

Annual Chairman's' report 2019 AGM



Firstly, let me once again thank all the volunteers that have and continue to contribute to the running of our clubs and zone, without you our boys and girls and men and women would have no game.

On behalf of all the players and our administration a massive “thumbs up” and appreciation for the selfless hours and the passion that you bring.

Also, my thoughts go out to all of your communities and those that have been personally affected by the recent fires and devastation throughout our region.

In saying that also adding appreciation to all those brave firefighters and volunteers on the ground and behind the scenes that I am sure apply to so many of your members.

I am sure that most of you have seen my recent correspondence regarding any club wishing assistance for any of its members affected by the fires. FMNC and NNSWF may be able to be in a position to assist with any fundraising or specific help that we may be able to provide.

It has been another very successful year for our great game and in saying that also acknowledging that we are the number one participant sport across the huge Footprint that is FMNC.

Our boundaries stretch as far as Gloucester and Buladelah in the South all the way to Willawarren and Stewarts Point in the North and all parts in between.

Over 6,800 registered players from under 6's through to the golden oldies in the over 35's. Men, women, boys and girls.

32 clubs plus our High-Performance network.

We deliver Football for participants of all levels, abilities and skills.

We have encouraged and supported 158 Registered Referees, an increase of 20 over last year and more than double the total of 2015 (78).

FMNC is the only zone to increase referee numbers, we are also the only zone to continue to fund and provide the game leaders course to encourage young referees.

We continue to assess and mentor our young referees and I urge you all to encourage and support them and keep them in the game officiating.

Without good referees our game is less enjoyable for our players.

Our continued challenges are to enhance our high-performance programs **and for me especially** never forgetting that most of our players play “**park football**” with their mates and to make that experience as best as possible.

We have been running a successful and enjoyable Friday evening program for girls in the southern end of the zone and this push and support for more involvement and better facilities and infrastructure for our girls and women will be a major objective for next year across the zone.

We have supported and assisted and encouraged the Rainbow Warriors club.

This program was the passionate project and dream that has become a reality for Matty Zarb on behalf of his son Marly.

With the help of many people this program for children with disabilities on the spectrum have had an opportunity to not only get a taste of our brand of Football but has been a great meeting point for the parents and caregivers and an outstanding success and model for future programs.

As I write this we are investigating and trialling a “walking Football” program as well as other inclusive types of Football for all our diverse community.

We have just recently organised a partnership with the Newcastle Jets to run the Sporting schools’ program in our area.

FMNC operates the only Regional Jets Hub in NNSWF to enable our children and young adults to stay in the local area without having to move to Newcastle.

We are also implementing junior coaching structures through our close relationships with the Newcastle Jets and implementing the Jets Academy to be available to supplement our existing and your clubs existing programs for development.

FMNC clubs have had great success in infrastructure grants and funding, both individually and as part of a sports complex.

No zone has been more successful in the entire footprint of Northern NSW Football.

This can be directly linked to the work done by FMNC and NNSWF in lifting our profile with local, state and federal governments.

Over \$14.2 million dollars' worth of grants for items as large as sporting complex in Kempsey to lighting and drainage works and all the way down to shirts and goal posts!

We have at our zone's disposal, acquired the services of a brilliant and expert grants writer and at nominal cost can provide that service and contact for any of our clubs.

I am passionate and devoted to gaining more funding and recognition and in particular female friendly changing facilities for players and officials as well as improved playing field quality for our thousands of participants.

Despite still not having enough adequate infrastructure and indeed a "home for Football" the signs are encouraging as we continue to push all levels of government for an equitable share of facilities and upgrades for what is not only our local number one participant sport by a long way but Australia's number one participant sport with over 1.6 million players.

To that aim earthworks have commenced on our "home for Football" site at Thrumster and we have secured a number of assistance donations to get to this stage and are currently accessing grant applications and in consultation with local, state and federal government bodies.

Works will be commencing on a state-of-the-art multi-purpose facility at South West Rocks and we continue to work with all relevant organisations for improved grounds at Kempsey Hubs and Camden Haven to name just a couple of our target areas.

I have had talks with David Gillespie in the Southern Region and he is committed to assist us to find Regional facility and land owners to achieve what local government appears to not be in a position to do at this stage.

Our game is one of social inclusiveness and as mentioned earlier gender equality.

Sport is the glue that holds communities together it encourages social values and delivers life skills.

Delivering more than just a game of Football but a broader community benefit, social interaction, relationship building, multi-cultural integration, tackling obesity and mental health issues as well as general health and well-being.

The numbers that play our game and the incremental growth not only Globally and Nationally but locally support that theory.

Our community competitions at all levels have been an outstanding success this season culminating in the Zone Championships which we plan to expand on in 2020.

Our annual awards night held on 21st September was an overwhelmingly attended event with double last year's numbers and a genuine celebration of performances and achievements for the season as well as a great social event.

It was a night of celebrations of successes and chance to renew old friendships and build new relationships.

An opportunity to share stories from this season and past seasons and to build and foster even greater goodwill between all clubs and participants.

I can only commend this evening to even more of you to attend in 2020 as it is an opportunity to wind down our collective season and join one another with no pressures or agendas simply to be part of our extended Football family.

In closing, I wish to thank Bruce in his role as General Manager, in what has been for my part, an extremely rewarding working relationship and also building on a very close friendship allowing us to deliver "best practise" performance across the Zone.

To Amanda, Justin and Andrew in the office supporting Bruce, my personal thanks for your efforts, energy and professionalism.

To Larry in his role as Technical Director in what at times is an overwhelming task he continues to provide programs and support to our players and coaches and as a result of our restructure will now have more time to devote to our community club coaches and assist at grass roots level as part of his ongoing programs.

Our board has been a collaborative of dedicated participants with various levels of interest and expertise in our game and my colleagues have brought to the table intelligent and well based views and opinions as we continue to look for improvements and additions to the way we are structured and provide football across our vast footprint and ever-increasing numbers and the challenges that brings to the table.

Each board member has been a contributor and an invaluable source of wisdom and counsel to me and I am thankful and appreciative of their involvement.

My deputy chairman and long-time serving fellow board member Mark Woodward is standing down this year and I wish him and his partner Stacey a bright future and my thanks for his contribution to Football and his friendship and advice over the years we have spent together on the board.

Of course, our season is more than the sum total of this brief report and so many other achievements and successes throughout 2019

Over the course of my Chairmanship I promised to keep you and your clubs informed and communicate on a regular basis. Since 2016 I have delivered 18 “Chairman’s Updates” that have been posted on-line and sent to your clubs as well as the media and politicians and influencers across our zone and beyond.

My wish is that I will be in a position to continue to serve and contribute to Football and to carry on assisting to improve the delivery of Football for my grandchildren and you and your families moving forward.

There are always things that with hindsight we could have done better and things that we can collectively do to improve but having said that I truly believe that overall as a collaborative group we do an outstanding job and together we can continue to flourish and be even better over the ensuing years.

Once again thank you to all involved with our great game across our vast footprint.

It is an honour that I am privileged with to be your Chairman and on behalf of the entire board thank you for your ongoing support and contributions.

On behalf of the board and administration of FMNC our best wishes for the “off-season” and over the Christmas period and in to the New Year.

Thank you

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, sweeping oval shape with a smaller, more complex mark at the bottom right, likely representing the initials 'MP'.

Mike Parsons

2019