

1974–2024

Jeff McGill


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CAMPBELLTOWN



JEFF McGILL

THE AUTHOR

Jeff McGill is a former editor of the *Campbelltown-Macarthur Advertiser* and has written extensively on the history of his home town. He is a recipient of Campbelltown Council's Heritage Medallion.

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Acknowledgements

JEFF McGILL, AUTHOR

This project was daunting at first because Wests had no dedicated archives section, which meant one had to be *created*. Luckily, that task was aided by a small army of cheerful members, staff, and club pioneers. A huge thanks to all.

Key helpers included Frank Ward, Jim Marsden, Tony and Jackie Norton, Bruce and Tina Melville, Garry Munro, Karen Hansen, Mandy Perrin, and my long-time friend, Christine Vardy-Thomson.

A gem worthy of special mention is Pamela Evans, who provided a bevy of vital photographs and clippings.

Not to mention the seven club directors — Alan Buxton, Paul Lake, Marty Bullock, Steve Noyce, Stephen Stewart, Greg Copeland and elder statesman Roy Warby.

As a newspaper reporter in the 1980s and 1990s, I was lucky to have many conversations about Wests with the late John Marsden and Gordon Fetterplace. Gratitude also to the Local Studies team at Campbelltown Library, and Campbelltown and Airds Historical Society.

Helen Lawson, partner of the late Ray Corkery, and Ray's daughter, Jodie, were both helpful and supportive.

I tip my hat to Rick Wayde, the archivist at Wests Ashfield. The relationship between Ashfield and Campbelltown has often been rocky, but Rick was helpful, candid, witty, and generous with his memories.

Thanks to club CEO Daniel Perkiss, executive assistant Patricia Dielman and all management and staff. Particularly the club's marketing and communications manager Katie Petkovski, who became a fellow researcher, a mini-road trip partner, and also a friend.

Finally, thanks to my wife, Trish, who rides these historic roller coasters with me.

Introduction

ALAN BUXTON, CHAIRPERSON OF WESTS

On behalf of the entire board of directors, it is with great pleasure that I introduce this story of Wests' journey so far.

Our club's vision, 50 years ago, was to nurture rugby league in Macarthur and provide a dedicated space for dining and entertainment. This remains at the heart of what we do today.

Our story began with humble roots — driven by a group of visionaries and supporters, with many highs and lows. In 2024, Wests Group Macarthur is one of the leading club groups in New South Wales.

New heights in membership, staffing, community and sporting support have been reached in recent years, while weathering challenging economic times — and tackling significant venue development projects. Thanks goes to the dedication of the board of directors and outstanding leadership of Chief Executive Officer Daniel Perkiss. None of our success, however, would have been possible without the foundation laid before us by so many people over 50 years.

I extend my deepest gratitude to Jeff McGill for crafting this publication. His expertise and connection to Campbelltown has produced a wonderful summary of our story. I would also like to thank the many contributors (named on the opposite page), especially Jim Marsden who put us on this journey more than 18 months ago.

Heartfelt thanks to our supporters over the years. The members who have chosen Wests in the past, the 88,500 members who choose us today, and the generations of members yet to come. We are honoured to be part of your lives, and *your* stories are the biggest part of ours.

I hope you enjoy this book, and here's to 50 years of shared memories and countless more to come.

Timeline

1908
Origin of Campbelltown Kangaroos

1969
Campbelltown Kangaroos win the Group 6 grand final

1970

1970
Creation of *"Campbelltown City Rugby League Football Club Ltd"* — with the goal of building a local leagues club premises

1971
First AGM

1973
Liquor licence obtained

1974
Our club opens

1980

1981-82
Sports Bar added to club; Campbelltown loses bid to join Sydney rugby league premiership

1983
Newtown Jets seek to take control of our club

1986
Our club goes broke: Wests Ashfield takes charge

1987
Wests Magpies play their first season at Campbelltown

1990

1991
Promised extensions postponed by Ashfield

1994
Launch of "Wests Foundation"

1996
Club regains independence from Wests Ashfield

1997
First major extension of the club

1999
Wests Sports Council formed

2000
Wests Tigers is born

2001
Upstairs auditorium opens

2002
Failed attempt to rename ourselves "Campbelltown Sports Club"

2005
Multi-storey carpark opens

2007
Wests amalgamates with Tennis Club

2008
Bambu extension opens

2012
Wests amalgamates with Lakeside and Camden Valley

2013
Our club leaves Wests Tigers JV

2017
"Wests Group Macarthur" is born

2018
Bambu becomes The Hub

2020-21
COVID-19 lockdowns

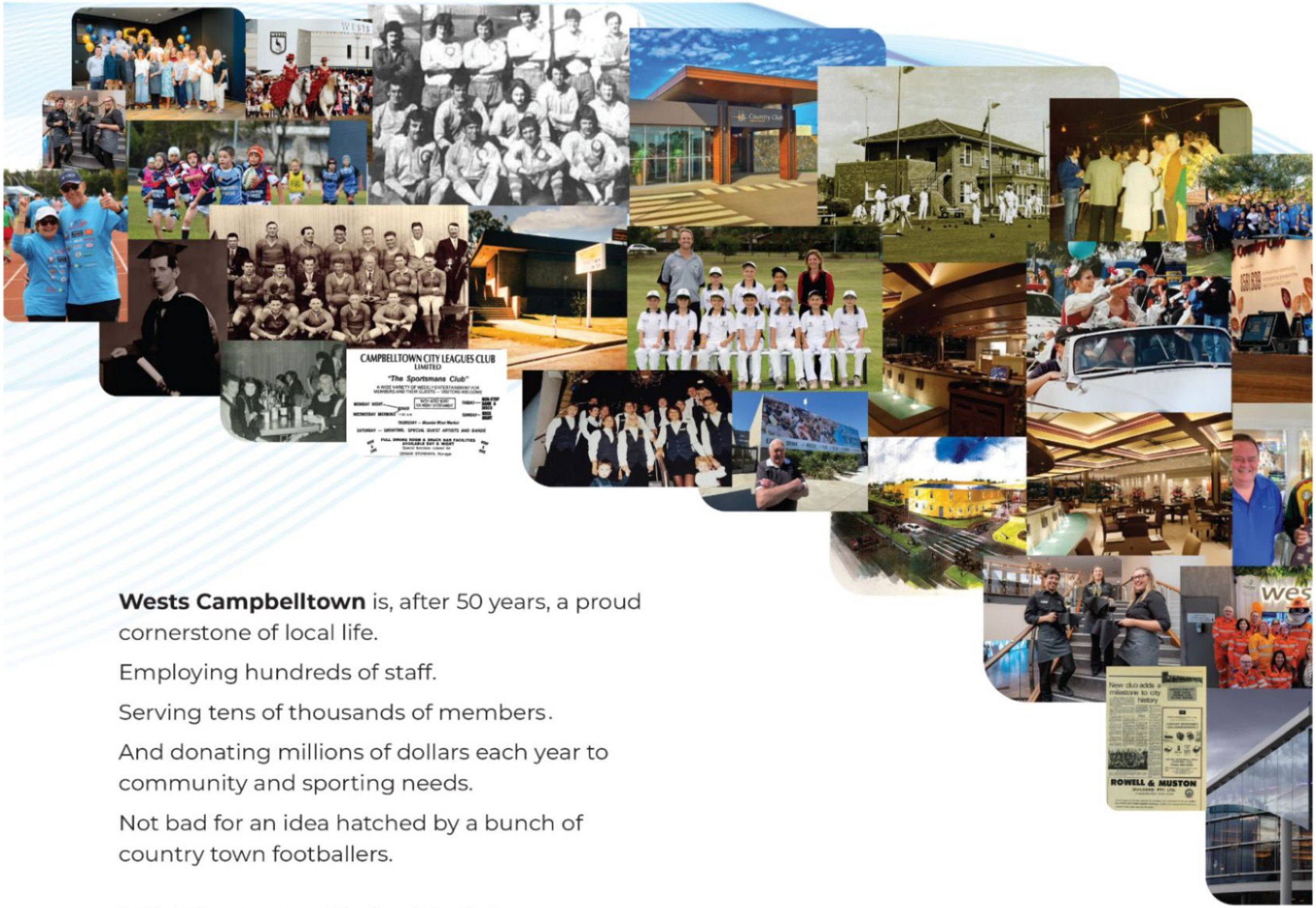
2023
The Sherwood opens

2024
Celebrating 50 years

2000

2010

2020



Wests Campbelltown is, after 50 years, a proud cornerstone of local life.

Employing hundreds of staff.

Serving tens of thousands of members.

And donating millions of dollars each year to community and sporting needs.

Not bad for an idea hatched by a bunch of country town footballers.

Let's take you on a trip back in time . . .


WESTS
SPORTS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD



As we journey back in time, let's start **now** . . . Wests in 2024, our anniversary year. We're a major supporter of our community, but only exist because our community supports us.



The next stop is the same view in **1972** — shortly before our club was built. That white building is the original squash court that occupied the site. But we're going back earlier than that . . . to **1908**.



Campbelltown Kangaroos in the 1920s Some of its early stars included towering dairy farmer Jack Nash *(rear, second from left)* and a former World War I lighthorseman Ted Sedgwick *(seated, holding the ball)*. Ted's brother, F.J. 'Mate' Sedgwick *(rear, fourth from right)* later served as Mayor of Campbelltown in the 1950s and was a special guest at the opening of Campbelltown City Leagues Club in 1974. Holding the flag (at far left) is Albert 'Alf' Duguid, the renowned team coach and administrator.

The Mighty Kangaroos

THE FOUNDATIONAL BEDROCK OF OUR CLUB'S STORY

Although Wests was founded in August 1974, our original name was the "Campbelltown City Rugby League Football Club" — established to support a local football team. So, let's start there . . .

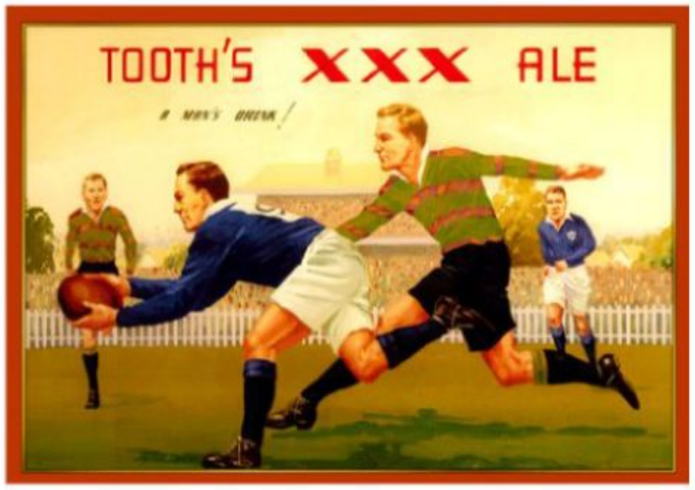
The Campbelltown Kangaroos were as old as rugby league itself in Australia, tracing their origins back to 1908.

By the 1920s, the game had become a crowd-pulling phenomenon. Our boys wore blue and gold bars on their jerseys, and played against other suburban teams from around the Sydney region.

These were games of blood and passion. At one match, against Fairfield in 1931, Campbelltown architect and club official Geoff Gore had to fire a revolver into the air to stop the brawling spectators.

Diggers returning from World War II found comradeship on the football field and, in 1946, Campbelltown was included in a new *rural* competition — Group 6.

That meant playing teams such as the Camden Rams, Picton Magpies, Bowral Blues and Mittagong Lions.



Working man's game Rugby league's fast action, athleticism, and tactical skills were celebrated by hotel artworks across NSW.



Life Member Reuben 'Poppa' Evans was a Kangaroos hard man, helping win grand finals in 1946 and 1949. He later gave decades of service to our club. This wedding snap — with Mary Nott — was taken in 1942 during World War II.



Bonds of brotherhood This 1967 wedding portrait of Kangaroos legend Tony 'Skinny' Norton and Jacqueline Carroll shows them flanked by three of his teammates — Harold Stuart, Ron Streater and Les Bonomini. Norton and Streater would both go on to become foundation directors of our league club in 1974.

We wear the blue and gold
Are we good, are we good,
Are we any bloody good?
We are the boys
from Campbelltown!
Roos, Roos, Roos, Roos.

PART OF THE TEAM SONG



Tony Norton Leading the team onto the ground in the 1960s. He is now a Life Member of Wests and our club's much-loved Sports Ambassador.

The Kangaroos won the inaugural Group 6 grand final in 1946. That same year the Parramatta Eels joined the Sydney competition and signed two Kangaroos — Arthur O'Malis and Dave Munro. The latter scored the Eels' first try!

The home ground of the Kangaroos was Duguid Oval, which stood at the northern end of Queen Street (present-day site of Officeworks and Brands On Sale). It had been named in memory of a legendary Kangaroos coach, Alf Duguid.

Campbelltown did win a second Group 6 premiership in 1949, but then a painful two-decade 'drought' followed as Southern Highlands teams dominated the 1950s and 1960s.

This was despite the efforts of local stars such as Nick Evans, Ron Streater, Ross Chandler and Tony Norton.

But Campbelltown's population was growing rapidly, and its thriving juniors were soon forging a new generation of stars such as Kevin LeJuene, Bruce Melville and Bob Ginnane, to name a few.

There were joyous celebrations on 4 May 1968 as rural Campbelltown was officially declared a city, and the first electric train also arrived from Sydney. But as far as many sports-mad locals were concerned, the true high point came with the 1969 football season, as their beloved Kangaroos cut a swathe through the Group 6 competition.



Kangaroos' home ground
Duguid (pronounced 'do-good') Oval in the 1960s. "Playing on that field was like playing on concrete with grass tufts," recalled local journalist Robert Penfold.





Part of the town fabric
Two photos from the Vardy family album — Kangaroo players parading along Queen Street during a Fisher's Ghost Festival in the 1960s, and a portrait of the Kangaroos Ladies Auxiliary. They are (from left) Joyce Vardy, Isabel Elliot, Marie Maloney, Edna Bellman, Gwen Muggleton and Carol Wating.



Frank Ward A Campbelltown real estate agent who sponsored the Kangaroos and was known for his big heart and deep pockets. Frank would eventually become a foundation director of Wests.

Season of promise

THE SPARK THAT LIT THE FUSE

"If you lived in Campbelltown in 1969 and didn't like football there was something wrong with you," laughed Christine Vardy.

Three generations of her own family had played for the Kangaroos, and the game was followed like a religion by many.

The huge home games at Duguid Oval are still fondly recalled by Robert Penfold (of *National Nine News* fame) who began his media career in Campbelltown. "Some families arrived early on winter's days to park near the sidelines to watch from their cars . . . as long as they didn't mind footballs bouncing off their bonnets."

The football club's most passionate sponsor, real estate agent Frank Ward, was also vice-president and believed the Kangaroos' could win the 1969 Group 6 grand final — if their momentum was better harnessed.

The team needed a playmaker. It found two: John Marsden and Ray Corkery.

> **Most of us had come through the juniors together. You could feel the momentum of 1969, you can remember the talk.**
>
> KANGAROO FRONTROWER
> BRUCE MELVILLE





Christine Vardy *(at right)* She spent her childhood watching Kangaroos games — and also participated in girls' novelty matches.



Christine's parents *(at left)* Joyce Vardy was president of Ladies Auxiliary, while Bill 'Champ' Vardy was a player, coach, and later a foundation director of Wests.



New talent A thriving juniors competition in the 1960s helped draw large crowds to Duguid Oval.

An odd couple

THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF WESTS

Ray Corkery was a tough-as-nails hooker, and knockabout family man, who enjoyed a beer with his mates. John Marsden was a flamboyant lawyer, barely able to kick a ball, whose homosexuality was the worst-kept secret in Campbelltown.

Together, this unlikely duo became the driving force of the Kangaroos in 1969 and, eventually, the founding fathers of Wests Campbelltown.

Marsden, raised in his family's pub (Lack's Hotel), had established a small one-man legal practice behind Warby's Bakery in Queen Street in 1968. His connection to the Kangaroos came via his defence of a few players charged with assault — and he got them off. The Kangaroos were so impressed they elected him president of their football club.

"It was quite entertaining," recalled Robert Penfold, "for these rough and tough footballers to have someone like John, obviously gay, so interested in promoting their game. But, he turned the Kangaroos into a serious, well-managed operation and the players really looked up to him."

Marsden was known for clever publicity stunts, but also attention to detail. The Kangaroos now had finance committees, injury officers, even a public address system for home games.

As much as Marsden added sparkle, the Kangaroos still needed a strong on-field leader. They found 'Corks'.

Ray Corkery was a lionhearted mix of brain and brawn. A man who had tasted big time glory with the St George Dragons, then played in England.

"When Ray came on board he brought a degree of professionalism to Group 6 that lifted everyone," said Frank Ward.



Ray Corkery as a St George Dragons player in 1965 He enforced a strict training regime on the Kangaroos in 1969. "His barking message — 'your brain must beat your body' — still rebounds in my ears," said Bruce Melville.



'ROOS SIGN TOP LEAGUE COACH

In keeping with the new look committee, and new look approach by the Kangaroos Rugby League Football Club, outstanding hooker, Ray Corkery, has been appointed by that club as captain-coach for the 1969 season.

Twenty-five-year-old Corkery, married with a young family, appears to have all the qualifications necessary to steer the 'Roos into one of their best ever seasons.

Whilst in England, Corkery attended the English coaching school, and was successful in obtaining his coaching certificate.

Corkery was introduced

commencing tonight.

President John Marsden also revealed at last week's meeting that there are several new faces in the town all of whom indicated their intentions of stripping with the 'Roos this season, and with the return of Kevin Le Jeune from Vietnam, the team begins to take a formidable look.

Mr. Marsden's address to the players on behalf of the committee was encouraging and he indicated that the club was determined to win

pointed an injury officer, a club house officer and a finance committee which comprises P. Williamson, the manager of the E.S. & A. Bank at Campbelltown, Mr. C. Gal, the accountant at the same bank, and Mr. R. Chandler, the accountaant of this bank at the Bankstown branch.

The writer feels that the Club is to be congratulated on the manner in which they are approaching the coming season and the long range tip, here and now, is

Deal done Corkery and Marsden strike a pose for the press in February 1969.



I defended a group of young footballers charged with assault and they were found not guilty. After that, those footballers thought I was God and wanted me to be the president of their club.

JOHN MARSDEN

John Marsden in 1966 Visionary, egotist, maverick, gossip, vicious enemy, loyal friend, and forever proud of his home town: *"There are only two great cities in the world — Rome and Campbellown."*



Lacks Hotel in Queen Street This pub, bulldozed in 1984, was originally owned by Marsden's grandfather, Herb Lack, then his parents, Guy and Tibby Marsden. It was a watering hole to many generations of Kangaroos players.

1969 grand final

WILD CELEBRATIONS UNITE CAMPBELLTOWN

What a season! Record wins. Record crowds. Fullback Kevin LeJuene was even back from serving in the Vietnam War.

Of the 479 points scored that year, a third were from the boot of goal-kicker Ron Girrard. Halfback Roy Warby — named 1969's best and fairest — played so well he was signed by the Parramatta Eels.

But despite all that success, the Bowral Blues were still the favourites to win the grand final on 21 September 1969.


GROUP SIX
COUNTRY RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE

GROUP 6

1969 COMPETITION

GRAND FINALS

MITTAGONG SPORTGROUND

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1969

ADMISSION: 40 CENTS

12 noon: Under 18 Grand Final
THE OAKS v CAMPBELLTOWN RSL

1.20 p.m.: Reserve Grade Grand Final
MITTAGONG v CAMPBELLTOWN 'K'

3.00 p.m.: First Grade Grand Final
BOWRAL v CAMPBELLTOWN

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Surviving programme From the 1969 grand final.

Bowral had easily defeated Campbelltown in the semi-finals, and were feeling confident. *Too confident.*

The tone that day was set by a Kangaroos' reserve grade team, led by Tony Norton, which scored a thumping victory over their own rivals, the Mittagong Lions.

When Ray Corkery led his first grade team onto the field, the press hailed it as one of the best displays of rural football ever seen. Bowral was thrashed 22–7.

The celebrations back in Campbelltown were long and arduous, recalled Bruce Melville. "A giant conga line brought the town to a standstill. It went through Carolyn's Dress Shop, where we picked up girls to join us, then up and down Queen Street. Police closed the revelries down at 7pm; the beer was running from Lack's Hotel out into the street." Big crowds later packed Campbelltown Civic Hall for a Victory Ball with blazers and trophies.

The Kangaroos were poised for a decade of unbeatable greatness — so Group 6 evened things out more. Three teams from Campbelltown, not one, would be competing in the 1970 season!


Battered and bloody, Campbelltown Kangaroos first grade coach, hooker Ray Corkery accepts the first grade premiers cup from Australian coach Harry Bath following their slashing win over Bowral in the Group Six grand final last Sunday.

Bloodied warrior chief Ray Corkery receives the Group 6 grand final trophy from national coach Harry Bath. Corkery was widely praised in the press for creating "a tightly knit bunch of team mates, eager and confident."



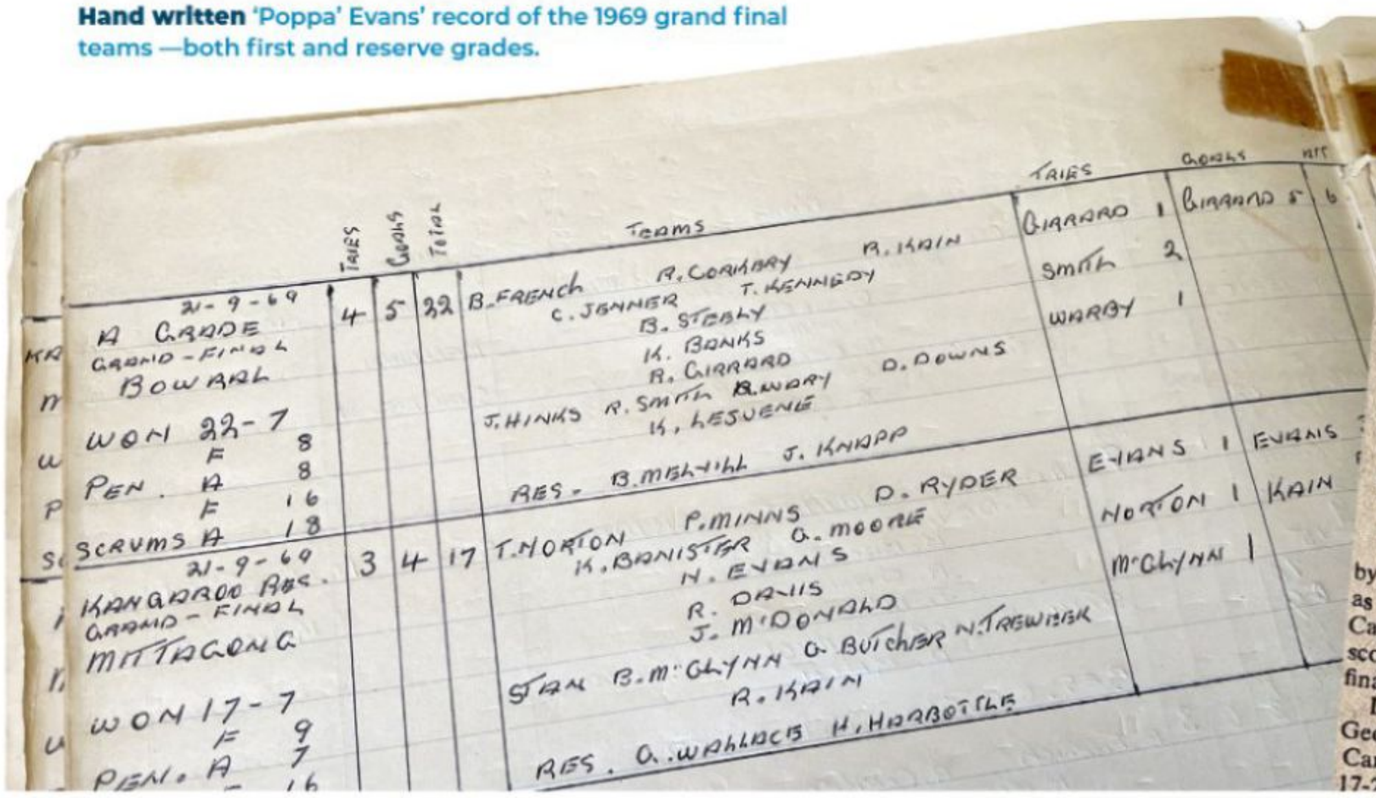
The first grade team of 1969

(back) Kevin LeJuene, Bruce Steeley, Bob French, John Knapp, Ron Girrard and Bruce Melville, with the team manager Jack Muggleton;

(centre) Col Jenner, Rod Smith, Ray Corkery and Dick Downes.

(front) Roy Warby, Jan Hincks, ball boy Neil Kain, Nick Evans and Ron Kain.

Hand written 'Poppa' Evans' record of the 1969 grand final teams —both first and reserve grades.



	Tries	Goals	Total	Teams
21-9-69 A GRADE GRAND-FINAL BOWRAL WON 22-7 PEN. F 8 A 8 SCRUMS F 16 A 18	4	5	22	B. FRENCH R. CORKERY B. KAIN C. JENNER T. KENNEDY B. STEELY K. BANKS R. GIRRARD J. HINKS R. SMITH R. WARBY D. DOWNS K. LEJUENE RES - B. MELVILL J. KNAPP
21-9-69 KANGAROO REC. GRAND-FINAL MITTAGONG WON 17-7 PEN. F 9 A 7	3	4	17	T. NORTON P. MINNS D. RYDER K. BANISTER G. MOORE N. EVANS R. DAVIS J. M'DONALD STAN B. M'GLYNN G. BUTCHER N. TREWICK R. KAIN RES. G. WALLACE H. HARBOTTLE

Tries		Goals	
Girrard	1	Girrard	5
Smith	2		
Warby	1		
Evans	1	Evans	
Norton	1	Kain	
M'Glynn	1		

Headliners Sydney's newspapers took note of our success, this article from *The Sun*, 22 September 1969.

Campbelltown team springs a giant upset

By GEOFF PRENTER

CAMPBELLTOWN Rugby League men won their first Group Six premiership in 20 years when they thrashed defending champions Bowral 22-7 at Mittagong yesterday.

They did a "Balmain" by springing a giant upset as Bowral had beaten Campbelltown by a cricket score in the second semi-final two weeks ago.

Led by former St. George hooker Ray Corkery Campbelltown raced to a 17-2 lead ... sides endeavoured to move the ball as quickly as possible to the wings.

Locals must have sensed the Towns were going to "turn it on."

More than 3,000 fans were at the Mittagong Oval ...

An idea is hatched

IMAGINING A LOCAL LEAGUES CLUB

The two new Campbelltown teams were the Warriors and Collegians. Their arrival split the local football fan base into three — not everyone would be barracking for the Kangaroos anymore.

There was another concern . . .

Campbelltown RSL Club backed the Warriors, while Campbelltown Catholic Club backed the Collegians, meaning the two new teams were both funded by beer and pokie profits. Yet the Kangaroos had to rely on gate takings and sponsors. So, an idea was hatched to create a leagues club for the original team.

The credit for that usually goes to the Juniors committee: Bill Vardy, Lou Bonomini, Lance Wooton, Peter Fletcher, Earl Reeves, Lloyd Robertson and Frank Moore, among others. But John Marsden, as Kangaroos president, took the bull by the horns, with the support of former players such as Ross Chandler and Ron Streater.

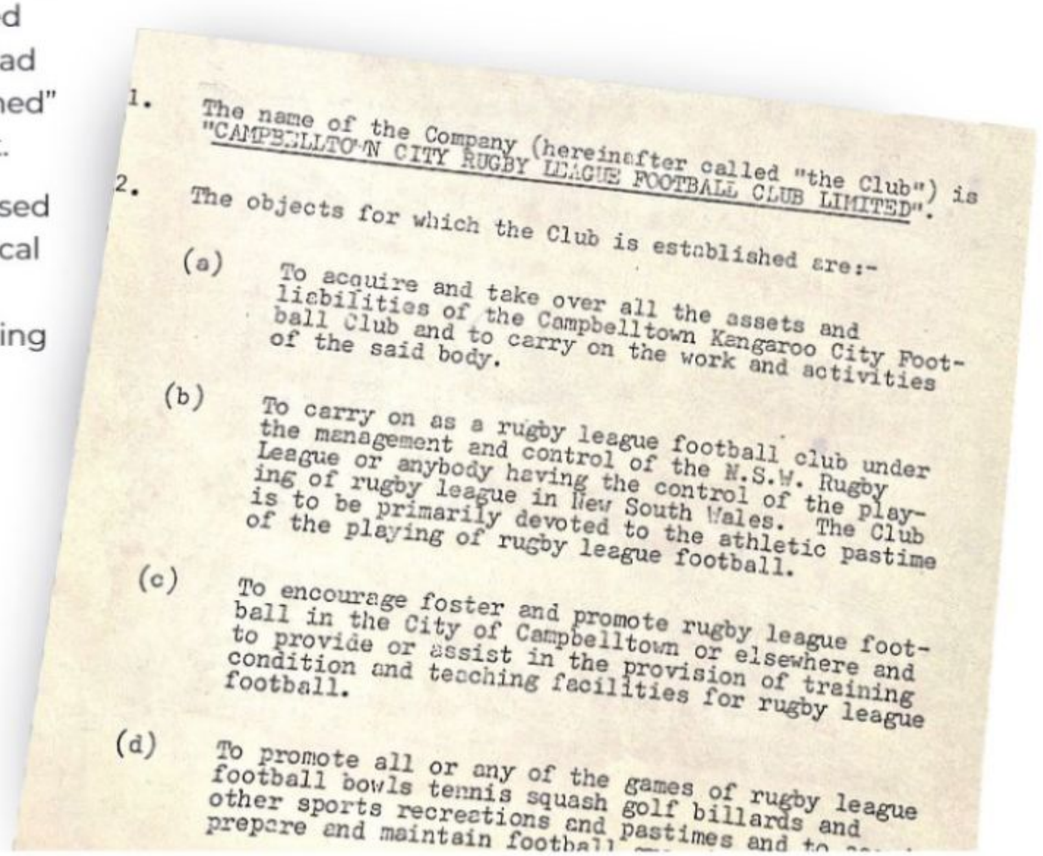
The first step was turning the Kangaroos into a company.

A "*Memorandum and Articles of Association*" (drawn up by a Bankstown solicitor J.P. O'Neill) was submitted to Campbelltown Council for scrutiny in September 1970. Most councillors were supportive, but there were some voices of criticism. That angered Frank Ward, who claimed that jealous rival clubs had deliberately "bad-mouthed" the proposal to scuttle it.

Marsden insisted a licensed club would help get a local team into the Sydney premiership — something for everyone.



St George Leagues Club Working-class palaces such as this sprung up across Sydney after poker machines had been made legal in the 1950s. The Dragons' club grew so large it was nicknamed "the Taj Mahal".



1. The name of the Company (hereinafter called "the Club") is "CAMPBELLTOWN CITY RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB LIMITED".

2. The objects for which the Club is established are:-

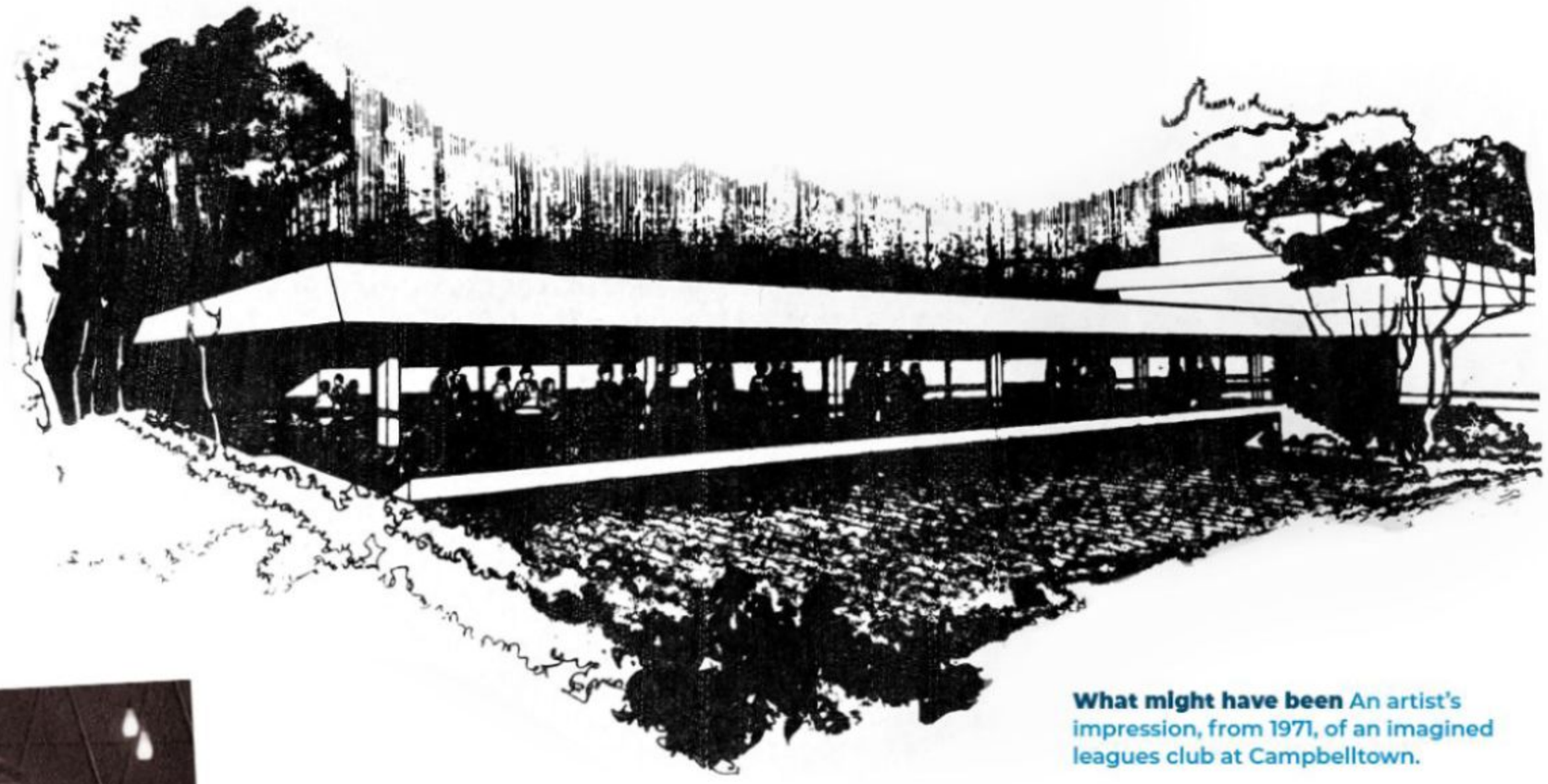
(a) To acquire and take over all the assets and liabilities of the Campbelltown Kangaroo City Football Club and to carry on the work and activities of the said body.

(b) To carry on as a rugby league football club under the management and control of the N.S.W. Rugby League or anybody having the control of the playing of rugby league in New South Wales. The Club is to be primarily devoted to the athletic pastime of the playing of rugby league football.

(c) To encourage foster and promote rugby league football in the City of Campbelltown or elsewhere and to provide or assist in the provision of training condition and teaching facilities for rugby league football.

(d) To promote all or any of the games of rugby league football bowls tennis squash golf billards and other sports recreations and pastimes and to prepare and maintain footbal

Typewritten 'Memorandum" from 1970 Outling our objectives. The first Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in 1971.



What might have been An artist's impression, from 1971, of an imagined leagues club at Campbelltown.



A young Gordon Fetterplace Pictured with wife, Barbara, was among the Campbelltown councillors who supported our club's creation in 1970 — despite the fact he was a Collegians supporter! Decades later, Gordon became a giant personality of Wests.

Council approved the project and the "Campbelltown City Rugby League Football Club Ltd" was officially registered on 12 November 1970.

Its original nine directors were Marsden, Ward and Corkery, as well as Kangaroos identities Tony Norton, Ted Foley, Bill Vardy, Ron Streater, Earl Reeves and Lawrence Yared. Two other directors to serve in those early days were Jack Muggleton and Lloyd Robertson.

To start the ball rolling, a temporary (unlicensed) club house was created for the Kangaroos at Waratah Hall. "This was an old white house on the corner of Menangle and Camden roads," recalled Tony Norton, "near where the railway level crossing used to be.

"We'd meet, sign the membership book, play table tennis or cards, have a cup of coffee, or whatever. We did that for years."

By 1972, club membership stood at 400. A special artist's impression was created to show members what an imagined club might one day look like — but where would they build it?

