

Official Magazine of Queensland's Former Origin Greats

FOGS
QUEENSLAND
FORMER ORIGIN GREATS

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TON OF HISTORY

State of Origin celebrates 100 games



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A Message From THE EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN



Picture: News Queensland

COMING INTO State of Origin time again, with the Maroons gunning for their ninth straight series wins, it is sometimes easy for us Queenslanders to feel like we are 10-foot tall and bulletproof.

It almost seems incredible that this amazing wave of success that Mal Meninga's Maroons have been riding since 2006 is approaching a decade in duration.

In any sporting sphere, what they have done is an incredible achievement.

When you put it into the context of Origin being the best of the best in one of the most demanding and brutal contact sports in the world, where the previous winning streak stretched only as far as three, it truly is remarkable.

That is why now is as good a chance as any, before the series begins for another year, to take a step back and really savour what has been accomplished.

This is by no means an early concession that maybe this magical run is at an end. Far from it.

But, as we approach State of Origin's 100th game in this year's series, it is fitting that we take a minute to appreciate the great team that we have representing us, and carrying the traditions built up over

those 100 games for the next generations to build upon.

Certainly, there have been other instances already this year that should reinforce the idea of appreciating what you have, while you have it.

Inside this edition of Queensland Magazine, you will read about how one of our own, Gary Larson, faced up to his own mortality after he was diagnosed with prostate cancer.

Thankfully his story is a happy one, with tests now fully clearing him of cancer.

But it is also a cautionary tale for all of us about the true value of something most of us take for granted every day – our health.

Gary was lucky, but this year's other rugby league sermon about appreciating what we have did not come with much luck at all.

Alex McKinnon has only just turned 22, and was a star on the rise.

Now, due to a highly publicized but no less tragic accident, he has been diagnosed as a quadriplegic.

Impressively though, Alex has vowed to dig deep and fight on, setting himself the challenge of walking his new fiancée down the aisle.

It is a journey everyone in rugby league longs to see.

These words are not meant to be a downer, or cast a pall over what will again be one of the highlights of the sporting year.

Just a reminder that when you're are busy climbing towards a goal, it is sometimes important to stop, look around, and see how far you've come.

Here at the FOGS, our organisation continues to climb, with the success of our ARTIE Academy and Indigenous Employment and Careers Expos, as well as the planning and construction of our new headquarters in Castlemaine St, across from Suncorp Stadium.

This was a major plank in Tossler Turner's vision for the FOGS, having a home of our own, and is a major step forward for the organisation's future.

For all of us this year, on and off the field, there is plenty to achieve and to aspire to.

But there is also the chance to be thankful for what we have, and proud of how far we've come.

GENE MILES
Executive Chairman

FROM THE COACH'S DESK

With Queensland coach Mal Meninga

BALANCE OF POWER

Honouring the past, concentrating on the present, preparing for the future.

CELEBRATION, RECOGNITION and preparation – that is the delicate balance that the Queensland team must master ahead of State of Origin's 100th match to launch this year's series.

It is a great occasion, and there will be a huge celebration involved, particularly early in the week.

I believe they are getting the 1980s guys together for a reunion, and that will be a wonderful thing.

The significance of the occasion will help remind us of the reasons that Origin started, and that is an important thing – not just for the current team, but for future players.

To understand what Queensland players went through before Origin started is an important part of what we are about, and a

valuable lesson for the young guys to learn.

Hopefully the guys that aren't in the team yet, the future players, will pay attention to what it all means, listen and learn so that they will be up to speed when the time comes for them to be called into camp.

I know that our players will really relish being around that sense of occasion, and that sense of history.

But they also know that the best way to acknowledge what those guys achieved is to be successful with their own efforts this year.

As has been the case with us for a number of seasons now, one of the bigger challenges we will face is keeping the players mentally stimulated after eight series wins in a row.



Original 1980 Queensland State of Origin team.

Pictures: Courtesy News Queensland



We need to make sure the week is an enjoyable one, and refresh them mentally and physically as much as we can.

I want them to enjoy the week, and make sure they are fully relaxed and focused on game day.

That has been the secret of our success, that balance in our preparation.

There is no question that it is getting harder every year for us to come up with challenges and motivation to ensure we are mentally switched on for the job at hand.

We haven't started all that well in the past few years, and all of the players are aware of that as well.

Particularly in Game I of a series, it is really important part of our preparation we need to get right.

It comes down to the attitude that we carry into the start of the game. We have to make sure that we don't take our foot off the pedal at any stage.

We can't sit on our heels for a bit until we find ourselves in the situation where we need to do something and then switch on, like we have done on occasions in the past.

We have to be on the front foot, and take the advantage away early in the game.

Part of keeping that mental edge sharp is maintaining our standards and disciplines within the team and our environment.

There is no relaxation on standards. Ever.

It has been a critical ingredient to our preparations — how we conduct ourselves and the standards we hold ourselves to.

To relax those standards, make exceptions to rules or to turn a blind eye to behaviour or attitudes that are in opposition to what is expected is when cracks start to appear.

Where there are cracks, erosion and the failure of the integrity of the unit cannot be far behind.

We need strong leadership from everyone involved for us to be at our best, and that is where we need to be to win.

Origin demands it.

If you can't hold yourself to those standards, then there is no room for you.

Even the smallest percentage of change in the standards we demand means we reduce our chances of winning.

That is unacceptable.

This team cares too much about the legacy it will leave, and the respect shown to those who have gone before, to be damaged by attitudes that do not meet or conform with the team standards.

I think the Queensland players from that first Origin game back in 1980 would back that stance to the hilt.



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NATURAL SELECTION

Darren Lockyer is back for the Maroons, but it's a whole new ball game.

