APRIL / MAY 2025

FIRST BALL

THE **PRIMARY** CLUB OF AUSTRALIA **NEWSLETTER**









THE PRIMARY CLUB
OF
AUSTRALIA

Providing sports & recreation opportunities for people with disabilities

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Dear Primarians and Friends around the country,

Exciting times in Australian cricket right now, headlined by the Women's dominance in all forms of the game with new stars emerging in time for the ICC ODI World Cup in India later in the year.

Meanwhile, the Men's team faces the World Test Championship at Lord's against South Africa in mid-June, followed by a tour against the much-maligned West Indies squad. But the real excitement will be the Ashes summer in Oz.

The Primary Club is hoping to provide A Reserve seats at most of the Test Matches, some of the ODIs, and of course our signature events like the Sydney Test Match Breakfast on 4th January, where we expect close to 450 Members and Guests.

From physical impairment to intellectual challenges, 4.4 million Australians live with a disability (almost 18% of the population). The Primary Club's charter is to help them lead more fulfilling and rewarding lives through sport and recreation. Our members will enjoy reading stories in this edition of 'First Ball' about several of our initiatives around the country. But there is so much more to do!

Jim Maxwell welcoming respected journalist Peter Lalor to the SCG for the September Dinner (top); the 'laugh a minute' chat with former Test cricketer Wayne Phillips (below)



At the last Baggy Green Dinner in September, we were delighted that our founding fathers, Peter Howarth and Jon Erby, chose to toast the Club's 50th Anniversary and praise all our Members and Committee Folk over the decades. We talk about the 600 charity projects and the 60,000 people we've touched. But it's impossible to count the millions of smiles we've helped create. And therein lies our motivation!

As you will read further on in this edition of "First Ball", we had the pleasure at the Baggy Green Dinner of anointing another three amazing athletes into what I think of as our Sir Roden Cutler 'Hall of Fame'. Not only have Bronte Marshall, Rae Anderson and Koen Jansens performed at international and local levels with distinction, they have put the effort into helping many, many other athletes learn a particular sporting discipline and reach for a dream.

Finally, a word about our PCA cricket squad. For 30 years, we had the convenience and luxury of our own home ground in the Dooralong Valley, thanks to the generosity of Peter Howarth; and that Lemon Tree Ground was indeed our 'home' complete with pavilion, rest rooms, bar and wall space for trophies and mementos.

In the cricket report in the latter pages of this "First Ball", we read about our new generation of Primary Club cricketers who regularly play the game we love and grow our membership, hopefully to fill future committee roles. We congratulate their new leaders — Andrew Wildblood, Greg Stark and Ross Anderson — for this effective transition.

Looking ahead, I'd like to remind ALL Members how important your personal support is in several aspects — financial, volunteering, and/or attending our events. Watch out for details about all these on our website.

At the time of writing, we are deeply saddened by the sudden passing of Shaan Verco beloved wife of our Charity Development Manager, Geoff. She was of course also well known to many of you as an active and passionate supporter of the Primary Club over many years, and we will all miss her dearly. Our thoughts are with Geoff and his family during this difficult time.

Jim Maxwell AM, President



Shaan and Geoff

CHARITY NEWS

Primary Club Members will share my pleasure in reading these stories from five of our charity partners. These demonstrate the diversity of environments and people that our grants support – not just in sport participation, but also with many simple tasks we take for granted, such as going for a swim, learning to walk, to communicate, to share and to compete. Each has an important role in a person's healthy inclusion and wellbeing.

Derick Borean Committee & Chair, Charities Sub-Committee

"TRY WALKING IN MY SHOES"

Cerebral palsy is the most common physical disability in childhood, affecting movement and posture. One in three children with cerebral palsy are unable to walk. Many children with cerebral palsy access therapy to improve their walking ability and use mobility devices to improve their independence.

Annabelle is working towards increasing her walking endurance with the walking frame. The "GaitKeeper Treadmill" generously donated by The Primary Club of Australia to Cerebral Palsy Alliance provides Annabelle and others with a consistent and controlled environment, allowing them to achieve a high level of repetitive practice. The different speeds available on the treadmill support Annabelle's therapists to challenge Annabelle's step length and speed and allows for slower periods for Annabelle to actively rest.

