

OPENING SPEECH – SOMERSET CHANGE ROOMS

February 27th 2010

Thank you Grant,

I would like to take you all back approx 15 years ago when I stood at the top of the stairs at the old change rooms, beside that infamous Council Engineer Jack Riddiford, and asked the him the question as to which the club could get first, a new ground or new change rooms.

Jack simply smiled, said the Council had no funds for either but try for the new ground, just do the basics and worry about drainage etc later. Just 4 years ago and 11 years after that conversation, we opened our new pitch and our junior pitch as well.

A terrific achievement, but the change rooms looked a long way away at that stage.

Then in October 2007 out of the blue, I received a phone call from Sid Sidebottom's office asking if the club would be prepared to accept funding of 50% of the cost towards new change rooms, if the Labor Government was successful in the 2007 Federal Election.

Well I cannot say we were prepared but we were certainly happy to accept the challenge.

A hectic month followed as we drew plans, prepared costings and approached both State and Local Government for the additional funding that we would need. The Club had been squirreling away some funds for some time with the knowledge that we would have to tackle this undertaking at a later stage, but now it was thrust upon us with the Labor Party's success at the November Election. We now had \$125,000 of Federal funding and an opportunity too good to miss.

As most would be aware, due to my work I was spending every third week in Canberra, where I managed to have a meeting with Stuart Atkins from The Dept of Health and Aging. Stuart has been most helpful with working through the grant process.

With me away, Martyn Fishwick stepped up to work with Rob Hill from the State Dept of Sport and along with the support of Bryan Green and Stephen Kons we were successful in obtaining some \$38,000 of funding from the State government.

The club then put together a strong proposal to council which resulted in us obtaining a further \$25,000. The feedback from the councilors was terrific and the support from the council works gang headed by Rob Holmstrom has been invaluable.

So with a proposed build cost of \$250,000 we had \$188,000 of grant funding to complete the project. Daunting but as I said a challenge we had accepted and were determined to succeed at. But with \$60,000 to make up we were we going to need some strong volunteer contributions and donations!

In November of 2008, 12 months later, we had planning approval and the fun began.

This facility could not have been built to our budget without the generosity of the local businesses, which have donated, or sold to us at a discount, the materials and labour we needed for the construction.

Beginning with Nick Roper and Alan Skellington, the design and plans were completed.

Then Stubbs Constructions completed the concrete work and agreed to be the overseeing builder for the rest of the construction.

Browns Plumbing, Dargavel Windows and Russell- Smith Electrical helped out with the technical bits and Timberland have looked after us with all the materials we needed.

Treloar Plastering really chipped in with the walls and ceilings and Nigel Medwin fitted all the vinyl sheeting throughout the building.

Other builders like Leigh Glover and Jarrod Wade gave of their time and Barry Cumming at B&S furniture made all the seats, hook rails and the ball rack in the Referees room.

Newman's Heating designed and provided all the ventilation system and Leigh Heath donated several days to the installation of it.

Ricky Glover built the brick walls and Crawford Joinery installed the cupboards.

Jensen's Sheetmetal provided all the Stainless Steel work including the 2 fantastic shower grates.

Buying locally has resulted in many of our suppliers taking out sponsorship partnerships with the club. For this we are very appreciative and hope that they will support the club for many years.

However all this meant little if the club members and supporters couldn't follow through with their time. A huge ask with the 15 months of construction time since we turned the first sod.

We have managed to achieve above all expectations, with club members really pitching in and undertaking the majority of the construction.

We have had over 1700 hours by 78 club members and supporters, resulting in a dollar value of over \$60,000. This has meant that we have been able to put a lot more quality in the finish of the building than was first planned.

From the initial design work, right through to putting the signs on the doors there have always been someone to answer the call to a working bee or to help organize a task.

I would particularly like to mention the following members;

- Martyn Fishwick who worked so hard ensuring the success with the initial funding applications,
- My father Jack Brown and my son Christian Brown, both who looked after the ongoing work schedules while I was in Melbourne for 3 months and,
- Our Treasurer David Pease, who has looked after the financial side, freeing me up from that task.

Now there are several very special people the club would like to recognize for their individual efforts, could these people please come forward.

Greg Deal;

- Greg is the guy that probably attended the majority of the working bees, always cheerful and always ready to help me where he could. Had a go at everything.

Craig Macey;

- Craig spent a lot of time helping with the electrical work, a huge job on a building like this.

Kevin Forsyth

- Kevin was our go to man, he organized the lunches at the working bees, helped out as a laborer right through the construction and did a huge amount of the painting with his funny little square brush thing.

Bobby Eaves

- One of our plumbers, Bobby gave many hours during the initial framing and then completed a lot of the fit out of the plumbing.

James Nettleton

- Jimmy is one of our plasterers, but like Bobby really spent more time on other sections, always ready to give those 3 valuable hours before cricket on his Saturday mornings.

Grant Wells

- Our president, who told me he would have the painting done in 2 weeks!, but trying to get lots of volunteers at the end was difficult, so Grant did most of it himself, a huge task but one that he got finished in time.

The last two are to two very special members, without them we wouldn't have made it happen, with 20 guys like these two on my side I could build anything, they gave me huge support right through the project and I thank them very much for that.

Tyler Duniam

- Not only did 90% of the electrical but pitched in with everything else as well, nothing was too much trouble and an absolute joy to work with.

Garry Townsend

- Garry is our carpenter, I am astounded at the amount of work one man can do in a building this size. Like Tyler, nothing was a problem, every time I asked for something it was done straight away and always with a smile
- I have no doubt that Tyler and Garry saved the club \$ 20,000 between them.

So there you have it, the end of the biggest challenge the club has faced in its 31 year history. A project that started 27 months ago with that simply phone call from Sid, offering us the opportunity to create a facility that I believe rivals any other soccer change room in the state.

A facility that allows us to refocus back to the things this club does so well, providing the opportunity for our youth to develop as sportspeople and to grow, make friends and enjoy the challenges that our sport offers.

Finally I would just like to say thank you to my wife Tracey and all of the other 77 people who supported me and the club for the past 27 months, what a journey it has been.

Nigel Brown
Project Coordinator.