

## AUFC President's report 2013

### The 2013 season in brief

2013 was a year of consolidation for the Blacks, especially for the A-grade team, back in division 1 after several years in the harsh wilderness of division 2. While there was some relief from avoiding the hike out to picturesque Eastern Park and the friendly folk at Portland (temporary relief only it would seem), it was nevertheless, again, a tough year, for all grades, ages, and genders. (Bob gave his endorsement for a women's team – Bob Neil's Girl Guides – and the rest was, naturally, history).

That said, Bunny Warren and the inimitable SCUM delivered the undeniable football highlight of the season by playing intense pressure football Ross Lyon would've been proud of, to defeat the highly-fancied Roving hams at a Broad's view and claim the 8 reserves' premiership. What a glorious day it was; and what a delight to share in Bunny's and the team's palpable joy. Bunny's ascension to the ultimate prize has been steady, *inevitable* according to the numbers, and his by *right* after all (a most unlikely Spooner, but there you have it).

Off-field there were many highlights. For me (having sadly missed Super Sunday in 2013) the Greys' lunch at the boat club, at which Richard Colless was a genuine star, and the annual dinner were both wonderful celebrations of all things Black. The powerful sense of pride, joy and community was remarkable, and spoke volumes for not only the club's rich history but also its future. Make no mistake, the Blacks' culture was again prominent – alive and in outstanding health – in 2013. Indeed, it became all the more firmly defined for me.

Jeez a lot happens at the World's Greatest Football Club in a year. It's hard to encapsulate it all in a single document so I'm not even going to try. What follows is simply a selection of highlights, with apologies in advance to anyone who deserved a mention but didn't get one.

### Sponsors

Our grateful thanks to our highly valued sponsors: the Cumby, Thomas Foods International, SA Brewing Co., Angove Family Winemakers, Foodworks North Adelaide, Minter Ellison, Beach Energy Ltd., Bridgestone Select Magill, Hayes Knight SA, Norwood Ballroom, and Vok Beverages. This club would not survive without the generosity of these supporters.

### Volunteers

Likewise the Blacks rely for our very survival on the efforts of volunteers in all grades, in all manner of roles, throughout the entire club: coaches, runners, team managers, water runners, physios / trainers, time-keepers, social leaders, and the list goes on. The club recognises and thanks every single volunteer for their commitment to the Blacks.

### The Committee

Speaking of valued volunteers, this awesomely talented and highly-credentialed group again committed itself to the betterment of the Blacks in all things in 2013. This year we engaged in a structured process designed to permit a strategic analysis of and plan of attack around the most pressing challenges and opportunities facing the club. My grateful thanks, on behalf of the club, to all committee-members; Bridgy, Howie (deserved winner of the Best Clubman award in 2013), Screecher and Rulebook in particular; and to Ange for the benefit of her expertise.

## **AU Sport**

The great man Mike Daws and AU Sport were again generous supporters of ours. In 2013 the committee was very fortunate to have Caitlin Stanley and Sarah Lane from AU Sport on hand for expert advice and assistance on a broad range of issues of strategic relevance to the Blacks including marketing, development, operations, administration and management. We are most grateful.

## **Congratulations**

The club congratulates all of the following:

- Players who reached games milestones including Slipper and Screecher who both qualify for life membership having reached 200 games; Tom Bernard (250), and Ruley (300 odd (and I mean *odd*) games since the mid-late 80s including the SCUM premiership in 2013).
- Emerging club-folk including Eliot Hewish, Henners, Pup, Haz, and many others who – despite their relative youth – have taken it upon themselves to get really involved both on and off-field, and who form the nucleus of the club’s future leadership. This is inspiring to see.
- Other club-folk who continue to put themselves out (and on the radar of the fun police, in the case of the Blacks Ball) for the benefit of others, including Bob Miles, Janne Filmer, Jo Richardson, Matty Allen, Stuart Allen, Craig Evans, Damian Leonard, Peter Sharley, Ben Russ, Nick Heath and more.
- Will Paynter and Brad Davis for state selection, and Will Paynter and George Hurley-Wellington for selection in the SAAFL team of the year.
- All Club award winners; richly deserved.
- Beatle and Alby – thank you both, and good luck.
- All life members inducted in 2013. They are too numerous to list here but all have contributed – in various highly meaningful ways – to the rich fabric of the Blacks over many years. Every one of the new life members who spoke at the dinner did so with evident pride, joy and humility. Amber’s speech on behalf of the Blacks’ women was a particular highlight.
- Peter Maddern and (posthumously) C.B. Sangster for their deserved elevation to the esteemed Blacks’ Hall of Fame. Both Peter and John (on behalf of his father, and something of a Blacks’ legend in his own right) spoke beautifully about the significance of the acknowledgment, and the pivotal part the footy club has played in their lives (and in John’s case his father’s life).

## **Event Highlights**

The Blacks do events well. Grateful thanks to those who took part in organising and managing them. Some highlights from 2013 include:

- Ladies’ day.
- The 1960’s reunion held pre-season at the West Adelaide Football Club. What an amazing era this was for the Blacks. The teams of this era constitute a who’s who of Blacks’, SANFL and AFL legends.

