

President's Speech—30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary- 3/7/15.

Good evening and welcome.

Richard, thank you for your Welcome to Country and your ongoing support of the Academy.

I, too, acknowledge the Traditional Owners and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

I acknowledge and welcome the following distinguished guests:-

MPs, Mayors, GMs, others.

APOLOGIES---we have had a number of apologies including from some of our prominent graduates.

I can live with apologies which say things like "I'd love to be there but I am playing for Australia that weekend etc."

We have done our best to locate key people and athletes who have been instrumental in getting us to where we are today. That has not been an easy task to locate these people. I apologise to anybody who feels offended that they didn't receive an invitation.

Over the next 12 months, the five Mayors of the region have undertaken to turn their annual Mayoral Receptions for the Academy athletes, into Receptions which celebrate these 30 years from the perspective of each Council area. So we look forward to catching up with our former athletes and supporters over the next 12 months across the Illawarra.

#### HISTORY

In 1973 the Federal Minister for Recreation, the late Kevin Stewart commissioned Prof. John Bloomfield to report on sport in Australia.

The Bloomfield Report envisaged a three tier approach with an Australian Institute of Sport and State and Regional Institutes. Nothing happened.

Australia had a "shocker" at the Montreal Olympics in '76 and the Moscow Olympics in 1980 ended in a bad relationship between the AOC and the Federal Government- due to the boycott issue.

So the then Federal Minister, Bob Ellicott, took the Bloomfield Report off the shelf, activated it and in 1981 Prime Minister Fraser officially opened the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra.

State Institutes began to emerge and by 1983, Prof. Bloomfield started getting up to mischief at the UoW with Tom Penrose and other eager academics keen to assist.

It has been a delight to speak to Prof Bloomfield over the last few weeks and reminisce. He has sent us a nice message which you can read this evening on the Honour Walk.

Key collaborators included Ted Tobin, a very respected civic and sporting leader in the Illawarra, and Ian Richardson, who was the Illawarra Regional Manager of NSW Sport and Recreation. I acknowledge that Ian, and Ted's son Ian, are with us here tonight. Welcome to you both.

Ted began organising community support- starting with the Region's Mayors and business leaders. Successive Mayors of all Illawarra Councils have maintained strong financial and civic support over the three decades.

Most importantly the UoW Vice Chancellor, Prof. Ken McKinnon gave his strong support to this radical proposal. Indeed he gave permission for the Steering Committee to operate under the legal protection of the UoW.

The Illawarra Institute of Sport was officially launched in Wollongong in December 1985.

We are especially honoured to have Prof. McKinnon with us this evening.

The UoW continues to be a strong supporter today and I acknowledge John Patterson's role in that over so many years.

So, the Steering Committee was hard at work in the latter half of 1985- planning the content of programs, setting policies and selecting sports, coaches and athletes for the first intake in early 1986.

There was no precedent for this work. Everything commenced with a blank sheet of paper.

The inaugural sports were netball, hockey, gymnastics and basketball.

Our first corporate sponsors were City Coast Credit Union and Westfield. I acknowledge Barry Wood who is here tonight-who as part of CCCU, has been a long term supporter of the Academy and a close friend and colleague of Ted Tobin.

In 1986 Prof. Bloomfield, the Chair of the Australian Institute of Sport and the Executive Director- Prof. John Cheevers forwarded us a grant of \$18k p.a. for three years and we banked it. Later the Commonwealth Auditor found that it was an illegal payment- you can't pay Federal money to a regional organisation. Too late!

In January 1987 we received our first grant from the NSW Minister for Sport and Recreation, Michael Cleary-\$22k p.a. for two years. Since then we, and indeed all Academies, have received fabulous support from successive Ministers and staff of Sport and Rec., especially the current Minister, Stuart Ayres and the Office of Sport represented tonight by John Egan and Mia Jenkins.

In 1988 we became an incorporated body with the Illawarra Region of Councils becoming our constitutional head and with a Board of Directors comprising a broad cross section of community, sport and government representatives from across the region.

In 1989, the House of Representatives Committee of Inquiry into Sport in Australia, and Chaired by Stephen Martin, found, amongst other things, that the Illawarra Academy of Sport provided the model for the development of potentially elite young athletes.

NOW--Fast forward to tonight and we have developed over 5000 athletes and provided them with coaching and education to assist them, both on and off the field.

Our graduates have achieved great things-at all levels- on and off the field.

The Honour Walk is a testimony to that. The Academy has become a vital piece of the Illawarra sporting landscape.

Corporate sponsors- big and small, political representatives, civic leaders, volunteers ( being Directors, coaches, managers, consultants and many others) have seen fit to give the Academy support over these 30 years. State and local sporting associations have formed excellent and vital partnerships with us- none more so than netball. The media have always been most supportive.

Your presence here tonight means you have been instrumental in getting us to where we are today.

The highlights I have witnessed, in my long association, include:-

The creation of the Individual Athlete Program

The creation of the Athlete with Disability Program,

The number of athletes who return to assist the Academy when their careers are over, and,

The partnership we now have with our enthusiastic parents whereby our consultants give them education sessions in subjects such as nutrition, psychology, drugs protocols, injury prevention etc. to enable them to assist their children, to the best of their ability, at home. No longer are the parents merely chauffeurs.

What I am most proud of is that we have kept the core values which were so important back in 1985.

On behalf of the region's young athletes and the Academy, I thank you all present tonight, for the faith you placed in us and the dedicated service you have rendered.

TONIGHT- I acknowledge Southern Phone-- Chairman Bill Hilzinger, Vice Chair Rod Oxley, and CEO Mark Warren for your sponsorship of tonight's event. This is in addition to your annual sponsorship of the Presentation Night. Thank you Southern Phone.

I wish to thank our Event Sub C'ttee, Gregg Rowland and Amy Duggan, who are both Academy Directors, as well as Rosita O'Keefe who was a Director and C'ttee member until recently.

To Amy, I offer a special thank you for offering your services as compere of this event. I know you will carry out your duties to your customary very high standard.

To General Manager Shannon and the Academy staff of Andrew, Angela and Selin, thank you for undertaking this huge task in such a positive manner.

The Honour Walk was a major research undertaking and the result is a magnificent display of our history. I hope you all enjoy the memories it evokes. Thank you to our staff.

Finally, at the end of the Honour Walk, we have a letter of congratulations from the Prime Minister, Hon. Tony Abbott- the ultimate recognition of our progress and success over 30 years as Australia's first regional Academy of Sport.

So, on behalf of the Board and Staff of the Illawarra Academy of Sport, I thank you all for your support over those thirty years. To the past athletes here tonight, firstly congratulations on your achievements, on and off the field, and secondly, for attending this evening in support of the Academy.

I trust you will have a most enjoyable evening.

Thank you.