Thank you, Primary Club of Australia, for supporting the health and wellbeing of children with cerebral palsy, like Annabelle.

CEO Rob White explains: "Thank you for your recent generous donation of \$41,603.00 supporting Cerebral Palsy Alliance's vision of an inclusive society for all people with disability. Your generosity will create brighter futures."

Shannon Taylor Cerebral Palsy Alliance, Forestville NSW





"PUTTING THE BOOT IN"

The Sydney FC Foundation used close to \$4,000 from the initial Primary Club grant for sporting equipment and the remainder on assisting the powerchair team and program with their equipment. These facilities have now been used by over 1,800 participants throughout over 17,000 individual sporting events and Gala Days and are positively impacting hundreds of people with disability on a weekly basis. We continue to look to grow our programs and are venturing into new areas of Sydney in the coming months, through our schools and community programs.

Jake Cohen
Sydney FC Foundation





Annabelle on the treadmill (left); trying out the game of football (top and above)

"HIT THE JACK. BOSS!"

Boccia is a precise ball sport, akin to bocce and related to bowls and pétanque. The name "boccia" is derived from the Latin word for "boss". The sport is contested at local, national and international levels, by athletes with severe physical disabilities.

The Primary Club funding has created opportunity for us to supply 'start-up kits' for both these newly formed clubs - Bega Valley and Hunter - to concentrate their energy and focus on the members and creating an inclusive environment for people of all abilities from social to high performance levels that are fun, challenging and socially interactive within a connected Boccia community. Boccia Australia the strives to be most inclusive accessible sport through its delivery of programs across the nation and globe. This funding is a key factor enabling us to offer accessible clubs with quality equipment to new and current members. As volunteer-run sporting clubs, it is important to make the process as simple as possible, especially for people new to the sport.

Kelly Rourke CEO, Boccia Australia



"MANLY WHEEL EAGLES"

At the Primary Club Dinner last September, Koen Jansens was awarded a Sir Roden Cutler Award, which included a \$7,500 grant to Sargood Foundation. Koen has a great and very close relationship with Sargood and the Foundation. Upon his receipt of the award, he advised us that he would like the funds to go towards the Foundation which was very generous.

Koen has a great relationship with one of our most recent connections in the Manly Wheel Eagles Wheelchair Basketball Team. We decided to use the funds to purchase a custom Melrose Basketball Wheelchair for the Manly Wheelchair Basketball program. The chair will be used by existing and emerging athletes within the program and will go a long way to allowing players to

participate in disability sports. In fact, over the coming weeks the chair will be used by a current participant at the gym at Sargood and a local resident who will be starting his journey into wheel-chair basketball.

Thank you again Primary Club for all that you do and giving us the opportunity in March to come out to your Corporate Cricket Day at North Sydney Oval.

Andrew Edmondson OAM Sargood Foundation

"SITTIN' ON THE DOCK OF THE BAY"

Recently Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club near Newport NSW hosted the World Championship event for para sailing and the associated 4 x HANSA class boats. The Primary Club safety boats were key assets in providing support to the fleet over 10 days.

Mike Woolley and John Sanderson send their thanks on behalf of the 180+ competitors and their support teams from 16 countries.

Crystal Bay's stated mission is "Getting you on the water for maximum fun".

Sean Wong
On Water Support & Communications,
Sailability Crystal Bay







Fletcher trying out the new wheelchair for Manly Wheel Eagles (left); World Championship Para-Sailing and our safety boats at work (above)

EVENTS & OPERATIONS

"NOW, NOW, LADIES - NO SQUABBLING!"

There's no doubt about it, the two new Shoprider mobility Scooters and the Sandcruiser beach wheelchair have been a wonderful addition in assisting our Widows and Beneficiaries here at Legacy Camp at Busselton WA.

All thanks to the Gallant fund raising efforts of Matt Brumby and provided by the Primary Club, Legacy can now assist all our beneficiaries with much needed additional mobility equipment for our beautiful beachside location here.

As time marches forward the need of our Legacy widows for greater mobility constantly increases and the two new "Gophers" (mobility Scooters) were a big hit amongst the Widows. Polite jostling ensued as to who was going to be first to drive these new machines.





