

**Old Carey Grammarians FC
2014 AGM
Monday 24th November 2014
Bulleen Club Rooms
Presidents Report**

Twelve months ago we were reconciling our relegation to Premier B and the task of finding a new coach and stabilising the club after a tough 2013 season on the back of 3 years in Premier A grade. Needless to say a lot has happened since then and I am delighted to report it was all positive, culminating in a return to Premier A grade together with Uni Blues. Whilst we fell short of winning this season's B grade premiership we thoroughly deserved our runner up status and promotion. It is only the 2nd time in VAFA history that the two relegated teams from A grade were re promoted the following year. The last time that happened was 52 years ago with Old Xavs and Alphington.

I mentioned the appointment of a new coach, after a great deal of discussion where various options were considered including the possibility of having Cam Howat captain/coach we appointed Glenn Cox to the role. Glenn has a rich amateur football history. Having played at Marcellin Old Collegians FC, Glenn was an instrumental part of Marcellin's rise from C grade in 1997 to A grade in 2000 where he won the Woodrow Medal. Glenn was club captain in 2004 and 2005 as well as a VAFA representative. Following his retirement Glenn turned his hand to coaching at Marcellin. Firstly as an assistant in 2007 and 2008 (B grade premiers) then as senior coach in 2009 in A grade before stepping aside due to birth of his first child.

Supporting Glenn would be Justin Seabury (a former Carey student who played with Glenn at Marcellin) and Dave Wright. With the decision to look for a new reserves coach we decided it was time to appoint from within and the universally popular James Wagner took on the role as reserves coach with Nick Thompson his assistant. James and Nick have the mutual respect of the playing group and worked very closely with Glenn, Justin and Dave to transform the culture of the playing group and reignite their passion and belief. Ian England agreed to front up again as our 3rds coach and did a wonderful job ensuring we provided a game of football to as many boys as possible, I believe 75 boys played 3rds football in 2014. Rounding it we were thrilled to resign Michael Tarrant to allow Michael to continue his work with the U19's. Michael was the success story of 2013 and keen to see the hard work in building a healthy U19 program continue. Well supported by Michael Mitchell and Alan Fotheringham, the Unders played finals in 2014 and had a great season with some stand out wins. The support of the school's football program has become a real focus for us and we are starting to see the benefits from the initiatives put in place by Michael and Alan. We must continue to invest in this as the school's Y12 feeder must be strong.

The theme for the playing group was to be *GAINING RESPECT*, most appropriate after the poor 2013. The boys adopted this as their mantra across all teams. Seniors gained the promotion, the 2nds just missed finals but regained a winning belief, the 3rds were one of only two teams in the completion to not forfeit, we missed finals just but played some lionhearted football delivering some well-deserved wins for Ian and his crew. As mentioned above the Unders played finals, providing games for several very handy school boys in the term breaks and had Toby Wooldridge win the VAFA's division's B&F.

Old Carey was again very well represented in the VAFA's rep games. Joel Rice, Tom Roach, Lach McQueen-Miscamble and Ben Smithwick were vital members of the VAFA's win over the EFL in March. Andrew Sloan, still under 19 was rewarded for an outstanding season in the seniors holding down full back with a spot in the VAFA's U19 rep team v Vic country. Cam Howat returned to rep football in June and was a key member of the Big V in its away win over AFL Queensland. And at season's end Ben Smithwick was invited to join the VFL in providing a warm up International Rules games for the touring All Ireland team ahead of its game against the AFL.

Off field we had our challenges, it is a very costly exercise now running a driven football program and as reported in the treasurer's report we failed to produce a surplus this season despite the on field successes. It remains a big challenge funding the program and we become very reliant on the generous support from our key sponsors and wonderful parent group. Cookie was again active and delivered 10 outstanding home lunches. He has an amazing network and was able to pull some big draw card guest speakers to our home lunches, all no charge. These included: Peter Knights, Paul Daffey, Mike Fitzpatrick, Robbie Flower, Rodney Eade, Dipper, Tim Clarke, Greg Hutchison, and Craig Bradley, with Ian Cohen doing several of the interviews. The lunches are a vital part of our success as they provide our supporters and the opposition time to enjoy the some company ahead of the home games. There are not many clubs these days that are committed to putting on weekly home game lunches. Cookie has done a magnificent job and is already planning the 2015 menu!

Our sponsorship subcommittee reviewed our programme and implemented some new strategies to broaden the net. Ben, Wes and Chris signed up:

- John Hands business, Hotel Restaurant Supplies, major sponsor for a 3 year term
- The Geebung
- Lion Nathan
- Bank of Bendigo
- Lakeside Financial Services
- Jellis Craig Glen Iris
- Jeffrey Thomas and Partners
- Patterson Cheney
- Prime Mover
- ROI.com
- As well as the regular Panther Club members

I know I speak on behalf of the players, coaching staff and committee in stating how appreciative we are of the generous support from everyone.