Orana Park

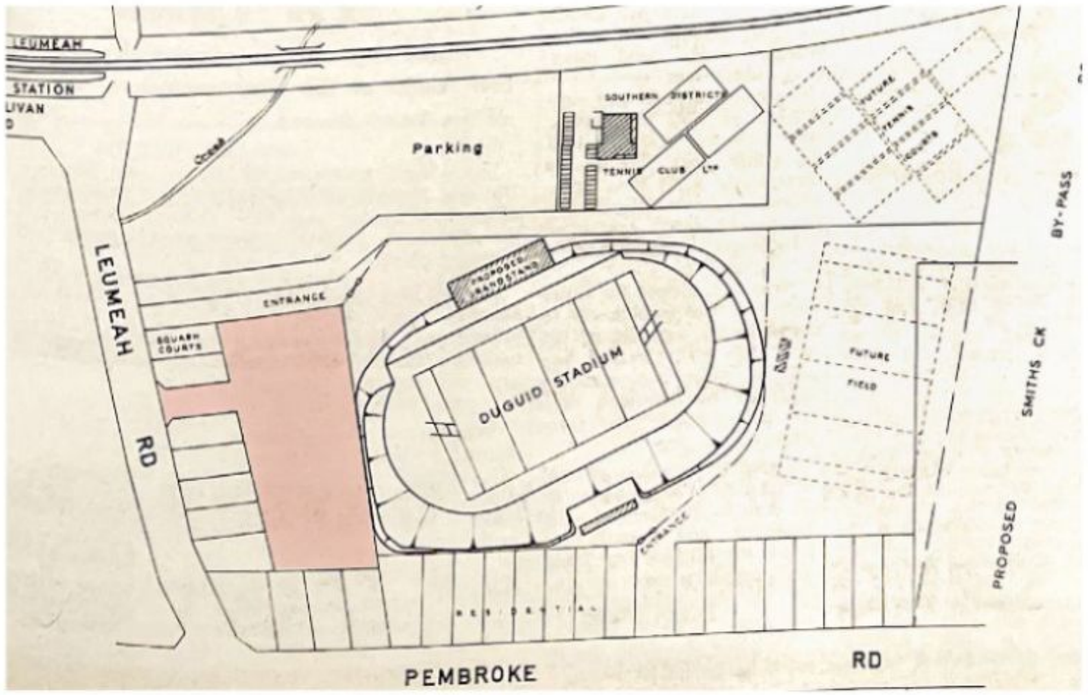
A SITE FOR OUR CLUB IS FOUND IN LEUMEAH

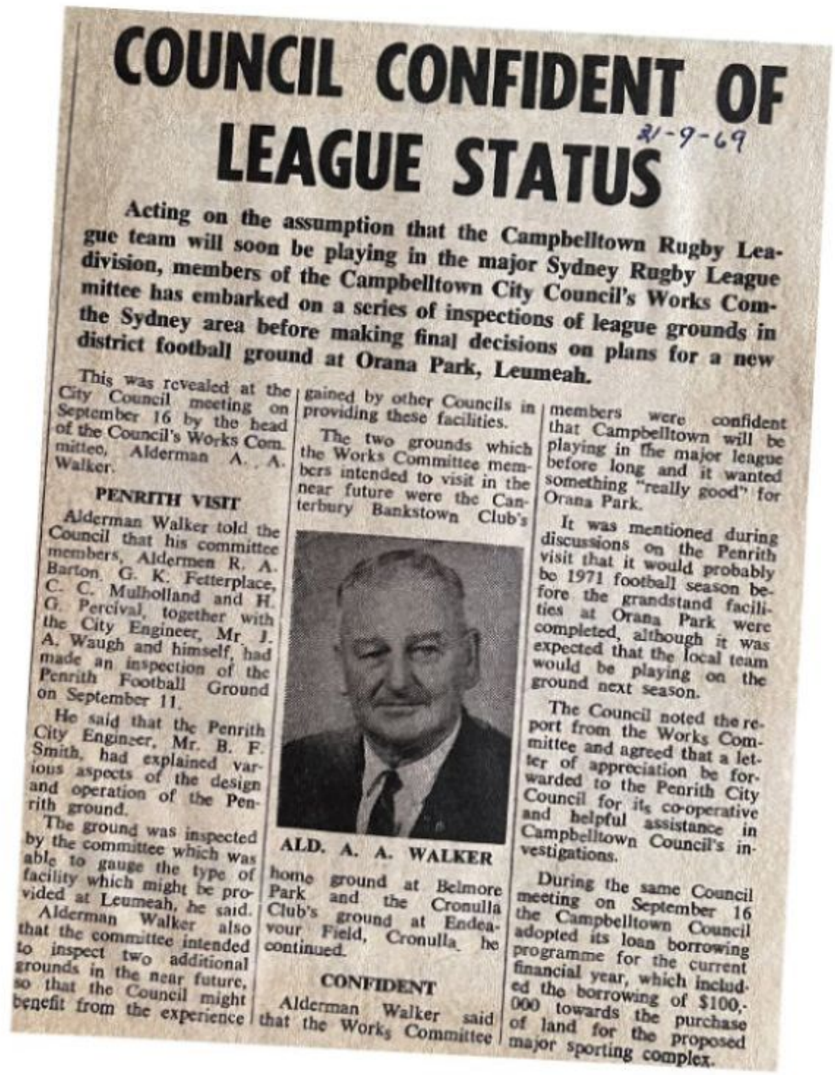
The Kangaroos lost their home ground in 1970 because Campbelltown Council had sold Duguid Oval to be developed into a car sales centre (Rod Lawrence Ford).

Their new home ground was Orana Park. Just a rough paddock next to Leumeah station, but about to be transformed into a proper football stadium — "the equal to Penrith Park or Endeavour Field".

Those two locations mattered because Penrith Panthers and Cronulla Sharks had been the last two teams admitted to the Sydney competition (in 1967). Campbelltown was expected to be next.

When the new stadium opened on 28 March 1971, a guest was Eileen Duguid because the new ground's name would continue to honour her husband.





COUNCIL CONFIDENT OF LEAGUE STATUS

21-9-69

Acting on the assumption that the Campbelltown Rugby League team will soon be playing in the major Sydney Rugby League division, members of the Campbelltown City Council's Works Committee has embarked on a series of inspections of league grounds in the Sydney area before making final decisions on plans for a new district football ground at Orana Park, Leumeah.

This was revealed at the City Council meeting on September 16 by the head of the Council's Works Committee, Alderman A. A. Walker.

PENRITH VISIT

Alderman Walker told the Council that his committee members, Aldermen R. A. Barton, G. K. Fetterplace, C. C. Mulholland and H. G. Percival, together with the City Engineer, Mr. J. A. Waugh and himself, had made an inspection of the Penrith Football Ground on September 11.

He said that the Penrith City Engineer, Mr. B. F. Smith, had explained various aspects of the design and operation of the Penrith ground.

The ground was inspected by the committee which was able to gauge the type of facility which might be provided at Leumeah, he said.

Alderman Walker also that the committee intended to inspect two additional grounds in the near future, so that the Council might benefit from the experience gained by other Councils in providing these facilities.

The two grounds which the Works Committee members intended to visit in the near future were the Canterbury Bankstown Club's

ALD. A. A. WALKER

home ground at Belmore Park and the Cronulla Club's ground at Endeavour Field, Cronulla, he continued.

CONFIDENT

Alderman Walker said that the Works Committee members were confident that Campbelltown will be playing in the major league before long and it wanted something "really good" for Orana Park.

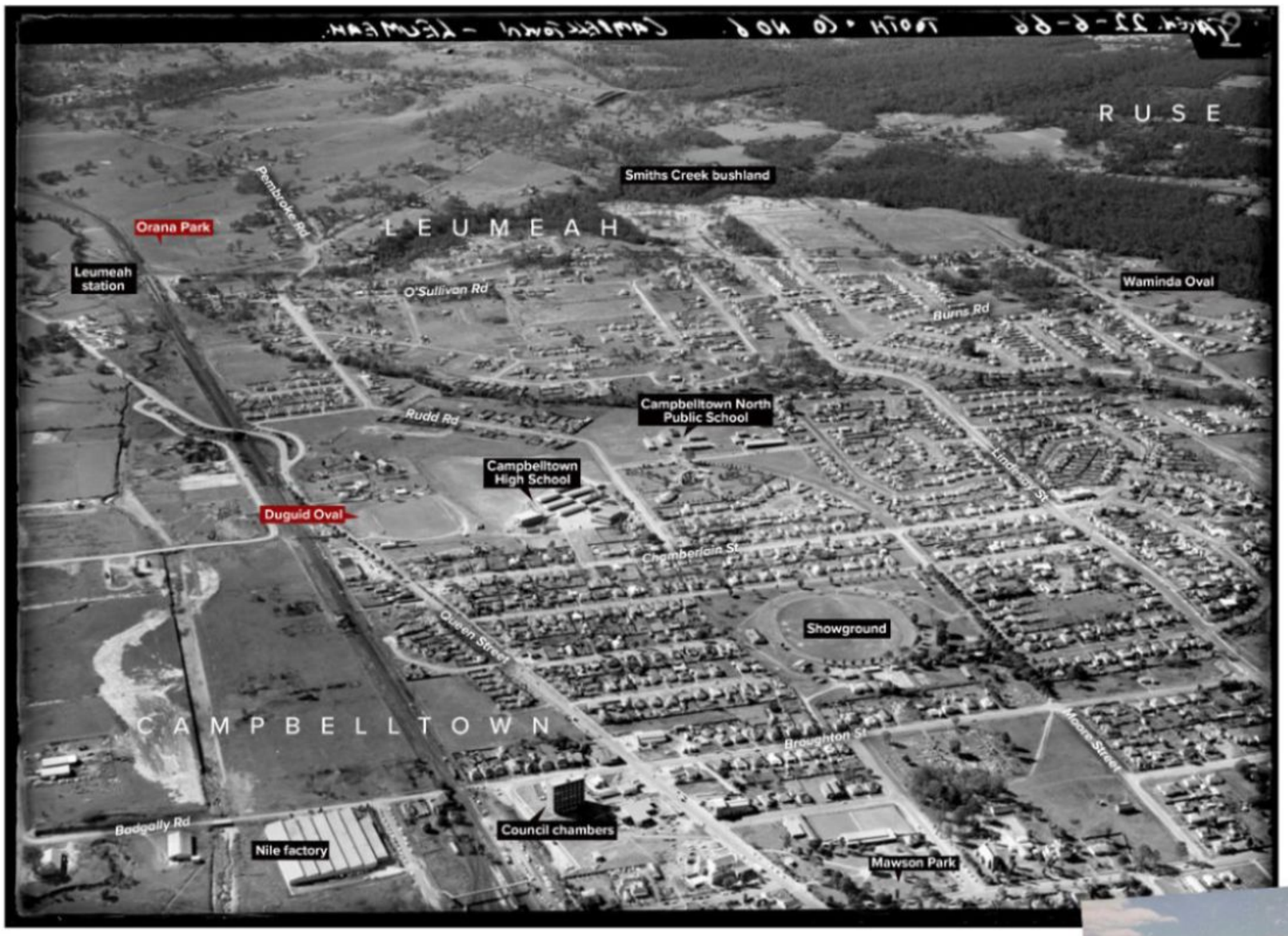
It was mentioned during discussions on the Penrith visit that it would probably be 1971 football season before the grandstand facilities at Orana Park were completed, although it was expected that the local team would be playing on the ground next season.

The Council noted the report from the Works Committee and agreed that a letter of appreciation be forwarded to the Penrith City Council for its co-operative and helpful assistance in Campbelltown Council's investigations.

During the same Council meeting on September 16 the Campbelltown Council adopted its loan borrowing programme for the current financial year, which included the borrowing of $100,000 towards the purchase of land for the proposed major sporting complex.

High hopes A 1969 newspaper clipping, kept by 'Poppa' Evans, predicting Campbelltown's future participation in the Sydney Premiership.

Map of Orana Park in 1971 The future leagues club site is marked in red. The spot described as "future field" is now Campbelltown Athletics Stadium, and the "Proposed Smiths Creek Bypass" is today's Rose Payten Drive.



Aerial view of Campbelltown
This image from the late 1960s shows where the original Duguid Oval was located on Queen Street. Also the new Orana Park site, further up the railway line at Leumeah.
The Kangaroos' rival teams were based at Bradbury Oval (the Collegians) and Ruse's Worrell Park (the Warriors).
State Library of NSW

Officially, at least. Few Campbelltonians could remember Alf Duguid, who died in 1942, so most football fans simply referred to the stadium as "Orana Park".

The playing surface was drained and turfed, but construction of a grandstand was deemed too expensive.

Orana Park nonetheless became a local sporting hub. Campbelltown Amateur Athletics used it in summer, tennis courts were built next door, and a squash court had opened at the stadium's entrance.

Orana Park was also the perfect place for the Kangaroos' proposed leagues club.



Orana Park Campbelltown Council couldn't afford a grandstand yet, but it did create "the hill" — a grassy bank to hold thousands of spectators.

> **[Mike Semchyshyn] has done more for the club than anyone else.**
>
> JOHN MARSDEN



Historic moment
Frank Moore and Mike Semchyshyn erecting the "notice of Intention to Build" on the club site in 1973 (with the white squash court seen at rear).

Semchyshyn, swinging the hammer, was a Canadian-born engineer who had worked on the Snowy Mountains Scheme before arriving in Campbelltown.

Land…and a licence

MIKE SEMCHYSHYN STAKES OUR CLAIM

Club secretary Mike Semchyshyn hammered in a "Notice of Intention to Build", next to Orana Park, on 11 October 1973. This simple moment was the result of three years of hard slog.

"In 1970, we'd approached Campbelltown Council with our proposal to buy the land next to the oval," recalled Frank Ward. Almost two acres costing $12,000.

Town Clerk Harley Daley and Councillor Arch Walker were key allies in getting that land sale approved. "It was a good deal for both sides," said Ward, "but the hardest job was getting a liquor licence."

That fight began in June 1971 and lasted longer than anyone expected. "Efforts through the courts have taken their toll and tired the board members," John Marsden wrote in a newsletter.

The legal struggle also pitted members of the Marsden family against each other. The licence application had met strong resistance from the Australian Hotels Association (NSW) — led by Guy Marsden.

"Lack's Hotel had long been the Kangaroos' drinking hole," explained Bruce Melville. "So things, I think, got pretty icy given that Guy's own son, John, was leading the leagues club push."

The Kangaroos failed in their application to the Metropolitan Licensing Court — but won on appeal. Permission was finally granted on 27 July 1973.

Paul Lake, a long-time director of our club and also a Mayor of Campbelltown, described Mike Semchyshyn as the true hero of our story. "Without Mike's long hours getting us that licence, there wouldn't be a Wests here today," Lake said. "It's simple as that."



Harley Daley Campbelltown's Town Clerk was a staunch Kangaroos man and encouraged the land sale — but warned that the deal was off if a liquor licence was not obtained.



Our empty block Note, at rear, the homes that once lined Pembroke Road.

Acknowledging Country

THE EARLY HISTORY OF OUR CLUB SITE

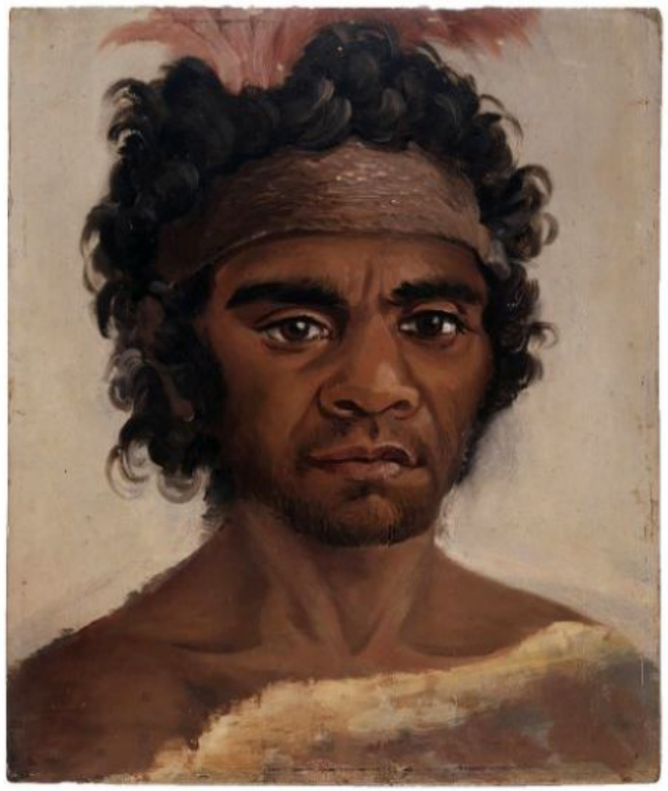
Wests stands on Dharawal land. For countless generations local clans had hunted game along the creek.

Then redcoats arrived with muskets in the early 1800s, European land grants replaced ancient hunting grounds, and the Indigenous custodians began to be described as “trespassers”.

The spot Wests now stands on was a land grant to William Kitson, a former convict who was transported on the *Royal Admiral* in 1792. But Kitson soon sold his land, with other farming families growing crops here in subsequent decades.

The railway came in 1858, but a local platform for farmers was not erected until 1887. It was named ‘Leumeah’ (after the largest of the nearby farms, originally granted to John Warby.)

Housing estates arrived in the 1950s and 1960s. Leumeah Progress Association asked Campbelltown Council to provide a public sportsground. The 12 acres acquired was named Orana Park — an Aboriginal word for “welcome”.



Traditional custodians An unidentified Indigenous man of the 1810s *(State Library of NSW)*. Pioneer John Warby was known for building close friendships with the Dharawal people and named his farm *Leumeah* — meaning “here I rest”.

The paddocks of Leumeah As they looked in the farming days. This Bentley family photograph is from the 1920s, long before the arrival of suburbia.





The land grants of present-day Leumeah As shown on the St Peter parish map (Campbelltown), held by NSW Land Registry Services. The grant given to William Kitson — the site of Wests — is marked here in red. The grant immediately to his south was given to Jeremiah Smith, who was perhaps the namesake of Smiths Creek (which seperated their farms). John Warby's farm was one of the larger grants.





What did the original landscape of our club site look like? Impossible to say, given it was cleared centuries ago. These photos — snapped by the author a few hundred metres up Smiths Creek — might offer a rough idea. It was likely a rocky bushland of ironbarks, grey gums, and ferns.

Working bees

CLUB VOLUNTEERS ROLL UP THEIR SLEEVES

Meetings were underway with the architect, Mr Bloomfield, and the builders, Rowell & Muston of Blaxland Road. "Jack Rowell also built Manly-Warringah Leagues Club," said Bruce Melville.

To keep costs down, members volunteered as labourers, digging ditches and other chores. This "Grounds Committee" under Jack Muggleton won high praise from the football team's captain-coach Ray Corkery, as chairman of the building sub-committee.

The camaraderie of those working bees is fondly recalled by Tony Norton. "Everyone used whatever skills they had," he said. "John McDonald was a surveyor, Mike Semchyshyn was an engineer, Roy Braid was a carpenter, and so on."

In 1972, it was estimated building work would cost $140,000 (with an extra $8,500 needed for a 56-space car park). But skyrocketing inflation meant the final figure in 1974 was closer to $500,000.

Ron Streater, as chairman of the finance sub-committee, led loan negotiations with the banks. The club also got a $60,000 loan from Campbelltown Council.







All hands on deck Working bees on the site in 1972-73. That's John McDonald surveying *(above)* and Mike Semchyshyn *(at left)*. Tony Norton can be seen manning the barbecue *(at top)*.



Orana Park gathering The sizzle of sausages was the soundtrack to early club social life. Barbecues were held not just for thanking volunteer workers — this shot was taken at a juniors match in 1972.

Arrested over prawns

OUR FUNDRAISERS WERE NOT ALWAYS SMOOTH SAILING



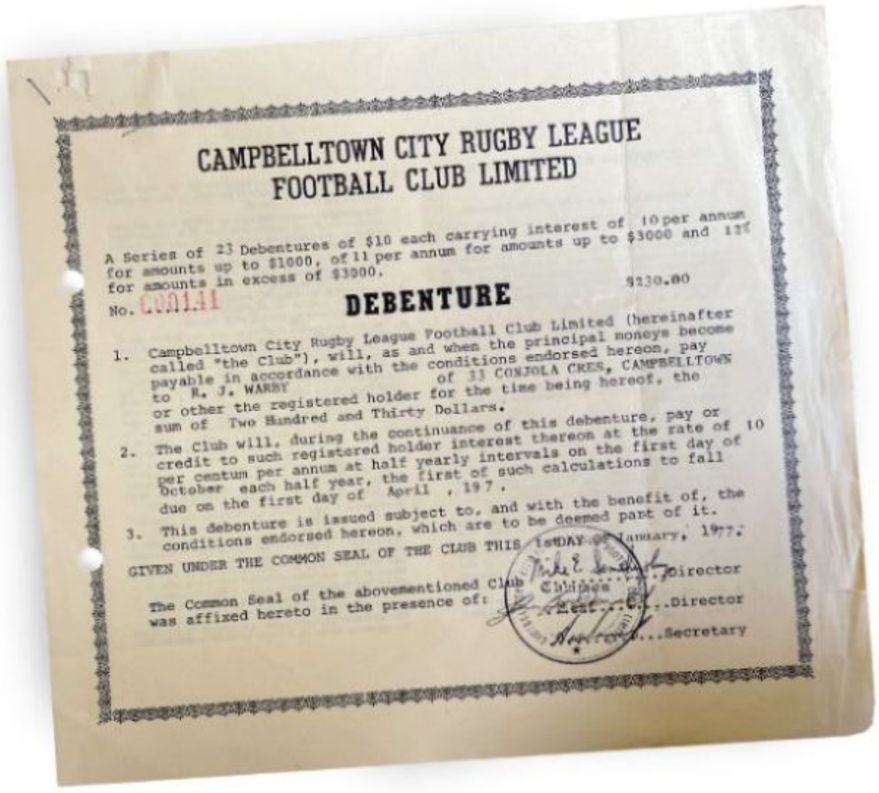
To help raise funds, there was an endless schedule of barbecues, dinners, pub raffles and gaming nights. Even a bus trip into Sydney to the musical *Jesus Christ Superstar*. "So many ideas," said Bruce Melville. "People bought a brick for $50." "We also ran a Miss Spirit entrant in the Fisher's Ghost Festival," said Frank Ward.

Another form of fundraising was debentures, taken out by the members. (Essentially a loan which the club promised to pay back with interest.)

"Members were generous," said Ward. "I put in $5,000 I think, but the Worrell boys sold some of their farm at Ruse and put in $30,000!" Those debentures had raised $75,000 by 1973 and would continue to be issued throughout the decade.

Sadly, few small investors ever got a return. "Never saw a cent," shrugged Ward. "The leagues club went broke in the 1980s". That bleak future was hard to imagine in the early 1970s.

Of all the fundraising activities, none was as headline-grabbing as a Prawn Night



CAMPBELLTOWN CITY RUGBY LEAGUE
FOOTBALL CLUB LIMITED

A Series of 23 Debentures of $10 each carrying interest of 10 per annum for amounts up to $1000, of 11 per annum for amounts up to $3000 and 12% for amounts in excess of $3000.

No. Con1.11 **DEBENTURE** $230.00

1. Campbelltown City Rugby League Football Club Limited (hereinafter called "the Club"), will, as and when the principal moneys become payable in accordance with the conditions endorsed hereon, pay to R. J. WARBY of 13 CONJOLA CRES, CAMPBELLTOWN or other the registered holder for the time being hereof, the sum of Two Hundred and Thirty Dollars.
2. The Club will, during the continuance of this debenture, pay or credit to such registered holder interest thereon at the rate of 10 per centum per annum at half yearly intervals on the first day of October each half year, the first of such calculations to fall due on the first day of April , 197 .
3. This debenture is issued subject to, and with the benefit of, the conditions endorsed hereon, which are to be deemed part of it.

GIVEN UNDER THE COMMON SEAL OF THE CLUB THIS 1st DAY of January, 1972.

The Common Seal of the abovementioned Club was affixed hereto in the presence of:

...Director

...Director

...Secretary

A solid investment? One of the 1970s debentures taken up by Roy Warby. "I never got anything back — and at 10 per cent compound interest do you know how much they owe me?" he laughed.

Big backyard parties *(far left)* Often held as fundraisers at the homes of John Marsden and Frank Ward.

at Lack's Hotel held shortly before Easter in 1971. It was raided by police (in an alleged breach of the state's liquor laws).

"I wasn't there," Marsden penned, "as I was moving into my new home [at Denham Court], but I received a phone call from my mum about 11pm. The police had raided the hotel, arrested my dad and about fifteen footballers, saying they were having an *illegal* Prawn Night because there was no food on the table and there was entertainment, which wasn't allowed. The fact is there was plenty of food on the table and no entertainment."

Marsden's claim was partly true. There was food — Tony Norton had the receipts. But the only reason there was no entertainment was because country music singer Bert Carroll had been shoved out a window. *"We'll pay you later"*, Norton yelled.

When Marsden arrived at the police station he was arrested for using threatening words. "But I defended the charges," Marsden boasted, "and we were all found not guilty and costs, in excess of $17,000, were ordered against the police."

Prawn night snaps at Lack's Hotel
Blame for the police raid has been traditionally attributed (by the Kangaroos) to local football rivalries —because several police were known to be either Collegians supporters, or players.





Glory days on the paddock

CLUB MEMBERS CHEER ON KANGAROOS' SUCCESS

The Campbelltown City Kangaroos — as the team was now officially known — did not hang up their boots after 1969, going on to win another five Group 6 grand finals in the following six years.

This unprecedented winning streak lifted spirits as their leagues club was under construction at Leumeah.

In 1970, the Kangaroos had won 6-4 against Oakdale Workers in quagmire conditions. That game was also notable because Oakdale's captain-coach was John Fahey, a future NSW Premier.

Fahey was also a law partner of John Marsden and, before the grand final, refused to talk to Marsden for a week.

The Kangaroos made their hat trick in 1971 when they defeated the Campbelltown Warriors 15-13.

The Warriors, however, got their revenge by winning the 1972 premiership. That season, Ray Corkery also stepped down as captain-coach of the Kangaroos.

Now led by former Canterbury-Bankstown centre John Greaves, the Kangaroos went on to win another treble.

They defeated the Collegians in 1973, then a new local team, the Ingleburn Bulldogs, in 1974 and 1975.

Campbelltown sides dominated Group 6.



John Marsden Receiving another trophy from Group 6 president Hilton Middleton.

Win after win An early Orana Park home game, *below*.





Our juniors "The backbone of the club" said stalwart Bill McManus in the 1970s.



Legendary games Second-rower Ross O'Donnell in the mud as he is tackled by Mittagong in 1974.

We had great times, and our supporters could not wait for the games.

FRANK WARD



Trading card Johnny Graeves in his days with the Berries (Bulldogs).

Back page Report on the Kangaroos, showing Ron Kain in action. The journalist was former player Bruce Melville.



Goonan's Pharmacy
Opp. Coles New World
Ph. 2 1452

Campbelltown Ingleburn NEWS
SPORT SECTION

CLINTONS HOLDEN CAMPBELLTOWN

Greaves kicks City to berth in final

Bruce Melville

Campbelltown City displayed a superb, first half goal-kicking exhibition from Johnny Greaves in defeating Oakdale Workers 16-10 last Sunday to reach the 1974 Rugby League Grand Final.

Spectators were robbed of a lot of interest when City bolted to a 16-3 lead at half time and decided to rest on their laurels.

It did appear they were only going through the motions in the second stanza.

The standard of play was not exceptional and ran a poor second to last week's Oaks-Ingleburn match as far as a crowd-pleasing effort is concerned.

Oakdale conceded far too many penalties within

Five-eighth Gary Flake made a number of probing runs to set his backline into motion.

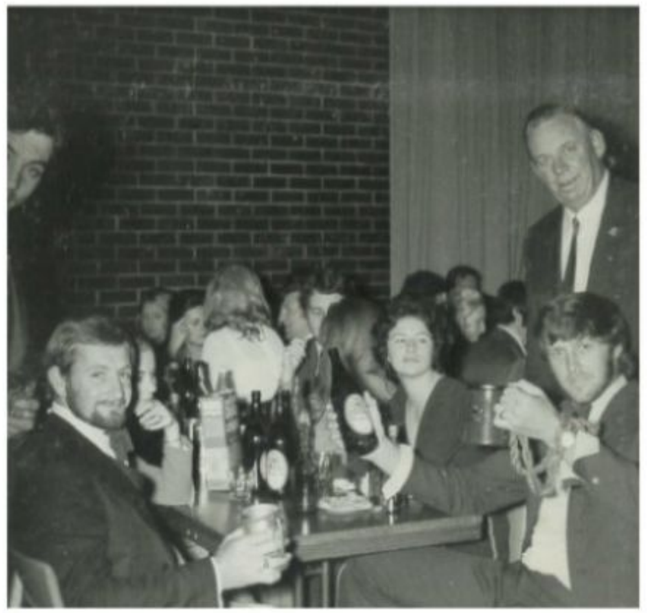
City worked play close to the Workers line and fullback Chris Wotton put up a well judged kick, followed through quickly and was on hand to capitalise on the Workers defenders mishandling to force the

FOR SALE
CAMPBELLTOWN VALUE PLUS

2 bed. B/V home in excellent condition. Solid construction in good area. Established garden. Barbecue etc. $23,950.

Immaculate 2 bedroom home weath/tiled roof, oil heater, situated in quiet area close to all amenities, garage and storage space under house and many extras. Good value at $26,900.











A Kangaroos Ball This 1972 event was held at Campbelltown Civic Centre. Many familiar faces can be seen, including four directors of the future leagues club — Frank Ward and John Marsden in velvet suits *(top left)* Ron Streater *(bottom row, at far left)* and Bill Vardy with wife Joyce *(bottom left)*.

Dawn of something big

MACARTHUR GROWTH CENTRE DECLARED IN 1973

Photos survive of many Kangaroos social nights of the early 1970s. Lots of fun, humour, and outrageous fashion choices.

These events were held at Campbelltown Civic Hall, the Golf Club, Bowling Club, Lacks' Hotel, or Rugby League Country Club at Narellan. So, the prospect of soon having their own premises at Leumeah excited the Kangaroos.

Ray Corkery was honoured with a special farewell as captain-coach, but he didn't move away from Campbelltown. It had become his much-loved family home and workplace.

In 1973, the "Macarthur Growth Centre" was unveiled — a masterplan to develop Campbelltown, Camden and Appin into a new urban complex the size of Canberra. Just in time for the new leagues club to open.

In July 1974, a meeting was held at Waratah Hall for the Kangaroos to meet Phillip Brown, who had been appointed as secretary-manager of the (almost-complete) premises. Brown said he hoped it would become "one of the major leagues clubs in NSW".



Orana Park As our club was being built in 1973, teenagers flocked to a "Sounds of Summer" concert next door, with acts such as Sherbert.



Tribute to "Corks" The captain-coach with John Marsden at the special "Ray Corkery Appreciation Dinner" in late 1972.



Growth The new freeway which linked Campbelltown to Sydney in 1972, as housing estates began to cover the hills. This young population entrenched Campbelltown as a rugby league heartland.

August 1974

CAMPBELLTOWN CITY RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB OPENS ITS DOORS

Our club began trading on 2 August — but the *official* opening was staged on Saturday, 31 August 1974.

"It was a very colourful scene and brought spring a day early," reported the *Campbelltown-Ingleburn News*, "as members and their wives lined the banks overlooking the newly-built premises. Most of the women chose semi-formal dress and, as if by magic, the rain clouds that had been threatening disappeared".

About 300 of the club's 450 members were present as John Marsden rolled out the red carpet for NSW Justice Minister John Maddison to cut the ribbon. (Maddison had been Marsden's first boss.) The official party earlier attended a poolside champagne luncheon at Marsden's Denham Court home.

Marsden had grown a beard for the occasion and strutted around in a three-piece suit of cream silk with tan shoes. "The cane he carried added that extra touch of suave sophistication only John could master," the press noted.



A snapshot of the original architecture The 604 square-metre building cost almost $500,000 and the royal blue and gold signage on the roof relected the team colours of the Campbelltown City Kangaroos. This view is looking east.





Official guests NSW Justice Minister John Maddison, the new club's secretary-manager Phil Brown, Federal MP for Macarthur John Kerin, the club chairman John Marsden, and John O'Toole, the secretary of the NSW Country Rugby League.

An original invitation
Still held by Roy Warby.

THE CHAIRMAN and BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Requests the pleasure of the company of you and your wife (or lady friend) at the Official Opening of the CAMPBELLTOWN CITY RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB
by the
Honourable J. C. MADDISON, M.L.A., B.A., LLB.
at 2.45 p.m. on
SATURDAY, 31st AUGUST, 1974.
R.S.V.P. Secretary, P. Brown
24/8/74
Admission only by production of invitation.



Opening day snap
(above) One of the Kangaroo wives, Tina Melville. She, and Bruce, would become regulars — the club's vivid orange curtains are shown in this 1970s dinner snap of the couple, *at left*.

"It felt like a big event — our own club!" said Bruce Melville. "The mood was very jubilant that day."

"The club was essentially one big room," Melville explained. "You came in through a small vestibule area, then double doors opened up onto tables and chairs. The northern wall was glass, overlooking Orana Park, with a long bar to the far right, poker machines along the Pembroke Road end along the wall, and a small dance floor. There was a mixed grill restaurant on the right. The meals were quite good."

The decor reeked of the seventies — orange curtains, dark wood paneling, warm brown carpeting, and flamenco chairs. Marsden boasted the club had a standard of comfort and service equal to any larger club in the Sydney area.

A major feature was a full-width patio overlooking Duguid Oval. "This will be a licensed area and members will be able to watch the match of the day in full comfort," Marsden said.

"The future is unlimited," he added, "and further recreation facilities are certain to be added as members exhibit their interest in the most practical way — regular use of existing facilities and attendance at all functions arranged."

The colonial-style dining room was under Sheila McLure, an English-qualified chef. It operated as a family bistro for lunch and dinner, Wednesdays to Fridays, but offered a full restaurant service on Saturday nights, with a smorgasbord on Sunday evenings.

By the late 1970s it was a French restaurant, then Chinese in the 1980s.



Balcony shot Under the club was also a junior players' area, showers, team meeting room, as well as storerooms and an air conditioning plant.



● Patrons at the colonial-style tables and chairs in the club's dining room.



● Chef Mrs. Sheila McLure, chalks up the menu for the City Football Club's Bistro.

The service is open from noon to 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays.

The club provides restaurant service on Saturdays from 12-2 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. in the dining room. Children are welcome.

News cutting Showing Sheila McLure, our first chef, preparing a menu. Members are also shown enjoying the original dining room.



John Marsden



Frank Ward



Ray Corkery



Bill Vardy



Tony Norton



Ron Streater



Ted Foley



Frank Moore



Mike Semchyshyn

The nine directors who guided the club from its opening in 1974 All were Kangaroos players or team administrators. Pioneering club member Garry Munro described them as "a bunch of really great blokes and hard workers — but only a few of them were actually experienced businesspeople".

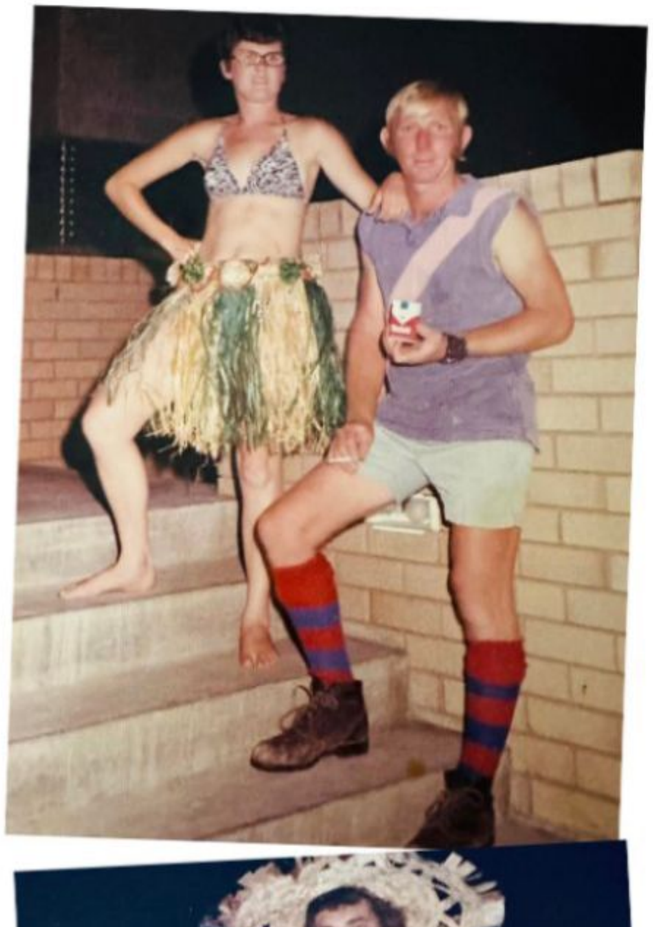


Where did that original club vanish to? Well, it's still there — just hidden within. This photo, above, shows foundation director Tony Norton standing outside the section that was our original clubhouse. The long set of stairs that formed its entrance also survives today as a fire exit.



Aerial view With the squash court and block of shops/ offices in the background.







A great night out

CLUB DRAWS BIG (AND NOT-SO-BIG) NAMES

"Top live artists only". That was the policy, John Marsden declared in 1974.

Admittedly, many of the cabaret acts that followed were hardly household names (budgets only stretch so far). But some truly big names did play at the club. Johnny O'Keefe, Jimmy Little, John Williamson, Col Joye and Little Patti to name a few. Irish comedians Brian Doyle and Sean Kramer were also popular.

Member-generated fun was also a mainstay, such as the fancy dress celebrations shown at left.

During the 1970s, the club had its own house band — Reaction — which played three nights a week. Mainly Top 40 hits, looking stylish in caramel-coloured suits with chocolate velvet lapels. The lineup Included John Hepher, Kevin Harris, Allan Muir and Ken Hornery (the latter replaced by Sean McHugh as the band later changed its name to Hart).

Fancy dress party New Year's Eve 1976, with club members posing at the entrance steps. Jill and Roy Braid are shown (at top), with Veronica and Harold LeJeune.

I remember going to see Johnny O'Keefe, and Delilah. Also the comedian Johnny Garfield . . . he was pretty rude.

JACKIE NORTON

Harris recalls the psychedelic lighting that lit up their faces as they performed. Hepher said the Leagues Club had a more youthful feel than the Catholic Club or RSL, which were more family audiences. Both musicians vividly recall Marsden emceeing events in his gold lame jacket.

Reaction served as a backing band for visiting stars, said Hepher. "No rehearsals — no budget for that. Some of us had a basic knowledge of music theory and



Groovers This artwork was used in an early 1970s ad for Narellan Rugby League Country Club — now part of Wests Group.





