
ANNUAL REPORT 2021

INTRODUCTION

What an interesting 12 months it has been for local water polo! We were unsure in September last year whether we would even hold a competition, however, although numbers were down, we managed both a Senior and Junior comp plus lots of training and development programs. This culminated in some great finals action and representative triumphs.

We again experienced problems with council pool availability as the Mittagong Pool flooded (a few times) and was closed for the bulk of the season, it will be interesting to see what unfolds with this pool leading up to council elections in September.

There has been some 'future directions' sessions with interested Club members, and a survey to ask whether we should vary playing nights. These sessions have drawn out some offers of support for committees and the Board so we look forward to an injection of new ideas - all detailed in the following pages.

Succession/Support

The current SHWP Board consists of ex-Presidents/VP's/Life Members and even a Patron collectively with >100 years service to the Club, all will be moving back into retirement at the end of the Season! The Club has been on the lookout for 'new blood' to help out running Southern Highlands Water Polo with success at last. There is room for more support however and we value your contribution, in any form, so if you are willing, please send an email to SHWP@outlook.com with your details and which aspect of Club Admin you are interested in.

We appreciate the ongoing support of Water Polo NSW, and in particular our Competition Co-ordinator Paul Sloan who has done a fantastic job after literally being thrown into the 'deep-end' in September last year, thanks Paul, what a great effort!

Our support from WPNSW will continue next season and of course our long serving Club stalwarts will be around to mentor and support the new blood so please do not hesitate to put your hand up! We will not leave you in the Deep End....

Please read on.....



HIGHLIGHTS

- Despite the pandemic, we enjoyed a great season of water polo!
- What a great couple of nights for the Senior and Junior Grand Finals before Easter, wonderful participation and crowd support - thank you all!! Congratulations to all the winners, see details below and congratulations to all the award winners.
- Thanks again to those who helped out over the season too, always appreciated and essential for the smooth running of the Club.
- Big thanks to all the referees who contributed over the season and did a sterling job with the Finals, thanks also to WPNSW refs, Michael Hart and Bob Smith who officiated at the Seniors Grand Finals.
- And there's a comprehensive report below on training and representation – a great read!
- Finally, special thanks to Paul Sloan, our Competition Co-ordinator, who did a great job in his first season of water polo with our Club, and worked tirelessly at both Senior and Junior Finals to make it all happen! – Paul's report on the season follows below.



SHWP BOYS NSW STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS TEAM 2020



SHWP NSW GIRLS STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS TEAM 2020

WATER POLO NSW SUPPORT

We thank our State body, WPNSW, for their ongoing support of water polo in the Highlands. This has continued over recent years through CEO's David Whittaker, Rick Hooper and most recently Alex Godbold who took on the top job late last year. Support has manifest through various programs backed up by a number of staff from Head Office. Carrying on the diligent work of Danielle Smith last season, Caroline Crayford has been our 'go to' person this year and has provided great support for officials and the administration of our Club. We sincerely thank Caroline, Alex and others for their help!

The most significant contribution of WPNSW has been through our Intern Program which saw Paul Sloan employed as our Competition Co-Ordinator in September last year. We have been given an assurance that this program will continue, along with support through the WPNSW Academy complementing our own training, representative and referee programs.

Competition Co-ordinators (Paul Sloan) Report – 2020/21 Season

The 2020/21 season was one with several highlights, as well as several lowlights. It was a challenging commencement to the season, which took several weeks to get up and running as a season proper. However once teams were sorted out and venues clarified the competitions started to run a lot smoother.

The remainder of the season however did not always run smoothly. Some issues were out of our control (the flooding and subsequent closure of Mittagong Pool necessitating a change of venue for the Junior competition to Bowral Pool mid-season), while others seemed to be a perennial problem (the reliance on the same few people each week to stand up and referee, a problem not only isolated to Water polo). It has been very pleasing to see Craig Ford take on the responsibility of umpire development, bringing juniors up through the refereeing ranks to hopefully take on more senior games in the near future. The support of all players and coaches is paramount to ensuring these junior referees get the opportunity to learn the intricacies of refereeing in a positive environment.

I would like to thank all teams on the season that was played under the difficult circumstances brought on by COVID. Restrictions on venue numbers and social distancing were challenging at times and I thank parents especially for their understanding with these limitations.

To those teams that played in the finals, congratulations on making the semi-finals and finals, and a special mention to those teams that went on, both Junior and Senior, to win their respective competitions.

