

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 40th Annual Report of Southern Highlands Water Polo – an extraordinary year for the world, and a different end to our water polo season to say the least.

The 40th year of water polo in the Southern Highlands began as usual in October last year. The competitions were again supported through the Intern Program from Water Polo NSW with Seniors ultimately fielding 4 A-Grade and 6 B-Grade teams and Juniors 26 teams. For the first time in some years the Club trialled a timeslot for females, and more than 20 women participated over the season through an informal game slot each Monday night. Jenny Balla and others made these games fun with coaching and skills assistance.

Competitions continued through to Christmas, and after a short break over the holiday period resumed in January with competitions close and exciting in both the Senior and Junior ranks. Then, the world experienced a crisis unmatched in our time which disrupted societies across the globe, and resulted in our competitions being cancelled on 16 March – an unfortunate end to what was shaping as an exciting conclusion to a great season of water polo.

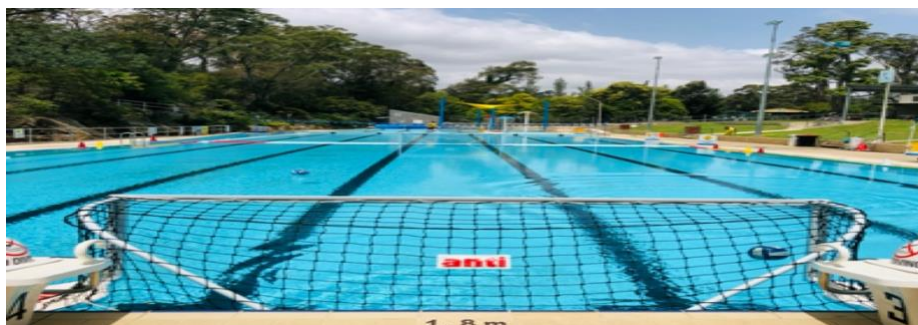
We were to celebrate the 40 years of Highlands water polo landmark in March this year however, COVID restrictions meant this celebration had to be postponed – hopefully we will be able to celebrate before another landmark arrives!

There is great uncertainty as to how our lives will be affected in the short and long term, this uncertainty spreads to community sport and we stay tuned to Sports NSW and the Federal Government advisory bodies to keep up to date with what may be on offer come the new season of water polo – watch this space!

We are fortunate to have continuing support from our peak body, Water Polo NSW in the form of competition assistance. Rick Hooper, WPNSW CEO, will provide an update on this support and a summary of competition options (as we currently understand) at the AGM.

We don't know what is around the corner, however, be assured that SHWP will strive to provide support for appropriate competition, training and development into the future.

Please read on.....



HIGHLIGHTS

We hosted the Water Polo NSW Country Club Championships!

Our Club put in a bid to host these Championships early in 2019 and were notified in November of success! Men's and Women's teams were already in preparation for representative action and knowing that we were hosting the Country Clubs injected an increased level of excitement and commitment amongst representative players. Regular training sessions were held at Aquabliss and Mittagong Pools with good attendance, there was a visible improvement in skills and fitness through this training. Thanks goes to Jenny Balla and Jason Nicholas in particular for their assistance in training and preparing teams for the competition.



SHWP NSW COUNTRY CLUBS CHAMPIONSHIPS
WOMEN'S TEAM 2020



SHWP NSW COUNTRY CLUBS CHAMPIONSHIPS
MEN'S TEAM 2020

Representation did not stop at the Country Championships!

Aside from the Country Championships, SHWP players trained and represented at a range of events over the season including Beach Water Polo. U12's and U14's participated in tournaments and a band of Juniors attended regular training to hone their skill and prepare for competitions and representative opportunities.

Water Polo NSW Intern Program support

This program continued for 2019/20 with Liam Ireland taking over from Stephanie Evans. Liam brought a range of skills to the Club as a result of his playing history (started playing water polo in the Flippaball 'league') and as an Australian Water Polo League (AWL) Referee. We are currently negotiated a 'Service Level Agreement' with WPNSW with a view to enhancing this program.