The house band Allan Muir, Sean McHugh, Kevin Harris and John Hepher *(top left)* in fancy dress, circa 1975, and *(at top right)* Reaction performing in its normal caramel-coloured gear.

some of us didn't, and relied on looks and other signals from the more educated as to when to stop and start the tunes. We mostly winged it through the floorshow."

The atmosphere varied according to whether the Kangaroos had won or lost that weekend — but, generally, Hepher said it was a friendly audience.



Top early performers Johnny O'Keefe and John Williamson (shown here pre-beard) entertained members in the 1970s.

Frank Ward feared the wild antics of a few of the young footballers was giving the club a rough reputation. "It was difficult to control some members, because the footballers believed it was *their* club but it was really a community club."

Marsden, too, was concerned. "The board's decision is that the auditorium must be kept at a high standard," he warned. "It cannot be treated as a public bar, nor can it be treated in a manner that would embarrass members of the community."



Indigenous performer Jimmy Little's show is promoted in this 1979 newspaper advertisement.

Tough times

INFLATION STOPS PATRONS SPENDING BIG

The Kangaroos initially thought their timing was perfect, because their club had opened just as the Macarthur Growth Centre was launched. They were wrong.

Marsden admitted they could not have opened at a worse time, because Australia's economy went bung in 1974. Wages and prices soared out of control as unemployment skyrocketed.

Our club's first balance sheet showed a profit of $71,000 but, in real terms, it meant big losses, particularly in the dining room. "We couldn't generate the money necessary to keep things going properly," said Frank Ward.

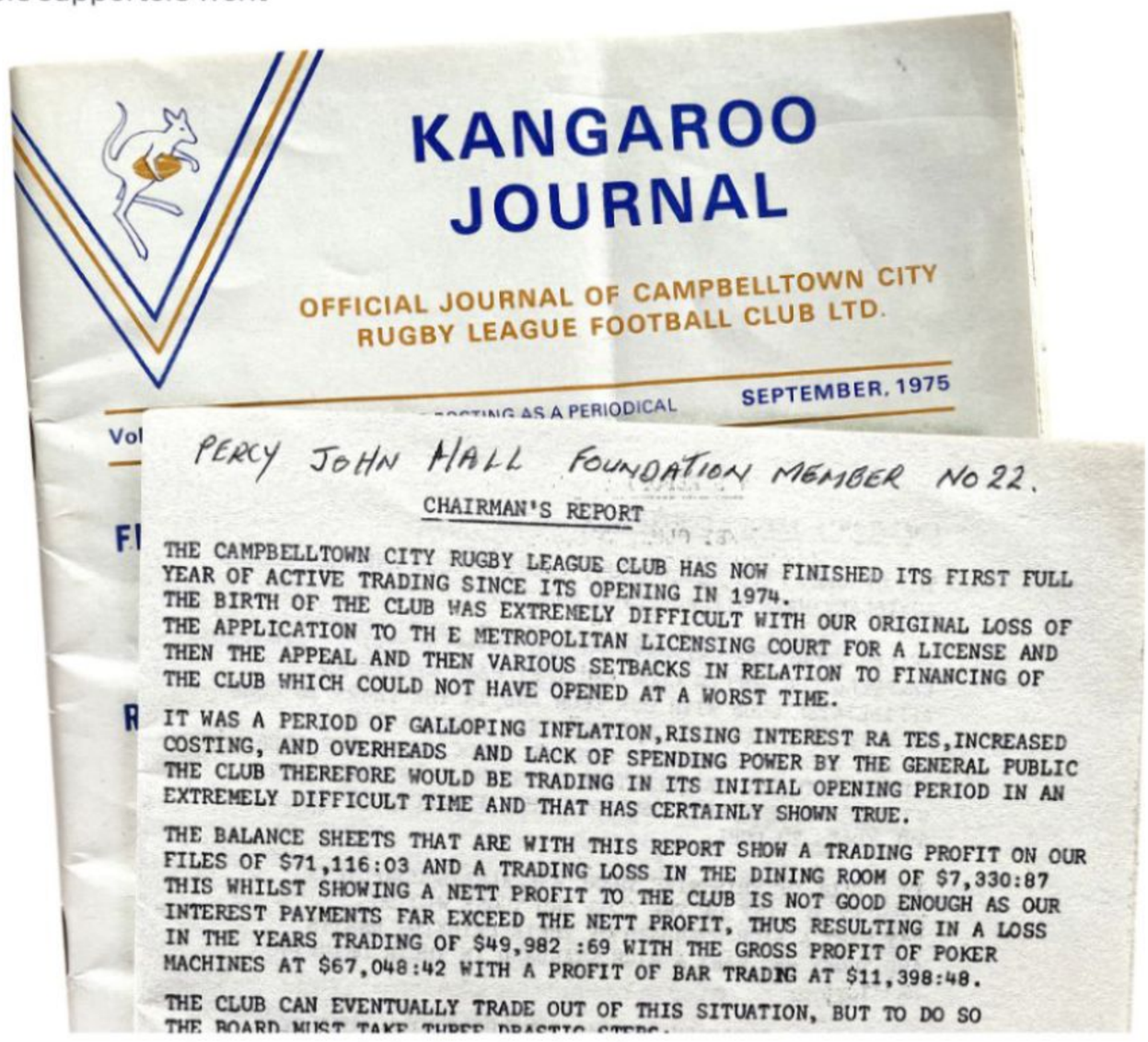
Campbelltown's other clubs had a built-in advantage of large membership bases. "If a Catholic didn't go to the Catholic Club they had to go to Confession," Ward joked. "Likewise, the RSL had a membership tied to public sympathy for the diggers.

"We were just the football crowd — and only *a third of* the football crowd because Collegians and Warriors supporters went to the other two clubs. So, in essence, it was destined to choke itself to death unless we could attract more patrons".

Marsden insisted the club *could* trade its way into surplus, but not without "severe" cuts to its overheads.



John Marsden
Resplendent in his gold-lame jacket. "He actually did a fair job as compare," said John Hepher.



KANGAROO JOURNAL

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF CAMPBELLTOWN CITY RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL CLUB LTD.

SEPTEMBER, 1975

PERCY JOHN HALL FOUNDATION MEMBER NO 22.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

THE CAMPBELLTOWN CITY RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB HAS NOW FINISHED ITS FIRST FULL YEAR OF ACTIVE TRADING SINCE ITS OPENING IN 1974.
THE BIRTH OF THE CLUB WAS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT WITH OUR ORIGINAL LOSS OF THE APPLICATION TO TH E METROPOLITAN LICENSING COURT FOR A LICENSE AND THEN THE APPEAL AND THEN VARIOUS SETBACKS IN RELATION TO FINANCING OF THE CLUB WHICH COULD NOT HAVE OPENED AT A WORST TIME.

IT WAS A PERIOD OF GALLOPING INFLATION,RISING INTEREST RA TES,INCREASED COSTING, AND OVERHEADS AND LACK OF SPENDING POWER BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC THE CLUB THEREFORE WOULD BE TRADING IN ITS INITIAL OPENING PERIOD IN AN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TIME AND THAT HAS CERTAINLY SHOWN TRUE.

THE BALANCE SHEETS THAT ARE WITH THIS REPORT SHOW A TRADING PROFIT ON OUR FILES OF $71,116:03 AND A TRADING LOSS IN THE DINING ROOM OF $7,330:87 THIS WHILST SHOWING A NETT PROFIT TO THE CLUB IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH AS OUR INTEREST PAYMENTS FAR EXCEED THE NETT PROFIT, THUS RESULTING IN A LOSS IN THE YEARS TRADING OF $49,982 :69 WITH THE GROSS PROFIT OF POKER MACHINES AT $67,048:42 WITH A PROFIT OF BAR TRADING AT $11,398:48.

THE CLUB CAN EVENTUALLY TRADE OUT OF THIS SITUATION, BUT TO DO SO

Early annual report
Upper case letters were used to emphasise the financial challenge, in September 1975. This rare surviving copy was donated by the family of pioneering member Percy Hall.

Kerry and Steve Noyce in the 1970s The club was trying to attract the membership of the young new families pouring into Campbelltown. Steve, a bank worker, would later go on to become CEO of Wests Magpies and Wests Tigers, and twice be elected to our club's board as a director.



"House Committee" teams were formed. The nine directors took turns manning the bar, picking up glasses, cleaning ashtrays, and acting as door security, with a team of five or six volunteers each.

"My daughters would come down with me on weekends," said Tony Norton, "as I emptied poker machines, counted tills, did paperwork, and swept the place out."

The club offered lifetime memberships as a big one-off fundraiser. Paul Lake was among those who took up the offer. "It cost me $70 — a lot of money back then."

Part of the problem was a revolving door of club bosses; many resigned after clashing with the hands-on directors.

The first secretary-manager, Phil Brown, quit in frustration in 1975. Director Ted Foley ran the club until 1976 when he was replaced by secretary-manager Neil Armstrong. Then Harvey Pound. Then Gwen Woolaston.

Gwen, who had been a staffer since day one, was at that time the only woman running a leagues club in NSW.

By the early 1980s, Jim Giddens was secretary-manager, followed by Daryl Wilson. Perhaps there were others; no master list survives in the club's archives.

Many of us worked as volunteers at the club. Honesty was important — it was our club — and you'd the count the poker machine money and it wasn't even short 10 cents.

GARRY MUNRO

Gwen Woolaston Our club's female manager an be seen in this news clipping from the late 1970s.



New personalities at Leagues Club

As well as employing the first woman secretary/manager in a local licensed club, the Campbelltown City Rugby League Club has a former State representative player working to please the customers in the form of ex-Balmain forward, John Spencer.

The club's new petite "managerperson" is Mrs. Gwen Woolaston who has been a member of the staff since the club opened in 1974.

She was recently promoted to the position of secretary/manager and is now working in with the club's new board of directors who have the big task ahead of making the local club an attractive venue for local clubgoers.

Mrs. Woolaston is responsible for the general administration of the staff and day to day affairs of the club, which is making a big effort to overcome early financial setbacks.

Gwen Woolaston has taken on the rather daunting task with the thanks and good wishes of club members who are anxious to see the club get on its feet and advance, in line with the growth of the district.

Working in and around the club is the Kangaroos new captain/coach, John Spencer, who is spending the off-season working for the betterment of the club until football time comes around.

When that happens, John will be spending much of his time endeavouring to mould the famous Kangaroo team back into the old Group Six premiership winning combination it was a year or two ago.

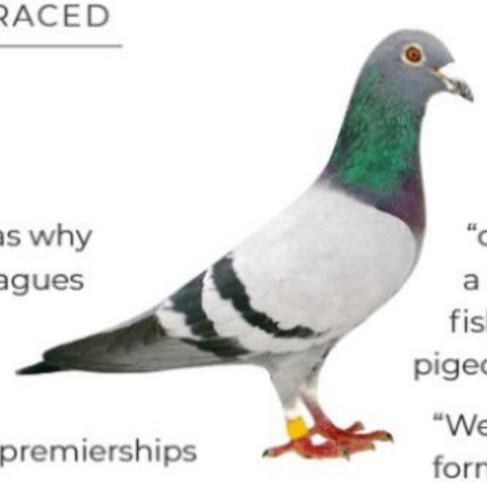
The message from the club directors is "drop in and have a chat with our top personalities — and do it more often."

Clubs within the club

RUGBY LEAGUE NOT THE ONLY SPORT EMBRACED







Supporting football was why Campbelltown City Leagues Club existed — it's *raison d'etre*. And, in 1975, the Kangaroos won their grand slam: premierships in all three grades!

Admittedly, a dry patch then followed. The next two seasons were won by The Oaks Tigers, then Camden Rams in 1978.

But, those lean years were also wins for our club because Orana Park was the venue for all Group 6 grand finals, and crowds poured in. Other representative fixtures included a renowned clash in 1975 between a Group 6 representative side (coached by Ray Corkery) which beat a touring French side 2-0.

But, from its inception, Campbelltown City Leagues Club was about supporting *all* sports. Its network of sub-clubs, or "clubs within the club" included a social golf club, a cricket club, fishing club, darts club . . . even a pigeon racing club.

"We are proud that we have formed an association with the Campbeltown Soccer Club and they have become an affiliate club," John Marsden wrote in 1975. "And in the years to come we hope to be able to support them financially. We are so proud that a similar association has been formed with Campbelltown Swimming Club and, again, we hope to be able to support them financially in the years to come." (That hope, of course, is now our club's primary mission statement.)

Former Kangaroo Bill Hoad was appointed as sports secretary, liaising between the many clubs. He was known for his attention to detail. "Everything had to be just so," recalled wife, Gloria.

The Ladies Auxiliary was also busy under a new generation of members such as Dianne Hoy, Kathy Mumford, Joan Quinlan, and Judy Wilson.

Backing sport A newspaper shot of young netballers at Minto's Coronation Park in the 1970s, and also a shot of Ken Bellman on the burst for the Campbelltown City Kangaroos.



Orana Park (Campbelltown Sports Stadium) as it once was
Every Campbelltown student of the 1970s and 1980s recalls attending school athletics carnivals next to the club. This shot was taken by Phil Reed of Airds High School.



Trip up north Snapshots from the early 1970s of a fishing club trip to Forster.



Year of heartbreak

1979 PROVES AN *ANNUS HORRIBILIS* FOR THE CLUB

Our club was caught in the doldrums by the end of the 1970s. Mounting costs. Rising taxes. Languishing membership.

Phil Ashton, an accountant with Coopers Lybrand, recalls visiting to do the books and the club felt empty. "Not the flashest place in town," he said. "The tennis club next door had all the energy."

Our club's woes were compounded by on-field disappointments. The Kangaroos were Group 6 wooden spooners in 1979.

But that bad news was trivial compared to two *real* tragedies that year:



Haertbreak
ABC News still of miners trying to comprehend the deaths of their mates.

First, the Appin Coal Mine Disaster — an underground gas explosion — killed 14 miners on 24 July 1979. Several of the victims were well-known faces at Campbelltown City Leagues Club. Two were also big Kangaroos identities — Bob Rawcliffe and John Stonham.

Rawcliffe, 45, of Appin was a first grade starter, junior coach and football club treasurer. Remembered as reliable and conscientious, he left a wife, Julianne, and three children to grieve.

Stonham, 44, of Leumeah was manager of the Kangaroos first grade team. "John was always on the ball [and] ensured jerseys were nice and clean for the players," the local press eulogised. He was mourned by wife, Esther, and nine children.

A series of club appeals raised money for the grieving families.

A fortnight later came another shocking fatality: Peter Minns, who died at the club on the night of 4 August 1979.



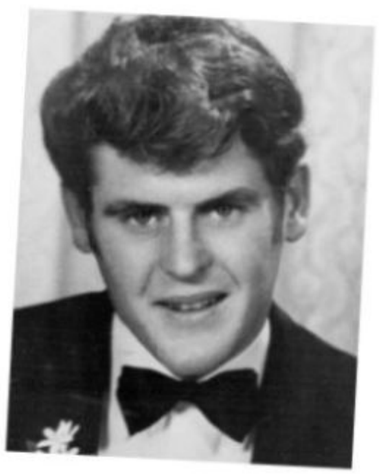
The memorial plaque at Appin "Bobby Rawcliffe was my mate," recalled club member Garry Munro, also a coal miner. "His wife Julianne was such a nice person. Those deaths affected everyone in the industry . . . it could happen to you. It hurt everyone."

The 28-year-old was part of Tony Norton's House Committee team when a drunken fight broke out . . . and Minns was thrown from the balcony.

An apprentice carpenter from Sydney was charged with his murder. Minns was a popular identity and had played in the 1969 Kangaroos reserve grade team and had remained close to Norton, his former captain-coach.

The local press devoted a page to Minns' funeral, at St Peter's Church, attended by hundreds of Kangaroos. The Under 10s squad formed a guard of honour, while pallbearers included John Marsden, Les Welbourne and John McDonald.

Minns' sons, Warren and David, had been left without a father and his heartbroken wife, Jeanette (Jenny), gave birth to daughter, Kelly, the day after his funeral.



Peter Minns He lost his life at the Club in 1979 and is still deeply mourned. The words "forever in our hearts" was etched on his gravestone.

A Peter Minns Foundation raised money for the education and welfare of Peter's children, and the Kangaroos Golf Club also created a Peter Minns Shield.

"It was a tragedy, and the club never really recovered from it," said Frank Ward. "We quickly got the reputation around town of being a rough house."

The dawning of a new decade did raise spirits as the Kangaroos bounced back from their wooden spoon to claim the 1980 Group 6 premiership.



Gallery of faces Family and friends still gather at Appin each year to remember the victims of the 1979 mine disaster.

The loss of Peter Minns hit us all pretty hard. Such a good bloke. I'd coached him in footy and used to hold him up in the scrum.

TONY NORTON

Raiders and Steelers

CAMPBELLTOWN 'ROBBED' OF ITS CHANCE IN THE BIG TIME

Our club had always had one major goal: getting a Campbelltown team into the Sydney competition, toughest of all the rugby league battlefields.

John Marsden — elected as our club's first Life Member in 1979 — had also been elected to the New South Wales Rugby League (NSWRL) executive. Perfect timing, given that two new teams were due to be admitted. The last expansion, in 1967, had welcomed Penrith and Cronulla. Now it was, surely, our turn.

Campbelltown was the fastest growing place in Australia — a football heartland with a huge juniors base, a leagues club, and a stadium next to a railway station. All the boxes had been ticked.

Marsden enlisted popular Mayor Gordon Fetterplace into a local campaign, with publicity stunts in Sydney to argue our case. Fetterplace believed sport was a glue uniting growing communities.

The NSWRL, however, wasn't interested.

It had decided to go bigger than Sydney and wanted a *regional* competition. It announced the Illawarra Steelers would join the competition in 1982.

The other team, the NSWRL suggested, would be manufactured in Canberra. Campbelltown had been discarded.



Canberra joins the competition A local insult reinforced by a geographic absurdity. Campbelltown, was still in Group 6 and considered "rural" — yet Goulburn, Queanbeyan, Yass, and other Group 8 districts in the Raiders' drawing area were now regarded as "metropolitan".

Campaign Mayor Gordon Fetterplace was a vocal ally — *below* is one of the news articles pushing Campbelltown's case.



LOCAL LEAGUE MUST GROW . . . OR DIE!

Mayor gives warning

If the NSW Rugby League administration does not admit Campbelltown to major metropolitan inter-club competition and take a greater interest in the code in the district, it will wither and die!

The Mayor of Campbelltown, Ald. Gordon Fetterplace, issued this warning in Sydney on Friday afternoon.

He was addressing a well attended meeting of Sydney's sporting media, and League officials at a special conference and luncheon at the Kings Cross Travelodge.

town included in the major Metropolitan Rugby League competition.

He said the aim was to have a club from the City of Campbelltown admitted to the Sydney based major league competition.

The proposal has been put forward at a time when the Aust-

● Ald. G. Fetterplace

● John Marsden

Group 6 are incompatible.

Campbelltown is a young, fast growing urban area, while the

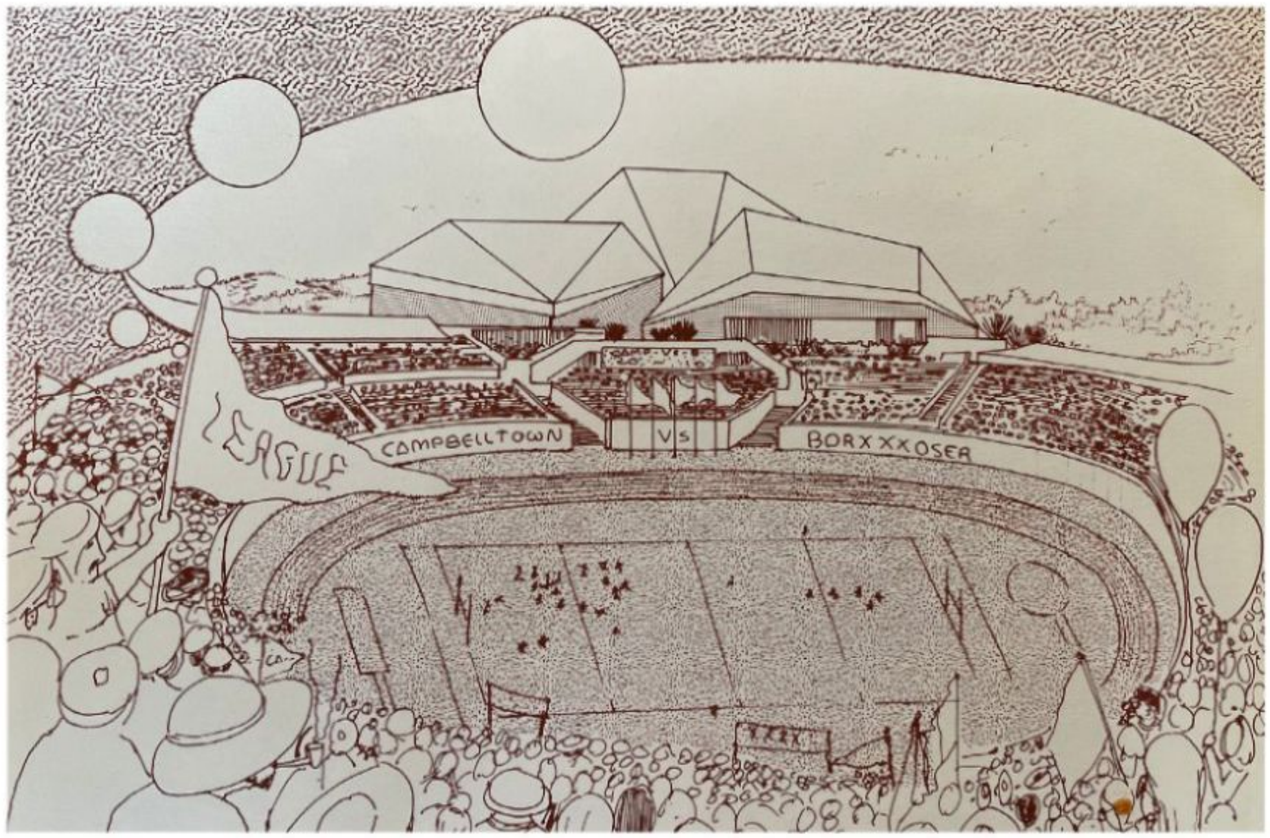
ple evidence of support from all Rugby League clubs in Campbelltown and from all sectors of

al Committee of Country Rugby League.

"However, in those positions I believe it is incumbent upon anyone holding such a position to promote anything that is in the best interests of Rugby Lague.

"My association with Rugby League and on an administration level dates back more than 15 years, and it has always perturbed me that the administrators of Rugby League in NSW failed in their responsibilities when areas such as Liverpool and Fair-

> **Campbelltown can field and support a first grade side in the Sydney competition. Action in five years time will be too late.**
>
> GORDON FETTERPLACE



1981 artist's impression What a future Orana Park might look like — as imagined by John Marsden and his campaigners.

Pre-grandstand Youngsters at Orana Park, with the bare hill (now Woodbine) at rear.



To Marsden, that was a cruel betrayal and he used every trick to sabotage the rival bid — even an argument that Canberra airport was often closed due to fog making it risky for Sydney teams to land in one piece . . . if at all.

Just two votes on the NSWRL sealed Campbelltown's fate, and Canberra Raiders were born.

Campbelltown had been left with no hope of playing at top level — the next two teams admitted, in 1988, would be Newcastle and Brisbane.

Marsden doubled down and produced a booklet that painted a dire picture of the death of rugby league in Campbelltown — complete with grim reaper artworks.

In truth, the local junior league was thriving, but the NSWRL admitted something had to be done to "save" the sport in Macarthur. Its answer was for Campbelltown to merge with an existing Sydney club: the Newtown Jets.

Newtown, almost broke, was in serious decline with tiny crowds and a cabinet of wooden spoons. The NSWRL ordered the Jets to begin talks with the Kangaroos.

Marsden saw it as an imperfect solution, given that few local fans felt any affinity with the inner-city club. Newtown was also reluctant. But, as the Jets needed to sell their own leagues club to clear their debts, they looked longingly on the leagues club premises at Leumeah.

So, negotiations began. All the local clubs — the Kangaroos, Warriors, Collegians and Ingleburn Bulldogs — were ordered by NSWRL to leave Group 6 at the end of the 1983 season, in preparation to merge into a newly-named "Campbelltown-Newtown Jets" team in 1984.

Newtown debacle

LOCAL RUGBY LEAGUE GETS LEFT IN TATTERS

It was the season of mixed loyalties.

Campbelltown welcomed the Newtown Jets to Orana Park in 1983, but it was still cheering the Kangaroos as they played their final season with Group 6.

The merger wouldn't become official until 1984, but Newtown decided to play four of its matches at its "future home" of Leumeah.

That first match (versus Parramatta) drew 11,000 fans — Newtown's biggest crowd in decades. But the Eels decimated the Jets 54–14. Not a good start . . . made worse by a suspicion that most Campbelltonians in the crowd were wearing Parramatta jerseys.

The Jets simply didn't "click" with Campbelltown, and Orana Park crowds dropped by half. *Rugby League Week* reported Newtown officials were seen crossing out the second word on the "Newtown-Campbelltown" programs.

Newtown was also very unhappy with Orana Park. No grandstand to shelter fans from the rain, its showers ran cold for the first grade players, and the only canteen kept running out of stock.

There was also local resentment because it was a so-called "merger", but no Campbelltown players joined the team. So club members tended to get more excited by Kangaroos' games. Particularly when we won the 1983 grand final! The Oaks were defeated 24-6.

Making it even more emotional, Ray Corkery had been coaxed out of retirement to coach the team. Tim Sheens, a former St Gregory's College captain, was also the team captain.

The leagues club hosted a gala dinner for the Kangaroos to farewell Group 6 (which would now be centred on the Southern Highlands' teams) as the planned merger with Newtown went ahead.

The problem was, it didn't . . .



One season wonder A Newtown Jets "home" game at Orana Park in 1983.

Newtown made it a condition of their support that they'd take control of our club at Leumeah. John Marsden rejected this.

FRANK WARD



The Sportsman's Bar added to side of our club in 1982 It was our first major extension. Tony Norton said there was no choice: "The club was too congested, with only one main room. If a music act or function was on it had to happen with all the tradies and regulars there too. We had to break the club into two sections." Warren Thomson — a future director and chairman — was the builder.

The deal fell apart in late 1983 as Sydney's media reported on bitter disharmony. "It felt to us more like a hostile takeover than a merger," recalled Frank Ward. "There was a lot of disagreement."

Then Newtown went broke. It had failed to sell its Stanmore leagues club at auction, and now had little to offer Campbelltown but debt and a jumper.

Marsden declared that Campbelltown no longer wished to *join* Newtown, but *replace* it. The NSWRL refused.

Newtown was instead ejected from the competition, taking Campbelltown's hopes with it. "It was a devastating decision," admitted Marsden.

Campbelltown rugby league was in a mess — not only excluded from the Sydney competition, but removed from Group 6. "Our seniors just folded," said Garry Munro. "We'd lost everything. There was a lot of bitterness about that."

Campbelltown's juniors were forced into a new Liverpool competition. The dreams of 1969 seemed dead in the water.



Kangaroos captain Tim Sheens celebrates the Kangaroos' 1983 grand final victory. He later gave thanks to Corkery for "planting the seed to pursue a coaching career". Sheens went on to forge a top career that would include coaching four NRL premiership winning teams — including Wests Tigers.

> **I was still very committed to the leagues club, and so I was surprised in the mid-1980s to discover that there was a campaign to remove me from the board and toss me out as chairman. I was even more surprised to find that the campaign was led by a former friend.**
>
> JOHN MARSDEN

Corkery in charge

MARSDEN OUSTED AS CLUB CHAIRMAN

John Marsden still had many supporters, but others blamed him for the Newtown disaster. Some felt he'd been too busy making headlines as a powerbroker to have the welfare of the struggling leagues club as his top priority.

Ray Corkery was among the doubters. He staged a so-called "coup" at the 1984 annual general meeting (AGM).

Unfortunately, no paperwork survives in the club archives — but Bruce Melville remembers that event well:

"Marsden arrived, expecting to be re-elected, but soon realised how ugly the mood was. He stood in the front of the club yelling, '*They're trying to get rid of me, they're trying to get rid of me*'. 'Champ' Vardy had arrived and looked John in the eye: '*Well, why do you think we're here.*' "

That was a powerful message given that Vardy had always been one of Marsden's staunchest backers. The chairman's time was up.



New team A Campbelltown-Liverpool Hornet jumper that belonged to coach Steve Noyce.



New chairman Ray Corkery being lifted on the shoulders of his players after coaching them to victory in the 1983 Group 6 grand final. He was now widely seen as the best person to lead the leagues club out of its financial woes.







Orana Park One bright spot from the Newtown debacle was the erection of a huge 3000-seat grandstand in 1984. Campbelltown Council had approved the $1.25 million revamp to help a local side into the big time.

Barry Upsall One of the new club directors (pictured with wife Willette). He became a key supporter of Corkery in the years ahead.



Corkery, as the new boss, had to build an entirely new team around him, because all the original directors had by now retired. "Most of us left around 1983 when the whole Newtown thing went down," recalled Tony Norton.

Corkery's deputy was Bob O'Sullivan. Other fresh board members included Steve Noyce, Gordon Allen, Dennis Burke, Barry Upsall, Roderick Smith, John McDonald and Ludwig Zielinski.

Noyce was a coach with the Hornets — the new local team. "We'd come to the club for functions and presentations, so a connection grew," he said. "Ray thought I could help on the board."

Orana Park, meanwhile, had been revamped with a huge new grandstand in 1984. But it was a Sydney-grade ground without a Sydney-grade team.

Eastern Suburbs considered relocating to Campbelltown. To test the waters, the Roosters played a "home game" at Orana Park in June 1986. Most of the local fans who turned up, however, cheered for their opponents — Western Suburbs Magpies — who won the game 16-14.

Magpies CEO Rick Wayde was blown away by Campbelltown's support. The true footballing future of our club had just been, unwittingly, revealed.

Our club goes broke

CORKERY TRIES TO GET 'SWOOPED' BY MAGPIES

The eighties were boom financial times — but only at *other* licensed clubs.

In 1985, for example, Campbelltown Catholic Club's fourth expansion doubled its floorspace, as membership soared to 10,000. Very different to our 2,000 members, as we languished as "Campbelltown's third club" — and a very distant third at that.

Ray Corkery, in seizing the chair, had given himself a hospital pass. He admitted it was hard making a profit without any senior football being played next door at Orana Park

Young people *did* come to live music gigs, and the Chinese restaurant was popular. "But the club was on its knees," said Bruce Melville. Tony Norton recalled he'd drop in on a Saturday afternoon to find just a dozen patrons in the premises.

Amazingly, our club kept to its charter and made donations to sporting teams — more than $11,000 in 1986. The same year, it declared a deficit of $120,000.

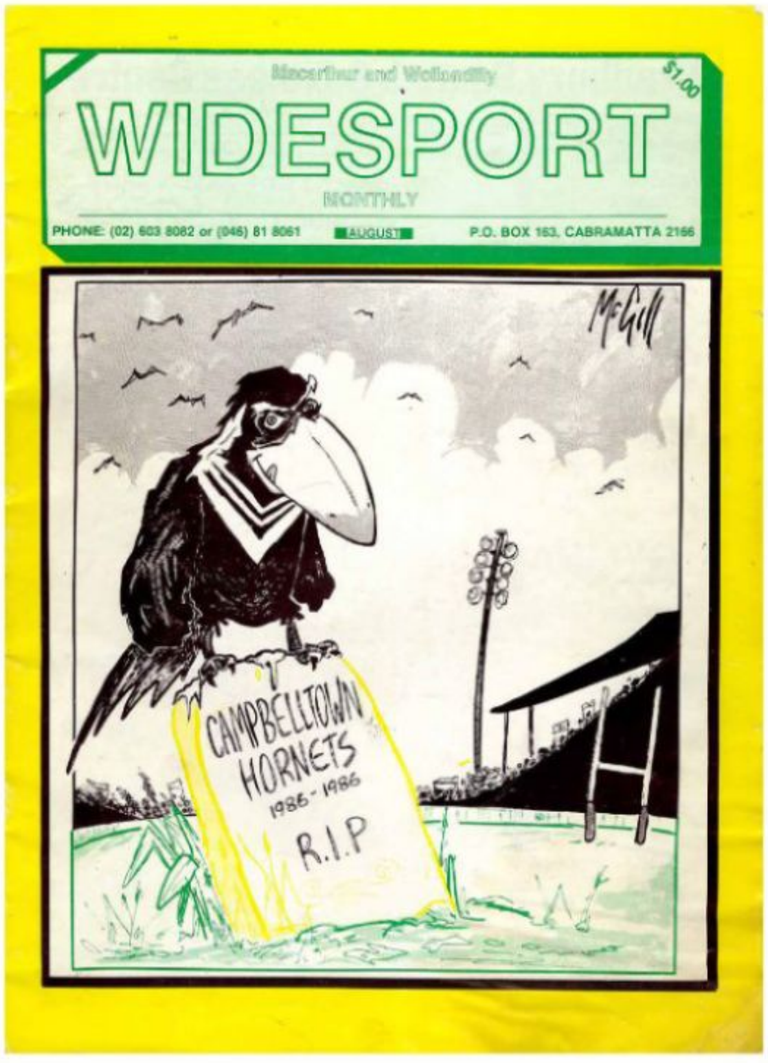
That was a recipe for disaster and the auditors made it official in June 1986: the club was broke. Its only possible lifeline was a merger with Western Suburbs Leagues Club at Ashfield.



A succulent Chinese meal? A 1986 promo for the Golden Ocean. Although fondly remebered, the eatery was losing money. Secretary Manager Daryl Wilson called 1985-86 "the most difficult trading period the club has ever experienced."



Club romance Mandy Wearing and Paul Perrin — one of many love stories hatched at our club. They had their first date at a 'Mad Gorilla' concert in the auditorium in 1985. "There wasn't much there back then," Mandy recalled, "but the club was really making an effort with its live music." As Mandy Perrin, she would go on to become a long-serving editor of the *Macarthur Chronicle* newspaper.



Arrival of the Magpies A short-lived local sports magazine (edited by Col McDonald) noted the end of the Hornets with this cover in 1986. The artist was young Campbelltown reporter Jeff McGill who went on to become editor of the *Macarthur Advertiser* — and, as fate would have it, the author of this 50-year history of Wests.

Should this agreement [with Wests] not be consummated then we believe the company may not be able to continue as a going concern . . . closing down and disposing of its assets.

AUDITORS COOPERS & LYBRAND

That option was suddenly on the table because the Magpies were coming to Campbelltown!

Wests had been fighting in court to stay in the NSWRL, so Magpies CEO Rick Wayde agreed to move his endangered team's home ground from Lidcombe to Orana Park in 1987 — therefore laying claim to Campbelltown's vast network of juniors.

Campbelltown was, after all, Sydney's *new* western suburbs. And the Magpie's battler image (the 'fibros') tended to sync with local attitudes. So, Corkery was soon in negotiations with Wests Ashfield.

"I went out and had a look," Rick Wayde recalls. "The club was stuffed — it had foreclosure signs up, with about five days left to trade. The old squash court also had a 'for sale' sign on it, so I saw Alan Clarke and Peter Cook [chairman and general manager of Ashfield] and an arrangement — a friendly takeover, if you like — was arranged. Everything was very amicable. We also bought the nearby squash courts in preparation for the merger."

Wayde's funniest memory was getting a furious telephone call from John Marsden — *'Nothing happens in Campbelltown without my approval!'* — but, I told him, sorry, the deal was done."

Corkery would forge a fruitful relationship with Ashfield's Alan Clarke, but hated having to surrender the independence of his club — a crushing blow to any founding father — but he also knew the Magpies represented survival.

Corkery predicted the next AGM would be "history making".

Becoming ‘Wests Campbelltown’

CHANGING OUR NAME

That “historic” meeting — on 29 October 1986 — drew a packed auditorium. All present to vote on the proposed merger with Wests Ashfield.

Ray Corkery moved the motion, seconded by club stalwart John McDonald.

Frank Ward was a lonely voice of caution. He asked if there had been a recent valuation of the club’s assets. (There hadn’t been.) He suggested the proposal was “radical thinking” given the “lack of information.” His question was ruled out of order by Corkery, who said everyone knew exactly what was going on.

Ashfield’s Alan Clarke rose to his feet and assured the crowd that his club was going to use its own assets to save the Leumeah club from bankruptcy, receiving a round of applause.

The moment of truth came when Corkery asked John Marsden — as the club’s only life member — to speak. Marsden was no longer the chairman but, as always, he commanded attention. His words certainly had the power to sway any undecided members.

In a statesman-like mood, Marsden declared the club’s future was at stake.



Leagues Club rep. MR.ALAN CLARKE to outline exactly what Wests would do in this area.

MR. CORKERY then called upon MR. ALLEN CALRKE to speak.

MR. CLARKE gave details of the W.S.L.C.S. assets and houw Wests would use their assests to assist financially to improve the Clubs trading position.

MR. CLARKE RECEIVED LOUD APPLAUSE

DARYL WILSON then read Amendment 2 (page 6 of Journal) and Amendment 3 (pages 6 and 7 of Journal)

MR. CORKERY then called upon original President, No.1. Badge holder adn only Life Member of Club MR.JOHN MARSDEN to speak on behalf of Amendments.

MR. MARSDEN then took the floor and moved that the Amendments be accepted as a package and that the Motion be carried in total.

Mr Marsden spoke strongly in favour of the Amendments stating that the Club's future was at stake and we should look towards the Western Suburbs Leagues Club with excitement of having a First Grade team.

Mr. Marsden then urged everyone to accept the motion. He said that Mr. Corkery and the men behind the scenes were convinced that Wests people are bona fide.

