**Dianella Soccer Club 2019 AGM – President’s Report.**

The 2019 season again saw playing numbers at full capacity as registered players for the Club increased to 320, playing in 29 teams from under 6 to under 18, continuing our presence in all age groups of Junior football.

The committee has continued to work hard on maintaining the infrastructure and practices necessary to provide the opportunity for young people to play the game of football in an affordable, community based, family-friendly environment.

We are again indebted to the City of Stirling for allowing use of Yokine Reserve as our home ground. Following the late winter rains the pitches have remained in excellent condition and having the third full size pitch allowed us to host this year’s 6s and 7s with no issues. Our busiest Sunday this season saw around 500 players kicking a ball at Yokine, a wonderful achievement for all concerned.

We will continue to lobby the City of Stirling for additional lighting on the Oval, and more importantly increased lighting across the car park. With the addition of a cricket pitch in the middle of the oval around half of our squads are training in near-darkness, and the lack of lighting in the car park remains a major concern. I hope these issues will be addressed in good time.

I wish to thank our sponsors. This season we welcomed our new Shirt Sponsor, Denis Murselovic from DnD Building. We also welcomed back Natalie Hoye of Bellcourt Property Group, Caesar Aquino of Onside Sports and Colin Sanfilipo of Cameleon Coatings. Without their financial support our fees would not remain at the affordable levels they are now. We are very fortunate to have our sponsors on board.

We are often asked by members “will we move towards the NPL model?” In short, the answer remains no. We pride ourselves on being a junior community club and part of that commitment is maintaining affordable registration fees for our members. Unlike NPL clubs we do not pay wages to players, coaching or administrative staff. Every cent we receive from registration is ploughed back into the club and every player from the age of 5 to 18, regardless of ability directly benefits.

As our Treasurer will shortly report, the Club is in a sound financial position. I am satisfied the future of the Club is financially secure.

Dianella Soccer Club is an organisation that survives solely on the good will of volunteers who give up their time and energy to become committee members, coaches, assistant coaches, managers, referees, linespersons and many other tasks allowing children to play football. The success of our club is only possible with the support of these families and volunteers and those that value the role of sport in connecting local communities. To these people I say thank you – this is your Club and we look forward to your continued contributions in 2020.

One team of volunteers missing from action this season was our formidable line marking squad. This is because for the first time we employed a professional firm, Mark My Turf to survey and mark all pitches. We couldn’t have been happier with the results and the feedback received from all quarters has been overwhelmingly positive.

The enthusiasm on show from our Coaches this year was exceptional. Many coaches returned and we were joined by several new coaches who all took to the responsibility with great credit. I hope they have been “bitten” by the coaching bug and we see them back next year. I hesitate to mention individual names, but special thanks go to the following coaches who have given up their time despite having no children at the club. Josh and Nathaniel Dowling (16s), Anthony, Michael and Nick Gileno (15s), Mitchell Cavanagh (13s) and Mick Owens in the 10s. We also had a father and son team working together, where Jonah Froman, a player from the 15s, stepped up alongside his dad Ryan to coach a squad in our 11s in a real display of teamwork. But to every Coach, a special thank you for a job well done.

The annual Coaches match highlighted to me what Dianella Soccer Club and the game of football is all about. We had coaches, assistant coaches and a few guests ranging in age from their 20s into their 50’s, and despite the wind and rain a fantastic night was had by all. I do have it on good authority that some weren’t moving too well the following day, but I would like to think that many of our current players will still be pulling on their boots, stepping on to the pitch and having fun well into their 50’s.

I wish to thank the 2019 committee for their tireless efforts. Each and every one of you should feel a sense of pride, knowing that your work goes towards making a fun experience of playing football a reality for so many kids.

I would particularly like to thank Mario Zinni and Maria Stella for continuing in their respective roles of Junior and Miniroo’s Team Co-ordinators and being committed to doing the job well. Maria went above and beyond in also looking after The Small Sided Clusters and Mario shrugged off a health “scare” to carry on regardless. You were the backbone of the playing side this season and I have lost count of the number of compliments received about your roles at the club.

Sonia Beros returned as our Secretary this year. You have more than fulfilled your role, organising, cajoling and reminding us all, me more than most, of the tasks in hand. Thank you for ensuring our meetings stayed “on track” and the club were “on the ball”.

To my right-hand men, Akash Bisnath, Treasurer, and Mick Owens, Vice President, thank you.

Akash as always has controlled the purse strings, dealing with all the invoices, Football West admin, referee’s fees, supplier’s costs etc. and all the while keeping the club’s budget on track. He is a great man to lean on, thank you, Akash.

Mick Owens is not just Vice President, but also our Coaches Co-ordinator. Mick is also the Assistant Coach and Team Manager of the WA State Paralympic Football team. I have seen the team train and play at Yokine and I love the work Mick is doing, in conjunction with coaching the 10s, in helping everyone play the beautiful game.

Dorina Martelli as always had us running like clockwork for the new look Trophy Presentation and Wind-Up and we also had a fantastic turn-out for the Club’s Ten Pin Bowling event at the Rosemount Bowl in July. Carmel deFillipis again had the teams kitted out and photographed, raising a tidy sum in the process. The issue of organising the distribution of photos and receiving payment remains somewhat problematic and we will look at possible ways to improve the process for next year.

