

## Chairman's Report to the 2021 Annual General Meeting of the Moreton Bay Lions Australian Football Sports Club Inc.

Well, I've made a lot of speeches to you guys over the last four years and I'm sure you're delighted to know that this is the very last one.

I purposely put myself last in the pecking order of speeches today because I wanted to pay my respect to the fine people you have just heard from, and a few others as well.

It is not my intention today to talk about how well the Club has done over the last few years (I've already done that at our presentation ceremonies). Rather, I want to talk about why we have done so well.

Now, I have always been a believer in the simple truth that no one is indispensable, especially in an organisation like this. We all have a use by date, some maybe longer than others, but eventually we all get replaced — and that is not necessarily a bad thing.

Replacement means fresh ideas, new directions and challenges, so that the continued existence of the Club, and all that it stands for and represents, is secured for future generations of Aussie Rules players and their families.

So why have we been so successful of late? It's because of the people in this Club and the passion and love they have for it. And it starts at the top — with your Board.

Jim has been my right-hand man for the last four years. Together we have been through a lot. Whether it be appointing coaches, sacking coaches who didn't quite work out, settling disputes, dealing with disgruntled parents, negotiating with AFLQ, or solving the problems of the world over a beer or two at my place while playing pool. He has always been there.

Jim has run a massive department within the footy club in his role as Football Director and he has done it with distinction. He has also been the runner for the Ressies Men for the last few seasons, and whenever we hold major events, Jim is always the first to volunteer to be a ground marshal or whatever — such is his passion and love for his Club.

One of the greatest pleasures I have had in my tenure as Chairman was to present Jim with his Life Membership of this Club at last year's Senior Presentation Night. If any man deserves that honour it is Jimmy Matthews.

Over the years a strong bond of friendship, and mutual respect has formed between Jim and me. Thank you mate, for your wonderful support, and always being there for me and the Club you love.

Deb and I also have been through a lot together. From the early days of my Chairmanship, I hassled her to take on the role of Finance Director. Later she became our Events Director, then she was "just" a Board member without a portfolio for a while, and finally she became our Events Director once again.

Apart from her role on the Board, Deb is also the Merchandise Officer for the Club — this job entails a mountain of work just in itself. On top of that, Deb is also the Team Manager for our Senior Women.

Deb and her hubby Carl have also worked tirelessly behind the scenes. Whenever there is a working bee here, they are always the first ones to pitch in. Carl, up until now, has also been our Property Officer and general Mr Fixit. I love the way he just goes about doing what he does without fanfare or wanting any recognition.

Their children Adam and Samantha play in our Senior sides. Together, they are the embodiment of what a Moreton Bay Lions family is.

I thank you Deb for everything you, and your family, do for this club. Like Jim, you do it out of passion and love for the Maroon, Blue and Gold.

Unfortunately, Shane couldn't be here today because he double booked himself and is right now doing it very tough on Straddie with his lovely wife Tracey.

Shane came onto the Board in 2019 and took over the role of the Events Director — he did this while still being the coach of our Reserve Men's team. His easy-going nature and his ability to make everyone around him feel good, made him a natural for the job. He took to it like a duck to water and we all, I'm sure, have great memories of the functions Shane organised as the club's Events Director.

In 2020 his wife Tracey was diagnosed with an aggressive form of cancer and obviously Shane needed to spend more time with her. He still wanted to be involved in the Club, but not in such a public role. So in a cabinet reshuffle of the Board, Deb graciously agreed to take over Shane's role as Events Director and Shane took on the job of Finance Director.

As a result of being involved with this Club that we both love, Shane and I have become really good mates — and that to me, says it all. Isn't that what footy clubs do though? They turn strangers into bloody good mates.

And the good news about Tracey — she is in remission and has been for some time now. She's not out of the woods — but the signs are very encouraging.

That leaves Fiona. What can I say about this lady? I think it would be fair to say that Fiona is one of those people that when she sees a job needing to be done, she rolls up her sleeves and gets in there and does it.

In a different time, she was the President of the Bribie Island footy club. When she and her family came across to our Club it didn't take too long before she got herself involved in a practical way.

Fiona has been the Club Registrar for as long as I can remember. Being the Registrar involves hours and hours of work, all done for free and just about all of it done behind the scenes. As the Club has grown, so has Fiona's job as Registrar grown with it. This year we had nearly 600 people playing footy for this Club — every one of them looked after by Fiona.