NEVER SATISFIED. It was the mantra that former Test cricket captain Steve Waugh adopted in his relentless desire to install Australia as the kingpins of world cricket. And now the Queensland rugby league hierarchy is taking on a similar mentality as they look to continue their Origin dominance over the embattled Blues for another generation.

Not content with eight consecutive series victories, Maroons hierarchy have turned to Origin icons Darren Lockyer, Petero Civoniceva and Michael Crocker to help mentor the next generation of Queensland stars.

Lockyer has been appointed to oversee the development of the Queensland under-20s, while Civoniceva (under-18s) and Crocker (under-16s) will also play key roles at interstate grassroots level.

In conjunction with the Queensland Academy of Sport, former Broncos and Maroons coach Wayne Bennett helped establish the Emerging Origin program in the early-2000s to help combat NSW's dominance of interstate football.

The elite camp has had a profound effect on Queensland's revival as an Origin force. Now the Maroons are solidifying their structures under Mal Meninga's regime, with Lockyer, Civoniceva and Crocker to educate rising Queensland talent on the principles to succeed at rugby league's highest level.

"I'm really excited by the mentoring role with the under-20s," said Lockyer, Queensland's most capped player with a record 36 Origin appearances.

"Having been a part of the ups and downs at Origin level for a long time, I think I can bring those experiences to the table.

"I really enjoyed working with the under-20s squad at their camp in January. There's a lot of talented young guys coming through and it can benefit them if they have a former Origin player they can talk to about their experiences.

"It's all about attitude. Any junior Queensland squad will have talent but the key is building the right attitude to be successful and then maintaining it. The good kids are willing to learn and I'll really enjoy helping them out."

Lockyer worked with a number of emerging stars at the January camp, including Storm rookie fullback Cameron Munster, Israel Folau's brother John and Broncos trio Ashley Taylor, Jordan Drew and Corey Oates.

As well as having a formalised mentoring role, Lockyer will also join Queensland's senior selection panel this season.

QRL Chief Executive Rob Moore said Lockyer's role as a Channel Nine commentator gives the former Maroons five-eighth the ability to assess the form of current and potential Queensland stars.

"It wasn't a difficult decision including Darren with the three other competent selectors we have already got," Moore said.

"There's no doubting the current selectors' knowledge of the game and their enthusiasm for Queensland.

"What Darren brings is currency more than anything else, as well as being a former player involved in so many Origin series wins.

"There is the value in really knowing what it is like to play through that many series and have so many successes.

"You have to look at the selection panel as a team and Locky helps us cover every aspect of the game."

Lockyer, who retired at the end of 2011, said maintaining Queensland's health at Origin level is important to him.

"I don't want to be a passenger, I want to help make a difference and it will be great to have some input in selecting the side," he said.

"I feel very fortunate to be in this mentoring role, plus working among the existing selectors.

"It was driven by the current coach and Mal indicated he wanted me to stay heavily involved with the Origin family.

"I always said I would do whatever I could to help Queensland out.

"Mal does a wonderful job not only with coaching on the field but the peripheral stuff around the team and it's great to be a part of the process."

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

Why Queensland has nothing to fear from the coming end of an era.

QUEENSLAND KNOW Father Time is fast approaching.

Star duo Johnathan Thurston and Billy Slater may now be thirty-somethings, but Maroons hierarchy are confident they have readymade replacements in young guns Moses Mbye and Cameron Munster.

While Thurston and Slater don't plan on checking out of Camp Maroon anytime soon, the pair can't go on interminably and that's where Mbye and Munster enter the equation.

Still just 19, Munster was added to Queensland's under-20s Emerging Origin squad in January, just eight weeks after being handed a full-time NRL deal by Melbourne Storm.

A fullback or five-eighth, Munster has already made waves down south, impressing coach Craig Bellamy so much he was handed the injured Slater's No. 1 jumper for a pre-season trial against Canberra.

Mbye has had a similar impact at the Bulldogs. The 20-year-old playmaker idolised Thurston as a rising star at the Noosa Pirates and is on the cusp of becoming one of the few players of African descent to appear in the NRL.

The product of a Gambian father, Mbye wore the Queensland No. 6 jumper at under-20s level last year and one day hopes to walk in Thurston's legendary footsteps.

"I've played league since I was eight so State of Origin is the dream," Mbye said.

"I'm playing five-eighth so my long-term goal is to become like Thurston.

"He's the benchmark of the halves nowadays, in my eyes he is the best player in the world so if I can be half as good as him I'll be doing quite well.

"Growing up, I've watched Darren Lockyer and Thurston. They are really talented players and big-game players, I've watched them win so many Origin and Test matches and

hopefully one day I get that chance."

Mbye underlined his class with a man-of-the-match performance in Canterbury's 20-10 pre-season trial defeat of the Storm at Suncorp Stadium. But there has been no magic carpet ride to the NRL.

As a teenager, Mbye was overlooked by the Broncos and Titans before the Bulldogs took a gamble.

"It's been a long road," he said. "I didn't make any junior-rep sides at Noosa, I was overlooked quite a few times but that was only fire in the belly to prove a few people wrong.

"I had a stint in the Titans development squad for a year or two, but nothing came of it, then the Bulldogs spotted me

at a schoolboys carnival (in 2010).

"It never got me down. You can either put your head down and kick stones or you can get on with it and carry on with your dream.

"My dream was always playing in the NRL. I'm so close now and I'm working hard to get there."

Munster, meanwhile, is learning from the master at close range. Most days, he is a metre away from Slater in the Storm gymnasium.

And while the Rockhampton product is too humble to compare himself to Slater, good judges believe it is only a matter of time before Munster reaches NRL stardom.

The 185cm flyer set the Intrust Super Cup alight last season.

At 18, he clinched rookie-of-the-year honours after a superb season at Central Capras, which included a blistering 70-metre solo try against Burleigh in which he beat seven defenders.

