



PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION

# PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS'

# MEMBER NEWSLETTER

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2022 EDITION

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

- ROD GRINTER

Dear Members

Happy New Year – and happy new season - to everyone. I hope this newsletter finds you and your families fit and healthy; to those who have lost loved ones or are unwell, if there is anything we can do to assist you and your families during these difficult times, please reach out. We are here to support you when and where we can.

I'm looking forward to a very exciting year, and to being able to get to the MCG to connect with members and enjoy watching our team perform. We have requested four MFC P&PP&OA Family and Friends Match Day functions:



- Rd 1. vs Bulldogs
- Rd 7. vs Hawks
- Rd 12. vs Swans
- Rd 22. vs Blues

Round One will be a Grand Final re-match, complete with flag raising to welcome a new season and a new challenge in 2022.

Round Seven looks set to be a real winner, when the highlight in the room will undoubtedly be a 1970s team lineup across the alphabet from Ditterich to Wells, organised by Des Campbell.

Round 12 is the classic capital city clash, and marks our now traditional get together with our Swans' counterparts.

Round 22 rounds off the season, and gives everyone a great chance to catch up again before finals time.

Details regarding each of these functions will be made available as soon as possible. We look forward to having as many members, family and friends as we can join us throughout the season.



We are also delighted to be a Gold Sponsor of AFLW player Georgia Campbell in 2022. As mentioned in earlier editions of the newsletter, Georgia is the daughter of past player Adrian. She is Melbourne's first ever father-daughter selection, and a former state representative in high jump. Selected in the AFLW's Under 19 All Australian team, Georgia – who is 182 cm tall – was one of the stars of the Eastern Ranges side. Everyone involved with the P&PP&OA looks forward to seeing and supporting Georgia's progress as she builds her career in the red and blue.

Bring on 2022!

**Rod Grinter**  
President  
MFC P&PP&OA



**DON'T FORGET** MFC P&PP&OA AGM MONDAY, 28 MARCH 2022 THE BENTLEIGH CLUB STARTS 6 PM

## ROUND ONE – HITS AND MEMORIES

As we head towards Round One, it's worth remembering that Footscray started in the VFL in 1925. Of course, Melbourne was already entrenched as one of the original sides. So, from 1925 until now, there have been 66 occasions so far on which the two sides could have met in Round One.

As revealed by the stats gurus at the AFL, a 'Melbourne-Footscray match up was the one that took the longest to occur!' It didn't happen until 1975.

Melbourne was coming off a wooden spoon in 1974, while Footscray had made the finals.

The two have only played each other in Round One on one other occasion – 1979. Melbourne was again coming off a wooden spoon, while Footscray had finished second last in 1978.

Both the 1975 and 1979 Round One meetings were at the MCG, and both were won by Melbourne: by eleven points in 1975, and two goals in 1979.



The question therefore is: having defeated Footscray/Western Bulldogs twice in an opening round, in both cases coming off a wooden spoon, what will happen in 2022, coming off a flag, with the Bulldogs as runners up?



PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION

PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS & OFFICIALS

# MEMBER NEWSLETTER



## REV'S ROAMINGS

It's been a busy time for The Rev throughout December and January, with over 80 contacts to all corners of the P&PP&OA population. While the sad occasion of Steve Laussen's funeral service at Wesley College brought over 200 together, other events also provided opportunities for Melbourne people to gather. One of the stars of the show was everyone's favourite 98 (99 in May) year-old, Des Bell, who attended the club's Best and Fairest. In true

veteran form, he had a great time, and didn't get home until 1.30 am!

From Colleen Dooley in Creswick, getting through storms and floods, to Ray Dawson in the heat of Echuca, and other Association members across the country and the globe, we thank Rev for his dedication to keeping in touch with everyone. He says that 'It has been a pleasure once again to serve you and the Association through providing Proactive Pastoral Care to players and officials of the MFC.' It's also a pleasure to have Rev on board for Season 2022 – we are sure that everyone looks forward to hearing more from him as he keeps the connections going and provides invaluable Proactive Pastoral Care to all.



## VALE HARLEY BALIC

All associated with the Melbourne Football Club were saddened to hear of the death of Harley Balic in January. Aged just 25, Harley faced tough times in his short life, but was loved by many, and will be remembered fondly by all.

From the Sandringham Dragons, Harley was drafted by Fremantle in 2015, and

went on to play in a premiership with WAFL side Peel Thunder in 2016. After playing four games for the Dockers in 2017, he took indefinite personal leave.