It would be remiss of me not to mention those people who helped me very closely in the running of the competitions each week. To Alison Coates, Vanessa Puchert and Craig Ford who tirelessly turned up every Tuesday night for the Junior Competition to help set-up, hand out team caps, assist parents on bench duty, and manage referees, thank you. Your professionalism and knowledge went a long way in teaching me about the sport of Water Polo. You will be sorely missed in the work you do behind the scenes in ensuring a smooth-running competition each week.

An additional thanks to Miles Lochhead and Alan Balla for the advice and support in the running of the Senior Competition each week. Your knowledge of the game certainly helped me adjust to the requirements of running a sport competition that was relatively new to me (except when the Aussie women beat the USA in the Gold medal match in the dying seconds at the 2000 Sydney Olympics!!).

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Water Polo and learning so much more about the game itself, as well as an understanding and appreciation of the sport. Thank you to Water Polo NSW, and Southern Highlands Water Polo as a body, for the opportunity to work with such a diverse range of people who have come together under the one banner to play and promote their sport.

I send the new Board best wishes as they start their term with SHWP, and the challenges and opportunities they will face with the upcoming winter and summer seasons.

Paul Sloan

SHWP Competition Coordinator 2020/21

Think – Act – Play

Remember, *“For when the ‘one great scorer’* comes to write against your name, he/she writes not that you won or lost, but how you played the game....”* (*your own interpretation of the ‘one great’ can be used here!).



TRAINING/COACHING

Our most recent Life Member, Jenny Balla, has continued her enthusiastic support for player improvement and representation again this season. Jenny’s comprehensive report below reflects this enthusiasm and provides evidence of tremendous progress in this area. The Club has produced a number of regional, state and national players over the years, we can see there is more to come – thank you Jenny and your team!!

2020-2021 SHWP Coaching and Representative Report – Jenny Balla

The past 12 months has been particularly successful regarding our junior training program and junior representative program.

The attendance at training over the past year has been really encouraging. I would like to continue to work on not only our scheduling to allow for better coach player ratios but also to continue to extend the skill base and positional play of our juniors. With these training sessions also to have parent contributors to not only become more familiar with basic training drills but to also aid in player ‘control’.

I think there is a place for year-round water polo in our community and see that the social aspect of training and scratch games to be beneficial in the sense of learning whilst playing actual games but most importantly in its role in joining our community as a whole and working together to make each other better.

The representative culture in our club is alive and well and can only continue to get stronger and have the Southern Highlands Club become more of a force to be reckoned with in future tournaments. I would like to see an Academy style format where we have players train together from the beginning of the season and trials and selections occur to form the strongest teams for tournaments. This would also enable parents, coaches, and officials a calendar of target tournaments and plans can be made, and fundraising can be organised earlier to cover these.

I would like to say thank you to: -

- Our coaches and managers who communicate to the players and parents, liaise with our uniform manager (thank you Brendan Fannin and Leah Wallace). Thank you Vivienne Krasso, Caroline Mellish, Andrew Leimroth, Ana Cruz, Sarah Lee-Billinghurst and Megan Moore, Alison Oates and Anthony Buckley, Craig Ford, Alan Balla and Mindy Hindmarsh.
- Greg Puchert for being the tech behind the scenes, supporting the organization of our training sessions and the financial wizard behind our representative teams. He was who got all this regular training started.
- Aquabliss Frensham who allow us to utilize their fantastic pool, where the equipment is all there, and it is inside and warm and toasty.
- To the people that are always there to help. From our young players who have a willingness to always pitch in and set up and pack up, parents who are willing to just pitch in with whatever is required. I simply just could not continue to run the training sessions without you. I will not list names for fear of leaving someone out, however, I hope you know that I know who you are, and I am thankful.

Training

For the first time we have offered year-round training, with the exception of our 2020 Covid hiatus, which has been continuously well attended.

During the year we have held weekly training on Wednesday nights and during Summer on Thursday nights due to the growing numbers attending. Craig Ford, Brendan Fannin, Lauren Balla, Jason Nicholas, Sarah Lee-Billinghurst, Craig Moore, Elise Balla, Alan Balla, Mia Corbett and Dave Houghton all lending a hand at various times.

The premise of the training sessions has been about fundamental skills of legwork, agility, passing, shooting, and fouling. Representative teams took their training further as individual teams working on set up play and extra man play. Overall, the skills and fitness have improved considerably along with general knowledge of rules and game requirements.

