

Scone Polo Club

Presidents Report for 2016

2016 has been a year of development. The Club has been committed to, over the last couple of years, to encourage junior players, support the development of the game and improve facilities for our members.

We started out by introducing a “zero tolerance” on the playing field during the Bob Skene League and it was amazing how all players took notice. A record 20 teams competed over three weekends with formal kid’s games thrown in during the Easter school holidays. Generally, the standard of play was excellent with no major incidences or complaints. It was a Club in action with a positive atmosphere and good camaraderie everywhere.

As always, we appreciate having the Ellerston boys come down and participate as it helps lift the standard of all games. Scone is one of those unique Clubs in the World where junior or new members have the chance to play with or against Australian Test players or high goal players with International experience; all in an honorary capacity, over a three week period.

During the Muswellbrook Cup and Mothers Day weekend we witnessed the inaugural Ladies Tournament which saw four teams battle it out for the inaugural Dr Judy White trophy.. It was a mixture of female talent from Queensland, Sydney, Local and abroad vying for an opportunity to play at Ellerston later on in the year.

The 22nd junior Polo School held in October hosted 86 attendees. It is an incredibly big effort put in by the organising Committee but the reward is in seeing the smiles of gratitude on the faces of all the kids. That alone is testament to its success. Well done Alex and Charch Warner, Anto White and all the coaches that give up so much of their time to help our future players.

At the Scone annual tournament (The Donald Macintyre Cup) the Club celebrated 125 years with the production and launch of a soft cover book of photographic memories covering the last 25 years since Bill Bishop’s Book Scone Polo Club 1891-1981. The Club thanks Dr Judy White and Sophie Fraser for their assistance in putting it together.

Again, our premier fund raiser and Family Polo weekend (Dougal Archibald Cup) was a great success. It was a slightly different formula with the promotion of more car stands so that family and friends could unite and have a less formal picnic experience on the sidelines of the Polo. Thank you to Alex Warner, Joe Ryan and the organising Committee for your efforts to make it such a success.

The Committee has been very active in making improvements about the Club. We now have our own Horse Welfare Trailer on site for all tournaments and yes there is a new hot water system in the shower block.

After nearly 6 years of continuous debate and fund raising we now have a completed “wooden Horse” to assist in coaching, training and practicing skills. A big thank you to Frank Bragg for his tenacity in getting the structure completed and shipped out from Scone. It has been no easy feat to reach completion.

The Club has purchased a new “zero turn, ride on” mower so that the grounds and surrounds are kept tidy at all times during the season. Its acquisition lessens the burden on members to bring their own gear to working bees and enables continuity in presentation.

You may have noticed new trees planted along the side lines over the last two years. It has definitely softened the grounds and given them a welcoming feel. Thank you to Frank Bragg and his band of helping hands. We are to continue our planting program this year but in memory of certain members whom we have lost in recent months.

On the administrative side of things we have combined forces with the Scone Race Club to manage our data base and hopefully keep our membership communication in a more regular pattern and more efficient service. Rose and Partners Accountants have been recruited to oversee our accounts and assist treasury deal with the ever increasing demand on managing the financial affairs of the Club.

You may have also noticed a new Scone Polo Club logo which was introduced to all of our programs, letter heads and literature. The creative genius behind the scenes is Kath Brooks and her team of “merry men”. Thank you Kath, it has helped freshen up the appearance of The Club’s communications.

More recently and perhaps more importantly we have appointed three Trustees to oversee the Roger Sawyer Trust. They are Mr Frank Bragg, Mr Alex Warner and Mr Ross Cole.

The Trust Deed governing the Trust has been established and stamped with the great assistance of Kate Mailer. The Club thanks these three gentlemen and Kate for their professional assistance and handling of this most important asset for and on behalf of The Scone Polo Club.

You may have also noticed the exhibition of colour photographs around the shed. In light of the fabulous collection of photography over the years taken by Joe McNally and Stephen Mowbray we have enlarged several of them to give the Club House a lift.

Just recently Mr Tony Tresidder from Snow Sports in Jindabyne has donated some industrial shelving which we hope to use to tidy up both the Club House store room and the machinery shed.

Perhaps our biggest undertaking during the past 6 months has been the resurfacing of Glenugie Ground. It has been a considerable expense and an enormous learning curve but hopefully the result will be of great benefit to all players in the future. Thanks go to Frank Bragg and the Grounds Committee plus the professional guidance of Ben Foley (Ellerston) and Jim Gilmore for managing us through the process.

On that note, the players owe an enormous debt for the commitment and effort that our groundsman, Mr Bill Rutland has put into our grounds. In the next 12 months we hope to see even more improvements but we couldn’t even contemplate it without the help of Bill Rutland. His dedication is exemplary. We are very lucky to have an employee who shares a passion to get these grounds to the best possible condition within the limited budget available.

To the Committee, your guidance and support has been fantastic. As a team we have achieved much in a relatively short period of time.

To those retiring Committee members, we thank you for your contribution and I'm sure you all have great comfort in knowing that there are young, enthusiastic members to come on board to take the Club into the next generation.

A special thank you to our secretary Mrs Kirsty Cole and Treasurer Felicity Fraser as well as Scott White for, his now, two decades of service behind the Bar.

To Serena, your support, as always, has been 150 %. The atmosphere about the Club House is at all times welcoming and jovial with kids, mothers, girl friends and members all participating and sharing the work load. Thank you from all of us for such a wonderful contribution to the Club over 4 years.

Two years ago a senior member of the Club approached me and commented that he thought the Club was; in his own words "in a mess".

Well.....In 2016 Scone Polo Club had more playing members than any other Club in Australia. It has grounds and facilities enviable by many other Clubs. It has a healthy balance sheet with cash in the Bank, an investment property and a sizable investment share portfolio, a vibrant and enthusiastic Committee, nine formal Tournaments scheduled on the NSWPA Calendar for 2017 and some of the most exciting young players ever to ride onto a polo field as members. I leave you to make up your own minds!!

Thank you all for your support and encouragement throughout 2016.

All the best for the 2017 season.

Peter White

President

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