

A History of the North Queensland Sports Foundation



***By Cathy Nilbett
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About the Author

Cathy Nilbett arrived in North Queensland in 2004 from Yackandandah, Victoria. She completed a Business Administration Traineeship with the North Queensland Sports Foundation from May 2004 to January 2005. Cathy left her mark in many ways; including the compilation of this historical review of the North Queensland Sports Foundation since 1983. Cathy has moved on to study journalism full time at the RMIT and this is a testimony of the time Cathy spent with the North Queensland Sports Foundation.

The North Queensland Sports Foundation would sincerely like to thank Cathy for her efforts. The members of the North Queensland Sports Foundation wish her well in the future and hope that this is the first of many published articles by Cathy.



~Acknowledgement~

There are many people that deserve my recognition for their assistance in compiling this history. The process of sorting through and arranging information was at times quite trying and lengthy, with the task made much easier by the memories and insights provided by numerous people.

Firstly, I would like to thank Bob McCullough, who provided me with such detailed information regarding the development of sport in North Queensland and the early days of the North Queensland Sports Foundation. Ken McElligott was also of great assistance regarding the early years, as he informed me of the activities leading to the Foundation's inception and the first Games.

Thanks also to longtime Chair Ross Contarino, present Chair Cr Margaret Cochrane, Mount Isa Mayor Ron McCullough, Jim Nichols, former Townsville member Noel Wilson and finally to Sally Lambert and Stuart Gibson, the Foundation staff who were constant sources of knowledge, support and encouragement.

Cathy Nilbett

The Mission Statement of the North Queensland Sports Foundation

**"To Encourage, Promote, Represent, Develop, Manage,
Communicate sport throughout North Queensland"**

Within this Mission Statement the North Queensland Sports Foundation aims to:

- Organise and conduct on a biennial basis a North Queensland Games.
- Maximise sporting participation and promote good sportsmanship among competitors.
- Promote co-operation between all sporting organisations and persons involved in sporting organisations.

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~Foreword~

It is unlikely that the original steering group, which first met on 11 August 1983, would have imagined that the North Queensland Games Foundation had a future spanning over twenty years and looking into the next twenty years.

Similarly, the idea of compiling a history of the “Foundation” has been mooted for several years and has finally come to fruition. Understandably, I am delighted that Cathy Nilbett who was a trainee with the North Queensland Sports Foundation until early in 2005, took on the task. Cathy painstakingly read the various and numerous historical documents that had been collected. She also conducted interviews with many people connected with the Foundation over the last twenty years. She has produced an excellent account of the activities of the North Queensland Sports Foundation.

I would like to sincerely thank Cathy and Sally Lambert who has put the finishing touches to the booklet in helping to source the pictorial history of the North Queensland Sports Foundation.

The North Queensland Sports Foundation has achieved a great deal in the last twenty two years, and it is certainly hoped that a similar historical account will be produced somewhere around 2027!

Yours in Sport

Cr Margaret Cochrane
Chair
North Queensland Sports Foundation



~Introduction~

*Bob McCullough - Inaugural Chair and Life Member of the
North Queensland Sports Foundation*

Sport has always been synonymous with the North Queensland lifestyle, and over the years the region has produced many high performance athletes. This in itself has been a significant achievement, as while participation in sport has not been a problem, the disadvantages in gaining experience and regular competition at the higher level has been most difficult. Costs certainly play a big part in this disadvantage, along with the time factor in getting to and from competition in South East Queensland and other States. This was particularly so when travel was difficult because of poor road conditions and the high costs of air travel.

While this situation was blatantly apparent for many years through to the late nineteen seventies, the development of sport was happening in virtually every city, town and village throughout the region and participation was high with the resultant evolution of high performance talent in many sports including rugby league, netball, basketball, soccer, swimming, yachting, field hockey and track and field athletics. Of course the traditional country sports of rodeo, camp draft, equestrian and wood chopping was of a high standard.

Anyone living in North Queensland in the early nineteen seventies experienced the awakening of the region in realising that they lived in one of the most liveable places in Australia. Development included many industries being established in the region, accompanied by a great sense of pride in being North Queensland. Tourism started to boom and there was great competition between both Townsville and Cairns to be the tourism centre with an international airport. Tourist operators also realised the value of the Great Barrier Reef as a Wonder of the world and the desire and enthusiasm of overseas visitors to see such facilities along with the region's tropical forests and unique outback, including Mount Isa.

Local Authorities started to arise and many great developments took place including shopping malls, road making, the Casino in Townsville and tourist facilities throughout the region.

James Cook University was developing fast in a number of areas and the establishment of both the Australian Institute of Marine Science and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority further enhanced the overall standing of the region.

North Queensland also had a number of outstanding politicians including Margaret Reynolds, Mike Reynolds, Geoff Smith, Ian McDonald, Tony Mooney, Tony McGrady, Ron McCullough, Ken McElligott, Dan Gleeson, Robert Rossi, Matt O'Neill, Noel Wilson and Cliff Anderson, all of whom were extremely conscious of the potential of the North

Queensland Region. Many of these people carried strong influence at the Federal, State and Local Authority level.

In sport the region was bursting at the seams for greater participation and recognition, and both the Primary and Secondary Schools went through a strong period of development, to the point that North Queensland athletes were strong rivals to the rest of Queensland and at the national level. Much credit must go to the dedication of the schools in bringing sport to the fore in the early seventies. Of course the strong base of school sports drove many of the sports organisations to provide better competition facilities and competitions. In track and field athletics every North Queensland town or district had a significant club, Copper City at Mount Isa, Slade Point at Mackay, Pioneer River at Ingham, Sarina and a raft of clubs in Townsville including Townsville, Ross River, PYC and North Star. In total these clubs catered for close to 1000 athletes who competed fervently at Queensland country, North Queensland and State championships.

Great changes in sports structure and organisation started to occur from around nineteen eighty, with Australia joining in the ban of the Moscow Olympic Games and the then Australian Government under Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, initiating the Australian Institute of Sport and a number of other incentives to bring Australia to the fore in Olympic Sports.

The 1982 Commonwealth Games in Brisbane were in fact a great 'kick start' to the overall awakening of Queensland and its potential as a State. The preparation for the games brought both national and international focus to the State and North Queensland was certainly part of the focus. In the lead up years there was much anticipation and excitement and sport received a significant boost. Sports facilities such as the all weather track at the Townsville Sports Reserve, Indoor Basketball facilities, Hockey fields and Netball courts multiplied many times in major centres throughout North Queensland.

Until this time virtually all sports in Australia were run on a volunteer basis including administration, development and coaching. In fact paid coaches and development officers were unheard of. The progress in the technology of sport and its administration went ahead in leaps and bounds to its present state of Australia being a leader in all aspects of sports development. These initiatives flowed on to North Queensland and many athletes have benefited.

The history of the first twenty two years of the Foundation is indeed significant as it clearly indicates a strong and growing interest throughout North Queensland in sport and sports participation. It also shows that the Foundation is modern in its thinking and its initiatives in promoting

Sports Awards and sports development in remote localities are a credit to the organisation.

Keeping abreast with community needs and challenges is an area which requires constant attention and monitoring and it is indeed pleasing to observe that the Foundation is constantly addressing such needs and challenges.

It would certainly be remiss of me if I did not express my delight in the success of the Foundation over the past twenty two years. I am very proud to have been given the opportunity to serve North Queensland and to be a contributor to the success of the Foundation.

Finally I would like to pay tribute to Dale Seaniger, the Executive Director, who served the Foundation, and me as Chair, so well in its formative years. I have great memories of the dedicated hard working Dale and his wonderful attribute of making things happen. He is a great larrikin and he lives in the memories of many, many North Queenslanders. Well done Dale.

~The Beginning~

The North Queensland Sports Foundation is an organisation unique in its determination to develop and promote sport at a grass roots level throughout the large and diverse area that is North Queensland. In the early 1980s, after witnessing the North Queensland International Games, held in front of a full capacity crowd at the Townsville Sports Reserve, the first time track and field athletes had ever been attracted to North Queensland, the passion for sport held by North Queenslanders was duly apparent. This event was a significant forerunner to the Brisbane Commonwealth Games, with public acceptance of the event and the enthusiasm of athletes, leaving room for little doubt that North Queensland was on the verge of great development in the sporting field.

The idea to develop an organisation that would endeavour to achieve the growth and development of sport in North Queensland eventuated from a public meeting convened by Cr Ken McElligott in 1983. The advent of the highly successful Commonwealth Games in Brisbane and its television and media coverage wetted the appetite of North Queenslanders even more and virtually every sport wanted greater participation and visibility of sport in the community. Many minds were buzzing with prospects of the future and from this Ken McElligott, the then deputy Mayor of Townsville, commenced lobbying the idea of a North Queensland Games to allow the athletes of North Queensland the opportunity to compete in a sports carnival in North Queensland.

Ken's initial objective for the establishment of the Foundation and the Games was to allow the athletes of North Queensland the opportunity to compete at a high level in their local area. He sought a multi sport competition of reasonable standard to be held in North Queensland, believing that local athletes were disadvantaged and discouraged by the great distances involved in attending competitive competitions in the metropolitan area.

The original idea for the North Queensland Sports Foundation came from the actions of another Townsville councillor, Sheila Keeffe, who formed a North Queensland Theatre company which derived its base funding through North Queensland Local Authority contributions. Ken believed this to be a novel way to construct an organisation and a means of ensuring continual support and funding. If a theatre company could exist under such a format, why not a sporting body? The support of Local Authorities from throughout the North would give consistency and status to the Foundation.

This idea had been with Ken for some time before the Foundation came into existence. Ken originally arranged to hold a two day North Queensland Conference which would discuss sport and attempt to

identify the disadvantages and opportunities that existed for North Queensland's sporting community, however a poor response to invitations did not warrant proceeding with the meeting.

Ken attempted to bring together a number of forums to advance the concept but complacency and the strength of rivalry between the major centres of North Queensland tended to negate any initiative no matter where they came from within the Local Authorities.

Despite the lack of interest shown in the conference, Ken's drive to establish the Foundation and belief that it would be of benefit to North Queenslanders, denied him the ability to lay his idea to rest. A successful public meeting was convened on 16 February 1983. The meeting, of fifty-two people, was almost entirely attended by sporting people from Townsville.

As reward for his venture, a Steering Committee was formed at this meeting. This committee consisted of Bob McCullough as the Foundation's first chairman and Ken as Deputy Chair. Vying for a position in State Parliament, (he would be elected in October 1983), the already present demands on his time caused Ken to seek another person to fill the position of Chairman. Bob McCullough was suggested to Ken by George Lovett, an athletics devotee and member of the original committee. At the time McCullough was Chief Administrator of the Australian Institute of Marine Science and President of the Ross River Amateur Athletics Club, with his initiatives including the introduction of Little Athletics in North Queensland and the founding of the famous North Queensland Schoolboys and Schoolgirls Track and Field Championships. Needless to say, Bob embraced the opportunity to be the North Queensland Sports Foundation's first chair.