Traded to Melbourne at the end of 2017, Harley decided during 2018 that it was time for him to retire from the AFL. While he had not played any senior games for Melbourne, he was highly regarded, and left the club with the best wishes of the entire red and blue community.

We share the sorrow of Harley's family and many friends, and assure them that he will always be fondly remembered; a special part of the Melbourne Football Club.

## BENEVOLENT FUND

### - Jackie Emmerton

Our Association's committee is extremely grateful to those members and supporters who have donated to our Benevolent Fund over the past couple of years. These donations will enable us to continue to provide support for those members in need, while also delivering subsidised, affordable and inclusive events for our members well into the future. Donations can be made by direct deposit to our Association's bank account.

Our Association's banking details are:

Account name: MFC Past & Present Players & Officials Association

BSB: 063 204

A/C: 1008 8589

*Please use your name as the reference.*

A full list of donors for 2020 and 2021 is listed on our website:

[www.mfcpastplayers.com.au](http://www.mfcpastplayers.com.au)

**Add your name to the 2022 donor list by making a contribution now - any amount is appreciated!**

## CELEBRATION DAY SPECIAL

Many who shared the special occasion of premiership celebrations on 5 December last year also took part in a wonderful photo shoot, up on the podium with the premiership cup.

You can now grab your own souvenir of this moment. If you were there, or if you'd just like to share the enjoyment,

please contact Lynda Carroll ([lynda\\_carroll35@hotmail.com](mailto:lynda_carroll35@hotmail.com)) to organise your order.



For \$15.00 unframed (including postage), or \$30.00 framed, complete with date caption, don't miss out.

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW? - ANDY LOVELL

Looking back on a full and busy career in the AFL, Andy Lovell is delighted with how the cards fell for Melbourne in 2021. Making his senior debut for the Demons in 1988, he went on to play 121 games to the end of 1995, followed by a further 43 with West Coast between 1996 and 1998.

Andy's debut season was a memorable one, finishing with the club's first Grand Final appearance since 1964 – but no premiership, as the Hawthorn machine was in full force. 'When we played in a Grand Final in 1988, the Hawks were the best team. In 2000, Essendon was best. But, in 2021, the Demons were well placed.'

Despite that, like most other Melbourne supporters, there were a few nervous moments during the 2021 Grand Final. 'I walked outside when Bont kicked the goal!' But now, Andy is as overjoyed as everyone else with strong red and blue affiliations.

Heading back into his playing career, one of the most significant of these was the 1994 semi-final win – funnily enough, against the Bulldogs. This was Andy's 100th game; a milestone he shared with Stephen Tingay. 'I played alongside Stinga, and that was pretty special, too.'

At the end of 1995, Andy went on a trip to Bali with Tingay, Glenn Lovett and Paul Hopgood. While away, he fielded queries from West Coast Eagles CEO Trevor Nisbett and coach Mick Malthouse about playing with the Eagles. While initially adverse to the idea, the deal was done, and Andy ended up at West Coast.

After his playing days were over at the end of 1998, he stayed in the west, as 'Mick gave me an assistant coaching job.' It was the start of a new phase of involvement in the game, and saw Andy forge some wonderful connections across the AFL community. 'I feel really blessed to have such great mates. I've worked with Ken Hinkley and Leigh Tudor – they're great mates, and Dean Solomon is, too. Then I've got some great mates from

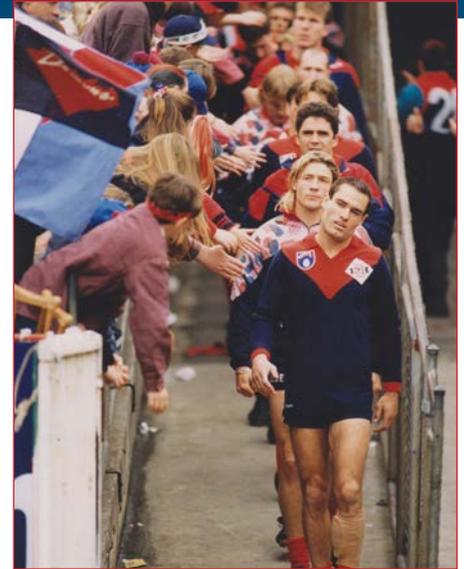
Melbourne who are up here, like Matt Mahoney.'

When you look across Andy's coaching experience, he has seen the game at all levels and through all clubs, providing a fascinating story in its own right. East Perth coach in 2003 and 2004, Andy was assistant coach at Geelong in 2005 and 2006, development coach at St Kilda when Ross Lyon was in charge ('I reckon that's when I lost my hair!'), coach at the Sandringham Zebras when the team was affiliated with Melbourne, and appointed assistant coach at the Gold Coast Suns in its inaugural season of 2011 (alongside Hinkley).