"Oh, that one's mine" one of the Ladies pronounced. "It's my team colours!" You just can't argue with that.

The Sandcruiser is more for the adventurous as it allows with great ease, I must say, a rather easy push over the sand to the water's edge.

On a hot day the Beneficiaries who find it near impossible to negotiate the beach can now be easily assisted to the water's edge for a swim. The Sandcruiser gathers a small crowd of onlookers as it defies logic by moving effortlessly across the beach.

All In all, a wonderful contribution by Matt Brumby (PCA Sir Roden Cutler Award recipient 2021/22) and the Primary Club in raising and providing the funds for the much-needed additional equipment for the many Beneficiaries here at Legacy Camp WA. Cheers and thank you All.

Peter Bruce Camp Caretaker, Legacy WA Over a busy summer, with all the international and local cricket being played, there has been a range of the Primary Club's own activities and events.

The demand on Primary Club resources has increased to provide more assistance to our charity partners in accordance with our charter.

Now well into our 50th Anniversary Year, we need our members support even more – to renew your membership, pay your fines, attend events, but also entice your friends, family members and corporate interests to join in the fun-raising.

Nathan Dale, Director of Operations







THE BAGGY GREEN DINNER 2024

The 'Baggy Green Dinner' incorporating the Sir Roden Cutler Awards honouring the significance of representing one's country was held at the Sydney Cricket Ground Noble Dining Room on Thursday 25th September and was truly an inspirational experience, with 200 Members and guests in attendance.

The Sir Roden Cutler Award is named in honour of the longest-serving Governor of New South Wales, Sir Roden Cutler (Governor from 1966 to 1981) and our first Patron and Twelfth Man. The Award is presented for outstanding sporting achievement and contribution by a person with a disability.

The special beach chairs at Busselton WA (left); Jackets a-blaze at the 'Field of Play' drinks and canapes on the SCG (above)

Highlights included President Jim's 'interview' with former Aussie cricketer (and comedian) Wayne Phillips, plus a fireside chat between renowned journalists Peter Lalor and Mike Coward, and Stephanie Brantz MC'd the event, sharing official duties with Twelfth Man Mark Taylor, resplendent in his NSW Blazer, complete with Ansett boarding pass in the inside pocket. Stephanie conducted the award ceremony with grace, dignity and just a hint of emotion.

The finalists who each receive a charity grant of \$7,500 were introduced in the presence of Life Member Daphne Benaud and Dr Anthony Cutler (son of Sir Roden), who presented the finalists with their medals:

- •Bronte Marshall, para-athlete, who has represented Australia in international swimming and rowing events winning multiple medals. She now serves the Community Rowing Club (Sydney), competing in regular regattas but also assisting other rowers at training and 'learn-to-row' classes.
- Rae Anderson, a dual summer and winter Paralympian and more recently a "Para Matilda". She now works as project coordinator at Disability Sports Australia and Cerebral Palsy Alliance.
- Koen former international Jansens, basketballer representing Netherlands and teams in Italy and Spain. Koen is Co-Founder & Board Director of Wheelchair Basketball Australia (WBA). Koen's role in the formation of WBA has had a profound effect on wheelchair basketball opportunities and calibre of competition in Australia and will do so for many years to come. As Koen was unable to attend, his medal was accepted by fellow basketballer, Rhys Baxter, who proved to be an entertaining ambassador for the sport.

MC Stephanie Brantz interviewing SRC Awardee Rae Anderson (right); Rae receiving her special award with Mark and past SRC winners James Pittar, Damien Thomlinson and Leisl Tesch MP (right, 2nd up); Daphne awarding Bronte Marshall with her SRC Medal (right)



Founders Peter Howarth OAM and Jon Erby AM toasted the Primary Club in the occasion of our 50th Anniversary and received their commemorative medals from Daphne.

\$22,500 was raised to cover the three Sir Roden Cutler Awards, to be distributed to Community Rowing, Disability Sports Australia and Sargood Foundation (for Wheelchair Basketball).

Overall, the night was truly 'ablaze' with colour, as one may witness in the highlights video on the NEWS page on our website.