Graham Bird was elected as the first Treasurer, and Lorell Edwards as Secretary. Ray Ringuet, John Rivett, George Lovett, Bill Martin, Liam Hanna, Mel Pengilley, John Lockhart and d'Arcy Clayton completed the committee.

From the election of the Steering Committee, progress was rapid as McCullough was of the view that to succeed it was essential to set a target date for the inaugural Games and to work forward from there he emphasised that by acting quickly public opinion would be positive. Set a date too far ahead, Bob strongly believed, and the concept would die. Easter 1984 was set as the date for the inaugural Games, with the first Games to be held in Townsville.

The Steering Committee produced a "Plan & Program" within a month of its forming, with the key aspects being that sporting organisations and the community would be the drivers of the Games, community volunteers would be essential for the many facets of the Games and Foundation organisations, an Executive Director would be employed to manage the

Games and approaches would be made to both Federal and State Governments for financial and other support.

The Steering Committee was also particularly conscience of the need to unite North Queensland and was firmly of the view that the Foundation and the Games should be seen as a shared responsibility and not belonging to any city but rather to the people of North Queensland.

And so the North Queensland Games Foundation, it was not until 1998 that it became known as the North Queensland Sports Foundation, came into existence. The Foundation is recorded as having been formally incorporated as a limited liability company on 18 May 1983.

Graham McCullough, the Foundation's first Executive Director, was appointed on 1 August 1983 and the first board meeting was held on the 12 August. The first income of the Foundation to meet the salary payments of Graham McCullough was obtained from Ray Ringuet. The amount was \$1,000 which was a considerable amount of money in 1983 and it was given freely by Ray.

The draft constitution for the Foundation was prepared by John Rivett. Before long however, Dale Seaniger had replaced Graham as Executive Director. The first task for those involved with the Foundation was to outline the organisation's goals. It was decided that in accordance with the original concept for its inception, the Foundation was to achieve sporting development and promotion at a basic level through North Queensland. The first event to encourage this was the Games. The Foundation began preparing for the inaugural North Queensland Games, to be held over Easter 1984 in Townsville. An ambitious project to say the least.

As a means of giving the Foundation a sense of identity and recognition, committee member Liam Hanna arranged the design of a logo for the Foundation, which remains an enduring symbol of the Foundation. It was designed by Gordon Esam of Maidens Cirak Advertising and is a configuration of boomerangs representing an athlete with his arms in the victorious position. The Foundation's motto, "Proud to be North Queensland" also continues to be used today. The phrase capitalises on the pride North Queenslanders have of who they are and where they live.

The fundamental notion of the Games was that they would be held biennially over Easter. Easter was believed to be the ideal time to hold the Games as it represents the change of sporting seasons, summer to winter. It was felt that this timing would allow both traditionally summer and winter sports to participate. The Games were initially to be held in Townsville continually as it was geographically central to North Queensland, but this created some regional rivalries and dissent.

The Foundation was conscious of the need for harmony throughout North Queensland and recognised that this was in fact pivotal for the long term

future of the Foundation. Accordingly it was agreed that the games would rotate around the four major centres of North Queensland- Townsville, Mount Isa, Cairns and Mackay to clearly demonstrate that the games were truly North Queensland and not owned by any particular city. The rotational proposal was not fully accepted in the formative years as Cairns City Council in its deliberations decided that it would proceed with a form of 'City Games' as conducted by a number of cities throughout Australia including Rockhampton. The Foundation did not deter Cairns City from this approach but made it clear that even if a city or local authority elected not to be a member of the Foundation the games would still be open to all athletes and sportspeople of North Queensland. This approach remains to the present day and is attributable to the success of the Foundation.



~Townsville 1984~

Organisation for the first Games got underway promptly and while seen as a determined task, planning was successfully embarked upon. Named the SGIO North Queensland Games after a major sponsor was fruitfully lured, the carnival was held in the Townsville region on 19-23 April 1984. In Ken's words the Games were an "outstanding success." The Games were embraced enthusiastically by locals and events were well attended. Competition was of a high standard in all the forty-two sports that were included in the Games, ranging from athletics to shooting, from water polo to gymnastics.

The Games coincided with Townsville hosting the Queensland Country Athletics Championships as well as the North Queensland Swimming Championships, meaning that many elite athletes were attracted to the region. 6,400 competitors took part in the 1984 Games, making them the largest regional multi-event sporting Games in Australia. All involved with the Foundation were rewarded for their efforts in preparing such a successful event.

The prime venue for the Games was the Townsville Sports Reserve. The development of sport in the late nineteen seventies and eighties gained a lot of momentum and while a number of prominent sports administrators in North Queensland made significant contributions, the figure of George Lovett was even more prominent. George worked tirelessly for the construction of the all weather track at the Townsville Sports Reserve and once completed he became even more determined that the facility would be fully utilised. This approach certainly did not please the Trustees of the Sports Reserve as they were die hard Rugby League people and saw the advent of the athletics track as an intrusion. Yet this did not concern George and he proceeded at great haste to establish a sound program of athletics events. Hence the opportunity to utilise the track during the Games was of great delight to George.

The opening ceremony was held at the Townsville Sports Reserve, and attended by some 15,000 people. Entertainment included dancers, exhibitions and a march past of over 1,000 children and 6,000 sportspeople representing a diverse range of sports. A fireworks display was held at Queen's Park and Castle Hill was illuminated for the first time.

Games mascot Sunny the Bunny did a lap of honour to a rousing reception. Sunny was designed by Steve Bishop, creator of the majority of the Foundation's artwork in the early days. A competition was held to name the mascot, with 11 year old Cloncurry resident George Haines the winner out of 800 entrants.

A major feature of the opening ceremony was a tableau including hundreds of regional school children depicting the Games symbol.

Another feature of the opening ceremony was the inter-shire relays, the first event of the Games. The Women's 4x100m relay was followed by the men's 4x100m relay with regional North Queensland towns competing. Papua New Guinea won gold in the women's event, with Townsville taking out the men's race. Dawn Fraser, special guest of the Foundation over the Games period, presented medals to the female winners, with MP John Brown making the men's presentation.

Bob McCullough's opening message as Chairman officially launched the Games. His speech was well received by all in attendance:

"Welcome to the inaugural North Queensland Games. I feel confident that these Games are but the start of bringing sport together in the North Queensland region and over the next decade the concept will be further developed to provide sportspeople with the maximum opportunity to participate in sport whether it be for recreation or achieving excellence.

It is only just over one year since the North Queensland Games Foundation was established and in that time considerable work has been done in bringing the inaugural Games to fruition. For this I thank and congratulate everyone who has assisted and I feel sure you will by the time these Games are completed on the 23 April 1984, feel extremely proud of being a person who helped make it happen.

Of course a Games program of the magnitude attempted cannot happen without funding and services from both Governments and the business community. Such support has been excellent from all levels of Government and the business community. On behalf of the Foundation, Games competitors and the people of North Queensland, I thank all those who have contributed.

On behalf of the North Queensland Games Foundation I wish to express its delight that sportspeople from all over Queensland and overseas have made the journey to Townsville to participate in the inaugural North Queensland Games. I feel sure that the spirit of friendship, fun and rivalry on which all sport is founded will prevail throughout the Games and the opportunity will be taken to fraternise, to discuss our mutual problems, to renew friendships and acquaintances and to make new ones, as well as to watch our best sportspeople in action.

I trust that everyone will enjoy the inaugural SGIO Building Society North Queensland Games."

Following this speech, the flame was lit by long distance runner Ron Grant.

Forty-two sports held successful competitions over the Games period. Participation rates were pleasing with the novelty of such an event drawing both competitors and spectators. In all, 62,400 people witnessed

the three day spectacle. The carnival came to an end when the closing ceremony took place, again at the Townsville Sports Reserve.

Mr Brown, Federal Minister for Sports, Recreation and Tourism, stated that “You just can’t seem to get these North Queenslanders to stop smiling.” Mr Brown had visions of the Games being incorporated with the annual Australian Games. He also believed the Games could be used as a model by the Federal Government when determining its future involvement in the funding of similar events organised by not-for-profit organisations.

The then Alderman Margaret Reynolds was sceptical about the money spent by the Townsville City Council on the facilities and event but conceded that it was all worthwhile.

While still undertaking to establish the Foundation as a functioning body with its own initiatives, the North Queensland Games Foundation gave assistance to previously established events. Hence the Foundation strongly supported the Magnetic Island Swim event for many years, and after the Games in 1984, the Swim was the major event the Foundation was involved with. The major sponsor of the swim was AAMI.

The Magnetic Island Swim began in 1954 when three men swam the 5.5 miles from Magnetic Island to Townsville in protective cages to celebrate the Royal visit of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The Swim has become an annual event, with a small number of competitors from across Australia participating.

During the 1980s the North Queensland Sports Foundation was of great assistance to the Magnetic Island Swim, with the Foundation’s input vital to the Swim’s re-growth by gaining National recognition for the event and attracting top class swimmers such as Tracey Wickham, Duncan Armstrong, and later Glen Housman and Susie Maroney. The Foundation assisted by way of promotion, labour and fundraising.

Attention now turned to the next Games, scheduled for Easter 1986 in Mount Isa, and preparations began. The Foundation was aware that the Mount Isa Games would be something of a challenge. There was some concern that the Games would be a failure and hence destroy the concept of a North Queensland Games before it had sufficient time to establish itself.

~*Mount Isa 1986*~

During the two year period between the Townsville Games and the commencement of the Mount Isa Games, all involved with the Foundation worked tirelessly to prepare for the event.

Sponsorship was very difficult to obtain during the early years and the Foundation was often short of money. The government was hesitant and sparing with its support and it was a battle to gain finances from them. Former Townsville City Council representative Noel Wilson, life member of the Foundation, says members were all “very thankful for the support received from councils”, as their contributions were crucial to the survival of the Foundation. While some councils reneged, and were difficult to persuade to become members of the Foundation, or did not join at all, many willingly supported the Foundation by way of membership. There were twenty-two member shires at the time of the first Games.

The Games in Mount Isa attracted 54 different sports. The Mount Isa Games continued the precedent begun in Townsville by being a successful and well supported event.

The Board of the Foundation was delighted with the support given to the Games by the community of Mount Isa, as the Foundation was constantly aware that the formative years would be “difficult and require considerable dedication and commitment by the North Queensland community” to allow the Foundation to establish itself.

Apprentices working at Mount Isa Mines constructed the Games torch, which continues to be used in current Games. The torch was kept by Mayor Tony McGrady until it was transported to Cairns for the following Games.

The Games began with a spectacular opening ceremony including a mass of Pipe Bands originating from Darwin to Toowoomba. Traffic travelling to attend the opening ceremony at Kalkadoon Park was backed up for eight kilometres. There was a pioneers pageant, multi-cultural display and the first ever laser show to be held in North Queensland.

Games mascot Isa Liza led the main parade, which included the Band of the First Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment and children representing sports and shires. The main parade was followed by the official addresses of Mayor Tony McGrady and Chairman Bob McCullough.

The three days of competition saw 8,500 participants compete in various sports. However after surveys were completed at later Games, the figures from early Games such as Mount Isa are slightly dubious. The Games were conducted in a friendly and encouraging manner, with competitors thoroughly enjoying their competitions.