"I can't believe I'm here in Melbourne having a joke with boys like Billy and Cam Smith. It's a big stepping stone, it's not everyday you get to train with guys of those calibre," Munster said.





YOUNG GUNS: Canterbury sensation Moses Mbye wants to follow in the steps of his hero Johnathan Thurston, and (inset) Cameron Munster is learning all he can from Billy Slater at the Storm.

Pictures: News Queensland.

"I don't think anyone can ever succeed Billy, it will be hard to do what he did, but it would be an honour to wear his jersey one day.

"I feel for the next person who wears the No.1 jersey because it will be huge shoes

to fill. But it's always been a big dream of mine to play fullback and it would be great to have to chance to do it one day.

"I try hard to do the things he does but it's very hard to repeat it. It takes a lot of hard work and experience to get to his level.

"I can't be happier here. I thought it would be a lot harder to settle, but guys like Cam and Billy have taken me in and treated me really well."

Munster recently met Darren Lockyer at the Queensland under-20s camp and dreams of wearing Maroon.

"Darren Lockyer was my idol growing up, I got picked for the Queensland under-20s Emerging squad and he was there talking to us which was good," Munster said.

"He was telling us what it was like to play for Queensland and how it felt to put the jersey on.

"It feels good to know a coach like Craig Bellamy thinks I'm up to NRL standard. I have to keep working hard, I have heaps to work on, but it's nice to know the Storm are giving me every chance to succeed."

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HOME GROUND

FOGS continue to build for the future with new admin base.

PART OF “Tosser” Turner’s vision for the Former Origin Greats was for the organisation to one day stand on its own two feet, and have its own place to call home.

The founder’s great vision has taken another step forward with the acquisition of a new commercial property on Castlemaine St that the FOGS will eventually call home.

The 1093sqm building sits on 1207sqm of prime rugby league real estate – directly across the road from Suncorp Stadium.

The new FOGS HQ is a massive step forward for the organisation, and will further entrench its reputation as a leading Queensland charity.

It is also a cornerstone of the long-term vision Tosser, the inaugural chairman, had to see the FOGS not only survive but thrive on their own.

Executive Chairman Gene Miles said the new building would help FOGS cement their identity as a stand-alone entity, with the organisation’s administration staff to make the transition to their new home gradually over the next 12 months.

“This is the little empire that Tosser built, and this new property, which will eventually become the new headquarters for the FOGS, was without doubt a part of the vision that he had for the organisation very early on,” Gene said.

“Branching out and getting a home of our own was something that was always a



Pictures: Courtesy James Ralph, Wright Property Corp

part of our long term plans, but the fact is with the organisation growing as rapidly as it is, we have just run out of room here at Suncorp Stadium.

“Ultimately we didn’t have any other option but to find somewhere else to go.

“The best thing about it is that we as an organisation will now own something. “We were just incredibly lucky that we were able to find something that suited our needs so well, just across the street from the greatest place in the world.”

Gene said a number of options were being explored as to what layout and design the new headquarters would take.

“We have a number of great ideas that are being looked at, but it is far too early to be getting excited about what might be done,” he said.

“This is a longer term project, the next 12 months at least I would think, and one that we will have to proceed with cautiously.

“We have a number of bold plans that have been discussed, which are quite exciting for us as an organisation, but there are a lot of processes to go through and we are still a long way down the track.

“We have a lease here at Suncorp Stadium until the end of next year anyway, so we are in no great hurry.

“We have a lot of boxes to tick over the next 12 months, but certainly we have some plans to do some very special things out of the new building as well.”

Gene said the building was not only an operational necessity, but a part of the FOGS’ charter to leave a lasting legacy for the generations to come.

“Having assets was always something that Tosser was very big on for the organisation’s future, and he always envisioned having a home for us,” he said.

“When we hand the baton over for future State of Origin players to continue on the work of the FOGS, they will at least know that they will always have a home across the road from Suncorp Stadium.

“When Mal Meninga decides to hand over the reins of the Queensland team, he will have left an incredible legacy for the next generation and future generations to work from.

“We will be doing that as well with the next generation of players who will eventually take over the running of the FOGS.”

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LEADERSHIP CAMPS SHOW YOUNG LEADERS HOW TO HELP CLOSE THE GAP

WHEN THE Queensland State of Origin team gets ready for a big performance, the Maroons go into camp to help them focus on their task and ensure their preparation is spot-on to achieve success.

It is a lesson that is now being applied to assist in the FOGS indigenous education programs, with the ARTIE Academy Leadership Camp the new addition to the initiatives aimed at improving attendance and engagement among indigenous students at ARTIE schools.

Two camps were held this year to introduce the program.

The first, held in Townsville, was attended by 45 students from Years 9-12 who are the Young Indigenous Leaders at Kirwan State High School.

The second camp, in south east Queensland, saw over 50 students from years 11 and 12 across eight ARTIE schools attend.

Both camps challenged the students and their abilities as school leaders across the following areas:

1. Individually - Reflecting on self, shedding negativity, strong belief systems, goal setting, being the best that you can be, overcoming self-doubt;
2. "Leadership within, then without" – Challenging the process, inspiring a vision, role modelling;
3. Active leadership – Action planning, practical skills, working together to achieve a common goal, closing the attendance gap at their school.

The camp aimed to turn the students into more effective leaders, giving them the self-belief, and group cohesiveness required to implement a "peer-to-peer" plan of action to be implemented at their school to close the attendance gap by the end of 2014.

On a personal level, by the end of the camp the students had an improved sense of self-determination to succeed.

Students were shown their school's attendance gap in 2013, and were then directly challenged to take ownership of the issue and share ways they can inspire and encourage their poor attending peers to improve attendance.

Participants were involved



in a range of practical and theoretical activities focussed on challenging thoughts and beliefs about themselves as individuals and how that relates to leadership.

