hooker Mark Riddell's 2002 classic when he jumped the fence at WIN Stadium in Wollongong, sat on one of the bucket seats and applauded his own try.

Also wearing the Red V, and at the same venue, Norman re-enacted Riddell's skit after pouncing on a spilled Bulldogs pass in the final two minutes of the clash with the Bulldogs and running away to seal victory. He immediately headed for the perimeter fence, sat on the fence (Riddell had leapt it and sat in the first row seat) and applauded his feat, with teammates joining him.

There were plenty of other post-try shows worthy of recognition during rounds 8-11.

The first into the act was Penrith skipper Nathan Cleary who earned \$5000 for his 'skeet shooting' celebration. Sportsbet added a \$10,000 bonus after his special handshake with a teammate.

Parramatta Eels cult-figure, Fijian flyer Maiko Sivo, slid over the tryline in the left corner and proceeded to sit down, clap his hands, which is Fijian tradition, and drink kava.

Sharks winger Sione Katoa pretended to cut up a coconut and drink

from it after his try against the Dragons.

Saints' in-form centre Zac Lomax blew a kiss at the camera, while Knights players exchanged kisses on the cheek after a try by Kalyn Ponga against Souths.

And there were many, many more as NRL players not only leapt into the spirit of good natured hamming it up but did their bit for the Foundation.

"We're not going to lie; we were a little bit concerned at Sportsbet after round 8 came and went with no celebrations," said Sportsbet's content and PR manager Simon Legg.

"However, we knew the players were excited about this idea and after Dane Gagai crossed the line in round 9, followed by Adam Reynolds' inventive referee impersonation, we knew the flood gates were going to open ... and open they did!

"We couldn't be happier to see 14 celebrations, totalling a massive donation of \$80,000 to The Men of League Foundation. The Foundation plays a tremendously important role in our great game and we're delighted that those funds will be put to good use."

"At Sportsbet, we love supporting the NRL, and while we're fans of the game, we've thought something was missing from yesteryear... the art of the try celebration."

"So that's why we came up with the unique concept of Try July — to spark some fun and excitement when the players cross the line."

"But what was our hook going to be? Well, we know the Men of League Foundation plays a tremendously important role in our great game, so what better way to encourage the players to support the concept, than by giving back to assist the brilliant work the Foundation does behind the scenes."

NOTE: AFTER HANDING OVER A CHEQUE FOR \$80,000 SPORTSBET FOUND ONE MORE TRY CELEBRATION WORTH REWARDING - SOUTH'S ALEX JOHNSTON'S LE BRON JAMES IMPERSONATION (ASSISTED BY DANE GAGAI) ON JULY 31 AND INCREASED THEIR DONATION TO \$85,000.

FAREWELL 'LITTLE ARTIE'



NEIL CADIGAN

He may be best known as the little man on Australian rugby league's biggest trophy. Yet Arthur Summons, who died in May, will go down in the country's rugby codes as much more than the vanquished, muddied gladiator who stands beside grand final giant Norm Provan on the NRL's premiership trophy.

While the dual international first gained a reputation in rugby union, playing 10 Tests for the Wallabies, he was a league player while growing up, captaining Mt Pritchard to premierships in the Parramatta juniors. However, Homebush Boys High where he attended was a rugby union school and he captained their First XV for two years (1951-52), made the Combined High Schools rep teams and joined Gordon rugby club in 1955.

During his five seasons with Gordon, Summons won two premierships and played nine times for New South Wales and was selected in the 1957-58 Wallabies to tour of Britain, Ireland and France, making his Test debut against Wales at Cardiff Arms Park. He toured New Zealand in 1958 and played the last of his 10 Tests for the Wallabies at the Sydney Sports Ground in 1959, against the British Lions, before being lured by Western Suburbs who were then seen as the millionaires of the Sydney rugby league competition, desperate to dismantle the all-conquering St George who were in the midst of climbing the mountain towards their world-record 11-year premiership reign.

Nimble on his feet, with a good pass and good low tackling technique, Summons took to league quickly. In his second season (1961) he made the Australian side and by the next year was captain in the third Test (as five-eighth) in the absence the injured Reg Gasnier and Keith Barnes. The following season he was chosen as captain of the 1963-64 Kangaroos, who have been voted by a panel nominated by Men of League as the greatest Australian Kangaroos team of all-time.

He played 56 first grade matches in five seasons with the Magpies, including three successive grand finals losses to the Dragons from 1961-63. It was after the controversial 8-3 loss in the Sydney Cricket Ground mud in September 1963 that The Sun newspaper's experienced photographer John O'Gready snapped the image of mutual respect and exhaustion between opposing skippers Summons and Provan, seconds after full-time.

The two playing heroes nor O'Grady could have envisioned how that one moment, or single click of a camera, would be frozen into rugby league immortality.

Provan had just completed the eighth of his 10 successive grand final victories while Summons was coming to grips with his third loss – after Wests had gone down 22-0 in 1961 and 9-6 in 1962. The controversy around that match has been largely lost in time while that one embrace has withstood it.

Summons' teammate that day, team of the century hooker Noel Kelly who died just 29 days after his little mate in June, took to his grave the belief grand final referee Darcy Lawler, a noted punter, had backed St George to win that day – based on a report from his Magpies teammate Jack Gibson that Lawler had

placed a (illegal) bet with a SP bookmaker Gibson knew – to win 600 pounds.

Several dubious decisions, an 18-7 penalty count to the Dragons and a two-to-one scrum count supported the accusations, with Kelly finally spelling out his beliefs in his autobiography 'Hard Man' in 1993. Typically, Summons seldom commented publicly about the controversy although he did admit at a Western Suburbs function in recent years that, when the photo was taken, he was telling Provan, "the referee got us again".

Instead, as the legend of O'Gready's photo took on enduring status over the ensuing five decades or more, the modest, affable Summons accepted his never-expected role as a major ambassador for the game's good spirit and developed a special bond with his adversary of '63, big 'Sticks' Provan. The image is symbolised in the Provan-Summons Medal too, won each year by the NRL player who shows the greatest characteristics of sportsmanship and respect.

When the pose was re-enacted at the SCG in 2013 after it was announced it would be sculptured into the Provan-Summons Trophy to replace the J J Giltinan Shield as the annual prize for the grand final winners (the Giltinan Shield became the minor premiership prize), Summons appropriately expressed: "It's surreal ... what happened from that photo being taken. Images being used for the premiership trophy ... it's beyond my ability to explain it.

"The mud helped make it. We look like statues. We're epitomised for as long as they play for that trophy. We'll be long gone and they'll still be playing for it because it is rugby league."

Soon after his Sydney playing days, Summons moved to Wagga Wagga where he played three seasons with the Magpies, represented Country and became secretary-manager of the leagues club for many years. He still lived there with his wife Pam when he passed, aged 84, on 16 May.





Inaugural Brisbane Broncos of 1988 (from left) Keith Gee, Grant Rix, Grant Thorogood, David Bourke, Scott Lewis, Gene Miles, Allan Langer, Kerrod Walters, Ray Herring, Michael Hancock, Chris Johns and Terry Matterson. INSET RIGHT: Family winners - Sam, Charlie, Keith and Alex Gee after winning

SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND COUNTRY TOWN BEAUDESERT HAS PRODUCED PLENTY OF FIRST-CLASS FOOTBALLERS, US PGA WINNING GOLFER JASON DAY AND OTHER PERSONALITIES. THE GEE BROTHERS, PROUD LOCALS AS ANY OF THEM, LOOK FORWARD TO CELEBRATING THE KINGFISHERS' 50 YEARS' FOOTY HISTORY IN NOVEMBER.



GEE, WHAT A MILESTONE FOR BEAUDESERT KINGFISHERS

STEVE RICKETTS

When foundation Brisbane Broncos forward Keith Gee looks back on a decorated career, one thing stands out - a reserve grade premiership with his beloved Beaudesert Kingfishers, a club that celebrates its 50th year in 2020.

It wasn't just any reserve grade title. For Gee was the coach and the team included his sons Alex, Sam and Charlie.

That was 2017 with Runaway Bay the vanquished side, on the day of the Gold Coast Rugby League grand finals at Pizzey Park, Miami.

"We only fielded a reserve grade side that year and had 22 players to call on, all of them Beaudesert juniors," Gee recalls. "Winning that game was the biggest thrill of my career. It beat playing for Queensland or the Broncos."

Rugby league in the Beaudesert district goes back a century or more but the birth of the Kingfishers, juniors and seniors, did not take place until 1970 after a meeting at the Railway Hotel. Publican Tom Kassulke finished up the club's inaugural president, with the club playing out of Willis Park.

In the years to come, the club would enter several different competitions, most notably the Gold Coast and Ipswich Leagues.

The club won its first Gold Coast A grade title in 1983 and there were back-to-back titles in 1990 and '91.

One of the club's most famous juniors is former Test centre Chris Close, whose father was a local policeman. In more recent times Germaine Paulson (Rabbitohs) and Jamal Fogarty (Titans) have graduated to the NRL, after starting their careers at Beaudesert.

Going way back, there were Jack Veivers, who played for Queensland in the 1950s, and then his son Greg who captained Australia in 1977. They had to go to Souths in Brisbane to achieve their aims, as local football was very much of the village variety with matches against other small communities, such as Rathdowney, Peak Crossing and Boonah in what was called at one stage the Fassifern League.

There also was goal-kicking winger Ian Dauth, a Brisbane Brothers legend, who finished his career at Nerang and played seven matches for Queensland in the late 1970s.

Keith Gee, the eldest of three footballing brothers, first hit the headlines in 1983 when he was picked from Beaudesert for the Gold Coast Vikings representative side that played in the Winfield State League.

"I had been to Vikings' home games at Owen Park (Southport) with the Beaudesert boys to work in the steak tent," Gee said. "Every club got a chance to raise money through selling steak sandwiches and for the blokes working the tent, there was free beer."

"I was at training the day after one of those trips to the Coast when I was told I had made the Vikings side. I thought they meant the under-19s but it was first grade, under the coaching of former Canterbury-Bankstown fullback Peter Inskip. The next week I was playing Wests from Brisbane."



Gee played State League again in 1984 under captain-coach Phil Hortz, a policeman at Beaudesert.

In 1985, Gee signed with Brothers in Brisbane, with Ross Strudwick having succeeded another former Test halfback Tom Raudonikis as coach of the 'Fighting Irish'. Gee won a reserve grade premiership with Brothers but it was a hollow feeling because he felt he had under-achieved, and his relationship with Strudwick had not been great.

"I took a backward step, to go forward," Gee said of his decision to return to Beaudesert to play under Hortz in 1986 before taking on the captain-coach role for 1987.

That was his breakout year. He played again for the Vikings in the State League and was chosen for the Country side which played City in a Queensland selection double header at Lang Park, with the main game featuring a Queensland Maroons team against Sydney Maroons.

"We beat City, so (captain) Pat Shepherdson and I had quite a few beers at the bar in the Rugby League Club under the Frank Burke Stand at Lang Park," Gee recalls. "[QRL managing director] Ross Livermore came out from his office asking around for Keith Gee. When he found me, he asked if I had a passport because I had been chosen for the Queensland tour of New Zealand. I didn't even know there was a tour. I was that elated I rang up two of my old school teachers to tell them."

Wayne Bennett was coach of the side which included future Australian halfback Allan Langer for the first time in maroon. Gee missed the first game against a New Zealand XIII in Auckland but played the next match against Bay of Plenty at Rotorua and scored a try.

"I was number 17 in the program and they had me down as Ken Gee," Keith said. "I've since found out that Ken Gee was a famous English player. Anyway, I got on the field that day after nearly freezing to death in the tiny dressing room.

"Late in the year I got picked again for Queensland for a match against the touring Kiwis at Lang Park. I had played club footy against Southport Tigers and that night, around 10 o'clock, I took a call from the Gold Coast League president to say I had been picked for Queensland.

"I told him I had to go to work the next day. I had a truck to drive. I went into work at 5 am and told my boss what had happened and he said 'no worries' and drove me to the Travelodge [the team hotel] in Brisbane in his truck. I can still picture him driving up to the reception entrance in this big truck, dropping me off and then reversing out onto busy Roma Street - in peak hour.

"We started slowly against the Kiwis but led 14-4 early in the second half before Kevin Iro cut loose and they won 22-16. He was reminiscent of Mal Meninga, the way he could palm you off. The next week they beat Australia."

In 1988, Gee became a Bronco, signing with the new club at the same time as his youngest brother Andrew who would go on to play 255 first grade games for the club, represent Queensland 17 times and tour Papua New Guinea in 1991 with the Australian team.

"(Broncos CEO) John Ribot came to my gym in Beaudesert and I cooked him bacon and eggs," Gee recalls. "Andrew and I were a dual signing but (younger brother) Mark signed with Gold Coast Giants.

"I had a great off-season with the Broncos and got selected for their first match against Manly at Lang Park. In the sheds, I couldn't stop giggling, because (fullback) Colin Scott had on one of the reserve's gowns and was masquerading as a boxer. I stopped laughing a split second before Wayne Bennett came into the room."

Gee was in the second row in the inaugural Broncos side that took on the reigning premiers before a crowd of 17,451. On the field that day were internationals Colin Scott, Chris Johns, Gene Miles, Wally Lewis,

Langer, Greg Dowling, Greg Conescu, Bryan Niebling (Brisbane), Dale Shearer, Michael O'Connor, Cliff Lyons, Des Hasler, Noel Cleal, Don McKinnon and Phil Daley (Manly).

"The hairs stood up on the back of my neck as I ran onto the field, hearing the roar of the crowd. I went in with everything I had, making my first tackle. Everyone was chatting. It was like things were in slow motion, but it was so fast, and so physical. People recall Wally Lewis's try and the fact Terry Matterson scored 24 points on his 21st birthday. But what is not so well known is what a fantastic team win it was."

Gee scored his first try for the Broncos the following week, against Penrith at Lang Park, in a match he rates the most physical of his career with the Panthers boasting forwards of the calibre of Peter Kelly, Mark Geyer, John Cartwright and Royce Simmons.

"I was 'Johnny-on-the-spot' when Bryan Niebling got a pass away," Gee says. "I loved the competitive nature of that game, the big hits. Every tackle was 120 percent. It was a good win (20-18), but it showed us not every win would be as convincing as the one against Manly."

Mark Gee was one of the architects of Gold Coast Giants' shock 25-22 win over the Broncos in round 10 at Tweed Heads, a match Keith would rather forget.

"That was the Giants' proudest win of the year," he recalled. "I had a chance to get us in front in the second half but lost my footing with the try-line at my mercy."

"The following year I got to play alongside Andrew (in reserve grade) at the Broncos and that was my most enjoyable game for the club."

"Mark, Andrew and I had grown up playing at home, on a footpath covered in rocks, and it wasn't touch footy, I can tell you."

Another Beaudesert product, Gary French, who had won a Brisbane premiership with Souths in 1985 under the coaching of Bennett, also played for the Broncos in the 1988 and '89 seasons and is fondly remembered by Castleford fans for his efforts in the English competition.

Keith joined Mark at the Gold Coast in 1990, signed by then assistant coach Mal Clift who would take the reins the following year.

"It was a handshake agreement at the bar at Seagulls Leagues Club," Gee said. "[Coach] Bob McCarthy said to 'Shifty' (Clift): 'What the hell did you do that for? We've already got 25 second-rowers.'

"But Mal saw me as a prop as well and made me captain at one stage in 1991 when Wally Lewis was out. But I missed six weeks (suspended) after I got done for a Cumberland throw against Newcastle."