We thank Liam, Lochie Feary (again), and supporting WPNSW personnel such as Danielle Smith and Glenn Simpson (Pookie, who was a regular assistant at Junior games), for their assistance over the season.

Think – Act – Play

We continue to use the Think-Act-Play (TAP) [Policy](#) over all the competitions. TAP embodies the core values of sport and our game, respecting the components will ensure that our competitions are played in the best of spirit, fairly and for the benefit of all. Remember, "For when the 'one great scorer'* comes to write against you 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 sport will only improve if players commit to a level of fitness, and make an effort to attend training. This season we again held regular training sessions primarily organised by Jenny Balla – we again thank Jenny for her commitment and dedication to the sport and willingness to step up for regular training and coaching activities.

As mentioned before, effective training and coaching relies not only on qualified coaches but also managers and team captains to follow through. Should you wish to learn more, please email us at SWHP@outlook.com, speak to Jenny or contact a [Board Member](#).

Finances

In his second year as Treasurer, we are indebted to Greg Puchert for his thoroughness and dedication in supply of an accurate set of 'books'. I commend Greg's Treasurer's Report as testament to his skills and thank him for standing up again for this job.

Our Club finances have never been better with a closing Retained Surplus of \$60,845 for the year. This result has just been boosted by two Grants totalling \$31k so we are in a very healthy position moving into our next season – mindful that we have commitments in relation to Grants, our current balance as at the AGM is \$78,399. Thanks to Greg, Sarah Lee Billinghamurst and Alan Balla for their assistance in submitting grant applications – they paid off!

Sponsorship and Support

The Club is relatively independent financially and relies on subscriptions to maintain a budget surplus. We regularly reach out through fundraising to bolster funds and support projects.

I would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of Mittagong RSL, BDCU, Kennards Hire, WPNSW, The Australian Sports Foundation for their support in supplying funds to replace equipment burnt in the Mittagong Pool fire, and most recently the Commonwealth Bank for their grant relating to Bushfire Recovery.



