

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

There are two ways we can view season 2008/09 at the Moonee Valley Cricket Club – either through a negative viewpoint or a positive light.

If you look for the negatives, you can point out two Grand Final losses and no senior flags.

I much prefer the positives – and there is plenty to focus on. Following advice from Cricket Victoria, we can officially say we're now the biggest cricket club in the State.

We might have lost two Grand Finals, but the upside was that we made our first turf Grand Final since 2002/03, and all three of our Turf teams made the finals. We've now been promoted to the VTCA's North A Division for 2009/10.

Six of our 12 senior teams made finals, and six of our 14 junior teams. With 26 senior and junior teams, we are by far one of the biggest cricket clubs in Victoria.

Ten players in our Turf finals sides came through our juniors – so the equivalent of virtually one full team was home-grown. A further eight players through our junior program played in our other three senior finals teams.

This season we added a tenth senior men's Eleven and a second women's Eleven. Our Under 14 (2) team won a thrilling Grand Final, with nine wickets down and off the second-last ball – making Glenn Perussich our first multiple juniors Premiership coach. We have won one or more junior Premierships in each of the last six seasons, so our junior development continues to bubble along.

Holy Grail

Our last senior Premiership was in 2000/01, and the quest for our next one has become almost the

Holy Grail of the club. We are putting a lot of pressure on ourselves as a result. This season it was a case of so near, yet so far, as our Firsts and Thirds put up a brave fight at different stages of their matches.

But I believe the processes and structures we have put in place in the Moonee Valley Cricket Club have placed us in good stead to achieve the ultimate result.

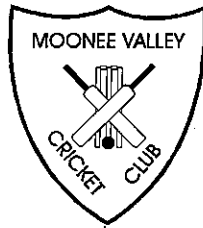
Stability

Stability and improved communication of our chosen direction were priorities for the new committee leading up to last season, and we achieved vital early steps with the prompt reappointment of coach Lou Raffaele for his second season, and Mark Gauci back as First Eleven captain. We fielded just 18 players in our First Eleven in 2008/09, compared with 26 the previous season – and this stability carried through to far more settled line-ups in the lower grades.

This stability – enabling players to get to know their teammates and their role in their team – was vital to six senior teams making finals and a further two just missing the cut.

We had more of a buzz and sense of purpose around the Club with chef Peter Fenaughty's Thursday night meals, our regular structure for Match Reports and our onfield performances. Other clubs were again learning that they took Moonee Valley lightly at their peril – in any grade.

Success begets success, and we were demonstrating this regularly with onfield performances. On one memorable Saturday in November, we had Evan Blythe, Pat Felmingham and Nigel Walker each take seven wickets, while Alan Harry and Dean Lawson each made 150s in



the Sixths on the way to a new Club record score across all grades – 3/475.

With our 26 teams we are almost the equivalent of a small or medium-sized business, and our structures and processes are vital to us being able to run efficiently and professionally. We were able to achieve this, without losing sight of the fact that our players, parents, supporters and volunteers are our No. 1 asset and the reason why we exist.

Twenty20

We achieved success in the North West Cricket Association's Twenty20 competition, easily cleaning up Taylors Lakes – the eventual winner of the top NWCA grade flag. It was good to be able to benchmark against one of the pace-setters of the local comp and match up so convincingly.

Bushfire Benefit

I can't say enough about the efforts of Mark Gauci in organising our Bushfire Benefit Match so quickly after fires devastated a number of Victorian communities on February 7. The effort was very much player-driven and led by Mark, as we knew that two of our own players were directly touched by the tragedy.

As a result of the efforts, the Moonee Valley Cricket Club raised \$9700 for the Bushfire Appeal and won lavish praise from our local representatives, including Essendon State MP Judy Maddigan, Maribyrnong Federal MP Bill Shorten and Moonee Valley councillor Jim Cusack.

Our women

Our women's teams learned how to win games of cricket, and it was emotional to see the White team win the first match of the season and then the Black team – comprised mainly of our pioneers – break through for two wins in three weeks late in the season. Three of our girls in Under 12s and Under 14s also starred at senior

level, so we've got a lot to look forward to with our women's cricket.

Your Committee

I wish to thank my hard-working colleagues on your committee for the team roles they played in ensuring that virtually everything during the season ran smoothly and professionally.

Vice President **Jim Polonidis** brought great stability to the committee with his wise counsel, particularly utilising his experience as a player in the top grades to ensure that we kept abreast of cricket at the top levels.

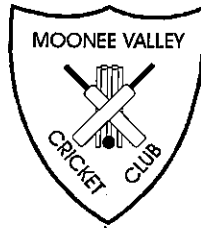
Kevin Gardiner had in my view the best job at the Club as junior co-ordinator – but probably also the hardest, as he had the previous incumbent of seven years looking over his shoulder the whole time. Kevin – I now have full confidence in your skills and abilities and know that junior development is safe in the hands of you and your committee.

Paul Comino and **Phill King** had the arduous task of controlling our finances, and it was no mean feat to keep abreast of the figures and turn a small surplus. They ensured we knew where we stood at all stages throughout the season.

Richard Cooney is a no-nonsense secretary, as anyone who copped a Cooney grilling during the captaincy interviews will attest. His work behind the scenes is first class.

Dynamo **Kim Johnston** gave our sponsorship a big boost pre-season, then turned her focus on events and functions and we achieved great success there.

We also utilised the experience of **Daniel Phillips** as a top-grade player, and he was always in control as our equipment manager. The fact that he worked shift work, travelled from Kilmore and captained the Seconds made his efforts even more meritorious.



Peter Fenaughty as canteen manager invariably emerged from the kitchen with flour in his hair and beard on Thursday nights, but his efforts were first-rate and he turned an excellent profit from his endeavours.

Steve Malone pioneered our move into sponsored onfield apparel, and our black and white playing tops looked great. He also had a second string as our Under 14 head coach.

And **Jenny O'Brien** as Funds Manager made a valuable contribution to turning a profit.

Thanks and congratulations

Thanks also go to Lou Raffaele for the way he coached and led our onfield performances, Tony Gleeson for again taking on the role as Women's coach and then trying to explain the physics of the job at presentation night, and to the tireless Danny Terzini for being honoured with Life Membership.

Dan has been an indispensable member of our Club since before my time, and his role and vision in the establishment of our juniors in 1996 was

significant. And he's taken on just about every other task that's been invented.

Congratulations to Bob Sciacchitano for winning the Lindsay Jones Best Clubman award, for a multitude of tasks he takes on without ever seeking acknowledgment. He played a key role in getting our new nets finally up and running.

Congratulations to John O'Brien for winning the MMVCA C Turf bowling award, to Alan Harry for winning the Barron Shield batting award in the NWCA and to Jacinta de Niese for beating all the boys to win the NWCA Under 12 batting award.

And finally thanks to my wife Adele and sons Murray and Nigel for their patience in putting up with my obsession with the Moonee Valley Cricket Club. The boys have long been players, and even Adele has taken the view that "if you can't beat them, join them" as a Women's team member.

And thanks to the partners of our other committee members for "lending" them to a worthy cause in the Moonee Valley Cricket Club.

Graeme "Charlie" Walker.
President,
Moonee Valley Cricket Club.