MR. CORKERY then asked Mr. John McDonald, the seconder if he wanted to speak.

Mr. McDonald said that John Marsden had remembered everyting he had told him.

MR. CORKERY asked for any speakers against the Motion: NIL.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR:

MR. LE JEUNE asked if black and white colours would apply to the Kangaroo's Juniors.

MR. CORKERY said they did not.

MR. CORKERY put the 1st Amendment to the Floor and read same.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MR. CORKERY referred to 2nd Amendment.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MR. CORKERY referred to 3rd Amendment

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

MR. CORKERY the expressed as President, that it is going to be great to be involved in Sydney Rugby League.

MR. CORKERY DECLARED ALL DIRECTORS POSITION VACANT.

MR. CORKERY moved to the ELECTION OF THE BOARD

As it happened One of the typewritten pages of minutes from that fateful 29 October 1986 meeting.

Big story As it was covered in the the *Macarthur Advertiser*.



It’s official: Wests take over City leagues club

The 78-year-old tradition and spirit of the Western Suburbs football team looks set to continue for another 78 years, not in the inner city area of Ashfield, but in the true western suburbs of Sydney — Campbelltown.

Although the decision to relocate was made some months ago, the final step in the plan was not made until last week.

At the annual general meeting of the Camp-

A resolution was put forward to amend the Memorandum of Association.

The resolution was “That the name of the club be changed from Campbelltown City Rugby League Football

magnificent tradition of Western Suburbs, or putting their faith in the fledgling Campbelltown club.

Members voted unanamously to change to Western Suburbs.

The takeover was now

stricken Campbelltown club back into the black.

A few members spoke for and against the change, but none commanded more attention than Campbelltown solicitor John Marsden.

In his speech to the meeting, Marsden man-



The cover of our last annual report under the old name When Ashfield took over there was an effort to maintain continuity, therefore the next annual report cover was identical in every way — except for the new "Wests" name. The first annual general meeting under Ashfield was also officially described as the "16th AGM", not the 1st AGM.



Moment in time This newspaper ad from September 1986 marks the crossover: we were still called 'Campbelltown City Leagues Club' but we were also promoting Magpies open trials.

"We should look towards the Western Suburbs Leagues Club with excitement of having a first grade team," he added.

Corkery put the vote to the floor and it carried — unanimously.

Campbelltown City Leagues Club had voted itself out of existence. It was now Western Suburbs Leagues Club (Campbelltown) Ltd.

Corkery thanked his fellow directors, staff and loyal members, in particular Kevin LeJeune and the Juniors. Corkery then smiled — "It is going to be great to be involved in Sydney rugby league."

He stood down as chairman, and an election for a new board was held. It was all carefully scripted with just nine nominations for nine positions.

The new chairman was Alan Clarke (also chairman at Ashfield). Elected, too, were Magpies CEO Rick Wayde, and Ashfield insiders George Grimmond, Brian Hare, Jim Rankin and John Toomey. Campbelltown was allowed three voices: Corkery, Bob O'Sullivan and Barry Upsall.

A new future beckoned.

New loyalties

BARRACKING FOR MAGPIES . . . NOT KANGAROOS

Ray Corkery, like many locals, did learn to cheer on the Magpies at Orana Park. Some doubted his sincerity. "Ray *loved* the Kangaroos," laughed Rick Wayde, "He *tolerated* the Magpies."

Many club members, however, did become staunch Magpies fans, such as sports secretary Bill Hoad. "He'd go down to watch a game," said wife Gloria, "then come home to watch it again on the TV!" Mayor Gordon Fetterplace was also a Magpies tragic, and an increasing presence at Wests.

But other club members muttered about *these Ashfield blow-ins*. "We'd gone from a Kangaroo thing to a non-Kangaroo thing," sighed Frank Ward.

Garry Munro added: "A lot of us kept following the same Sydney teams we'd always followed — Roy Warby stayed with Parramatta, I still wore the green and red of Souths." Echoing that sentiment was Tony Norton: "I followed the Roosters, but would go down to games with my wife, a Magpies supporter, and say to her *your* team seems to be going well today."

Many younger Campbelltown fans, however, keenly embraced the Magpies. The first home game at Orana Park in 1987 was a triumph; the Eels (reigning premiers) were thrashed 32-16.



Ken Stonestreet and Mark Wallington

Stonestreet, of Leumeah, was a Magpies star of the 1960s but disliked Wests Campbelltown, calling it "the 'Roos Club".

Wallington — 'Mark the Magpie', the team's mascot — was a lot more fond of the club, but admitted feeling an underlying hosiility against his beloved Magpies amongst some senior club people.

Both Stonestreet and Wallington would, however, go on to warmly praise Wests for its generous support of a local charity close to both their hearts — Macarthur's 24 Hour Fight Against Cancer.



Hearts and minds Local interest in the Magpies soared among local youngsters in 1989 with the arrival of English sensation Ellery Hanley (left) the best player in the world. Also young Daly M winner Cameron Blair joined the Magpies. This duo became popular celebrities at schools and events.



"Maggies, maggies" Campbelltown youngsters cheering on their newly-adopted team in 1987.

Old and new Club membership badges belonging to Garry Munro.



Despite that promising start, the Magpies were wooden spooners in 1987 and 1988.

Alan Clarke, as new club chairman, urged members to embrace the "remarkable achievement" of being able to cheer on a first grade team at Orana Park — which was, after all, their longtime dream.

Indeed, the leagues club was seen as a vital meeting ground for old fans and new fans to flock together. A huge Magpie, flexing its muscles, went onto our rooftop as Magpie logos also replaced Kangaroos emblems on club letterheads.

Clarke genuinely embraced Campbelltown as the future of the Magpies, and he made a point of saying "us" whenever he spoke about the club. It was, in his mind, a team effort.

Ashfield in charge

CAMPBELLTOWN OUTNUMBERED AND OUTVOTED



Alan Clarke Always a gentleman, he was known for his tact and humour. Clarke also ensured that Ray Corkery — as Campbelltown's football hero — was appointed his deputy chairman.

"Rescue operation" was a phrase Alan Clarke often used to describe Ashfield's arrival at Campbelltown.

That *did* seem valid. Even in its first year as "Wests", our club lost a whopping $240,000.

Clarke shrugged. That was to be expected, he said, given that expensive renovations were needed to revamp the 13-year-old premises to attract new members. (Steve Noyce still remembers the creaky floorboards).

That revamp worked, and new patrons poured through the doors. "Startling," Clarke said. Membership soared from 2000 in 1986 to 8000 by the 1990s.

The power of a fresh coat of paint, and a big Magpie on the roof. Or was it more than that?



Danny Ware Our club's new secretary-manager. "His wife, Margaret, ran the Magpies cheer girls," said Steve Noyce. Karen Hansen added: "Danny was great, very focused on us being a community- and family-minded club."

Ashfield had appointed a new secretary-manager to run the club — Danny Ware. He was an inventive marketer who organised constant giveaways and raffles, held free stage acts, and arranged kids' shows with clowns, ice-cream and hot dogs. "Family club" was a new catchcry.

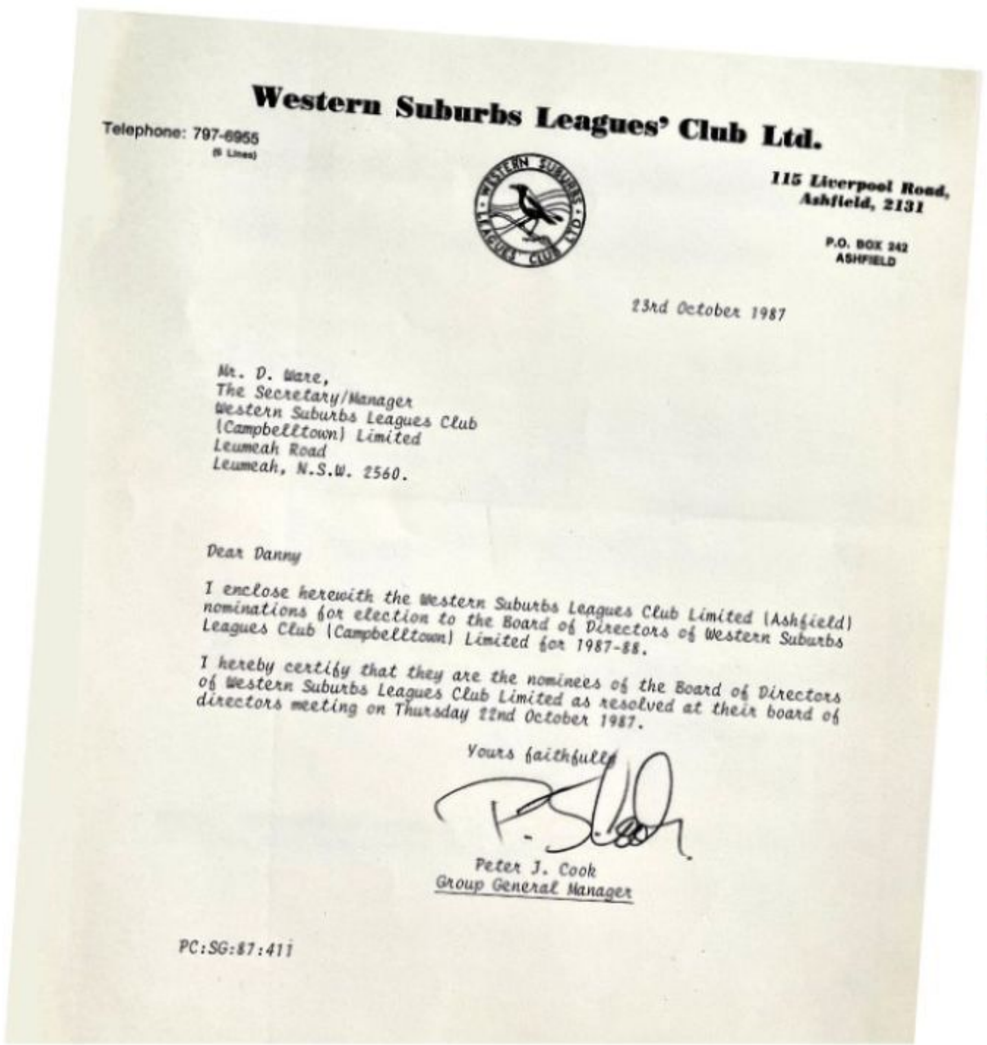
In the adjacent squash courts, the upstairs section became the Magpies' new administration offices, while its three courts, gymnasium, pool and sauna were available to all club members. Not a money spinner, but it did add squash to the list of sub-clubs.

Those sub-clubs were urged to embrace the new colours. Kangaroos Fishing Club,

> **The cost of bringing premiership football to Campbelltown would be born by Ashfield — a price we are prepared to pay.**
>
> ALAN CLARKE



Historic glimpse
This shot shows a John Therry Catholic High School sports carnival at Orana Park in the late 1980s. If you look closely you might see the giant magpie on the club's roof.



Western Suburbs Leagues' Club Ltd.

Telephone: 797-6955
(6 Lines)

115 Liverpool Road,
Ashfield, 2131

P.O. BOX 242
ASHFIELD

23rd October 1987

Mr. D. Ware,
The Secretary/Manager
Western Suburbs Leagues Club
(Campbelltown) Limited
Leumeah Road
Leumeah, N.S.W. 2560.

Dear Danny

I enclose herewith the Western Suburbs Leagues Club Limited (Ashfield) nominations for election to the Board of Directors of Western Suburbs Leagues Club (Campbelltown) Limited for 1987-88.

I hereby certify that they are the nominees of the Board of Directors of Western Suburbs Leagues Club Limited as resolved at their board of directors meeting on Thursday 22nd October 1987.

Yours faithfully

Peter J. Cook
Group General Manager

PC:SG:87:411

A 1987 letter from Ashfield
It gives the Campbelltown club instructions re the appointment of Ashfield delegates to its board. Despite using phrases like "nominations for election" it was, in truth, a rubber stamp. Only three Campbelltown directors (a powerless minority) were elected by the club membership.

for example, became Magpies Fishing Club. The darts club also staged a Black and White Shield challenge event against its Ashfield "sister club".

That friendly inter-club rivalry became more fraught in the local boardroom, which was firmly controlled by Ashfield.

Each year, six of our board's nine directors (a solid majority) were *appointed* by Ashfield. Only three were *elected* by the club's membership. That Campbelltown trio — Ray Corkery, Barry Upsall and Bob O'Sullivan — often felt pointless.

Clarke, however, was a natural diplomat who maintained unity. Corkery, his deputy, praised the chairman for the "amicable and close-working" bridges he built. Steve Noyce agreed. "Alan Clarke was very mild-mannered, and Ray was known for his outspoken passion, but they worked well together."

Rick Wayde remembered a genuine spirit of inclusion. "One of the first things we did was pay back the [1970s] debentures. Those old debts, or at least the bigger ones, were fixed up as part of the spirit of the thing." About $50,000 in total.

But many smaller investors weren't included. "Never saw a cent," said both Frank Ward and Roy Warby.

Promises, promises

THE CLUB EXPANSION THAT NEVER HAPPENED

Wests was no longer in the red by 1988, hitting a profit of almost $67,000. The dark days were behind us.

Alan Clarke was dropping hints about a major building programme. "We can't forever be the little one-room club," he told members in 1987. "A very large complex will have to be planned."

That was music to Ray Corkery's ears. Additions were urgently needed, he said, as membership soared. So, too, did the profits — more than $500,000 by 1992.

But Corkery's sharp business brain couldn't work out *how* the promised building programme would occur if the club's savings were constantly milked by the Magpies. (In 1989, for example, the football team took half our total profit.) After other donations were made to local juniors and sub-clubs, there wasn't a lot of spare cash for construction.

The Magpies can't be blamed for putting their hand out. The job of a leagues club was to support its league team — and Ashfield was shouldering most of the burden. But Corkery called that short-sighted logic. "If we want a team in Campbelltown, we need a much bigger leagues club to support it," he said.

Clarke *did* accept that argument.

In 1990, he announced plans for a huge $21.5 million facility — including a tavern, gym, a restaurant, even retail shops.



The big white marquee Next to the club — seen in this 1989 aerial snap — was Ashfield's idea of expansion.



Annual report graphs Showing the steady profit growth of our club.



Club promotion From the late 1980s.



Community Campbelltown's growth had been difficult, but things were looking up by the late 1980s — with a Campbelltown Arts Centre, a Western Sydney University campus, and a Botanic Garden at Mount Annan *(above)*.



Campbelltown Blues A local Australian Rules team rose in success after the collapse of the Kangaroos' senior team. The captain-coach of the Blues, Russell Matheson, was later elected as a local Mayor and MP.

Clarke, however, died that November — and the promise died with him.

Ashfield sidelined the planned extension (blaming an economic recession then gripping Australia) and called for costs to be slashed at Campbelltown.

That infuriated Corkery. He succeeded Clarke as the new club chairman, but realised he was a powerless figurehead, constantly outvoted and defeated by the board's Ashfield appointees.

"After the death of Alan Clarke all the goodwill and good faith that he had encouraged was lost," Corkery said. "A combined spirit no longer existed."

At one club AGM, members complained about the long queues to buy a beer. So Ashfield agreed to extra staff but a firm "no" to extensions. Even as the economy began to bounce back.

It was not until Campbelltown recorded a record profit of almost $1 million in 1995 that expansion was allowed back on the table. But, when the development application was lodged, banks refused to provide the required loan funds. This was due to a new set of financial obligations placed on the club by Ashfield.

An exasperated Corkery went public with his frustration: "Another 12 months has passed by, and whilst the club has again produced a record profit, it would appear they do not have a lot to show for it."

But, if Corkery felt like he was caught on a constant treadmill of disappointment, at least there was major Campbelltown progress being felt within the Magpies rugby league football team . . .

"The Ashfield era was a critical point in our history and a time of great need. They were crucial to our survival, and we wouldn't be where we are without them.

ALAN BUXTON

"We were never going to get what was good for Campbelltown. Our money was *their* money, if you get what I mean.

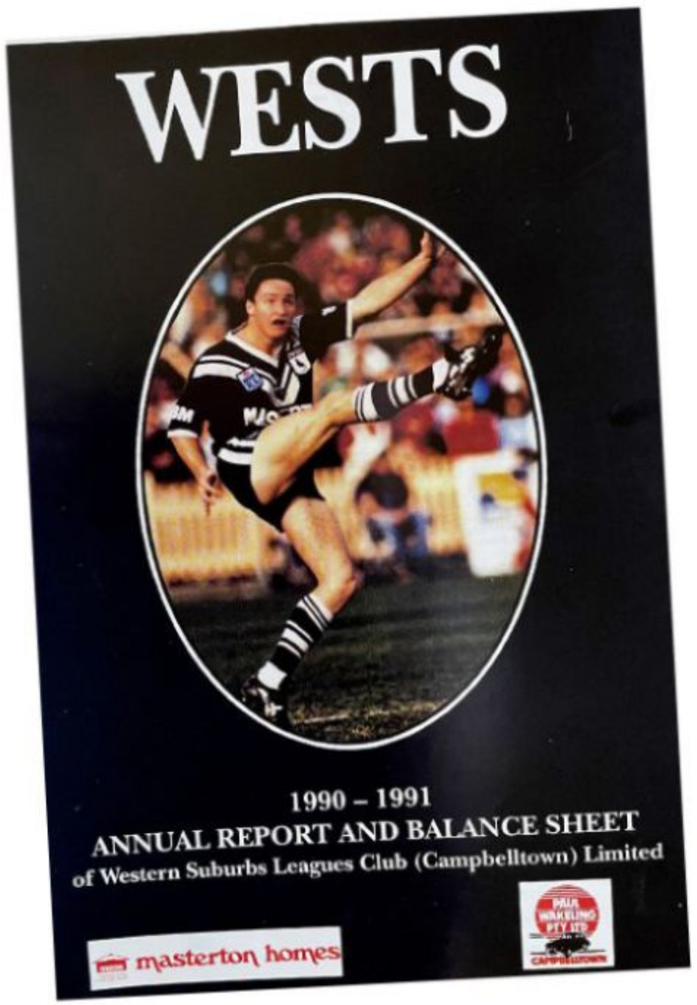
STAFFER KAREN HANSEN

Localising the Magpies

A CRUCIAL SHOWDOWN AT WESTS CAMPBELLTOWN

In the early 1990s, Campbelltown patriot Steve Noyce was appointed as the new CEO of the Magpies.

As well as his close links to our club, Noyce was a local juniors coach — and one of his former players, Jason Taylor, was on the brink of rugby league fame.



Local star Our club's 1991 annual report celebrated Jason Taylor, a fan favourite at Orana Park.

Other local players had made it to first grade (such as Jamie Ainscough, Shaun Devine and Stan Presdee) but Taylor — a former St Gregory's student — was the first superstar, with his deadly-accurate goal kicking and open style of play.

Wests was so proud of 'JT' that he was featured on the cover of our 1991 annual report. A junior to celebrate.

Then, it all went pear-shaped.

The media was abuzz about a feud between Taylor and Magpies' coach Warren Ryan, who benched him mid-season in 1992. That unpopular decision was overturned by the Magpies board, but a frustrated Taylor walked away and joined the North Sydney Bears, where he went on to become the game's top point-scorer of the decade.

Many club members muttered that the wrong person had been forced out — it *should* have been Ryan.



Troubled times Mayor Gordon Fetterplace welcomed Magpies coach Warren Ryan to the Fisher's Ghost Festival in 1990, but Ryan was a poor diplomat — with growing unrest among players, our club, and local fans.



Blank Jerseys The Magpies playing without a major sponsor during the mid-1990s.

Magpies then plunged into endless crisis. Injuries. Salary cap breaches. Loss of sponsors. Poor on-field performances.

This led to a showdown at Wests Campbelltown, in June 1994, when a delegation of unhappy local business leaders confronted the Magpies board.

This delegation was led by solicitor Jim Marsden — younger brother of John — and local car dealer Paul Wakeling, an influential sponsor. They wanted the Magpies to be "a more genuine product of its new Campbelltown home".

Wests faced liquidation without business support, so Ryan was sacked as coach, and several Campbelltown faces were added to the Magpies board. By 1995, Marsden was elected chairman.

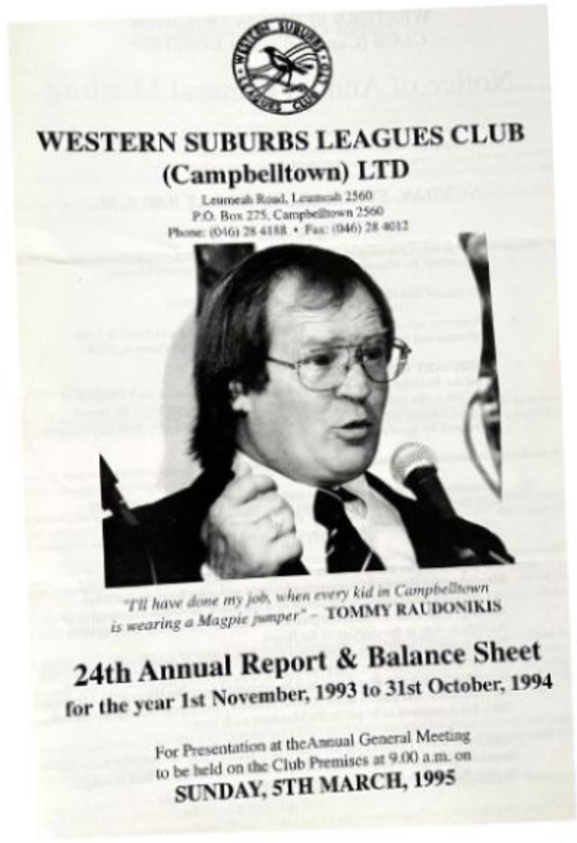
With Marsden and Noyce now at the helm, the Magpies suddenly felt a lot more local. Football club board meetings were also moved from Ashfield to Campbelltown, a heavily-symbolic cultural shift.

As a coaching successor for Ryan, Wests hired a true Magpies legend — Tom Raudonikis. He'd been coaching in Queensland and, in his distinctive raspy voice, Raudonikis vowed to make his beloved Magpies a competitive force once more.

Better still, Raudonikis made his home in Leumeah and, as promised, took the Magpies to the finals in 1996.

Jim Marsden "I am not saying that we shouldn't recognise the history and tradition of Wests, but more has to be done to involve Macarthur."





WESTERN SUBURBS LEAGUES CLUB
(Campbelltown) LTD

Leumeah Road, Leumeah 2560
P.O. Box 275, Campbelltown 2560
Phone: (046) 28 4188 • Fax: (046) 28 4012

"I'll have done my job, when every kid in Campbelltown is wearing a Magpie jumper" – TOMMY RAUDONIKIS

24th Annual Report & Balance Sheet
for the year 1st November, 1993 to 31st October, 1994

For Presentation at theAnnual General Meeting
to be held on the Club Premises at 9.00 a.m. on
SUNDAY, 5TH MARCH, 1995

Tom Raudonikis His arrival as coach injected a dose of optimism into the Magpies, and he was celebrated on our club's annual report cover. Corkery was a huge Tommy fan — *"his passion is just what the side needs."*

In the early 1990s the Magpies were still working out of the squash court building, and enjoyed a strong relationship with the club next door.

STEVE NOYCE

The ‘Wests Foundation’

LOOKING AFTER OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

Rugby league was the reason our club existed, but it remained a beacon for *all* sports. So, at the instigation of secretary-manager Danny Ware, a “Wests Foundation” was established. This was a special body to help fund worthy young Campbelltown athletes “towards and beyond 2000”.

This Foundation was officially launched on 23 June 1994 by Olympic swimming coach Laurie Lawrence.

Its committee was chaired by John Marsden — a thoughtful inclusion of the club’s spurned founding father.



“It was truly great to have John on the Foundation,” said senior staffer Karen Hansen. Marsden’s committee included prominent businesspeople and also cultural leaders — such as Sioux Garside of Campbelltown Arts Centre.

This was because Wests believed the Foundation had a potential beyond sport, seeking backers to extend grants to other areas. “The Foundation hopefully will support the youth of the future in a variety of fields,” said Ray Corkery, “including the arts, entertainment and at all academic levels.”

Soon afterwards, Danny Ware took charge of Seagulls Leagues Club at Tweed Heads.

Peter Cook arrived from Ashfield as the new boss at Campbelltown, taking the title general manager. “Peter was a hard taskmaster,” recalled Karen Hansen, “but a very good businessman.”

John Marsden The founding father was back at “his” club via the Wests Foundation — a great way to mend bridges. Marsden had been offended when Ashfield re-allocated membership numbers in 1986 and gave him number 27! He returned his No 1 badge in fury, refusing to set foot in the club until Ashfield backed down. It did. No 1 went to the grave with Marsden.





Formalising our funding support
Dolphins Softball *(at top)* and Magpies Cricket were two of the first clubs to join the Wests Sport Council in the late 1990s.

There were also changes to the sub-clubs.

Sports secretary Bill Hoad collapsed and died at the 1997 AGM. Corkery made a heartfelt tribute: "If St Peter has a fishing club in heaven, I am sure Bill is to the fore in its organisation — and giving all involved hell. We all miss you, Bill".

The club's new sports secretary was Fred Borg, Campbelltown's Citizen of the Year, known for his tireless community work.

Borg took Hoad's solid base and forged it into the "Wests Sports Council" in 1999. This was a formal network of all the sporting groups Wests had a supportive relationship with. In 1999, it also began holding monthly/annual awards.

By the early 2000s, the Sports Council included 10 clubs: Campbelltown Camden Ghosts Cricket, Campbelltown District Netball Association, Campbelltown Ghosts Baseball, Dolphins Softball, Macarthur Triathlon, Macquarie Fields Swimming, Magpies Cricket, Ruse Soccer, Wests Social Fishing and Wests Hockey. (In 2024, it has three times as many clubs.)

The lion's share of Wests' funding still went to the Magpies — $200,000 in 1995. But Corkery wasn't happy about that, as it was preventing the promised expansion.





Wests events in the 1990s *Above* is Danny Wade, Julie Luke (CEO of Wests Juniors), Deputy manager Rod Hahn and general manager Peter Cook. Sue O'Neill, *top right*, is cleaning tables — with a small staff everyone pitched in. *At right* is Werriwa MP Mark Latham speaking to a crowd.





Fred Borg Our sports secretary of the late 1990s, who created the Wests Sports Council.





Gordon Fetterplace
One of Campbelltown's longest-serving Mayors, was skilled at juggling both sides of politics (pictured above with Prime Minister Gough Whitlam in the 1970s).
But, at his core, he was a humble everyman, most comfortable sitting around a camp fire, beer in hand, wearing his old battered bush hat and Magpies jersey. His personal charisma is largely credited for convincing Ashfield to loosen its grip on the Campbelltown club.

Wests Campbelltown must have autonomy [from Ashfield], it must have the ability for its members to elect and have confidence in its board — with no nominations from outside.

JIM MARSDEN

Spurning Ashfield

THE PUSH TO LOCALISE OUR LEAGUES CLUB

The bitterness of board meetings at Campbelltown had become entrenched. The days of *"we"* under Alan Clarke had turned into *"us versus them"*.

Despite being chairman, Corkery was still being outvoted. But he did get a valuable ally in 1994 when former Mayor Gordon Fetterplace was elected to the board. Fetterplace was loyal to Corkery, and to Campbelltown, but he was also a staunch Magpies man — and his larrikin charm built bridges on the board.

Nonetheless, Corkery hit the roof when Ashfield handed Campbelltown a bill for club revamps since 1986, plus costs associated with the (non-existent) extensions. Almost $1 million.

Corkery insisted the late Alan Clarke had committed to develop Campbelltown at Ashfield's cost — but that money was now considered a "loan".

The result was a new round of acrimony. (It was this tangled mess of financial governance that had caused the banks to refuse to provide money to build the proposed extensions.)

Corkery wanted Ashfield, in return for this "loan" repayment, to allow Campbelltown a *locally-elected* board. Ashfield complained about Corkery's "confrontationist" attitude, and suggested the club was ungrateful for being rescued from bankruptcy in 1986.

Stepping into the fray was Jim Marsden who, as Magpies chairman, warned that the Campbelltown club was "lagging behind", and urged Ashfield to let it chart its own future. Many believe Fetterplace's diplomacy was, too, a key factor. "Everyone liked Gordon, even the Ashfield mob," recalled Bruce Melville. "He definitely helped swing things our way".



Artist's impression
Architect Peter Georgeson's concept of what the long-imagined club extensions at Wests might look like. This artwork appeared on the front cover of our 1995 annual report — but many Campbelltown cynics doubted Ashfield's willingness to press ahead with the expensive building work.

When George Grimmond, chairman of Ashfield, received blunt questions from local members, he claimed it was always Ashfield's intention for Campbelltown, in time, to have "its own representation".

Corkery insisted that time was *now*! He requested that the next batch of Ashfield appointees, due in early 1995, include two Campbelltonians "who he could work with": accountant Roy Warby and surveyor John McDonald.

To everyone's surprise, Ashfield agreed.

With their appointment, Campbelltown suddenly commanded a narrow 5-4 majority on the board. "I saw Ray after that happened," laughed Melville, "he was punching his fist into his hand with glee."

Corkery thus began what he privately described as a "messy divorce".

After much haggling, the two boards settled on a $600,000 figure to be paid back to Ashfield for the "loan". Campbelltown also bought the squash court from Ashfield for $217,000.

Rick Wayde, looking back, says while he understands the local emotions, from an Ashfield perspective it was a tragedy. "I wasn't on the board at that time, and if I was, I never would have let Campbelltown go." Wayde blamed "the laziness of some of the Ashfield people — they didn't want to have to keep on driving out to board meetings at Campbelltown."

Karen Hansen, a senior staffer, agreed. "I do think it was a relief to the Ashfield people not to drive out here anymore. For us, it was also a relief because we could now do our own thing — and I don't think Ashfield was ever going to pay for those extensions."

Independence Day

CAMPBELLTOWN REGAINS TOTAL CONTROL

An extraordinary meeting of members was called on 3 March 1996 — to vote for a change to our club's constitution.

Gordon Fetterplace had proposed that the Campbelltown board be reduced from nine directors to seven — all of them democratically-elected. *No more Ashfield appointees*!

That official resolution was moved from the floor "with a great deal of pleasure" by Magpies CEO Jim Marsden, and was passed unanimously. Ashfield's decade in control was over.

In the subsequent democratic election, Ray Corkery was returned as chairman, with Fetterplace as his deputy. Also re-elected were long-time director Barry Upsall, and recent additions to the board, Roy Warby and John McDonald.



Serendipity The big Hollywood blockbuster of 1996 was a film about the ejection of alien occupiers. Purely a coincidence.

The last two spots went to Ron McDonald (a brother of John) who was a founder of the Catholic Club and a finance manager of the RSL Club, as well as Barry Moore, a general manager of the RSL for 16 years. Corkery called it a Dream Team.

George Grimmond, on behalf of Ashfield, wished Campbelltown "our very best for the future", suggesting the two clubs could now prosper as equal partners.

Corkery thanked Ashfield — it had saved his club from bankruptcy. But there was

> **We have reverted to a democratically-elected Board of seven, all of whom have a long association with the Campbelltown area.**
>
> RAY CORKERY





Excellent staff The new Campbelltown-controlled board congratulated not only its loyal members, but its hard-working staff as the transition took place. Pictured here above 1990s staffers posing for snaps. The cellarmen are Mick Wilson and Steve Vidler.



The first local board since 1986

At far left are the club's two senior managers — Rod Hahn *(standing)* and Peter Cook *(seated)*.

The seven directors are *(standing at rear)* John McDonald, Barry Upsall, Roy Warby, Ron McDonald and Barry Moore, and *(seated at front)* Ray Corkery and Gordon Fetterplace.



Executive Assistant Karen Hansen
One of our club's longest-serving staffers. A true "jill of all trades" she was a prime mover of almost everything that happened at the club — from functions and training to marketing and recruitment.

a strict caveat: no money would go to the Magpies for three years.

Corkery, with Marsden's support, had declared a "moratorium" to allow Campbelltown to build its long-awaited extensions. A dismayed Ashfield was left to fund the football team alone.

Quick progress was made on financing the extensions, thanks to Paul Wakeling who opened a door for loan negotiations with Esanda Finance and ANZ Bank.

Building work, by Gledhill Constructions, began in August 1996.

Our club's general manager, Peter Cook, was technically an Ashfield appointee but remained in charge and won praise for his role in loan negotiations.

Public praise was also heaped on other senior staffers: Cook's deputy Rod Hahn, executive assistant Karen Hansen, and promotions manager Norm Alamango for their hard work during the changeover.

Most of our profit was now funding building work, but there was also a big jump in donations to local sporting clubs. A hefty $48,524 was given in 1996, more than double the previous year's effort.

That was a sign the new-look Campbelltown club was going to be about a lot more than *just* the Magpies.

Wests Campbelltown doubles in size

THE LONG-AWAITED EXTENSION OF 1997

Our club became a giant building site known as *Stage One*.

"Whilst it would be great to be able to do all the proposed extension in one go," Ray Corkery told members, "we are restricted by funding and parking constraints."

The project would include a new foyer and entry, a new poker machine lounge, a large new mixed lounge, a TAB/Keno area, and a new administration area, plus a complete refurbishment of existing areas.

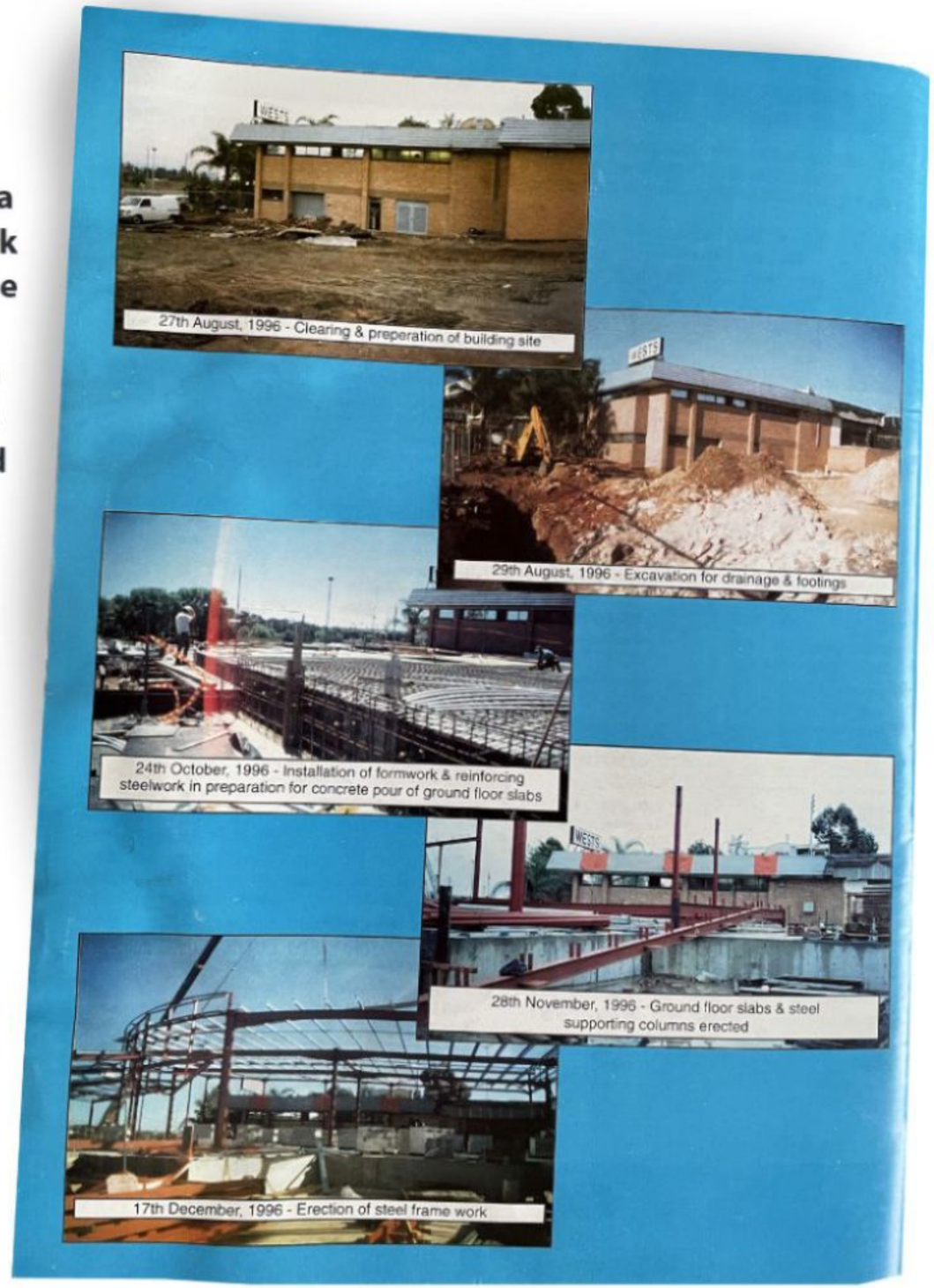
Progress was slow at first with the laying of foundations and drainage; the site was solid rock. But once the footings were laid, and ground floor slabs poured, the steelwork went up quickly.

As this grand design unfolded, the adjacent squash court was demolished to create more car parking spaces. (Magpies' offices on the top floor were relocated to Queen Street, Campbelltown.)

Corkery, in the annual report, singled out a trio of club members for special praise:

"The demolition of the old squash court and its replacement with a landscaped carpark gives the club a fine perspective and the sealing of the back car park has eliminated the old dust bowl."

PETER COOK,
GENERAL MANAGER



Back cover of Wests' 1997 annual report
Showing a collage of photos showing Gledhill Constructions' progress.



Finished The new-look club lit up like a Christmas tree in September 1997. A sealed car parking area had replaced the old squash court.