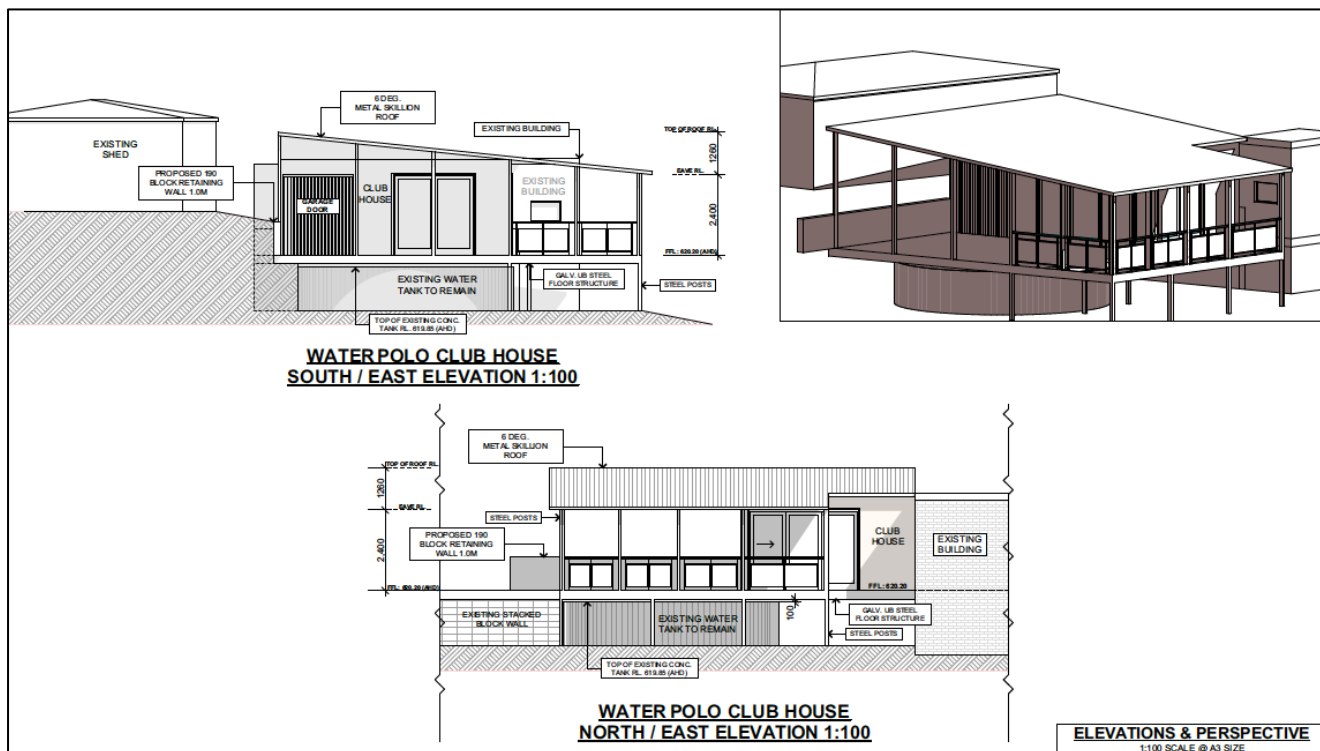
POOLS

You would all be aware of the issues faced at Mittagong Pool which meant we had to continue using the Bowral Pool this season for Juniors. Mittagong reopened in January, just in time for the Country Club Championships, and we were able to finally use our brand new equipment! U14's enjoyed the revamped venue from February onwards whilst Senior, U12 and U16's played at Aquabliss. The pool looks great and so do the new goals! Just imagine how good it will be when we rebuild the Clubhouse.

Aquabliss continues as our primary venue and was looking pristine for the Country Clubs in January. Thanks to management of both Pools over the season for their support and flexibility. Thanks also to the Council for waiving the Mittagong Pool hire fees for the Country Championships weekend. Along with WPNSW, we are negotiating our future use of Aquabliss and Mittagong Pool to enable an expanding competition in the future once COVID settles.



In terms of the Clubhouse (burnt down in a vandal fire in 2017), we have been working with Council for 2 years 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 for the new Clubhouse. We are hoping 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!



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 this happen – we will keep the water polo community posted with any developments.

MEMBERSHIP

With a significant increase in Capitation Fees, which go to our peak bodies WPNSW and Australian Water Polo, we experienced a drop off in registrations this season. Membership stands at 300 with the breakup described below. 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, we will be able to subsidise registration fees across the board for the upcoming season. The new committee will deliberate on this and notify the Membership once details are clear.

Our Membership is currently as follows:

Member Type	Numbers
Juniors	204
Seniors	51
Supporters/Life Members	33
Women comp only	12
Total Membership	300

Our Members make up teams as follows:

Age/Comp	Teams
U12 – Junior	6
U14 – Junior	6
U16 – Junior	4
B-Grade – Senior	6
A-Grade – Senior	4
TOTAL	26

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
2015	Life Member	Andrew Basaglia
2001-2019	Patron	Ray Smee OAM (deceased)
2001--2019	Patron	Tony Springett OAM
2014--2019	Patron	Carl Phillips
2019	Life Member	Alan Balla
2019	Life Member	Ian Feary
2019	Life Member	Scott McClean

Again this season, 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 2019-20, 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.