Gee returned to Beaudesert at the end of his top-grade career and played with the club until the end of the 1996 season.

In 1992 he played under captain-coach Kevin Langer, the older brother of Allan. Kevin represented Queensland Residents many times, touring France in 1989.

The 50-year-reunion has been organised for 14 November at the Beaudesert Civic Hall and former Broncos' Test prop Shane Webcke and top entertainer Danny McMaster are planned to be special guests. Performer Rick Price was also on the card but the Tennessee-based singer-song writer from Beaudesert could not get a clearance to travel from the USA.

Keith Gee has unveiled his own song-writing skills, putting pen to paper to come up with 'Playin' for the Kingie' which it is hoped will be performed by golden guitar winner Josh Arnold.

Keith has put his heart and soul into the song, which is what you would expect, given he played in the inaugural 1970 season in the mighty three stone seven pounds team, wearing sky blue skivvy style jerseys.



WE HAVE CREATED A WONDERFUL DISCOUNTED WINE OFFER FOR MEN OF LEAGUE MEMBERS AS A WAY OF GIVING BACK. MEMBERS CAN ENJOY A DISCOUNT - AND THE FOUNDATION BENEFITS FROM EVERY SALE.

EXCLUSIVE WINE OFFER TO MEN OF LEAGUE MEMBERS

To celebrate their support for the Men of League Foundation, Mortimers Wines have created exclusive offers to Men of League members only!

Not only will members receive a 10% discount on any of the Mortimers Wine range purchased online or at the winery, Peter Mortimer will also give a 10% rebate back to the Men of League!

WIN! BONUS! All members who purchase wine online by 31 October 2020, will go into the draw to WIN a weekend's luxury accommodation for four people and a personal VIP wine tour with Peter Mortimer at the Mortimers Wine Estate in NSW.

"I will personally see that whoever wins will have a visit to remember!" - Peter Mortimer

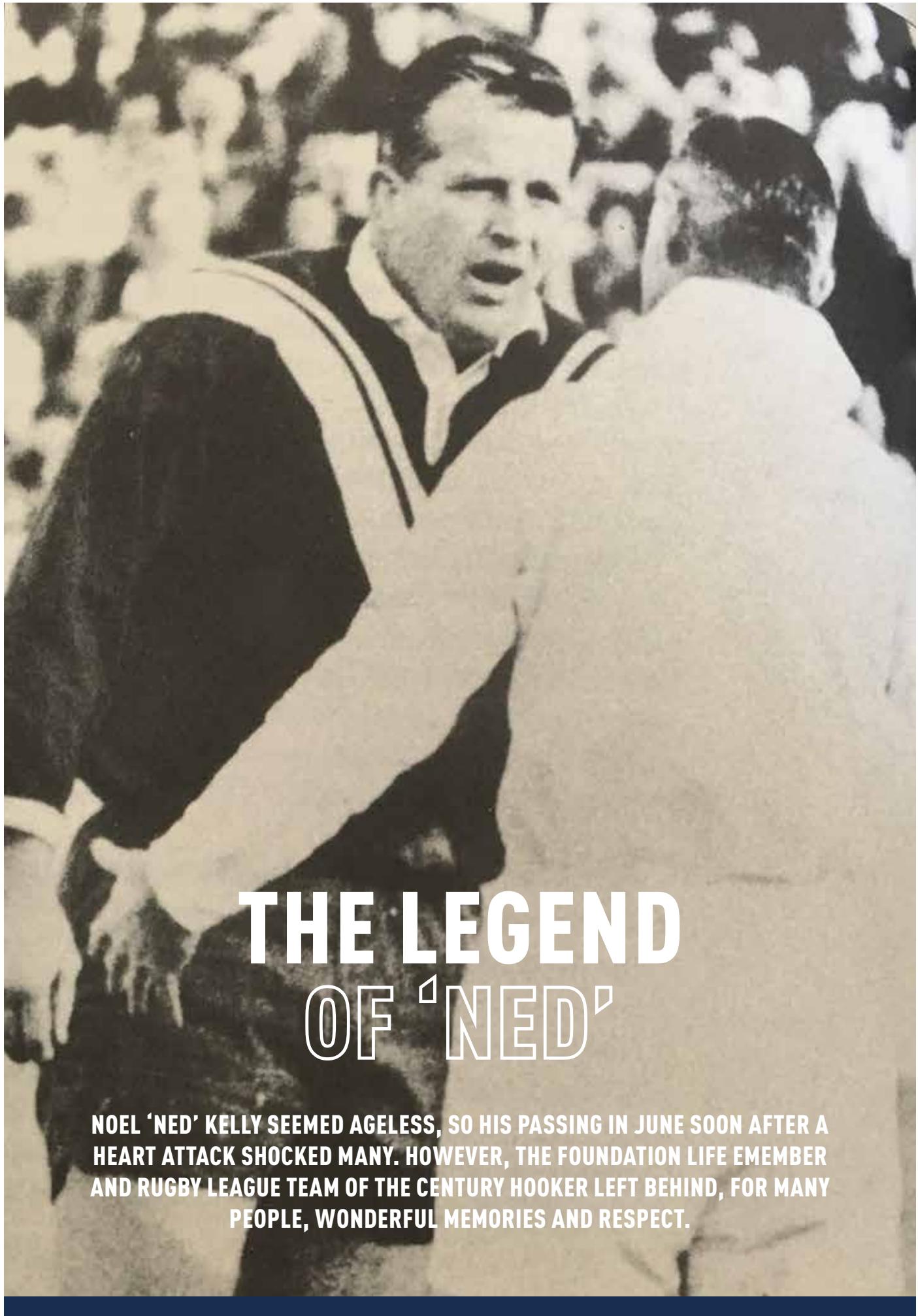
LAUNCH SPECIAL

**1 X 6 PACK OF PREMIUM CHESTNUT GARTH 2015 CABERNET SAUVIGNON RRP \$228,
MEN OF LEAGUE MEMBER PRICE \$206.20**

WIN! All current members who purchase wine online by the 31 October, 2020 will be in the draw to win two nights' luxury accommodation for four people in the Canopy Loft at Mortimers Wine in Orange, NSW. The prize includes a private tour and wine tasting with Peter Mortimer and a ploughman's lunch in the vineyard. Valued at \$2200!
*(terms and conditions apply).

Just use the coupon code MOLF on checkout to receive your discount and be in the draw!!

*Terms & Conditions: Accommodation Prize Booking is subject to date availability. Prize does not include travel, all travel costs are the responsibility of the winner(s). Prize entry is open to current members only who purchase wine from www.mortimerswines.com.au and use the promotional coupon code MOLF on check out.



THE LEGEND OF 'NED'

NOEL 'NED' KELLY SEEMED AGELESS, SO HIS PASSING IN JUNE SOON AFTER A HEART ATTACK SHOCKED MANY. HOWEVER, THE FOUNDATION LIFE MEMBER AND RUGBY LEAGUE TEAM OF THE CENTURY HOOKER LEFT BEHIND, FOR MANY PEOPLE, WONDERFUL MEMORIES AND RESPECT.

Hard man ... Noel Kelly in typical on-field pose, 'deliberating' with a referee



'Ned' receiving life membership of the Foundation in 2016.

NEIL CADIGAN

It's a well-worn cliché – "champion player but an even better bloke". Yet it certainly fitted Noel Kelly well.

A man with enough achievements to his name to match all but a handful in rugby league's annals, 'Ned' seemed to always available to chat to others, no matter what their background.

And his extraordinary league record, that sees him not just a team of the century member but regarded as one of the toughest forwards to lace boots, still left him modest, humble, down-to-earth and always a man of the people.

And those traits are what perhaps we treasure most about our sporting idols in Australia.

When Noel Kelly left our presence on 14 June, at age 84, he left the many who had met him with a wonderful perspective about the 'working class sport' and its most treasured characteristics.

The boy from Goodna, near Ipswich, was a driving force behind Men of League Foundation as member number 18. He was a life member, and a Foundation board member and director from 2002-14. Even after that period, he still supported the Northern Sydney committee from his home on the northern beaches and often the Tweed District committee during his many visits to his holiday apartment at Coolangatta with wife of 63 years, Chris.

'Ned' had a lifetime of memories and experiences, and that led to entertaining banter at the many Foundation speaking engagements or fund-raisers he was glad to attend. Behind the legend was also a committed family man.

Kelly went from the Goodna juniors to make first grade with Ipswich Brothers, as a hooker alongside props Dud Beattie and Gary Parcell, the trio going on to provide an all-Ipswich Australian front row in a Test match against France. He won the prestigious Bulimba Cup with the Ipswich rep side in 1958-59, with his form seeing him be selected for Queensland and Australia in 1959 and going on the first of his three Kangaroo tours to England and France (1959-60).

On return from that tour 'Ned' was lured to Ayr, south of

Townsville, by an incredible offer at that time of 800 pounds (enough to buy a house in the area) for what he thought was a straight-forward captain-coach position. It turned out all five of the sugar town's clubs had pitched in to pay his way, so he had to coach and play for one of the five on a rotation basis over the season.

He moved to Sydney in 1961 to join the rich leagues club-funded Western Suburbs Magpies who had enlisted strongly in an attempt to challenge the mighty St George. Ned had to suffer the heartache of going down to the Dragons in three successive grand finals (1961-63) – the toughest to take being 1963 when the Magpies had beaten their arch-rivals three times during the season and had to endure what they claimed was bias by grand final referee Darcy Lawler, in his last game in the middle before retiring.

Ned stayed in the black and white jersey for the rest of his top level playing days, switching to front row in his later years. He plied his trade as a butcher for most of that time.

A tough man in the era of an 'eye for an eye' brutal forward battles, Ned was sent off 17 times and dined out on the figure for years as a guest speaker, claiming mistaken identity, poor refereeing, pure innocence and his claim that most were for repeated scrum infringements.

His most infamous send-off came in a Test match against New Zealand at Lang Park in 1967. In the first set of the match, Kiwi prop Robin Orchard fumbled the ball and Australian five-eighth Johnny Gleeson hared through towards the loose ball, only to be 'coat-hangered' by Orchard. Kelly walked directly towards Orchard and put him on the ground with a left hook. Referee Col Pearce sent both players off – after just 90 seconds of play!

Folklore has it that when he entered the Aussie dressing room, Kelly confronted a thief going through the players' belongings – and flattened his second victim within minutes of the first.

Yet, underneath the tough footballing exterior, was a kind, caring man which Noel Kelly showed time and time again during his association with the Foundation.

He toured as a Kangaroo with the brilliant 1963 squad as prop with Dragons hooker Ian Walsh the captain. He became the first front-rower to make a third tour in 1967-67. His international career ended on that tour with 28 Tests to his name, along with eight games for Queensland and six for New South Wales. In his nine seasons for the Magpies from 1961-69, he played 111 first grade games. His last four seasons (1966-69) were as captain-coach.

Few people are aware that he had a final season of playing, at age 34, with Wollongong in the Illawarra competition.

Ned returned to coaching with North Sydney from 1973-76, taking a Sydney representative team to a tour of New Zealand in '76. During that period he was also a popular member of Rex Mossop's 'Controversy Corner' panel during the Sunday 'Sports Action' show.

In 2008, Kelly was named as the hooker in the Australian team of the century during the game's centenary year of 2008, is in the Queensland team of the century as hooker and Wests Magpies' all-time greatest team, as hooker and captain. He was awarded Australian Sports Medal in 2000, life membership of the Sydney Cricket Ground of the SCG and the Western Suburbs Magpies while Wests Tigers' annual award for the best forward is named the Noel Kelly Medal. In 2018 he received the Order of Australia Medal.

His memory will endure for those who watched him play and the many more who enjoyed his presence, compassion and his larrikin humour.



BRUIISING BRONCOS OF 2000 RECALL THE GLORY

THE BRISBANE BRONCOS, CIRCA 2000, READILY ADMIT THERE WAS NO GREAT FINESSE TO A TEAM THAT FINISHED SIX POINTS CLEAR AS MINOR PREMIERS AND COMPLETED THE JOB WITH A CLINICAL GRAND FINAL VICTORY BASED ON SIMPLE GO-FORWARD FOOTY AND BRAWN. TWO DECADES ON, THEY'RE PLANNING A SPECIAL CELEBRATION.

STEVE RICKETTS

Kevin Walters knew nothing could stop the young Broncos team of 2000 from winning the NRL premiership as long as they had a calm, guiding hand at the wheel.

The current Queensland State of Origin coach was captain that season and, along with lock Kevin Campion and interchange players Michael Hancock and Englishman Harvey Howard, was part of the small group of hardened veterans in the 17-man grand final squad.

Walters was able to provide the leadership required from halfback, following Allan Langer's shock mid-season retirement in 1999.

The Broncos were never headed in the grand final as they accounted for the Graham Murray-coached Sydney Roosters 14-6, in front of a crowd of 92,277 at Stadium Australia on Sunday 27 August with fullback Darren Lockyer named Clive Churchill Medal winner as player of the match. The grand final was played early that season because of the impending Sydney Olympics.

That 2000 Broncos side, coached by Wayne Bennett, will be honoured at the annual old boys lunch at Brisbane's Caxton Hotel on Friday 6 November when the players also will toast long standing supporter, sponsor, life member and former club director, Don Jackson, who is 80 this year.

The players all have different memories of that grand final win which completed a 'golden era' for the Broncos, who had won NSWRL titles in 1992 and '93; Super League in '97 and the inaugural NRL premiership in 1998.

Ipswich product Walters was the only man to play in all five grand final wins, after being part of the Canberra Raiders' first premiership winning side in 1989. He has been asked many times to nominate which game means the most to him but declines to single out one.

"Put it this way; I wouldn't sell any of them on eBay," is a favourite reply.

Gorden Tallis, who would go on to captain the Broncos, said it was a forwards' win in 2000, with giant wingers Wendell Sailor and Lote Tuqiri playing a huge part as well, scoring a try each.



Ready for battle ... opposing captains Brad Fittler and Kevin Walters at the 2000 grand final breakfast. Photo: NRL Images.

"That was the closest-knit Broncos' team I ever played in," Tallis recalled.

For Brad Thorn, the current coach of the Queensland Reds, it was his last game for the Broncos before his first sojourn in rugby union. He would return to the Broncos in 2005 and win a premiership in 2006, before heading back to rugby in New Zealand 2008.

"We just beat the competition up in 2000," he says. "It was just a big, physical team and probably not that exciting. We would just roll down the field with our forwards and just bash. For me, it was a really enjoyable time."

Prop Shane Webcke played the grand final with a broken arm, suffered six weeks earlier when attempting a tackle on St George-Illawarra forward Luke Bailey.

Doctors told Webcke the arm needed eight weeks to heal but he came back after five, playing in the preliminary final win over Parramatta, before backing up for the decider. In the build-up to both games, he was worried he would let the side down by having to retire early.

"I got into a bit of a rhythm in the grand final and, thankfully, we were always in control," he said.

Hooker Luke Priddis, who would go on to win the Clive Churchill Medal in Penrith's 2003 grand final win over the Roosters, was in awe of Webcke.

"It was my job to stay beside him and make tackles for him," Priddis said. "But he played his role. The 2003 win was more of a personal thing because I took on a leadership role, as the only one to have played in a grand final outside (prop) Martin Lang. A lot of what I had learned at the Broncos, I took into that game."

Centre Michael De Vere, who was part of the 1997 and '98 triumphs, had the goal-kicking job in 2000, taking over from Lockyer.