Nathan Dale, Director of Operations









SYDNEY TEST BREAKFAST 2025

We were thrilled to host almost 390 members and guests at our annual Test Breakfast on 3rd January – a prelude to Australia hosting India in the Sydney Test, in the presence of Twelfth Man Mark Taylor AO, President Jim Maxwell AM and MC Brett Sprigg. (This was our largest number of guests since 2018 and before COVIC when 448 attended the England breakfast.)

Once again, the venue for our signature event of the year was the Eastside Dining Room at Allianz Stadium, which we now think of as 'home'. Highlights were the panel interview with Mark Taylor, Ed Cowan and ESPNcricinfo's deputy editor Andrew McGlashan, and a bit later an informative chat with NSW Wheelchair Basketballers Rhys Baxter and Koen Jansens, the latter a Sir Roden Cutler Award winner in 2024.

Special guests included joint PCA founder Peter Howarth OAM, Senator Dave Sharma, former NSW Minister for Sport Stuart Ayres, Life Members Daphne Benaud and Rick Glover OAM and 15 members of the Australia India Business Council.

To view a short highlights video, I recommend you go to the NEWS page on our website. \$32,500 was raised for approved applications for special treadmill equipment at Cerebral Palsy Alliance sites in Orange and Wollongong.

Special thanks to our corporate supporters – Goodman, Argenti and Breene & Breene.

The Primary Club had also secured 250 seats for our members in SCG stands for the first 3 days of the Sydney Test, an excellent way to complement the Breakfast event. Thanks to all who participated in this way.

Rick Glover, Deputy President















Special guests at the 2025 Breakfast included Stuart Ayres, Ed Cowan (left); MC Brett Sprigg (above); SRC Winner Koen Jansens (below)



NORTH SYDNEY OVAL FESTIVAL 2025

Following the success in the last six summers, we were granted access to the fabulous North Sydney Oval once again to allow the Primary Club to host two charity cricket days - 'Marathon Cricket XIII' on Monday 3rd March and 'Insurance Ashes VII' on the Tuesday.

By compacting the program somewhat, we also included 'The Breakfast Plate' early on the Monday morning, for club and social teams, a carry-over from the days when the Primary Club used to enjoy the SCG as venue for our festival.

Despite rain in the forecast for both days, the cricket gods looked down on us, and we did not lose one minute due to weather. Thanks again to curator Jordan Magro and the hard-working ground staff!

Marathon Cricket XIII

We were pleased to host four corporate teams on the Monday – Equinix, the Breene Machine, newcomers Goodman and a PCA Invitation XI. The format was a four-way round-robin tournament with rankings determined by net run rate ('NRR') under the Last Man Stands ('LMS') scoring system. The top two teams played a five-over final playoff, where the reigning champions Breene Machine defeated Goodman by a comfortable 18-run margin.

Teams retired to enjoy drinks and gourmet canapes served in the Mollie Dive Dining Room, where PCA Deputy President Rick Glover assisted with the trophy presentation to Breene skipper Lucas Parsons, well known for his other professional sporting prowess.



Marathon Cricket winners, the Breene Machine (above); Insurance Ashes winners, SURA/Austbrokers (top right); SURA captain Luke Scott receiving the trophy from NRMA captain Kristen Dorsch in the presence of Deputy President Rick Glover (bottom right)

Insurance Ashes VII

A big shout out to the insurance industry teams who participated – Austbrokers/SURA, CGU, Chubb and newcomer NRMA Insurance. Reigning champions, Steadfast Group, were unable to participate but still chipped in as an event sponsor.

So, following a similar format to Monday's event, we had a four-way round-robin tournament. In an amazing final, it came down to the last ball, where Austbrokers/SURA defeated NRMA by just 3 runs. Smiles all round and lots of 'high-fives'!

A highlight of the day was the display by the Sargood Foundation of the adaptive mountain bikes used by spinal cord injury patients learning how to live life and be active while spending time at Sargood on Collaroy. These bikes are funded in part by the Primary Club through events such as Insurance Ashes.

Rick Glover supervised the trophy and medal presentations, where NRMA captain Kristen Dorsch presented the trophy to Luke Scott from SURA.