Juniors

Under 12's

First Place – Marlins

Second Place – Tudor Blue

Third Place – Tudor White

Best and Fairest

First – William Gilbert (Tudor Blue)

Second – Oliver Rowntree (Tudor Red)

Third – Tristan McGorman (Tudor White)
Benji Lee-Billinghurst (Marlins)
Annabel Rowntree (Tudor Blue)

Coaches Awards

Tudor White -	John-Paul Leimroth	Gib Gate -	Hugo Lori
Tudor Red -	Charlie Garnett	Oxolotyls -	Hamish Murray
Tudor Blue -	James Trudgeon	Marlins -	Oscar Kemp

Under 14's

First Place – Swordfish

Second Place – Oxley Destroyers

Third Place – Oxley Cruisers.

Best and Fairest

First – Salvatore Perrotta (Oxley Destroyers)

Second – Annabelle Bow (Oxley Torpedoes)

Third – Oliver Linde (Oxley Cruisers)

Coaches Awards

Oxley Destroyers -	Matteo Perrotta	Oxley Missiles -	Will Thomson
Oxley Cruisers -	Chloe Legg	Orcas -	Maya Williams
Oxley Torpedoes -	Katie Ayling	Swordfish -	Torah Wooderson

Under 16's

First Place – Oxley White

Second Place – Mariners

Third Place - Kingfish

Best and Fairest

First – Dom Uliana (Oxley Blue)

Second – Hal Canute (Oxley White)
Noah Ford (Mariners)

Coaches Awards

Oxley White -	Olivia Bow	Mariners -	Annie White
Oxley Blue -	Duncan Greig	Kingfish -	Lauren Cameron/Xavier Mcloughlin

Juniors Notes

Highlights for training and rep perspectives from past season:

- Strong consistent attendance to junior training through-out the entire season. With up to 30+ kids in attendance. Essential support given by Lauren Balla, Jason Nicholas and Alan Balla in these busy sessions.
- With retention of skills from previous terms training paid off with greater understanding of the rules, greater understanding of fitness involved and therefore higher level of game play in our general competition.
- Five SHWP junior water polo rep teams were formed over the season: Boys U12s in Orange, U14s boys and girls and U16s boys and girls in Wagga. This is the first time we have had representative girls teams in U14s and U16s. Hugely successful weekend in Wagga enjoyed by players and parents alike. See website for a report on this earlier in the season.
- First time the Club has conducted benchmark testing (albeit in limited capacity), with junior players nominated for WPNSW try-outs.



Seniors

We are sure you all would be disappointed that we could not conclude our wonderful season of water polo in the normal way, these are indeed unprecedented times.

As all Competitions were cancelled on 16 March, we followed Water Polo NSW guidance and all Minor Premiers are those teams which were leading the comp ladder at time of cancellation.

Results for Seniors are as below:.

B-Grade

Seniors B-Grade Final point scores: *

1st Horton Heroes – 37 points

2nd Oxley Gold – 35 Points

3rd Polar Bears – 29 points

4th The Smugglers – 26 points

5th Dolphins – 19 points

6th Oxley Blue – 16 points

Therefore, Horton Heroes ended up Minor Premiers for B-Grade with 37 points and Oxley Gold Runners-up on 35 points.

A-Grade

A-Grade Final point scores: *

1st Polar Bears – 33 points

2nd Sharks – 30 points

3rd Dolphins – 26 points

4th Horton Heroes – 24 points

Therefore, Polar Bears ended up Minor Premiers for A-Grade with 33 points and Sharks Runners-up on 30 points.

***Note:** Seniors Total Points include results from the October rounds which do not show in 'Fixtures and Results' on website.

Although we did not get to determine placings in a traditional Finals format, the results reflect performance throughout the season and are a good outcome given these strange circumstances we are all currently experiencing!



RECOGNITION

We could not conclude the season in the normal way and there has been no formal presentations, however, this does not take away from the effort put in by players across the board.

