

RLTA President's Annual Report 2008

This past year has been yet another milestone in the history of the RLTA. The redevelopment of the site has taken another couple of forward steps with the refurbishment of the former clubhouse and the re-building of court 1. We have said farewell to Jani Kroyherr, our club coach of the past four years, and welcomed Dean and Sophia Toparis to the role of joint coach/managers. We have seen numerous additions to the new clubhouse thanks to the terrier-like fund-raising efforts of Yvonne Willson and, with Council's help, we have even prepared the ground for an additional ninth court when it is needed. On the down side, our membership numbers continued to slide, from 499 in 2006 to 420 in 2007 to 378 in 2008, most of which was a decline in the number of mid-week ladies and to a lesser extent, our juniors.

Administration

Our administrative structure has remained the same for the past three years with Jani Kroyherr, and his Universal Tennis team managing court hire, fee collection and the junior fixture program through the Pro-shop, and our own part-time Secretary/Manager (Betty McCoy) responsible for site management and club activities. Betty was ably assisted in her role by several club volunteers, namely Keith Collyer (caretaker), Pat Cleary (groundsman), Bev Hogan (book-keeping) and Tony Barton (barman). On behalf of the club I wish to thank them all for their efforts.

The RLTA comprises various groups that all utilise our wonderful facilities and contribute to its upkeep and development. Competition fixtures account for about 50% of total court revenue, while regular social groups account for another 30%. Coordinators take responsibility to ensure that these tennis activities remain strong and viable and I would like to take this opportunity to thank these individuals on behalf of the club: Ray & Eleanor Lambley (Monday night), Betty McCoy (Thursday night), Kym Reimers (Saturday), Maureen Hilzinger and Margaret Bird (mid-week ladies), Bruce MacLean (Vets), Tony Barton (Tuesday night social) and last but not least, Sean Samuel and the other parents who helped Jani with the junior fixtures.

In August 2008, Jani gave notice to the RLTA that he would not be renewing his contract at the end of the year and had chosen a lifestyle move to the Sunshine Coast. Jani has since accepted a coaching position at Kawana Tennis Club and we wish him all the best for his future tennis career. The RLTA has taken the opportunity to restructure the administration of the centre for 2009 and has now appointed Dean & Sophia Toparis as coach/managers. Dean and Sophia are both qualified tennis coaches and have a proven track record in successfully managing tennis centres. As well as being a Tennis Australia Certified Club Professional coach with more than 20 years experience, Dean is a qualified accountant with a business degree from the University of Technology in Sydney.

Courts

Court 1 was rebuilt and resurfaced early in 2008. The synthetic grass was removed (and sold), the decomposed granite court surface replaced with compacted road base with a 1% slope from south to north, and a new synthetic grass surface was then laid over the top. Net posts and fences were adjusted to accommodate the new court contour. While the cost of the work was considerable, the result has been a wonderful success. The surface plays truer than the adjacent courts and water runs off much more readily, allowing play to continue in situations that prevent play on the adjacent courts. In time and as finances allow, it is planned that the remaining courts (2 to 4) will also be redeveloped.

We have been fortunate and appreciative of retaining the services of our caretaker Keith Collyer and groundsman Pat Cleary who have ensured that the courts were maintained in top condition for the benefit of our members. To assist in this process, the club has now invested (with the help of raffle proceeds) in a ride-on mower (no blades) to be used in brooming the court surfaces.

Clubhouse Fittings

The Veterans group and in particular, Yvonne Willson, deserve special thanks for their fund-raising efforts the proceeds of which were used to purchase 50 new chairs, a lounge unit, flat-screen TV and table tennis table for the clubhouse.

Former clubhouse

A major change to the site took place with the redevelopment and refurbishment of the former clubhouse. Originally destined for demolition once the new clubhouse was built in 2005, the building has been used as a ground store while awaiting its ultimate fate. With no monies spent on it, the building and the roof in particular, had been deteriorating badly and so it was with great satisfaction that we have been able to not only restore it to its former glory, but to surpass that level and bring it into line with the finish of the new clubhouse. Two-thirds of the new building is now occupied by the Spring Festival organisation who will use it as their administrative headquarters, while one third of it has become a very secure ground store and caretakers workshop. The RLTA financial contribution to the redevelopment was no more than the original cost of demolition, with Redland City Council and the Spring Festival financing the remainder. The Spring Festival will have a sub-lease over their component for the duration of the RLTA lease and will be responsible for its maintenance and fit-out.