- The memorial game for Paul Rofe QC against SPOC at Bob Neil #1 (leant a typically Blacks' irreverence later in the day by Rocky Junior's quintessential whiteboard writings. More about that in the JT Goose section). Rofey's unique contribution to the club is likely to be recognised in singular fashion in 2014.
- Anzac Day. Norm Shierlaw confirmed his legend status with a post-match medal speech that will never be forgotten by those present. Norm died on the day of the annual dinner. His involvement with the Blacks brought great joy to Norm and his family. Norm will be sadly missed on Anzac Day in particular.
- The quiz night.
- Greys' lunches in Melbourne (thanks again Harmsy), Sydney (Nick Fosdike was a star), London (where the Blacks' influence remains potent, leading to inter-governmental consultation and approval for the erection of lights at Bob Neil #1, along with Emu's signing (see below); thanks in particular to Jase Cameron and Nick Kurzel – and a vast Adelaide team – respectively), Perth, Brisbane, Singapore (Tom Kat)...all coordinated by Rulebook.
- The Greys' lunch at the boat club, as previously mentioned. Richard Colless confirmed that the horse has bolted on a "no dickheads" policy for the Blacks (thank goodness); and Papa Raschella's 46-minute question still causes me to wake at night, confused and wondering when the pain is going to end. Richard loved it.
- The annual dinner. I was surprised to learn that attendances have been low in recent years. This is truly a highlight of the Blacks calendar. The 2013 dinner was particularly moving as speaker after speaker (new life members, and Peter Maddern) spoke passionately (and with tears in their eyes; every one of them) about the significance of the footy club in their lives. This was Blacks drama at its most glorious.

## **2014**

### **APPS (Approved player points system)**

We understand that the SAAFL has approved an amendment to the points system so as to provide for a rating of 1 point only for those of our players who are required to change their usual place of residence to attend Adelaide Uni. By reference to our round 18 team from 2013, this amendment would have brought our points total down from 15 to 9. It is likely to represent a significant (and utterly appropriate) ongoing concession for us. The Chairman in particular was relentless in bringing this to pass.

### **Lights**

These are being erected as we speak. They will provide for match-quality lighting at Bob Neil #1, hopefully in time for round 1 (assuming the good folk at Hackney High come to the party).

## **Major Sponsor – the Havelock**

We are delighted to be returning to the Havelock in 2014. Rocky Junior is particularly pleased, although we will miss his early morning allegations of security brutality and ignorance and repeated resignations, followed by hasty retractions upon sobering up.

## **Coaches**

John Paynter was appointed club coach for 2014 soon after the 2013 season finished, and has been hard at work at pre-season training. John's enthusiasm is palpable, and his record speaks for itself. We are delighted to have him as senior coach and look forward to watching A grade finals footy this year.

Despite a tough 2013, Mick O'Leary (D1R), the Pimp (D7), Tonto (C1) and Kenny Everitt (D7R) have, somewhat amazingly, signed on again for 2014. They will be supplemented by Tyro and Michael Reid (C2), Ruley and Sean Philpot (C4), and Tess Baxter (Girl Guides). Congratulations and good luck to all coaches.

## **Recruitment**

You never know quite what you're going to get by way of recruits at the Blacks, and often O-Week brings out a few talented last-minute stars. Nevertheless we've been working hard since season's end to ensure that we retain as many players as we can (especially bearing in mind snow season, uni exams and the like) while supplementing the playing stocks wherever possible.

With regard to the A-grade squad we are thrilled that a number of gun recruits from other clubs, together with highly talented school graduates have agreed to play at the Blacks in 2014. The club is abuzz at the time of writing with the very exciting news that Nick Gill (NAFC and Crows) will play at the Blacks in 2014. Emu's signing (irresistible really, having regard to the relentless global Blacks' machine; truly a team effort) has already prompted the re-commitment of one of our wavering stars and is likely to generate further interest in the coming weeks. We are starting to look pretty dangerous.

## **Finally; Culture**

Just a word on this and then I'll stop carrying on about it. Thanks to A-Mac in particular for this insight.

I have been mistaken insofar as my perception of the Blacks' culture has been that it is defined by boozing and hi-jinks (for want of a better description). It is not, although these things tend to be typical manifestations of the culture. The Blacks' culture is, in fact, defined by what we have in common – our commitment to the love of the game in its purest form (i.e. our commitment to amateurism in the face of the otherwise pervasive influence of money in the game and the competition).

This commonality is club-wide. It filters through to every corner of every change-room, every footy bag of every member of every team, every kit of every coach, team manager, runner, water boy or girl. It brings us *all* together. It creates this unique community we love to engage in, be part of, and contribute to. It doesn't matter whether you booze on or you don't; or whether you play up or not. Those things are irrelevant to your acceptance into the Blacks' community. Your very presence at the Blacks ensures your acceptance.

What tends to happen, too, when your community owes its very existence to the integrity of all of those who belong to and contribute to it, is that you tend to attract more of the same. This explains the abundance of quality at the Blacks. Our commitment to the love of the game, the club and our community will continue to be our trademark in 2014 and beyond, and we will continue to survive and prosper. Heartfelt thanks, on behalf of the club, to all who contribute to this amazing community.

Go the Blacks.

Michael Dadds  
President AUFC