'I was at the Suns for eight years, and then I was Gold Coast regional manager for AFL Queensland', says Andy, bringing his coaching story almost up to date. Records show that he also coached the Indigenous All Stars against West Coast in 2015, as well as the QAFL representative team in 2019. Now, of course, he has a very different and special role to play.

Andy Lovell is now the Clontarf Academy Program Coordinator at Palm Beach Currumbin State High. The Clontarf Foundation was set up by former Fremantle coach Gerard Neesham, and 'exists to improve the education, discipline, self-esteem, life skills and employment prospects of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and by doing so, equips them to participate more meaningfully in society.'

It's a welcome challenge for Andy, involving around ninety boys in the school. 'The focus is on life skills and mentoring. The boys come from a broad spectrum, and from Years 7 to 12.' The energy involved in keeping them engaged equates with the energy needed to take on coaching, and Andy recognises both the similarities and differences. 'I've coached for 22 years, and spent 33 years in the AFL. The main difference is that this is not with elite athletes.' The boys Andy is working with are 'good kids', and he is



Shared milestones - Andy Lovell and Stephen Tingay played their 100th game on the same day; a memorable semi-final win against Footscray in 1994.

excited by the prospect as a new school year swings into action.

The events of recent times, as well as Andy's own change of job, also mean that he has been able to reconnect, particularly with the likes of Todd Viney and Rod Grinter. 'When they made the Grand Final, I thought 'Todd and Rod really deserve this.' Todd stabilised the footy department, and Rod's done so much with the past players, through things such as the WhatsApp group, to keep everyone involved.'

While son Ben and daughter Emily have grown up on the Gold Coast, so don't



Andy Lovell, with son Ben and daughter Emily

have the same affinity with the Demons that Andy does, the more senior members of the Lovell family realise how special it is.

As for Andy, there's one big plus to his new job.

Having not really been able to make it to Melbourne functions and games while coaching in one role or another, his new job means that he's no longer working on weekends. The result of this?

'You're not going to be able to keep me away!'

We look forward to seeing you soon, Andy.



PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION

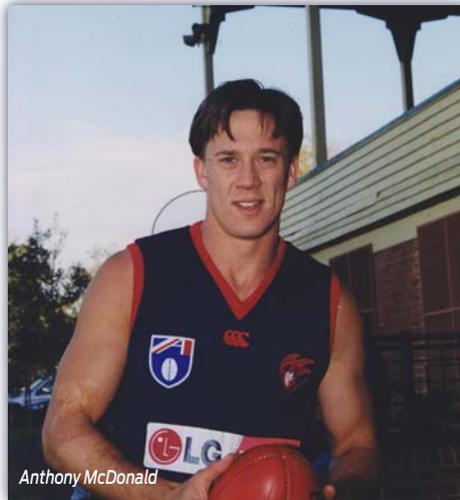
PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS & OFFICIALS

# MEMBER NEWSLETTER

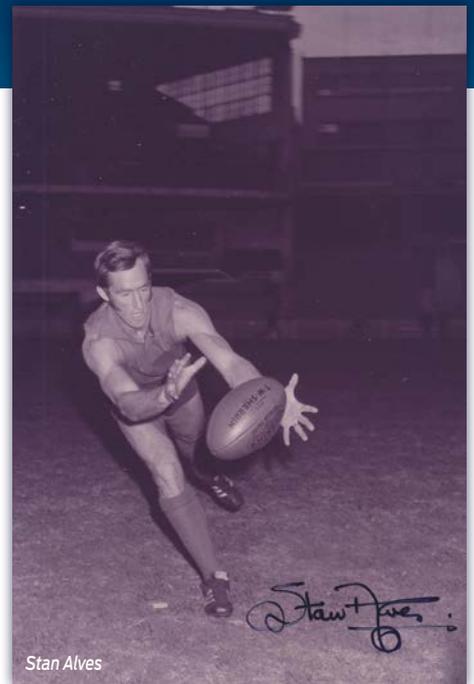
## REMEMBER WHEN

A recent donation of photos to the Association revealed some familiar faces, travelling back across the decades. How many of these faces do you recognise? We particularly love seeing Bryan Kenneally in action, as well as a certain blond look from the late 1990s. (But wait, there's more....next edition).