"We wanted to hold a senior leadership camp to up-skill and motivate our seniors because we think that is where the key to our success is – trying to get them to believe that they can make the change," said ARTIE staff member Hayley Camman.

Indigenous Affairs Minister, Nigel Scullion, attended the second camp, and said the work of the ARTIE Academy was crucial because it utilised the resources of the front line troops – the students themselves – in the battle in closing the gap in indigenous education.

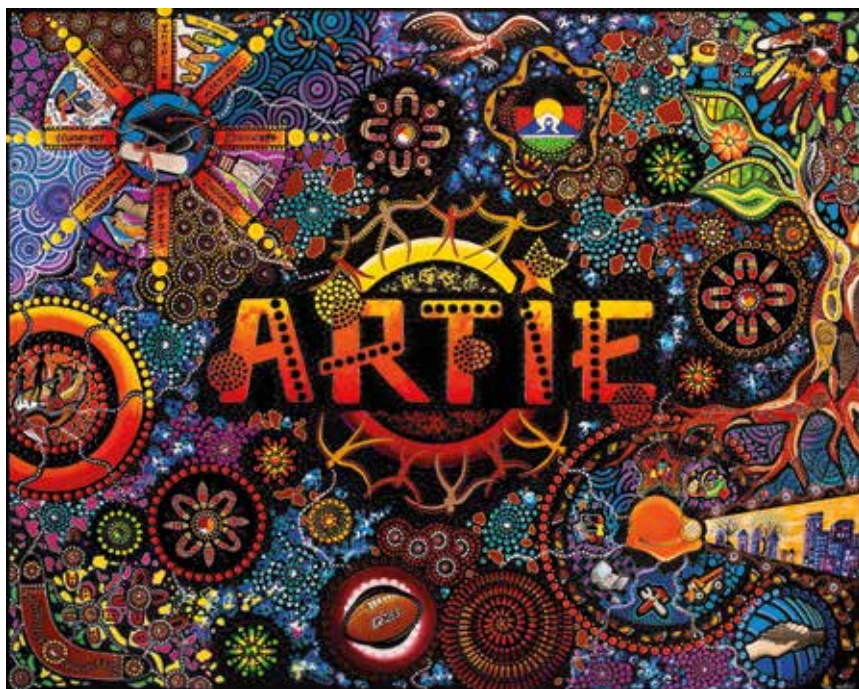
"ARTIE is a fantastic organisation, and I was delighted to be here...seeing these kids doing my work for me – coming up with new initiatives, coming up with new ideas, coming up effectively with new policy," Senator Scullion said.

"I am going to be very connected with the outcomes of this forum because it is an insight from the people who are most important, because it is an insight of people who are at school.

"Education is absolutely fundamental to closing the gap. I want to get every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander to go to school.

"I want to get (attendance levels at) 90 per cent, which is the same as mainstream right across Australia. That is our goal, and in fact we have now made it a new closing the gap target."





CHERN'EE PUTS HER ART AND SOUL INTO FOGS

RENOWNED YOUNG indigenous artist Chern'ee Sutton has just completed her second artwork for the ARTIE Academy.

The stunning, intricate and beautiful piece took more than six weeks to create, and is the second-largest piece Chern'ee has ever undertaken.

The piece encapsulates everything about the ARTIE Academy, and features on the new ARTIE website – artie.net.au – and also on the ARTIE rewards for students, including the exclusive hoodies, speakers and shorts.

Chern'ee is a prodigiously talented 17-year-old contemporary indigenous artist, whose heritage lies with the Kalkadoon people from the Mt Isa area, and she is a fantastic role model for her people and all Queenslanders.

The FOGS are once again very thankful for Chern'ee's continued support and generosity.

JHARAL SHOWS ARTIE STUDENTS HOW TO GO FOR GOLD

THERE ARE few people as well placed about the challenges of overcoming hurdles than Jharal Yow Yeh, so he was the perfect choice to talk to two high-performing Gladstone schools that are kicking goals within the ARTIE Academy.

This year, the ARTIE Academy introduced a new system of attendance and academic goal challenges, based on gold, silver and bronze.

For Semester 1, students awarded a bronze level will have maintained a minimum C grading for effort and behaviour in Maths and English.

Students at the silver level will have maintained a minimum C grading for effort and behaviour in Maths and English, while also achieving an 85 per cent record for physical attendance.

The students rated at gold level will have maintained a minimum B grading for effort and behaviour in Maths and English, while keeping a 90 per cent physical attendance record.

Students who achieve a gold, silver or bronze level are entitled to awesome rewards.

The two ARTIE schools in the Gladstone region have been standouts in the program, with over 80 per cent of indigenous students at both schools earning bronze, silver or gold.

Both schools have improved their attendance



data and are working hard to close the attendance gap at their schools.

This is a fantastic achievement and the students, teachers, parents and wider community should be extremely proud.

To congratulate them on their achievements, Yow Yeh – the former Broncos, Origin and Test winger – visited the schools delivering a message to maintain their hard work and support each other through the program.

Jharal encouraged students to overcome obstacles and barriers that are currently stopping them from coming to school and working hard in Maths and English.

He was able to draw on his own personal experiences in battling to overcome his horrific leg injury to encourage the students to never give up.

Jharal was rightly lauded for his courage earlier this year for the way he fought back from his broken leg to restart his rugby league career with Brisbane Norths and in a pre-season trial with the Broncos, and he said students should be able to similarly work their way through setbacks and obstacles to reach their goals.



JT HELPING ARTIE STUDENTS STAY AHEAD OF THE PACK

NOW THERE is even more reason for ARTIE student to use their heads!

Queensland five-eighth and Cowboys captain Johnathan Thurston is behind an incredible reward for ARTIE students who achieve a "gold" level by maintaining a B grading for effort in Maths and English plus 90% physical attendance.

Successful students will receive a specially designed ARTIE headgear, personally signed by JT.

