



ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL CLUB INC.

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President's Report 2016

2016 Thanks

To all who contributed in myriad ways to the Blacks again in 2016. Respect to you all.

A reflection on the final round of division 1 footy brought to life the contributions of many of our volunteers and supporters, and the feeling around the club.

It was Sponsors' day. There was a theme: sponsorship is not just about money or shorts or a training jacket, but about creating opportunities for young men and women to be exposed to the many benefits of engaging with this footy club. This is priceless. It can and often does set young people up for the rest of their lives. It did for me.

Bob Miles was behind the bar, genial as always. Volunteering and loving it.

Darcy Bateman was badly hurt in a contest. Going at the ball without fear. For the love of the game. I went to the rooms at $\frac{3}{4}$ time to see how he was going. Not well. His parents were there. It's impossible to describe the feeling – a kind of pathos that went right through you and stuck in your core because the humanity was so real – humbling and authentic, and kind of devastating. I left in tears.

We played the Sinners. We lost. One of their players was retiring. The same fellow who ironed out Lukas several years ago and caused him to miss half a season. And yet our players – including Lukas – formed a guard of honour and joined with our supporters in applauding this chap off. (Observant readers will note my commitment to not descending into pejoratives. This is difficult). This says everything about the character of our players.

After the game JP – who as I have said before has come to embody and exemplify the fine principles of University sport – insisted that I speak to the umpires about the absence of a free for Darcy. I reluctantly agreed, against my better judgment. Ubiquitous football director Howie came with me. In the course of the discussion it was suggested that Darcy's flattened nose may have been caused by his head hitting the ground. The futility of this discussion suddenly became very clear: as was evident to all observers, Darcy had hit the ground with the *back* of his head.

John Robinson, grandfather of Divots and Braden, SANFL life member and highly experienced football aficionado, put it succinctly and brilliantly, "Can't you blokes think of a better way to waste 20 minutes of your life?" Spot on Robbo, thanks mate.

The change-rooms – the walls adorned as they have been forever with priceless memories, many decades old – were awash with emotion. JP spoke elegantly with heart on sleeve, as he always does. Boz was appropriately acknowledged for 30 years of dedicated service. The respect - from all, for everyone, but especially our players, was palpable.

Janne brought down the left-over food and waitressed. At the end a few stragglers remained. Wayno dropped in on his way through from a game somewhere beyond Grand Junction Road. Howie was there. JP and the assistant coaches. Boz. Cleaning up, naturally. All of us emotionally spent but at the same time satisfied, fulfilled.

The annual dinner

This was, again, a wonderful Celebration of Blacks' camaraderie and endurance.

Special guests included:

- Members of the 86 A1 premiership team including the captain Michael Kenny, coach John Griffen, and of course irrepressible team manager, Boz Maloney.
- Mike Daws, General Manager at AU Sport
- Luke Johnston, AUCC
- Phil Harper and Ryan O'Keefe from the Crows. Ryan was refreshingly candid and spoke well.
- Members of the 86 original 'Glamour Side' premiership team including coach Maddern and club record games and goals holder The Jerk
- Parents
- The Chardonnay Socialists – deserved and rowdy premiers after 2015's debacle. Lesson learned – the President was not invited to speak pre-game.
- The Ladies' teams – Prelim finalists in both divisions 1 and 2 in 2016
- Janne Filmer – club person of the year
- Tex Walker – retiring (as captain, not as a player) after a record 6 seasons as A grade captain
- Now 4 x Gunning medallist and new captain Seb Paynter
- Several valued Sponsors. We are especially grateful to our Gold and Platinum sponsors:
 - ✦ The Havelock
 - ✦ Thomas Foods
 - ✦ Angoves
 - ✦ AU Sport
 - ✦ Jones & Partners Radiology

2017

Appointments

JP was an obvious and unanimous re-appointment as 'A' grade men's coach. As noted elsewhere, JP has become an exemplar for the things that matter to the Blacks.

Seb Paynter likewise was an obvious replacement for Tom Walker as 'A' grade captain. Like Tom, Seb leads by inspirational example and will make a fine captain.

Women's footy

The Blacks have led the charge in women's footy. The AUFC ladies have unquestionably enriched this footy club's fabric in the few short years we have had the pleasure of sharing the Blacks' facilities and history. This year will see a third Blacks women's team joining the AUFC family.

20 of our ladies have been playing SANFL football in the early part of this season. Krissie Steen – who comes to us with a wealth of football experience – has been appointed 'A' grade women's coach. We look forward to continuing to work closely together through 2017.

The Executive Committee

2017 will undoubtedly present challenges for the Blacks. The current Executive is well-placed to deal with these challenges. This is a particularly talented and committed team, and I thank them for their dedication, expertise, and wisdom.

Constitutional reform

Senior Vice President Peter Sharley – among the many other things he does – has driven the reform of the Constitution. It is a solid and excellent piece of work and speaks adroitly to the needs of the Blacks.

I gain particular pleasure from the reviewed *Objects* of the club, especially these:

- To foster and cultivate the spirit of sportsmanship in Australian Rules football, especially among the students and graduates of the University of Adelaide.
- To foster and cultivate the personal, professional, and football development of the players.
- To choose as many football teams as practicable from among the members of the club.
- To enter such teams in any competition or competitions as may seem to be desirable, and to enter into contests with football clubs of other universities subject to the rules and regulations of the Adelaide University Sports Association.

Another significant inclusion is the requirement for the Executive Committee to include both a female and a male player, preferably undergraduates of Adelaide Uni.

These amendments provide an insight into to some of the things that really matter to the Blacks. These are the things that have underpinned our cultural success for over 110 years and will continue to inform the way we move into the future.

General Manager

2017 will see something of a revolution in terms of Blacks management – for the first time we will have a paid General Manager of Operations (at 0.5 FTE to begin with). This is thanks largely to the generosity of AU Sport who have agreed to share the expense.

Sharls, Bridgy and Mike Daws have been interviewing a high quality selection of candidates and an announcement is imminent. This is a very exciting development for the AUFC.

Recruitment

At the risk of courting controversy, 2016 highlighted for me that we have a different measure of success from other clubs; especially those competing in division 1. For us winning is naturally important, but never at the expense of the fundamental Blacks' ethos, which can be conveniently distilled, I think, into these propositions:

1. Enjoyment
2. Playing for the love of the game
3. Inclusivity
4. Development of the person – personally, professionally, and in football

You can't buy these things. You can get them at the Blacks. On-field success at the highest level will come, but not, at the AUFC, by paying for players.

Our recruiters including JP, Bridgy, and a vast global team, have been hard at work, as have our ladies. The Blacks will be highly competitive at the highest levels in 2017.

Intervarsity

One of the really great – and unique – things about playing at the Blacks and going to Uni is playing intervarsity. I am thrilled (somewhat more thrilled than Qantas no doubt) that intervarsity will continue to thrive in 2017 after a series of competitive and high quality matches in 2016 in Adelaide and Canberra. Thanks to all of those who have contributed and continue to contribute to the success of intervarsity.

Finally

Grateful thanks for allowing me the humbling privilege of serving as President of this iconic institution again in 2016.

I take this opportunity to wish all Blacks folk a successful and, more importantly, an enjoyable and fulfilling 2017.

Michael Dadds
President, AUFC