St John Medical Service provided first aid practitioners on both days, sponsored by Steadfast and SURA respectively. This year there were no serious injuries amongst the players, apart from some wounded pride and muscle soreness. Thanks again to St John and those sponsors.





Each evening, we invited the Last Man Stands ("LMS") organisation to stage some demonstration T20 games, with their players also helping to raise funds for the Club.

Finally, special thanks to our 14 volunteers over the two days! They maintained their enthusiasm throughout, as did Andy, Phil, Kris and the team of LMS umpires and scorers, who kept the program on schedule and provided instant updates on the scores and rankings. Great work, guys!

And the outcome? Over \$38,000 was raised for our charities over the two-day festival, another great result.

Geoffrey Verco, Charity Development Manager

LAST MAN STANDS AT NORTH SYDNEY

Once again, the Primary Club hosted two Last Man Stands (LMS) fundraising games under lights on each of the Monday and Tuesday evenings. First up we saw a 'Dream team' match between the highest ranking players from the Eastern and Western Suburbs of Sydney, with the 'LMS Sydney Charity Shield' up for grabs. A strong East Sydney team performance saw them retain the trophy for the second year in a row.

On the Tuesday night, the two 'champion teams' of LMS Sydney - Western Swingers & Connelly CC - met to contest the 'Phillip Buckland Cup', a trophy named in honour of Big Phil, who has done sterling work in umpiring at many LMS & Primary Club fundraising events over the years.

Western Swingers produced a dominant performance to take home the trophy. Many thanks to all of the terrific LMS volunteers and players that helped to make the event such a success, with \$3,800 being raised for the Primary Club charity from the two matches!

Rob Stevenson
PCA Committee Member and Principal, LMS



Winning LMS teams, East Sydney (above) and Western Swingers (right) with LMS Stalwart Phil Buckland (top right)







VICTORIAN OPERATIONS

In recent times, our Management Committee has donated funds to two significant charity projects in Victoria. Firstly, the Borinya Special School in Wangaratta received a grant to upgrade its playground facilities to provide more variety in physical exercise for their students, while we recently approved a grant for additional safety equipment on the Making Waves training yacht in Geelong.

We are keen to engage more with our Victorian-based members and have been reaching out to like-minded cricket-based organisations such as Taverners Victoria and Australian Cricket Society.

Members will see we are sharing with those folk in functions from time to time and do plan to instigate some unique member-oriented events in the months ahead.

We continue to explore additional funding to compliant charities in Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia. If you know of a DGR-registered charity organisation requiring sporting or recreational facilities for people with a disability, please put them in touch with the Primary Club of Australia.

Application forms are available on our website under the heading 'What We Do'.

Col Hackwood Committee Member (Victoria)

CRICKET

SEASON 2024/25 KICKS OFF NEW ERA FOR CRICKET SQUAD

The 2024/2025 season marked a changing of the guard for the Primary Club Cricket team. Over the last decade, captain Nathan Reay, Secretary Rob Stevenson and vice-captain Damien Langley led the way on a new era for Primary Club cricket, creating a legacy of spirit, culture and pride which has changed the playing squad forever. But with Nathan and his family returning to the UK, Damien and his family returning to Perth, Rob still fulfilling secretary duties from Kenya and club stalwarts like Christian Patterson having all three knees replaced, it was time to pass the torch, induct a new leadership group and launch a refreshed playing squad.

Greg Stark took the reins as the new Club Cricket Captain, with Andy Wildblood adding his leadership and mentorship as Cricket Club President. We also welcomed a new Cricket Secretary, Ross Anderson (with Rob Stevenson providing enormous support from across the globe to transition Ross into this enormous role). Damian Frittum, Craig McIntyre and Jon Prior resumed their committee roles to help bring the season to life.

We attracted some fresh new talent over the offseason, which helped overcome the weekly challenge to field a team. Previous part-time fill-ins became registered squad members, including Lachie Border, Andrew West, Raj Kiran and Omair Khan.





