



ourcommunity.com.au



CENTACARE
Catholic Family Services

Westpac Australian Community Idol 2007

Address to the Communities in Control Conference
Melbourne, 4 June, 2007

Shane Hartney & Gary Kairn

President & Vice President, United Cricket Club
(Bendigo, Victoria):
Community Idol Finalist

*If quoting from this speech, please acknowledge that it was presented to the

**2007 Communities in Control Conference
Convened by
Our Community & Centacare Catholic Family Services**

If quoting from this speech, please acknowledge that it was presented to the
2007 Communities in Control Conference, Convened by
Our Community & Centacare Catholic Family Services
www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic

Shane Hartney:

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to be here today representing our club, a small cricket club in Bendigo in central Victoria.

We have three open-age sides and a junior side and we operate out of the Emu Valley Cricket Association in central Victoria, which is typical of lots of country leagues run around Australia in the summer months.

If anyone's thinking of shifting to Bendigo over the next few months and are interested in a game of cricket, please give Gary and me your phone number after this session, particularly if you're an opening bat or wicket keeper; we are desperate for those type of players at this stage!

The club has had a go a number of things over a long time; over the past 20 years we've attempted a few different things in the club. It's very easy for a small community group just to tread water and operate the same thing every year and just operate as most clubs do. But we've tried to bring a few things to our club over the past 20 years, and that makes us a little bit different and keeps our members on our toes.

That variety has given our club probably a little bit more impetus and a little bit more vigour, and it means that we're not just playing cricket – we're doing something else for the community.

I'd like to elaborate on some of the things that we've done over the last 20 years. And just to show we're not treading water at the moment, next year we're introducing an over-40s cricket side, and over the next few years we're hoping to introduce a women's side into cricket in Bendigo.

One of our main initiatives has been integration of intellectually disabled people into our club. This came about purely by accident; we take no credit for that. I was working in a special education setting in Bendigo and loved to have a kick of the football and play cricket with the students at lunch and recess times. But the facilities at this venue weren't very good, so I had the idea of perhaps taking them down to

our local cricket club and showing them how a normal cricket club works – introduce them to the nets, to the clubrooms and use normal cricket gear.

That was very successful – the students loved it. We built it into our phys. ed. and sports program, and it continues as the basis to our program to this day; we're still taking students out of the school setting and bringing them down to the cricket club for sessions.

Then we modified it. We started bringing cricketers out of our cricket club to these training sessions to help with the training drills and to introduce different things to the students, and they developed a very good rapport with our students doing that.

A number of the students had had negative interactions with the law and with police. We have been lucky over the years to have had a number of police officers in our club, and we got them to come to these sessions and to take the students and show them that the police aren't just police for 24 hours a day, they have other lives. This was a great vehicle to break down some of the stereotypes that our students had about the police.

From there we introduced some of the students to our normal training on Tuesday and Thursday, and that was a very successful part of the program as well. A number of students over the years have actually played on a Saturday afternoon in our sides, our Division 3 sides, and that gave us a real buzz around the club.

For students who weren't so inclined on the sports side of things, we developed programs in our club catering for those needs as well – things such as ground manager, clubrooms manager, catering manager, and all sorts of roles that included people in the club and gave them some sort of meaningful role to play in the club.

Probably our most successful inductee in our club was Judith Hall. Judith came 20-odd years ago to the club as a 42-year-old. We asked Judith to come along and help with the afternoon teas. Judith, at that stage, was living with her Mum, a fantastic lady, but her Mum must

have done everything for her – we didn't realise that Judith hadn't crossed the road before by herself, hadn't actually been to a shop by herself before, and actually didn't know that tea needed to be boiled before it was a little bit tasty. The players in the club took it upon themselves to help Judith with these skills, and over several months she picked up all those things. And 21 years later she's still there every Saturday doing that sort of work and running the thing.