When society returns to some form of normality, there will be a formal presentation, in the meantime, the results of Club Awards are as below:



SENIORS

- B-Grade B&F Male – John Jamieson (Hortons Heroes) ~ Runner-Up Sam Cupitt (Smugglers); Third – Noah Ford
- B-Grade B&F Female – Joint winners! Lauren Cameron (Polar Bears) and Phillipa Kettlewell (Polar Bears) ~ Runner-Up – Alice Hayes
- A-Grade B&F Male – Daniel Barnes (Dolphins) ~ Runner-Up – Ben Canute; Third – Alan Balla
- A-Grade B&F Female – Elise Balla (Sharks/Polar Bears) ~ Runner-Up – Chelsea Flood; Third – Lauren Balla

JUNIORS Best and Fairest posted above



REFEREEING

A big thank you goes out to all those who refereed over the season and to Liam and Pookie from WPNSW for mentoring and coaching the referees. Thanks also to Jason Nicholas Alan Balla, Alison Oates and Vanessa Puchert for setting up rosters contacting refs and contributing to the smooth officiating of games over the season.

COACHING

Jenny Balla again was tremendous in organising and performing training assisted by daughters Elise and Lauren, and husband Alan. There were plans at foot to hold coaching and refereeing support clinics through the WPNSW Technical Academy earlier this year, however, due to COVID intervention this did not occur. Once things return to normal, we will again set up this opportunity for players and referees.

REPRESENTATION

As mentioned in the Report opening, the highlight of the season was our Club hosting the WPNSW Country Club Championships. Although our teams did not feature on the podium, the competition was great for player development, skills improved no end through training in the lead up and the competition itself.

Other representation opportunities were experienced with Juniors as reported above

WATER POLO NSW

The Intern Program continued this season with Liam Ireland taking over from Stephanie Evans as our Competition Co-ordinator. Liam was ably supported by Danielle Smith from WPNSW Head Office and later in the season with the help of Glenn Simpson ('Pookie')!

Moving forward, we are negotiating a 'Service Level Agreement' with WPNSW to enhance the support previously provided which will involve paid personnel for competition, training and coaching, and reduce the burden on Club officials. More on this as the partnership develops.

COVID

The COVID Pandemic has disrupted all of our lives, and community sport has suffered along with many other sectors of our community. WPNSW have a [page](#) dedicated to updating the water polo community on COVID related aspects of our sport, please access this resource as required. Firm advice is not available for dates/activity in the future due to the uncertainty of the unfolding COVID Pandemic. The Club will endeavour to keep Members informed as best as possible with a view to providing safe and appropriate activities for our community sport – stay tuned to our website for updates.

WEBSITE/MEDIA

Thanks again to those who have assisted in keeping our Club and the local community informed of activities throughout the season, in particular media scribe Dave Chandler and social media whizz Gabby Butcher. We can always use help in this area so if you are 'media savvy' contact the Club with any offers of assistance.

40th YEAR CELEBRATIONS

There has been much fanfare over the year getting us all excited about the 40th celebrations! Bookings for our scheduled event were flowing in nicely and then a Pandemic....

Rest assured we will celebrate turning 40, when is another question, again, we will keep you posted.

FINALLY

What a year it has been, many ups, a few downs and a lot of fun. As we move through these uncertain times, we request local community support to ensure that our Club can continue to provide water polo competition and sports development for our current and future members. This will need to be a team effort so please do not hesitate to get in touch should you feel you have something to offer.

Vale Ray Smee. An esteemed Patron of the Club, Ray Smee, passed away in mid-November at the age of 89. Ray was a tremendous supporter of our Club and leaves a tremendous legacy to the sport of water polo and our Club. There is a tribute to Ray on the Club [website](#), rest-in-peace.

After serving the Club for many years I have made the decision to 'hang up my cap'. I look forward to spending more time with my family and 5 grandchildren, and, am committed to a newly formed organisation '[WinZero](#)' which has a mission to assist the local community in its transition to 'net-zero' carbon emissions.

I would like to thank the many club volunteers and officials who have assisted in making this organisation what it is today, and only hope that we emerge from the Pandemic stronger and healthier and that the sport of water polo continues to thrive in our local community.

From the Deep End

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Miles", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Miles Lochhead

President 2019-20