Happy faces Magpies chairman Jim Marsden *(at centre)* proud of his big brother's legacy, at the new-look club in 1997 with life members 'Poppa' Evans and Tony Norton.

The first two were Warren Thomson, a project builder by trade, and Robert Round, an architect, who had both volunteered their know-how to the building committee.

The third person praised was Alan Buxton, a local ANZ banker. "$3.4 million was a lot of money to borrow back then, and I was able to get it approved," Buxton smiled. "I was essentially the club's bank manager at ANZ." Buxton also joined the finance committee as a volunteer.

Construction work fell behind due to rain, but finished under budget — $5.5 million.

The finished extensions were opened in April 1997. Refurbishment of the original club was completed four months later.

The doubling of our club's size would more than double our profits — from $1 million in 1997 to $2.3 million in 1998.

Just as Corkery had predicted.

Stage Two would soon be on the drawing board, the club announced, and that would be even grander: a major $10.8 million project involving construction of an upstairs auditorium.

Wests, meanwhile, felt like celebrating . . .



Palm Court Brasserie The new bistro was a drawcard of the 1997 extension. It was bisected with an operable wall enabling both restaurant and private function facilities.

Oh, what a day!

WESTS CELEBRATES WITH A COMMUNITY PARTY

A grand "re-opening" was held on Sunday, 14 September 1997.

There was a parade, bands, cheerleaders, circus performers, rides, footballers signing autographs, fireworks, and dancing horses from El Caballo Blanco. All overlooked by a giant inflatable Magpie.

Campbelltown councillor Meg Oates — a Magpies fan and proud Leumeah resident — helped Corkery with the official duties in a packed auditorium. The days of Wests being Campbelltown's 'third club' would soon be in the past, he predicted.

The stars *did* seem to be aligning . . .

We had a big new (locally-run) leagues club. We had the Magpies football team (headed by a local CEO and a local chairman). Some of its best young stars (such as the McGuinness brothers and John Skandalis) were local juniors. And the team was coached by Leumeah's own Tom Raudonikis.

Everything looked bright . . . until a powerful media company scuttled it all.









Giant community celebration Nobody could wipe the smile off Ray Corkery's face after so many years of hope. His huge new club had opened — with all of Campbelltown invited along.








Welcome to the
OF
GRAND OPENING
WESTS


GRAND
WESTS
WESTS

Wests Tigers

CAMPBELLTOWN FOOTBALLING FUTURE IS RE-WRITTEN

The destructive Super League war of the late 1990s — in which Rupert Murdoch's News Ltd launched a rebel competition in a bid to gain valuable Pay TV rights — left the sport in tatters.

Wests remained loyal to the Australian Rugby League (ARL). It had no choice. Super League wasn't interested, signing other Sydney teams such as Panthers, Bulldogs and Sharks. After struggling so hard to get a local team into the top competition, everything seemed at risk.

The new Magpies CEO, Martin Bullock, attended meetings at the club to update members. "We need to be strong to show we have a strong following in this area," he said.



Martin Bullock The new Magpies CEO and proud Campbelltonian, at a Wests event in 1997.

The appointment of coach Raudonikis had, as expected, sent a shot of adrenaline into the Magpies. But the team could not compete in the expensive player market stoked by Super League and wooden spoons awaited in 1998 and 1999. The game itself was in crisis as crowds dwindled, ratings fell, juniors stagnated, and sponsors stayed away.

So, a peace deal was thrashed out by the ARL and News Ltd resulting in a new, merged, National Rugby League (NRL).

This NRL ordered a reduction in the number of teams to just 14. News Ltd promoted the Magpies ("a waste of time") as the team most likely to be ousted first.

Wests had little choice but to merge with another at-risk club, the Balmain Tigers, to ensure their mutual survival — giving birth to "Wests Tigers".

The good news was, a $22 million revamp of Campbelltown Sports

The heritage logo The badge adopted by the Magpies in 1998 as it was fighting for survival. Tom Raudonikis publicly declared: "Western Suburbs belong here in Campbelltown — not anywhere else".



Claws out, ready to roar Campbelltown football fans got their fourth "local" team in 15 years — from Kangaroos to Jets to Magpies to Tigers.



Progress Campbelltown Sports Stadium's new eastern grandstand is seen here. In the foreground is the new state-of-the-art Athletics Stadium, created on the old training oval.
"The stadium had not been up to scratch," recalled Jim Marsden. "Even as a merged team, we wouldn't have been accepted if it wasn't upgraded. With the Olympics fast approaching, I went to the two local members (Michael Knight and Craig Knowles) as well as Campbelltown Council's General Manager Paul Tosi, and suggested the stadium be upgraded and also used as a training facility for visiting Olympic teams. This was agreed by all, with the money raised."
When it reopened, Wests provided $600,000 to fit out facilities at both grounds, as well as temporarily operating the catering service.

Ground, to ensure it met NRL standards, included a giant new eastern grandstand. The bad news was, this stadium would be barely used because Wests Tigers was a *joint venture* — meaning only half its home games would be played at Leumeah, the rest at Leichhardt.

Even worse news, Wests Tigers was essentially a creation of the Ashfield and Balmain leagues clubs (which were footing most of the bills) so Campbelltown was given just one seat on the 10-seat Wests Tigers board.

That stark imbalance was reinforced when the joint venture made Concord Oval its headquarters, as the media tended to focus on "the Tigers" and usually refer to Leichhardt Oval.

There was, however, local joy when Wests Tigers took to the field for the first time at Campbelltown Sports Ground — on 6 February 2000 — and John Skandalis, a former Magpie and Minto Cobras junior, scored the first try.

Other homegrown stars such as Liam Fulton and Brett Hodgson helped add a Campbelltown presence, but the road ahead would be rocky.



Local hero John 'Skando' Skandalis became a popular Campbelltown star of the Tigers — and has always been closely-linked to Wests Campbelltown.

Millennium games

AT THE OLYMPICS . . . AND IN THE BOARDROOM

Skando's first try for the Tigers was almost outstaged by another sport-related milestone at Campbelltown Sportsground that year — celebrations for the Sydney 2000 Olympics torch relay.

Olympics fever gripped Wests, too, as colourful banners went up and an endless array of promotions, ticket giveaways and memorabilia were rolled out.

Nine months earlier, the club had also embraced the New Year's Eve celebrations that ushered in 2000, our function rooms booked for months in advance. We also introduced a "Millennium Card" for member discounts.

Apart from *millennium*, another new catchphrase entered the lexicon — *www*.



Tony Mathew Arriving as the new general manager in 2001, he would stay two decades and eventually take the title chief executive officer.

The world wide web was exploding in use and, in 1999, we began promoting our online address — www.westslc.com — as "an exciting new communication tool".

Peter Cook had stepped down as general manager in 1998, and was briefly replaced by Danny Ware, before Tony Mathew was hired as the new club boss in 2001. He would stay two decades.

Changes to the board of directors also made waves.

Gordon Fetterplace had retired in November 1999 — "accepted with the deepest regret" by Corkery. His new deputy chairman was Roy Warby, who was respected for his financial skills, but also one of Corkery's trusted Kangaroos team mates from 1969.

The gaping hole on the board left by Fetterplace's departure was filled by a true club legend: Mike Semchyshyn.



"Should auld acquaintance be forgot" The dawning of the year 2000 got all the publicity, but Wests also got behind the true millennium celebrations — which, according to basic mathematics, was the start of 2001.

Big day at Leumeah The arrival of the Olympic torch at Campbelltown Sports Ground in 2000, *opposite*, resulted in a massive community celebration.



But, at the February 2000 AGM (where Semchyshyn's appointment was to be made official) he was defeated — *by just one vote!* — by a surprise candidate: Ashfield's Rick Wayde.

Other Ashfield loyalists who still held their Campbelltown membership got him across the line. (At least that's the popular club folklore.) It was certainly a shock.

Wayde would prove, as always, an astute and eloquent presence. But Corkery saw it as an insult to Semchyshyn . . . and an unwelcome return of Ashfield influence. "A thorn in our side".

Wayde admits he *did* want to ensure Campbelltown's support for the Magpies amid all the joint venture politics. And, as it turned out, Semchyshyn *was* elected to the board — at the 2001 AGM, replacing a retiring Ron McDonald.

Corkery wanted Wayde gone, and coaxed a popular Fetterplace out of retirement. When the next vote was held, in February 2002, Wayde was ousted. The Ashfield connection was cut again.

Meanwhile, in these early years of the new millennium, Wests embraced a noticeably *regional* outlook. (Evident by the names appearing on our donation list — such as Camden Scouts, Picton High School, and Narellan Junior Rugby League Club.)

We wanted a *Macarthur-wide* presence.



Rick Wayde The former Magpies CEO was a skilled emcee, pictured here interviewing Tom Raudonikis at Wests. The Ashfield loyalist's re-election to the Campbelltown board in 2000 came as a genuine shock to other directors.





Camden Bowling Club in its 1950s heyday Its Onslow Park site was leased on a long-term basis from Camden Council, but by the late 1990s the club was in a financial mess. After the merger with Wests Campbelltown in 2000, a tiny magpie logo was added to the white sleeves of the bowlers' uniforms.

The magpie wants too much, but her tail is unable to carry it.

OLD PROVERB CITED BY
CAMDEN BOWLING CLUB HISTORIAN FRANK FARRUGIA

Wests Camden Bowling Club

OUR FIRST PARTNERSHIP TEACHES MANY LESSONS

An almost-broke Camden Bowling Club asked Wests for a merger in 1999.

Wests agreed, calling it a gesture of community spirit. With strong support by members at both clubs, the merger became official in October 2000. "Wests Camden Bowling Club" was born.

More than $500,000 was injected into an extensive renovation of the rundown premises and its bowling greens.

But, the Camden investment soon turned into an endless money pit, both in staffing and resources, while recording heavy losses. Wests, in a frank appraisal to bankers stated: *"We spend considerable resources trying to put out fires [at Camden] yet our contribution is not appreciated by the majority of members and turnover continues to decline."*

Wests, unwilling to absorb that constant financial drain, advised Camden Council trading would cease in late 2002.

A Fairfield hotel group sought to obtain the site, but after strong opposition from Camden's pubs, another plan emerged.

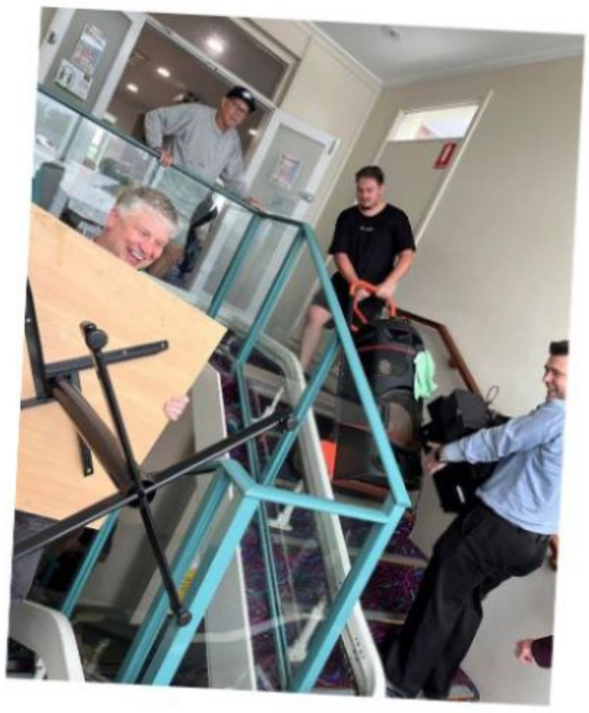
Bowling club members created a steering committee with tennis, cricket, and rugby league clubs in the township to create a "Camden Sports Club" on the site.

This steering committee needed to obtain a licence, so it asked Wests to keep the club and greens operating into 2003. Wests agreed — more a moral obligation, than a legal one. "This was a generous gesture and proved vital in stopping the lease from lapsing," said bowling club historian Frank Farrugia.

Camden Sports Club — or "Sporties" — opened in February 2004, and the link with Wests ended.

Sort of. An underlying affection obviously remains because when Sporties suffered severe flood damage, twice, in 2022 Wests donated furnishings. It also helped the embattled Camden club with its resources, transport, IT, and marketing support.

"The friendship, support and camaraderie has been completely overwhelming," declared Sporties director Brooke Grech.



Helping hands When Camden Sports Club was hit by its second 'rain bomb' in 2022, an army of people — including several from Wests Group Macarthur— helped move items to the second level and sandbagging all doors.



Artist's Impression
Showing the huge new wing about to be created at the rear (Pembroke Road side) of the club.

Stage two extensions

WESTS GOES UPSTAIRS IN 2001

Ray Corkery had hoped the second round of club extensions might be ready for New Year's Eve celebrations in 1999. Not even close.

This is because the original design was torn up. "Unacceptable," the board said, "because it involved the demolition of part of the new section of the existing club."

New architects were engaged — Robertson and Marks — who created a two-storey design that involved hardly any demolition, and Denham Constructions began work in 2000, completed by the end of 2001.



Reality
The finished architecture — snapped from the front, and above.







New facilities The new upstairs auditorium space could comfortably sit 850 guests. O'Malley's Irish Pub was also a popular addition.

> **It is my 100 per cent belief that it was this new local board of directors at Campbelltown that turned things around. We always had the attitude — borrow, expand, make profits, pay it back — and keep doing that. Look how big and successful our club is today.**
>
> ROY WARBY

The entrance foyer now had an undercover drive-through passenger drop off and pick up area. Also a new 200-car parking area east of the building (where the big white marquee had once stood) with a second entrance created into the reception.

The original auditorium became an enlarged bistro, sports bar and gaming area, while a staircase and lift gave access to the new first-floor auditorium.

These additions did not come cheap — $10.5 million — but were made possible via the club's finance committee, including the "invaluable" Alan Buxton, as Corkery once again hailed him.

Many more millions would be spent in the following few years, too, with an Irish bar — O'Malley's — added in 2002. Also two new downstairs conference/function rooms in 2005, together with a new "pokies balcony" (as indoor smoking was phased out via new state government regulations).

With the new extensions came the usual bump in membership, hitting 20,000 by 2004. Wests was now one of Campbelltown's major venues.

But . . with the Magpies no longer existing in first grade, and with the old links to Ashfield severed, should our club still be known as "Wests"?

‘Campbelltown Sports Club’

THE (FAILED) BID TO CHANGE OUR NAME

As the 2001 extensions went up, the Magpie shield came down, and it never returned. Wests had ditched the bird.

A top Magpies team no longer existed in the NRL, and anti-Ashfield sentiment had flared again due to squabbles in the Wests Tigers boardroom.

By the early 2000s, our club had replaced the magpie symbol with a new “palm trees” logo, hoping to evoke a holiday resort mood. Ray Corkery then proposed a complete name change: to “Campbelltown Sports Club”.

This title was trademarked, and local art students were tasked with coming up with a potential logo — ideally including orange (representing an athletics track), green (grass) and blue (water).

The name change would need members’ approval, so an extraordinary meeting was held on 26 September 2002.

The auditorium was packed. Not just with Campbelltown faces, but Ashfield ones. “A lot of the people who turned up to vote we never saw in the club,” said staffer Karen Hansen. Roy Warby added: “They bussed them all in from Ashfield.”

Rick Wayde remembers it differently. “There were no buses,” he said, “but there were phone calls, and an effort to keep [Campbelltown] as Wests”.

Wayde also suggested many Campbelltonians (such as Mayor Meg Oates) had become keen Magpies loyalists, and the local juniors were still wearing the black and white.

The existing ‘Wests’ name and logo did create a misconception because people thought our club was *owned* by the Western Suburbs football club. It wasn’t.

GARRY MUNRO



The Magpie shield It was taken down during building work and never went up again. Mark Wallington said it was smashed during removal and a senior club member at Campbelltown was heard to say “good riddance”.

New palm trees logo Our club no longer felt tied to the Magpies. It’s new branding is featured on this 2000s cap.



When the vote was held, there was a clear majority for "Campbelltown Sports Club" — almost 60 per cent. But, because a special resolution needed 75 per cent, the motion failed. Our official name would remain Western Suburbs League Club (Campbelltown) Ltd.

As the board licked their wounds, there was talk about a second attempt but, as time marched on, the Wests brand became too deeply entrenched.

Wayde did attempt to get re-elected to the board, in 2003, but was defeated by Alan Buxton — that "invaluable" club volunteer of the past two extensions. He was also our delegate to Wests Tigers.

Two more (unexpected) board changes quickly followed in 2003 . . .

Barry Moore retired and was replaced by Paul Lake — well-known in junior rugby league circles, a Campbelltown Mayor, and an active clubsman who had actually moved the formal motion in favour of "Campbelltown Sports Club".

Next came the death of popular director John McDonald, which sent the club into mourning. His place on the board was filled by Warren Thomson, another committee volunteer who'd played a big role in the recent extensions.



A new generation of future leaders This trio joined the board in 2003 — *(from left)* Alan Buxton, Paul Lake, and Warren Thomson — all well-known club identities.





John McDonald and "his" bar There was much mourning when the former Kangaroo died in July 2003. With the blessing of his widow, Christel, the club's sports bar was named "Macca's Bar" in his memory.

The Home of Sport

EMBRACING A NEW MOTTO — AND A NEW MINDSET

Although "Campbelltown Sports Club" had not been approved as a name, Wests often acted as if it *had*.

In 2004, it introduced its new motto: "The Home of Sport".

Those four words were reinforced by an important cultural shift. The club had been founded to fund a top rugby league side (the Kangaroos, then Magpies), while giving funds to other sporting clubs as a sideline. That ranking was now flipped. Local juniors were now our focus.

The poor treatment of Campbelltown by Wests Tigers' board (dominated by Balmain and Ashfield) was a major catalyst. The last straw came in 2004 when the Tigers did a financial deal to play *half* their home games at Sydney's Telstra Stadium — leaving just three a year at Leumeah!

"Campbelltown community deserves their games," insisted Alan Buxton, our delegate to the Wests Tigers board. But his single vote was powerless against the nine inner-city votes pitted against him.

Mike Semchyshyn (who had replaced Fred Borg as sports secretary) wanted "truly local teams" to be our mission — an attitude embraced by the board.

We were committed to funding Wests Tigers until 2011, but our future now lay in what Buxton called the "grass roots" of sport. That funding was not always

Goodbye palm trees
The 'Home of Sport' motto was accompanied, in 2004, by our new 'stars' logo.

Why are we paying $500,000 a year for [Wests Tigers] football games that are not being played at Campbelltown? Let's instead support *true* local teams.

MIKE SEMCHYSHYN



Wests Cup
A scatter of clippings kept by Tony Norton. Teamwork and fair play were promoted in the new cup — win or lose, it was the lesson of the journey, said organisers Alex Melville, Brendan Roberts and Graeme Edwards.





Typical of the club's new focus Macarthur Rams Under 12 Women's Premier League soccer side, named as our club's "Team of the Year" in 2008. It was undefeated and running first on its ladder with a 10-point lead over the second-placed team. The Wests' board loved backing these young athletes.

glamorous. Things like socks, insurance premiums, or the upkeep of playing surfaces. But all vital for any volunteer-based sport to survive.

When Julie Luke of Wests Junior Rugby League publicly thanked the board for its increased funding at a subsequent AGM, it opened a floodgate of praise as one club after another followed suit.

In 2005, our name was given to a new annual "Wests Cup", a rugby league knockout carnival for schools across Macarthur that became a marked success. It had an emphasis on sportsmanship — with players even forming a tunnel for their opposition, and clapping them from the field.

Wests' directors felt far more inspiration from that, than any of the dysfunctional showdowns at Wests Tigers' board meetings.



Mike Semchyshyn One of the club's foundation directors returned to the board in 1999 and became the respected sports secretary.

By the 2000s, a popular highlight of club life was the annual Wests Sports Council Awards night. Monthly winners vied for a top annual award in seven categories: *Junior Sports Person*, *Youth Sports Person*, *Senior Sports Person*, *Elite Sports Person*, *Sports Team*, *Elite Sports Team*, and *Spirit of Sport*.

The club also introduced, in 2003, a Amateur Sporting Grants Policy for individuals and teams representing Macarthur at state, national or international level. In that first year, 128 rising stars shared $15,000. By 2005, it had more than doubled.

Many teams wore our logo somewhere on their uniforms or signage, and the Sports Council proudly boasted of a growing list of national and international achievers — many of them women. A few examples might include Erin Densham and Natalie Van Coevorden from Macarthur Triathlon, and Sarah Coyte, Lauren Cheatle and Belinda Vakarewa from Ghosts Cricket.

In 2006, Semchyshyn retired as sports secretary and handed the reins to Martin Bullock — widely experienced as a sports administrator — who would also shortly join the club board (replacing Gordon Fetterplace, who retired in 2007).



New Sports Secretary "Marty" Bullock has now served in the important role for almost two decades. He is pictured above at a Camden Netball presentation ceremony.

As he was Bullock's election to the club's Board of Directors in 2007 also showed how far Wests had come — in his footballing days, *shown at right*, he had played for the Collegians — the traditional rivals of the Kangaroos.





Emblazoned Wests is usually a quiet achiever, but many of our sporting clubs — such as Campbelltown Camden Ghosts Cricket — proudly feature our name on their uniforms, building a brand awareness across the Macarthur region.







Olympians Our club in 2004 gave financial support to hammer thrower Bronwyn Eagles and swimmer Jim Piper, above, "so they could give the Athens Olympics their absolute best".

Other Olympians have since enjoyed our support, such as 2012 bronze medal triathlete Erin Densham *(left)*.

> **Women's sport has been an important part of the club's support development —particularly women's cricket. That's another way my own family has been involved with Wests. My daughter has worn plenty of T-shirts with the club's logo through her cricketing career.**
>
> MANDY PERRIN

Bullock praises his many helpers over the years, such as Stephen Stewart, Karen Hansen, Colin Rose, Jan Hincks, Lyn Deveney, John Brown, Anne Fairhall, Les Welbourn, Paul Zielinski, and the club's 'sports ambassador' Tony Norton.

Stephen Stewart, as a president of the Sports Council, became so entrenched in our club's sporting ethos that he was also elected to the board of directors.

"We love being Santa Claus," said Stewart. "We love helping our clubs, because we, too, are involved in kids' sport and know what they're going through, what they 're all trying to build each weekend."

Roy Warby delights in the diversity, and the numbers. "Just look at the netball," he said, "how many girls' teams play at Minto each weekend, and we support all of that! Most of our money now goes to junior sport — which is how we want it."



Stephen Stewart The former president of Magpies Cricket Club, also served as president of the Sports Council before becoming a Wests director in 2008.

I don't care what sport kids are playing — so long as they're playing sport. Whatever we can do to make that happen is great.

STEPHEN STEWART

Alan Buxton added: "We've even changed the official wording of our club's constitution to reflect the fact that we exist to support *all* sports in Macarthur, not just rugby league."

Paul Lake said the levels of donations to local teams is snowballng. "We hand out some really big grants, but just as important are the smaller grants. Maybe for some little club that just needs an extra $2,000 or $5,000 to help them click along another season. That's an important service we provide."

Stewart said our club has, at times, taken unconventional steps to support junior teams. For example, when local newspapers (struggling to survive in an online world) stopped printing local team results, Wests purchased advertising space to run match reports. "Kids like to read about themselves — so we ensured at the time that they could."





Collage of Involvement Photographs submitted by our various sporting teams for the annual Sports Council award nights in the 2000s and 2010s. For Wests, being "the home of sports" is more than a mere slogan.















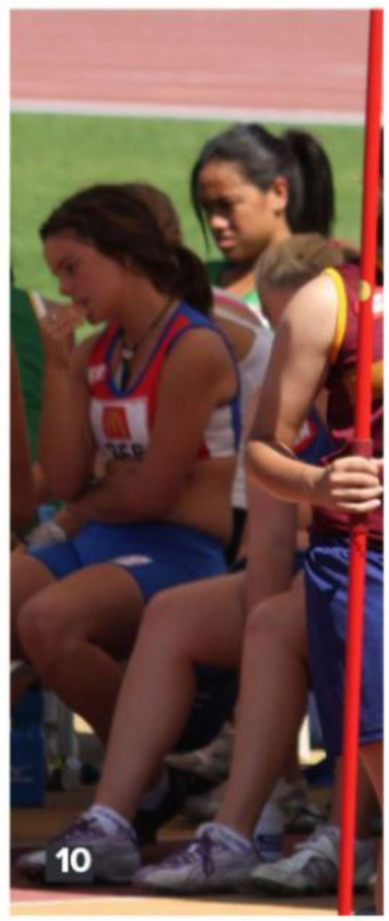





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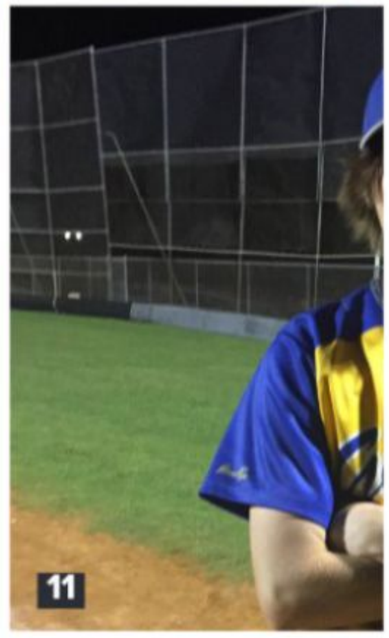

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A gallery of some Sports Council Awards winners:

1. **Rachael Jack** of Ambarvale Little Athletics, 2012 Senior Sports Person.
2. **Brad Cox** of Wests Hockey Club, 2014 Senior Sports Person.
3. **Lauren Cheatle** of Campbelltown Camden District Cricket Club, 2016 Elite Sports Person.
4. **Matthew Browne** of Magpies Cricket, 2019 Youth Sports Person
5. **Debbie Stewart** of Magpies Cricket, winner of the Spirit of Sport award in 2003, 2008 & 2018.
6. **Macarthur Raptors** National Indoor Cricket League, 2018 Elite Sports Team.
7. **13c Airds Lyrebirds** Netball Club, winner 2019 Sports Team of the Year.
8. **Damien Mortimer**, Campbelltown Camden District Cricket Club, 2013 Elite Sports Person
9. **Jordan Richardson** of Moorebank Baseball, 2017 Youth Sports Person.
10. **Jessica Pace** of Ambarvale Little Athletics, 2010 Youth Sports Person.
11. **Rhys Dewick** of Ghosts Baseball, Youth Sports Person in 2014 & 2016.
12. **Julie Foster** of Macarthur Triathlon Club, Senior Sports Person 2005 and 2010.
13. **Under 13 Mollie Dive Shield** Representative Team, Camden District Cricket Association, winner Elite Sports Team in 2012.
14. **Graduate B Macarthur Flames** Netball, Sports Team winner 2018.
15. **Robert Howe Jr** of SWSAS Tennis, Junior Sports Person 2008.
16. **Sarah Coyte** of Campbelltown Camden District Cricket Club, Elite Sports Person 2011.
17. **Darcey Malone** of Macarthur Football Association, 2019 Elite Sports Person.


24 Hour fight
against cancer
MACARTHUR

More than *just* sport

BACKING COMMUNITY CAUSES AND PEOPLE IN NEED

With its eye firmly on the future, Wests' board had to be reminded in August 2004 — by old Kangaroo Jan Hincks — that it had reached its 30th anniversary.

The club had reason to celebrate. In 1974, it had been technically running at a loss, but, in 2004, it was about to declare a profit of $6.5 million.

That led to a corresponding jump in grants. The $580,000 given in 2005 increased to $890,000 in 2006. It would keep climbing to more than $3.6 million by 2024.

That money, it must be stated, does not all go to sport, but also community, cultural, and educational causes.

A full list of all the recipients would fill another book, but a tiny sample might include Kids of Macarthur Health Foundation, Campbelltown PCYC, local Rotary clubs, Youth Solutions, Macarthur Domestic Violence, Lifeline Macarthur & Western Sydney, and Ingham Institute, and a range of local needs such as bush fire brigades and schools.

"I particularly love some of the small picture stuff we do," said Paul Lake. "For instance, we started doing breakfasts at Leumeah High because [former principal] Paul Zielinski told us some kids were coming to lessons hungry in the morning, so we did what we could to help kick-start their brains ready for learning."

Plenty of big picture stuff, too. One example was the devastating Boxing Day Tsunami of 2004 which killed 230,000 people and left millions homeless — Wests donated $10,000 to the appeal.

And we can't forget Macarthur's 24 Hour Fight Against Cancer walkathon, created by our former sports secretary Fred Borg, which raises money for cancer care. Wests began backing this event with a $2,000 grant in 2005 — which has since climbed to $20,000 a year.

Community presence Macarthur's 24-Hour Fight Against Cancer, *opposite page*, has been supported by Wests since it began in 2005. These events are also usually full of familiar Wests faces.



Helping hand Local bush fire brigades often benefit from Wests' funding. Pictured here in the late 1990s were Kentlyn volunteers Kalena Maika and Ron Worrell — the latter of whom was also a Life Member of Wests (and member no 97) who died in 2002.

The biggest and best community event that Campbelltown has ever seen was the Wests Tigers winning the 2005 NRL Premiership! Naturally we are proud to have played a major part in making that happen.

RAY CORKERY



Celebrating victory This photo of the celebrating Wests Tigers still graces the wall of our sports bar today. The team was coached by former Kangaroos captain Tim Sheens, and included players well connected to Campbelltown such as John Skandalis, Liam Fulton, Bryce Gibbs and Brett Hodgson, the latter of whom became an ambassador for Wests.

2005 Grand Final

WESTS TIGERS WIN THE NRL PREMIERSHIP

Campbelltown erupted in euphoria in October 2005 when Wests Tigers won the NRL premiership, defeating North Queensland Cowboys 30-16.

It was the first time a joint venture team had won a grand final, and the match set new television viewing records. Bitter Wests Tigers boardroom squabbles were forgotten as "our" team was joyously cheered and toasted.

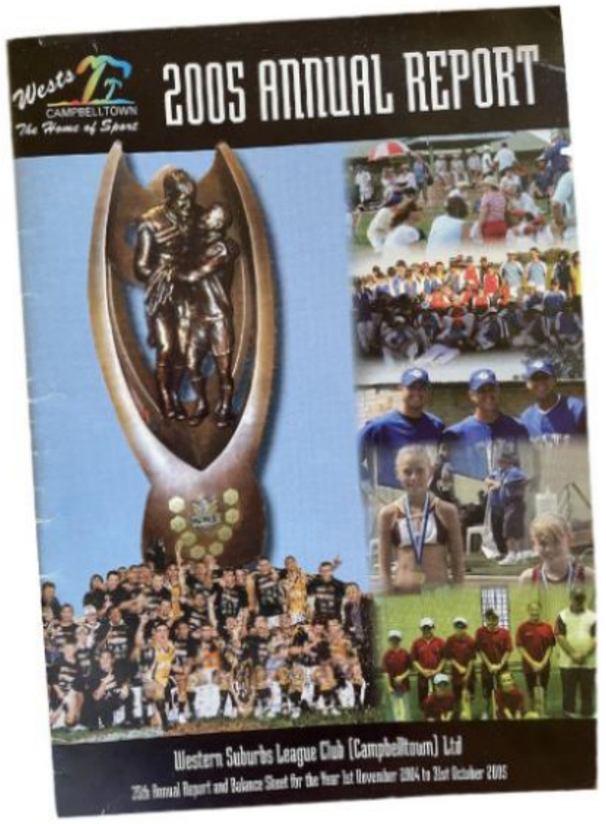
Mind you, it wasn't quite the same feeling as the 1969 grand final victory; the Kangaroos had returned home to Campbelltown to celebrate, whereas the Wests Tigers made merry that night at Ashfield and Balmain leagues clubs.

But the team did come to Campbelltown the next day, and thousands of fans flocked to Leumeah stadium to welcome them. It was a magical moment as local boy John 'Skando' Skandalis lifted the trophy and the crowd went wild.

In coming months, the players would visit local schools, as Wests proudly displayed the trophy for its patrons.

That local pride hit a high point at a special tribute event for Skandalis in 2006, when coach Tim Sheens, flanked by Steve Noyce and Jim Marsden, made a heartfelt announcement that Campbelltown was, without question, "the future of Wests Tigers" and he wanted to move its headquarters here. The room erupted in applause and cheers.

Sadly, the powerbrokers at Ashfield and Balmain saw things differently and Concord remained the team's main address.





Historic moment The cover of our annual report (*top right*) in 2005, celebrating the victory, and John Skandalis rasing the trophy in front of cheering crowds.

Warby era begins

AS OUR TWO FOUNDERS LEAVE THE MAIN STAGE

Ray Corkery was a shadow of himself. On a trip to England in 2003, he'd suffered a stroke that left him barely able to walk or talk, in rehabilitation for months.

"It was really bad," recalls daughter, Jodie. "His face dropped and he lost the use of the right-hand side of his body. But you could never knock Dad down — just like he played his football. *'I'll learn to write with my left hand,'* Dad told us, and he did learn to learn to walk again."

Ray's deputy, Roy Warby, stepped in as acting chairman, maintaining a steady ship. Out of sheer loyalty, Corkery remained the boss until February 2006, when it was clear change was needed.

"The club was really magnanimous," said Corkery's partner, Helen Lawson. "They kept him on when he probably should not have been there as chairman." Jodie agreed: "Whilst it impacted the speed with which he could process and express things, he always had his sharp business acumen and his wit."

When Warby took over, it was a significant milestone because there had only been three chairmen since 1974: John Marsden, Alan Clarke, and Corkery.

As a straight-talking accountant, Warby was known for his extensive knowledge of club laws. "He also puts 110 per cent into everything he does," said old Kangaroo Garry Munro.





Roy Corkery After his stroke he was granted life membership. "He was my close mate," recalled Bruce Melville, "but, In all honesty, Ray was also a shell of himself."



Roy Warby The new chairman had old links with the Kangaroos, as a member of the legendary 1969 grand final team. He had even older links with the suburb our club stood in as a descendant of Leumeah pioneer John Warby.

Warby would face many challenges in the years ahead, particularly as smoking bans and huge new poker machine taxes threatened clubs everywhere — but he would prove a firm leader, aided by Mike Semchyshyn as deputy.

Corkery did remain on the board, as a respected founding father of the club.

The club's other founding father, John Marsden, was also in poor health.

Marsden's little one-man law firm (opened in 1968 behind Roy Warby's father's bakery) had, by the 2000s, grown into one of the largest law firms in Sydney. Marsden himself had become a human headline as the president of the NSW Law Society, and NSW Council for Civil Liberties, as well as a vocal member of the NSW Police Board.

He was also at the centre of Australia's largest and longest defamation case. He emerged victorious, but the stress of that trial, many believe, triggered the cancer that ended his life in May 2006.

The crowd of mourners at his funeral included former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and High Court Justice Michael Kirby, but also hundreds of everyday



John Marsden in a media scrum prior to his death
The crowd at his funeral at St John's Church in Campbelltown was so large many mourners had to watch from a video link in a nearby hall. The gay man's sense of humour outlived him, with songs he requested be performed at his funeral including *YMCA* by The Village People.



friends from Wests, and many other community organisations he had supported. "John was often on the phone, asking if there was anything he could help us with," recalled Tony Norton. "He was a true friend."

Marsden's will ensured that money was left for an array of causes, from gay rights and Aboriginal scholarships, while his art collection, worth millions, went to his beloved Campbelltown Arts Centre.

His "No 1" membership of Wests also died with him, never to be re-issued.

> **At school John led a marching band; *he knew nothing of music*. He was foundation president of the swimming club; *he could barely make a lap himself*. He was president of a football club; *he never kicked a ball*. Yes, John had an indomitable will.**
>
> SALLY MARSDEN (JOHN'S SISTER)

Changing attitudes

FROM JUST BASHING THE POKIES, TO A SAFER FAMILY INVOLVEMENT



Family safe events A poster from 2008 inviting club members and their children to a giant Christmas party at the stadium.



One armed bandits? An old 1980s promotional image of members having a flutter, pulling a lever at the side.

BetSafe™

New attitudes Logo of the "safety net" service that Wests was a founding member of.

In the smoky haze of the 1970s, leagues clubs were synonymous with boozy revelry and near-constant promotion of the chiming of poker machines. However, by the early 2000s there was a major image transformation underway.

A truly "family-friendly" environment was now all-important — particularly as Wests so actively promoted youth sport.

School holidays now featured special fun days and rides. Also face painting, pizza making workshops, kids discos, reptile shows, obstacle courses, even interactive science shows "with flying monkeys, expanding heads and fart science".

The harder challenge to tackle was gaming. There's no getting around it, the profitability of all leagues clubs had

long revolved around beer and pokies — mainly the latter. As late as 1996, our senior staff had joined a study tour of Las Vegas and spoke of a desire to create "a casino atmosphere" at Wests — a sensory overload, from people yelling at coin drops to special lighting features.

Attitudes, however, quickly changed amid growing political calls to ban pokies, denounced as home-wreckers.

Wests was swift to respond. In 1998, it became a founding member of Betsafe — a "safety net" to ensure compliance with legislation, enforce responsible gambling policies, oversee staff training, and offer a free counselling service and self exclusion program to its club members.

Nonetheless, the "Pokies War" of 2003 saw the NSW Government double, then triple, taxes on machine revenues (not profits). Unhappy clubs accused the government of using them as cash cows to prop up a shaky state budget.

A better deal was eventually struck for Wests due to its strong support of local sport — but we were still paying tens of millions of dollars more than previously.



A gallery of fun Snaps and promotions for various kids' events at Wests over the years.

With its pokie profits, Wests had to (via ClubGRANTS) fund a range of community needs . . . but it was already doing that.

"A lot of our community funding now gets funnelled through pokie tax structures," said Alan Buxton, looking back at the changes. "But we're giving more than $3 million a year, far more than the legal requirement. We do that because it's the right thing to do."

