

FOUNDING OF THE TAKAPUNA RUGBY CLUB

Founded in 1934 the Takapuna Rugby Club is able to look back on 51 years of involvement in rugby and the district of Takapuna with pride and satisfaction.

Originally servicing an area comprising isolated settlement, farmlands and bush, Takapuna Club now competes with nine other rugby clubs domiciled amidst a fast growing urban sprawl covering much of the North Harbour peninsula.

The year 1972 saw the Club Headquarters transfer from Taharoto Road to the impressive Club Rooms and superior facilities at Onewa Domain. Takapuna Rugby Football Club may reflect with satisfaction on the achievements of the club's teams. In recent years the club has catered for up to 28 junior boys' teams, a significant contribution to the development of young people in the region. The club may take pride in the junior grade teams who provided the club with several championship titles in the late 1970's and the seniors who took out the prestigious Gallaher Shield in 1940 and 1980.

A golden era for Takapuna began in 1978 when the seniors under the coaching direction of Peter Roberts began the climb back from the second division and culminated with the team winning the 1980 ARU Championship. By 1980 the Club had New Zealand representatives in All Black prop Greg Burgess, Junior All Blacks, second five eight, Mike Mills and centre Gary Brunson and a New Zealand Colt full back, Ian Frew.

On occasions the club would field up to seven players in one game in the Auckland Senior Provincial team and since 1978 the Takapuna senior team has reached the championship round each year.

Many great players and fine people have passed through the Takapuna Club during the past 51 years leaving it richer for their contribution. Some of these people have gone onto higher achievements beyond the boundaries of rugby.

Fred Thomas, Mayor of Takapuna and Sir David Beattie, Governor General of New Zealand are among these. Within the rugby world, Takapuna's All Black trialist of the 1970's, Chris Kennings is poised as Chairman of our new Union to make a significant contribution to the game.

THE GROWING PAINS – 1934-1976 – Vin Baylis

Our Club was formed in the period referred to as the "Great Depression" and it is a great tribute to our Founders that, they:

1. Purchased a section of land right opposite Taharoto Park and;
2. With borrowed money had erected the Training Shed and Dressing Rooms in 1936.

Traffic along Taharoto Road was very light in those early days but became increasingly heavier as the years went by.

The fact that our Headquarters were in the middle of a residential area caused severe restrictions on the uses to which the premises could be put, particularly later on when we had built the “Social Hall” onto the front of the training shed (1936) and with the advent of the Town and Country Planning Act.

- So it was in the early 1960's when the Barry's Point Tip got into full swing and the large reclamation now completed was in its early stages, our Club officials started thinking of a) having grounds available there some day in addition to Taharoto Park and b) moving the headquarters down there.
- However progress was slow and it became apparent that many years would pass before the ground had settled and with drainage problems etc it would be better to look at alternatives.
- During the later 1960's it was suggested that we build a new headquarters on Taharoto Park. We even had a “perspective drawing” of a building on sight, in the area now occupied by the Soccer Club. This was the period when the TCC relaid the No: 1 field in its present position. However no development took hold and this went no further because of local complaints.
- It was about this time that committee man Mr WRF Ramsay suggested that a large vacant area adjacent to Thomas Park off Porana Road could be a possibility and went to the Council without result.
- We seemed to be in a “nowhere to go” situation and in 1970 we had no home ground for Senior Football as Taharoto Number One was not ready. The 1971 season was back to normal.
- SUMMER 1971-72 – The Big decision. Mayor Fred Thomas suggested a swap: TRFC to Onewa Domain and the Soccer Club to Taharoto. A group of our committee men met the Mayor and others at Onewa one sunny morning and the concept was outlined. We would have three full sized fields – as eventuated – plus the use, for an unspecified time, two smaller fields on the hockey/cricket area.
- The benefits to us inherent in such a move were obvious to a majority of committee members, Life Members and indeed most of the Club members as they became acquainted with the proposition. Objectors were few – three committee and a similar number of others. Needless to say there are none now!
- Mayor Fred Thomas explained that for various good reasons, there was some urgency in acceptance of the proposal and a special meeting of members was called. Approval in principle was passed by a very large majority.
- It is worth recording for posterity that Mayor Fred Thomas was the force behind this and other developments in up-grading the sporting facilities in Takapuna. We who were involved in our particular activities are grateful for his efforts. To achieve the complete result at Onewa he personally had to deal directly not only with Rugby, Soccer, Cricket and Hockey Clubs but also with the NZ Post Office, NZ Army,

Northcote Borough Council, Waitemata County Council, the Education Department – all of these bodies owning land around the Domain.

- The efforts of a number of committee members between 1972 and the opening of our Onewa headquarters on March 20th 1976 was immense but those who inherited a “going concern” have benefited greatly – that after all was the whole purpose.

GOLDEN JUBILEE, 1934-1984

It is hard to believe 1934 to 1984 – fifty years gone by.

It seems such a short time ago that the Club was formed in a rapidly growing suburb of Auckland.

I read with renewed interest in the history of Auckland Rugby, of familiar lack of early facilities the drive of enthusiastic members from one stepping stone to another to achieve the final goal – a home.

An extract from Auckland Rugby Union history reads – The Club organised a Donnybrook Fair and collected £800 (\$1,600) from a huge attendance – big money in those days.

How well I remember the first real home in Taharoto Road and across the road the 2 rugby fields, in those days a great facility.

In 1940 a red letter day for the Club in winning for the first time the Gallaher Shield. It has always been a pleasure to play at Taharoto Park and Takapuna sides were always worth opponents. I recall also playing cricket and refereeing on the ground.

The shift to Onewa Domain marked a difficult but now wise decision. As one who was closely associated in some of the planning, I know of the many problems which had to be over-come. Needless to say all financial and building worries were overcome by the devoted few so that today present players and those of the future can have magnificent facilities.

Local bodies are so often the target of cries for help and more help but I believe the Takapuna City Council has always been receptive to reasonable requests by the Club for encouragement.

I am sure elsewhere in this publication due recognition will be made to the many prominent sons who brought the Club to its present standing today.

The Club now soundly based can look forward to the advent of the next 50 years of wonderful progress.

LF Warren – President ARF Union



Takapuna Rugby Football Club 5th Grade 1934.