Tennis – Club Championships

The club championships were conducted during the September school holidays. The popularity of the event has been maintained though some competitors have expressed difficulties in playing several singles matches and a final in the one evening. Some revision to the arrangements may well be made in 2009. The winners for 2008 were:

A Mens Singles:	Jani Kroyherr
B Mens Singles:	Peter Cox
A Mens Doubles:	Steve Parr & Justin Schneider
B Mens Doubles:	Mark Wakeling and Carl Sabatini
Mixed Doubles:	Wasiela Weary and Ben Parr

On Wednesday 24th September at 3pm the 2008 Junior Club Championships were held at the RLTA. We had an impressive field of younger players than the previous year which opened up the field. The winners for 2008 were:

18& Under Boys Singles:	Wade Fraser
18& Under Girls Singles:	Suzie Knezovic

Tom Ferguson Shield

On Sunday 24th August Redlands played in the annual inter-district competition for the Tom Ferguson Shield. Despite our high hopes after last years magnificent win (second time ever), 2008 turned out to be something of an embarrassment for the club. Of the club's 16 finest in 2007, we could only manage 6 players (5 men and 1 lady) who were available to back up in 2008. Finding able replacements for the men proved relatively easy, but the club was only able to find five of the necessary eight ladies prepared to represent our club on the day. As a result, we were forced to forfeit one of the 4 matches and our president was sentenced to play as a lady for the day in order to save face with other teams who had travelled long distances to compete. For the record, Gold Coast won the day from Beenleigh, Redlands a distant third and Beaudesert fourth. In 2009, the competition will be hosted at the Redlands and I hope that our efforts will receive much wider support..

Redland Bay Challenge

On Sunday the 15th June, our team's victory over the Redland Bay Tennis Club made us the winners three of the last four times the clubs have met in the annual Redland Bay Challenge Tournament for the Rosie Dunn Shield. The event was contested by eight teams of four players from each club, and the tennis was of a high standard throughout with all sets played in a wonderful spirit. Redland Bay dominated the top two divisions for most of the day, but the RLTA had the depth of talent and finished winners, 32 sets to 27. Special thanks go to members Yvonne Willson, Peter Cox, Betty McCoy, Shane Keefe and Lena Bandiera for their help and catering.

Redland Shire Perpetual Tennis Shield

The tournament for the Redland City Council Shield was held on the 24th August and this year we had wonderful weather and a total of 40 players. Once again the competition was played with great spirit and enthusiasm. The two names to be engraved on the Shield for 2008 were Val Watkins and Paul Smith. Val won with 25 games, just one game ahead of the runner-up Maureen Hilzinger. Paul Smith also won with 25 games, and his runner-up was Les Wilson with 21 games.

Club Fixtures

Club fixtures remain strong with Monday and Thursday night competitions running at close to full capacity. The Saturday A Grade fixtures continue to use three courts each week, with the Vets social tennis of a Saturday afternoon making full use of the remaining five courts.

The junior fixtures continued to run in three separate divisions that were played on three separate days (Wednesday and Friday afternoons and Saturday mornings). The Friday and Saturday groups with the more experienced players ran well, but the Wednesday fixtures with mainly inexperienced players (and parents) struggled and will need to be revised in 2009.

Thank you's

I would like to thank all of the RLTA committee for their support in 2008, especially Bruce MacLean for taking on the role as newsletter editor. His efforts have made a huge difference to communications within the club. Also helping to make it all work, Vivien Carlsson has matured into a wonderful minutes secretary and the Treasury team of Bill Tapper and Reg Griffin have kept us informed in a timely fashion as to the club's financial health. I would also like to make special mention of the efforts of Shane Keefe this past year as he has not only been a creative architect but also a fantastic negotiator in managing our clubhouse refurbishment project. Once given the green light, he has managed to get the project completed under time and under budget.

I would also like to add that it has been a pleasure working with our secretary/manager Betty McCoy, our coach Jani and his Universal Tennis team, and our band of volunteers (Keith Collyer, Pat Cleary, Tony Barton and Bev Hogan). Thank you one and all for your contributions in 2008.

Ian Somers

President RLTA.