The topic of gaming will likely remain a touchy one, so long as poker machines are legal in New South Wales. But Wests has tried to walk a careful line, leaning away from being a social problem, and more toward social responsibility.

Wests Tennis Club

TAKING OVER THE PLACE NEXT DOOR IN 2007





In 2007, Wests amalgamated with its neighbour, Southern Districts Tennis Club — rescuing the latter from financial ruin.

This merger immediately gave our members access to 14 courts and a tennis shop . . . not to mention a popular Chinese Restaurant. "We see certain synergies," Roy Warby said at the time.

Wests guaranteed it would continue to operate the courts for at least 10 years, but assured members: "it will continue to operate for a long time."

In early 2008, work began on a major upgrade of the clubhouse, as well as a resurfacing of playing facilities — including one hard court "comparable to the surface of the Australian Open". Also LED lights for night-time play.

This was expensive, but Wests wanted to give its juniors the best opportunities, citing Adam Hecimovic (a recent winner of the U14 Australian Tennis Championships) as an example.

Some members feared it might become another money pit (à la Camden Bowling Club). The Tennis Club did, in fact, find it hard making a profit — "struggling to compete with the leagues club just up the road" — but, by 2012, it was paying its way . . . and that was the objective.

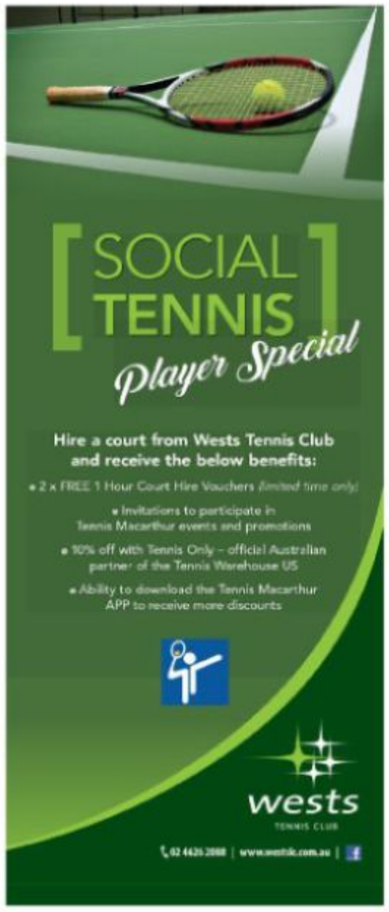
The rescue of the tennis centre had also put Wests at the epicentre of Campbelltown's recreational and sporting scene, given the surrounding precinct also included the Sports Stadium and the Athletics Stadium.



Courting success Wests Tennis aids all ages and skill levels including social, hot shots, cardio, and school holiday clinics — this one from 2018.

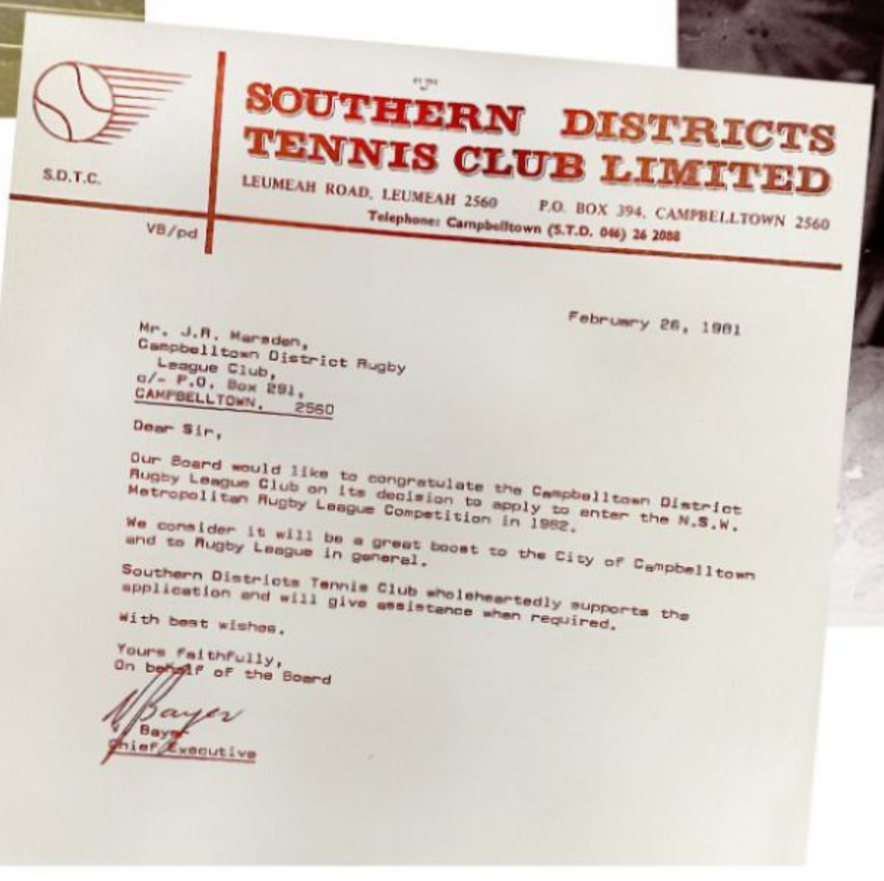


Merger The tennis club dated back to 1971.





Leumeah's links to tennis were strong. Local woman Rose Payten was one of Australia's first tennis stars of the early 1900s. Rose Payten Drive, alongside the tennis club, is named in her honour. (Campbelltown & Airds Historical Society)



S.D.T.C.

SOUTHERN DISTRICTS TENNIS CLUB LIMITED

LEUMEAH ROAD, LEUMEAH 2560 P.O. BOX 394, CAMPBELLTOWN 2560

Telephone: Campbelltown (S.T.D. 046) 26 2088

VB/pd

February 26, 1981

Mr. J.R. Marsden,
Campbelltown District Rugby
League Club,
c/- P.O. Box 291,
CAMPBELLTOWN. 2560

Dear Sir,

Our Board would like to congratulate the Campbelltown District Rugby League Club on its decision to apply to enter the N.S.W. Metropolitan Rugby League Competition in 1982.

We consider it will be a great boost to the City of Campbelltown and to Rugby League in general.

Southern Districts Tennis Club wholeheartedly supports the application and will give assistance when required.

With best wishes.

Yours faithfully,
On behalf of the Board

Bayer
Chief Executive

Links Both clubs had a shared history. This letter to John Marsdern in 1981 praised the league's club's effort to get a Campbelltown football team into the Sydney competition.

The Bambu expansion of 2008

CREATING A MAJOR NEW CORNERSTONE OF THE CLUB



Changes Plans and designs for the original club, in 1974, had just been sketched on paper. The 2008 expansion came complete with computer graphic imagery, *above*, and a scale model displayed in the foyer, *below*.

The old squash court had been replaced by a car park in 1997 — and that car park was now replaced by the next big Wests extension, as membership neared 30,000.

A lavish Asian-style "Bambu" mixed lounge, tapas dining area, and cocktail bar were highlights of a $13.5 million project that brought our club all the way to the corner of Old Leumeah Road.

A resort atmosphere was the aim, with water features, intricately-carved wood sculptures, and tropical greenery. Outside, the architecture was dominated by a colossal glass facade, allowing natural light to showcase all the new shapes and tones inside. A striking new sustainable feature was also a tank holding 120,000 litres of rainwater from the roof.

"The brief was to feel like a quality resort, with a Balinese flavour.

ROY WARBY

Global Projects (project managers), Curtin Architects (designers) and Premier Building Group (builders) also added the Balinese theme to the new downstairs entrance foyer. The result was truly grand, and won widespread media attention.

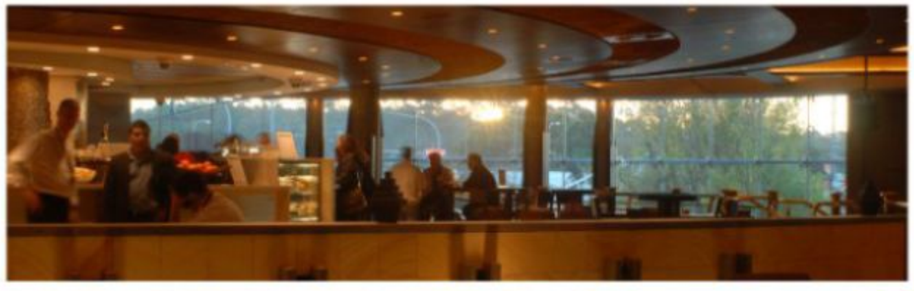
Campbelltown-Macarthur Advertiser hailed it as "a new Leumeah", symbolic of a suburb undergoing a growth boom, with the huge Mosaic residential complex also erected across the road. It also made the front cover of *ClubLife* with a heading "The Best From Sydney's South-West". The trade magazine called the





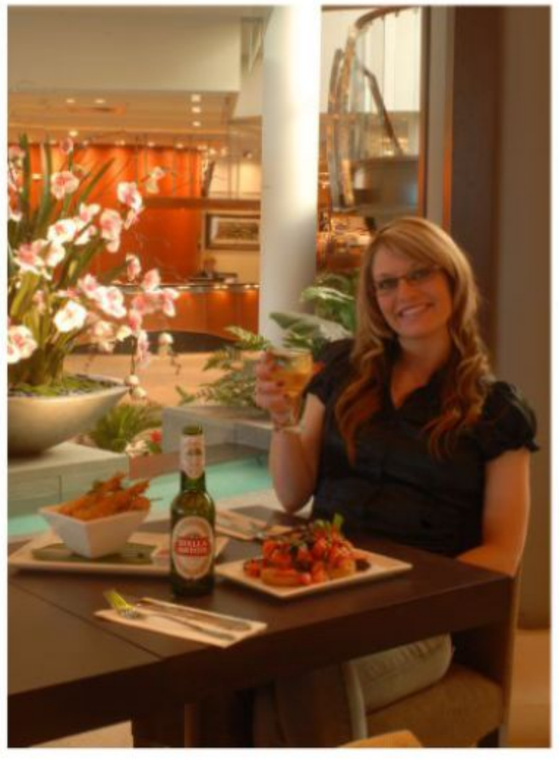


Bambu The club's marketing material said it was designed to give "a feeling of nature with a hint of spice and plenty of luxury based on traditional Asian design styles".











Floorplan Shortly after the extension opened these graphics were placed on display in the foyer. Grey marked non-public areas (such as staff areas and kitchens). The original 1974-vintage club took up part of the area marked in orange.

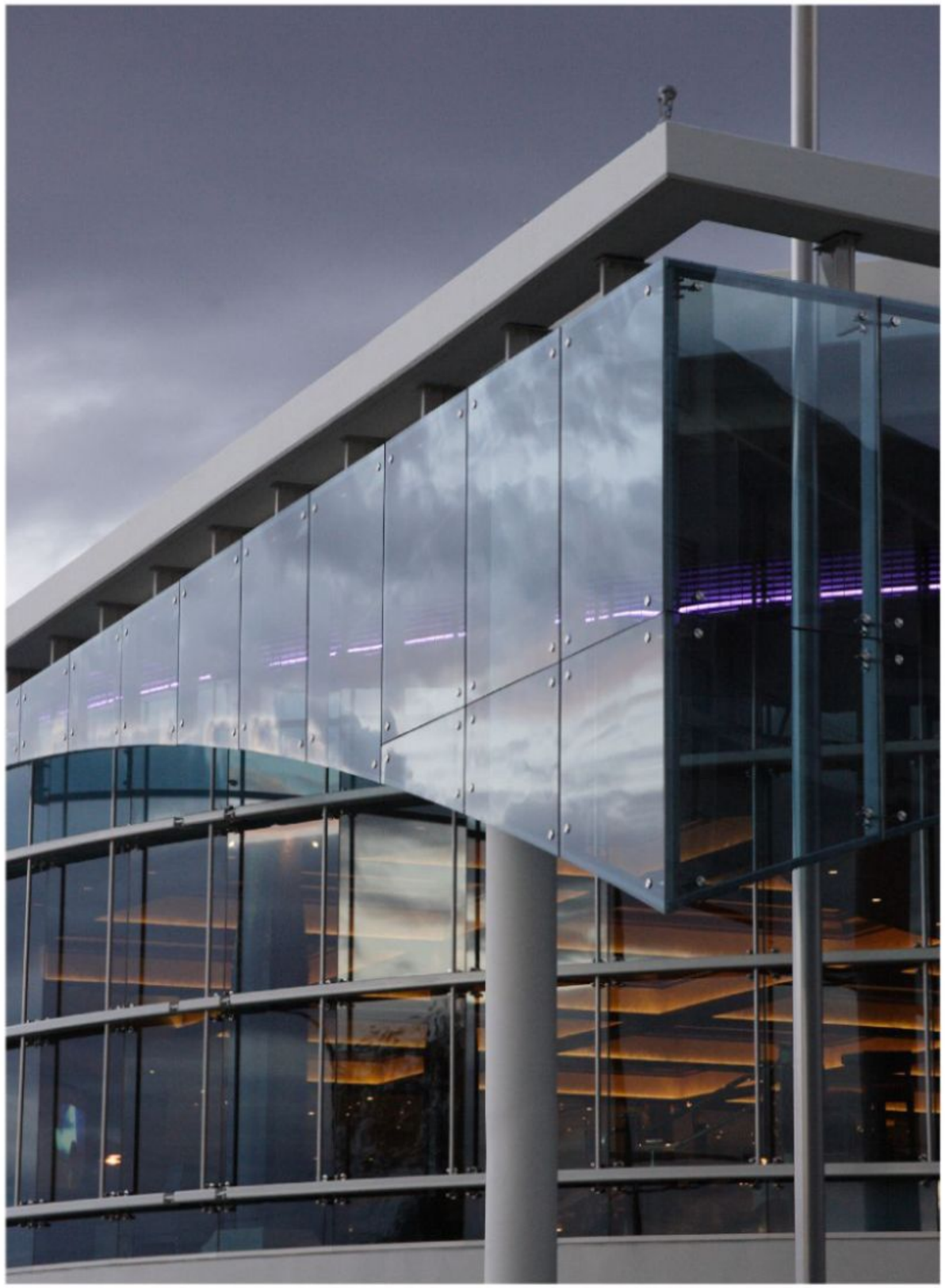


renovations "sexy", and even a "decadent opulence".

The club itself said the idea was one-stop entertainment. "We want people to be able to have an entire night here, with a cocktail, maybe some tapas or dinner, finished off with some coffee and cake and entertainment." Low key solo and duo acts would perform in the new areas, while live acts remained in the auditorium.

The former lounge in the old section of the club was refurbished as a bistro overflow area. In 2009, catering revenue increased a whopping 40 per cent. The restaurant in Bambu — Chilli Chilli Thai— became so popular, bookings were required on Friday or Saturday nights.

Like all expansions, it triggered an immediate rise in membership — hitting 40,000 by 2009. "This is an indication that we are meeting the expectations of those in the community," said Roy Warby.







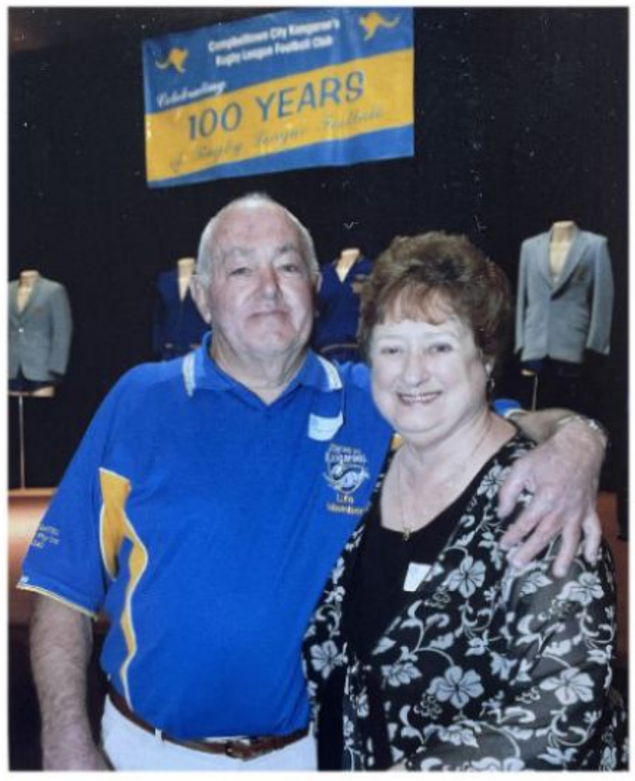
A new and grand appearance Steve Noyce told the media he remembered his old Magpies days working in primitive conditions in the converted squash court back in the 1980s. It all looked rather different now, he smiled.

Retaining our roots

THE KANGAROOS CELEBRATE THEIR CENTURY

It was men such as these that set in stone the Kangaroos' tradition of pride in club, and Campbelltown.

VERA BERTOLA, MACARTHUR CHRONICLE



Tony and Jackie Norton The couple whose 1967 wedding photo is featured in the front chapters of this book, posing in 2008 with old Kangaroos blazers.

For all its grand designs, Wests sometimes paused to remember the past . . . back to the days when it was the Kangaroos' clubhouse.

So chairman Roy Warby joined a sea of old familiar faces at the team's 100th anniversary celebrations in 2008.

Tony Norton was front and centre as not only a 'Roos legend, but a foundation director and Wests' sports ambassador.

The oldest living Kangaroos present were Cecil Hund, 95, Alf Cooper, 92, and 'Poppa' Evans at 90, all warmly applauded. Other football club veterans included Jack Muggleton, Gordon Sullivan, Harold Budgen, Bill Gorrie, Ted Foley, Noel Treweek, Cecil Curran, Bernard Shaw, Bill Rixon and Les New, each of them aged over 75.

Many wives and daughters of former players were also welcomed, such as Nell O'Loughlan, Colleen Eglelton, Gwen McIlveen, Marjorie Wells, Shirley Treacy, Diana Duguid, Betty Munro, Dot Kain and Lucia Bonomini.



Great day The decibels in the Wests auditorium rose swiftly as about 400 old teammates and family reunited and reminisced.





All generations Norm Flegg, Brett MacDonald, Shannon Flegg, John Mason and Nick Olsen catching up with old football field memories.



Old community links Wests chairman Roy Warby with Christine Vardy-Thomson, daughter of Kangaroos club legends Bill 'Champ' and Joyce vardy.



Signed kangaroo Foundation director Frank Ward *(above)* with Bruce McDonald (brother of Wests directors John and Ron McDonald) and 'Poppa' Evans, a life member of our club.



Legends (clockwise from top) Alf Cooper, Cecil Hund, Gordon Sullivan and Noel 'Smokey' Treweek.



Old friends Bill Rixon and Shirley Treacy



Bit by bit This aerial shot in 2007 shows the original block of shops (at centre right) purchased by the club. Also the multi-storey carpark erected where houses used to stand on Pembroke Road. The doctor's surgery and remaining stand of shops were purchased in more recent times. The area of ground at the front of the club has been prepared for the next big extension (2008).

Thinking ahead

BUILDING CARPARKS, BUYING REAL ESTATE

In 2009, Roy Warby announced Wests had bought the large two-storey block of 10 shops alongside the club.

This was so those shops could eventually be bulldozed, to allow the club to expand. "In the meantime, many units offer commercial returns," Warby said.

This was part of the *big picture* plan Wests had followed for decades.

Before the Bambu extension, the club had (in 2005) erected a $4.6 million multi-level car park, providing 260 spaces. That was only possible because Wests had, years earlier, bought the houses that once occupied that site.

Rick Wayde recalled his first stint on the board in 1986: "At one meeting, I noted a house at the back of our club on Pembroke Road was for sale. I said we ought to buy it, knock it down, and make it an entranceway to the club. The other houses would also likely want to sell."

Sure enough, two more houses were bought in 1989, then a fourth in 1999. All were demolished in the early 2000s.

Car parking had long been an issue because the parking zone between the club and railway is owned by Campbelltown Council (for commuters).

Paul Lake recalls: "In September 1998 a meeting was held to negotiate a financial agreement, to allow the Council to complete its major upgrade of the Sports Ground. Wests only needed 239 car spaces to meet [council requirements].

"The financial assistance given by the club led to a *Licence to Occupy for 99 years*. This licence required the club to pay the Council more than $3.2 million and Council constructed 807 car parking spaces on the eastern and western side of the railway and a pedestrian bridge over the railway."

"What that licence does not reveal," Lake added, "is that the Council at the time required urgent funding to purchase 10 houses to complete the athletics field. (It was trying to attract the Japanese Olympic team to Campbelltown for pre-Olympics training.) And, the club's $3.2 million solved that problem."



Multi-storey car park It was initially opened in 2005, but was made higher in 2019. It now provides more than 500 parking spaces.



Weather permitting Parking becomes even more important when major rain events flood the council-owned carpark. It was not until the early 2000s that the site was finally sealed.

Still a great night out

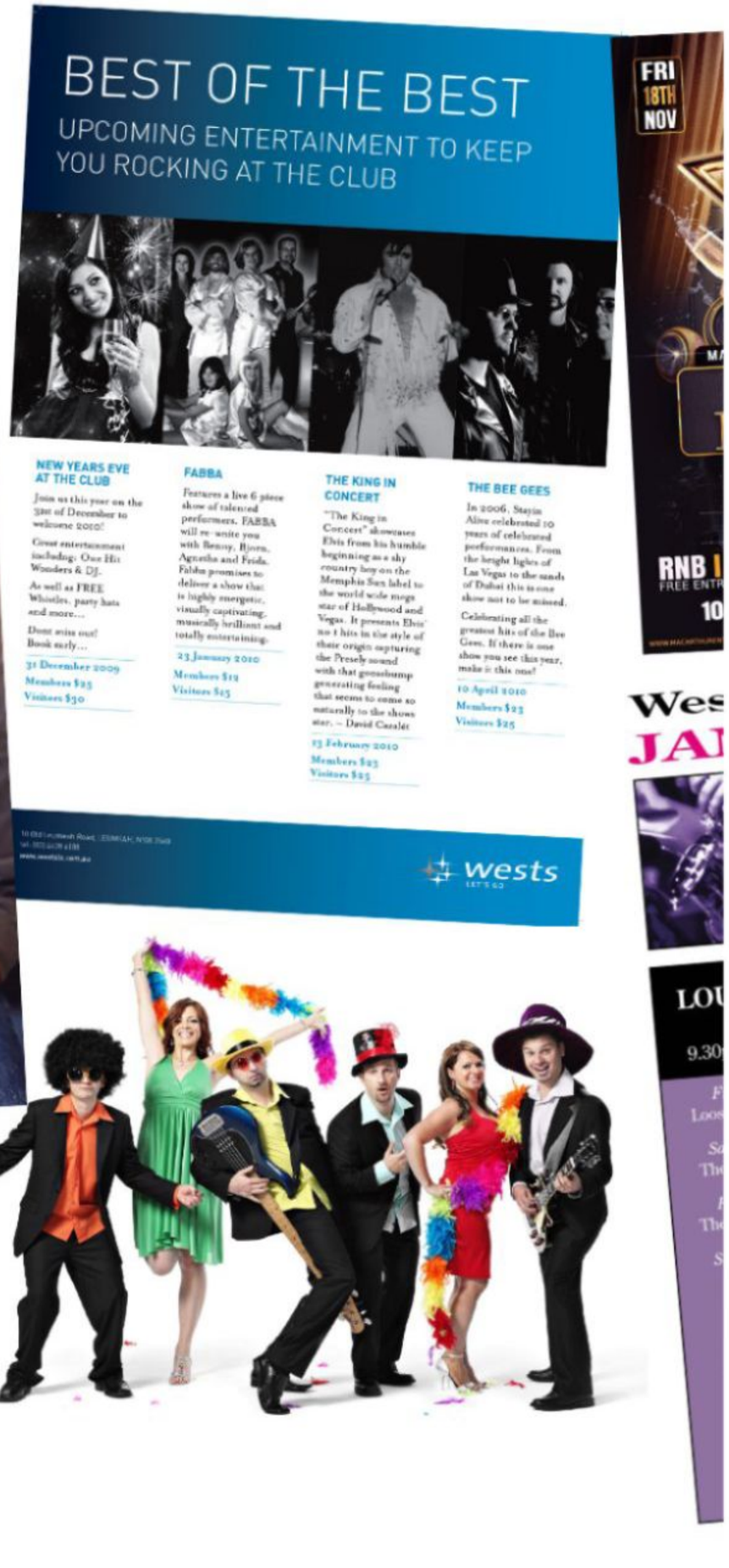
VERY DIFFERENT ENTERTAINMENT TASTES

In 1997, our members were entertained by the "JOK And Bandstand Show". Funny, because back in the 1970s the *real* JOK — Johnny O'Keefe — and various Bandstand stars had performed at the club.

Tribute acts became big crowd pullers in the 2000s — from the Kenny Rogers Experience, Australian Bee Gees Show, and The Beatnix, to Abbalanche, Dirty Deed (AC/DC) and The Eagles Experience.

But also original acts such as Daryl Braithwaite, Radiators, Choirboys, Damien Leith, Swanee, and The Nevilles. Also plenty of smaller live acts — from Bitta Sweet and Jelly Bean Jam to Jason Jackson.





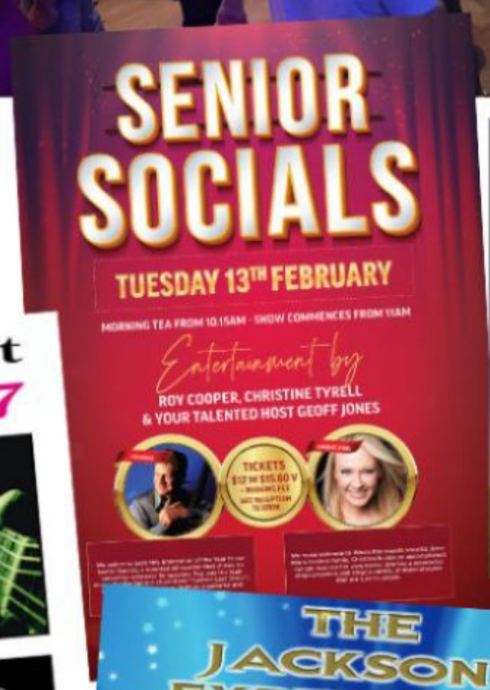


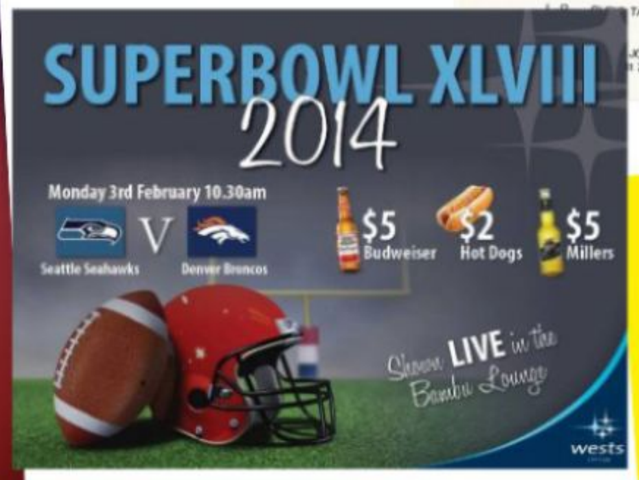



MACARTHUR ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS
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Night Party
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DJ MONTY
NB | DANCE | TOP40 | 80S & 90S
E ENTRY | 9:30PM TILL12:30AM | 18+ AGE | DRESS TO IMPRESS
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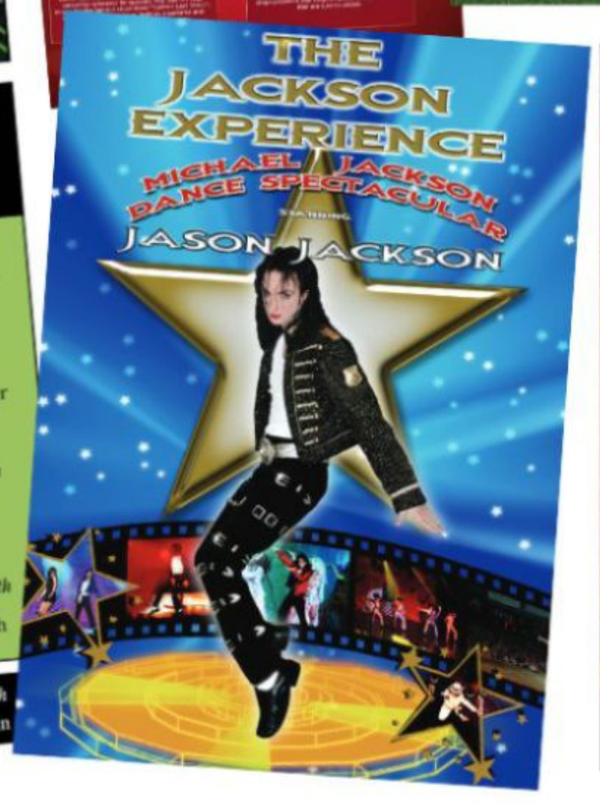

BRIAN NICHOL
GEOFF TURNER
FESS PARKER
BRENDAN CALLINAN
the RADIATORS


SENIOR SOCIALS
TUESDAY 13TH FEBRUARY
MORNING TEA FROM 10.15AM - SHOW COMMENCES FROM 11AM
Entertainment by
ROY COOPER, CHRISTINE TYRELL
& YOUR TALENTED HOST GEOFF JONES


SUPERBOWL XLVIII
2014
Monday 3rd February 10.30am
Seattle Seahawks
V
Denver Broncos
$5 Budweiser
$2 Hot Dogs
$5 Millers
Shenoa LIVE in the Bandroom Lounge
wests


GROOVY
New Years Eve
PARTY
with
The Kylie Show
It's Shagadelic - The Austin Powers Show
& Tasty
the kylie show
Free whistlers, blowers, party hats & more!
DJ from 9pm, Band from 10pm
$15.00
Book at reception
Early Bookings highly recommended.
TASTY


ests Entertainment
ANUARY 2007
LOUNGE
9.30pm - 1am
Friday 5th
Loose Conection
Saturday 6th
The Wanderers
Friday 12th
The Archer Bros
Saturday 13th
GTS
Friday 19th
Crushed Ice
Saturday 20th
Revive
Friday 26th
Tandem
Saturday 27th
BorderLine
BEER GARDEN
4.30pm - 7.30pm
Sunday 7th
Finn MacCool
Sunday 14th
The Peter Power Trio
Sunday 21th
Shawnuff
Sunday 28th
Freddies Freeloaders
BISTRO
5pm - 9pm
Saturday 6th
Dave Mason-Cox
Saturday 13th
Dave Macmaster
Saturday 20th
Ron Ashton
Saturday 27th
Peter Kinch
ROAMING
Friday 26th
Feral Fylnn


THE JACKSON EXPERIENCE
MICHAEL JACKSON DANCE SPECTACULAR
JASON JACKSON


AUGUST ENTERTAINMENT
Friday 2nd
AKINGA-ACE AWARD WINNERS
Saturday 3rd
MONTEGO BAY
Friday 9th
DIRTY DEEDS
Saturday 10th
TASTY
Friday 16th
FUNKSTAR
Saturday 17th
FAMILY VON TRAPP
Friday 23rd
PEACHY
Saturday 24th
SOUL FEVER
Friday 30th
URBAN ANGELS
Saturday 31st
CHOIR BOYS
DJ from 9pm and Bands from 10pm - $6 Cover Charge
SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE.

Camden master stroke

LAKESIDE AND THE COUNTRY CLUB JOIN WESTS

The fate of Wests took a sharp turn in 2009 when another local sports club — Camden Valley Golf Resort, near Narellan — went broke.

Camden Valley had been established in 1964 as the "Rugby League Country Club" (RLCC), a joint venture of a dozen leagues clubs, each with an equal share.

RLCC was long famed as Sydney's only 27-hole golf course. It had a clubhouse and bistro, a motel, as well as a swimming pool, tennis courts and cricket grounds.

RLCC was a popular spot for Kangaroos events, such as cabaret and social nights, before our club opened in 1974.

By the early 2000s, Camden Valley (as it was then marketed as) was losing money. The RLCC board decided to convert its valuable land assets into suburbia.

As part of that process, RLCC acquired Camden Lakeside Golf Resort (to be retained as a golfing green space for the housing estates being planned).

Then came the Global Financial Crisis of 2008-09 which saw the entire project collapse, after RLCC's development

CAMDEN LAKESIDE COUNTRY CLUB

CAMDEN VALLEY GOLF RESORT

Remember these? The old logos of Camden Lakeside and Camden Valley as they looked in 2012.

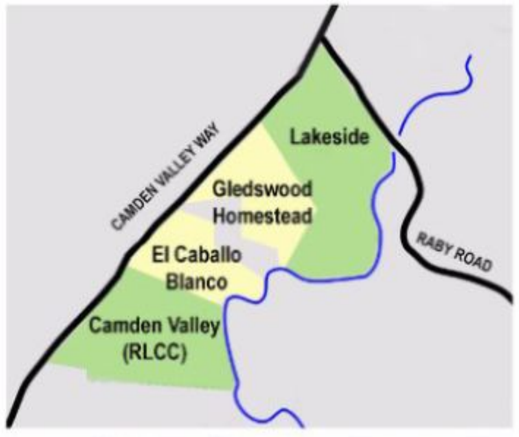
Huge changes The old Country Club entrance, *below left*. It is now part of Gledswood Hills, below, a huge network of housing estates created by Sekisui House. "We didn't plan any of that," said Alan Buxton, "we just took over after all the development plans were in place."







Almost unrecognisable The Country Club site as it looked in 2012 *(top)*, and as it looks today.



Simplified map Shows the four original land holdings off Camden Valley Way — the area that has now become the suburbia of Gledswood Hills.

partner went into liquidation. The land was sold to Japanese developer, Sekisui House, which was creating adjoining estates on the El Caballo Blanco and Gledswood Homestead sites.

It all sounds very confusing.

But, the upshot for Wests was simple. Our club stepped in and took ownership of the RLCC's old licensed club at Camden Valley, as well as its recently-acquired clubhouse and 18-hole golf course at Lakeside. This was possible because of an impressive piece of foresight undertaken by Wests half a decade earlier . . .

Wanting to establish a foothold in the Narellan growth area, Wests had (in 2004) purchased Balmain Leagues Club's share of the RLCC partnership. The following year, it bought a second share from the Eastern Suburbs Leagues Club.

As the holder of two shares, that meant Wests lost $1.6 million when RLCC collapsed in 2008-09. On paper, it was a fininacial disaster. In reality, however, it was a bonanza.

Wests was able to acquire all the remaining RLCC shares at a bargain price — as all the other leagues clubs sought to jump off what they thought was a sinking ship. It wasn't.

Wests had effectively picked up two major real estate assets, in a booming growth centre, for just $3 million. "As history has since shown," Alan Buxton beamed, " it was one of the best decisions this club ever made."

In 2012, Wests officially merged with these new Narellan sites. Lakeside, and the old Rugby League Country Club, were now a part and parcel of our club

So, began a new Camden era . . .



Long-time links John Marsden and other club members at a Kangaroos cricket club presentation night held at the Rugby League Country Club in the early 1970s.





Lakeside had the best potential. It was already a favourite wedding spot, and regarded as one of the Top 10 public golf courses in NSW. Sure enough, by 2013, Lakeside was making a profit.

The old RLCC clubhouse would "prove a little more difficult from a financial perspective," Warby predicted in 2012.

Wests renamed the site Country Club Gledswood Hills and undertook a $15 million redevelopment which, by 2017, had increased the floor space by 40 per cent and turned it into a modern "sophisticated" venue with an outdoor alfresco area, dedicated children's play facility, and breathtaking views.

The crowds poured in — almost beyond Wests' wildest dreams.

Camden Lakeside also underwent a major redevelopment, including an 180-seat bistro extension and members lounge. The golf course itself was also reconfigured and redeveloped (as surrounding housing estates are created around its edges). Experienced course superintendent Dean Hopper ensured the newly-created greens were even firmer and faster.

Future plans for Lakeside might include more clubhouse expansion, basement parking, even a luxury 120-room hotel. Time will tell.

Greg Field, the manager in charge of Lakeside and Country Club, forsees a very-near future where Wests' annual profits will be larger on the Camden side of the council border. Both clubs have certainly become important donors to Camden area community causes.

They have also ensured Wests is now a truly regional club. Back in 2005, more than 90 per cent of our members lived in Campbelltown local government area. By 2024, almost 40 per cent of our members are in Camden and Wollondilly Shire.