The camp drafting events were a highlight of the Mount Isa Games, with \$3,345 of prize money available. Over 600 people competed in the camp draft competitions.

In all the Mount Isa Games was an outstanding success. The Mount Isa Games gained the attention of the Confederation of Australian Sport, being mentioned in the Best Presentation and Organisation of a Sporting Event category at their Annual Awards.

The 1986 Games were Chairman Bob McCullough's final Games. Richmond Shire member Peter Elliott was elected as McCullough's replacement. Reflecting on his time as Chair, McCullough felt "satisfied that I have had the opportunity to contribute to the sporting community" and was rewarded by the success of the 1984 and 1986 Games. He felt "confident" that the Games would "grow in significance and become a focal point" of the Australian sporting calendar. McCullough was determined that the Board not become complacent after two Games, but rather strive to develop the "total concept" and make the Games more exciting and attractive to the public.

After retiring from the Australian Institute of Marine Science, Bob moved to Northern NSW and entered the world of sport for people with a disability, becoming Chair of the Australian Wheelchair Athletes Ltd and from there President of the Australian Paralympic Federation. This led him to international sport and he became President of the International Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Sports Federation and a member of the International Paralympic Committee. Bob served as Vice President of the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Organising Committee and was honoured for his work through being appointed a member of the IOC Evaluation Commission for the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Bob's award included an OAM, appointment as Associate member of Australia's Sporting Hall of Fame and a Paralympic Order from the International Paralympic Committee.

~Cairns 1988~

The 1988 Games in Cairns coincided with the celebration of Australia's bicentennial. The Games were held from 1-4 April. Barlow Park, a new sports facility, was built to accommodate the carnival. The Cairns Games consisted of 58 various sports, with a strong focus on including all sections of the community. Mr Randy Garlando, Sport and Recreation Officer for the Far North Queensland Region pursued such involvement by visiting community groups and speaking about the North Queensland Games. Executive Director Dale Seaniger also contributed, addressing the Aboriginal Coordinating Council and other prominent community organisations.

The opening ceremony was open to anyone who wished to participate. Mr Graham Gordon, chairman of the opening ceremony committee, was determined that the scale of the spectacle would be one "of which we can all be proud." The highlight of the ceremony was the many school children depicting aspects of marine life from the Great Barrier Reef in real life form.

The North Queensland Games torch arrived, after having travelled by pony express from Mount Isa.

Being the Bicentennial year, a strong emphasis was placed on the history and cultures of North Queensland throughout the competition. The 1988 Games brought \$4 million dollars to the Cairns region and 18,000 visitors, again a fine turnout for the event.

During the late 1980's the Foundation was heavily involved with the North Queensland Schoolboys and Schoolgirls Athletics Championships. Organised by the Ross River Athletics Club and held in Townsville, it is believed to be the best school based carnival in Queensland. The Foundation supported the event primarily through assistance with fundraising. The Foundation donated medals and Board Members were present at medal ceremonies to assist in the presentations.

A weakness identified in the Foundation at this time was the heavy reliance upon the Executive Director in every area, from basic office work through to planning and organisation. Any other assistance afforded the Executive Director was of a voluntary nature and hence sporadic. Despite this, Dale Seaniger worked diligently to develop and promote the Foundation's cause. The work Dale did for the Foundation was vital to its survival.

~Mackay 1990~

The following Games, the last to complete the rotation through the four major regions of North Queensland, were held in Mackay in 1990. Ms Pat Wright was the Executive Director of these Games, the only Games in which she would have the role, after Dale Seaniger resigned after directing the first three Games.

Dale had played an instrumental role in assisting to successfully establish and maintain the Foundation. He resigned after the Cairns Games as he did not wish to travel and be away from his family. He accepted a job with the Cairns Jockey Club. He would be greatly missed by all involved with the Foundation.

The Foundation was in great financial difficulties at the time of the first Mackay Games. Nearing financial ruin, Pat Wright agreed to take on the role of Executive Director without a salary. With the money saved from this action, the Foundation was able to write off debt from the Cairns Games and start in the black after leaving Mackay.

Suncorp supported the Games by way of a \$50,000 sponsorship, an increase in sponsorship and continuing to support the Games as the company had since its inception.

A competition was run to find a new Games mascot, following a rabbit in Townsville, lizard in Mount Isa and a cassowary in Cairns. Spike the echidna was chosen from over 90 entries and was well-loved by spectators over the weekend.

As usual, preparation for the Games began well in advance of their commencement. In May 1989, Games organisers arranged a North Queensland Games Committee Sportsman's Dinner at which former Australian Test Cricketer Alan Davidson spoke. Davidson voiced his praise of the Games concept, and was admiring of the philosophy that participation was just as important as winning.

The Mackay City Council was excited about hosting the Games, believing that the carnival would be the largest event in its sporting history. The Games were officially launched in February 1989 at a lunch in Victoria Street. Attending the launch were Suncorp Queensland Community Relations Manager Mr Jeff Pascoe, Daily Mercury General Manager Mr David Lonsdale, East-West Airlines Central Queensland Region Sales Manager Mr David Soden and MVQ Local Sales Manager Mr Ron McGee. The launch occurred ahead of the torch arriving in Mackay after being moved by naval boat from Cairns, with HMAS Cairns seeing it to the Pioneer River where it was met by the Mayor of Mackay, Peter Jardine.

The opening ceremony was held on the 13th April, beginning with a Street Parade of sports representatives and community groups. The ceremony included an equestrian display, intershire relays, Games mascot and the

official opening, with Debbie Flintoff-King opening the Games. Two days before the opening ceremony, the 1,500 seat grandstand at the showgrounds was deemed “structurally unsound” and closed for the ceremony. A local firm was hired to erect a temporary grandstand on the day of the opening.

Competition was rain-affected, yet despite this 15,000 turned out to compete in the 64 events. Once again the accuracy of competitor numbers is in doubt but regardless of this, the turnout was a thrill to organisers. Competitors came primarily from North Queensland; however the Mackay Games saw an increase in support from the country areas of Queensland, Brisbane, interstate and overseas.

Delegations from Western Australia, Victoria and the Northern Territory visited the Games in an effort to gain an insight into finding a means of conducting a similar event in their home states.

Beneath blue skies and in calm conditions, more than 300 people watched Mackay claim victory in the Surf Lifesaving carnival, one of the most popular spectator events of the Games. Former Mackay resident and international tennis player Nicole Pratt travelled north to compete in the tennis tournament held at the Harrup Park court. Future Olympic Track and Field athlete Benita Willis was a junior competitor at the Mackay Games.

The Games drew to a close on 16 April with a ceremony at the Civic Centre. Presentations were made to the outstanding athletes of the Games, before the Games flag and flame were removed to await the following Games in Townsville 1992.

Mr Jim Nichols, a former journalist and newspaper manager from the Mount Isa region, was employed as the Foundation’s Executive Director in 1991. Jim began work on the 4 February and would remain with the Foundation until 1997. He was decisive to the success and development of the North Queensland Games Foundation, working with immense dedication and selflessness to further its cause. Jim stated that he was “most impressed with the excellent reputation the Foundation has, and the great community support it evokes.”

The North Queensland Sportstar Awards, a new initiative for the North Queensland Games Foundation, were first held in March 1991. These awards are to recognise the efforts of the most outstanding junior and senior sportspeople in North Queensland and to assist and encourage them to strive for greater success. Winners of the award then have the opportunity to contest the Queensland Sports Federation’s Sportstar awards. Local Authorities nominate sportspeople from their shire for the award, which is presented at a formal presentation evening.

The inaugural Sportstar awards were Jim’s first project with the Foundation. Jim worked in conjunction with Radi Cox of Media Support

Services, whom Jim says must receive “a huge amount of credit” for the success of the awards. Radi worked for no charge to ensure the awards were a success.

The North Queensland Radio Network contributed in excess of \$3500 to ensure the success of the presentation evening. In announcing the North Queensland Radio Network’s commitment to the evening, Chairman Peter Elliott stated that the basis had now been firmly established to ensure the North Queensland Sportstar Awards gained prominence and stature in years to come.

The inaugural awards were conducted on 16 March 1991, to award the most outstanding sportspeople of 1990. The awards were held at the Sheraton Breakwater Casino Hotel in Townsville and hosted by Benny Pike of Sunshine Television. Special Guest for the evening was Rugby League player Gene Miles. Proceedings were broadcast on Sunshine Television from 6.30-7.30pm, a major coup for the Foundation.

There were ten nominees for the awards, with the senior award going to Miriwinni Triathlete Brad Beven and the junior award to Julie Majer, a swimmer from Cairns. Brad Beven was awarded a seven day Hobart holiday. Julie Majer received a \$250 Angus Smith Sports Store voucher and three days for a family of four at the Latitude 19 Resort.

Golfing star Karrie Webb was a junior nominee in these first awards.

The Foundation continued the tradition of contributing to the Ross River Schoolboys/Schoolgirls Athletics Championships in 1991 by way of assisting with fundraising and writing press releases.

An issue to arise in 1991, following the completion of the first rotation of Games around the four major centres of North Queensland, was the idea of permanently holding the Games in Townsville. This idea of centralising the Games had long been brewing. At the Board Meeting held on 16 March 1991, board members Lionel Lucas and Phillip Stark raised the issue of whether it would be desirable to centre all future Games in the Townsville region. There was great discussion on this contentious subject and much ambivalence. Chairman Peter Elliott desired a decision to be made in order to quash speculation amongst councils.

Numerous ideas were discussed. It was suggested that cities could put in submissions to run the Games, which did not necessarily mean that the event would be held in the same order as the first four were. It was agreed however, that despite the location of the Games, a central and permanent office in Townsville was required to coordinate matters.

At this meeting, it was moved Phillip Stark and seconded Alan Rockley that a list of positives and negatives of both prospects be sent to the Local Authorities of North Queensland with each Authority to respond with their preference and any comments.

The proposed advantages of the Games being permanently held in Townsville included location, existing facilities, weather and continuity. With the disadvantages being listed as loss of trade to other centres and declining interest from Local Authorities who would never have a Games held in or near their region. Peter Elliott reminded the board that the North Queensland Games Foundation is fundamentally a regional organisation.

At the following Board Meeting on 24 May, Peter Elliott prefaced the issue of Games rotation by saying that all should have seen the compiled list of advantages and disadvantages and be ready to make a decision on the issue.

It was then moved Noel Wilson and seconded Beryl Hunter that the Games be continually held in Townsville. Noel did point out however, that he was merely forwarding this motion to settle the issue and that the Townsville City Council had not requested to permanently host the event. Peter Elliott read a letter from the Cairns City Council stating that it believed the Games should be permanently rotated and after further discussion the motion was dismissed.

Ron McCullough then moved that the Games in future rotate in the order of Townsville, Mount Isa, Cairns and Mackay but that this order is not necessarily permanent. This motion was seconded by Beryl Hunter.

In a final change, Pat Wright moved that the Games always move in the sequence they currently do. This was seconded by Marie Murray and then carried.