This is a truly special item that is exclusive to the ARTIE Academy, and will only be distributed to gold ARTIE students.

Thurston himself will wear his version of the headgear in the NRL – during the Closing the Gap round when the Cowboys play Penrith in Sydney in Round 23.

Not only that, but four lucky gold ARTIE students will be selected to attend the match against the Panthers in Sydney, travelling with a parent or guardian, and will get an exclusive meeting with JT himself on the day of the game.

It is an incredible reward for gold ARTIE students, and reason enough to keep their heads down and work hard at school!

SIX STRAIGHT IN CAIRNS

KICKS OF ANOTHER BIG YEAR FOR EXPOS

Another year, and the start of another successful series.

WHILE THE Maroons will be going all out to achieve a ninth consecutive State of Origin series win this year, the Former Origin Greats have just started the 2014 series of the incredibly successful FOGS Indigenous Employment and Careers Expos.

And the FOGS kicked off this year's series with a winning streak of their own, getting underway in March with the sixth consecutive Expo for the Cairns district.

The first event for the year began with the FOGS "Closing the Gap" forum that provides essential information for local employers, education and training providers about closing the unemployment gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

More than 100 guests were in attendance for the forum, which helps local community stakeholders to connect with those looking to help improve employment outcomes for local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

Deputy State Manager of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Helena Wright, was on hand to deliver important information regarding Indigenous Employment, specifically changes within the Australian Government that may affect stakeholders.

Generation One, an organisation striving to end the disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians in one generation through employment, assisted in the forum's proceedings.

FOGS returned two weeks later to hold the FOGS Corporate Networking event, which saw over 120 guests in attendance.

The FOGS used the event to thank the Australian Government for its on-going support of the organisation and series of events, as well as the event's principal sponsor for the sixth consecutive year, Construction Skills Queensland, and event partner Queensland Fire and Emergency Services.

Celebrating the Expo's sixth straight year in the community, the FOGS also thanked all of the key stakeholders, including Indigenous community members and exhibitors, for their contribution and ongoing support.

The busy Cairns program concluded with the Expo itself that, six years on, continues to be an incredible success story in the region.



Around 3400 job-seekers came through the door to peruse 55 exhibits from prominent Queensland employment, education and training providers including Woolworths, Accor, Sea Swift, Uniting Care Community, Cairns Regional Council and James Cook University.

FOGS Allan Langer, Gene Miles, Colin Scott, Sam Backo, Gary Belcher,

Kerrod Walters, Michael Hancock, Wendell Sailor, Petero Civoniceva, Steve Price, Scott Prince and Justin Hodges were joined by Bronco Ben Barba to help attendees navigate their way through a huge range of try'a'trades/skills for a hands-on go at careers like surveying, floor-laying, landscaping, plumbing, carpentry, beauty, hairdressing and wet tropic management.

CSQ KEEPS TEAM SPIRIT ALIVE

Construction Skills Queensland back again as principal sponsor of the FOGS Indigenous Employment and Careers Expos.

QUEENSLAND'S BEST performances on the State of Origin field of battle are always delivered when the entire team is working together towards the one goal.

Off the field and in all walks of life, the recipe for success is no different. Being able to work with teammates you can rely on makes it so much easier to attain the goals that may have remained out of reach working alone.

That is why the Former Origin Greats are proud to have Construction Skills Queensland on their side once again as the principal sponsor of the FOGS Indigenous Employment and Careers Expos.

CSQ's sponsorship ensures the continued growth of the Expos, now held annually in Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Mount Isa.

Construction Skills Queensland CEO Brett Schimming said his organisation was proud to be returning as the principle sponsor of the important initiative.

"We are very pleased to have the opportunity to work alongside the Former Origin Greats on such a worthwhile initiative," Mr Schimming said.

"The FOGS are to be commended for their ongoing commitment to helping people in Indigenous communities gain employment.

"The expos provide the ideal platform for CSQ representatives to speak directly



with career seekers about our programs that can help them find a pathway into the construction industry."

Mr Schimming said the teamwork between the two organizations had seen the Expos blossom from its early days into a genuine driver of opportunity and social change within indigenous communities across the state

"The FOGS greatly appreciate the support Construction Skills Queensland

has provided the FOGS Indigenous Employment and Careers Expos since the partnership commenced back in 2009," said Executive Chairman, Gene Miles.

"At that time it was an unknown venture we undertook together however through collaborative work and a strong vision, a longstanding partnership has materialised" he said.

Construction Skills Queensland is an independent industry-funded body supporting employers, workers, apprentices and career seekers in the building and construction industry.

The organisation provides the construction industry with strategic insights and data to help plan workforce needs well into the future.

Mr Miles said working together with CSQ to create a better life for Queenslanders had been the driving force behind the success of the Expos.

"There is a lot of hard work that goes into making the Expos the terrific success they have been, and to have CSQ alongside us every step of the way as the principal sponsor has made that hard road much easier," Gene said.

"The FOGS are tremendously proud to be involved with CSQ, and to work alongside them as a team in making the Expos happen every year.

"We hope it is a partnership that will continue long into the future."

NEW MOTIVATIONAL WORKSHOP KEEPS HOPEFULS ON RIGHT TRACK

THE FAMOUS Queensland spirit is defined by characteristics like never giving up, and finding the strength of character to keep working towards your goal no matter what hurdles come your way.

This motivation has driven plenty of our state's greatest rugby league players, and now the same principles are being used to help motivate indigenous students and job-seekers.

After the success of last year's "movie workshop", which received overwhelming accolades from both teachers and students, the FOGS were looking to build upon that success in 2014.

From that, the Motivational Workshop was born.



Hosted by Michael Hancock, the 25-minute presentation helps groups of attendees at the FOGS Indigenous Employment and Careers Expos find the right attitude and tools required for success.