"I liked the added pressure of goal-kicking," De Vere says. "I loved that 'villain or hero' stuff. Even when 'Locky' was kicker, I would practise for hours after training. I always wanted to be the kicker and I believed in myself. I had shared the role with Ben Walker in reserve grade, where Ivan Henjak was coach."

The 2000 season was the springboard for De Vere to make the leap to representative football and in 2001 he debuted for New South Wales, going on to represent Australia in 2003.

"That was my best season (2000)," De Vere said. "I had bulked up in the pre-season and wanted to make the centre position my own as well as playing rep footy. I thought I was a chance for

the World Cup at the end of the year but it wasn't to be."

De Vere, who is a level 3 coach, has been working in the Broncos' game development department as well as overseeing junior footy at Easts Carina. But because of COVID-19, he is now out of work and plans to go back to university to study psychology.

"I enjoy coaching and teaching (footy) but I'm not as hungry about those things as I was as a player," he said. "You must be driven to achieve goals. I have a lot of different ideas and concepts I would like to explore and I also plan to write books."

Ben Ikin, five-eighth in the 2000 grand final, has had many roles since he retired from football in 2004 and is best known as host of NRL 360 on Fox League. He also had been linked to the Broncos' CEO post, which was advertised on 8 August.

Ikin said the 2000 backline was "pretty handy" but not as brilliant as some that had gone before.

"There was some strike there and we had enormous latitude given the strength of the pack," he said.

Ikin had played a season with Gold Coast and three with North Sydney before joining the Broncos in 2000. The closest he had come to a title previously was a preliminary final appearance for the Bears in 1997, when they were narrowly beaten by eventual ARL premiers Newcastle.

Man of the match Lockyer made a crucial try saving tackle on Roosters centre Shannon Hegarty before either side had scored but had admiration for his opposing number one Luke Phillips.

"Luke Phillips had a cracker and saved about five tries," Lockyer recalls. "There was no rocket science about the way we won. Wayne (Bennett) understood what would work under the rules of the time (unlimited interchange). We had a big pack and big wingers and played a power game, which no-one else could match."

2000 GRAND FINAL DETAILS:

BRISBANE BRONCOS 14 (L Tuqiri, W Sailor tries; M De Vere 3 goals) d SYDNEY ROOSTERS 6 (C Fitzgibbon try; L Phillips goal). Referee, Bill Harrigan.

TEAMS:

BRONCOS: Darren Lockyer; Lote Tuqiri, Tonie Carroll, Michael De Vere, Wendell Sailor; Ben Ikin, Kevin Walters (c); Shane Webcke, Luke Priddis, Dane Carlaw, Gorden Tallis, Brad Thorn, Kevin Campion. Interchange: Harvey Howard, Michael Hancock, Shaun Berrigan, Ashley Harrison. Coach: Wayne Bennett.

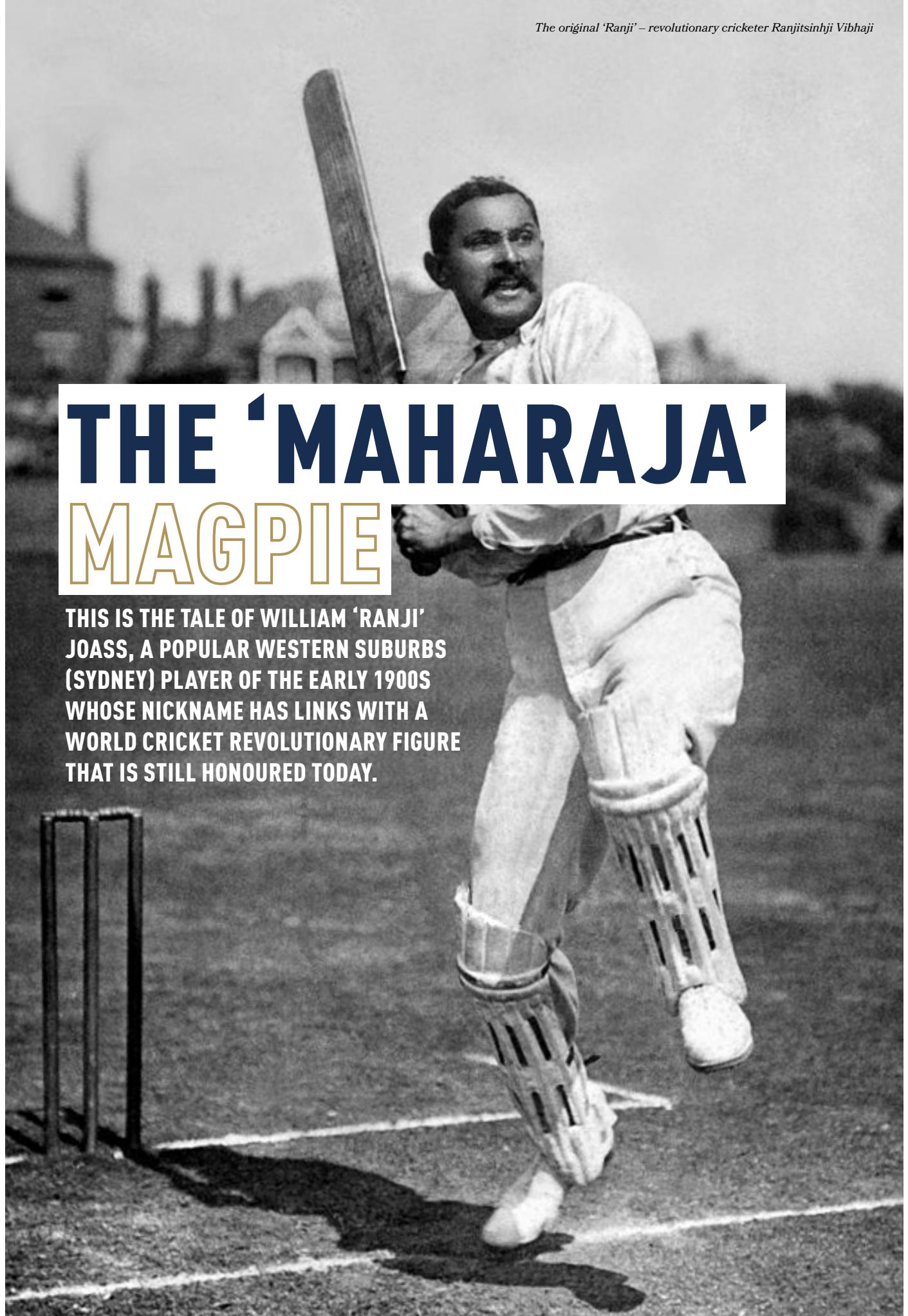
ROOSTERS: Luke Phillips; Matt Sing, Ryan Cross, Shannon Hegarty, Anthony Minichiello; Brad Fittler (c), Adrian Lam; Ian Rubin, Simon Bonetti, Peter Cusack, Bryan Fletcher, Craig Fitzgibbon, Luke Ricketson. Interchange: Dallas Hood, David Solomon, Shane Rigan, Craig Wing. Coach: Graham Murray.

Steve Ricketts covered the 2000 grand final for The Courier-Mail newspaper and the 2000 World Cup in Europe for News Ltd. He also wrote 'Bennett's Broncos' about the Broncos' golden era of 1992-2000 that produced five premierships. Go to: stevericketts.com.au

The original 'Ranji' – revolutionary cricketer Ranjitsinhji Vibhaji

THE 'MAHARAJA' MAGPIE

THIS IS THE TALE OF WILLIAM 'RANJI'
JOASS, A POPULAR WESTERN SUBURBS
(SYDNEY) PLAYER OF THE EARLY 1900S
WHOSE NICKNAME HAS LINKS WITH A
WORLD CRICKET REVOLUTIONARY FIGURE
THAT IS STILL HONOURED TODAY.





Western Suburbs players Jim Stack, 'Ranji' Joass and Edward Ellis.



The Wests team of 1924 – Joass is in the back row, third in from the right.

BARRY ROSS

The Pratten Park Magpies website, presented by the (Sydney) Western Suburbs Rugby League Past Players Association, is great reading for league fans, exploring some fascinating stories about the game's foundation club that played in the major premiership from 1908-99 when it merged with Balmain to form Wests Tigers.

And its team of dedicated historians and Magpies devotees has thrown up the story of former dual NSW rugby and rugby league representative William 'Ranji' Joass, who was a stand-out Wests personality in the early years of the 20th century and a man with a fascinating background.

The website idea came from Tony Lewis and Greg Willis who set up the 'Noel Kelly Kids' site in 2000. In 2014 Geoff Squires, from the Pratten Park Magpies old boys' group, approached Tony to set up a website for his association.

The Pratten Park Magpies was formed in 1986 by Bill Owens, Jack Thompson and Ben Fisher as a way to establish an old boys' network of former Western Suburbs players. In the early days, the numbers accessing the site were less than one hundred but as at July 2020, the number of views has grown to more than 72,500 a year. Tony and Steve Lothian, who came on board after Greg's death in 2005, are continually on the lookout for stories and activities for their followers.

One of their favourite tasks is to track down former players or their next of kin, to present them with their Wests players medal. Neil Bennett, Geoff Ibbett, Bob Dickinson and Rick Wayde are very helpful with this, while the Wests Ashfield Leagues Club is also very supportive.

Tony Lewis was reading a 1964 Rugby League News program when he came across a small story about the death of a former Wests player 'Ranji' Joass, who had died on 8 July 1964. Not knowing anything about him, Tony immediately began some in-depth research.

He found that he was buried at St Saviours Church on Canterbury Road at Punchbowl and when he visited the cemetery, he was shocked to see the plot was marked by "a stick in the ground". Tony, along with brothers Ted and Keith Greenaway, decided to give Ranji a worthy final resting place and achieved this after several months of hard work. Financial support to complete this project was generously provided by the Pratten Park Magpies, Ian Dodds and the Enfield Federals old boys' group. The story about the grave's restoration can be read on the website.

Tony, with the help of several others, investigated the football career of Joass too. Well known league historian Terry Williams uncovered that the name Ranji came from India's Prince Ranjitsinhji Vibhaji Jadeja, a revolutionary figure

in cricket best known as 'Ranji' who was most noted for introducing, or at least perfecting, the leg glance as part of his back-foot batting style which was unorthodox at that time.

During a career in English country cricket from 1893-1908 for Cambridge University and Sussex, Ranjitsinhji became the first Indian to play for England; he played 15 Tests and toured Australia with the English side in 1897-98 where he became a celebrity with cricket fans. He returned to India where he became the Maharaja of Nawanagar and the country's major domestic competition, the Ranji Trophy, is named after him.

Bill Joass' was of Indian-Dutch heritage and 'sunny' skin colour, seeing him given the nickname of Ranji which became unofficially accepted as his Christian name.

Born in 1886, William Joass began playing junior rugby union in 1900 and later joined the St George Rugby Club with his brother Alf in the club's first season in 1906. In five seasons, Joass played 55 first grade games and represented Metropolitan (Sydney) in three matches and made one appearance for New South Wales – a 32-9 win against Central North in Tamworth in 1909.

After beginning his rugby career as a fullback, he moved into the forwards in 1908. When he changed to league in 1911 and joined Western Suburbs, he quickly established himself as one of the game's best forwards. While Alf played in the Magpies' opening match against Glebe while Ranji did not make his debut until the next week in the loss to Newtown at the old Metters Ground in Erskineville on 6 May.

Ranji was impressive from the start and after just four games was selected for NSW. On 7 June 1911 at the SCG, he played the first of his four games for NSW. In this match against Queensland, Ranji scored a try in the 49-0 victory while his captain Dally Messenger scored 20 points from two tries and seven goals.

Joass also played for NSW in 1912, as well as two games in 1919. In 1919, Wests won the City Cup and Joass had an impressive game in the 14-10 win over Glebe in the final at the Sydney Showground. The Wests team was Athol White, Wally Collins, Peter Burns, Bill Connelly, Lon Stettler, Barney McPherson, George McGowan, Harry Leddy, Ranji Joass, Tedda Courtney, Joe Reidy, Jack Redmond and Charlie Tye.

Ranji Joass retired at the end of the 1923 season and in 13 seasons had played 156 first grade games for Wests (Alf played 24), scoring 13 tries. He is Wests player number 85 and life member number six. He was 78 when he died.

His son Bill 'Tonto' Joass played four first grade games as a winger with Canterbury in 1935, their first season in the NSWRL premiership.

PETER'S NEW PARROT-ISE

Q/A

PETER MORTIMER



Glory ... Steve (on shoulders) and Peter Mortimer celebrate the last of three premierships all three brothers achieved over five years, after being St George at the SCG in 1985.

Peter Mortimer, part of the famous Canterbury-Bankstown brotherly act of the 1980s, has offered the Foundation the support of his Mortimer Wines company. Here he reflects on his footballing days – that saw him play 11 seasons and 272 first grade games for the Bulldogs, including four grand finals, and represent NSW – plus his current passion, wine making.



AS A 20-YEAR-OLD OLD IN MAY 1977, YOU PULLED ON THE BLUE AND WHITE JERSEY TO MAKE YOUR DEBUT FOR CANTERBURY AGAINST PENRITH, WHAT WAS YOUR MEMORY FROM THAT DAY?

I was defending the right-hand side with the great Bob McCarthy. That was the highlight of my life to date. Late in the first half I slipped over backing up and my brother Steve jumped on me accidentally, kicking me in the back of the head. I don't remember the rest of the game but, looking at the video later, I played OK.

YOU WERE NICKNAMED 'PARROT', CAN YOU TELL US THE STORY BEHIND THAT?

I used to imitate my school teachers, teammates and pretty well anyone who made a noise. I am not proud of the nickname but you don't get to choose your own do you.

ALONG WITH STEVE AND CHRIS, YOU ARE THE ONLY BROTHERS TO PLAY TOGETHER IN FOUR ARL/NRL GRAND FINAL SIDES – 1979 (LOSS), 1980, 1984, 1985 (ALL VICTORIES). HOW SPECIAL IS THAT AND WAS THERE MUCH RIVALRY BETWEEN YOU?

Early on there was great rivalry in the back yard with us three and the youngest brother Glen, who played with Bulldogs then Cronulla. Actually, he was the first Mortimer to play for Australia (Schoolboys). However, success at that level and the excitement of grand final day, is a great reward for us individually and a massive tribute to our father Ian who started the Kooringal Magpies in Wagga Wagga in 1963. It was our family who started the practise of walking the victory lap with our children, in 1984. Since then it has become a very important and emotional opportunity for those who are lucky enough to do it. As a family we were blessed to be part of a club that engaged not only the players but wives, kids and extended family. Rugby league has been very good to the Mortimers.

WHO WERE THE TOUGHEST PLAYERS YOU PLAYED WITH OR AGAINST?

Chris was physically tough and used to terrorise opposition. Steve was mentally tough and would cop endless targeting but could still turn the result of a game in a single moment of brilliance. Peter Kelly and Geoff Robinson stand out as tough teammates while Les Boyd and Michael Beattie were tough opponents.

YOU'VE BUILT A FAMILY WINE BUSINESS IN ORANGE, NSW. CAN YOU TELL US WHAT DREW YOU TO BECOMING A WINEMAKER? AND HOW IS THE FAMILY INVOLVED IN THE DAY TO DAY OPERATION?

Julie (Peter's wife), myself and our five sons planted the vineyard in 1995 without an ounce of knowledge. We received formal education and hands on experience from neighbours and industry partners. Bruce Tyrrell gave us valuable advice before we started making wine and our business has grown conservatively but strongly from 25 years of learning. The industry is fantastic and the Orange region produces fruit that other regions buy to enhance their blends. The boys are all

engaged in their own business careers, picking up skills that would enable any one of them to take over some day. We'll see what happens.