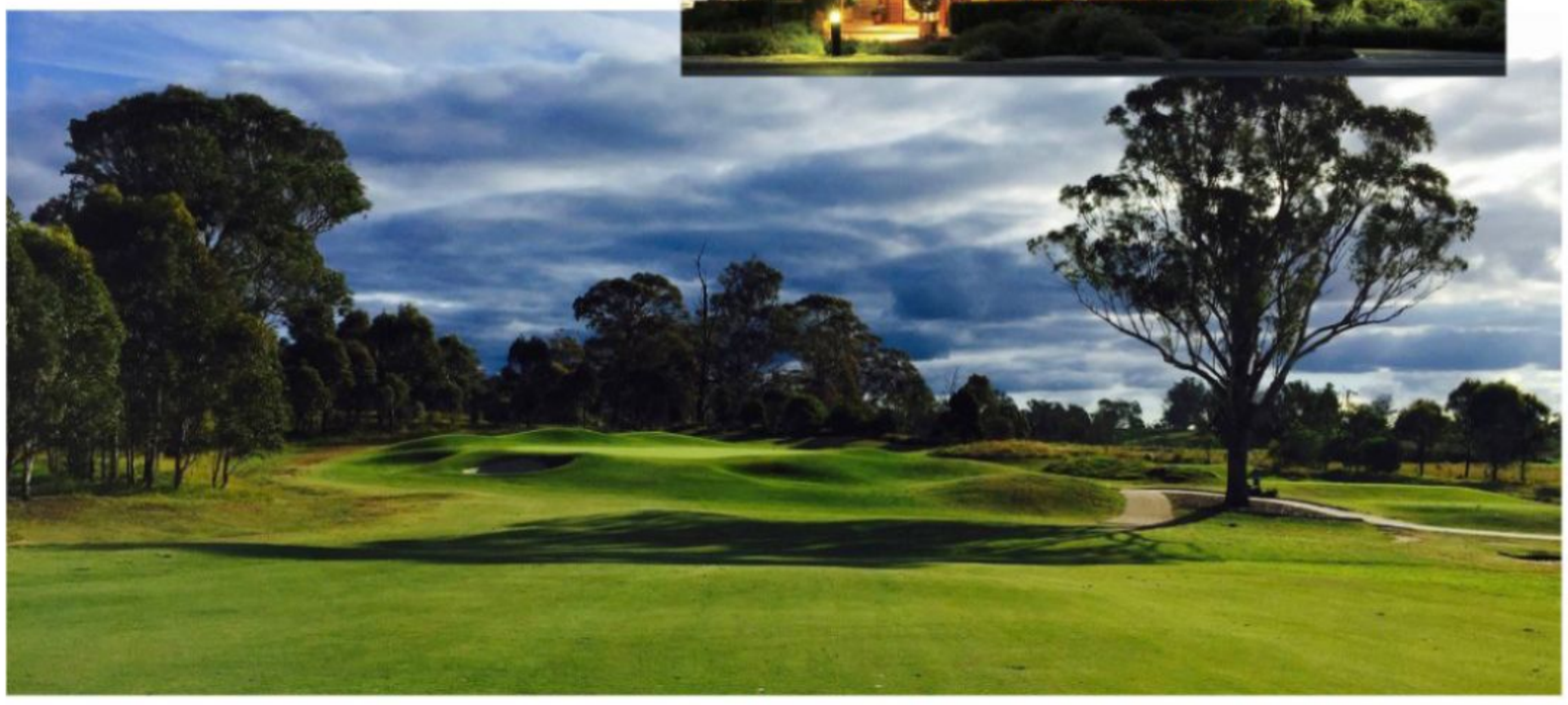
Country Club reborn Wests poured $15 million into its redevelopment of the Gledswood Hills site.







Drawcard Lakeside's awards have since rolled in. It was named as the 2019 Golf NSW Metropolitan "Club of the Year". It has also repeatedly won top prizes in the Bride's Choice Awards for best wedding venue.



It was with great foresight that Wests purchased the Country Club and Lakeside at the time. The expansion in the Camden area has surpassed all expectations and the growth will only continue to explode.

GREG COPELAND

Selling our share

CAMPBELLTOWN LEAVES THE WESTS TIGERS BOARD

Wests made rugby league headlines in June 2013 when it pulled out of the "disjointed" joint venture.

Our club sold its one seat on the 10-seat Wests Tigers board to Ashfield for a dollar. "Going by the team's onfield performance, we charged 50 cents too much," Alan Buxton joked.

Wests departure was not merely due to squabbles and a lack of Campbelltown presence, Buxton explained.

"Wests Tigers really needed to consolidate in ownership and leadership to allow for future direction and growth. Wests was in a strong [financial and management] position as a business, and with the risk of the Joint Venture falling over . . . as some felt it might at the time . . . we thought it best if we walked away. The idea was that Wests could have a bigger voice as a financial sponsor. When you're just one vote in ten on a dysfunctional board, it's almost pointless".

On the paddock, meanwhile, things were not going well for Wests Tigers. No golden age followed their fairytale 2005 grand final — just scandals, embarrassing defeats, sackings, and blame games. It had become an NRL basket case, not an NRL powerhouse.

There was also constant criticism that it was an Ashfield/Balmain team, with little interest in Campbelltown. The worst snub came in 2015 when Wests Tigers publicly admitted it *was* considered shifting its HQ further west — to Liverpool!



Local patriot Chris Lawrence speaking at at Sports Council dinner. Despite frustrations with Wests Tigers' board, there was a genuine affection at Wests for Macarthur's homegrown players.

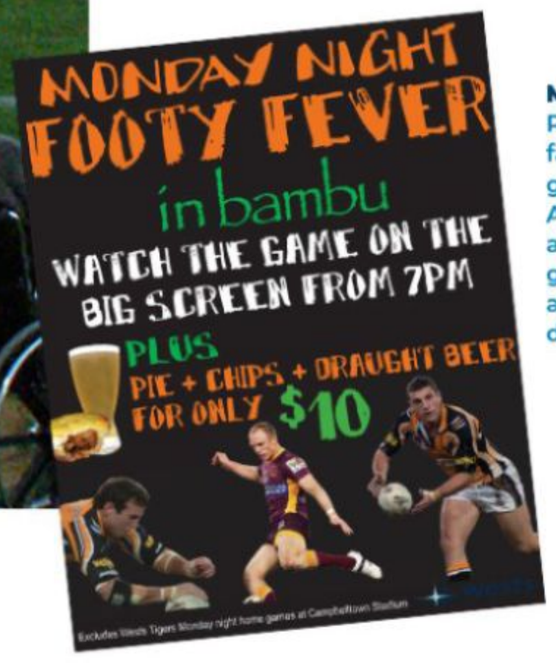






Talent drain Local superstar James Tedesco switched from West Tigers to the Roosters in 2018, wanting to play for a strong team. Other NRL clubs also made an artform of plundered Macarthur talent. In 2012, for example, nine members of Parramatta's trophy-winning under-16 team had been Wests juniors.

Flag waving A grainy fan snap, at left, of a rare home match at Campbelltown Stadium — just three games a year, as opposed to the dozen games a year the Magpies had played.



Mixed feelings Poster enouraging fans to watch the game at Bambu. Although no longer a stakeholder, Wests guaranteed $200,000 a year to local juniors development.

Three games at Campbelltown a year! In terms of building a fanbase, with a culture of going to games, good luck with that.

ONLINE COMMENT

Campbelltown's reaction was brutal. "I've had people in the street saying they'll never go to a game again," said Federal MP Russell Matheson. Mayor Paul Lake, also a Wests director, warned "if Campbelltown Stadium was an oval shape [Australian Rules] it would be very interesting. You make your bed, you lie in it."

Indeed, AFL and Soccer were now vying for the hearts and minds of Campbelltown, with the rise of Greater Western Sydney Giants and Macarthur Bulls. Campbelltown City Kangaroos had also re-launched a senior rugby league team in Group 6.

In 2023, an independent review into why Wests Tigers hadn't played finals football since 2011 came to the conclusion that the joint venture's future lay in Macarthur, not the inner city.

The response, at Wests, was predictable. "Their future was here quarter of a century ago," said sports secretary Martin Bullock. "But they're only just working that out now — maybe too late."

Wests Group Macarthur

NEW LEADERSHIP, NEW ERA

When Roy Warby joined the board in 1995 Wests was still considered Campbelltown's "third club". Two decades later, it had become the largest club in Macarthur.

Net assets were worth more than $80 million, with almost 70,000 members, and our club's community donations were about to hit $1 million a year.

Warby had good reason to feel proud when he stepped down as chairman in 2016. He was staying on the board, but handed over the reins of leadership to Warren Thomson, with Alan Buxton elected as his deputy.

Thomson would serve until 2019, when he handed the big chair to Buxton — with Paul Lake as his deputy.

This was "the class of 2003" stepping up as a new leadership team of an expanding club. No longer just Wests Campbelltown, but Wests Tennis Club, Lakeside Camden, and Country Club Gledswood Hills.

In 2017, Wests began marketing itself as "Wests Group Macarthur" — an overarching identity with the motto: *"Four great destinations, One journey"*.











The new leadership trio Warren Thomson *(top left)*, Alan Buxton *(below left, handing out a prize to volunteer Paige Morel of Ingleburn Softball Club)* and Paul Lake, *above*, who also served as the Mayor of Campbelltown. "Lakey" is shown with Barbara Fetterplace, wife of Gordon who died in 2008. Campbelltown's swimming pool has been named in his honour.

To retired chairman Roy Warby — a big thank you for your dedication to the success and ongoing development of our club.

WARREN THOMSON

The board had more than proved itself.

But, photographs of our seven club directors often drew criticism — *"a bunch of old white blokes!"* — in a supposed era of diversity and inclusion.

That's why Wests made headlines, again, in 2015 when prominent businesswoman Anne Parnham stood for election to the board, ruffling feathers by placing newspaper ads promoting her campaign.

Parnham was not the first woman to stand. There had been four — Yvonne Watts in 1989, Di Missingham in 1991, Joan Gee in 1996 and Francis Bergstedt in 1998 — but none were elected. Glass ceilings tend to be high in leagues clubs.

Parnham was a solid candidate: a local Chamber of Commerce president and Campbelltown's 2014 Woman of the Year. But she, too, was defeated.

Parnham claims she was met by hostility. "People came up to me at the AGM saying, *'So, you're the troublemaker!'*. I wasn't even permitted to speak."

But others present that day say they felt the existing board had paid its dues.



Anne Parnham She ran this newspaper ad promoting her campaign in 2015.

"Our club is a democracy," said Paul Lake (who had shared a local council election ticket with Parnham). "Anyone can nominate to be elected onto the board, as long as they meet the criteria. Then, it's up to the members."

At the 2022 AGM, the club constitution was changed, replacing "chairman" with "chairperson". Cosmetic — but also, perhaps, hopeful.

A place to celebrate

ANY EVENT, ANY CAUSE, ANY TIME, ANYONE



When our Club opened in 1974, members were excited to be able to hold their own social functions. But, given it was just one big room until the early 1980s, those events needed to be shared with patrons.

Rather different to now . . .

Tailored packages today suit any occasion in a range of venues — from small 70-80 guest functions in the Acacia and Eucalyptus Rooms, or 150 guests in the Gardenia Room, or 340 guests in the Jacaranda or Waratah Rooms, or 700 in the Auditorium (a combination of the previous three thanks to moveable walls).

Wests, therefore, is the scene of many local events, from Rotary gatherings to huge weddings, or major award ceremonies. By the 2020s, the club was hosting more than 1500 functions a year.



Youth Excellence Awards Rebecca Hatch of Campbelltown Performing Arts High School being named as local Rotary Youth Ambassador at the 2018 Youth Excellence Awards at Wests. Hatch has since enjoyed success as a singer-songwriter signed to Sony.

Young Champion Awards Georgia Potter, 18, the 2023 winner of Rainbow Crossing's top award at Wests for her support of local causes.



Macarthur Police Awards Senior Constable David Blom, named as Rotary Police Officer of the Year at Wests in 2018.

The style of our club is friendly and relaxed; our members are down-to-earth people who expect value for money.

CLUB STATEMENT TO BANKERS



A gallery of colours and themes Showcasing the stylish sort of backdrops Wests is famed for.



Local Small Business Awards The Panoutsopoulos clan of Kings Charcoal Chicken fame, renowned for their community support and a category winner most years at Wests — including grand overall winner in 2015.

WEDDING EXPO

Sunday 5th July

WESTS

Old Leumeah Rd, Leumeah

10am till 3pm

Over 100 exhibitors with 2 fashion parades at 11:30 & 1:30

Entry $10pp

ourweddingexpos.com.au



Celebrating strength and survial Wests was more than a destination for awards ceremonies and fun events — but also important causes. Club CEO Tony Mathew, pictured above, joined balloon-laden staffers in welcoming White Ribbon Convoys to Wests, in support of local victims of domestic violence.

Passing of a legend

OUR CLUB MOVES ON WITHOUT RAY CORKERY

Ray Corkery instilled into his players the toughness, discipline and will to succeed — not only in rugby league, but in life.

BRUCE MELVILLE

Ray's contribution to the development and success of Wests cannot be overstated.

WARREN THOMSON

He was a rough, tough footballer. He was also a really smart bloke, always looking at the business component, and giving encouragement to everyone around him to excel.

STEVE NOYCE

"Ray Corkery was the glue that joined all the different eras of our history," said club original Garry Munro.

He'd led the Kangaroos in 1969 and been a foundation director of our club in 1974. He was chairman when Ashfield arrived in 1986, and chairman when it was kicked out in 1996. He'd celebrated each of our three major extensions.

Both Corkery and John Marsden had been our founding fathers, but it was Corkery who was the rock of ages.

That doesn't mean he was a saint. The long-time chairman sometimes "acted like he owned the place", complained some frustrated critics. But most memories of him are fond.

Corkery's heart was broken when, due to worsening ill-health, he had to resign as a director in 2016. He was delighted, however, to be replaced on the board by his old comrade, Steve Noyce.

Corkery was awarded life membership of Wests, and the Kangaroos also treated him as a living legend, even naming a football cup in his honour in 2017.

"That was nice," said Corkery's partner Helen Lawson. "He was chuffed about that. Fans would even hunt him about his old St George days — he couldn't believe these people existed, let alone wanted his autograph!"

"Back when he was captain-coach, he loved mentoring the players. Even things like getting them dressed up, coat and tie, and taking them somewhere posh in Sydney, teaching them how to deal with that. Every now and again, some bloke would come up to him in the street, and say, *'Ray you changed my life'*. He would just be so chuffed by that."

Raymond Peter Corkery died, aged 77, on 22 October 2019. Much mourned by Helen and his daughters, Jodie, Terri and Kate.

Tributes flooded in, usually along the lines of "a true gentleman" or "his stable direction and growth for Wests". Many sports clubs praised his legacy.

Wests, in issuing its own heartfelt tribute, confirmed that Corkery's member No 6 badge would never be re-issued.



Farewell to the chief Ray Corkery adored being surrounded by his fellow Kangaroos, now playing senior games again in Group 6. Here, he beams for a shot with Kangaroos coach Liam Fulton, a former Wests Tigers star. The Kangaroos, in turn, treated Corkery like the club legend he was.

From Bambu to The Hub

NEW LOOK FOR THE FOUDATION CLUB



Big change The old moody lighting and water features of Bambu were replaced by a sort of modern country vibe. Lots of light wood features and a happy feeling of natural light.



The Balinese flavour of Wests vanished during 2018 as our club embarked on a major $29 million revamp.

Goodbye Bambu, hello The Hub.

"An eclectic group of dining options," said food and beverage manager Simon McNamara. "We have Deli Style sandwiches by day, Italian dishes at night, Asian Fusion all day and a Sushi and Tempura outlet opening soon." It was also open for breakfast . . . fancy a cup of coffee with some Belgian Waffles?

The gaming and function rooms were also reborn, while the club's old brasserie became The Kitchen, a relaxed family-friendly space with seasonally influenced food choices and Italian pizza oven.

Trade increased "exponentially", the club reported in 2019, calling it one of the strongest trading years ever.

But, as New Year's Eve crowds poured in to celebrate 2020, few of them could imagine what was about to unfold — a nationwide crisis as thousands of Australians died in a coronavirus pandemic.





Let's go! The Hub has become more than just a lounge, hosting many community celebrations — from Melbourne Cup races to New Year's Eve parties.



Big smiles Former staffers Rebecca Ellsmore, Brooke Taprell and Haley Stephenson checking out the new-look signage at Wests.

The Kitchen A new family bistro area was immediately popular with members.



Pandemic closures

CLUB ADOPTS MOTTO "PEOPLE BEFORE PROFITS"



Face masks But the smiles of Leigh Prebble and Kristie Nelson can still be felt. Alan Buxton paid tribute to Wests' resilient staff who often bore the brunt of public anger over Covid-10 regulations. "Behind every mask is a smiling face," the club insisted in its Facebook posts. "We are working together to keep you safe."

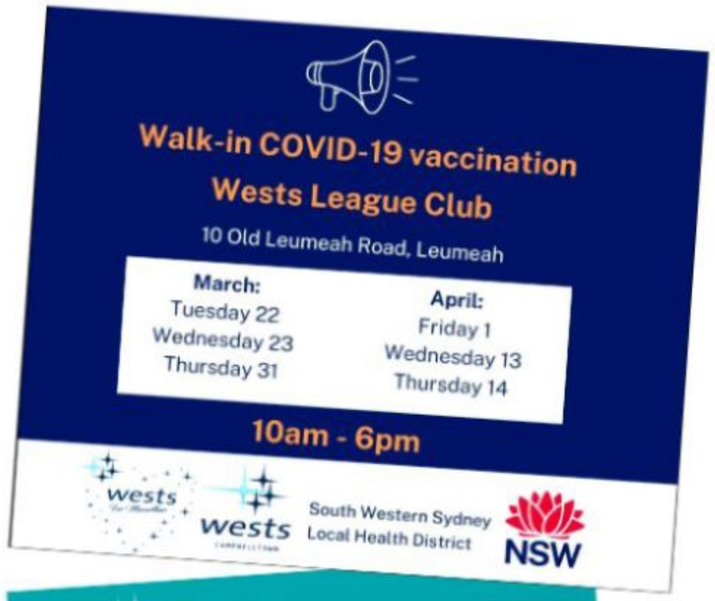
"Social distancing" became a new catchcry in 2020-21 as COVID-19 swept Australia and masks hid faces.

Our club was repeatedly forced to close — including for three months in 2021 — as "lockdown" became another catchcry. That meant tens of thousands of social interactions were banned, and hundreds of club staff were left without a job.

These dire times proved a baptism of fire for Daniel Perkiss, Wests Group's new CEO. Instead of gently settling in to learn the ropes, he was busy developing response plans, supporting employees, and communicating with the community.

Many clubs laid off their staff, but Wests vowed to maintain its payrolls, as well as other support measures such as hampers. Alan Buxton called it a "People before Profits" policy that cost $2.1 million.

"Whatever our staff received from the government in welfare, we resolved to make up the difference," said Buxton.







Campaigns Wests played a key role in ensuring Macarthur had one of highest rates of vaccination — 98 per cent — in NSW.

Together we were able to navigate the uncertainty and challenges of our second pandemic year and re-open after an 106-day closure to a stronger, more resilient team and community than ever before.

ALAN BUXTON



Baptism of fire Daniel Perkiss became our new CEO during the pandemic and led Wests with a genuine care for people. It might be said that staff learned much more about him in that first year than they might have otherwise.

That meant no one paying a mortgage, or supporting a family, was financially disadvantaged. It drained our bank account — but was worth it." The result, on re-opening, was a truly thankful staff and perhaps one of the highest-morale workplaces in Australia.

Wests treated the community the same way. Its donations actually *increased*, as its profits crashed. That made a real difference to 72 sporting clubs, 44 organisations and 26 schools in a time of crisis — when preserving our social fabric seemed so important amid panic buying and erosion of normal freedoms.



Cheers "Freedom Day" as Wests welcomed back patrons in October 2021 after months of lockdowns.

Julia Maulguet was among the handful of senior staffers who "babysat" the club when it was in mothballs. "It was weird, just a few of us in this big silent building as we exercised, cleaned and dusted."

The only part of Wests able to operate normally was Lakeside golf course, with its fresh and open air. An island of hope.

There was a feeling of genuine celebration in October 2021 as members were finally allowed back in. And, they arrived in droves to reconnect with their friends and family.

That also meant our financial generosity in a time of crisis was also rewarded. In 2022, Wests Group would declare a staggering profit of $19.25 million. Putting people before profits had, ironically, proved to be very profitable.

Whatever the 2020s still has in store, Wests has proved itself strong enough, resilient enough, and united enough to meet any challenge head-on.

Re-engagement

WESTS SPEARHEADS POST-PANDEMIC PUBLIC SPIRIT

Wests Cares A new heart-shaped logo summed up our 2020s mindset.

Wests Group found itself at a pivotal juncture as it emerged from the shadows of isolation and set out to rekindle a spirit of togetherness.

Not only internally, with a revitalised calendar of events, promotions and themes in its venues, but externally. Our club threw itself into community outreach like never before.

Wests was morer than a major supporter of Macarthur's big events — from the Fisher's Ghost Festival and Christmas Carols to Campbelltown City Challenge Walk — but it also *participated*.

Our directors, staff, and members were serving snags at barbecues, handing over tinned goods for homeless families, meeting kids at school events, taking part in working bees, or seeing up-close how donations were making a difference. In 2021-22, the club also launched a new annual *Community Magazine* to report on the latest club news.

The sheer variety of our connections also showed how far Wests had come from being a mere leagues club. From providing installation of defibrillator packages into the community, to backing new community arts facilities, to funding charities In support of women fleeing domestic violence.

Buxton summed it up: "We are more committed than ever to being a profit-for-purpose organisation that exists for the betterment of Macarthur."



Frontline In the community Alan Buxton and Paul Lake at a Men's Outreach barbecue, with Davina Smith of Turning Point Camden.



Massed visits Our club often expresses its thanks to local volunteers — such as to these orange-clad SES volunteers after major flooding and storm emergencies in Macarthur.

Comforts and refreshments At the 2023 Fisher's Ghost Fun Run Wests provided a "Chillout zone" across the finish line — complete with drinks and snacks, comfy beanbags and smiling faces.



Being present The Wests team, above, at the 2022 Campbelltown City Challenge Walk at the Mount Annan Botanic Garden, led by gaming supervisor Chris Manaton.



Ho ho ho! Christmas Carols is one of the many community events supported by your club.

MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE TO *Macarthur*

With every visit you make to a Wests Group Macarthur venue, you make a genuine difference to the real people of the Macarthur region.

Through our ClubGRANTS, fundraising and awareness initiatives, we are able to connect with and improve on the issues, challenges and opportunities in our region and offer support accordingly. Check out some of our wonderful highlights from 2022.



JOINING THE FIGHT AGAINST CANCER

Wests Group Macarthur was pleased to support 24 Hour Fight against Cancer with $20,000 worth of funding for the Macarthur Cancer Therapy Centre toward the comfort, support and services of those receiving Cancer treatment.

Through the funding, the Cancer Therapy centre was able to purchase equipment including three x CareCell Area Zone pressure mattresses and six x SAF cushions for terminally ill patients and provide patients the choice of remaining in the safety and comfort of their own homes.

Wests also assisted in the purchase of electronic information boards for the centre to keep radiation patients aware of changes to treatment schedules, waiting times, health information advice and upcoming patient education forums.

COMPLIMENTING CANCER TREATMENT

South West Sydney Local Health District Cancer Wellness centre helps to deliver complementary integrative therapies to patients undergoing Cancer Treatment. Wests was pleased to provide funding towards these services that make an enormous difference to patients including specialty oncology massage, acupuncture, and meditation to support patients, who have already been through so much through their clinical treatment regime.



CAMDEN WOMEN'S COOKING GROUP



The Camden Digital Arts and Culture Centre identified a need to create a safe space for women, especially aboriginal and immigrant women who were isolated, struggling or lacked support without family and friends around.

Wests, through the provision of supplies and ingredients, was happy to support the new Camden Women's Cooking group that brings cultures together and connects women over food while also providing mental health training, workshops in mindfulness and wellbeing, information, advice and patient education forums.

SUPPORT FOR A SWITCHED ON MENS SHED

The Australian Men's Shed Association is a national service provider supporting more than 1,200 Men's, Women's and Community Sheds and is recognised as one of Australia's largest male-based community development organisations. When Men's Shed Narellan reached out for some support to replace the electrical switchboard at their premises we were happy to help supporting their 80+ members to work in a safer environment.

YOUTH SOLUTIONS

Wests Group Macarthur prides itself on supporting programs that keep the community active and safe and were pleased to make a $3,000 commitment to support Youth Solutions' Skill (Drug and Alcohol Information and Resilience Skills) program in 2022.

The SKILL project is delivered as a series of workshops over several weeks, which aim to educate and develop skills to reduce drug and alcohol related harm. As well as providing drug and alcohol education and safety strategies, the project focuses on mental health and resilience aimed at developing positive coping and self-help seeking skills in young people.

We are also excited to be building a new project with Youth Solutions to provide drug and alcohol information and support to 12-17 year olds through community sports clubs. Stay tuned.



FOSTER CARE ANGELS

Foster Care Angels exists to support, empower and create opportunities for children and young people in the foster care system and their families and has expanded their support for all disadvantaged children.

Wests was pleased to provide funding toward the provision of a Mental Health and Resilience Online Training and APP A Maze In Mind to educate and empower young people in essential life skills, signs of mental illnesses, strategies on coping with mental health issues and enhancing resilience.

HEADSPACE

Wests was pleased to work with Headspace to fund the 'Make-Space' program, an art and creative activities program for a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing for youth in campbelltown. This project aims to connect young people aged 12-25 years together in a safe space, connecting them with other youth and enabling them to try different creative modalities.





RAINBOW CLUB

Rainbow Club is a network of social swimming clubs for children living with a disability that offers unique Swim the Rainbow and Rainbow Squads programs. They offer a fun and safe community for children to have personalised swimming lessons catered to their needs and provide much needed social connections to families who provide the caregiving. Wests was really happy to support the purchase of swim school clothing to reduce the cost to families who use this service as well as support for their end of year social events.



LOOKING AFTER OUR LOCAL RFS

The Wests Group Macarthur team was thrilled to present NSW Rural Fire Service - Georges River Brigade in Minto Heights with their new ROVER Lawn King donated via ClubGRANTS.

Before the new ride-on mower arrived via local business Village Mowers, the Georges River RFS team was taking turns bringing in their personal mowers to attend to the almost 2000sq of station compound grass areas.

The Rural Fire Service do an amazing job supporting the community through fire emergencies, flood clean up and other call outs for assistance and Wests is proud to support them back!

WHEN CARERS NEED SOME CARE

Disability Macarthur operate the Sunflower Cottage in Mt Annan to provide weekend accommodation for children and adults 8-65 years with high support and medical needs so that caregivers can take time out to attend a special family event or simply relax and recharge.

When they reached out for some upgrades to their security system for the safety and security of their patients at the cottages Wests was happy to help.

We look forward to further supporting Sunflower Cottage in 2023 with much needed maintenance support.



DRIVING OUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic Violence has a devastating impact on families, children, and communities. Not only is it the number one cause for homelessness in women and children, on average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner. This must stop.

Macarthur has some of the highest rates of Domestic Violence in NSW with over 1400 clients referred to the Macarthur Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service in the last year.

Wests Group Macarthur has prioritised a strong relationship with the local Domestic Violence committee for a united approach to tackling the challenges around funding and delivery of services head on.

We are pleased to have supercharged our support by over 200% and work closely with other local venues via the Campbelltown ClubGRANTS committee to fund and support the delivery of domestic violence related programs and services. Some of the projects in this space include:

- **Driving Out Violence Convoy** $5,000
- **Paws Pats at Risk Vet Care** $3,000
- **Macarthur Legal Centre** $5,000
- **Campbelltown DV Forum** $5,000
- **Campbelltown Women's Coffee Club** $6,000
- **Blue Wren House Camden Women's Shelter** $20,000
- **Blue Wren House Waterproof Mattresses** $5,000
- **Escabags** $3,000



Campbelltown DV Committee

Coming Soon!

Look out for a hearty announcement in 2023 as Wests joins forces with other venues in the region to launch a new partnership with Heart of the Nation to increase the number of AEDs in our community.

HEART OF THE NATION

"Wests cares" A couple of pages from the new *Community Magazine* that our club began to publish in the 2020s to keep members up-to-date with its latest community activities and sponsorships.



Sunflower Cottage One of Wests' favourite community projects in 2023 was a backyard renovation for a home operated by Disability Macarthur. (It provides up to four nights respite care, giving parents/carers a much-needed break.) After lockdowns and months of rain, the cottage, nestled under tall gum trees, was in need of some TLC and a two-day working bee by Wests staffers transformed the outdoor space.



Giving a duck about cancer Wests staffers Leanne Craig and Kelly Robinson represented 'Team Ten Four Rubber Ducky' in the Cancer Council's Shitbox Rally in October 2022, bashing through 3300km of scrub from Mackay to Darwin. They were inspired by workmate Jessica Pereira diagnosed with breast cancer. Wests donated an old maintenance vehicle (only 'shitboxes' were allowed) and, supported by Wests donations, they raised $12,000.



Camden focus New club director Greg Copeland, left, helping to celebrate Narellan Men's Shed's 10th anniversary in 2023. One of many local services Wests supports via the ClubGRANTS program.

The Sherwood

WESTS TENNIS CLUB IS REBORN IN 2023

As much as Wests Group thrived, the weak link in the chain seemed to be the ever-struggling tennis club.

So, Wests brought in the bulldozers and embarked on a bold new adventure — The Sherwood.

The result, opened in 2023, was a modern pub-syle venue and alfresco dining that felt like a luxury beer garden. Relaxation was the vibe, with staff wearing t-shirts. "Experience tasty food and bevvies and enjoy a variety of specials all week long, along with live entertainment on the weekend," our website said.

Share-style dishes were a speciality, from Roku Gin-cured kingfish to old favourites like hand-smashed burgers. A signature cocktail menu featured nostalgic flavours like "Rainbow Paddle Pop" and there was a selection of tap beers, some of them dedicated to local brewers.

"Our team has achieved a tavern style open plan feel," said Wests CEO Daniel Perkiss, "complemented by an enormous 4.5m by 2.5m outdoor screen to deliver optimum sports viewing."

Curtin Architects teamed up with Interior Designer Ruth Harris from Redwah Design Studio to bring the venue to life with textures such as marble, stone, timber joinery, and lush planting.

There was even a map of Campbelltown on a large steel panel on the side of the building, as well as on the carpet inside.







Gone The original tennis club dating back to the 1970s, bulldozed to make way for a completely modern new club.



The Sherwood As it looks now — with some of the caps being given away to promote the club's new branding logos.



The name 'Sherwood' was a nod to the history of Campbelltown, inspired by the former suburb Sherwood Hills. But the obvious connection to the Robin Hood legends was furthered by a custom mural of the medieval outlaw in Sherwood Forest, by artist Joe Quilter.

Among the many guests at the opening was Rick Wayde, that former Magpies CEO who, in 1986, made the fateful decision to take over a broke Campbelltown City Leagues Club.

He could only marvel at the progress. "Whenever I come to Campbelltown Sports Stadium, I always make a point of walking through the club," Wayde said.

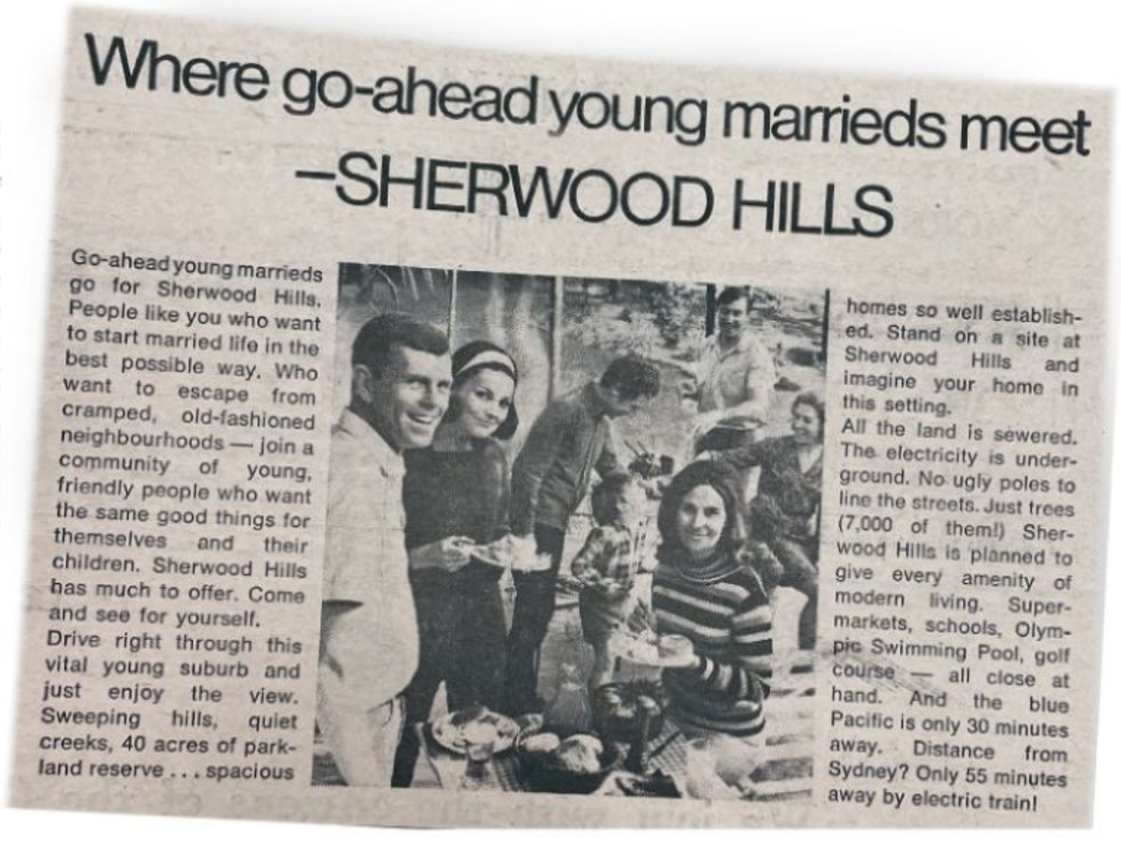
The Sherwood brings the local community a new style of venue to create a world-class sports and entertainment precinct in our own backyard.

DANIEL PERKISS

"Campbelltown and Ashfield might not have always seen eye-to-eye, but I do get a sense of pride when I walk through, at how well Wests is doing."

"That's from years of wise decisions by its board," Wayde admits. "But in saying that, if I hadn't made that decision to save the club [back in 1986] there probably wouldn't be anything here now."

Reaching back The name 'Sherwood' reminds people of Robin Hood. But, the name was also a gentle nod to one of Campbelltown's earliest housing estates — "Sherwood Hills" (Bradbury). This promotional ad for the estate is from the late 1960s.



Where go-ahead young marrieds meet
—SHERWOOD HILLS

Go-ahead young marrieds go for Sherwood Hills. People like you who want to start married life in the best possible way. Who want to escape from cramped, old-fashioned neighbourhoods — join a community of young, friendly people who want the same good things for themselves and their children. Sherwood Hills has much to offer. Come and see for yourself. Drive right through this vital young suburb and just enjoy the view. Sweeping hills, quiet creeks, 40 acres of parkland reserve . . . spacious homes so well established. Stand on a site at Sherwood Hills and imagine your home in this setting.

All the land is sewered. The electricity is underground. No ugly poles to line the streets. Just trees (7,000 of them!) Sherwood Hills is planned to give every amenity of modern living. Supermarkets, schools, Olympic Swimming Pool, golf course — all close at hand. And the blue Pacific is only 30 minutes away. Distance from Sydney? Only 55 minutes away by electric train!

People *are* the difference

THE SMILE, THE SERVICE, THE CAREERS OF THE FUTURE

The Sherwood's manager is Julia Maulguet — a long-time Wests staffer who began picking up glasses in 2006 and has since built a career here.

Meanwhile, Eliza Saul is a young barista. For her, Wests is not a career, but a job — a handy way to pay her way as she plans for a career in the police force.

Both women show the strength of Wests as a *short-term* and *long-term* employer. "I wonder how many local careers have been built on shift work in our club," pondered Alan Buxton.

In the wake of Wests' "People before profits" policy during the pandemic, staff morale feels strong in 2024.

Maulguet said she went from picking up glasses and cleaning tables, to promotional hosting within weeks. "I wanted to stay and progress at Wests." The club is now the backdrop to her life. "I joined when I had a one-year-old son, being able to be home with him during the day and work at night. That one year old son, Joshua, is now 18 and working at Wests!" Given her parents were members beforehand, it is a three-generational story.

Wests places its employees front and centre of its marketing— with the slogan: *"Our people make the difference."*







Short-term Eliza Saul, serving a coffee with a smile in 2023. "I love my job, as Wests is local, and has a really supportive team environment. I also love connecting with people."

Long-term Julia Maulguet, above, at work as a young employee in 2008 when Bambu cocktail bar first opened. At right, Julia is also pictured in 2023 at the opening of the venue she now runs — The Sherwood. "Wests has always been a great place to work. Many of us duty managers have been here for years."





Our employees are the backbone of our organisation, each bringing their unique talents, dedication, and passion to create a dynamic thriving workplace culture.

LEANNE CRAIG
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER







READER OF THE WEEK

Sum yourself up: A hardworking, enthusiastic, social butterfly (as my dad likes to say), who has a passion for food and life.
A typical day? No two days are the same.
So it's not just at the Leumeah club that you work? With Wests owning a group of clubs, I also work at Wests Tennis Club, Camden Lakeside golf club and Country Club Camden Valley. They all have something unique to offer.
What would you spend your last $10 on? I have a massive sweet tooth, so … ice-cream.
If you could have dinner with any three people who would they be? Grace Kelly (great ambitions and wasn't afraid to stand up for herself and her family), Ellen Degeneres (so funny, and does so much for everyday people) and Maeve O'Meara from *Food Safari* (all her experience in cooking and travelling).
If you were mayor of Campbelltown for a day, what would be the first thing you did? Look into Campbelltown's tourism and see how we could improve it. Campbelltown is a great place; we have so much to offer.
Our best hidden gem? The Old Town Theatre on Queen Street. Great productions.
Funniest thing that has happened to you in your job? During a best man's speech I was asked as a prank to "return" a key to the groom's house. Luckily the bride also saw the funny side of it, too.
Where do you see yourself in 10 years? An event manager specialising in weddings.
If a movie was made about your life, what would it be called and who would star as you? *Speechless* with Zooey Deschanel.

ROSANNA SPEECHLEY of Eschol Park is an events team leader at Wests Leagues Club.

A public face
In 2015, former staffer Rosanna Speechley was selected as a 'Reader of the Week' for the *Macarthur Advertiser* newspaper.



Remember ths look?
An old snap of Wests staff in the late 1990s, wearing the club's first official uniform.

A morning tea for longtime staff was held at Wests in March 2024 (see opposite), with "friendship" cited as a dominant collective memory. Work colleagues are also confidants, mentors, and pillars of support.