At the heart of the presentation is a DVD that

features indigenous men and women currently engaged in roles across a number of different industries such as construction, retail, education, health, and the armed forces.

Each individual shares their personal story of success and the individual journey they have experienced to help motivate attendees for their own journeys to a satisfying career.

The DVD presentation made its debut at the year's first Expo in Cairns, and received a great response from attendees.

FOGS believe that the presentation delivers the critical message that regardless of your background of personal struggles, achieving your goals ultimately comes back to having the right attitude and never giving up.

By exposing future employees to these real life success stories, attendees will be provided with not only motivation but also industry role models who prove the road to success is not always a straightforward process, and each individual's journey is different.



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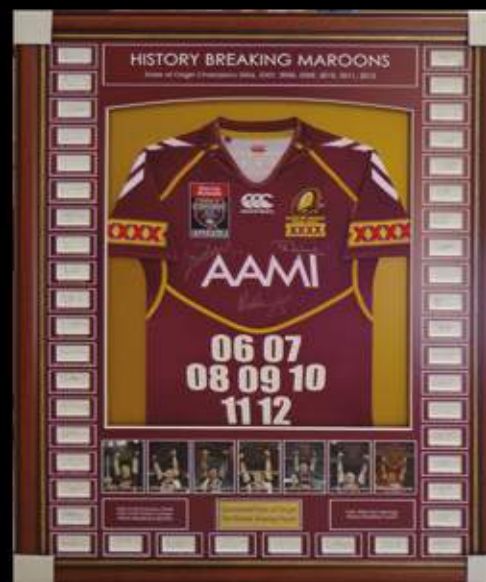
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FORMER ORIGIN GREATS

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SPIRIT *of* QLD

LARSON'S BIGGEST BATTLE

GARY LARSON

FOG No: 70

Clubs: North Sydney,
Parramatta

Queensland:
24 Origins (1991-1998)

Australia:
4 Tests (1995-1997)

FOR DECADES, Billy Moore's unforgettable rendition of the famous "Queenslander" chant personified the Maroons' love for State of Origin.

Moore's passionate war-cry was used to inspire his teammates on their way down the tunnel in that unforgettable 1995 series.

But now it is the source of inspiration for a greater deed - helping fellow FOGS legend Gary Larson through his battle with prostate cancer.

Last November, Larson, the snowy-haired workhorse who played 24 consecutive Origin matches between 1991-98, was rocked by the diagnosis he never saw coming.

If you watched Larson terrorise NSW opponents in his pomp, the Maroons' muscular tackling machine, you would appreciate he's hardly a typical candidate for the illness.

Prostate cancer can be hereditary, but Larson knows of no other victims in his family. The average age at the time of diagnosis is 70. Larson turned 47 in January.

Men with high-blood pressure are more susceptible, but Larson doesn't smoke and, at 91kg, still looks fit enough to pack into the Maroons' back row.

So when doctors mouthed the dreaded "C" word, Larson was shaken to his core. His life flashed before his eyes.

In his darkest hours, he found solace not only in the medical fraternity, but the FOGS family.

He says he was inundated with calls from former teammates. Not surprisingly, Moore was one of the first to call, promising Larson's fight would be FOGS' collective fight.

Today, Larson has won the battle. Blood tests show he is free of cancer.

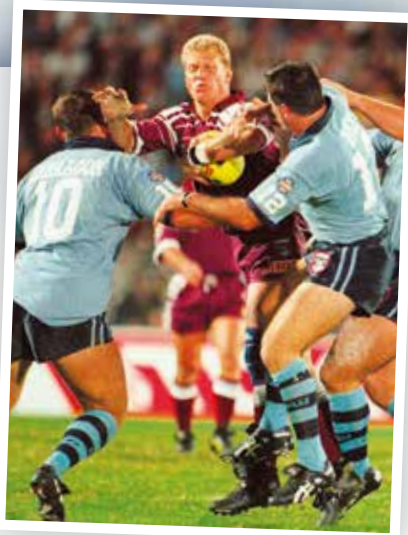
Go you good Queenslander.

"I'm so thankful to the footy family who were there for me and the great surgical team, including Dr Peter Heathcote, who was just magnificent the whole way through," Larson said.

"Going through this made me appreciate just what rugby league gives you and how a fraternity like FOGS can band together to help in a time of need.

"Ron Coote (Souths and Easts) from the Men of League was just an inspiration, but I also had so many calls of support from Queensland mates and identities. People like Steve Walters, Darryl van de Velde, Steve Calder, Tony Hearn and Billy Moore ... they were all there.

"I remember talking to Billy about



my ordeal and he said, 'Gary, just hang in there mate, we'll be there for you every step of the way'.

"That's the type of brotherhood that sums up rugby league and the bond that underpins the FOGS organisation."

As Larson points out, cancer does not discriminate, and it has targeted other members of the Queensland Origin family.

In 2009, Michael Hagan, currently the Maroons' assistant coach, was found to have prostate cancer, and 12 months later, former Queensland forward Darryl Brohman received an identical diagnosis.

Thankfully, both survived. Having successfully undergone surgery to remove his prostate, Larson has also lived to tell his story, but he is speaking out to alert men to an often secret cancer that can be lurking within.

"It came out of the blue," Larson said from his home in Gladstone in Central Queensland.

"To hear the words from the doctor ... prostate cancer ... I went numb.

"Whatever the doc said, all of a sudden went in one ear and out the other because you don't comprehend what will happen.

"I had no symptoms whatsoever. Some people take prostate cancer to the grave without knowing, for others, they can be dead within months.

"I didn't see any signs. Generally, you experience pain or see blood when urinating, but I felt fine. There's no history of it in my family, and I've never had a single issue with bodily functions.

"I've also led a fit and healthy lifestyle, but three years ago I decided to get tested as part of routine check-up."