The nicest thing about the industry is the people you meet and the facilities that we have to accommodate old teammates and opponents at our cellar door. I get regular visits from Steve Edge, John Dorahy, Peter Kelly, David Gillespie and many more where we light a fire, start with a beer then watch the moon rise over a nice red wine and bowl of Bolognese.

MANY PARTS OF REGIONAL NSW HAVE STRUGGLED WITH DROUGHT AND MORE RECENTLY FIRES AND RETAIL DOWNTURN DUE TO COVID-19, HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED?

We lost our entire vintage, deciding not to pick due to drought and smoke taint and eventually the birds got under our nets. We have only lost two crops in 21 years, so we can recover. Add COVID-19 to that and we may struggle in two years' time when this fruit would be released as wine. During shut down our wonderful MOO club members responded to our needs by purchasing some wine online. It got us through and now business is starting to pick up. I just hope complacency doesn't rear its ugly head and give us another spike. If any Foundation member wants to know more about our MOO wine club, they can find it on our website.

AS AN ORIGINAL MEMBER OF THE MEN OF LEAGUE FOUNDATION, HOW IMPORTANT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE FOUNDATION IN THE COMMUNITY AND HOW HAVE YOU SEEN THE ORGANISATION MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

I have seen firsthand how Men of League Foundation members have raised the spirits of former players and, in other cases, farmers who struggle with their situation, whether it be drought, mental health injury, accident or sickness. That network of volunteers is what our great game has lived by at all levels for 112 years. Foundation is about recognising a need, talking about it and lending support in whatever way we can. Every player who played this game is entitled to support but in most cases won't ask for it.

FINALLY, YOU SPENT 11 YEARS IN THE GAME DURING ARGUABLY THE TOUGHEST ERA OF RUGBY LEAGUE IN THE 70S AND 80S, HAVE YOU GOT A FUNNY YARN YOU CAN SHARE WITH OUR MEMBERS ABOUT A TEAMMATE, A COACH OR RIVAL PLAYER FROM THAT TIME?

The great Tas Baitieri, when he was coaching in France, invited Andrew Farrar and Chris Cordner to play for his club (Chatillon XIII) in the off-season, about 1991. Upon their arrival Tas had the entire first grade team and staff there to greet them as they came through customs with the traditional Aussie wave and extremely loud welcome, which was "Andrew, Chris ... F#%* me dead." They had no idea what they were saying and Tas was seen in hysterics.

Another that sticks in my memory is from our trip away in Hawaii after the Bulldogs' 1984 grand final win. A plane load of Texans arrived at the pool bar and the noise level tripled. After drawing some breath, a young woman asked us in a southern drawl, "anyways, where you guys from". David 'Cement' Gillespie replied, "Narromine". She screamed back, "Narrowmine, where the hell is that"? Cement rolled his eyes at

HOW BUCKLEY'S VISION GROUND TO A HALT

IS THIS A FAIR SWAP?

By NEIL CADIGAN

Dream come true?

ASLOWLY decaying old building in the heart of Sydney's legal centre has become the key to the NSW Rugby League's dream to one day own its own stadium.

The once mighty NSW Leagues Club is a shadow of its former self. The nine-storey building at 167 Phillip St these days is identified to league fans only as the location of the Monday night judiciary hearings, and the address of the NSWRL.

Only two of the nine floors could be regarded as profitable or well-used.

A membership which was once 25,000 is now less than 9000. The building is in bad need of renovation.

Yet its location makes it one of the most sought-after pieces of real estate in Sydney — an asset worth anywhere between \$20 million and \$40 million.

So when the new Liberal government suggested out of the blue last week that the league could buy the Sydney Football Stadium, the ailing NSW Leagues Club became the joker in the pack.

NSWRL general manager John Quayle is quick to assure footie fans that the game will not risk going broke, just to join the real estate market.

But as Quayle pointed out emphatically: "We will never get another opportunity to have our own ground. And that is why the league must pursue this vigorously — an offer will never come again."

There are three options confronting Rugby League. One is to buy the stadium outright, another is to gain a long term lease (99 years), and the last is to gain an operating licence.

At the right price, either could provide the league with the opportunity to make more money than ever thought possible.

All options depend on bargaining between the league and the government and the chosen fate of 167 Phillip St.

The NSW Leagues Club and the NSWRL are separate identities, operated by separate boards. But, in effect, the league has the ultimate control of both.

The leagues club's constitution says that five of the seven-man board are nominated by the NSWRL.

For many years these five have been chairman John O'Toole, Eric Cox, Jack Duggan, Dick Dunn and Charlie Gibson.

O'Toole, Country RL secretary and NSWRL board member, is the only "active" league official, although Dunn, Duggan and Cox remain NSWRL vice-presidents.

The club, built in 1938, is located across the road from the Supreme Court building and the chambers which house many of Sydney's leading barristers and solicitors.

The legal profession has been hit by a critical shortage of office space. Several proposals have been put to the leagues club in the past two years to have the club knocked down and re-established on two floors of a new, multi-storey building with office space above.

Each time the proposals have been knocked back. The leagues club preferred to watch the asset grow in value. And there was never any urgent need, despite the club operating at only a fraction of its potential — until, perhaps, now.

"To be realistic about purchasing, leasing or having the licence to run such a stadium, we must assess the viability of being able to return an income to the sport without the finances being detrimentally to the development of the code," said Quayle diplomatically.

The government has said it will employ an individual financial and legal consultancy firm to see how it could be done. Their findings will be put before the board to see if we are in a position to do it.

*Continued on page 13

ABOVE: The 1988 story in which John Quayle speaks of a possible deal for the league to own the Sydney Football Stadium. OPPOSITE PAGE: The column of NSWRL president Bill Buckley in 1964 that shows his vision for the game to own its own stadium, with an artist's impression included.

NEIL CADIGAN

And as the NRL prepares to play the next two grand finals on the unsuitable Sydney Cricket Ground, and grapples with aligning its stadium strategy with political dependence and government funding, a couple of articles from the vault poses one obvious question – why, 112-years into its history, does rugby league still not have its own home?

Few people today would know that, way back in 1964, the league's president Bill Buckley had identified a site at St Peters in Sydney's inner-west for the game to develop and own its own stadium, with a seating capacity of 90,000-100,000. Sydney City Council had granted approval for the estimated £8 million build and offered a 99-year 'peppercorn' rent agreement.

It was a grand dream of Buckley, who had just returned from the US and was amazed at their stadiums, to have the stadium built on the site - which housed the St Peters brickworks and surrounding land - before the visit of the Great Britain side in 1966.

A Rugby League News (which preceded Big League) article in the issue of February 27-March 1, 1964, revealed that plans and scaled models had been produced by an architect for the stadium that included "air-conditioned dining rooms, lounges and bars with closed circuit TV relays bringing the match into the room".

The article continued: "Mr Buckley said that this is 1964 and while the League has been chided in the past for not having owned its own ground it is now in a better position to do so than ever before and it will build a ground which will be a credit to the city of Sydney". It followed: "After all, Sydney is building an Opera House for those who love this particular type of entertainment and there is no reason why a sports arena of 1964 design could not be financed and built."

By 1968, it seems the plan had 'Buckles' chance of coming to fruition, to use an appropriate pun. It was revealed the council had found that the area was not all council-owned, with two acres of the site privately owned and another two on a long lease to the brickmaking company, making the council-controlled portion of the space too small for the submitted plans. In another interview, Buckley claimed the SCG, even then, "isn't big enough and its amenities are not up to the standard people are demanding nowadays".

Other sites were investigated but Buckley went to his grave with one of his biggest regrets being that the game did not have its own stadium.

Fast forward 20 years, to 1988. The NSW Government had just completed the over-budget \$62 million Moore Park stadium on the site of the old Sydney Sports Ground with rugby league as its major tenant and the Roosters and Rabbitohs transferring their home games there.

At 165-169 Phillip St, the NSWRL-controlled nine-storey NSW Leagues Club – prime real estate in the heart of the city's legal precinct – was slowly decaying in condition, use and relevance and its membership had declined from 25,000 to 9000. Yet it was an asset valued between \$20-\$40 million based on its location and a dearth of suitable office accommodation for law firms.

The new state Liberal government floated the idea that the NSWRL, then the custodians of the competition, could buy the SFS and develop offices next door. The sale of the league club

with a threatened future could suitably fund much of the deal.

League GM John Quayle stated (in a Rugby League Week interview with me): "We will never get another opportunity to have our own ground. And that is why the league must pursue this vigorously – an offer will never come again."

Three options were thrown up – the league could buy the stadium outright, secure a 99-year lease or gain an operating licence and thus also hire the venue to other sports and events.

Again there were road blocks. The NSW Leagues Club and NSWRL were run by different boards (although five or the seven leagues club board members were nominated by NSWRL) and a sale would need member approval. Ultimately, a price could not be agreed with the government to make the move viable and there was some reluctance from conservative club directors.

So, here we are in 2020 – 56 years on from Buckley revealing his grand plan – and rugby league does not own its own stadium; and looks a long way from ever doing so.

The Sydney Football Stadium, that had to be scaled back in size and comfort during the 80s because of the blow out in costs, has long been inadequate and has been flattened to make way for phase three of the sporting venues that have stood on the site (initially it was the Sydney Sports Ground, running east-west, the Roosters' home ground from 1911-86).

The leagues club closed its doors in October 2015, a dirt shell stands on the site of the game's second chance of a home base, the leased NRL's headquarters standing in what was the stadium's carpark ... and rugby league is still a tenant at the government's behest.



The Rugby League Week article of 1968 and John Quayle's vision.

OLIVE'S RECORD SOME MINER ACHIEVEMENT

FOUNDATION MEMBER BRUCE OLIVE, WHO WON 10 PREMIERSHIPS IN COUNTRY COMPETITIONS AND IS REGARDED AS ONE OF THE TOUGHEST AND MOST RESPECTED FRONT-ROWERS NOT TO HAVE REPRESENTED AUSTRALIA, IS STILL ENJOYING AN ACTIVE LIFE AT AGE 90.

BARRY ROSS

Playing a tough game of first grade football and then working for eight hours at the bottom of a coal mine is not something any modern-day footballer would consider. But not only did former NSW representative Bruce Olive do this regularly on a Saturday, he did it twice a week after tough training sessions as well.

Fit and tough, the indigenous prop from Casino in northern NSW who won several premierships in his hometown and in the high-quality Illawarra competition, also had four seasons with Newtown from 1964-67, playing 69 first grade games under coaches Alan Ellis and Dick Poole.

Front row forwards did not feature on the scoresheet too often then and Olive crossed the line just once in his Sydney first grade career – during an 18-8 win against Canterbury at Henson Park in 1964.

Born at Casino, Olive was one of seven sons and a daughter. Along with his brothers, he was a member of the dominant Casino All Backs teams of the 1940s-50s which played in the Casino-Kyogle-Bonalbo competition.

The All Blacks were premiers for seven successive seasons from 1948. The team that beat the All Stars 6-2 in the 1954 grand final contained six Olive brothers - Roy, Reg, Keith, Claude, Bruce and 16-year-old halfback Jimmy.

Roy had served with the Australian Army in the Middle East during World War II while Reg had fought in New Guinea. Playing on the All Stars wing in that grand final was local Casino schoolteacher Norm McKnight, who was born in Wollongong and was a former Illawarra Western Suburbs player. Bruce and Norm became good friends and, a few weeks before Bruce's marriage, he suggested he should think of applying for some work in the Illawarra district and join the Red Devils.

Bruce and his new wife Margaret took the mail train to Wollongong in early 1957 and he began working at the Huntley mine near Dapto. Soon after settling into the area, he contacted the Western Suburbs club and was warmly welcomed. His initial first grade game was 52-10 win over Collegians at Figtree Oval.

Under coach Frank Johnson, who was a hooker on the 1948 Kangaroo tour, Olive quickly became one of the best forwards in the Illawarra competition. He represented Illawarra that

season and scored a try in a 22-6 grand final win against Wollongong - Wests' first premiership victory.

In 1958, he scored a try in Illawarra's 35-17 win over Combined Groups 6 and 7 yet was not selected for the Southern Division team that was beaten 30-13 by North Sydney in Wollongong. Two days later, the Country selectors named him in the Southern NSW team to play Northern NSW at the Sydney Sports Ground as a selection trial for the Country teams to play City. He was also chosen for Southern Division to play Great Britain in the opening match of their tour, in Wollongong on Sunday 18 May, the day after the Country-City clashes.

Although Northern NSW beat Southern 35-29, Olive played well and was picked in the Country Seconds team to take on City. City Seconds, captained by Rex Mossop, won 39-6 but Olive impressed. He returned to Wollongong and was Southern's best forward in the 36-18 loss to the Poms.

The next day he was named as a front-rower in the NSW team to take on Queensland at the Sydney Cricket Ground, the first match of the 1958 interstate matches. In 19 days, Olive had gone from a little-known Illawarra first grader to a NSW player. He scored a try in his first match for the Blues, which NSW won 25-14.

He was selected for NSW in the 19-10 loss to Great Britain at the SCG and played in both of NSW's wins against Queensland in Brisbane. The 1958 Great Britain team had a powerful pack including Brian McTigue, Dick Huddart, captain Alan Prescott, Tommy Harris and 'the Wild Bull of the Pampas' Vince Karalius. British hooker Harris said before the team left for New Zealand that "Bruce Olive is the best prop I have played against in Australia".

Many top Australian players from that era agreed, including Mossop who told me during my time working with him that Olive should have played for Australia and wondered whether his Aboriginality went against him.

Olive went on to play two matches for NSW in 1959, two in 1961 and his ninth and last in the 25-12 win over Queensland in June 1962. He also played four successive games for Country Firsts against City Firsts from 1959, including wins in 1961 and 1962. In July 1962, he was a member of the first Country team to tour Queensland, winning all five matches convincingly while scoring 249 points to 36. Captain Tony Paskins finished the tour with 101 points, while Graeme Langlands scored 11 tries, including six in the 42-10 win against champion North Queensland club, Eacham, at Mareeba on 25 July.

After seven successive seasons with Wests in Wollongong, including another premiership in 1959, Olive joined Newtown. Still living in Dapto, he would drive to training at Henson Park, mostly with fellow prop Paul Quinn, who was living at Gerringong (they spent four seasons together with the Bluebags). Bruce would either go to training after working in the mine or go to work after coming home from training. Quinn played seven Tests and was a 1963-64 Kangaroo tourist.

Olive returned to the Illawarra competition, joining Dapto for two seasons in 1968 and 1969, winning his third Illawarra premiership in his first season after an 17-11 extra-time grand final win against Port Kembla.

When he retired at the end of the 1969 season when he was almost 39 (he played his last game of Sydney first grade football two weeks before his 37th birthday).

Olive retired from the Huntley mine near the end of 1990. A proud member of the Bundjalung people, he is a respected elder of his community and deeply admired by the people of Dapto.