*Thank you to Russ Canham for the kind donation of club publications and photographs.*



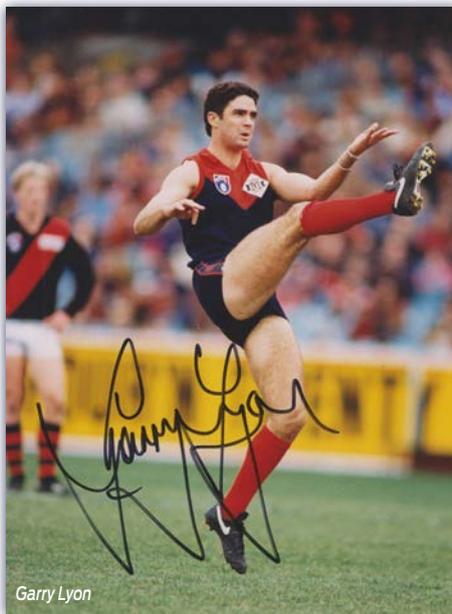
Anthony McDonald



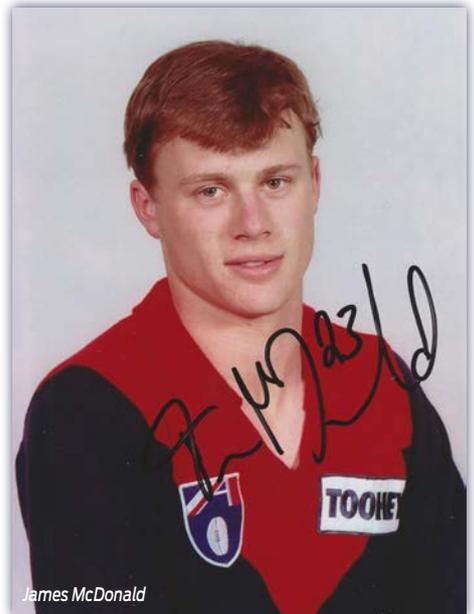
Stan Alves



Darren Kowal



Garry Lyon



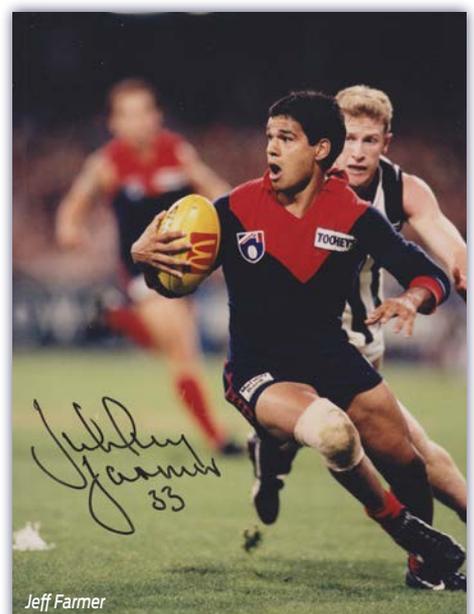
James McDonald



Russell Robertson



Russell Robertson and Shane Woewodin



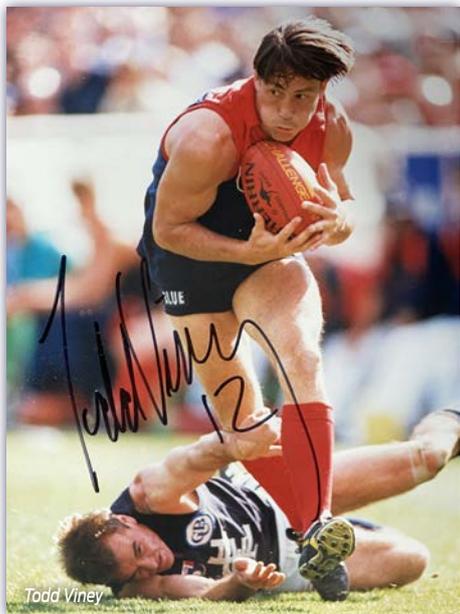
Jeff Farmer



Bryan Kenneally, Ken Emselle, 'Bluey' Adams



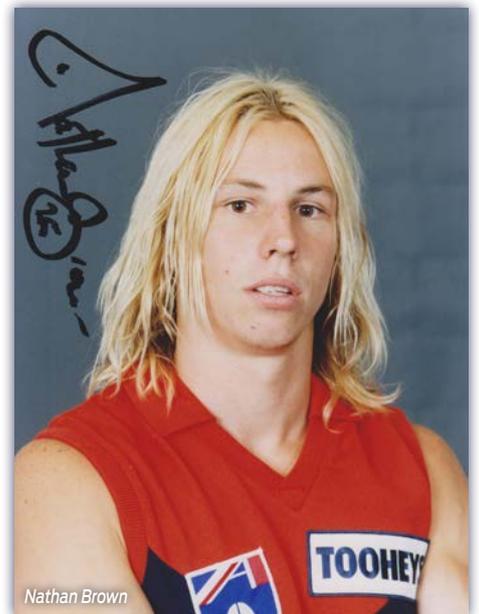
David Neitz



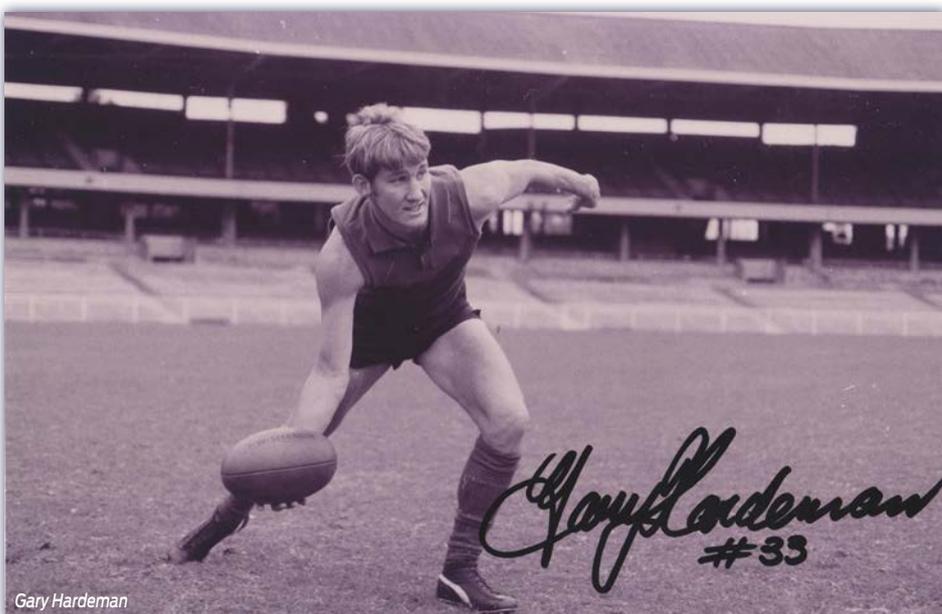
Todd Vinney



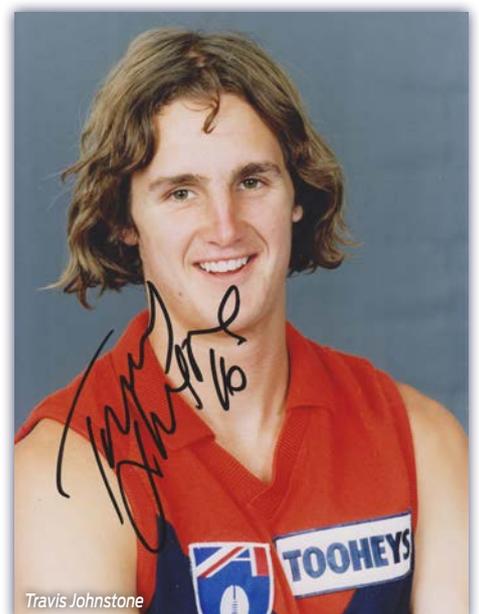
Marcus Seecamp



Nathan Brown



Gary Hardeman



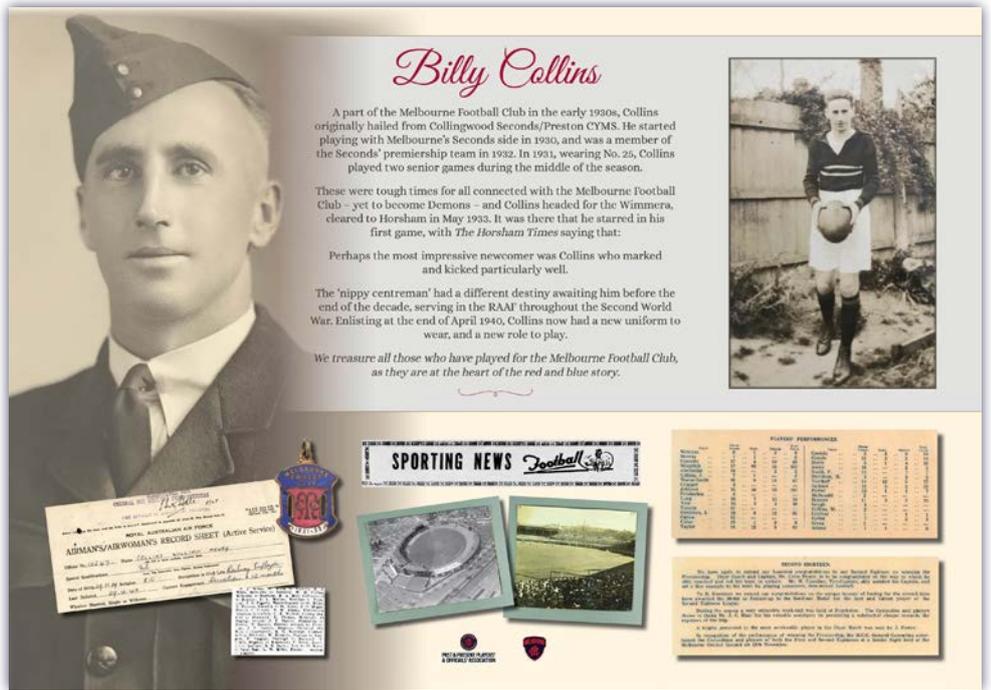
Travis Johnstone



# BILLY COLLINS

Sometimes, it can be an adventure to find images and records related to past players. Late last year, a query came from Liam Collins, in New South Wales. His grandfather, Melbourne past player Billy Collins, played two senior games for the club, along with a substantial amount of Reserves appearances, including the Seconds' premiership in 1932.