With the issue finally resolved, it could now be publicised throughout North Queensland that the Games would continually rotate, and attention turned to the 1992 Games.



~Townsville 1992~

The North Queensland Games returned to their place of origin in 1992 when they were held in the Townsville region once again.

Leading into the Games, the Foundation was in a strong position financially, and preparations were proceeding well. Peter Elliott remarked at this time, “our finances have never been better and the Foundation is widely accepted by the North Queensland community.” He also felt that additional staff would be required as “we are growing and must plan accordingly.”

Many volunteers gave their time in the lead up to the Games to assist Jim Nichols in what was a demanding organisational task. Three additional office staff were employed to assist with the smooth running of the Games, Jenny Ridgway, Mark Palmer and Alex Rainnie.

The 1992 Sportstar Awards were the other event needing great attention in the lead up to the Games. The second Sportstar Awards, recognising sporting success of 1991, was held on 7 March, again at the Sheraton Breakwater Casino Hotel.

Having already held the presentation evening before, second time around was certainly considered much easier by all those involved. Again the event was broadcast on Sunshine Television.

The event was yet again a success. Special guest for the evening was Paul Clarke, with the nominations for the awards increasing considerably from the previous year. Benny Pike of Sunshine Television was again the host of the evening. Townsville archer Gisela Clayton was the winner in the senior category, later going on to win the State award, with swimmer Julie Majer again winning the junior award.

Now known as the Suncorp North Queensland Games, up to 20,000 visitors were expected to descend on Townsville for the carnival.

When the Games returned to Townsville, Foundation founder Ken McElligott was State Member for Thuringowa. Ken stated that the “sheer hard work and dedication has ensured that the Games are here to stay.” He praised the efforts of Bob McCullough and Peter Elliott who “headed up” the Foundation in its formative years. He also acknowledged the work of former Executive Director Dale Seaniger, who “did much more than could reasonably be expected of an employee.”

The Games got underway with the opening ceremony on 17 April, with Normie Rowe and Kim Durant performing. Dawn Fraser returned to open the Games for the third time. Again inter-shire relays were held as the first event of the Games.

The torch had previously burned for one week in Flinders Mall after a team of athletes ran with it from Mackay. Charters Towers athlete

Clayton Pugh brought the torch into the Sports Reserve to be transferred to the crucible.

One of the biggest dance festivals to be staged in the North was part of the Games, with about 180 dancers competing in the Australian Dancing Board of control regulated event. An Olympic medal winner in 2000 and 2004, archer Simon Fairweather contested the archery events at the Games. Olympic swimmer Nicole Stevenson also competed in the Games, with the Australian Institute of Sport releasing her from her schedule to swim in the Games as a means of assisting her outdoor experience prior to the Barcelona Games.

Following the Games, at the Board Meeting held 19 April 1992, problems that arose during the Opening Ceremony were discussed. Approximately 6,000 athletes had been expected to participate in the March Past, and when just a small contingent turned up, the scheduling of events in the ceremony was forced to be reworked impromptu.

It was agreed that the small turn out of spectators was due to John Farnham and Steve Vizard not appearing as had been previously advertised. The 1992 Opening Ceremony had a cost of \$45,000, a figure Chairman Peter Elliott believed was the minimum required to conduct a basic ceremony.

Over the weekend of competition, eight hours of Games coverage was broadcast on Sunshine Television. The network's sport guru and North Queensland Sportstar Awards host, Benny Pike anchored the coverage.

During the Games, 8,895 medals were presented. Competition was competitive throughout the Games, and 85 events were conducted smoothly.

Peter Elliott was overall very pleased with the Games, aside from the Opening Ceremony. For the first time, an accurate list of competitors was recorded. This data showed that 14,572 people competed in the Games, 13,216 from North Queensland, 1,239 from Queensland, 101 from Australia and 16 from overseas. The Foundation was also enjoying a very strong financial position following the Games.

Prior to the 1992 Games, Board Member Ron McCullough of Mount Isa suggested that the Foundation compose a plan of all future activities it wishes to conduct. This was suggested as a means of establishing a strong direction for the Foundation in its running of events aside from the Games. Public comment was sought on the future of the Foundation as part of this initiative and planning and development sessions were held. Board Members were later presented with a document outlining all operations to be conducted by the Foundation in a two year chronological format.

One activity begun during this time was the Green and Gold Club, a more modest version of the one that exists today. The Club was launched on

25 March 1992 by David Wharton, a former Australian modern Pentathlon representative and Board Member. The launch was attended by Channel Seven Sports anchorman Bruce McAvaney, Channel Seven executives, North Queensland Games Foundation officers and officials, media representatives and sporting personalities. This club would later be revised and become internet based.

The 1992 Magnetic Island Swim was again staunchly supported by the Foundation, and fielded the highest ever number of entrants and of the best standard.

In 1992, Board Members were asked to suggest a sport to be considered the 'elite' sport of all future Games. In November 1992, Ron McCullough wrote to Jim Nichols proposing cycling as this elite sport. It was thought that a cycling race of 120km minimum would be a suitable feature event and be replicated in other centres for future Games. Through Mount Isa cycle club Copper City, a race in the Australian Cycling Federation's Annual Exceed Series was attracted.

Peter Elliott resigned from the Chair at the end of 1992 after chairing through three Games. Mirani Shire Council representative Matt O'Neill was elected as the new Chair. With the beginning of a new year, again the annual Sportstar Awards were the first major event to be arranged. The awards were held on 13 March at the Sheraton Breakwater Casino Hotel. An unprecedented thirty nominations were received and the night was a success. Olympic kayaking gold medallist Clint Robinson was the guest of honour, and Brad Beven again took out the senior category. Junior winner was Cairns cyclist Bernard Panton. Brad Beven became the second North Queensland Sportstar Award winner to win the state awards later in the year.

In September 1993, the Foundation organised the Great Northern Bike Tour, a promotional bike ride from Townsville to Mount Isa, coinciding with the Board's AGM by arriving in Mount Isa on 24 September. Assistance with the race was provided by Local Authorities along the route. The ride was conducted in association with the Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association to raise funds for their cause. To assist with the ride's credibility, a team of riders had to ride the entire distance (eight to ten riders). The ride was a success, and the Foundation decided to support future rides, with a race planned from Townsville to Mossman via Charters Towers and the Atherton Tablelands in 1994, and a race from Mount Isa to Cairns in 1995.

In 1994, the North Queensland Games Foundation announced a sponsorship deal between the Foundation and Boral Gas for the Sportstar Awards. Officially renamed the Boral Gas North Queensland Sportstar Awards, the sponsorship deal rescued the awards which had been run on a

benevolent basis by the Foundation since their inception. The Foundation's losses varied between \$3,000 and \$4,000 each year of the awards.

Chairman Matt O'Neill said the sponsorship rescued the Foundation from a situation where although it ran a highly successful regional event, it did so at a cost. He also stated that the Foundation had no revenue producing resources and relied on donations, the goodwill of the community and sponsorship to run its many events.

The awards were held in Mackay at the Ocean International resort on 12 March, the first time the event had been conducted outside Townsville. Former Olympic swimmer Justin Lemberg was the special guest for the Mackay awards. Brad Beven again won the senior category, with Townsville athlete Dane Pilcher the junior winner. Pilcher won the 200m and 400m at the Australian secondary schools championships in Canberra in 1993, breaking the 200m record. It was also announced that Ingham would host the following awards to continue the rotation of the awards around North Queensland.



~Mount Isa 1994~

In 1994, the Suncorp North Queensland Games were again hosted by Mount Isa. The community came together to ensure the event was once again a success. The Games were non-elitist and people of all ages and abilities participated. Mount Isa Mines were experiencing financial difficulties at the time of the Games, and were unable to contribute a figure close to the generous \$100,000 they put into the Games in 1986. However Mount Isa businessmen fundraised hard to gain funds for the 1994 Opening Ceremony. The Mount Isa West Rotary Club also assisted greatly in fundraising. A car was raffled and at one stage an organising committee member volunteered to offer his house for mortgage to underwrite the cost of the opening ceremony as many people were concerned with the event being a failure.

Board Member and Mount Isa Mayor Ron McCullough devoted himself to organising a successful Games, and much praise was bestowed on him afterwards when the Games were completed smoothly. Jim Nichols declared that “full credit for the success of these amazing Games” must go to Ron McCullough.

One of Australia’s leading rock bands of the time, The Baby Animals, were secured for the opening ceremony by the Mount Isa West Rotary Club. A variety of sports were again included in the Games, with skydiving, camp drafting, croquet, off-road motor racing and water skiing some of the more unusual inclusions.

The flame left Townsville on the 24th March for Mount Isa, stopping at schools along the way. The flame arrived in Mount Isa for the opening ceremony on 8th April. The Games were officially opened by Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, Bob Gibbs. Following the official speeches, local band Bad Boys performed, followed by The Baby Animals. Over 10,000 people attended the opening ceremony.

During the Games, the Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association moved their Queensland Cycling Championships to Mount Isa in order to increase participation in the event by incorporating it into the Games. Townsville hosted five events, ice skating, yachting, off-shore yachting, volleyball and darts due to the facilities not being available in Mount Isa. The yachting event was actually the annual Townsville to Dunk Island Yacht Race.

The feature of the Games was the Road Race, a 120 km ride from Cloncurry to Mount Isa. Olympians Kathy Watt and Kendrick Tucker competed in the event, which boasted a \$10,000 prize pool. Sixty-two riders nominated for both the men’s and women’s events. The Australian Institute of Sport strongly supported the event, sending many athletes, including an AIS Road Team. Following the success of the race, the Australian Cycling Federation asked the Copper City Cycling Club to

host the event each year. It is now recognised as one of Australia's most prominent races on the annual calendar and attracts international riders. In all, the 1994 Suncorp North Queensland Games were a great success. There were approximately 8,000 competitors. Matt O'Neill said of the Games that he was "both proud and humble" to be Foundation Chairman at this time. The Mount Isa Games were also the first in which a positive financial outcome was shown.

Following the Games, Jim Nichols pushed for guidelines to be created for sports to ensure apt competition could be duplicated in all regional centres. The idea of seeking nominations through the Foundation office was also first considered at this stage. The primary benefit of nominations would be for recording purposes, as well as holding final control over all revenue and the quality of sporting competition.

State Government funding was improving, with the Foundation receiving \$35,000 on the proviso that a detailed developmental plan that suited the Government's scrutiny be submitted. At this time Jim Nichols also desired a professional Developmental Plan to be devised, claiming that the "price of accountability is a high one indeed."

Matt O'Neill began lobbying to have Life Membership included in the Foundation's Articles of Association, as he believed Pat Wright should be made the first Life Member of the North Queensland Games Foundation. At the Annual General Meeting in Townsville on September 23 1994, Matt O'Neill said he believed Pat was most deserving of life membership, and she was presented with her certificate by Peter Elliott. In receiving her life membership, Pat stated that it "was an extremely great honour" and important to both her and the people of Mackay.

Founding Chairman Bob McCullough was also proposed as a life member. It was moved Ron McCullough, seconded Ann Hannah, that Bob McCullough be made a life member.