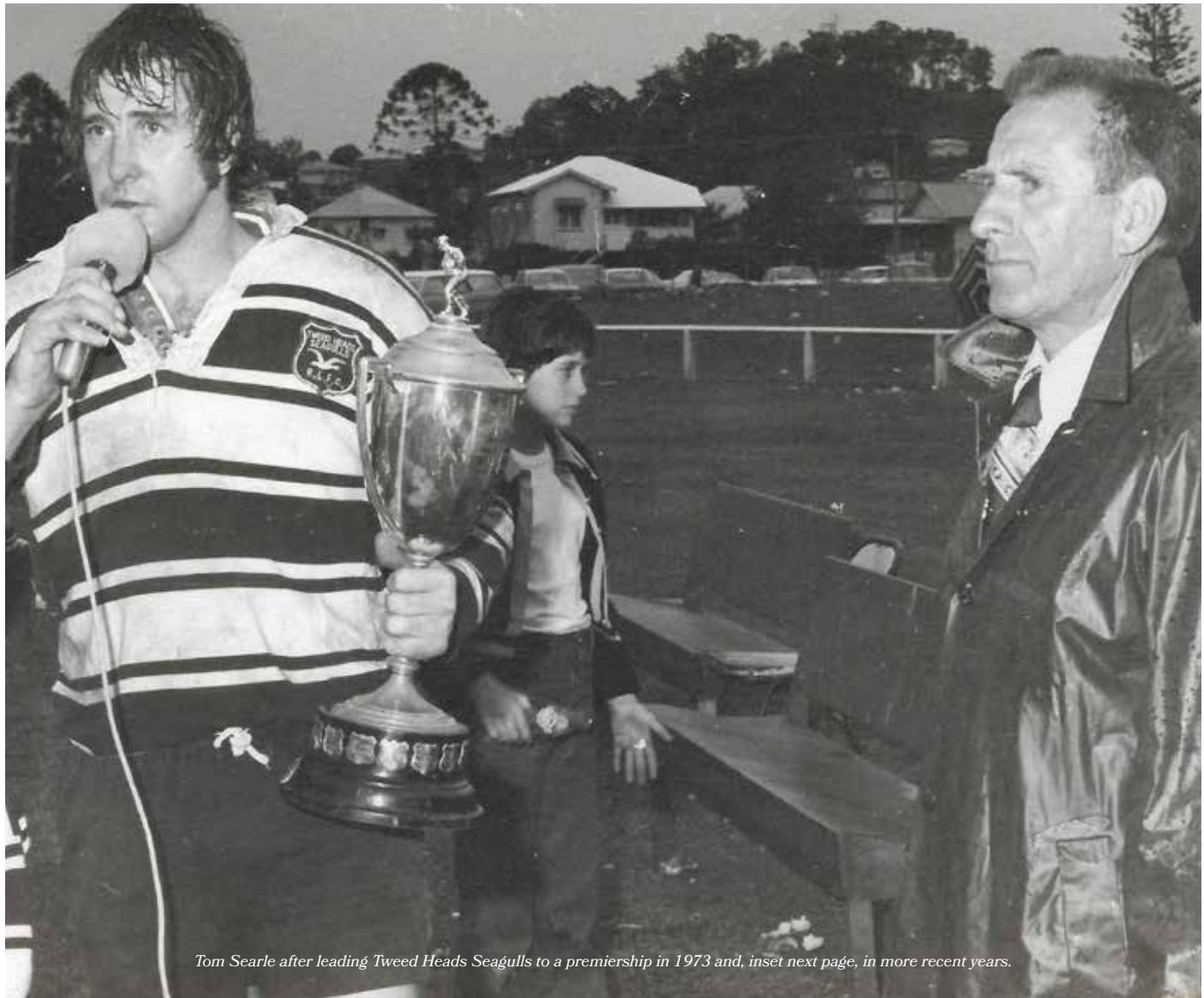
He has three sons, two daughters, eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren and at 90 years of age he is still active and mentally alert.

*NSW team v Queensland 1959.
BACK ROW: Reg Gasnier, Bruce Olive, Nev Charlton, Norm Provan, Rex Mossop, Brian Hambly, John Raper.
MIDDLE: Brian Clay, Don Parish, Terry Beckett, Harry Wells, Ian Walsh, John Riley.
FRONT: W. Davoren (manager), Bobby Whitton, Brian Carlson (captain), R. Rayner (coach), Brian Graham, Ian Moir, T. Ward (manager).*



The very strong NSW Country team that toured Queensland in 1962. BACK ROW: T. Loveday (manager), J. Ward (manager), J. O'Toole (CRL secretary). THIRD ROW: J. Tobin, G. Langlands, G. Smith, B. Olive, A. Currey. SECOND ROW: L. Irwin, P. Quinn, K. King, R. Lumsden, R. Smith, G. Hampson. FRONT ROW: R. Hopper, K. Negus, V. Everington, T. Paskins (capt), R. Saddler, E. Harrison, R. Bennett.





Tom Searle after leading Tweed Heads Seagulls to a premiership in 1973 and, inset next page, in more recent years.

'THE LION' SLEEPS



GRAHAM CALLAGHAN

Thomas Stanley Searle, aka 'The Lion', as expected filled the Tweed Heads Seagulls' Stardust Room to capacity for his celebration of life ceremony on 10 July despite COVID-19 restrictions which would have kept hundreds more away.

Such was the popularity and respect the former successful player, coach, recruitment guru and adviser to many and friend to more during his many years of dedicating himself to rugby league, that the upstairs and downstairs sections of the Stardust Room were filled to capacity with numbers limited to 400.

Not only had he led success on and off the field around the border, his son Michael masterminded the return of top flight rugby league to the Gold Coast with the advent of the Titans, with father Tom their first recruitment manager.

The ceremony was rich with emotion with many stories of Tom's football days, including his end of season trips, mixed with tales of his social and family life with Father Anthony Lemon officiating and Ben Ikin, who began his illustrious first grade career as a Gold Coast Seagull, handling the MC duties. Tom's good mates Damian Kenniff, Peter O'Neill and Neil 'Bing' Pringle did the readings.

Tom lost his battle of brain cancer, at age 71, at a North Sydney hospital surrounded by family and close friends on 22 June.

He was a true legend of Northern Rivers football, coaching the Seagulls for 10 seasons and winning four premierships. He had earlier represented Country Seconds from Tamworth in 1968 (and was selected again in 1972-73) and had a three-season stint with Keighley in the English top flight in between as a stylish centre.

In his first season as Tweed Seagulls first grade side, as a 23-year-old captain-coach, it was only the brilliance of a 17-year-old Gold Coast Tigers centre who went on to become a legend, Steve Rogers, who denied him a first-up grand final victory. However, his side followed that with successive premierships from 1973-75 and he won a fourth title (as a player) in 1977.

Tom was given life membership of the Seagulls in 1982 and was enticed by his former Country coach Don Furner, then the Seagulls CEO during their Winfield Cup days, to take on the recruitment/development officer's role which he continued until the demise of the then called Chargers in 1998.

He was a driving force behind the Seagulls' entry into the Queensland Cup in 2003 and within three years he was scouting for young talent for his son Michael as they worked to put a squad together for the Titans' inaugural 2007 season.

The Lion had the rare talent of picking footballers, seeing raw talent and instilling in them a new-found belief in their abilities. Ikin, who played 150 ARL/NRL games, 17 times for Queensland and two Tests, said he owed Searle plenty because it was Tom who started his 10-year career in the NRL.

"I was playing for Seagulls and probably battling to be in the top three players in our team but Tommy saw something in me and I went on to play five seasons with North Sydney and five with the Broncos after my initial year with the Seagulls in 1995 (as an 18-year-old)," said Ikin.

"He believed in me and there were many more from the Gold Coast-Tweed area who Tom saw something in and they went on to have distinguished careers in Sydney football."

"Tom looked past your faults and whenever you were in his company, he made you feel important."

"If you knew Tom, you had a friendship never to be forgotten."

Searle snr. played with Seagulls until 1983, leading the "social seconds" to a record number of reserve grade premierships and taking great pride helping develop the knowledge and skills of the younger players.

Their first signing was Preston Campbell who Tom said one of his greatest recruits. He often said during games, "That's my man Preston!"

"I was a shit footballer but he made me think I was good," said son Michael who played with Canterbury before returning to play with Gold Coast-Seagulls in 55 first grade games.

Shortly before his passing, Michael took Tom on a trip back to Tamworth and then to Manly to visit their good mate John Cartwright, the Titans' first coach.

Michael said Tom was his best mate and hero and during Tom's nine-month battle, "he never showed any fear and he died with dignity and left with gravitas".

The coffin was draped with Tom's football jumpers from his various former clubs.

Current Seagulls' CEO Matt Francis, another close friend of Tom's, said he met him in the early 1990s when they worked together supporting young footballers at Australian Training Company, before they continued their career in the NRL.

He said the day was filled with plenty of tears but more importantly lots of laughter, adding that Tom had the ability to find the best in people and lead them to find the best in themselves.

Matt Francis appropriately concluded his tribute with, "The Lion sleeps tonight" before a standing ovation lifted the room.

COMMITTED KEV TAKES A BREAK

ONE OF THE BUSIEST AND MOST DEVOTED LOCAL MEN OF LEAGUE COMMITTEE LEADERS HAS STEPPED DOWN TO TAKE A BREATHER. FRASER COAST PRESIDENT KEV EMBREY HAS CERTAINLY LEFT A POSITIVE LEGACY.

Kev Embrey has passionately given much of his life to rugby league, and those who support it. However, he knows it's time for him and wife Sheron, also a great supporter of the game, to put their feet up for a while and do some travelling in their caravan.

The Foundation's Queensland volunteer of the year in 2017 has decided to stand down from the presidency of the Fraser Coast committee, a role he has held since March 2016.

Kev had held many positions in rugby league in that region of Queensland well before joining the Foundation's Fraser Coast executive and possesses a long-proven appetite for helping rugby league at many levels.

Before moving to Hervey Bay, he lived further west in the Burnett region at Gayndah in the late 1960s and early 70s and he played league for Gayndah before taking on coaching and administration duties at junior and senior level at Gayndah and Mundubbera when he and Sheron moved there.

He was also involved in the Central and South Burnett leagues and held several positions in the Mundubbera Rugby League Club, including regularly carrying out ground announcer duties on game days and helping prepare and maintain the playing fields.

Kev joined the Fraser Coast committee in March 2015 and his natural enthusiasm was quickly evident. He became heavily involved in the committee by attending meetings, assisting to organise events and conducting welfare visits. He was appointed president in March 2016 and been tireless in his devotion to spreading the profile of the Foundation, and assisting those in need, ever since.

He could be seen attending Maryborough and Hervey Bay league games where he would set up a marquee, sell raffle tickets and attract new members.

He assisted in the organising the Maryborough bowls and golf days and the inaugural Hervey Bay golf day (which is now an annual event) at which he would liaise closely with the golf club, chase sponsors and special guests, run raffles and assist with presentations. This event was a tremendous success and will now be an annual event.

The Men of League Foundation day at Monto has become a big event with teams playing for the Men of League Shield. Kev has been instrumental with its success and the sportsmen's dinner held after the game. There is also the Men of League



Kev and Sheron Embrey after he was announced as Queensland volunteer of the year in 2017.



Amongst friends ... the 2016 Maryborough golf day, which has been a great success. (From left) Peter Stephenson ,Vic Beardmore, Kev Embrey, Sheron Embrey, Jeff Bacchi, Nigel Freemanthe and Trevor Lindeberg.

Foundation Shield contested at Eidsvold with which Kev was heavily involved, the Hervey Bay fund-raising dinner (Kev would arrange guest speakers, approaching local businesses for sponsorship and liaise with local media and the many wellbeing visits he would make.

It was Kev who would deliver the Foundation magazine to doctors' surgeries, nursing homes and hospitals to spread its profile. He attended meetings of Hervey Bay Seagulls Rugby League Club as a representative of the Foundation and still find time to help the Seagulls with mowing of the fields, marking lines and painting of facilities.

"Whilst it is recognised that other members of the committee have contributed these above events, the drive and commitment shown by Kev has been the factor in ensuring that these events have been an outstanding success and are held in high regard throughout the community," said Fraser Coast committee secretary Jeffrey Bacchi.

"The committee would also like to recognise the work undertaken by Kev's wife Sheron. Sheron is a wellbeing officer and usually is involved in helping sell raffle tickets, assisting with barbeques and

accompanying Kev to all the events. As Kev admits, Sheron is the person who does all his paperwork and computer work.

"Both Kev and Sheron have always shown the utmost professionalism when dealing with the local communities of Maryborough and Hervey Bay and are highly respected ambassadors for the Men of League Foundation.

"Kev has organised a number of successful sporting dinners in Hervey Bay and has continued to actively promote the Foundation.

"Kev organised the commencement of the annual Men of League Shield played in the Burnett area and this has been running for a number of years. He has continued to attend local league games in Fraser Coast and Burnett areas to promote Men of League, sell raffle tickets and signing up new members.

"Kev's participation and dedication will be greatly missed.

"He won't be completely lost. I believe Kev is going to assist at future functions whenever possible but is planning to do some travelling with Sheron in their caravan and enjoy retirement."

BUNDABERG COMMITTEE GIVES IAN BACK HIS INDEPENDENCE

TOM DUNPHY (BUNDABERG SECRETARY)



Bundaberg wellbeing officer Mark Hanson and president Greg Pershouse with Ian Templeman as he tries his mobility scooter the Foundation bought for him.

To say that Ian Templeman loves the game of rugby league is an understatement. And although that can be said of many people, he has proved this through his actions.

After spending over 40 years involved in the game as a player and then as an administrator, Ian had to step back from his duties and retire from all roles in 2011 due to ill health. It has not diminished in any way his love for the game but not being involved after a lifetime of devotion is hard for him.

Ian's involvement as a player stretched across many areas of Wide Bay. He began in 1960 at 16 years of age in Gayndah and played A grade the same year. At 17 he represented Wide Bay and fondly remembers having to travel many miles to Wondai to train. It was just what you did back then. He also played for Avondale and Yandaran over the course of his playing career.

Ian's move to administration seemed a natural progression. He began in Bundaberg and went on to serve Bundaberg junior clubs Brothers, Brothers Saints and Western Suburbs.

He attended many QRL courses and attained a level one ASSA

certification and always attended the annual QRL conferences.

When involved with Brothers, Ian held the positions of president, secretary and treasurer at various times. When he moved to Wests, he held the roles of president, secretary and even managed the under-14 team.

Where Ian is most remembered though is as president of the Bundaberg Junior Rugby League where he was always referred to as 'Poppa Bear'.

Father time catches up with us all and Ian lost the use of legs, making it difficult to get around. A generous donation from the Bundaberg committee of Men of League Foundation of a mobility scooter has given Ian back his independence. He no longer has to rely on transport services and this has given him his quality of life back.

It seems fitting that after decades of service to our wonderful game, that the committee in Bundaberg has been able to give back to this outstanding and committed gentlemen.

LENDING A HELPING HAND

BOBBY KEYS

Former NSW and Newtown centre Bobby Keys had a successful hip replacement operation at St Vincent's Hospital on 24 July. Still mentally alert and active, the 80-year-old Bob and Julie, his wife of 58 years, live in the Moore Park area.

The Eastern Suburbs (Sydney) junior made his first grade debut for the Roosters as a winger against North Sydney Oval in 1960 when he was a 20-year-old policeman. He played six first grade games during his two seasons with Easts before he joined Newtown in 1962. He began playing in the centres and sometimes at five-eighth in 1963 and formed a highly-rated centre combination with 1967 Kangaroo, Brian 'Chick' Moore. In nine seasons with Newtown, Bob played 163 games, scoring 37 tries and a field goal. In his last season at Henson Park in 1970, he captained Newtown's reserve grade side to a win over Eastern Suburbs in the 1970 grand final.

