

Hi everyone as we celebrate the 70th year of the PITC.

I am sorry I cannot be here, our Grandson turns 10 this week in Queensland, so off we go. This is a terrific opportunity to celebrate all the work that went into the foundation of the Club, I would just like to pass on some memories I have.

I started playing tennis around 10 years old, going to early lessons and then playing junior Saturday morning competition, this was only against kids from Cowes and surrounds. I filled in for a senior team at the age of 14 or 15, becoming a full-time senior player at 16. I attended my first working bee at the club around this time. We removed the lighting system and painted them at John Fenton's farm, we also put them back up, using ladders and chains.

I joined the committee at 17, our meetings were held at people's homes - the Dixons in Church Street, the Fenton's at Sunset strip. Our annual meetings were often held in the CWA rooms in Thompson Ave, until the Club rooms were constructed.

I became secretary of the Westernport Tennis Association around 19, the association was made up of teams from this tennis club and from Newhaven and San Remo Clubs. We did not have far to travel so Saturdays were quite enjoyable and friendly, allowing farmers and fisher men to play and still work.

We also played night tennis which was mixed on Monday nights, 3 men and 3 women, as it was on Saturdays. We introduced men's night tennis on Thursday nights. This unfortunately created some conflict within the club, as men wanted to play on Thursday and forgo Monday mixed. This was disappointing as the men's comp was forced to close, as did the mixed a year or so later. Men's then started again on the vacant Mondays, and Westernport Tennis Club filled the gap for men to play tennis on Thursday night.

As time went on the Committee raised money for the club, our first target was toilets in the rooms. The old toilets around the reserve were pulled down, and another set of toilets were incredibly old and not user friendly. With the money raised over about 2 to 3 seasons (\$8,600), we were able to have the sewer connected to provide toilets for our members and the netballers.

We then set about raising funds to renovate the clubrooms, with our main source of income coming from court hire. Back then that amounted to about \$5,000 or in an exceptional year, \$8,000. This was around the time of council amalgamations. When all that settled down the Victorian Government, via the shire, were providing funding for Clubs to complete projects of this nature.

With their aid we were able to end up with what we have now. Whilst the original build cost was about \$5,000, the renovation came in about \$30,000. Although we were financial, a lot of this money was provide by debentures, with committee members as guarantors. We were also able to construct the deck out front over the steps, which enhanced the comfort of watching tennis and socialising.

We also resurfaced the concrete courts 2 times, with a lot of volunteer work in setting up and continually cleaning the surface for player safety and general care. For a period, we had 2 other courts on the netball courts area for overflow and greater participation, for juniors and seniors alike.

Overall, this club has been the meeting place to participate in sport and has allowed us to form great bonds between members and guests alike. I am proud of what we have at this Club and its achievement over its 70 years. I hope it will continue to provide a meeting place now and into the future.

Have an wonderful day with plenty of enjoyment for all.

Noel Burrell. 7 April, 2024

A special thanks to our past committees, members and life members who had the foresight and endeavour to develop a facility for them, and us in the future.