The 1994 North Queensland Sportstar Awards were held on 4 March 1995 at the Hinchinbrook Shire Hall in Ingham. For a second time, Clint Robinson was the special guest. Again there were thirty nominees for the awards. The awards coincided with Ingham's Australian-Italian Festival, the largest event on Ingham's calendar. Once again Triathlete Brad Beven took out the senior award. Leana Viero, a fifteen year old athletics star from Burdekin won the junior category.

These awards carried the Foundation's largest financial loss to date. This was caused by the lack of a naming rights sponsor, after Boral Gas no longer wished to sponsor the awards.

~Cairns 1996~

Preparation for the 1996 Suncorp North Queensland Games to be held in the Cairns region began promptly after the conclusion of the Mount Isa Games. The progress being made in Cairns amazed all involved and delighted Jim Nichols, "to say its amazing is an understatement." Marketing Consultant Mr Ron Carroll was elected as Chairman of the Cairns Organising Committee, and ensured progress was begun early. Ron would later resign from the committee, after infighting within the committee and difficulties with the Board. Ron's resignation appeared sensationally in the media, but by the end of 1994, the damage caused by that publicity had subsided somewhat. Geoffrey Smith was elected the new Chair in February 1995.

During 1994, the decision to centralise Games nominations, so they would all be processed through the office, was made. The decision caused a lot of headache and heartache, but was considered necessary in order to give the Foundation the credibility that government, sponsors and the general public desired. Centralised nominations would allow the Foundation to have an accurate record of the number of participants, something they were yet to achieve. The overall aim for the Games was to ensure they were seen as a cohesive event, running as one complete event rather than several individual events running at the same time under the same banner.

Jim Nichols was beginning to find the workload increasingly heavy. He employed a casual typist to assist with office duties, but it was soon acknowledged that permanent assistance would be required due to the demands on his time causing progress to slow. Generally, work slowed following the Games and Sportstar Awards, however 1995 saw an unprecedented amount of work being generated so early before a Games. Contributing to this was the increased activities of the Foundation and its more prominent stature in the community.

An event that required Jim's notice was the National Road Cycling Race which was held in Airlie Beach in September 1995. The event was held over three days, with a Roller Derby in Cannonvale claiming \$500 prize money on the Friday and an event in the criterium in Airlie Beach on the Saturday with \$1,000 prize money. The Road Race left Airlie Beach at 7am on Sunday and arrived in Mackay at 5pm. The Road Race carried \$10,000 in prize money.

Suncorp was a consistent supporter of the Foundation, providing funding to keep the organisation running. In 1994, Suncorp agreed to provide \$80,000 per Games year, and \$75,000 in the non Games year.

Jim Nichols had two full time assistants working with him from late 1995. Alison Lynch and Michelle Jago assisted with decreasing the amount of pressure placed upon Jim.

In the February proceeding the Cairns Games, nominations were trickling in at an alarmingly slow rate. Jim put this down to the Foundation concentrating on producing the nominations booklet rather than getting out amongst the sports.

Peter Elliott was successful in the November previous to the Sportstar Awards in securing a \$3,500 sponsorship with the Bank of Queensland. This gave the bank naming rights of the North Queensland Sportstar Awards. \$2,500 of the sponsorship went towards the winners of the awards, with the remaining \$1,000 set aside to offset costs associated with providing free meals and other services to nominees attending the awards.

Board Member Cec Anderson of Johnstone Shire obtained sufficient funding to cover all costs of the 1995 North Queensland Sportstar Awards, held in Innisfail on March 16 1996 at the Innisfail Reception Lounge, with Samantha Riley as the special guest.

Twenty Local Authorities were represented at these awards with Burdekin golfer Karrie Webb taking out the senior category and Clint Lawson, a boxer from Burdekin winning the junior award.

Twelve months prior to the Cairns Games, Jim Nichols appeared in the Cairns Post appealing for assistance in securing office space for the Games. "It is a real dilemma and we desperately need some help," Jim said, after adequate rental space in Cairns proved difficult to obtain. Daikyo company director John Gaylor came to the Foundation's assistance, offering free office space in Wharf Street, to the immense relief of the Executive Director.

The 1996 Suncorp North Queensland Games took place over 5-8 April, and were labelled the 'schizophrenic Games' by Jim Nichols. The Games were difficult to stage, and the "toughest" of all Jim had been associated with.

Founding Chairman Bob McCullough was invited to attend the opening ceremony as the special guest. Bob had gone on to become president of the Australian Paralympic Federation, and vice president of the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Organising Committee. Bob spoke and officially opened the Games. Both the opening and closing ceremonies received a poor public turnout, a factor that some felt it was naïve to ignore. Sections of the board felt that the ceremonies were not commensurate with a large scale sporting event.

The Games flame had become an intrinsic symbol of the carnival, and for the 1996 Games it was transported from Mount Isa to Cairns by bicycle. This occurred in the September previous to the Games, and was a promotional ride arranged by the Foundation to raise funds for the Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association. Thirty cyclists accompanied the flame the 1,200 km distance.

The Games suffered a lack of publicity, after a phantom campaign was waged after infighting amongst the Cairns Organising Committee, in which the Foundation was victim to rumours proliferating that the Games were broke, cancelled or would be unsuccessful if they did go ahead. This was exacerbated by the fact that regional newspapers shunned the Foundation and did not provide publicity. The Board was homogeneous in the belief that this issue was partly responsible for the poor turnout at the Games.

Jim Nichols believed that the common fault with all marketing operations was that “marketing is only being carried out in the immediate host area”, and therefore not reaching other regions from where mass participation is hoped to be achieved.

Yet despite this, survey estimates suggested that of the 7,200 people who competed in the Games, 60% of competitors were visitors to the Cairns region. There were 54 different sports in the Games.

At the Board Meeting on 18 May 1996, Chairman Matt O’Neill announced that he would be resigning, citing a lack of support and friction as reasons for his decision. Hinchinbrook member Ross Contarino was a popular choice to take over as Chairman. Cardwell Shire representative David Wharton was Acting Chairman for one meeting between Matt O’Neill’s resignation and Ross taking the floor, to allow Ross to organise work commitments. Ross had been a member of the North Queensland Games Foundation Board since 1992, and was determined to stabilise the Foundation to ensure it continued to strive for the development of sport at a professional and successful degree.

In 1996, the idea of changing the name of the Foundation slightly arose. The three proposed name changes were: “The North Queensland Foundation of Sport Limited,” “The North Queensland Sporting Foundation Limited,” and “The North Queensland Sports Foundation Limited.” While some felt that by dropping the word ‘Games’, the focus of the Foundation would be lost, Ross and others believed that altering the name would allow the Foundation to broaden and develop all aspects of the organisation, as well as making it more attractive to sponsors in the non-Games years. The issue was discussed heatedly and dropped after an agreement could not be reached.

Anita Hammon was employed in early 1997 to assist in the administration of the Foundation and she eventually went on to become the Manager for the 2000 Games in Townsville.

The 1996 North Queensland Sportstar Awards were hosted by the Burdekin Shire on 22 February 1997. Board Member for Burdekin Lyn McLaughlin worked intensely to ensure the event was a success, which by all accounts it was. A record attendance was achieved. Olympic swimmer Susie O’Neill was secured as the special guest for the evening.

Held at the Burdekin Memorial Hall in Home Hill, Cairns Mountain Biker Michael Ronning was the senior winner, receiving \$2,000 from the Bank of Queensland; return airfares and accommodation to the State awards, and a weekend holiday package. Junior winner, Cindy Morgan, a hockey player from Cairns, won \$500 from the Bank of Queensland, return airfares and accommodation to the State awards and a weekend holiday package.

By this stage planning for the 1998 Mackay Games was underway, with Mackay representative Cr Marie Murray dedicating many hours to its preparation in the early stages. It was decided that the number of sports should not be the major focus, rather fewer sports if necessary in order to obtain competition of a higher standard.

After running three Games over six years with the Foundation, Jim Nichols decided to resign. He took up a position with Mount Isa Rodeo, before later being appointed General Manager of the North West Star newspaper. Jim would be missed by the Foundation after having dedicated many years to its cause. Stuart Gibson would replace Jim as the new Executive Director. After an initial period of settling in and becoming acquainted with the Foundation, Stuart began work on the Mackay Games.

~Mackay 1998~

The Mackay Regional Organising Committee (MROC) was meeting on a monthly basis from its formation in 1996 until the Games in 1998. The committee not only included Board Members of the Foundation but also local community people. The Mackay City Council provided the Foundation with an office in the centre of town and funded a new administration assistant, Trish Bombardieri. In January 1998, Anita Hammon joined the organising team in Mackay.

Mackay resident and Event Coordinator Vikki Baldwin was appointed organiser of the opening ceremony and worked with her committee to arrange the event on a small budget. Andrew Haigh was employed to coordinate sports and the Suncorp Cycling Classic which was held in conjunction with the Games. Ken Furdek, a local media consultant provided the necessary skills to enable appropriate media coverage.

Again the North Queensland Sportstar Awards were conducted early in the New Year. Held in Proserpine on 22 February 1998, Olympic Javelin thrower Joanna Stone was the special guest. Wayne Mawer, a water-skier from Cairns won the senior award, with Mareeba squash player Michael Arcidiancono winning the junior award. Suncorp sponsored the winners to attend the State awards in Brisbane. Encouragement awards were also presented to Bowen showjumper Aaron Williamson and Charters Towers swimmer Ayrton Dickey.

The 1998 Suncorp North Queensland Games were a great success and hailed as having been professionally and efficiently run. Held from 10-13 April, large crowds turned out to both the opening and closing ceremonies, in which the benefit of a professional organiser was evident. Games mascot, Pudgy the Platypus was a feature of both events.

42 sports were organised as part of the Games, with around 6,000 people participating in the carnival. The majority of events were held in Mackay, however surrounding shires also hosted some events. Bowen hosted golf, equestrian and touch, Nebo held horse sports, Sarina athletics, Whitsunday swimming and archery and Nebo hosted hang gliding, Masters swimming, western action shooting and mountain biking.

The feature of the Games was a bicycle race held on Easter Saturday. The Suncorp Mackay Cycling Classic, a category one cycle race, carried a \$7000 prize pool granted by the Australian Cycling Federation as part of the 1998 National Road Series. The 180 km race went through the Pioneer Valley to Eungella and back. The race was won by Toowoomba cyclist Nathan O'Neill, who was a member of the Australian Institute of Sport team.

Townsville swimmer Penny Bond broke the 1500m Masters World Record at the Games, in a time of 17 minutes and 55.34 seconds, eclipsing the four year old existing record by four seconds. Bond was delighted to have her record acknowledged by FINA, swimming's world controlling body, as the Games are officially recognised by FINA.

All in all, the Games ran smoothly and successfully throughout the weekend. The success of the Games was recognised by the Mackay community when it was voted Event of the Year at the Mackay Regional Tourism Awards.