"Best Team Man" Craig McIntyre (aka, "C-Mac", bottom left); Vince Creagh winning yet another post-game bottle of plonk for what Vince does best (bottom right); Fathers and Sons (top right); the PCA's LMS team including the late Jim Hadley (second from right back row)

A Family Day- showcasing our father/son's









We also added new young talent including Finn Harricks (Pat Cummins doppelganger!), Hugo Neville and Oliver Scott, as well as seasoned cricketers such as Steven Sheakey, Matthew Needham and Susrith Vasansetti. As you know, inducting new players also means creating new nicknames, thanks to the help of Spider, Sheriff and Sausages! A special shout out to PCA Charity Development Manager Geoff Verco and PCA veteran Sandy Morgan for participating in cap presentations to celebrate our new teammates.

The season might have marked a new era, but the many traditions continued, as did the many battles for trophies with the same old 'foot on throat' approach! Highlights and milestones include:

- •Captain Greg Stark becoming the first player to reach 100 matches for the club, while Damian Frittum and Vince Creagh both reached 50 matches for the club.
- •We fielded a team in Primary Club's annual Marathon Cricket tournament played on North Sydney Oval. What an incredible event! We finished middle of the pack but were privileged to play a role in advancing the Primary Club Charity.
- •Opening our Jack Pace Shield account with a victory over Beavers, the one that got away vs Knox, an incredible JPS semi final victory vs Old Knoxonians, and tasting defeat vs Old Aloys in our first ever JPS Final.





- •Retaining the Squinty & Limpy Trophy defeating Sydney Uni.
- Hosting Ladies Day vs Reg Bartley XI at Allan Border Oval, Mosman.
- •Our first ever Live Streamed match, the Jim A special thank you to the following: Maxwell Plate vs Easts.
- Bankstown.
- •The Challenge Shield match vs Fire & Rescue NSW •Our umpires who officiated our matches, creating XI, and battling it out vs Barker College at Barker a great match day experience and in some cases College, two new matches on the annual PCA fixture
- •The Rodney Tubbs Trophy match being washed out while being spoiled by incredible hospitality by I Zingari at Camden Park.
- •With a heavy heart, a new tradition was launched this season in our match vs Cricketers Club at Camperdown. With the sad passing of Jim Hadley, who played a number of games for Primary Club, The Jim Hadley Memorial Trophy match was played and won by Primary Club, and will be an annual fixture, including a post-match "Shoes off for Jim" ritual.



Teams photo- PCA vs NSW Blind XI (top); PCA members and chief scorer, Ian Wright, acknowledged on the SCG scoreboard for the Pakistan Test (left); Jim and PCA Cricket Club President Andrew Wildblood presenting captain Greg Stark his special cap and award at his 100th game (right)

Congratulations to our season award winners

Batting Award

Greg Stark, 263 runs (20.23 ave.)

Bowling Award

Damian Frittum, 17 wickets (14.76 ave.)

Fielding Award

Finn Harricks, 5 catches and 1 run out

Highest Score

Kris Corbett, 80 vs Sydney University at Shore

Best Bowling

Steven Sheakey, 3 for 7 vs Knox Old Boys at St Lukes Oval

Best Team Man

Craig McIntyre, tireless efforts for the club and the team, in particular the team first attitude he displayed throughout the year. We are a stronger club with CMac around!

Jim Maxwell Award

Matthew Needham, Polled the most votes in the 3/2/1 voting system, 174 runs (24.86 ave.), 7 wickets (20.14 ave.)

- •All the players who wrote up match reports to chronicle our season. The themes varied throughout •Yet another loss (that's 40+ in a row!) vs an the season, including Music, Halloween and BBQ incredibly talented Blind Cricket NSW XI at themes, they are a great read and have captured the stories of our season forever.
 - donating their match fees to the charity
 - •The Primary Club of Australia Charity and its Committee for giving us a meaningful purpose while playing this great game.

Greg Stark Cricket Club Captain





On the Cover: Life Member Daphne Benaud awarding Founders Peter Howarth and Jon Erby their 50th Anniversary Medals at the September Baggy Green Dinner (top); Boccia balls funded by the PCA for Disability Sports (left); Sydney FC Foundation 'come and try' days (right).

THE PRIMARY CLUB OF AUSTRALIA INC

PO BOX 112 COLLAROY BEACH NSW 2097

Contact us at:
member@primaryclub.com
0403 606 224
Keep up to date with events, news and the charities we support;
see primaryclub.com

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CFN: 10757

ABN: 88 136 792 377