Liam wanted to give something special to his father, Philip – Billy's son – as a 70th birthday present. But there wasn't much out there; alongside a couple of family photos, the main resource was made up of some basic statistics. The certificate that resulted from discussion, research and design includes excerpts from the club's annual reports of the time, (online) newspaper clippings from when Billy transferred to Horsham in 1933, an MCC membership badge of



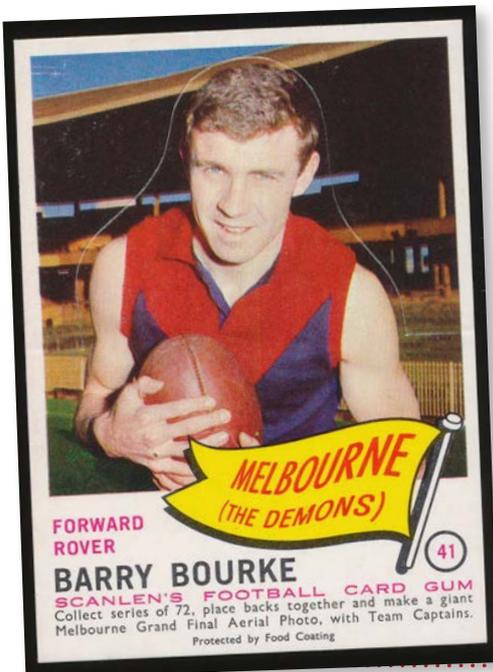
the era, some images of the MCG in the 1930s, and a clipping from Billy's wartime RAAF enlistment papers, via the National Archives of Australia.

For all past players and their families,

this is something to keep in mind; there isn't always a heap of information, but a basic profile can be made quite unique and personal in a different format, with other elements included.

# BARRY BOURKE

As most Melbourne people know, Barry Bourke has played the most games of any Melbourne player in the No. 14 guernsey, with 175 to his credit.



The first Melbourne player to wear No. 14 was Jack Bristow, who played two games for Carlton in late 1910 before being controversially dropped for the finals.

The majority of Bristow's career took place in 1912, when he played 18 games – nine wins, nine losses – for Melbourne, wearing No. 14 throughout. One of the first to sign up for wartime service in 1914, Bristow saw action on 25 April 1915 at Gallipoli, and was awarded the Military Cross after the Third Battle of Ypres. He survived the war, returning to Australia.

While Bristow was the first to wear No. 14, and Bourke holds the games record, there is a diverse roll call of players in between who have worn the number at Melbourne. Altogether, 21 players have worn it. Those who have graced No. 14 include dual Brownlow Medallist (1926 and 1928) Ivor Warne-Smith, 1950s great Trevor Johnson, and – most notably – MFC P&PP&OA President Rod Grinter, who is fourth in line for the

number of games in No. 14, achieving 134 between 1985 and 1994.

Second to Bourke for the number of games is Lynden Dunn, who wore No. 14 for 165 games between 2006 and 2016 before heading to Collingwood. Upon his departure, it was taken over by former Bomber, Michael Hibberd. To date, he has played 89 games in No. 14, with the most recent being the 2021 Grand Final win against the Western Bulldogs.

