

Welcome to you all, past and present members and family, and thanks for making the effort to be here. I hope you have a great night.

And

Happy 50th birthday to all of us who are or have been part of this Club.

Feels good to be 50 again.

On the subject of birthdays; It's David Wright's today.

Happy birthday David.

50 years ago decimal currency had only just been introduced, Galilee won the Melbourne Cup with John Miller as his jockey, and man was yet to set foot on the moon.

This club, as Al explained was built on the foresight of a few,

But on the extremely hard work of many.

This from within 8 objects of the Club in our original constitution:

- To provide tennis courts and develop and promote the sport of tennis in the local community
- To promote social intercourse between the members of the club as a non profit organisation
- To foster and emphasise the development of the sport of tennis among juniors and children and to further develop social responsibility amongst such

Enjoy each other's company through tennis,

Keep the facilities first class for the benefit of the local community,

Promote the sport of tennis, particularly through juniors

In the 60's, 70's, and 80's this place flourished under the model of the Club doing everything other than the coaching; which was done by Vic Edwards Tennis School. In the mid 80's a member who went on to become one of our Life Members joined a 6 month's waiting list to become a member.

To recognise the various periods of leaders amongst the many volunteers you can look at our Life Members board down in the far corner, where you will recognise many names including Al, who has put in since the onset and is still putting in today. A bit like an Everready battery really.

The club used to do everything through the voluntary efforts of many; including the administration of the booking system to casual and permanent hirers. This was done mainly through the incredible generosity of firstly Pam and Brian Dunkley,

And then Anna and John Miller;

Who happened to have the fortune, or misfortune, of both living close to the courts and having a shop in the Forestville Shopping Centre where they gave of both their and their staff's time.

As the 90's unfolded and the young family model changed from predominantly 1 partner; towards both partners being in the paid workforce;

And the number of activities open to those families grew;

And the number of people to whom tennis was a large part of their life shrank;

The committee of the time had the foresight to engage our first full-time manager and coach.

The club was very fortunate to engage the extraordinarily competent services of Andrew and Sharon Sun under the banner of Max Tennis.

This model allowed the Club to continue to offer the same level of services to its members,

But greatly improve the quality and range of offerings to local families

And greatly improve the ease of access to the courts for increasingly time-poor casual court hirers.

We had some hiccoughs in the mid 2000's as the Club lost its manager and within a couple of short years we were in a bit of trouble financially and in terms of kids coaching programs.

10 years on through the hard work of many people we are in a strong position again.

We currently have a great bunch of people within and just as importantly outside the committee who each do their bit to keep things operating smoothly and ensure that no 1 person is overburdened.

We have once again a first rate, professional, committed management team, led by Tim and Jules Bigg and their head coach Jen.

In an average week Tim engages 2 full-time professional coaches, 6 part-time coaches, and 2 part-time admin people who staff the office.

He put 4 of those 6 part-time coaches through TNSW training programs and 1 is about to start.

And collectively they take 400 people through lessons each week, including an average of 90 kids a week in in-school programs from Killarney Public, Forestville Public, and Killarney High.

And of course they run the booking system and staff the centre all the hours it is open other than the dedicated club times.

It is a full-time professional business that works to meet the increasingly demanding expectations of the local community.

And, I am pleased to say, they have in place a succession plan with the birth of their daughter, Chiara Bigg, well not so big yet, only 4 months ago.

In closing I would like to return to one of the key objects of the club,

To enjoy each other's company,

I have been doing the new member hit and introduction process for the last 18 months now and 70% of people who join are looking for a social group with whom to enjoy their tennis.

So, whether it be through playing comp, or organised social, or just having a hit with another member, we need to acknowledge each other, our members, who come up here, play with good humour, enjoy each other's company and provide the welcoming atmosphere that allows others, particularly new members to want to become a permanent part of this club.

To the next 50 years.

If you could fill your glasses, I would like to propose a toast.

To our tennis club.