Soon, alarm bells rang. His latest Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) reading - the test which helps determine whether the prostate has cancerous activity - spiked

significantly. His PSA went from 1.6 to 2.3. According to Larson's doctor, given his age, there was no question he had prostate cancer.

"We had a biopsy and it showed up a few worrying patterns on the prostate. The doc said let's do something before something really serious happens," recalls Larson, who has a 19-year-old daughter Poppy and a 17-year-old son Jack.

"I feared the worst.

"Thankfully, it wasn't aggressive, we got it in the early stages.

"I could have lived six weeks or six months, who knows? You don't know with cancer how quickly it sets in. The other organs around your prostate are your bowel, your colon, your testicles and if it had seeped into those, I would have been in real trouble.

"I don't think a lot of men realise what function the prostate performs until they get it. I didn't realise just how important it was. It controls a lot of things.

"Without my prostate, I've had to learn by using my pelvic floor muscles how to urinate again.

"The other problem is erectile dysfunction. I'm going OK in that department, I have about 40 per cent back, but when the prostate comes out, you lose a lot of nerves around the region.

"For a while, I felt like I'd lost my manhood and some people struggle with that concept. Some men suffer depression.

"I spoke to Hages and he said just follow the instincts you had in football and I had no hesitation getting it out.

"My wife is doing OK. We had a few arguments about which direction to go, but she was supportive of the direction I wanted to take.

"After the surgery, the pathology tests came back and I was in the clear.

"There were no signs of any cancer cells around the prostate, so it's a huge relief."

By speaking out, Larson hopes he can raise awareness ... and save a life.

"As men, we like to think we are macho and unbreakable, but we aren't 10 feet tall and bulletproof," he says.

"We don't take care of our health enough.

"I hope I can be a lesson for all men to have their prostate checked, because when we do get signs of something, it is usually too late.

"It was a huge scare but I'm back at work and feeling on top of the world.

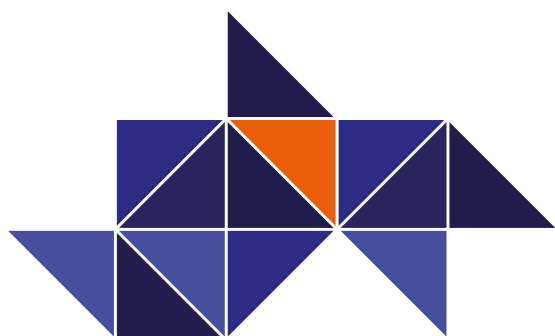
"I say every day, 'I'm here. I'm alive ... I'm on top of the ground'."

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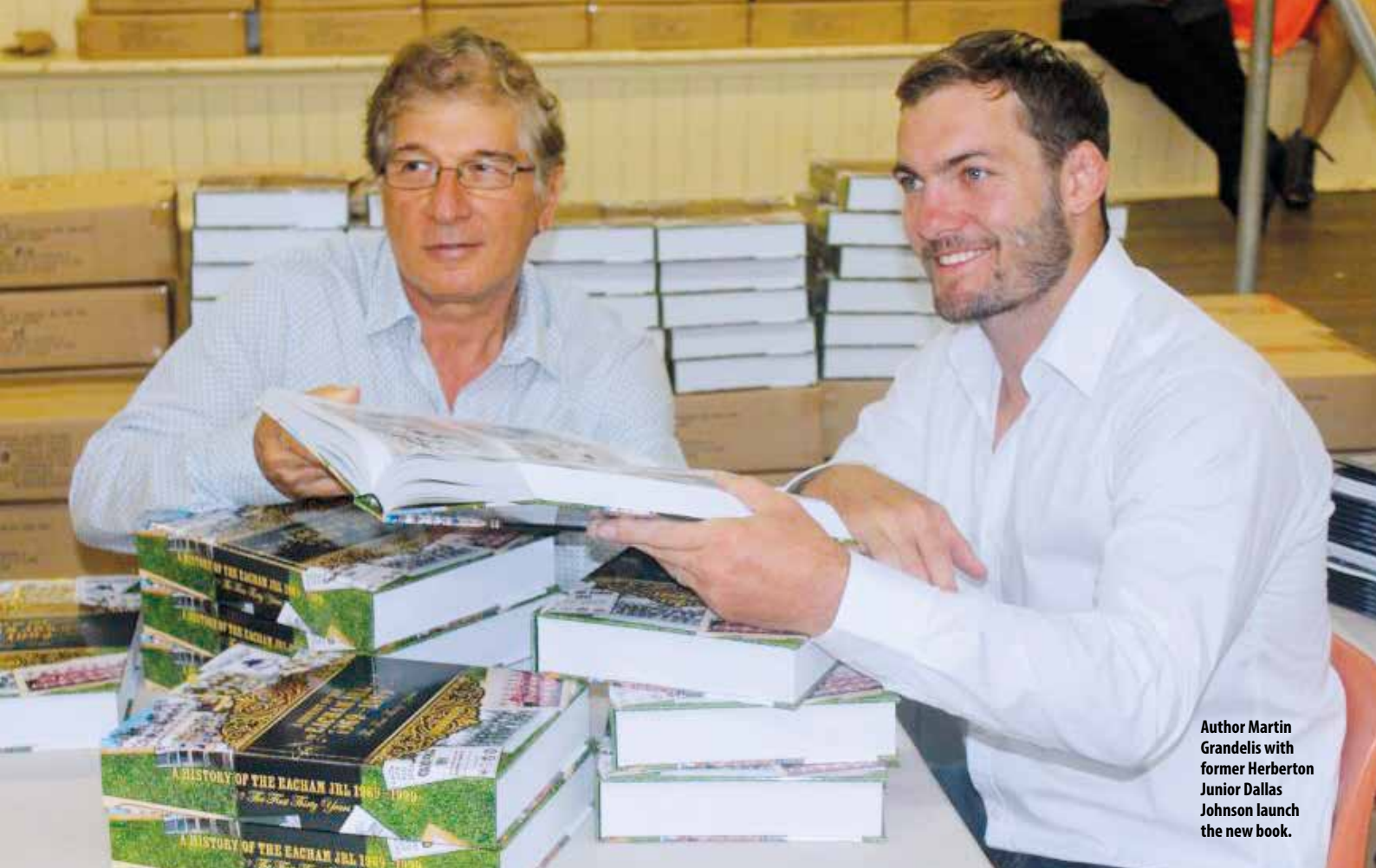
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Author Martin Grandelis with former Herberton Junior Dallas Johnson launch the new book.