Bob played four games for NSW against Queensland in 1964, all victories. He also played two games for City Firsts - in 1964 with Reg Gasnier as his centre partner and in 1966 when Brian Moore was next to him. In 1967, he played with City Seconds.

Bob had 12 years in the police force, finishing as a detective, before entering the hotel business and was a partner in several city and suburban hotels.

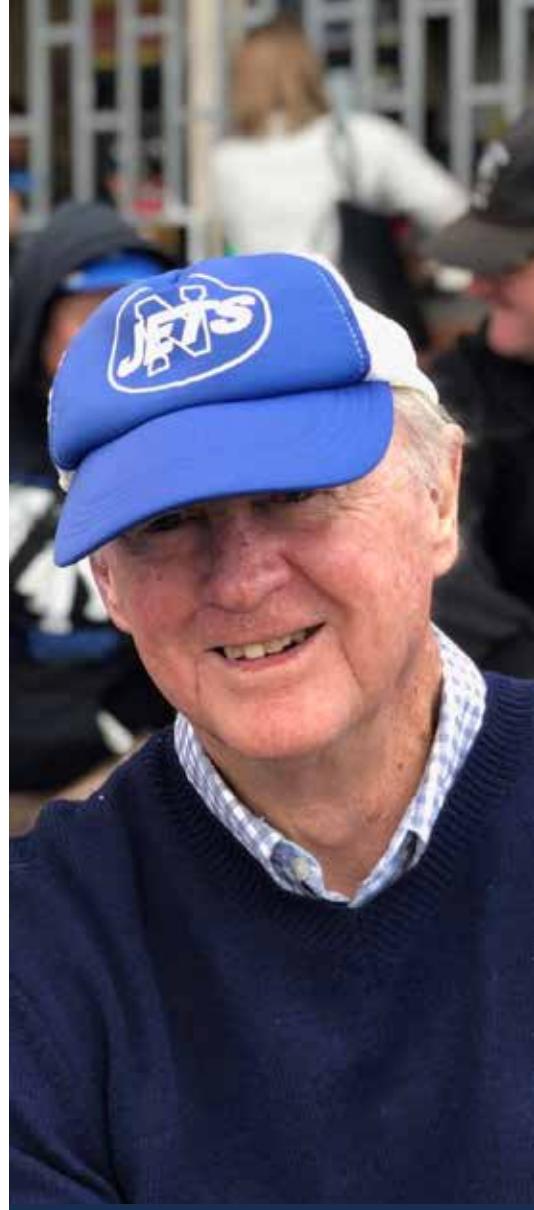
JOHN WALSH

Wellbeing officers Warren Thompson and Ken Vessey renewed their friendship with John Walsh, from Darwin, while John returned to Sydney for some medical appointments. Warren and Ken had met John and his wife Renita in Sydney during November-December 2019 when John had undergone surgery and follow-up treatment for cancer issues. This time, they traded yarns over lunch with John at Alexandria Erskineville Bowling Club as guests of club president Barry Carroll.

"As you can imagine we talked about many topics including the current COVID-19 restrictions, the manner in which NSW and the NT have coped to date, likely outcomes and naturally rugby league," said Ken Vessey. "We were all in agreement that the recommencement of the NRL and other sporting competitions had provided a huge uplift in the spirits of rugby league supporters and the larger community."

"I must be honest and admit our discussions on NRL club performances to date were somewhat swayed by the fact that we all support the South Sydney Rabbitohs.

"John surprised us previously with his courage, resilience and humility during an extremely trying time and once again his attitude and outlook had not changed since we last saw him. There is a chance that John will be back in Sydney in coming months and we will certainly see him again and try to fit in an NRL match, naturally featuring South Sydney. Special thanks go to Barry Carroll for his hospitality and ongoing support to the Men of League Foundation."



Bob more recently.



Bob Keys (back row, second from right) in the 1964 NSW team photo that featured several legends of the game.



(from left) Warren Thompson, John Walsh, Barry Carroll and Ken Vessey.

WILLIAMSON PIONEERED

GREAT INNISFAIL TRADITION

LIONEL WILLIAMSON WAS THE FIRST OF A STRING OF PRODUCTS FROM THE SUGAR CANE TOWN OF INNISFAIL IN NORTH QUEENSLAND TO TAKE THEIR PLACE AT THE END OF THE QUEENSLAND BACKLINE. WELL AFTER HIS PLAYING DAYS HAD FINISHED, HE WAS STILL PASSING ON HIS WISDOM TO THE REGION'S YOUTH.

GREG SHANNON

Any time with former Test winger Lionel Williamson is time well spent. Apart from a brilliant rugby league career which included representing his home town of Innisfail, North Queensland, Queensland, Sydney, NSW and Australia, plus a stint in the UK, Williamson has also contributed more than three decades of his life to mentoring and guiding young people in the education system.

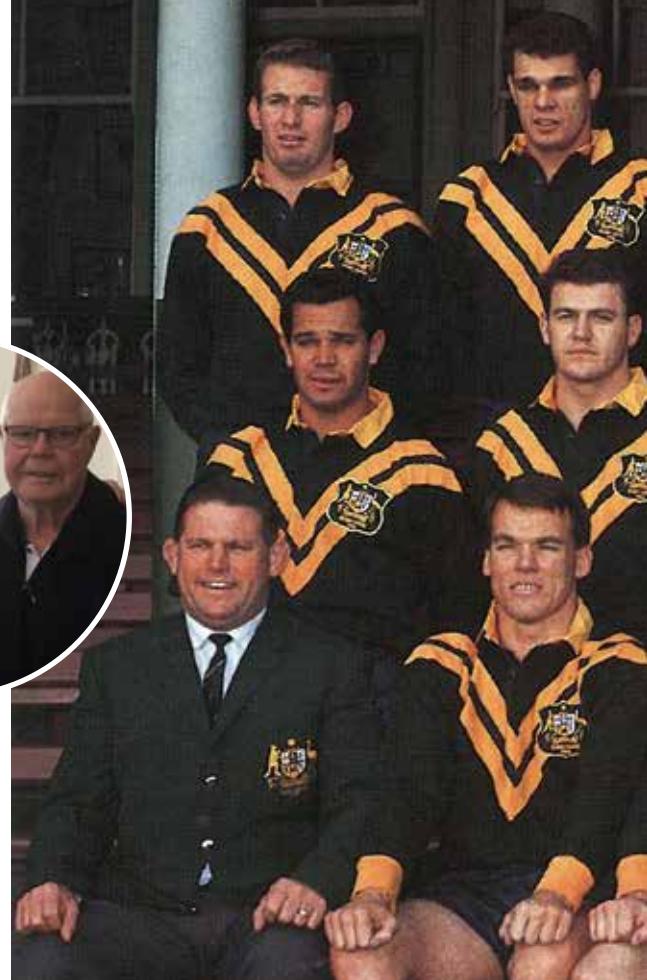
A sign outside the North Queensland town of Innisfail advises travellers that both Queensland wingers in the 2005 State of Origin side came from town. Ty Williams and Billy Slater made history that year but it wasn't the first time two wingers from Innisfail played interstate football in the same year.

In 1971 two Williamson brothers played in the series but on opposite teams - Lionel for NSW and Henry for Queensland. This was the pre-Origin era when players were selected on residential basis and Lionel was carving out a memorable career with Newtown in Sydney.

Yet he was always an Innisfail boy.

Growing up on a sugar cane farm near Daradgee, Lionel was introduced to rugby league while attending the Abergowrie College boarding school, 50 km west of Ingham and two hours from his home. Abergowrie College has a rich rugby league history with former students including legendary coach Bob Bax, Lionel and more recently Cowboys star Matt Bowen.

After finishing school, Williamson decided to study for the priesthood, spending two years in a Brisbane seminary where he



Lionel Williamson (far right, back row) among some of the game's legends. Ron Coote, Arthur Beetson, Williamson. Middle row: Eric Simms, Tom Rhodes, Bob Fulton, Clancy Kingston (manager). INSET: With former

learned Latin. However, he did not maintain his pursuit of a life in the priesthood and returned to Innisfail where he took a job with the nearby South Johnstone sugar mill, driving a cane train.

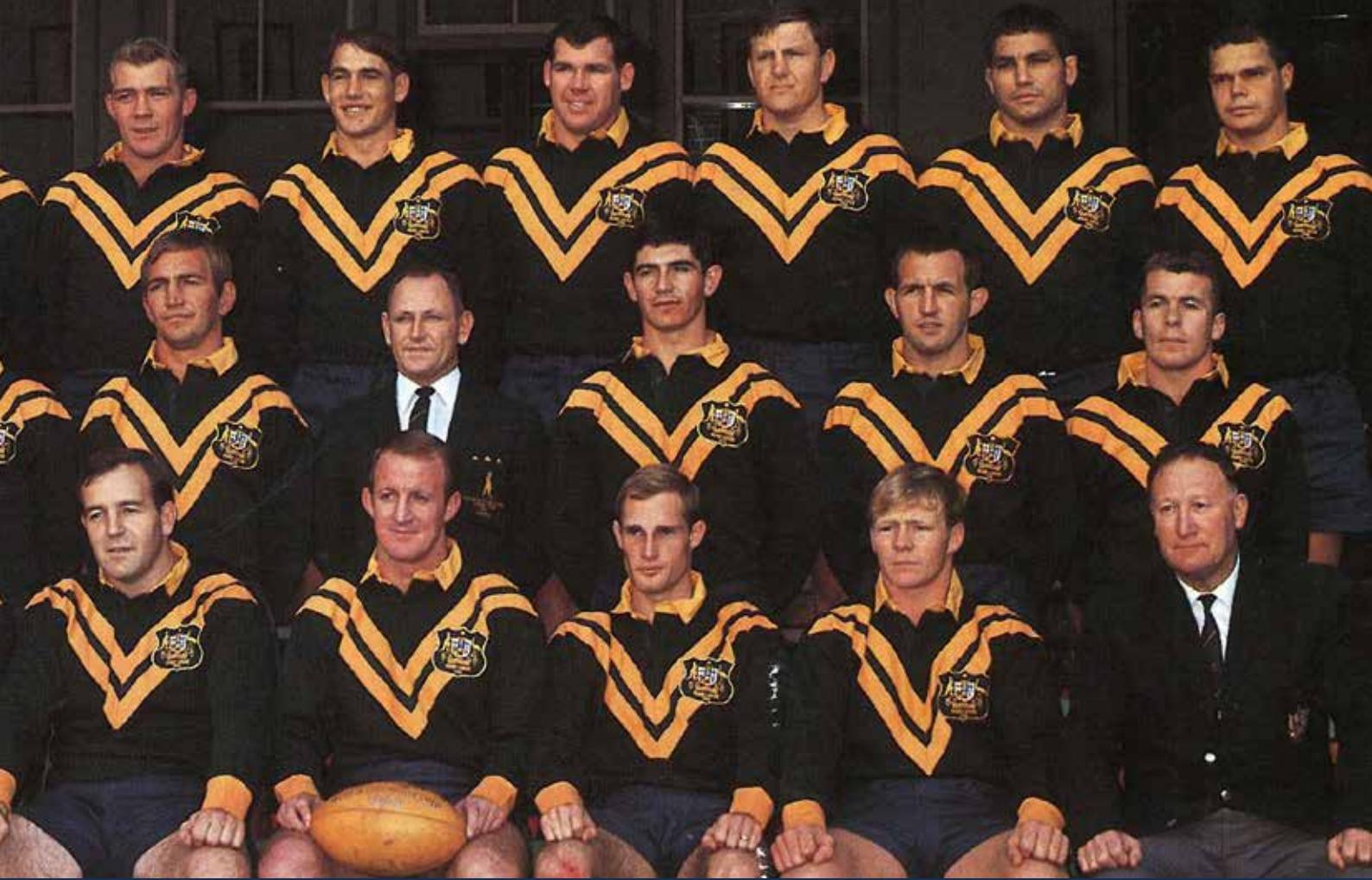
He joined Brothers in the local Innisfail rugby league competition in the days of when each northern town had its own competition from which a representative side would be selected to play Foley Shield. Williamson's ability and speed were soon noticed and in 1964 he was selected for North Queensland for a trial game which ultimately led to his selection in the 1964 Queensland side.

The game then took him on a huge adventure, with an offer to travel to the UK to join the Halifax club. This was too good an opportunity for a 21-year-old to miss and he soon found himself in the north of England playing in much colder conditions. He spent the 1965-66 season with Halifax before linking up with Bradford Northern. Not only did he play well at Odsal Stadium, he met his wife Diane while at the club.

Returning to Australia in 1967 after two English seasons, Williamson went back to his old job at the mill, played for Brothers and was chosen to represent Queensland again.

His representative career hit new heights the following year when, after playing for Queensland again, he was selected in the 1968 Australian World Cup squad along with fellow resident Queenslanders Brian Fitzsimmons, Dennis Manteit and former Queenslanders John Wittenberg, Elton Rasmussen and John Rhodes who were playing in Sydney. His debut in the green and gold jersey proved memorable, with him scoring two tries against France at Lang Park.

To have a local player make the Queensland and Australian sides



ends, as part of the 1968 Australian World cup squad. Others in the photo: (back row: Graeme Langlands, John Greaves, John Wittenberg, Dennis Manteit, Elton Rasmussen, Roy Branson, Fred Jones, Alf Richards (trainer), John King, Brian Fitzsimmons, Billy Smith. Front row: Harry Bath (coach), Brian James, Dick Thorne, John Raper (captain), John Queensland wellbeing manager Mark Bunting.

was a huge boost to the entire Innisfail community, as it was a decade later when an 18-year-old Kerry Boustead made the Queensland and Australian side from the town.

Inevitably, southern clubs came calling and Lionel moved to Sydney to link up with Canterbury-Bankstown. A drawn-out transfer wrangle meant he trained with the club but didn't get to play so, in what turned out to be another successful move, he joined Newtown instead where he went on to have a long career.

His international career continued with selection in the 1970 World Cup squad, in the Australian side that toured New Zealand in 1971 and he went on the 1973 Kangaroo tour to England and France. His 11th and final Test appearance was in the third Test against Great Britain in 1974.

Wearing the blue NSW jersey and going head-to-head with younger brother Henry in the 1971 Blues-Maroons clash was a unique event. Henry was playing club football in Townsville but he also spent two seasons with Newtown (10 first grade games) while another brother Max wore the Bluebags jersey in 1972 (three first grade games). Max and Henry later joined Brisbane Wests, winning the 1975 premiership. Another brother, Ronald, played for Newcastle Wests and another, Clive, played local league in Innisfail before becoming a magistrate.

By the end of 1974, injuries were starting to take their toll on Lionel and he retired from playing and spent some years in Sydney working in the transport industry.

In 1985 a new career beckoned which was to have a positive influence on hundreds of young people. Lionel took up a position as a dormitory and sports coordinator at St Augustine College in Cairns.

For more than 30 years he helped mould and nurture generations of youth in this role which involved countless hours organising and coordinating sporting teams and running the dorms. His faith and humility had a positive impact on hundreds of young people's lives as he became a trusted mentor and confidante to so many.

These days, living in retirement near Gordonville, south of Cairns, Williamson is still helping coach junior teams and he maintains a keen interest in the game, especially with some of his family forging their own careers on and off the field. Nephew Luke Williamson played for Adelaide, Canberra and Manly, chalking up 218 NRL appearances from 1997-08 (he finished with Harlequins in England) while grandson Lindsay Collins is a rising star with the Sydney Roosters, the 24-year-old becoming a regular in Trent Robinson's team in 2020.