On the social scene we started season off with a Cocktail Season's Launch in March where a fantastic crowd of 200 attended. This allowed us to welcome the new players as well as the parent group with an emphasis on new parents in particular the U19's. The boys held their annual prom night early one in the season and we had a great fun Fashion Parade at the Geebung mid-year with 100 plus attending. The season ended fittingly with our B&F celebration at Fenix with 200 attending including 14 plus U19 parents. Special mention must go to both Ash Smith and Kristen Hancock for the work in getting these functions up and a success. Ash too for her game day arvo teas and Kristen for her mother's day lunch, the ladies were thoroughly entertained by Melbourne FC legend Robbie Flower, sadly Robbie passed away soon after.

Recruiting wise we did well, the highlight being the signing Tom Roach. With a good new influx of players across all teams we had greater depth than 2013 and were able to cover injuries and unavailability well. 44 boys played in the senior team. There were many highlights, the tight tussle at Uni v Blues gave us confidence we could match them if we could sustain the pressure and stick to our game plan. Our home win over SKOB's another highlight however their return win allowed them to leapfrog us into 2nd place and have a 2nd semi crack at Blues. We held off OM's in the 1st semi to catch up with SKOBS for a GF shot and promotion. SKOBS win in R18 really gave Glenn the ammunition to fire up the seniors, come prelim final we controlled the game winning comfortably in the end and promotion to A grade. GF was not our day full praise to Uni Blues, overall though a great season.

Joel Rice was a popular and deserved Seniors B & F winner, whilst Lachie Hall took out the 2nds, Chris Macrow the 3rds and U19 captain, Cam Wallace the Unders award. We recognized life membership for Jack Joslin, James Wagner, Jeff Teele, Alan Harding and Trevor Cleary. There was much celebrating for the 400 game achievement by Kelvin Shrivess,

an amazing record, Shrugger fittingly captained that game as a winner, beating local rival Old Trinity, somehow we were always going to win that game, everyone was up for the game.

The season ended with the announcement of retirements for two very popular players, Mathew "Happy" Laidlaw and Al Stewart-Holmes. These two boys have been great servants of our club, champion players and champion people. Happy could have easily chased the \$ after his AFL career ended, rather he came home and quickly became a roll model to all at the club. Alby celebrated a 200 game milestone this year and playing his best football for some time, holding down a defensive role in the seniors. The boys will be sadly missed and will be hard to cover, I know though they will have left a legacy that will be filled by the younger players as they try to emulate Happy and Alby's passion, commitment and pride in their club.

The two senior teams were again well organised by our mighty Team Managers, David Cordner and Alan Fotheringham, these two did magnificent jobs. Michael Mitchell did likewise with the U19's, whilst Ocka was ably supported by Sam Hassett and Paul Gleddon with Darren Elsner his assistant. The club continued its commitment to provide the playing group with all of its needs (despite the increasing cost of running a driven program). We retained the services of Peak Physio in the form of a dedicated physio to be at training one night a week and attend all senior games on the weekend. Furthermore, we again enlisted the services of new trainers thereby allowing James to focus on managing his team to ensure we would have sufficient coverage at all times. Other items of expenditure included footballs and plenty of consumables.

Special mention must go to our team captains and their leadership groups, Cam Howat was again Club Captain and lead the playing group with great pride and enthusiasm. We welcomed several VFL release players when available and hope to see them all on our list when their time in the VFL has expired.

The club is indebted to the tireless work undertaken by the entire committee, in particular Craig Wallace as Treasurer and the support provided by Sam Hassett as Secretary. Special mention must go to Cookie for his customary home lunches. The same can be said about Rowan Reid, Rob Smithwick and Wayne Parker for their behind the bar support on Thursday nights and home games. Thanks to Nick Thompson as Football Operations, Richard Oppy for general counsel and game day coaching as well as Alan Fotheringham for his excellent work overseeing the U19 program and school relations.

I would also like to acknowledge the outstanding commitment of the club's trainers under the leadership of James Muling, this team did another wonderful job and go about their business with little fuss, the same can be said of John Pompei, our physio.

Carey Grammar School in conjunction with the OCGA, have again been great supporters of the club, both in providing facilities as well as administrative support and understanding. Jim and Erin at Bulleen are always obliging and have made our job all the easier at times.

So in closing I would like to thank you all for the support you have given me. Looking to 2015, there is no off season, we are already in training and have in place plans to ensure we are well prepared for another crack at A grade. We must look beyond surviving, everyone else will be making every effort to improve so too must we.

Season 2015 is not far away and we will have a massive challenge, so stay involved please.



Paul Newton

President, OCGFC