The attendance to training has been across most teams. The Gib Gate team has attended the training particularly from February 2021 and have had remarkable improvements in the understanding of the game and overall game skills.

Tudor House and a large majority of Oxley teams are still not participating in SHWP training sessions.

Winter 2021 Training

- Term 2 continued with a strong attendance by the U12 contingent. This term had a more social slant with a skill session in the first hour and games in the second hour.
- Term 3 has of course only just started. However, with one training session completed and 40 participants it seems like water polo is in strong junior hands!

Representative Programs

Each gender and age group were represented in multiple tournaments and competitions. Our top players representing born 09-04 had metrics testing results submitted to WPNSW and we have had 8 players selected to attend WPNSW Development selection camps. KAP7 held a skills camp for our representative teams in late March, along with additional training sessions for each of the representative teams prior to their tournaments.

Country Club Championships U14s and U16s – Newcastle

- This season we had 3 full teams and a group of draft players enter the WPNSW Country Club Championships in Newcastle. We had 3 teams qualify for semi-finals with the U14s girls coming away with a Bronze Medal, the U14s boys narrowly defeated to come 4th and the 16s boys also unlucky in their semi to come 4th.
- We had 4 U16s girls represent us in a Barbarians team which was a huge experience for them also.
- Ultimately, it was a positive experience for everyone involved. Fully kitted out in SHWP uniform, parents and players alike had a fantastic time.

NSW U12s Festival – Orange

- In March we headed to Orange with a boy and girls' team. With plenty of enthusiasm the kids played beyond their experience. With enormous improvements had by all over the course of the weekend and a hunger to learn more and train harder evident.
- The girls came away with a victory in their last game.
- We had new parents step up to the roles of managers and coaches, along with Brendan Fannin starting his refereeing journey.
- The positivity in this group of our WP community is fantastic and gives SHWP a strong future.

WPNSW State Festival – Sydney Olympic Park

- In the April School Holidays we sent 3 teams to the Sydney Festival which became a much harder undertaking thanks to the cancellation of the Australian Youth Championships in Brisbane.
- All 3 teams committed to the process of training prior to the tournament, selling raffle tickets and the overall enthusiasm was infectious to all. None of this can happen without the accompanying dedication of the parents. They were willing to help wherever possible with transportation, dress up costumes for the festival – special mention to Sally Terry and Megan Moore who had us looking amazing and I am not sure how we didn't win that prize!
- Week 1 - Under 16s boys play a strong week of water polo that had a total of 20 teams entered. Our boys competing in a seeded style draw giving them extraordinarily strong metropolitan opponents. With a win against Ryde in what was reportedly a nail-biting game, the boys showed the State that we are on the rise and by no means a push over. The boys demonstrated their hard work in swimming training and water polo training over the years had paid off. Unfortunately, due to the style of draw the days ran out and they were unable to see themselves up against other similarly positioned teams in the other groups of the draw. I have no doubt that they would have perhaps had a good chance of sneaking a look into the top 10. Their final position was 16th. Congratulation's boys. I would like to make special mention of Craig Ford who has coached these boys for a few years now and continues to contribute to the club.
- Week 2 - U14s girls' team and the U14 boys team competed in the B division. The boys were truly fortunate to have Scott Nicholson from Kap7 coach our boys after Alan Balla was unable to attend the tournament. Both boys and girls had fantastic tournaments with both teams only losing only one game to then power their way into the Gold (boys) Bronze (girls) medal matches, both coincidentally against Canberra. Each team played valiantly keeping all in the stands on their toes (particularly as the games were played side by side at the same time!) The girls managed to come away with the Bronze and the boys winning Silver, both teams certainly did themselves proud.

ACT Winter Competition

ACT water polo have been offering a 4-weekend competition which could be entered as individual weekends or multiple. We have entered in the two weekends in Term 2 with our top age U12 girls in both and our U14 boys in one weekend. This is a 5-a-side competition but has served to keep these players in the water and continuing to work on improving their game. There are two more weekends available in Term 3. Again, these entries have been completely driven by the players and their parents. Awesome effort by all.

Illawarra Water Polo

- Prior to Junior Country Club Championships, we collaborated with Illawarra Junior Water polo to hold scrimmages and work together to improve skills. I look forward to many more collaborations with Illawarra Water Polo in the senior and junior divisions of our club.
- We have continued to foster our broader local connection with reciprocal invitations of training and lately, although stopped due to COVID, a social 3 game series inspired by State of Origin NRL called Region of Origin.