EACHAM'S JUNIOR HISTORY IMMORTALISED IN PRINT

A NEW book about junior rugby league in the north gives an insight into the daily battles facing grassroots footy, and the clubs that have generated generations of the game's biggest stars.

A History of the Eacham Junior Rugby League 1969-1999 The First Thirty Years was launched in Atherton in December by author Martin Grandelis, a former President of the Eacham JRL.

The book was compiled on the back of decades of records, newspaper articles and interviews with over 500 past officials, players and supporters, covering the highs and lows the game has experienced in the district during those three decades.

The Eacham JRL district in far north Queensland was originally comprised of the Atherton, Malanda, Millaa Millaa, Mareeba East, Mareeba West and Mossman JRL clubs, and was formed in 1969.

It was one of the last districts in NQ to set up a separate administration for junior rugby league and "break away from the seniors."

By the mid-80s, Ravenshoe and Herberton had joined the Eacham JRL,

while some of the older clubs faded away.

The book includes a section on Eacham players who have played in NQ and Queensland representative teams, and includes photographs of many NQ junior rugby league teams from the last 30 years of the 20th century.

One of those players was former Storm and Cowboys lock Dallas Johnson, who was the first Eacham junior to play

State of Origin for Queensland.

Johnson, who played his junior footy with the Herberton Magpies, helped Grandelis launch the book in Atherton.

In a passionate address, Johnson spoke of the many hours that volunteers, parents, team officials and supporters gave to make junior rugby league what it is today.

"Like any youngster I never thought much about the issues that are necessary for junior rugby league to take place week after week," he said.

"If it wasn't for these special people, I'm not sure if the competition would still be going to this day."

While the book focuses on the history of the Eacham JRL, it also gives a grassroots insight into the changing values and attitudes in the administration of junior rugby league in Queensland.

The book, which is over 600 pages in length and includes 825 photographs, is available at bookstores across the Atherton Tablelands.

Those outside the Atherton Tablelands can email martin.grandelis@gmail.com to purchase the book and have it sent by post.



TACKLE ONE

TREVOR GILLMEISTER
TAKES A HEAD
ON LOOK AT
THE BIG ISSUES
IN THE NRL



THIS YEAR we will be going for a bit of a change of pace with my column for *Queenslander Magazine*.

For the past few years, we have been looking at way to help get guys back into a bit of shape.

But after all this time – and I am looking at you here, Mark Coyne – if you're not fit now, you're probably never going to be.

So from now on, this little spot up the back of the magazine will be dedicated to talking about the big issues in rugby league, and my take on them.

First cab off the rank is one that is very close to my heart – tackling.

More specifically, I'm talking about lifting tackles and the uproar that erupted after the terrible injury suffered by Newcastle's Alex McKinnon.

Let's get something out of the way first – like everyone in rugby league, I was shocked and saddened by what happened to young Alex, and I wish nothing but the best for him and his family as he works down a very hard road towards recovery.

But I think the shocking injury that Alex suffered did generate a bit of hysteria in certain sections of the game about lifting tackles, and talk about banning it from the game.

For a start, not all lifting tackles are the same.

On some occasions you have tacklers putting hands between the legs and lifting upwards.

To my mind, that is not on, and in most instances that will draw a penalty or suspension anyway.

But when you have an 85kg hooker trying to roll a 120kg prop onto his back in a tackle, he is going to lift the attacker's leg off the ground to slow that play the ball down.

In those instances, most of the time where things go wrong is not from the



Pictures: News Queensland

bloke around the legs lifting, but from additional defenders hanging off the attacking player's shoulders, driving in the other direction.

The end result is that the bloke around the legs no longer has control of the tackle, the bloke carrying the ball is swung like a pendulum, and you end up with a dangerous tackle.

When I was at the Broncos, I used to say to guys that I had played with for a while: "If I get in under a bloke, just leave me. Don't try to give me a hand, just take the support runners".

By doing that, I knew that I would keep control of the tackle, and there was less chance of things going wrong.

It is hard enough maintaining that control when you're trying to bring down a big rooster, but it becomes impossible when you have a couple of mates trying to help and adding another couple of hundred kilos to the equation.

What happened to Alex was a genuine tragedy, but also a terrible accident.

When you put it into the context of the thousands of tackles that are made every weekend in the NRL over so many seasons, you can appreciate what a freak set of circumstances it was.

Introducing laws to ban lifting in tackles involving more than one defender just don't seem feasible to me.

When you have players running at full speed, there is just no time to make those decisions.

Back in the old days, you had one bloke in low and one up high and you would knock them over.

But the game is so fast these days, there just is not enough time to set the defensive line like there used to be.

I am all for the rule changes that have rubbed out the third man in around the knees tackles, and got rid of a lot of the wrestling.

We're all pretty quick to put the boot into the league bosses when they're not getting things right, so it's only fair we give them a wrap over this.

I think they've got it right.

In general the footy has been better, and more enjoyable to watch because it is not getting bogged down in the wrestling stuff like it was for a few years.

They need to find the happy medium so it doesn't become too quick, but I think the new laws have been a success..

But trying to make a blanket ban for lifting tackles just won't work.

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