# 2020 Presidents Report

Highfields and Districts Netball Association (HDNA) is all about culture. The reason it continues to grow and increase its operations year in year out comes down to a pervasive underlying belief. What is that underlying belief? A simple premise, family. The idea that together in all our endeavours we are a netball family. Whilst I will never suggest that we do not have our differences and at times it may become animated, we all work towards a common goal and believe in a simple principle, give more than you receive as a parent, as a player and as a community.

2020 was and will be remembered as unique. It started with bushfires and drought, then along came COVID. A word that I hope will be confined to the pages of history books as soon as possible. COVID presented the board and our community a nightmare scenario that no one had all the answers to. From a netball perspective, early this year the season lay in tatters. For all intents and purposes, activities were cancelled and at the time there was little hope of any continuation. The board worked feverishly behind the scenes, designing multiple contingency plans and examining financial forecasts to ensure the club maintained the operational capacity to reopen as soon as circumstance allowed. At the heart of all this however, it was the plight of our players and their families that weighed heavily upon our thoughts. Job losses and the mental health of all the families who had become isolated dominated the conversation, which then instigated programs of reaching out and maintaining contact. Thankfully some but not all of the COVID regulations were lifted, allowing us to return to the courts but still with the memories of a once in a life time event.

Strategically the club continues to grow on all fronts though with this growth we face a number of key issues. The first is volunteers. To operate effectively and maintain the hard fought reputation HDNA has, the association needs to recruit more coaches, managers, umpires and volunteers. People come to HDNA with a certain expectation of service and standard. At this time a number of individuals bear the brunt of this, long term it is not sustainable or fair. The second need is a program to upskill the existing volunteers in their chosen fields. We must help our volunteers to reach their full potential and allow them to grow within our organisation and within the greater netball community. This growth naturally leads on to my final point, succession planning. The new coaches/umpires of today are our potential representative coaches and umpires of tomorrow, the replacements for those who naturally move away with time. Without a steady flow of volunteers and planning we place the organisation at a real risk of catastrophic failure in the future.

On the court despite all that fate threw at us we had an exceptional year. Fielding nineteen teams in the TNA Saturday competition, Wednesday Night, QPL and of course State Age and Interdistrict. The association and club took out multiple premierships this year and showed Queensland that a small association was comfortable being in the top flight division, showing we belonged there. The social Monday Night netball continues to shine the light on the fact netball is accessible to all people, no matter age and circumstances, which deserves much credit. This year we also trialled Monday night HDNA Summer Series in an effort to extend the season and offer greater value to those who wanted to continue netball after the abridged season of 2020. For me personally, my on court highlight lies with a team that did not make grand finals and the game itself was a loss. A young GS shot her first goal ever in a club match. Before the shot both mum and dad crouched as she did and went through the motions. As she shot and the ball went through the net they screamed with excitement. The father turned to me and said we have practiced it all year and we knew she could do it. To me that sums us up. HDNA is a small association and there are so many reasons why things should not work, but they do. We keep trying and never give up- that’s our secret.

HDNA goes into the 2021 season in a strong financial position with a strong cash reserve, giving the incoming board the ability to implement programs and measures as they see fit. A solid core of the board will continue on into the committee if elected, supplying operational continuity in Representative, Saturday Club, Finance and Administration. This operational continuity should not be understated. As a number of members head into their second year, the experience of the first twelve months in office should see greater efficiency and confidence in the discharging of their duties for the organisation. At the time of writing the HDNA summer Series is only two rounds in. This competition should act as a litmus test to see if we as an association are capable of further growth and one day hosting our own competition. Whilst I understand this to be contentious, in nature the growth of the northern corridor that is Highfields will continue. Without a presence, netball as a code can expect to lose further potential participants to sports that now host regular fixtures in our Highfields community.

I would like to thank our sponsors JEFO and BMC, both have been long term supporters of the Association and believers in young women’s and children’s sport. Without their investment so many of the things we have achieved would not have been possible. To my board my eternal thanks. During COVID I ask them to lead by example, investing multiple nights a week so our doors could open. We maintained the strict requirements of the COVID safety regime because each individual made a sacrifice, spending long hours away from their families so our community could retake the court. We do loose a few faces this year, so I would like to thank each of you for your service and dedication. Though one departure that I know I will feel and HDNA will as well, is the loss of Rosie Bradshaw. Rosie has been our Umpire Coordinator, always a cool head, wonderful planner and the ability to fix things on the fly. Not to mention of course a generous sponsor alongside Wayne. Their association with HDNA goes back many years, so in parting the loss is felt all the more. To Rosie and Wayne, thank you, the Bradshaw Umpiring award does not begin to touch on your services to our community. Know that your diligence and the memory of your service will remain with us and our community.

The future for HDNA is bright if it can maintain the culture that brought us to this point, be fearless in new endeavours, give back more than you receive and remember we are a netball family. To our players, umpires, families and officials, you have nothing but my deepest respect. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you for an unforgettable year. I wish the incoming board every success for shaping the association in the coming years and can’t wait to see what the future holds for HDNA.