WPNSW representation

Congratulations to the following players on being selected to attend WPNSW selection camps in the coming months (COVID dependent): Luc Puchert – GK born 04, Sebastian Cruz born 05, Luca de Manincor – GK born 07, Annabelle Bow 07, Sophia Terry 07, Angus Basham – GK born 07, Alex Cruz 07, Oliver Linde 07.

Jenny Balla

Should you wish to learn more, please email us at SHWP@outlook.com, speak to Jenny or contact a [Board Member](#).

FINANCES

Our finances are in great shape despite a very challenging year thanks to COVID. Although posting a loss of ~\$2,000, primarily due to reduced registrations, we have a healthy current balance of \$76,420.56. This balance includes carryover Grant Funds of \$26,000 which will be spent on player recruitment and development in the new season – COVID willing!

Our healthy position also affords the new Board the opportunity to offer fee subsidy as appropriate to ensure there is reduced hardship experienced by our Membership in these difficult times.

We are again indebted to Treasurer Greg Puchert for his thoroughness and dedication in running the finances of the Club and supply of an accurate set of 'books'. Greg is standing down as Treasurer after 3 years of service so we are looking for someone to fill Greg's competent shoes.

Thanks once again Greg, you have done a fantastic job!

SPONSORSHIP AND SUPPORT

Our sponsorship and financial support comes from a range of organisations that are promoted on our [website](#) with supporters logos reproduced below.

We are always looking for additional support so please contact us if you know of any opportunity to assist our Club through financial or service support.



POOLS

Aquabliss continues as our prime venue for competition and training. You would all be aware of the challenges we have faced over recent seasons with council pools. This continued after another serious flooding event at Mittagong in December.

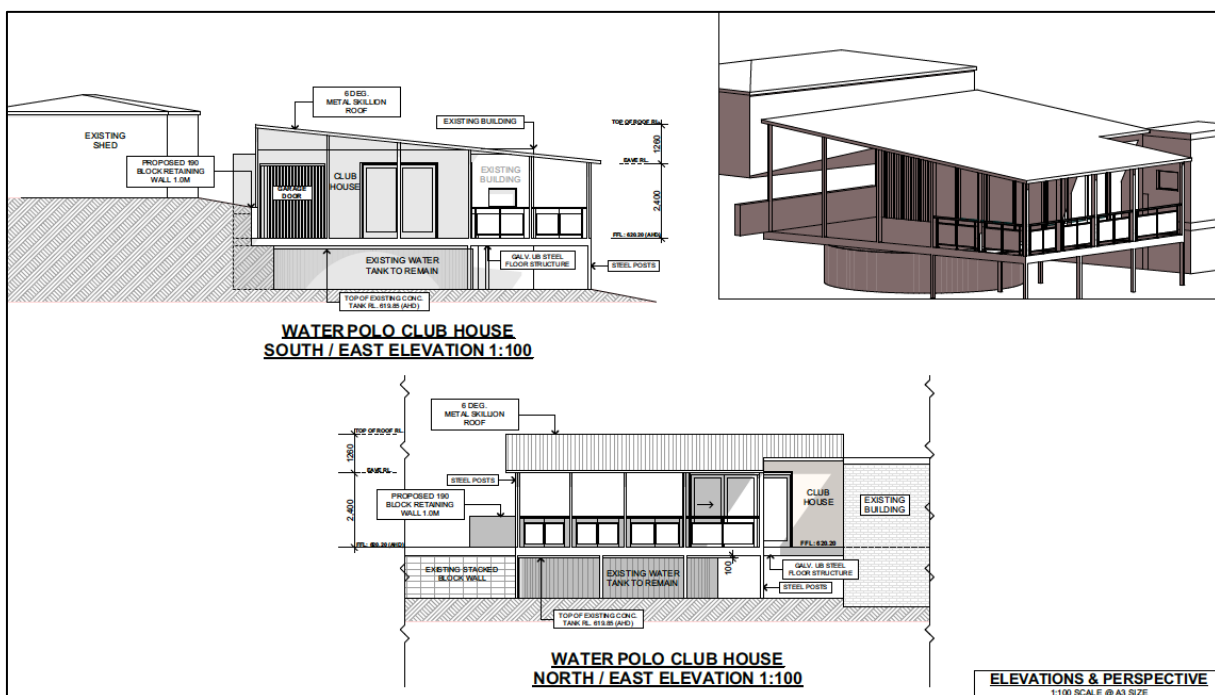
We understand a report is being prepared for the Interim Administrator at Council and the future of outdoor pools will hopefully be clearer once this report is made public. We look forward to continued support from council staff, and the new General Manager who recently commenced duties.