In September 1998, Tim Nugent was appointed Executive Director of the Foundation. One of the first major activities to occur under Tim's direction was the eventuation of a name change for the Foundation. After much deliberation, at the Annual General Meeting of the company in 1998 a motion was passed to change the name of the Foundation, and hence it became the North Queensland Sports Foundation. It was agreed that such a name would broaden the general public's perception of what the Foundation was involved with, and would better allow an expansion of the Foundation's activities. The Foundation quickly received positive feedback for this decision, being perceived as having a wider focus and invited to contribute more to sports decision making processes.

The Douglas Shire hosted the 1998 North Queensland Sportstar Awards on 6 March 1999. The event was staged at the Radisson Reef Resort in Port Douglas. Tracey Wickham was special guest for the evening, with Benny Pike compare on behalf on WIN Television. Lance Kelly, Rodeo from Herberton won the senior award, with the junior award going to Courtney Hanson of Mount Isa City for BMX. The Sportstar Awards were now firmly cemented as the second largest event run by the Foundation.

Another Cycling Race was organised for 1999, the Suncorp Metway Townsville Cycling Classic, which was held on 29 May from Port Hinchinbrook, Cardwell to Townsville. It was a category two race in the National Road Race Series and sanctioned by the Australian Cycling Federation. A total of \$10,000 was available in prizes.

Not long following the cycle race, Tim Nugent resigned. Tim had not remained with the Foundation for a very long period of time. In June 1999, Tim announced his resignation, citing that he did not feel comfortable in the position.

Anita Hammon, Administration Officer with the Foundation since 1996, was appointed Acting Executive Director, and was later made Manager (to replace the title of Executive Director) at the discretion of the Board. It was at this stage that Sally Lambert, current Administration Manager, joined the Foundation. Sally continues in this role and has been

instrumental in the efficient organisation of the many Foundation activities.

In preparation for the 2000 Suncorp North Queensland Games to be held in the Townsville/Thuringowa region, a Regional Organising Committee (TROC) was formed in early 1999. Foundation founder Ken McElligott chaired the TROC until October 1999 when Ross Contarino took over after Ken's resignation.

The launch for the 2000 Games was held in Townsville on 1 December 1999. Olympic Beach Volleyball player Natalie Cook was in attendance at the function, held at Citibeach Volleyball and attended by members of the sporting community of North Queensland. The Foundation had twenty-six member Cities/Shires at the time of the Townsville Games. A cheque for \$80,000 was presented to Ross Contarino by Suncorp, a symbol of their continued support for the Games.

A hiccup in preparations for the Games was experienced when a funding issue arose with the Department of Sport and Recreation Queensland. The Department decided to reduce its funding from \$50,000 to \$25,000 for the 2000 Games with no certainty of future funding. This was largely due to the trouble the Department experienced in trying to fit the Foundation into their existing sponsorship categories, and had the potential to severely impact upon the Games' finances. The Foundation Board refused to acknowledge the ultimatum and many councils made contact with local MPs and Ministers about the issue. MP Terry Mackenroth was contacted, and due primarily to his support of the Foundation and the North Queensland Games, the Foundation was eventually granted the full amount of funding and was assured this would continue into the future.

To coincide with the Games being held in the Townsville/Thuringowa region, the 1999 North Queensland Sportstar Awards were held in Thuringowa on 26 February 2000. Held at the Brothers Leagues Club, swimmer Julie McDonald was the special guest. The evening was well attended and an enjoyable night. Cairns water-skier Jo Hamilton who was the World Champion, won the senior category. Ronnie Dugdell, BMX also from Cairns City, took out the junior category.

~Townsville 2000~

To assist with the running of the Townsville/Thuringowa Games, Vikki Baldwin was again employed by the Foundation as Director of Ceremonies, and Ken Furdek as Director of Media. These two people played an influential role in ensuring the Games ran smoothly. Ken organised the central media centre, sending press releases and chasing up the media to ensure the Games received wide coverage. As a result of Ken's efforts, the Games were a great achievement with outstanding media coverage, especially through television and newsprint. Andrew Haigh was again employed by the Foundation to coordinate sports and the Suncorp Metway Cycling Classic.

The Games occurred from 21-24 April and attracted 4,703 athletes who participated in 48 sports. Many sports held their State Championships in unison with the Games, thus raising the profile and attraction to competitors of the Games. Sports adopting this initiative ensured that a professional and high standard competition was run.

Nominations were again centralised through the Foundation office, with the system now much more efficient. However there were still sports that chose to bypass centralised nominations and use their own systems.

Rain threatened throughout the weekend, but held off until the closing ceremony. 150 volunteers and ambassadors donated their Easter break to assist with medal presentations and day to day operations of the Foundation office, to the great relief of staff.

A highlight of the sporting events were Olympic cyclist Brett Aitken and Olympic Beach Volleyball, Bronze medallist Natalie Cook travelling to participate in the Games. Aitken won the criterium around Townsville city streets. They would both go on to win gold medals at the Sydney Olympics, Brett Aitken for the Madison Cycling Event and Natalie Cook and partner Kerry Polthurst won the Beach Volleyball.

The Games' oldest competitor, 76 year old Charlie Doyle, showed amazing determination and fitness, competing in the 200m, 400m, 800m and 1500m events. Charlie said the Games were motivation for him to "keep active."

In 2000, the closing ceremony was performed under a different format. Rather than being a structured ceremony, it was more of a 'Family Fun Day' including the official ceremonial aspects required to end the Games. This saw a greater attendance at the closing ceremony than in previous years. The ceremony was marred by heavy rain. Ron McCullough recalls how while erecting marquees and energetic helper drove a spike through the irrigation system, "The result was water everywhere and officials tiptoeing through 100mls of water trying not to get their feet wet."

The North Queensland Sports Foundation began participating in Sport and Recreation Queensland's North West Tour, a concept aimed at encouraging and developing sports participation in remote areas of North Queensland. Sports Development Officers joined the tour, to coach children and adults in these remote centres. In late 2000, Sport and Recreation Queensland approached the Foundation to coordinate the tours independently. The Foundation felt that this could be a means of further expanding its activities, and allow it to break into the education field.

The first North West Queensland Sports Education Tour would be held in late August 2001, and visit the Shires/Cities of Richmond, McKinlay, Mount Isa, Cloncurry, Boulia, Winton and Flinders. The tour was organised and coordinated by Sally Lambert and included Olympic Table Tennis player Brett Clark with six full-size table tennis tables.

The North Queensland Sportstar Awards were also held in the west in 2001. In 2001, the awards were held in Cloncurry. This was the first time the event had been held deep in the West.

Just previous to the awards in the New Year, Manager Anita Hammon resigned. This again threw the Executive Committee of the Foundation into strife as they contemplated a hasty replacement at this crucial time. Sally Lambert was left to fill the void until former Foundation employee Andrew Haigh, who had not long proceeding left the Foundation to take up a position with the James Cook University Student Union to assist with the staging of the University Games, was appointed Manager.

For the township of Cloncurry, the Sportstar Awards, held on 24 February 2001, were a great event. Olympic runner Raelene Boyle was the special guest. To the delight of Cloncurry schoolchildren, preceding the awards Raelene visited schools to hand out giveaways and sign autographs.

Natarsha Williams, a BMX rider from Johnstone Shire, won the senior North Queensland Sportstar Award, with Jane Bennett, a hockey player from Mackay City winning the junior award. Natarsha Williams was the current BMX World Champion and held a Number one World Series Ranking. Jane Bennett won gold in 2000 in the Under 18 Women's hockey tournament at the Sydney Youth Olympics. These awards saw the introduction of a new award category, the Team award. At the Cloncurry awards, The Burdekin Barras Under 13 Soccer team won the award. Among the Barra's achievements in the year 2000 was winning the Suncorp North Queensland Games, the Bessell Cup in Ayr and the Country Cup.

In late June the 8th National Road Race was contested in the Atherton Tablelands. The weather was not kind to riders and organisers; however the event went ahead and was won by Bart Duraj of Brisbane.

The North West Sports Education Tour was organised later in the year, with twelve state/regional coaching development officers travelling the

2180 km, ten day trek which saw approximately 1,400 school children become involved. The tour was greatly appreciated by the North West communities visited as coaches and sports usually not available were on hand.

At the Foundation's AGM in October 2000, Chairman Ross Contarino expressed his feelings for the need for the Foundation to reconsider the future direction of the Games format, stating that there was currently a greater amount of competition available to North Queenslanders than when the Foundation was established. Because of this, Ross felt that the Games needed to be more attractive to sportspeople to ensure the Foundation continued to exist as a successful entity. This topic would be a frequent one in coming meetings.

The Mount Isa Regional Organising Committee (MIROC) was well and truly established and working to ensure the next Games were a success. Mount Isa Mayor Ron McCullough chaired this committee and took great pride in striving for the Games' triumph in 2002.

The 2001 North Queensland Sportstar Awards occurred in Cardwell on 23 February 2002, preceding the Games. Cardwell Board Member Guni Liepins worked tirelessly to oversee an excellent outcome with previous Sportstar winner, triathlete Brad Beven accepting the role as the special guest at the awards. Scott Bower, Taekwondo from Townsville won in the senior category, and Jessica Affleck of Townsville won the junior award for swimming. Proserpine's Under 12 Rugby League team won the Team category.



~Mount Isa 2002~

The 2002 Suncorp North Queensland Games rapidly drew near with staff forced to relocate out west to efficiently organise the Games. Commencing with the opening ceremony on 29 March, 2,500 athletes from 25 sports were at Mount Isa's Kruttschnitt Oval to see the Games officially opened by former champion heavyweight boxer Joe Bugner. The evening featured a fireworks display and the lighting of the Games cauldron. At the Mount Isa Games, the oldest competitor was a 75 year old triathlete, and the youngest a two year old competing in equestrian events.

In the athletics events, hosted in Townsville, sprinter Justin Smith successfully defended his North Queensland Games 100m title by beating off a late surge by Cairns athlete Wagui Anau. Smith registered a time of 10.92 seconds, Anau 10.94, with Townsville's Grant McPherson finishing third.

In the Townsville to Mount Isa Cycling Relay, six Townsville riders battled heavy road traffic and fatigue to win the event. Finishing in 26 hours, 45 minutes, riders rode in half hour shifts every three hours throughout the 900km journey. Townsville finished just 10 minutes ahead of the No. 1 Mount Isa team.

Outstanding media coverage was again received, with the North West Star, Townsville Bulletin, WIN TV, Imparja and DMG Radio strongly supporting the Games.

To assist with ensuring the public were aware of the Games, posters, flyers, road signs and the Foundation's website were used as promotional tools.

The Mount Isa Games were run successfully, however participation numbers were the lowest ever seen. Just 1,790 people participated in 27 sports. The Foundation attempted to justify this decrease in interest in the Games by suggesting that Mount Isa would always have lower participation rates due primarily to location. Yet this was also perhaps hard evidence of the thoughts of the Chairman and others that a way of revamping the Games must be considered.

Workshops were held following the Games to address this issue of the need to adapt the Games format. The Board realised that they must be willing to move with the times and keep an open mind in order to inject new vibrancy into the Games.