On top of this workload, Fiona stood for the position of Communications Director at last year's AGM and won that position in a secret ballot. In addition to this Fiona, like Deb, is a Team Manager of not one, but two teams — our Colts and Senior Men.

And like the Barklas, Fiona's family is immersed in this footy club. Hubby Tony played Senior footy for the Club and is currently the Coach of our Colts side — a job he loves doing. Kirra-Leigh, their eldest daughter, is a Club First Aider (like her mum), Scoreboard Operator and Team Manager of our Reserve Men. Taneasha plays for our Women's team and is also the Team Manager for the Reserve Women's side.

And their young son Lochie — well, he's a gun in the making being selected to play in our Senior Men's team at the tender age of 16.

The Baxters, like the Barklas, are the embodiment of the Moreton Bay Lions family — always putting the Club first. They are dedicated warriors of this football club. It's no accident we named our new digital scoreboard in their honour.

There is one other person I would like to single out for special mention. She's not on the Board — although I reckon she should be — and that person is Fiona Heery.

Fiona literally lives at this footy club and I think it is fair to say she just about knows everybody in it by name. Her role within the Club is that of Team Manager Coordinator, but in reality, she does far, far more than that. Fiona is a Team Manager herself, she also coordinates and appoints our up-and-coming umpires to their junior games each week.

She is a wonderful encourager and motivator of people to get them to take on roles within the club. On big occasions, like when we host Youth Finals for instance, Fiona is the person that we all go to for advice and directions on what to do.

If there is a Wonder Woman at this Club, then that woman is Fiona Heery. Fiona, you are loved, admired and appreciated by everyone at this football club. When I said earlier that none of us are indispensable, that didn't include you. I can pay you no higher compliment than that.

These individuals I have just paid tribute to are the driving force behind the success of the Moreton Bay Lions. And as you can see, all of them wear multiple hats — maybe too many hats. And that is the issue.

There is a desperate need for new people to start taking on some of these roles that your Board Members and Fiona have been doing for far too long. A burden shared, is a burden halved. As the Club continues to grow, that burden gets heavier and heavier. At some point something will break if help does not come forward, and that will be to the detriment of the Club.

The Club's true strength lies in the sum of all its parts. There is a job for the taking for anyone willing to roll up their sleeves and simply ask, what can I do? Paraphrasing JFK from the 1960s our mantra needs to be, "Ask not what my footy club can do for me, but rather ask what can I do for my footy club?"

Having the right people in the right places at the right time is the secret to success... and we can never have too many people.

Over the last four years we have been able to achieve a measure of success through the tireless work of the following groups of people.

Our volunteer Coaches and Team Managers, from Auskickers through to U16s — all contribute their time and talents to the development of our young players. Without them we would have no club.

Likewise, our Colts and Senior Men's and Women's Coaches and Managers have given their all in the pursuit of success for our great club.

Those who volunteer as First Aiders, Canteen Workers, Social Media Admins, Ground Marshals, Goal Umpires, and any number of other jobs within the club, are the real strength of the Moreton Bay Lions.

Most times though, it is the same people taking on multiple roles who ensure that what needs to be done, gets done. This has to change — the Club is getting too big for things not to change.

I'll say it again — the strength of a footy club is in the sum of all its parts. That is everyone, all working together for the common benefit of all.

Looking to the future:

Next year we will have our very first U17 Girls team, completing our pathway for young girls to play the game they love, whatever their age.

Next year our Senior Men's teams take on the might of the Hart Sport Division 1 competition, after winning three premierships in succession.

Next year, our Senior Women enter an exciting new era under the guidance of their new, and highly credentialed coach, Shane Dawes.

Next year will see us celebrate our first anniversary as the sole operators of this facility.

Next year you will have new faces on your Board of Directors, including a new Chairman, guiding the Club with new and different ideas, in its quest for more success in the future. Please get behind them and support them in their quest.

So the future looks bright — but to truly share in any success that comes our way, we all need to share the burden of the workload that brings that success.

In the words of our Senior Men's Coach, John Soccio, "When we're all on the same page, the unthinkable becomes possible". I like that.

I want to close by thanking you for giving me the wonderful honour of being your Chairman for the last four years. We have all been blessed, because during that time, we have been privileged to be a part of the most successful era this Club has ever known. I step down from my role a happy man, sure in the knowledge that the Club will be in good hands as it continues to grow and prosper.

What a fantastic ride it has been! Go Lions!