From the childhood sugar cane farm to the UK, Lionel Williamson was able to see much of the world playing rugby league and has been able to give back much more to society through mentoring young people well after his playing days were over.

He was named in the North Queensland and Newtown teams of the century during the game's centenary year in 2008 and was also named in a team of the century selected from the Australian sugar industry. The Australian Sugar Industry Museum, near Innisfail, is developing a new sporting hall of fame display which will include Lionel's achievements, both on and off the field.

Greg Shannon is a member of the QRL history committee, the NQ Cowboys' historian and a director the Australian Sugar Industry Museum.



— COMMITTEE NEWS —



BRISBANE

Steve Ricketts, publicity officer

The Brisbane committee hopes to finish 2020 with a flourish at the Broncos and to start 2021 with another successful lunch at Norths Devils Leagues.

COVID-19 has put paid to the best laid plans of many people and organisations but it is important to remain positive. At the time of going to press, our annual Kick-Off Club Christmas lunch at the Broncos was a 'goer'.

Wednesday, 9 December is the date and we hope to have guest speakers of the same calibre as last year's duo, Gavin Allen and Wally Fullerton Smith.

Social distancing arrangements mean that ticket sales will be limited to around 85 but we will keep members up-to-date about those numbers.

After a recent committee meeting at Norths Devils Leagues, Men of League Foundation state manager Andrew Blucher and Brisbane committee member Kylie Gilvear met with Norths' general manager Sam O'Donoghue to discuss plans for next year.

Sam said the club was keen to host another function and Friday, 26 February is the confirmed date, ahead of the launch of premiership football the following month. Norths stars Mark Murray and Campbell 'Zulu' Dews, along with former Brisbane Souths prop, Geoff Naylor were guests at this year's function at the leagues club.

Committee members will be selling 'doubles' ahead of this year's State of Origin series in November, so give your support to our volunteers.

CENTRAL COAST

Dennis Tomsett, publicity officer

As a result of COVID-19 we have not been able to conduct any benefit events during this year. Our committee is aware of the current restrictions and are kept informed of any changes. We are hopeful that restrictions will ease soon and will then enable us to discuss event options with the various venues. Members will be notified by email of future events when confirmed.

Our wellbeing officers are available to assist those in need of

assistance. If you require any assistance or you know of other members in need, please contact Lance Henry on 0475 065 414 or Dennis Tomsett on 0458 211 817.

We would appreciate members considering to join our committee. If you are interested, or you know of other members that may be interested, please contact Eddy Johnson on 0457 810 564.

Keep safe and well.

GOLD COAST

Greg Sylvester, publicity officer

As with all Men of League Foundation committees, we have had to curtail our wellbeing visits and cancel several events due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All wellbeing contacts were made by telephone and it is pleasing to report that Ron Turner has recovered from a hernia operation, Ken Arthurson has had the stitches removed from a nasty wound to his shin (an accident whilst assisting the Foundation) and June Rasmussen is recovering well after having a cancer growth removed from her foot.

Val Irvine is recovering from a car accident and Paul Hague has received an excellent report from the specialist after a kidney operation.

Unfortunately, Dennis Ward has had several visits to hospital over the past few months. Sadly, we have lost two special people in Bobby Dimond (1948-49 Kangaroo) and Carolyn Gallagher, the widow of former Australian captain Peter Gallagher.

Plans are in progress to hold a morning tea for the widows of former players and committee members' wives, hopefully within the next six weeks, while preparations are well in advance for our annual Men Of League Internationals gala dinner which will be held on 6 March, 2021. Also on 4 November at Nerang RSL Club, prior to the State of Origin Kick-Off, we will be holding a father and son interview with John and Martin Lang (dependent on

government restrictions) with everyone welcomed to attend.

Sadly, we have had to cancel both our golf and bowls days, again due to COVID-19 ... boy it has a lot to answer for.

Before closing, we would like to wish Ian Amos and his wife Chris all the very best for their future, after Ian retired from his position of general manager of the Burleigh Bears Leagues Club, which he held for many years while doing a sterling job. Ian will continue as treasurer of the Gold Coast committee.

Please see a beautiful thank you card from Elsie Dimond, to the Men of League Foundation. It makes our job as wellbeing officers just a little more special, knowing we are making a difference.



To The Men of League
Thank you so much
for the beautiful flowers &
the kindness shown to us
when we lost Carl & my
husband also for the Men of League
members who regularly visited Carl
during his long illness.
Elsie Dimond & family

FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND

Kev Maher OAM, publicity officer

Where old friends meet! John Brown, former Brisbane Norths Brisbane, Queensland and Australian World Cup halfback, was on a 'grey nomad' tour of North Queensland and contacted me wanting to catch up with his old mate Ross Allen.

Ross Allen played rugby league in Toowoomba and was a Queensland state cricketer along with Brown who also played Sheffield Shield cricket in the 60s.

Kangaroo and World Cup winger Lionel Williamson, who toured on the 1970 World Cup team to England and France with Johnny Brown, also came along for the catch-up.

Lionel is very proud of his grandson Lindsay Collins, who is part of the Sydney Roosters outfit and a Queenslander.

John was also looking to catch up with his former Brisbane Norths hooker, Bob 'Chook' Fowler who unfortunately was away holidaying at the time.

ILLAWARRA

Gary Hart, secretary

Due to COVID 19 pandemic crisis restrictions in place, the Illawarra committee had to unfortunately cancel our 2020 bowls day, which is our biggest annual fundraiser. There is still hope, however, that restrictions may be lifted in time to enable us to hold our Christmas Kick-Off Club event on Tuesday, 1 December at Collegians' city club. We're all keeping our fingers crossed.

Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, Illawarra Division Rugby League (IDRL) resumed on Saturday 25 July, providing junior and senior players with the opportunity to again participate in rugby league in the Illawarra region.

With the Berkeley and Collegians clubs making a determination to withdraw from all senior competitions in 2020, and the Corrimbal and Dapto clubs not be able to field first grade teams due to player availability, the IDRL worked with NSWRL to ensure all clubs and teams could be accommodated. As a result, the Thirroul and Western Suburbs clubs were invited to field teams in the NSWRL President's Cup and Helensburgh elected to join the NSWRL Sydney Shield, with these arrangements in place for 2020 only.

All remaining six senior competitions got underway with 28 teams participating in open age, under-18 and second division men's competitions, along with

open age and under-18 women's tackle and open age Leagues tag competitions in the South32 Illawarra Women's League.

Despite the current difficult climate, junior participation is only down slightly on 2019 with 260 teams returning to the field across 20 age-based competitions in the Bendigo Bank Illawarra Junior League. The Illawarra District RLFC (Steelers) and the IDRL board of management acknowledged the efforts of clubs and volunteers, for making this return a reality.

After many years of service to rugby league in Illawarra, IDRL board of management chairman Ian 'Chook' Neill has relinquished his role which will now be carried out by former IDRL junior league president Gerry Murphy.

'Chook' gave great service to the Western Suburbs club over many years, at junior and senior levels. He has also been a long time member of the Illawarra Steelers' board, and held positions as IDRL junior chairman and in recent years was chair of the board. Additionally, Chook has been recognised for his significant contributions with life membership bestowed on him by five organisations: Western Suburbs Junior League, Western Suburbs Rugby League club, Western Suburbs Leagues Club, Illawarra District Rugby League (Steelers) and Illawarra Division Rugby League. After 66 years, Chook has well and truly earned a rest.

MORETON

Peter Affleck, president

As outlined in April's magazine, we held our highly successful annual golf day at Redcliffe Golf Club on Friday 21 February which saw a big field of 136 players enjoy the challenge, atmosphere and comradeship. No sooner had the celebrations finished and the world changed with "lockdown" and "isolation" upon us!

The Moreton committee has positioned a Kick-Off Club event to be held at the Redcliffe Leagues Club on Friday 23 October. We are in the process of finalising a couple of very interesting speakers which will highlight a

wonderful regathering opportunity for our members.

The increasingly popular golf day has also now been set for 2021, so get in early with team nominations to ensure you don't miss out on this much sort after experience. Shaw and Partners will again be our major sponsors for the event scheduled for Friday 19 February.

We have continued to be involved with virtual wellbeing visits to those in need, with such connection and conversations somewhat brightening the spirits in tough times.

PORT STEPHENS

Peter Arnold, secretary

The Port Stephens committee will hold the ninth annual charity bowls day at Nelson Bay Bowling Club on Sunday 27 September, starting 9.30am. The day will consist of teams of four, two of 10 ends with barbecue

lunch at a cost of \$20 great per person. It will be a family fun day with fantastic prizes, lucky team draws and great raffle and auction items.

If interested in attending, please contact the bowling club on 02 4981 1272

VICTORIA

Peter Foreman, president

In line with the rest of our Men of League Foundation family, our team in Melbourne has been severely impacted in our ability to execute our planned programs for the year due to the impact of the Coronavirus epidemic.

Whilst all committees have been affected, at the time of writing the greater metropolitan area of Melbourne is in lockdown, the Storm have relocated the football department to the Sunshine Coast and our committee has been forced to cancel or put on hold all of our planned events. Our team has not been able to meet face to face, and we are conducting wellbeing visits and generally communicating with each other over the phone.

Although our revenue-raising activities have been severely curtailed, at the time of writing it is pleasing to report that we have raised just short of \$51,000 as at the end of July. Luckily, we managed to run our annual golf day in February where we raised \$7570 and received \$3640 from the Storm via raffles at a couple of their corporate functions.

It is really pleasing to report that our long-term sponsor the Aces Sporting Club had provided \$39,600 in support for this year before they went into lock down. We are not expecting any further support from Aces this year due to

COVID-19 and the effect that it will have on their trading ability, however I would like to acknowledge the great support that they have provided to us since our inception. Put simply, they have been outstanding. We look forward to continuing our successful relationship once they have rebounded from the current environment and are once more in a position to renew their much-appreciated support.

It has been most heartening to see how the wider Foundation team have been able to work together and communicate effectively via the various Zoom meetings that have been introduced. This initiative (both wellbeing and presidents' meetings) has assisted in ensuring that the various stakeholders, such as head office and committee level, are on the same page, communicating effectively and generally pushing in the same direction.

As stated earlier, our committee is limited in what we can do to raise revenue for the remainder of the year in the current environment. However we are focused on trying to contact lapsed members and encouraging them to rejoin and we will run a set of doubles for each of the three State of Origin games in November.

To everyone associated with our Foundation staff, committees and members - stay safe.

TOWNSVILLE

Barry Buchanan, publicity officer

This year has certainly been a testing time for all of us but one of the saddest things has been our inability to attend funerals to farewell members of our rugby league community due to COVID-19 restrictions. One such member was Joe Goicoechea who was the first and only patron of the Townsville committee. We will miss him.

Even though the North Queensland Cowboys have suffered setbacks such as losing staff and finance because of crowd restrictions, they have still seen fit to donate a 20-seat area for our annual raffle. The nominated game is our final one for the year against the Panthers on 18 September. We also receive two tickets to each home game which our wellbeing officers can pass on to someone whose spirits can be lifted

during these difficult times. We thank Manda Ruddell for her support and now look forward to working with Luke Southam as Manda is on maternity leave.

While the Cowboys have returned to the playing field, unfortunately Townsville Blackhawks, in the Intrust Super Cup, have not but we look forward to working with them again in 2021. The new extensions at Brothers and the Kirwan Sports Club should prove very ideal for Men of League Foundation functions in the future.

No matter how good technology is you can't have a Kick-Off Club on Zoom. Members are longing for the return of the social gatherings for cold drinks, fine food and entertaining guest speakers.

Keep on caring for our rugby league community.

SYDNEY METROPOLITAN

Gary Hart, secretary

Our committee was disappointed to have to postpone the sold out Friday, 20 March luncheon at Souths Juniors due to COVID-19.

The theme '20 years since 2000' had a stellar line-up of guest speakers lined up, including NRL chairman

Peter V'Landys, Sydney 2000 Olympics mastermind Rod McGeoch, comedian, cricketer and entertainer Greg Ritchie and 2000 NRL grand finalists Lote Tuqiri, Wendell Sailor and Anthony Minichiello.

We hope to be able to have the luncheon as soon as possible.

THE 'BIG O' UNMASKED

To fans in the 1970s and 80s, he was 'the Galloping Garbo', a shy working-class hero who thrilled crowds for the Balmain Tigers and North Sydney Bears in between shifts as a garbage collector.

To opponents who dreaded facing his Polynesian power, Olsen Filipaina was a disrupter known as 'The Big O'. To coaches and media critics, he was simply 'Olsen the Enigma', such was the inconsistency of his performances that saw him at times an unstoppable force of power and class, and at other times seemingly disinterested on the football field on the club scene (yet rarely anything but explosive in the Kiwi jersey).

A recently released book, appropriately titled 'The Big O', by Patrick Skene, tells the story of Filipaina, a New Zealand Hall of Fame rugby league legend who paved the way for the Pacific revolution – the influx of Maori and Pasifika players who today dominate the NRL.

It tracks Olsen's story from his rise out of working-class South Auckland and starring for the Mangere East Hawks, through his overcoming of depression, racism and cultural dislocation in Sydney, to the Cinderella story of his success for the New Zealand Kiwis, enabled by the culturally competent man management of coaching legend Sir Graham Lowe, the New Zealand Test coach from 1983-86.

Forty years after Filipaina burst into the Australian rugby league scene, Skene's biography relates the journey of the rise of the Pacific community in rugby league through a humble and principled man who overcame barriers to dethrone the greatest player of all.

'Olsen was a pathfinder, the first to show what Polynesians could do, and he was the face of hope for his community. He was a great player who was misunderstood, and this is a very important book to explain his role in the Polynesian rise in rugby league.' Sir Graham Lowe

It's a brilliant, incisive read that has received positive review from many within the league community, including Men of League Foundation CEO, Steve Lowndes, who feels Filipaina's story would strike a chord many within the Foundation's membership.

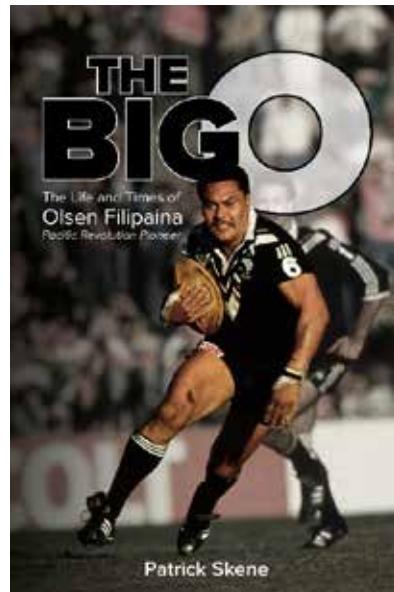
"Patrick forwarded me a copy of the book, which I found totally absorbing and a really unique trailblazing window into the enormous contribution that the Polynesian players would bring to the game in Australia," he said.

"Patrick subsequently introduced me to Olsen – an absolutely lovely guy, who would make a terrific ambassador for the Men of League Foundation in reaching out and connecting to the many players and families of Polynesian background contributing to the game here."

"I'm very keen to get Olsen involved once the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted and have discussed with Patrick and Olsen a potential book tour and Men of League Foundation promotional engagements through our local committees."

"It really is a story worth hearing and a legend worth meeting."

The book is available in bookstores throughout Australia and New Zealand.



"Highly recommend, this book. It's about rugby league but it's also about racism, mental health, being a pioneer for your people and Polynesian pride. Incredible story well told."

