

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO 2020 AGM

This past year has been one in a hundred. The first six months proceeded according to plan. We had a most successful Pharmacy 777 Open Pairs, always a popular event drawing a good number of visitors from other clubs, the jackpot finals and the Mixed Pairs Championship, won by Cathie Hood and David Schokman. The main events, of course for that time of year, are our two big social events, the Melbourne Cup and the Christmas Party. We had our largest numbers of members at these confirming that the social side of membership is very important to us all. Wilma and Jenny organised the Melbourne Cup catering and after a short panic, due to late arrival of the freshly made quiches we all feasted on quiches and tasty salads followed by the sweetest strawberries and ice cream. The Christmas Party was catered for by Jacquie Wilding, who provided a delicious four course feast, served by capable assistants in her absence because she was not well. Thank you to Wilma, Jenny, Jacquie and Matthew.

At the beginning of the year we ran six of our usual events, all very successfully, including the Club Restricted Pairs Championship which was won by Frances and Ian Hammond. We were all looking forward to the Club Birthday Party in March but that was not to be. On 15th March we were advised by the ABF to close the club because of the pandemic and for fourteen weeks the club was closed.

During that time we kept contact with members by producing fortnightly newsletters and I thank Jane Walker and Diana Gibbs for this and also the members who contributed stories to keep us all entertained. Some of our members joined Stepbridge and BBO to play bridge on line, in fact our home club members made up the third largest group on Stepbridge in June. Laurie Money helped initiate some of us onto Stepbridge for which we were very thankful.

Finally we were able to re-open the club on 6th July and since then our members have been gradually returning to face to face bridge. We have changed the way we do things to comply with government requirements and recommendations to try to provide a safe environment for members, but we appreciate that some members may still feel anxious about returning. We know we cannot afford to be complacent, the pandemic has not ended and these changes may be needed for some time yet. For now, those of us who have returned are very happy to be able to enjoy the social interaction with each other which we missed while the club was closed.

Despite the club closure after first term beginners' lessons and the cancellation of lessons in second term resulting in a loss of potential members, we have welcomed 33 new members since last year. Sadly seven members have passed away and we particularly note the passing of two life members, Maureen Goodbody and Denis Lawrence.

I need to report on progress regarding re-location of the club. While the City remains committed to this plan, any move is now at least five years away. The proposal for George Burnett Leisure Centre did not meet our requirements, so that is off the drawing board. The new option is at Challenger Reserve in a building to serve the sporting clubs which play at

the reserve plus the Manning Bowling Club and our bridge club. We would share some facilities with the bowlers and we believe this can be achieved very satisfactorily. In the meantime we will liaise with the City to achieve some improvements here.

I now wish to thank all the members who have willingly contributed their time to the club in the last year. Firstly, the members of the Management Committee, Tournament Committee, Education Committee and the Planning Committee who have all worked towards providing a happy and safe place to learn and play bridge amongst like- minded friends. Thank you particularly to Garth Scotford, stepping down after four years as Treasurer and Jeannie Ravn, who is stepping down after three years as Secretary. You have both made a valuable contribution to the running of the club and preparing it for the way forward. As well as our committees, we have many members who quietly go about helping the club without whom we could not manage. Thank you to you all. Finally, I must mention our tournament directors. This year Hilary Stilling, Sue Shadbolt and Marnie Leybourne joined the team and unfortunately, Garth Scotford and Jeanne Hey decided to retire during the closure. Jeanne has been directing at our club for over 20 years and Garth, since he joined the club in 2016. Both provided a very welcoming and high standard of directing. We miss you both and now please come up to receive a small gift from the club.

Finally, I thank you all for the privilege of being President for the past three years. I have enjoyed the time and wish the club success as it moves forward under the guidance of Danny Ravn and the new committee.