Judith doesn't realise she's breaking down barriers every Saturday afternoon. Other sides, of course, come into our rooms for afternoon tea. They all know Judith and they respect Judith and we just think she's a fantastic person. She brings boiled lollies along for the kids; our kids are there, have been there for years. And if you're in her good books you get a pair of socks for the players – you know you're in the good books with Judith when she presents you with socks.

This photo up there now gives me a lot of pleasure because it was taken about five years ago and it shows the fathers and sons that played together that year with that club. You'll see that there's 13, 14, 15-year-old boys in the front row. The nice thing about those boys is that most of them are still at our club. They've been brought up as toddlers from day one hanging around the club, around the players, and being involved with people of a range of abilities. And to them, intellectual disability has no meaning at all. We're just all people together, working together in the one club.

I think that's the one legacy our club is going to leave – these young fellows who are still at the club, they're now 17, 18, 19 years old. I hope they influence their peers. I'm very confident they'll pass the same attitude onto their own sons and daughters – that everyone's got a role to play and everyone's important and everyone's got something to do in any community group. We think that's fantastic.

I'd like to hand you over to Gary – he's going to talk about a couple of other things that we have done at the club for the last 10 or 15 years. Thank you.

Gary Kairn:

Shane has spoken about the integration of disabled people into our club, which is something we find really important. Some of the other things that we've done, and I'd just like to spend a few minutes on this, is looking at things we've done for members of our community – even members outside our own community.

I've got a couple of examples here and they'll go up on the slide show as we work through them.

We had a situation where one of our people had an illness in their family, quite a severe illness with Mum. We banded together with a local football club and basically overnight organised a charity raffle. We were able to present this family with a holiday to the Gold Coast, seven nights, airfares, and off they went. And it was just a real buzz for them but a real buzz for us to do it. Unfortunately, sometimes it does take tragedy to do that, but it's something that we've got within our culture at the club.

Here's another example, involving the broader community. People from Victoria will remember the tragic shooting of Rod Miller. We got involved in that through the local police in Bendigo and made our ground and facility and equipment and members available so that the local police in Bendigo could organise a charity match there. At the end of that we could give those funds straight to the Miller family on behalf of both United Cricket Club and the local police. Again, this was something organised unfortunately out of tragedy, but something we could find that would bind us together.

They're just a couple of examples that we've done as far as what the club is.

Just finally in finishing off, what about the club – what is United Cricket Club? As Shane said, we're a cricket club, we play in local association around Bendigo, basically a bush league, although we're city based in Bendigo, our club. We have built a strong club, not only in terms of the

personal, but also in terms of facilities, and we've been lucky to do that because of the commitment of the people within the club.

We don't have people on pay; we don't have any honorariums; we have nothing like that. We've just got a group of people that have passion. All the work's done voluntarily, and as the slides change over, you can see the work we've started. That is our basic clubroom at the start, years ago. We've been able to work hard as a club and as a community to establish and move to where we are now, which is obviously a much better facility than the old 'Changi' as we used to call it. I can remember getting changed in Changi and playing football on Ewing Park when I was a kid going to primary school, so it was pretty old.

We did raise funds and we did work hard and we have had some help and assistance in a minor way from our local council, which is good. Obviously awards like this, to be nominated and plucked out of the bucket as one of the three, I think is amazing.

That's all past now. We look to the future and we look for things that we can also do to help with the community as we move forward. And that's what it's all about. Obviously things that we've done in the past are important to us, but they are history. We'll continue our integration because that's just important to us. It's what makes us a successful club.

In closing, I'd like to thank you for listening to us, to let us tell you a small part about what United Cricket Club is, and what it means to us. I've got no doubt that the other presentations you'll hear will be excellent, and it's just great that the three of us have been able to give a small piece of why our organisations are important to us.

Thank you.

Communities in Control 2007

Proudly presented by



and



With the support of our Alliance Partners:



australia's aluminium



If quoting from this speech, please acknowledge that it was presented to the 2007 Communities in Control Conference, Convened by Our Community & Centacare Catholic Family Services www.ourcommunity.com.au/cic