The major outcomes of this workshop were to review the organisation's structure and membership with a view to fostering closer relations with sporting organisations and improving communications with major stakeholders. Revamping the Games was also a suggestion to come from the workshop, and ideas to achieve this included highlighting events that could include elite participants, holding a signature event and actively

pursuing the inclusion of State and Regional championships in the Games format.

At the General Meeting held on 20 September 2002, Manager Andrew Haigh announced his resignation due to family commitments. Once again the Executive Committee faced the task of appointing a new Manager. Previous Manager during the 1998 Mackay Games, Stuart Gibson, was appointed Manager again starting in November. In Stuart, the Foundation had a Manager already accustomed to the Foundation and its dealings.

In 2003 following the initiative of Herberton Board Member Blue Stewart, planning for the inaugural Gulf Savannah Sports Education Tour began. This was part of a new direction the Foundation had decided to take to heighten their profile and improve their standing in the community.

The 2002 Sportstar Awards preparation was proceeding smoothly prior to the event due to the involvement of McKinlay Board Member Margie Ryder. Hosted by the McKinlay Shire, Steven Bradbury was secured early as special guest for the evening. Held in Julia Creek on 26 April 2003, Commonwealth Games gold medallist Diane Reeves (Clay Target Shooting) from Carpentaria Shire won the senior category. Bowen swimmer Christopher Elphinstone won the junior award, with Cairns State High School under 15 Soccer team winning the Team award.

At this time a competition was announced in every school in North Queensland to create a mascot for the Foundation. Proserpine schoolgirl Jade Beck was selected as winner with her creation of Fred the Frilled Neck Lizard. Fred was refined by a graphic artist, Andre Reynaud, who also made the costume. Fred is now widely associated with the Foundation in all its activities.

As the twentieth anniversary of the Foundation's first board meeting approached, planning for a commemorative function began. It was thought that a function following the board meeting on the 15 August would be an appropriate way to celebrate the Foundation's longevity.

At the twentieth anniversary function, Ross Contarino, (Ross was made a life member of the Foundation during July 2003), paid tribute to the foresight of the founders of the Foundation, who created an organisation that has done great deeds for sport in North Queensland.

The event was hosted by Townsville City Council. Media interest in the event was very heartening, with many media interviews and reports being undertaken. Peter Cummiskey from the Sports Federation of Queensland was special guest at the function.

Securing a partnership with BHP Billiton, in November 2003 the North Queensland Sports Foundation launched the BHP Billiton North Queensland Sports Development Bursaries. Nominations are received from member councils, giving the opportunity for young North

Queenslanders to receive a \$500 bursary to assist them in pursuing their chosen sport. In 2004, twenty-five bursaries were awarded to young North Queensland athletes, who also were given a unique jacket.

The 2003 Sportstar Awards were fast approaching, with Atherton Shire named the host for the event. The awards were held at the Merrilands Hall in Atherton, with Max Walker delighting the crowd as special guest. A large crowd was in attendance. Atherton Board Member, Joe Paronella worked hard to ensure the success and was ably supported by Kaye Maloney who coordinated the event. Winners on the night were Zoe Tonks of Cairns for swimming in the senior category and gymnast Chloe Jackson, also of Cairns, won the junior award. Completing the trifecta for Cairns, Heather Law won the Service to North Queensland Sport award for her dedication to the sport of softball for many years. At the 2003 awards, the latter award replaced the team category.



Original drawing of “Fred the frilled neck lizard” created by Jade Beck from the Proserpine State School.



Drawing refined by Andre Reynaud who also made the costume.

~Cairns 2004~

The 2004 Suncorp North Queensland Games, to be held in the Cairns region, were blessed with an efficient and enthusiastic Regional Organising Committee. Chaired by Councillor Margaret Cochrane of Cairns City, meetings were held regularly from February 2003. Meetings increased in proximity and intensity as the Games drew nearer.

Alison Lynch was employed to assist with the administration of the Games. Alison had also been employed for the 1996 North Queensland Games, held in Cairns. Many local people once again came forward as volunteers to assist with the preparations for the Games. Together with Jean -Marie Gontier, who had also volunteered in Townville (2000) and Mount Isa (2002) and Tony Lambert who had travelled to Mount Isa to volunteer for the 2002 Mount Isa Game worked tirelessly to make the Games a success.

A Gala Dinner for the Games was held at the Radisson Hotel on the Pier in Cairns on 8th April 2004 to welcome visitors to the area, and to serve as a prelude to the following day's opening ceremony. 110 people attended the dinner, endorsed by the Cairns City Council. Olympians Ji Wallace and Kylie Shadbolt, a Cairns local, were the evening's special guests.

Leading up to the Games weekend, in true style, Cairns received more than its fair share of rain. This resulted in organisers having to change the venue for the Opening Ceremony to Barlow Park, which was the centre for the organisation for the Games. This was done with a minimum of fuss and people waited with bated breath. Luckily the weather held off and the Opening Ceremony was conducted in dry but dim conditions. Suncorp CEO John Mulcahy attended the Games, which were officially opened by Ji Wallace. The features of the opening ceremony were a laser show and a parachutist descending into Barlow Park.

A total of 3,559 competitors were involved in the Games. Forty sports were included in the Games format, with two having withdrawn just prior to competition. Signature event for the Cairns Games was the Pyramid Challenge, a race that is held annually in Gordonvale. The event involves running up Walsh's Pyramid, which stands at a height of 922 metres. Fifteen runners competed in the event under harsh weather conditions. Cairns runner Nathan Walmsley beat three time champion Max Fegan to take honours in the event. Janelle Tilse of Mackay won the women's section.

The closing ceremony was a quiet affair, with Board Member Cr Joe Paronella of Atherton the Master of Ceremonies. An inter-shire relay was held. The Games flag was presented to Bill Molloy of Mackay City, host of the next Games.

At the Foundation's Annual General Meeting in October 2004, long time Chairman Ross Contarino retired from the position but agreed to continue

attending meetings as a Hinchinbrook Shire representative. Ross's commitment to the Foundation during his years as a Board Member and Chairman has been unwavering, and his calm, organised leadership a positive and solid influence upon the Foundation. Cairns City representative Councillor Margaret Cochrane ascended Ross as the new Chair. Margaret is the first female Chair of the Foundation and is determined to continue to lead the Foundation towards greater stature in the community and success in all its activities.

The North Queensland Sports Foundation continues to progress smoothly, perhaps in its strongest position for some time. With the 2006 Suncorp North Queensland Games due to be staged in the Mackay Region fast approaching, organisation of this unique biennial event is once again of paramount importance. The activities of the Foundation are greatly enhanced and broadened since its inception twenty two years ago. However the underlying aim endures – to work for the development and promotion of sport at a grass roots level.

The continued popularity of the Games can be reduced to the simple fact that they cater to the inherent love of sport characteristic of North Queenslanders. While the North Queensland Sports Foundation board has at times been ambivalent regarding elitism versus participation with regards to the Games, this issue has faded with time and knowledge of the joy people obtain simply from participating in the Games. Essentially, they are a friendly and family orientated Games.

With the Games continuing to be held on a biennial basis, the Sportstar Awards held annually, six Sports Education Tours in the planning for 2005, 20 BHP Billion bursaries awarded in 2005 and the North Queensland Green and Gold gaining in recognition, the Foundation is certainly actively involved in achieving the goals set two decades ago.

In fact the Foundation has exceeded the expectations envisaged by its founders at the public meeting in February 1983.

~Current Board Members~

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Chairman	Cr Margaret Cochrane	Cairns City
Deputy Chair	Cr Sam Torrasi	Hinchinbrook Shire
Secretary	Cr Murray Hurst	Thuringowa City
Treasurer	Mr Charlie Law	Whitsunday Shire
Operations Chair	Mr Tony Vaccaro	Burdekin Shire
Finance Chair	Cr Don Rolls	Mackay City
Marketing Chair	Cr Joe Paronella	Atherton Shire
Development Chair	Cr Blue Stewart	Herberton Shire

BOARD MEMBERS

Cr Michael Brunker	Bowen Shire
Cr Mark Gaudry	Bowen Shire
Cr Mark Castelanelli	Burdekin Shire
Cr Guni Liepins	Cardwell Shire
Cr Barry Barnes	Cardwell Shire
Cr Frederick Pascoe	Shire of Carpentaria
Mr Michael Stevenson	Shire of Carpentaria
Cr Frank Beveridge	Charters Towers City
Mr John Wallis	Charters Towers City
Mr John Hall	Cloncurry Shire
Mr Dave Watt	Cloncurry Shire
Cr Peter Scott	Cook Shire
Mr Graham Hunter	Croydon Shire
Mr Ian Barton	Douglas Shire
Cr Dave Egan	Douglas Shire
Cr Jayson Watkin	Eacham Shire
Mr Russell Molloy	Eacham Shire
Cr Sean O'Neill	Flinders Shire
Mr Ross Contarino	Hinchinbrook Shire
Cr Mark Nolan	Johnstone Shire
Ms Wendy Schulz	Johnstone Shire
Mr Paddy Flynn	Mackay City
Mr Brent Armstrong	McKinlay Shire
Cr Margaret Ryder	McKinlay Shire
Cr Rita Neilsen	Mirani Shire
Cr Brett Peterson	Mount Isa City
Cr Trevor Shelley	Nebo Shire
Mr Peter Elliott	Richmond Shire
Cr Paul Steindl	Sarina Shire
Ms Emily Morgan	Thuringowa City
Cr Les Walker	Townsville City
Mr Dan Jackson	Townsville City
Cr John Lloyd	Whitsunday Shire

LIFE MEMBERS

Mr Matt O'Neill	Mr Noel Wilson
Mr Bob McCullough	Mr Peter Elliott
Ms Pat Wright	Mr Ross Contarino

~Past Board Members~

(This information has been researched from various sources and as a result is as accurate as possible)

Surname	First Name	Shire	Commenced	Ceased
Abdy	Coral	Atherton	2000	2000
Abel	Richard	Flinders	1986	1991
Adamson	Eric	Cloncurry	1992	1994
Allen	Bill	Atherton	1986	
Anderson	Cliff (DEC'D)	Pioneer	1986	1991
Anderson	Cecil	Johnstone	1991	
Ash	John	Hinchinbrook		
Bagley	Leslie	Charters Towers	1991	2000
Ball	Brian	Herberton	1996	2000
Banks	Howard	Cairns	1988	1990
Barlow	Vikki	Thuringowa	2003	2005
Barty	Peter	Mackay		
Bennett	Allan		1984	
Benson	David	Thuringowa	1984	1986
Bertoncini	Vic	Douglas	1986	
Bewick	Robert	Herberton	1986	
Birchley	Simon	Johnstone	1986	1991
Bird	Elayne	Mareeba	2000	2001
Bird	Graham			
Blanch	Thomas	Cairns	1987	1991
Bolton	Chris	Cairns	1986	
Borne	Franz		1984	
Borzi	Micheli	Mareeba	2000	2002
Boyd	Julie	Mackay	1989	1991
Bradford	Richard	Burdekin	1991	1994
Busoli	David	Thuringowa	1986	1991
Byrne	John		1984	
Callcott	Ben	Dalrymple		
Callcott	Cheryl	Dalrymple	1984	1990
Callcott	Roxann	Dalrymple	1995	
Campbell	Bruce	Eacham	2003	2004
Cardillo	Antonio	Hinchinbrook	1992	2000
Cavanah	John	Johnstone	1994	1996
Chesney	Sandra	Thuringowa	1988	1990
Clarke	David	Atherton		
Clutton	Greg	Mackay	1996	
Coffison	Ron	Eacham	1986	
Collins	Herb	Johnstone	1983	
Comerford	John	Mackay	1987	
Comerford	John	Thuringowa	1997	1998
Connor	Pat	Sarina	1996	
Corcoran	A	Not Known	1985	1986
Costello	Natascha	Dalrymple	1991	1995
Cutler	Kevin	Thuringowa	1999	2002
Davis	Rick	Sarina	1997	2001
Davy	Brian	Whitsunday	1995	1999
Day	Robert	Not Known		
Duncan	Samantha	Whitsunday	2000	2001
Edwards	Lorell		1983	
Egan	John (DEC'D)	Mackay	1985	1986