The Clubhouse story from last year is repeated below, nothing much has changed, just the need to have certainty prior to proceeding.



In terms of the Clubhouse (destroyed [along with years or records ☹️] in a vandal fire in 2017), we have been working with Council for 3 years now to replace the facility built by Club Members in the late 1990's. We are very fortunate to have the pro-bono services of local Designer/Builder Paul Samulski of PS Design & Construction to design and cost a concept/plan for the new Clubhouse. We eternally hope to have the work done in time for the new season which will provide a new meeting room, storage and viewing platform for water polo and swimming clubs alike. Thanks Paul!

(Postscript: Report on the Mittagong Pool going to Wingecarribee Shire Council on 28 July – [details here](#))



Plans for new Clubhouse at Mittagong Pool – thanks PS Design & Construction

We have basic funding to support this project, however, are relying on Council and the State Government for the bulk of funds to make it happen – we will keep the water polo community posted with any developments.

MEMBERSHIP

With a further increase in Capitation Fees, which go to our peak bodies WPNSW and Australian Water Polo, combined with uncertainty relevant to the pandemic, we experienced a drop off in registrations this season. Membership stands at 272 with the breakup described below. Again with uncertainty in relation to competition format and start dates, we are unsure of what fees we may face for 2020/21, however, thanks to support from the Commonwealth Bank and other grants, the new Board has the opportunity to consider subsidising registration fees across the board for the upcoming season. The new Board/Committee will deliberate on this and notify the Membership once details are clear.

Our Membership is currently as follows:

Member Type	Numbers
Juniors	169
Seniors	33
Supporters/Life Members	47
Women comp only	0 (not conducted this season)
Total Membership	272 (Note some players compete in both Senior and Junior comps)

Our Members make up teams as follows:

Age/Comp	Teams
U12 – Junior	4
U14 – Junior	4
U16 – Junior	4
B-Grade – Senior	6
A-Grade – Senior	4
TOTAL	22

We have the following Patrons and Life Members:

Year	Status	Name
1990	Life Member	Tony Springett
1990	Life Member	Gary Grant
2000	Life Member	Lyn Douglass
2004	Life Member	Miles Lochhead
2008	Life Member	Dave Chandler
2008	Life Member	Robert Greenwood
2010	Life Member	Ray Smee
2014	Life Member	Carl Phillips
2015	Life Member	Andrew Basaglia
2001-2019	Patron	Ray Smee OAM (deceased)
2001-2021	Patron	Tony Springett OAM
2014-2021	Patron	Carl Phillips
2019	Life Member	Alan Balla
2019	Life Member	Ian Feary
2019	Life Member	Scott McClean
2020	Life Member	Jenny Balla

Again as with all seasons, a number of players competed in multiple teams, often playing twice in one night. This provides opportunity for these players to improve fitness and skills, and enables a greater number of teams in the A&B Grade competitions – thanks goes to these players!

COMPETITIONS

Below is a summary of Competition for 2020-21, full details can be found under [Fixtures and Results](#) on the Website. Our [Revolutionise](#) website system provides an excellent summary of competition and uses a 'Win-Ratio' formula to best analyse results. Win-Ratio calculates the number of points received, out of the number of points possible, and is the basis for ranking the point scores. It is a fair measure, especially if teams do not play an equal number of games.



Finals action

Juniors Competition

Thanks to everyone for an enjoyable season. We again had a few challenges with pool closures and COVID19 but we got on with it and the kids just wanted to play water polo no matter what pool they ended up at.

The Junior Committee would like to thank everyone who lent an extra hand this season. The Committee is comprised of unpaid volunteer parents and we willingly give up our time to help co-ordinate the junior competition as our kids play and we enjoy lending a hand. As this was the last season for the current Junior Committee we have been looking for a new wave of Junior parents to join the Committee to learn the ropes and take over for future seasons, we have had some success on this front but as usual the more hands we have the easier it is for everyone. If you have some spare time and are interested in lending a hand please email SHWP.

Thanks again to everyone for a great season and hope to see you pool side in Term 4 for another fun season of water polo.