Like Hibberd, Bourke played in a Melbourne premiership – in 1964 – and continues to lead the way today, assisting Association members with their motoring needs. For all enquiries, contact Barry Bourke:



0418 999 101

[barrybourke.com.au](http://barrybourke.com.au)

## VALE LAURIE MITHEN

It is with much sadness that we all heard of the recent death of past player Laurie Mithen, at the age of 87.

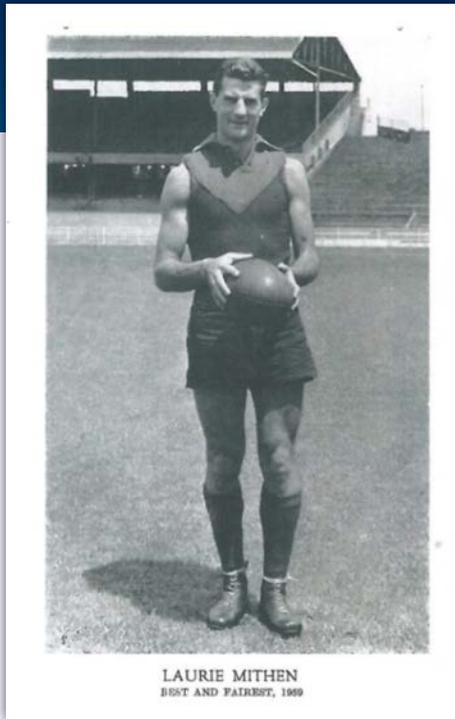
Laurie came to the Melbourne Football Club from Ormond, making his senior debut in the first round of 1954. Wearing No. 11, as he would for each of his 153 games (with the notable exception of the 1958 Grand Final), this initial encounter with Collingwood saw the newcomer receive rough treatment, sparking resilience and toughness in him throughout his stellar career.

Mithen was inventive and adaptable, which meant that he could play on either side of his body, and was renowned for his kicking and marking ability. In his second season – 1955 – he played in the first of five premierships, as well as being named as the inaugural recipient of the Ron Barassi Senior Memorial Trophy for outstanding service.

In 1956, Mithen was a member of the 'Olympic Premiers' team that would later be inducted into the Sport Australia Hall of Fame. The Demons thrashed Collingwood, and Mithen's contribution was hailed by the club, with the annual report for the season stating that:

*'In Laurie Mithen Melbourne possess a player of outstanding skill and cleverness. In the semi final this year Laurie played the type of amazing game that he alone in our side can play.'*

Injuries curtailed the typically consistent Mithen in 1957, but he returned to cement a dominant spot in the centre, along with a third premiership to round out a phenomenal hattrick, the victory this time coming against Essendon. It was Mithen who set the tone for the Grand Final when he took the ball out of the centre. Then it was on to Barassi, who kicked the first goal for the game



within seconds of its start.

Barassi and Mithen formed a dominant combination within the Melbourne team, and unfortunately this was part of the downfall of 1958. Up against Collingwood in the Grand Final, these two Demons were among those particularly targeted by the opposition. The ultimate result was a devastating three goal Grand Final loss.

Despite the disappointment, Mithen's season finished on a high note, as he was named Best and Fairest in 1958; an achievement that was followed up by another premiership and a second Best and Fairest in 1959. Having also represented Victoria, Mithen was celebrated for his achievements, with the plaudits including comments that:

*'Our "Best and Fairest" winner for 1959 for the second year in succession was Laurie Mithen. Laurie...has developed into one of the outstanding footballers in the Victorian League. His clever and brilliant football now possesses a directness and vigour that only comes from experience.'*

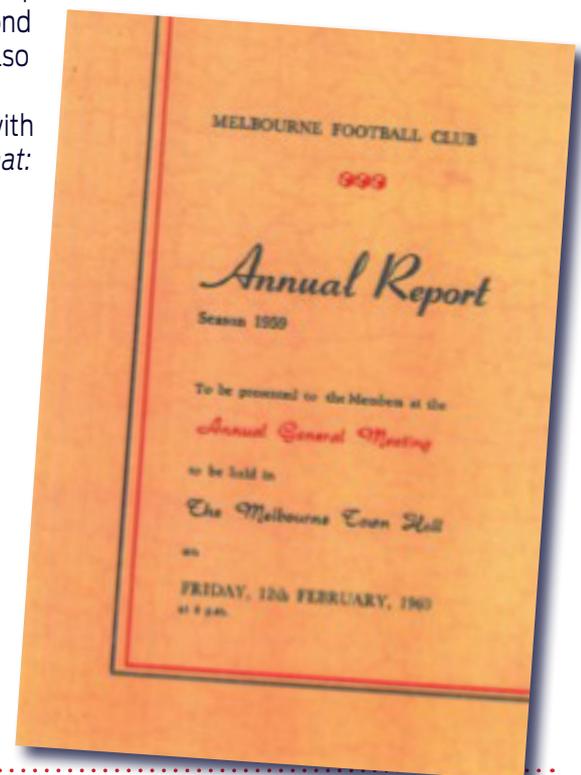
That experience helped to take Mithen to a fifth Melbourne premiership in 1960. In 1962, he went on to serve as the club's vice-captain, before retiring to become playing coach of VFA