Many funny stories were told at this gathering — such as when Gale Warner and Sue Hudson recalled the late 1990s: "We used to have a coffee shop, a little bar thing, in the middle of the dancefloor and when people wanted hot food, we'd have to go to the bistro to cook chips and then carry them on a tray, above our heads, and try to get them back to the coffee shop in one piece through all the cigarette smoke, dancers, as people who tried to pinch a chip on the way through!"

Shirley Imber recalled arriving early to hear Disney musical numbers blaring as the chefs loudly sang every word.

But old yarns aside, all the Wests Directors agree that staff have been a vital part of our cultural fabric — not only their skills, humour and expertise, but their deep understanding of the club's values and history. Not to mention the family-like bonds they create with members.

That tone of camaraderie and egalitarianism is set from the top. For example, despite being the club's CEO, Daniel Perkiss occupies what is perhaps the smallest and least comfortable office in the administration section, after giving up the large manager's office, with its window views, to accommodate the Group's Building & Development team. A decison unannounced, but respected.

In 2024, Dick Lucas was our longest-serving employee (more than 35 years). "He is always up for a laugh and a chat about the footy or providing you with the latest updates on the obituaries," one Wests social media post noted.

Our unsung heroes do tend to be sung.



The 'Old Guard' of Wests' staff celebrating in 2024 Some of the long-serving faces who have played a pivotal customer service role at Wests.
Back row: David Jackson, Brent Krause, Lee Massey, Christian Vera, Bruce Punch, Christie Sciberras, Kim Doherty.
Front row: Wade McKinnon, Mark Dymitriw, Dick Lucas, Julia Maulguet, Gale Warner, Dawn King, Katherine Fogarty, Sonia Menegazzo, Sandra Arthur, Vicki Omullane, Leigh Prebble, Shirley Imber, Sue Hudson.

Still the ‘Home of Sport’

A BASTION OF SUPPORT FOR LOCAL TEAMS



Tony Norton A local rugby league legend of the 1960s and foundation director of Wests — is still a much-loved club identity as our ‘sports ambassador’ in 2024.

In 2022, Wests again proved its grassroots support of juniors with a $330,000 grant to a newly-created rugby league competition in our region.

Wests Tigers Macarthur Juniors and Group 6 had both been combined (under the NSW Rugby League) into a single powerhouse competition of 447 teams, containing more than 7,000 players.

NSW State of Origin coach Brad Fittler and NSWRL CEO Dave Trodden praised Wests for solidifying pathways for local players. “Rugby league has been the beating heart of Wests since inception in 1974,” Chairperson Alan Buxton replied. “Being able to support the past, present, and future of the game within Macarthur is a privilege we take seriously.”

Wests Tigers’ vow to play more home games at Campbelltown, from 2023, also raised spirits at our club.

“Deep down, we’d love to see Wests Tigers to do well,” said Steve Noyce. “Our CEO, Daniel Perkiss, is a real footy person so he’s really trying to re-engage.”

in 2024, Wests’ support of the sport grew to circa $750,000 — not only via Macarthur Juniors but an uptick in partnership investment with Wests Tigers, who were celebrating their 25th anniversary, and other rugby league



Core mission A year after funding the new Macarthur Rugby League competition with a $330,000 grant, Wests increased their donation to $350,000 in 2024.



Old times sake Campbelltown City Kangaroos won the 2017 Group 6 grand final, its first title since 1983. Given our historic links, Wests offered them a big public congratulations.

related community engagement activities.

But a top priority remains our Wests Sports Council — now more than 30 clubs — and their vast youth networks.

Back in 1975, John Marsden had written about his dream that the club would, one day, be able to fund a wide array of sports. That dream has come true.

The numbers are impressive. A recent list of donations included $100,000 for Macarthur Football Association, $38,000 for Campbelltown Camden District Cricket Club, and $30,000 for Southern Districts Tennis Association. Old links are not forgotten either — $25,000 for the Campbelltown City Kangaroos.



Footy feed Wests Tigers great John Skandalis retains his close links with Wests, even designing special "Skando meal combos" for home game days — using all his favourite ingredients.

Our total annual sport contributions in 2024 are almost $1.2 million.

The Kangaroos — led by passionate former players such as Alex and Rob Melville (sons of 1969 grand finalist Bruce Melville) — were no longer all about the blokes, either. A local women's league was thriving in the 2020s.

Women do tend to dominate the list of Macarthur's top sports achievers, a fact reflected by the long list of female names in Wests' annual Sports Council Awards.

One of the latest prime examples is teenage soccer star Tegan Bertolissio of Macarthur Rams, winner of our Elite



Being present Wests prides itself on its active involvement — "We work really actively with Macarthur Rugby League on gala days," said Group Marketing & Communications Manager Katie Petkovski.

Sportsperson of 2023. Tegan was selected in the Junior Matildas (national) team and a key part of the squad that won the AFF U18 Asian Cup in 2022. Tegan then joined the Young Matildas (U20) squad for the 2024 Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers, and joined A-League club Canberra United.

Another recent Wests' award winner, in 2018, was cricketer Belinda Vakarewa. In a meteoric rise she went from playing for the Magpies and Ghosts to bowling for the Southern Stars, Australia's women's team.

An important change Wests made to its awards system was adding volunteers.

When new CEO Daniel Perkiss attended his first Sports Council meeting, he walked out feeling so grateful to the "unsung heroes" that he arranged a thank-you dinner for team volunteers.

"At that first event [in 2022] there were about 320 people," recalled Stephen Stewart. "We didn't skimp — only the best prawns, oysters, and free drinks, to recognise these people's years of dedication." Steve Noyce added: "Great camaraderie, with people from all sports but the same volunteering ethos. They kept saying thank you to us, but we kept on replying, *No, thank you!*"

That volunteers' night was so successful it has now become an annual event.

Youth winners so far have included Paige Morel of Ingleburn Softball Club and Cody Sainsbury of Macarthur Football Association. Also adult winners Glenn Schwarzel of Macarthur Triathlon and Fred Furner of Macarthur BMX.



Wests backing Triathlete Natalie Van Coevorden is another world-achieving local sportswoman who Wests helps with funding for travel, equipment and accommodation.



Achiever Australian cricketer Belinda Vakarewa. who attended Eagle Vale High School played in local teams, was winner of Wests' Elite Sportperson award in 2018.



Go Tillies! When the Matildas starred in the 2023 World Cup members poured into the club to watch watch them live and loud at The Hub.



Regional force Director Stephen Stewart with winners of the 2020 Elite sports Team of the Year — the Under 14s NSW titles representative team from Camden & District Netball.



Why we exist Every weekend thousands of youngsters hit our sporting fields to compete — with most of those teams supported by Wests. This fills our directors with more collective pride than any Sydney grand final could muster.



No end of talent Tanveer Sangha of Campbelltown Camden Cricket Club — winner of the 2021 Elite Sportsperson award— with Martin Bullock.

WESTS SPORTS COUNCIL MEMBERS IN 2024

Camden Cats Senior AFL Club

Camden District Cricket Association

Camden District Cricket Umpires Association

Camden & District Netball Association

Camden Tigers Football Club

Camden Valley Basketball Association

Campbelltown Camden District Cricket Club

Campbelltown City Kangaroos Rugby League Football Club

Campbelltown District Netball Association

Campbelltown Ghosts Junior Baseball Club

Campbelltown Harlequin Rugby Football Club

Eschol Park Little Athletics Club

Group 6 Rugby League Referees Association

Macarthur Baseball League

Macarthur BMX Club

Macarthur District Football Referees Association

Macarthur Football Association

Macarthur Rams Football Club

Macarthur Rugby League

Macarthur Triathlon Club

Macquarie Fields Swimming Club

Magpies Cricket Club

Mount Annan Swimming Club

Oran Park Gregory Hills JRLFC

Oran Park Rovers Football Club

Softball Campbelltown

Southwest Sydney Academy of Sport

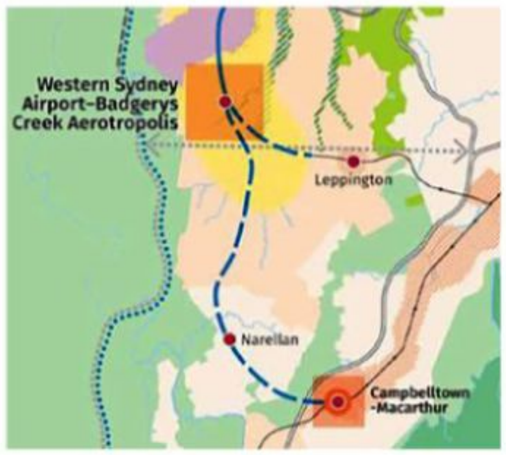
Tennis Macarthur

Western Suburbs District Rugby League Referees Association

Wests Hockey Club

Many possible futures

IS THE SKY A LIMIT FOR WESTS?



New city The creation of the new Western Sydney Airport is a future opportunity for Wests.

Pie-in-the-sky stuff Wests has to consider *all* multiple possible futures. This rough concept drawing, one of many sitting in filing cabinets, was sketched after politicians in 2017 spoke of a need to surround Leumeah station with high-rise. Our tennis courts, however, are in no immediate danger.

There's the future that gets handed to us, and the future we build ourselves.

With the former, Leumeah has been earmarked for a major transformation as part of a "*Reimagining Campbelltown*" Masterplan. How exactly that will unfold prior to the 2030s is yet to be seen.

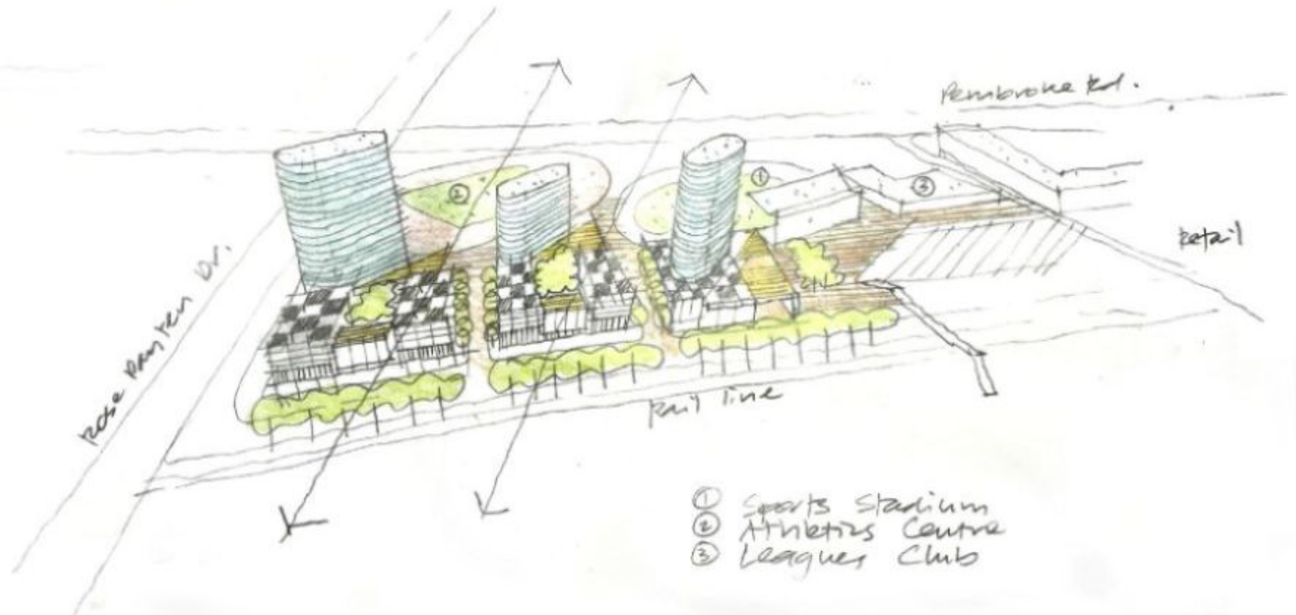
Campbelltown Council wants to retain a major sports precinct anchored around the stadium — with plans for a 2026 "Centre of Excellence". Yet, at the same time, the NSW Government is pushing for high-rise apartment blocks to be erected for commuters around Leumeah station. What that means for the large site occupied by our club's tennis courts is yet to be seen.

Wests has assured members that *if* the courts are relocated one day, tennis will still be supported by our club. At the 2020 AGM, Alan Buxton stated: "There are no plans [to relocate] at this stage . . . [and] our commitment is to sport."

As for the future we build ourselves . . .

Wests' next major step forward is already underway in 2024 — the planned construction of "The Greens" at Gledswood Hills. This will be a boutique golf club on the former El Caballo Blanco site, once famed for its dancing horses.

A Camden Council caveat means 27 golf greens must be provided in the suburb of Gledswood Hills (to replace the 27 holes at the old Camden Valley Resort.) There are only 18 holes at Lakeside, so the housing estate developers need to create another nine-hole course (for first timers or family amateurs). Wests has acquired a site next





Artist's impression "The Greens" at Gledswood Hills — as well as a nine-hole par-three course, it will include a driving range and putt-putt golf.

to that new course for "The Greens". It will help take overflow crowds from our busy Country Club, just up the road.

At the 2022 AGM, our club's constitution was changed — replacing Wests' central focus of Campbelltown with the words "Macarthur Region".

That regional flavour is reflected in the makeup of the board. The latest director appointed, in 2022 (replacing a retiring Warren Thomson), was Greg Copeland — a president of Camden Rams rugby league club, a Camden business owner, and a former Camden councillor.

So, where in our booming wider region might Wests next have a future?

Two locations are obvious, said Alan Buxton: in Wollondilly Shire, and at the new "aerotropolis" now being created at Badgerys Creek. "We've already acquired land near Western Sydney Airport, and are looking at options around the Wollondilly area."

The importance of the future is evident by Wests' appointment of Neil Pash as a new Group Building & Development Manager to assist in planning across all our venues in the decades ahead.

"As Macarthur continues to grow, so do our plans.

ALAN BUXTON







Game Day!

THE PLACE TO CELEBRATE WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

The setting sun cast a golden glow on Sunday, 14 April 2024, as Wests Tigers took on St George at Campbelltown Sports Stadium — "sold out" for the first time since 2005.

More than 17,000 fans poured through the gates, validating the joint venture's new focus on its traditional grounds.

Sadly, the Dragons won 24-12. But everyone agreed the real winner was Campbelltown, as the crowd cheered on 80 local junior league players in pre-match mini-games and half-time relays.

A huge roar of approval also came from the grandstands as our club handed over $350,000 to the combined Wests Tigers Macarthur and Group 6 Junior Rugby League competition.

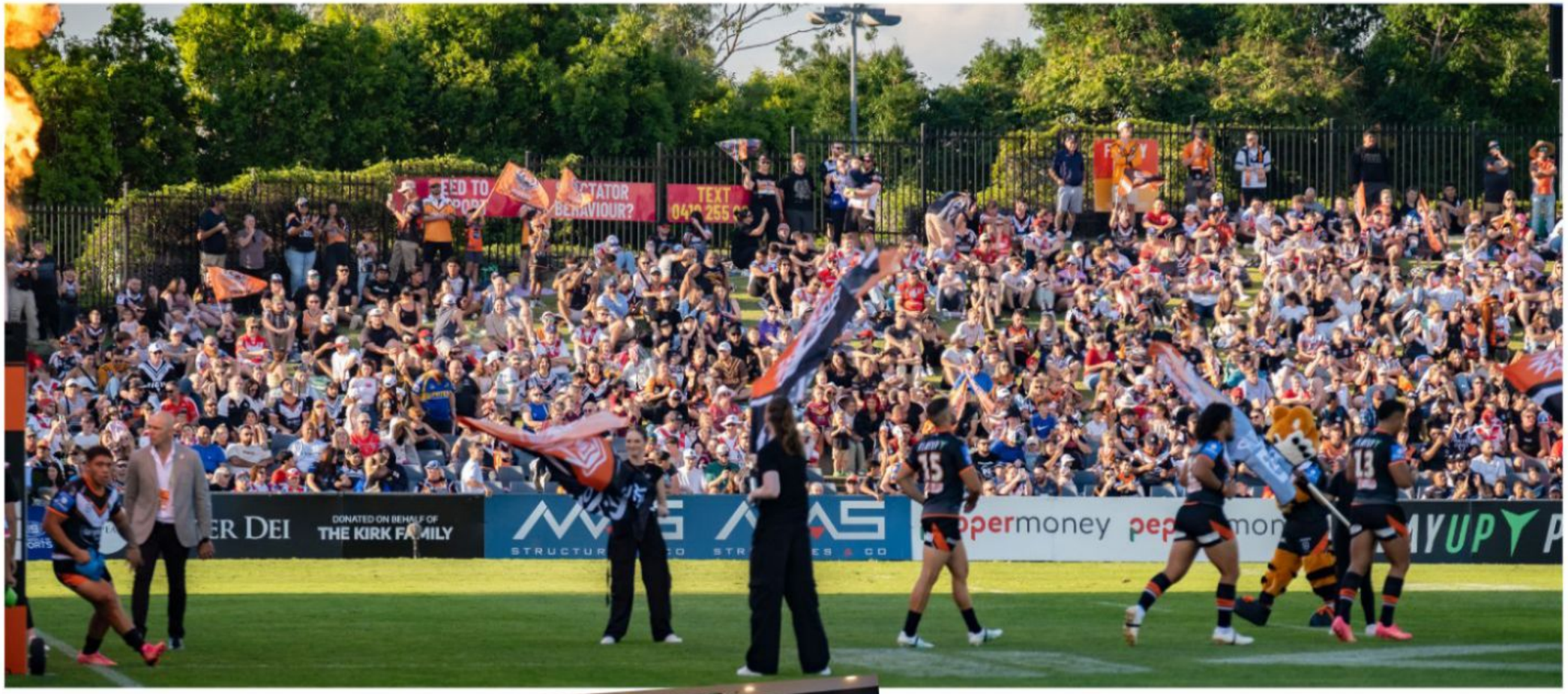
"Wests Group Macarthur have been on the journey with us for many years with their gracious support to our community," said Chairman of the Wests Tigers JRL Board, Daniel Draper. Chairman of the Group 6 Junior Rugby League Mark Dooner said it allowed for "more efficient competitions for players of varying ability and better opportunity for recruitment and retention of current players."

"Sincere thanks to Wests Campbelltown, who not only believe in the role our sport plays to enhance healthy communities, but also the role strong junior participation plays for future player development and pathways in rugby league.

DAVID TRODDEN, NSW RUGBY LEAGUE CEO

But the magic of that day wasn't limited to the Stadium. Wests, next door, was flooded with patrons, as bonds of friendship were celebrated over a drink and a tasty meal.

At the heart of it all lay the simple joy of connection, of coming together as a community to celebrate a shared passion. Which was the core aim of our Kangaroo founding fathers in 1974.







Sold out crowd A collage of images capturing the fun and community spirit of the first Wests Tigers home game of 2024.















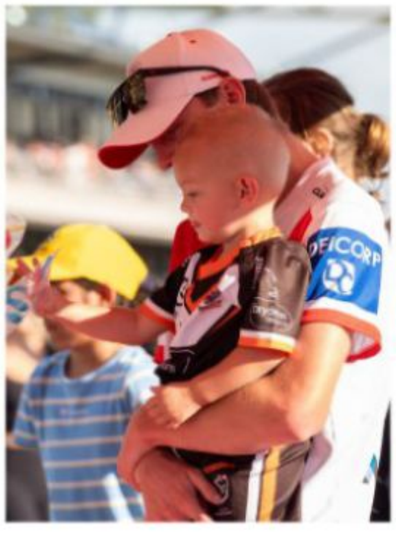


Truly, the home of sport In Sydney's rugby league culture, the home ground atmosphere is more than just a spectacle. It's a source of pride and unity as the roar of the crowd becomes a living, breathing entity, swirling and crescending with every tackle, try, or moment of brilliance or heartbreak. But friendships are also forged, and memories etched, within the community club that adjoins the stadium.


wests
wests
ZURICH










wests
wests


brydens
lawyers



Fifty years young

THE CLUB OF TODAY . . . AND TOMORROW

The 2020s can seem a grim place. Culture wars, real wars, climate and environmental concerns, extremism. Good sportsmanship and community spirit never felt so important — and *they* are Wests' specialities.

Few of the pioneers of 1974 could have imagined how much our club would grow in membership, status and impact.

Wests Group Macarthur in 2024 has a membership of 88,500 — *one in three local residents!* — and employs about 500 staff. Millions of dollars a year are granted in local donations.



In an average year we serve 840,000 schooners of beer, 62,000 pizzas, and 78,000 schnitzels. About 15,000 people a week walk through our doors.

As well as our "home" club at Leumeah, we have the Country Club Gledswood Hills, Lakeside Golf Club Camden, The Sherwood, and a plan for The Greens. Like a giant, ever-spreading tree with many branches but one strong trunk.

So . . .

Is the story of Wests best told by the pioneers like a Tony Norton, Frank Ward, Pamela Evans, Christine Vardy or Roy Warby? Or is it best told by modern teenagers working behind a bar to pay their way through university? Or, perhaps the young sports players funded by Wests and imagining a representative future?

Or, is the story of Wests best told by a community charity that can only do its work due to our funding? Or a young couple starting out on their life's journey at a Lakeside wedding ceremony? Or the senior citizens who enjoy a weekly get-together in a club bistro?



Half a century The anniversary logo embraced by Wests Group, as members celebrate in 2024.

wests
For the Future

Green concerns A better world is a concern for many Wests members and the club is meeting the challenge — from rooftop solar panels, and stormwater retention systems to major recycling programs and food digestive systems that prevent a need for trucking waste.



Not your average board portrait The cheeky personalities of the "men in suits" who run Wests. CEO Daniel Perkiss *(standing at left)* with directors Steve Noyce, Martin Bullock, Alan Buxton, and *(front)* Stephen Stewart, Roy Warby, Paul Lake and Greg Copeland.



All walks of life NAIDOC Week being celebrated in 2023 by South West Sydney Academy of Sport (backed by Wests). The Academy includes many talented young Indigenous athletes such as Brianna Mumbler (Netball), Bridget Saunders (AFLW), Clayton Hapuku (Softball), Bowan Williams (Softball), Max Brown-Tjakuapi (Basketball) and Ruby Grant (WFS-Soccer).

The answer is "yes". All of the above.

There are thousands of different versions of Wests' story, because Wests has 88,500 stories . . . and growing.

Mandy Perrin — that newspaper editor who had her first date at the club in 1985 — praises its blend of focus. "Their support of the Sports Council has opened the door to a lot of community support and, in return, those people show loyalty back to the club and use its facilities . . . so it's a really great two-way relationship. The people in charge are also a really good bunch who have the best interests of our community at heart."

Fifty years after its opening, Wests has become a key part of Macarthur's history. More importantly, it looks certain to be a key part of its future too.







Some clubs measure their success with financial spread sheets or real estate valuations — we have a different measure of success . . .

PAUL LAKE








THE SHERWOOD
Lakeside
wests
Country Club






Clintons Toyota

Appendix

CHAIR OF THE BOARD

John Marsden (1974-1984)

Ray Corkery (1984-1986)

Alan Clarke (1986-1990)

Ray Corkery (1990-2006)

Roy Warby (2006-2016)

Warren Thomson (2016-2019)

Alan Buxton (2019-present)

MANAGER / CEO

No master list exists from 1974-86, but managers from that period include:

Phil Brown, Ted Foley, Neil Armstrong, Harvey Pound, Gwen Woolaston, Jim Giddens and Daryl Wilson.

Post-1986 managers are:

Danny Ware (1986-1994)

Peter Cook (1994-1998)

Danny Ware (1998-2000)

Tony Mathew (2001-2020)

Daniel Perkiss (2021-present)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1974 to 1986

Unfortunately, complete records and dates of directors from this early period of our club are incomplete, but the list would include:

John Marsden
Ray Corkery
Tony Norton
Frank Ward
Ted Foley
Ron Streater
Bill Vardy
Mike Semchyshyn
Frank Moore
William Ball
Larry Foley
William Hoad
James Rowe
Ron Worrell
Bob O'Sullivan
Gordon Allen
Dennis Burke
John McDonald
Steve Noyce
Roderick Smith
Barry Upsall
Ludwig Zielinski

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

1986 to 2024

Names and dates from 1986 onwards are fully recorded.
Note: Directors who were appointed by Wests Ashfield/Wests Magpies during its decade in control (and therefore not directly elected by club members) are marked in grey — excluding Roy Warby and John McDonald who were, technically, installed as "Campbelltown" appointees by Ashfield, but were later verified by a vote of the local membership:

Ray Corkery (1986-2016)
Bob O'Sullivan (1986-1994)
Barry Upsall (1986-2003)
Alan Clarke (1986-1990)
George Grimmond (1986-1996)
Brian Hare (1986-1987)
John Rankin (1986-1994)
John Toomey (1986-1987)
Rick Wayde (1986-1987)
Arthur Brazier (1987-1988)
Robert Carter (1987-1992)
Peter Hardgrove (1988-1996)
Rod Rimes (1988-1990)
Bruce Sacre (1990-1995)
Ron Powell (1990-1994)
Harry Willis (1991-1995)
Ron Watson (1994-1996)
Gordon Fetterplace (1994-99); (2002-07)
Roy Warby (1995-present)
John McDonald (1995-2003)
Ron McDonald (1996-2001)
Barry Moore (1996-2003)
Mike Semchyshyn (1999-2000; 2001-09)
Rick Wayde (2000-2002)
Alan Buxton (2003-present)
Paul Lake (2003-present)
Warren Thomson (2003-2022)
Martin Bullock (2007-present)
Stephen Stewart (2009-present)
Steve Noyce (2017-present)
Greg Copeland (2022-present)

WESTS LIFE MEMBERS

John Marsden *
William (Bill) Hoad *
Barry Upsall *
Roy Ronald Worrell *
Edward (Ted) Foley *
William (Bill) Vardy *
Reuben (Poppa) Evans *
Thomas (Tony) Norton
Ray Corkery *
Mike Semchyshyn
Roy Warby
Warren Thomson

** (deceased)*

TENNIS CLUB LIFE MEMBERS

Victor Bayer
David Brew *
Gordon Chivas *
Robert Cryer *
Denis Gill *
Robert Harper *
Barry Preston *
Graham Taylor
Ronald Turner
Alfred Ward OAM *

** (deceased)*

RUGBY LEAGUE FOOTBALL
COUNTRY CLUB/
CAMDEN LAKESIDE COUNTRY CLUB
LIFE MEMBERS

A.C. Robinson *
J.C. Neill *
R.H. McKinnon BEM *
E.E. McGovern *
R. Stuart *
K.W. Hurst *
E. Dawson *
J. Ashton *
L. Doust OAM *
A. Mackie MBE *
A. Frizelle *
W.J. Thomas *
M. Treuer
H. Mayer *
J.J. Coyle *
E.A. Lang *

J.M. Purcell *
J.A. Quinn *
K. Rawlinson *
G. Garland *
H. Miller *
R. Donovan
J.T. Duggan *
R.J. Jackson *
M.L. Armstrong *
R.B. Harber *
V.A. Mychael *
M.G. Puckeridge *
E.R Brown *
T.W. Johnstone
B.A Samphier

D. O'Farrell
C.G. Bowden
C.H Murray *
B.J Walsh
W.B Sacre *
R. Saunders *
J.A. Mills *
M.A Maiden *
R. M. Treuer *
L. Hall
C.H. Gibson *
B.F. Geerin *
P.J. Coles
D. Robinson

** (deceased)*

Wests Board of Directors in 2024



Back row, from left: Chief Executive Officer Daniel Perkiss, with Directors Stephen Noyce, Martin Bullock, and Chairperson Alan Buxton

Front row, from left: Directors Stephen Stewart, Roy Warby, Deputy Chairperson Paul Lake, and Greg Copeland.

Wests Senior Executives in 2024



Back row, from left: Greg Field (General Manager Camden Venues), Neil Pash (Group Building and Development Manager), Brent Krause (Group Operations Manager), Wade McKinnon (Group Commercial Manager), David Tasker (Group Chief Financial Officer)

Front row, from left: Leanne Craig (Group Human Resources Manager), Simon McNamara (Group Food and Beverage Manager), Patricia Dielman (Executive Assistant), Katie Petkovski (Group Marketing and Communications Manager).

Wests Sports Council Awards

ELITE SPORTS PERSON

2009 **Adam Coyte** *Campbelltown Camden District Cricket Club*
2010 **Nathan Brain** *Campbelltown Camden District Cricket Club*
2011 **Sarah Coyte** *Campbelltown Camden District Cricket Club*
2012 **Shane Kelleher** *Macarthur District Baseball Association*
2013 **Damien Mortimer** *Campbelltown Camden District Cricket Club*
2014 **Natalie Van Coevorden** *Macarthur Triathlon Club*
2015 **Diane Cassel** *Southern Districts Tennis Association*
2016 **Lauren Cheatle** *Campbelltown Camden District Cricket Club*
2017 **Natalie Van Coevorden** *Macarthur Triathlon Club*
2018 **Belinda Vakarewa** *Campbelltown Camden District Cricket Club*
2019 **Darcy Malone** *Macarthur Football Association*
2020 **Rory Southwell** *Macarthur BMX*
2021 **Tanveer Sangha** *Campbelltown Camden District Cricket Club*
2022 **William Salzmann** *Campbelltown Camden District Cricket Club*
2023 **Tegan Bertolissio** *Macarthur Rams Football Club*

YOUTH SPORTS PERSON

2009 **Casey Hall** *Wests Hockey Club*
2010 **Jessica Pace** *Ambarvale Little Athletics*
2011 **Jordan Bates** *Campbelltown Touch Association*
2012 **Jarred Lysaught** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2013 **Cormac Clissold** *Southern Districts Tennis Association*
2014 **Rhys Dewick** *Ghosts Baseball Club*
2015 **Damon Arapa** *Wests Hockey Clubn*
2016 **Rhys Dewick** *Ghosts Baseball Club*
2017 **Jordan Richardson** *Moorebank Baseball Clubb*
2018 **Keiran Brook** *Wests Hockey Club*
2019 **Matthew Browne** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2020 **Andrew Salian** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2021 **Taj Barrington** *Ingleburn RSL Softball Club*
2022 **Cooper Robb Jackson** *Mt Annan Swimming Club*
2023 **Jack Jones** *Eschol Park Little Athletics*

JUNIOR SPORTS PERSON

1999 **Nicholas Hornman** *Triathlon*
2000 **Kahlia Vojkovic** *Hockey*
2001 **Daniel Szczudlo** *Swimming*
2002 **Cameron Stewart** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2003 **Alex Gohari** *Swimming*
2004 **Alex Gohari** *Swimming*
2005 **Jason Hayward** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2006 **James Phathanak** *Ghosts Cricket*
2007 **Adam Coyte** *Ghosts Cricket & Wesley Hore Ghosts Baseball*
2008 **Robert Howe Jnr** *SWSAS – Tennis*
2009 **Kristen Thompson** *Macarthur Triathlon Club*
2010 **Jarred Lysaught** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2011 **Chloe Gray** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2012 **Luke Noble** *Campbelltown Uniting Church Soccer Club*
2013 **Liam Marshall** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2014 **Katie Schwarzel** *Macarthur Triathlon Club*
2015 **Manoj Weerasingham** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2016 **Jeziah Papa** *Ambarvale Little Athletics*
2017 **Andrew Salian** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2018 **Reuben Bennett** *Ambarvale Little Athletics*
2019 **Brayden Brook** *Wests Hockey Club*
2020 **Alexandra Nothdurfter** *Mt Annan Swimming Club*
2021 **Jaxon Coleman** *Macquarie Fields Swimming Club*
2022 **Riley Lane** *Macarthur BMX*
2023 **Lewis Eddie** *Wests Hockey Club*

SENIOR SPORTS PERSON

1999 **John Weaver** *Triathlon*
2000 **Chris Kemp** *Triathlon*
2001 **Herbert Ray** *Swimming*
2002 **Paul Brooks** *Swimming*
2003 **Paul Brooks** *Swimming*
2004 **Jo-Anne Danne** *Triathlon*
2005 **Julie Foster** *Triathlon*
2006 **David Newsome** *Softball Association*
2007 **Erin Densham** *Triathlon*
2008 **Ryan Lavers** *Campbelltown District Softball Association*
2009 **Rob Picken** *Macarthur Triathlon Club*
2010 **Julie Foster** *Macarthur Triathlon Club*
2011 **Kevin Lowe** *Macarthur Triathlon Club*
2012 **Rachael Jack** *Ambarvale Little Athletics*
2013 **Nicole King** *Raby Hockey Club*
2014 **Brad Cox** *Wests Hockey Club*
2015 **Carol Wooldridge** *Macarthur Trialthlon Club*
2016 **Toby Ferguson** *Wests Hockey Club*
2017 **Rachel Eagles** *Macarthur Triathlon Club*
2018 **Wayne Stanton** *Tennis Macarthur*
2019 **Suzie Haddad** *Mt Annan Swimming Club*
2020 **Jack McGrath** *Group 6 Referees Association*
2021 **Rachel Eagles** *Macarthur Triathlon Club*
2022 **Hayden Hooker** *Wests RL Referees Association*
2023 **Aaron Waters** *Tennis Macarthur*

SPORTS TEAM

2001 **Mixed Under 15** *Hockey*
2002 **Under 13 Wests** *Hockey*
2003 **Ladies U/18 Brewer Shield** *Ghosts Crciket*
2004 **State League Team 2** *Netball*
2005 **U/16 AW Green Shield** *Ghosts Crciket*
2006 **U/16 Division 1** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2007 **U/16 AW Green Shield** *Ghosts Cricket*
2008 **Macarthur Rams U/12** *Women's Premier League MDSFA*
2009 **Under 12/1** *Narellan Rangers Soccer Club*
2010 **U12 Div 1** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2011 **U12 Girls** *Harrington Park Soccer Club*
2012 **U13 Div 1** *Harrington United Football Club*
2013 **U18 Div 1** *Gunners Soccer Club*
2014 **Under 8 White** *Warragamaba JRLFC*
2015 **Under 13B** *St Johns Netball Club*
2016 **Under 14 Division 3** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2017 **Under 18 Boys** *Wests-East*
2018 **Graduate B** *Macarthur Flames Netball Club*
2019 **13c** *Airds Lyrebirds Netball Club*
2020 **Div 6** *Campbelltown Thunder Netball Club*
2021 **Under 18 Boys Wests-East** *Wests Hockey Club*
2022 **Under 16s** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2023 **Women's Senior AFL Team** *Camden Cats*

SPIRIT OF SPORT

2001 **John Brown & Lyn Deveney** *Swimming*
2002 **Tom Brown** *Soccer*
2003 **Debbie Stewart** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2004 **Robert Whitaker** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2005 **Gavan Wells** *Ghosts Baseball*
2006 **Jim Nicol** *Little Athletics*
2007 **Michael McIlwain** *Campbelltown Touch*
2008 **Stephanie Kennedy** *Ambarvale Little Athletics*
& Debbie Stewart *Magpies Cricket Club*
2009 **Col White** *WSDRL Referrees Association*
2010 **Robert Cullen** *Raiders Softball Club*
2011 **Narelle Cullen** *Campbeltown & District Softball Association*
2012 **Glenn Schwarzel** *Macarthur Trialthon Club*
2013 **Kim-maree Teale** *Group 6 Referees*
2014 **Karen Parkes** *Ambarvale Little Athletics*
2015 **Andrew Green** *South Campbelltown JAFL Club*
2016 **Glenn Whiteman** *Group 6 Referees Association*
2017 **Ray Dwyer** *Group 6 Referees Association*
2018 **Debbie Stewart** *Magpies Cricket Club*
2019 **Tiarne Martin** *Eaglevale Netball Club*
2020 **Peter Phillips** *Ingleburn RSL Softball Club*
2021 **Samantha Mortimer** *East Campbelltown Eagles Netball Club*
2022 **Rosina Anson** *Tennis Macarthur*
2023 **Darren Hooton** *Mount Annan Swimming Club*

ELITE SPORTS TEAM

2009 **5th Grade** *Campbelltown Camden District Cricket Club*
2010 **U15's Representative team** *Group 6 JRLFC*
2011 **U14 Girls** *Premier Youth League Team Macarthur Rams Soccer Club*
2012 **Under 13 Mollie Dive Shield Representative Team** *Camden District Cricket Association*
2013 **Macarthur Colts Under 12 Representative Team** *Macarthur Baseball League*
2014 **Under 21 Poidevan Gray Team** *Campbelltown Camden District Cricket Club*
2015 **State League Team 2** *Campbelltown District Netball Association*
2016 **State League Team 1** *Campbelltown District Netball Association*
2017 **Macarthur Orioles 1st Grade** *Macarthur Baseball League*
2018 **Macarthur Raptors Premier League Team** *National Indoor Cricket League*
2019 **1st Grade Women's Team** *Campbelltown Camden DCC*
2020 **U14'S C&DNA Representative team** *Camden District Netball Association*
2021 **U10 Representative Tee ball Team** *Softball Campbelltown*
2022 **Metro League Team 2** *Camden District Netball Association*
2023 **NPL 3, U13 Boys** *Macarthur Rams Football Club*

SPORTS VOLUNTEER (JUNIOR)

2022 **Paige Morel** *Ingleburn Softball*
2023 **Cody Sainsbury** *Macarthur Football Association*
2024 **Elizabeth Dyet** *Wests Hockey Club*

SPORTS VOLUNTEER (SENIOR)

2022 **Glenn Schwarzel** *Macarthur Triathlon*
2023 **Fred Furner** *Macarthur BMX*
2024 **Elizabeth Blowes** *Campbelltown District Netball Association*


wests
Country Club
SHERWOOD
STEEDEN
SM


EAT
DRINK
wests
STEEDEN
STRATTON CONTRACTIONS
TRN GROUP
wests
STEEDEN