Elton	Trevor	Burdekin		
Engler	Gilbert	Charters Towers	1984	
Fitchett	Rodney	Herberton	1991	2000
Flegler	Keith	Cardwell	1988	
Fletcher	Paul	Thuringowa	1988	1997
Fraser	Don	Eacham	1988	
Fry	Russell	Eacham		
Gaffney	Terry	Carpentaria	1994	1996
Gardner	Marc	McKinlay	2003	2005
Gilkerson	Oliver	Mareeba	1994	1997
Ginns	Darren	McKinlay	1986	1999
Grant	Bette	McKinlay	1986	1991
Gray	Gordon (Wally)	Mareeba	1984 & 1997	2000
Greenwood	Tom	Not Known		
Hampson	Terry	Johnstone	2000	2004
Hannah	Ann (DEC'D)	Townsville	1992	2002
Hanson	Ruth	Not Known	1985	1986
Harling	Shane	Not Known		
Hayden	Annette	Herberton	2000	2004
Hewett	Brian	Thuringowa	1994	2004
Hoey	Peter	Flinders	1997	1999
Hughes	Timothy	Richmond	2002	2004
Hunter	Beryl	Flinders	1991	1997
Jackson	David	Burdekin	2000	2004
Jones	Brian	Charters Towers	1983	
Kasper	Gregory	Nebo	1991	1999
Keogh	Peter	Mackay	1991	1994
Kidd	Neil	Nebo	1996	1999
Lawrence	Gary	Cloncurry		
Lawson	David	Cairns	1991	2000
Leather	Col	Bowen	1986	
Lennon	Douglas	Herberton	1994	1996
Lenthall	Pamela	Mulgrave	1991	1994
Lewis	Chris	Mareeba	1986	1994
Lindsay	Fran	Cairns	1994	2000
Locciasano	Mundo	Atherton		1987
Lucas	Lionel	Not Known		
Lynch	Laurie	Charters Towers	1988	1991
Maloney	John	Burke	1994	1995
Mawhinney	John	Flinders	1994	1999
McCall	Butch (DEC'D)	Mirani	1994	2000
McCullough	Bob		1983	
McCullough	Ronald	Mount Isa	1991	2004
McDonald	Ian	Burdekin	1984 & 1986	1991
McDonald	Margaret	Johnstone	1996	1997
McElligott	Ken	Townsville	1983	
McGrady	Tony	Mount Isa	1984 & 1986	1991
McIntosh	Ian	Charters Towers	1984	
McLaughlin	Lyn	Burdekin	1994	2000
McVeigh	John	Burdekin	1988	1990
Molloy	Bill	Mackay	2000	2004
Moore	Bob	Mount Isa		
Moran	Kevin	Burke		
Moscato	Anthony	Whitsunday	1992	1994
Murray	Marie	Mackay	1991	2000
Nash	Andrea	Cairns	1991	1994

Nichols	James	Mount Isa	1999	2004
Nicholson	Les	Townsville	1989	
O'Brien	Chris	Thuringowa		
O'Brien	John	Johnstone	1986	1991
O'Neill	Charlie	Carpentaria	1986	1990
O'Neill	Matt	Mirani	1984 & 1986	1996
Ormonde	Eric	Charters Towers	1983	
Overton	Ross	Johnstone		1987
Parakas	Peter	Johnstone	1997	2000
Pease	Diane	Cardwell	1994	
Percival	F	Thuringowa	1983	
Peterson	John	Sarina	1991	
Pleydell	Joanne	McKinlay	2001	2003
Pohlman	John	Hinchinbrook	1985	1986
Price	Tony	Whitsunday	1994	1999
Rankin	WJ	Not Known	1986	
Ringuet	Colette	Thuringowa	1992	1994
Robertson	Bernard	Dalrymple	1995	
Robertson	Janeen	Bowen	1984	
Rockley	Alan (DEC'D)	Atherton	1988	
Rose	Colin		1984	
Rossi	Robert	Mulgrave	1984 & 1986	1991
Saunders	Geoffrey	Nebo	1994	
Seaniger	Dale	Bowen	1983	
Skoein	Neill (DEC'D)	Mackay	1987	
Smith	Marilyn	Mirani	1991	1994
Smith	Geoffrey	Cairns	1994	
Stark	Phillip	Atherton	1986	2001
Taylor	Brian	Thuringowa	1986	
Ticehurst	Alan (DEC'D)	Cloncurry	1991	2000
Vardy	Justin	McKinlay	2000	2001
Vassallo	Samantha	Mirani	2003	2004
Wall	Stephen	Cardwell	1997	2000
Ward	Gary	Carpentaria	1996	
Watt	Walter		1984	
Waugh	Don	Eacham	1986	1991
Wehlow	Charlie		1984	
Wharton	David	Cardwell	1992	2004
Whitby	Peter		1984	
White	Peter	Not Known	1985	1986
White	Stephen	Mackay	1994	1995
Whitney	Jennifer	Whitsunday	1999	2000
Wichman	Ray	Mirani	1984 & 1986	
Wilkinson	Ivan (DEC'D)	Atherton		
Wilson	Noel	Townsville	1986	2000
Wright	Pat	Mackay City	1988	1994
Wright	Richard	Bowen	1996	2003

North Queensland Sportstar Awards

Winners of the Senior Sportstar Award

1990	Brad Beven	Mulgrave Shire	Triathlon
1991	Gisela Clayton	Townsville City	Archery
1992	Brad Beven	Mulgrave Shire	Triathlon
1993	Brad Beven	Mulgrave Shire	Triathlon
1994	Brad Beven	Mulgrave Shire	Triathlon
1995	Karrie Webb	Burdekin Shire	Golf
1996	Michael Ronning	Cairns City	Mountain Bike
1997	Wayne Mawer	Cairns City	Water Skiing
1998	Lance Kelly	Herberton Shire	Rodeo
1999	Jo Hamilton	Cairns City	Water Skiing
2000	Natarsha Williams	Johnstone Shire	BMX
2001	Scott Bower	Townsville City	Taekwondo
2002	Dianne Reeves	Carpentaria Shire	Clay target Shooting
2003	Zoe Tonks	Cairns City	Swimming
2004	Nigel Paul	Flinders Shire	Taekwon Do

Winners of the Junior Sportstar Award

1990	Julie Majer	Cairns City	Swimming
1991	Julie Majer	Cairns City	Swimming
1992	Bernard Panton	Cairns City	Cycling
1993	Dane Pilcher	Thuringowa City	Athletics
1994	Leano Viero	Burdekin Shire	Athletics
1995	Clint Lawson	Burdekin Shire	Boxing
1996	Cindy Morgan	Cairns City	Hockey
1997	Michael Arcidiacono	Mareeba Shire	Squash
1998	Courtney Hanson	Mount Isa City	BMX
1999	Ronnie Dugdell	Cairns City	BMX
2000	Jane Bennett	Mackay City	Hockey
2001	Jessica Affleck	Townsville City	Swimming
2002	Christopher Elphinstone	Bowen Shire	Swimming
2003	Chloe Jackson	Cairns City	Gymnastics
2004	Kim Carroll	Cardwell Shire	Soccer

Winners of Junior Team Award

2000	Cairns SH School U15	Cairns City	Soccer
2001	Burdekin Barras U13	Burdekin Shire	Soccer
2002	Proserpine U12 R L	Whitsunday Shire	Rugby League

Winners of the Services to North Queensland Sport Award

2003	Heather Law	Cairns City	Softball
2004	Denis Donaghy	Cairns City	Basketball

Chair's Choice Award

2004	Margie Ryder	McKinlay Shire	Dirt 'n' Dust Triathlon
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North Queensland Sport Development Bursary

Bursaries were awarded to the following athletes in 2004

Ellee List	Swimming	Burdekin
Kim Carroll	Soccer	Cardwell
Ryan Suhr	Boxing	Charters Towers
Justin O'Neill	Athletics	Flinders
Kieran Gonzalez	Soccer	Hinchinbrook
Keiryn Lenoy	Tennis	Johnstone
Chloe McPherson	BMX/Cycling	Mackay
Ashleigh Stebbeings	Waterskiing	Mackay
Cameron Cain	Rugby Union	McKinlay
James Edgar	Judo	Mount Isa
Maree-Louise Briffa	Tenpin Bowling	Mount Isa
Emma Longmuir	Gymnastics	Thuringowa
Rachel Bracken	BMX	Townsville
James Woodcraft	Athletics	Whitsunday
Carl Dorman	Athletics	Whitsunday
Katie Harris	Tennis	Johnstone
Kate Johnston	Touch	Eacham
Chloe Jackson	Gymnastics	Cairns
Jason Hamilton	Horse Endurance	Herberton
Matthew Muller	Squash	Whitsunday
Tara O'Brien	Athletics	Mount Isa
Donna Fallon	Swimming	Thuringowa
Kate Castelanelli	Soccer	Burdekin
Nicholas Brownson	Clay Target Shooting	Dalrymple
Matthew Cameron	Wheelchair Basketball	Townsville

Bursaries were awarded to the following athletes in 2005

Peter Blaik	Mackay	Cricket
Farrah Boustead	Johnstone	Soccer
Kara Buttle	Mackay	Artistic Skating
Annalise Chester	Herberton	Motocross
Jeremiah Clark	Whitsunday	Taekwon Do
Shannon Connolly	Eacham	Judo
Kyle Dearness	Thuringowa	Indoor Cricket
Corey Frieswyk	Mount Isa	BMX
Darcy Ginns-Larkin	McKinlay	Motocross
Tracey Hannah	Cairns	Mountain Biking
Lars Hansen	Whitsunday	Athletics
Ryan Jarvis	Burdekin	BMX
Travis Klein	Townsville	Futsal/Soccer
Adrienne Lovejoy	Mount Isa	Softball
Rachel Pennisi	Hinchinbrook	Athletics/Touch/Netball
Thomas Phillips	Townsville	Trampoline
Kimberley Schulte	Thuringowa	Baseball
Dijo Sexton	Atherton	Squash
Trevor Southern	Cardwell	Water Polo
Ashleigh Southern	Cardwell	Water Polo