Junior Committee

Southern Highlands Water Polo

Junior Competition Results and Awards 2020-21

Junior Water Polo Final Results and Awards

Under 12s

First Place – Gib Gate

Second Place – Tudor Blue

Third Place – Tudor White

Best and Fairest

First	Amelia Blackshaw (Gib Gate)
Second	Joel Sheezel (Oxolotyls)
Third	John-Paul Lemroth (Tudor Blue)

Coaches Awards

Gib Gate	Olivia Cowley	Oxolotyls	Clancy O'Mahoney
Tudor Blue	Willoughby O'Brien	Tudor White	Harry Leahy
Marlins	Isabella Hol		

Under 14s

First Place – Orcas

Second Place – Swordfish

Third Place – Oxley Missiles

Best and Fairest

First	Sophia Terry (Swordfish)
Second	Xanthe MacDonald (Oxley Destroyers)
Third	Oliver Linde (Oxley Missiles)

Coaches Awards

Orcas	Maya Williams	Swordfish	Freya McLoughlin
Oxley Missiles	Oliver Linde	Oxley Torpedoes	Harry Kirsch
Oxley Destroyers	Xanthe MacDonald		

Under 16s

First Place – Mariners

Second Place – Oxley Gold

Third Place – Oxley White

Best and Fairest

First	Sebastian Cruz (Mariners)
Second	Duncan Greig (Oxley Blue)
Third	Tom Milner and Finn O'Mahoney (Oxley White), Sylvie Potgeiter (Green Machine)

Coaches Awards

Mariners	Hannah Hill	Oxley Gold	Chloe Hanrahan
Oxley White	Max Murray	Green Machine	Luca DeManincor
Oxley Blue	Ilana Sheezel		

[See the website Gallery for great pics of Finals action!](#)



Seniors Competition Results and Awards 2020-21

Senior Grand Final Results	
Result / Award	Recipient
B-Grade Runner Up	Hortons Heroes
B-Grade Premiers	Polar Bears
B-Grade Best & Fairest Female	1. Lauren Cameron 2. Mia Sandilands 2. Sophia Terry 2. Claudia Bear
B-Grade Best & Fairest Male	1. Hal Canute 2. Ben Canute - tie 2. Max Davis-Rice - tie 2. Thomas Jennings - tie 2. Sam Cupitt - tie
A-Grade Best & Fairest Female	1. Chelsea Flood 2. Claudia Bear 3. Mia Corbett - tie 3. Michelle Maitz - tie
A-Grade Best & Fairest Male	1. Ben Canute 2. Daniel Barnes 3. Rohan Buckley
A-Grade Runner Up	Sharks
A-Grade Premiers (Ray Smee Memorial Trophy)	Dolphins
Club Person of the Year Junior	Craig Ford
Club Person of the Year Senior	Alan Balla Miles Lochhead (joint award)



B-Grade Premiers – Polar Bears



A-Grade Premiers – Dolphins

WEBSITE/MEDIA

Our [website](#) often goes unnoticed as an excellent source for information, make sure you bookmark it and visit regularly to stay up to date. [Facebook](#) is the 'go-to' place for the latest, make sure you follow us!

We are looking for a social media 'guru' to help get the message out so if you have these skills, get in touch, we may even contribute to your Registration fee!!



Junior Girls showing skills outside the water!

40th YEAR CELEBRATIONS

Well, will we be 45 before we can celebrate?! Our tentative date for this rescheduled celebration is October 9 at the Highlands Golf Club Mittagong, it is anyone's guess as to what will face us in a few months – we will keep you posted!!!

IN CONCLUSION

This final report for me was very pleasing to prepare providing the opportunity to look back over a season that presented many challenges. The development of the report was assisted by enthusiastic contribution in the form of content, thanks to those who helped. I also pass on my very sincere personal appreciation to the Board for working behind the scenes to make it all happen, a great team effort.

Thanks goes to all who contributed to the additional 'machinery' of our Club and have been recognised above, thanks also to those who have not been mentioned, there are many quiet contributors at pool deck and out of sight who go unnoticed – without whom the Club would not succeed.

Best of luck, and a big thank you for their offers of support, to the new Board [Mia Corbett; Scott Basham; Mindy Hindmarsh; Nicole Linde; Adem de Manincor] and Committees [Sarah Lee-Billingsworth (J); Vivienne Krassoi (J); Mindy Hindmarsh (J); Chris Canute (S); Mia Corbett (S)], here's to Water Polo continuing to thrive and grow in the Highlands!

From the Deep End

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Miles", written in a cursive style.

Miles Lochhead
President 2020-21



The crowd roars! (Photo credit: Hamish Tamé)