To John Griffiths our Equipment Manager and Club Person of the Year for 2019, thanks for ensuring every team had the necessary gear before and during the season and for establishing and looking after our new relationship with Mark My Turf. The hours you have devoted, particularly this year has been recognised by everyone and you are a deserved winner of Club Person of The Year.

Pina Ricci worked closely with Nicky Walmsley and her team in the canteen. The team kept us fed and served much needed teas and coffees over the cold and wet winter mornings. Your cheery service kept us going. The Training Night Dinners initiative was re-introduced with some success as several teams took the opportunity to “bond over a burger” after training. We will look to continue and perhaps expand and offer new services next year.

Anthony Gileno stepped into the murky world of social media and became our IT Manager. It is safe to say we have now finally caught up with the rest of the world as our exposure has grown through Facebook and Instagram. Incredibly in the last few months our Post reach on Facebook is up a whopping 527%, Post engagement is up 1600% and our New Page likes are up 433%. It is a similar story on Instagram where the number of followers has grown fivefold.

All of this of course means we have significantly increased our ‘reach’ to the wider community and allowed our older players a better way to engage with the club. This is a really exciting area for the club and under Anthony’s guidance we look forward to continual growth over the next few years.

One particular post on Facebook really struck a chord in the community, registering just under 1000 views and engagement close to 400. Simply staggering numbers compared to anything else previously posted. This followed our donation of old playing shirts to the people of Ginatilan, a village in the Philippines. To see the pictures of hundreds of children proudly wearing their Dianella shirts was fantastic. We are currently having another clear out and identified some further old kits and club clothing which will make its way to help others in the Philippines.

Vince Bell has the unenviable role of being our Perth Glory Liaison Officer and member of the Club Ambassador Programme. Vince will continue to work towards cementing relationships with Perth Glory which is no easy task, as they appear to be a club in a permanent state of flux and disappointingly offer very little currently in the way of engagement with grassroots and community football.

Allison Stephens has followed the survey we published in June 2018 with a new survey issued at the end of this season. We hope for an equally strong response this time around. When we get the results we will sit down, focus on the key findings and use them to further build and improve the club.

One key take-away from last year’s survey and the source of much comment was the format for our end of season wind-ups. We listened and changed last year’s event and we again changed and re-structured yesterday’s celebrations. Whilst it is too early to evaluate any feedback from this year’s wind-up, comments made and passed to me yesterday were extremely positive which indicate we are on the right track. It is a fine balancing act juggling the happiness and engagement of over 300 players from 5 to 18 years of age, against the expectations of parents, carers and siblings. This is a work in progress and we will continue to listen and adjust accordingly.

To the committee, those already mentioned, and to those individuals not on the committee but have worked behind the scenes, thank you again for making this Club a true, community asset.

Once again Life Member Morgan Aquino returned to the club and along with sponsor Caesar Aquino offered two weeks of specialist goal keeper training for our 10s through to 18s. True to form one of the nights training was conducted in the pouring rain, but our goal keepers love the experience and they all benefit from the expert, up to date training from a Junior Matilda and Perth Glory keeper.

Your committee this year honoured Terry Tyzack with Life Membership. We are a fortunate club as we have had many strong and active supporters since formation. But not many have done as much for the club over a period of time without having a child or relative playing.

Over the years Terry’s contribution, not only in his role as a City of Stirling councillor, but also as a member of the local community helped facilitate our move to Yokine Reserve. At the time there was an extensive list of interested clubs (from all codes) looking to use the reserve. However, Terry saw to it that a ‘true’ local, community club moved into the prime location. Subsequently Terry also oversaw the huge improvements to the clubrooms, lighting for the pitches, and the list goes on. Quite simply, without Terry’s help and guidance we would not have the capacity or ability to offer 320 players the chance to play football.

On the field, as in all sports there were success stories and the not so successful. Whatever the story, our aim was to make the experience for every player an enjoyable one. Worthy of note however once again were the successes of our Juniors (13s to 18s). The 18s deserve a special mention, finishing as runners-up in Division 1 and making it to the semi-final of the knock-out Cup.

Of the seven Junior squads, four finished inside the top 4 and the remaining three missed out by a whisker. In the Top 4 Semi-Finals our 18s and 16s both suffered heartache losing via the dreaded penalty shoot-out, and our 14s North Div 1 Team and 13s Div 2 team pushed their respective league winners close but missed out on the finals.

In the absence of recorded scores for Miniroos (6s to 12s) it is difficult to highlight achievements, but in our 10s, 11s and 12s we had teams competing at the highest Metro level and each squad performed admirably against the so called “bigger clubs.”

However, I have always believed that children’s sport is about so much more than winning, so thank you to every squad for playing the Dianella way this season. Regardless of playing ability, from the fiercely competitive Metro league’s to the more ‘social’ levels we are very proud of our players. Well done to all those involved.

On that note, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage others to become part of the Dianella Soccer Club story, by getting involved at either Committee level or at grass roots level where the teams are. We are always on the lookout for new ideas and areas of expertise. Without a committee the Club cannot exist, and I am sad to say that many on the current committee will not be at the club for much longer. New blood is desperately needed to ensure the continuity of the work we are currently doing. Dianella Soccer Club is a friendly, welcoming place that offers a rewarding experience. Please give it some thought, we would love to hear from you.

2019 has had its challenges, but in a year that saw interest in the game grow though the success of The Matildas and the visits of both Manchester and Leeds United to Perth, participation in Association Football continues to outstrip all other sports in WA and across Australia. With the help of the committee and members I would be delighted to serve one more final Season as President.

Thank you.