side Port Melbourne, helping to take the 'Borough' to the 1964 premiership, ensuring red and blue domination across the VFL and VFA as Melbourne registered a memorable victory over Collingwood.

Mithen headed west in 1966, teaching in Perth for four years, as well as playing for WA side Claremont for two seasons. He then spent time as a school principal in Canada, before returning to the Gold Coast.

Over the decades, Melbourne celebrated Mithen for his contribution and status within the club. Named as an emergency in the club's Team of the Century, announced in 2000, Mithen was inducted into the MFC Hall of Fame in 2003, and was named as a '150 Hero' in 2008. In 2013, he was made a Life Member, hailed and humbly accepting honours for achievements that will forever be an integral part of the club's heritage.

**We will miss Laurie Mithen, one of the greats of the club in a golden era, and we offer our heartfelt condolences to his family and friends. He will always be special to us, and fondly remembered by all who knew him.**





PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION

PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS & OFFICIALS

# MEMBER NEWSLETTER

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2022

## ACADEMY ACTION

**O**ur thanks to Todd Patterson (MFC AFLW List Manager and AFL Futures/Academy Manager) for sharing this story with us. As it takes in many areas of the club which are also of interest to MFC P&PP&OA members, we thought everyone would appreciate the chance to find out what's going on in Academy circles.

We have had a busy month re-launching the Melbourne Academy in a post-COVID environment, and I wanted to share some of the events that have taken place.

The Academy captures Indigenous/Multicultural boys and girls, within both our Casey region and Alice Springs, as well as any father son or daughter prospects. The squads have come together for a number of training sessions and games against each other, as well as other club academies.

We kicked things off a couple of weeks ago with our Casey region boys and girls playing before and after our AFLW win against St Kilda. We split the results with the Saints on the day, with the girls not quite able to match it, but our boys being clear winners.

The highlight of the day was the involvement of three father son eligible players in Kynan Brown, Charlie Newport and Kalani White.

This then led to a really special occasion for the club, with our Alice Springs girls flying down on the weekend to play against our Casey girls, and it was the Alice crew that took home the chocolates on the day. This was an extreme



Kynan Brown, Charlie Newport and Kalani White

logistical challenge in the current environment. However, it has had such a significant impact in the Alice Springs community which will carry on through the year, bringing great energy and health outcomes, including prompting many to get vaccinated so they could participate. We provided a COVID safe experience, with all players returning negative tests the day after arriving home.

We also brought down three boys from Alice Springs for an additional Melbourne experience, and two Academy graduates in Deakyn Smith and Toby Bedford kindly gave up an hour on their Saturday morning (and four day break) to provide the lads with a terrific experience, which they thoroughly enjoyed.

I really wanted to highlight some exceptional efforts in getting this program off the ground. Tyla Hanks, Krstel Petrevski, Sarah Walsh and Rylie Ellis from our AFLW program delivered an elite program to the young boys and girls, with the feedback being overwhelmingly positive.

Rachael Lewis, Gaz O'Sullivan and Peter Maynard made the facilities available for this program; these games made it very long days for this crew and they went above and beyond to help us deliver, which is really appreciated.

Miranda Molnar held my hand through organising some amazing apparel for the kids, which everyone agreed looked great.

As always, there are many others that could be mentioned, but I really wanted to highlight the whole club effort and that our people continually go above and beyond to help support the delivery of programs like this.

**Again, many thanks to Todd for sharing this story, showing us all how fantastic it is to see the next generation coming through, and the many different levels of connection. If you are a past player looking to get your son or daughter involved in the Academy, contact Todd on 0408 445 966 or [todd.patterson@melbournefc.com.au](mailto:todd.patterson@melbournefc.com.au) for more information.**



PAST & PRESENT PLAYERS' & OFFICIALS' ASSOCIATION



[mfcpastplayers.com.au](http://mfcpastplayers.com.au)  
Instagram @mfcpastplayers