**Richard Hinds,
ABC Offsiders**

6,700
MEMBERS

TRIBUTES REMEMBERING THOSE NOW GONE

DARRELL COLLINS

Known as 'Daggie' in many circles, Darrell Collins had a rich rugby league pedigree. Darrell died at age 76 in a Forster aged care facility after a short battle with lung cancer. Three Collins uncles played with the Ourimbah Magpies through their extraordinary run of premierships in the 1950s with Kev Collins appearing in five successive grand final victories while Owen Morris was a successful captain-coach in the 1940s.

A goal kicking halfback, many good judges believe the prodigious schoolboy talent could have reached higher levels if he had applied himself properly. Darrell was chosen for the NSW under-six-stone side from Lisarow primary school and captained many rep teams while at Gosford High School. He captained the Ourimbah Magpies to under age premierships and was in the Magpies' first grade side that lost the 1963 grand final against Gosford.

In 1964 he was approached by the Parramatta Eels as a possible replacement for the retiring Bob Bugden and spent two seasons at Cumberland Oval but never progressed to the top grade before returning to Ourimbah from where he was chosen to represent Group 12 side and Southern Division (then Groups 6,7,12) against Illawarra in a Country Championship game in Wollongong. His five-eighth was Tony Branson who went on to reach Test honours. After switching to Gosford, he completed his playing career in Tuncurry. Darrell was cremated and his ashes placed beside those of his wife, Judy, who died two years earlier.

WARREN BUTLER

Warren Butler was a first grader at age 16 with the Shellharbour Sharks and went on to play lock the 1980 Group 7 defeat of Warilla. He moved to Narrandera, Mittagong and Wauchope as captain-coach before returning to Shellharbour where he continued playing until 2012 when the club was short of players. He was only 58 when he died and is survived by his



Noel Bissett

NOEL BISSETT

The Canberra Rugby League community is mourning the passing of long time former Canberra Region Rugby League chairman (a position he held for 12 years) and respected NSWRL referee, Noel Bissett, on Anzac Day. Noel was also president of the Foundation's Canberra Monaro committee for many years.

Tributes came from far and wide for Noel's years of service to rugby league.

"Noel was a highly respected referee and administrator and had been involved with the game for over 50 years in Canberra and the region," said Canberra Raiders CEO Don Furner jnr. "He is also one of the first life members of the Canberra Raiders and joined the ranks of the NSWRL referees officiating NSWRL matches when the Raiders were admitted to the NSWRL competition in 1982.

"He has made a significant contribution to the development of rugby league in Canberra. We have lost a true gentleman and great rugby league man. Noel always popped into the Raiders office and stopped to say hello to everyone. No one ever said a bad word about Noel and just as importantly, you never heard Noel say a bad word about anyone."

These sentiments were echoed by Canberra Region Rugby League chairman, Gary Green. "I have known Noel since my return to Canberra in 1985 and a truer gentleman you could not meet. His dedication to rugby league can be matched by few others from his early playing days at North Sydney through to joining the ranks of the referees where he excelled."

Noel Bissett was inducted into the ACT Sporting Hall of Fame in 2018 and was a driving force behind the Foundation's activities in and around the Australian Capital Territory.

BRYAN DIEZMANN

The Sunshine Coast-Gympie Rugby League Referees Association is mourning the loss of its past president Bryan Diezmann, who lost his two-year battle with bowel cancer in July. He was 62.

Bryan was a life member of the association and served it for over 25 years. He often refereed matches three days a week, juniors and seniors. Previously, he played rugby league at school and club level at Bribie Island where he also coached junior teams. As he developed problems with his knees, he found his niche on the touch line. He officiated in five consecutive A grade grand finals and was selected to officiate in the Queensland Cup.

Bryan became the senior referee selector and moved into the president's role, also becoming the top referees' coach on the Sunshine Coast and was soon picked up by the QRL and the NRL as a referee coach.

Bryan was a devout family man and encouraged his son and grandson to also become referees. He is survived by his wife Joan of 42 years, son Jay and daughters Tina and Kara and families.



Bob Dimond

BOB DIMOND

The last surviving member of the 1948-49 Kangaroos passed away in May, aged 90. When the team sailed out of Sydney in August 1948, Bob Dimond was the youngest team member at just 18. He did not play a Test match but his younger brother Peter would represent Australia in 10 Test matches. Born at Dapto, south of Wollongong, Bob went from Illawarra's 'seconds' representative team to a Kangaroo representative in just 10 weeks.

Bob was a champion sprinter, footballer and cricketer while at school and made his first grade debut with the Dapto club at 16 in 1946. Playing mainly at outside centre, he established himself as a regular first grader in 1947 and moved up to the representative scene in 1948. After representing Illawarra seconds, he was selected for Group 7, followed by Combined Groups 6 and 7 and then for Southern Districts who were beaten 13-12 at Newcastle on 1 May. After the Newcastle game, he was selected as a winger in the Country Seconds team to meet City Seconds but an injury saw

him promoted to the Country Firsts side. Although City won easily by 28-13, Bob impressed and was chosen for the NSW team to play Queensland at the SCG on 15 May.

While he did not play a Test on the 1948-49 tour of England and France, he played 15 matches for Australia on tour, scoring nine tries. He moved to Sydney in 1950 and played two seasons with the Wests Magpies, scoring 12 tries in his 23 first grade games. After a motorbike accident wiped out his 1952 season, he declined an offer from St George and took on a captain-coach position at Kempsey, returning to Dapto after four seasons on the north coast.

His early working career was spent as a baker but after moving to Caringbah in the late 1950s, he became a fireman for three decades. Bob and his wife Elsie moved to the Gold Coast in 2013 and were well supported by the local Foundation committee.

CAROLYN GALLAGHER

Carolyn Gallagher, the widow of former Australian captain Peter Gallagher, passed away in May, aged 83. Within days of attending the Gold Coast Men of League Internationals gala dinner in February, she was diagnosed as having cancer.

Peter ('Pedro') had died in 2003 after fighting cancer for six months and the Foundation regularly invited Carolyn to events to keep her included in the league community.

Peter Gallagher had a long and distinguished career playing for Brothers in Brisbane. He represented Australia in 17 Tests from 1963-68, once as captain. He toured Great Britain and France in 1963 and 1967 with the Kangaroos and played for Queensland 12 times. He was rated 98th in the Australian top 100 players during the centenary year celebrations of 2008 and was inducted into the National Rugby League Hall of Fame.

The Foundation offers their sincere condolences to Carolyn's daughter Sue, her partner Peter and family.

JOE GOICOECHEA

North Queensland Cowboys lost one of its founding fathers and the man in charge of building their first stadium when Joe Goicoechea passed away at the age of 87 in April.

Big Joe, who always said he wasn't Spanish ("I come from Basque"), arrived in Australia with his family in 1938 at the age of five. He was educated in Ayr where he started playing rugby league. At the age of 16 he represented Ayr in the minor junior grade team which, after winning the southern zone competition, went on to play Cairns on Foley Shield grand final day, the biggest day on the North Queensland league calendar. Ayr was victorious, taking out the North Queensland Register Cup. Playing alongside Joe that day was the great Kel O'Shea who went on to represent Queensland and Australia.

When Joe moved to Townsville working as a civil engineer he played for Souths, winning the Townsville premiership in 1952. Some of his teammates in that side were Jim Paterson, George Woodhead, Martin Dillon, Max Short and Reid Anderson.

When the North Queensland Cowboys applied to join the NRL it would only happen if they had a suitable venue. It was Joe who led the way, converting an unused trotting track into one of the best rugby league grounds in the national competition. Once the team was accepted for the 1995 competition Joe didn't stop there, becoming one of the founding directors of the Cowboys and his company, Mendi Constructions, a prominent sponsor.

When Cowboys secured their first grand final berth in 2005, Joe was absolutely elated so you can imagine his reaction in 2015 when the NRL Premiership Trophy came home.

When the Townsville Men of League Foundation committee was formed in 2008, Joe became its first patron and held that position until he passed on 22 April.

KEVIN HOGAN

Clever halfback and five-eighth of the 1960s-70s, Kevin Hogan, overcame a serious back injury to forge a respectable grade career for St George, Cronulla and Parramatta before returning to serve the Sharks as a lower grade coach and director.

He played 109 grade games for the Sharks, 49 in first grade, and 14 first grade games for Parramatta. The St George junior won a third grade premiership with the Dragons, played for Wentworthville in the second division, Newtown lower grades and Corrimal before the back injury curtailed him for three years. He joined Cronulla for their third season in the top competition 1969.

His best season was 1971 when he finished second to Denis Pittard (by one point) in Rothman's Medal voting and captained the Sharks to victory in the final of the Endeavour Cup against Canterbury. After his stint with the Eels in 1974, he captain-coached Norths in the Illawarra before he helped develop to players Andrew Ettingshausen, Mark McGaw, Jonathan Docking, Barry Russell, Alan Wilson and Michael Porter during six seasons of lower grade coaching with Cronulla. In 1989, Kevin was elected to the Sharks' board, showing he had a tremendously prominent impact on rugby league in the area and was vastly respected.

JIMMY JOHNSON

Brisbane's Past Brothers club has produced many international and state players but arguably the club's greatest character was long serving strapper Jimmy Johnson who held the position from the mid-1970s until his passing on 25 April, aged 84, after major surgery.

He would often strap four teams - under-23s, C grade, reserve grade and A grade - on the one day, and never asked for anything in return, except perhaps a cold beer. If there wasn't a bottle opener handy, he had one implanted in his artificial leg, which was fitted after he was injured in a motor bike accident when he was a young man.

Jimmy forged a strong friendship with former Test halfback Tom Raudonikis, who was Brothers coach in 1983-84, and their fishing trips were the stuff of legend. Jimmy's proudest day was Brothers' grand final win over Redcliffe at Lang Park in 1987.

A Men of League Foundation member, Jimmy was a regular at Kick-Off Club lunches at Broncos Leagues Club as well as being a

hard-working volunteer at golf days.

Brothers also have been mourning the passing of 1956 premiership player Brian Stirling, who later became a prominent junior coach and administrator, and former hooker Dion McCarthy. Brian, 83, died on 26 July while Dion was 80 at the time of his passing on 8 June.

GRAEME KNOX

Graeme Knox, aka 'The Zom', passed peacefully on 27 May after a short battle with cancer.

Graeme, and his brother David, were naturally gifted at sports and excelled in rugby league in the Manly-Warringah district and surf lifesaving activities with the Freshwater Surf Life Saving Club where their father was a prominent member. Graeme played for Harbord United and North Curl Curl and later with Erina Eagles on the Central Coast. He captained Manly's Jersey Flegg team for two years and was twice captain of their President's Cup side, moving on to play senior football with the Sea Eagles (24 first grade games 1964-68) and North Sydney Bears. He also became a referee.

Over a long surf career, he was a highly regarded member of Freshwater, South Curl Curl, Manly and North Narrabeen surf clubs and competed nationally and internationally in surf boat rowing. He devoted his life to advancing Surf Life Saving activities, especially surf boat racing, managing tours to Wales and England and in 1984 he received a Letter of Appreciation for his efforts from Prince Charles, Patron of Welsh Surf Life Saving. From 1987-2003 he wrote a popular weekly column in The Manly Daily newspaper on local surfing called Between the Flags.

'The Zom' was awarded life membership of Warringah Junior Rugby League Club, Valley United Junior Rugby League Club, Surf Life Saving Sydney Northern Beaches and Australian Surf Boat Rowers League. Other awards include 1998 outstanding community service award for media service, 2007 NSW Rowers League Hall of Fame award and Surf Life Saving Australia's 50 years' service award. He was married to Jennifer since 1968 and they had three children – Vanessa, Simone and Nathan. After 32 years with PMG/Telstra, Graeme became a part owner of a hotel in Wagga Wagga and later operated the popular kiosk at South Curl Curl Beach.

FRANK MYLER

English Test centre and coach Frank Myler died in England, aged 81. He was the last English captain to win the Ashes against Australia, in 1971, and first toured here in 1966. In 1970, after losing the first Test 37-15 in Brisbane, he led Great Britain to 28-7 and 21-17 victories in the next two Tests. The 1970 team also won the three Tests against New Zealand. Myler returned to Australia as GB coach in 1984 but his team all six Tests against Australia and New Zealand.

He played for Widnes in the English competition from 1955 when just 17, going on to play 369 matches (144 tries) in 12 seasons, and scoring a try in their Challenge Cup final win against Hull KR at Wembley in 1964. He moved to St Helens for four seasons from 1967-68 (144 matches, 46 tries.) and won the Harry Sunderland Trophy as the man of the match in the 1970 win over Leeds in the championship final.



Col Weir (far right) with 1962 Queensland teammates (from left) Mick Veivers, Frank Drake, Lionel Morgan and Barry Muir.

DON PERCIVAL

A true bush boy born Boorowa passed away at Shellharbour days before his 80th birthday. Don Percival played for Thirroul, Hay, Cootamundra, Griffith Black and Whites, Lismore and captain-coach of the inaugural 1970 Albury Roos premiership-winning team.

Don worked in many bush towns for the Bank of NSW (which became Westpac), then in the caravan park industry at Tamworth, Alstonville and Shellharbour. A big, fast three-quarter, he was leading try-scorer at many clubs and was sportsman of the year at Albury in 1970. Don married Anne Keenan in 1968. They had three children, Phillip (deceased) Alison and Jannell. Don will be remembered as a family man, successful businessman and talented footballer.

ROSS WARNER

Former North Sydney and NSW hooker Ross Warner, who played 186 first grade games for North Sydney from 1963-74, passed away in early August, aged 76.

After starring for Northern Division against the touring Great Britain side as an 18-year-old in 1962, the Tamworth-born hooker was recruited by the Bears. In 1964, he was chosen for Sydney Seconds, was elevated into the NSW and was selected as a reserve for Australia for the second Test against France in Brisbane but did not get on to the field. He played his fourth and last game for NSW in 1967 after playing hooker for Sydney Firsts against Country.

After retiring as Bears skipper at the end of 1974, Warner coached lower grade North Sydney teams and served on the committee. He also worked at Norths Leagues club for several years. He was a Bears' life member and was named as hooker in the club's team of the century.

COL WEIR

Col Weir was selected for Australia from the Brisbane Wests club in 1960, sitting on the bench for the first Test against France at the Sydney Cricket Ground. Australian coach Clive Churchill did not require Weir, or forward reserve Bill Delamere (Manly-Warringah) during the torrid, 8-all encounter, and that was the end of Weir's time in the green and gold.

A dashing centre, he had made his Queensland debut in 1959 in a series won 3-1 by the Maroons. He played eight times for his state between 1959 and 1962, including matches against France and Great Britain.

When he retired in 1966, aged 30, he had played 165 first grade matches for his beloved Wests Panthers, alongside the likes of Test stars Barry Muir, Alex Watson and Ken Day.

He later coached schoolboy teams and maintained a keen interest in the game, attending Men of League Foundation and FOGS (Former Origin Greats) functions, often with his great mate, former Queensland fullback Errol Stock.

Col Weir died on 1 August, aged 84, after a short battle with cancer.



As a *family owned and operated company*, it's important to us that we partner with organisations like the *Men of League Foundation* who *embody our family values*. That's why, despite these challenging times, *we are proud to continue our support* as naming rights sponsor of the *BMD Qld Wellbeing Program* which works to *care for the men, women and children* of the rugby league community.



CARING FOR THE
MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN
OF THE RUGBY LEAGUE COMMUNITY

40 YEARS STRONG
EST 1979.
Our business is *still* our people

07 3893 7000

www.bmd.com.au

