

# THE TORCHBEARER

## NEWSLETTER 76

**“56ers Torchbearers Club Inc”**

PO Box 2148, CAIRNS Q 4870

**Committee:**

Patron	Margaret Cochrane	
President	Jim Vallely	Tel 07 40532150
Vice President	Dennis Stevenson	Tel 07 40653223
Secretary/Treasurer	Bill Cummings	Tel 0418 871 011
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are invited to join members for the annual lunch commencing approximately at 1PM.

Please see attached meeting notice along with proxy form for those members unable to attend.

### Annual General Meeting 2023

Held at Cairns RSL Boardroom, the following office bearers were re-elected. President: Jim Vallely, Vice President: Dennis Stephenson, Hon Secretary/Treasurer: Bill Cummings, Assistant Secretary: Andrew Cummings.



2023 AGM Luncheon.

### President’s Comments

Greetings Fellow Torchbearers and Partners.

The 2024 North Queensland Games are done and dusted, an event where six happy athletes share in \$2,000 provided by our Club for both the Men’s and Women’s 1500 Metre Track Events.

Australia’s Olympic Team has had a wonderful Paris experience with our female competitors holding bragging rights and rightly so. For a small population our athletes punch well above their weight.

On the local scene, the International Iron Man Competition seems to be going from strength to strength, run during the month of May and drawing athletes from across the Globe helping to boost the local economy.

Trusting your senior years are being kind to you all and that you keep on keeping on.

Kind regards  
Jim Vallely  
President



### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2024

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

The annual meeting of the 56ers Olympic Torchbearers Club will be held in accordance with tradition, on **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2024**, i.e. close to the anniversary of the original commencement of the 1956 Olympic Torch Relay from Cairns to Melbourne on the 9th November 1956.

The meeting will be held at the Boardroom of the Cairns RSL, Esplanade, Cairns, commencing at 11.30am. Following the meeting, wives and guests

### North Queensland Games 2024

The North Queensland Games were held in Cairns, 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2024. The Club again sponsored the Men’s and Women’s 1500 meter event with \$2,000 prize money and representatives invited to participate in the games official opening ceremony and medal presentations.



Club President Jim Vallely announcing the continued sponsorship by the 56ers of the 1500m event at the NQ Games opening ceremony.



Jim Vallely and Bill Cummings participating in the lighting of the torch.



Club President Jim Vallely and Club Hon. Secretary Bill Cummings passing the games torch to Cairns Mayor Amy Eden.



Open men's medal presentation Barlow Park. 1<sup>st</sup> place Nicholas Fogale (4:01:80) age 20 (Cairns Athletics), 2<sup>nd</sup> place Kaiyan Blue (4:03:12) age 17 (Pace Running Cairns), 3<sup>rd</sup> Brody Boerboom (4:07:17) age 18 (Pace Running Cairns).

Front row left to right, Bill Cummings, Cr Rhonda Coghlan (Games Chair), Jim Vallely & 56er Don Lowe.



Jim Vallely presenting 56ers book "The Torchbearer" at the open women's medal presentation Barlow Park. 1<sup>st</sup> place Katelyn McGee (4:54:92) age 16 (Pace Runner Cairns), 2<sup>nd</sup> place Audrey Hall (5:01:20) age 28 (Townsville Road Runners), 3<sup>rd</sup> Bridie Maher (5:10:48) age 17 (Pace Running Weipa).

**WE SHOULD NEVER FORGET THEM**

**Jack Donaldson**

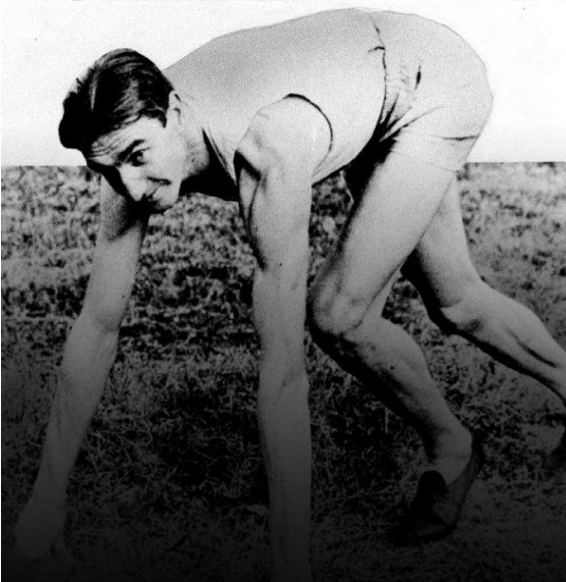
*The 'Blue Streak'*

Educated at local state schools, young Jack Donaldson worked at a Kerang store and flour-mill, and trained and rode his father's trotters before devoting himself to professional running. After some success as a schoolboy athlete Donaldson first became widely known in 1906 when he ran second in the Stawell Gift. Travelling overnight to Bendigo, he won both the 130yds (119m) and 220yds (201m) there. Over the next two years he had numerous victories at meetings in eastern Australia in spite of his rapidly increasing handicap.



Open Men's and Women's 1500m events on the track, Barlow Park, Cairns.

Of medium stature but slight build, 175cm tall and just 65kg, he attracted notice with his long, gliding stride and high arm action. His title, 'Blue Streak', derived from his well-known blue singlet marked with a large white 'A'. He set times from 1910 to 1913 which stood for up to 40 years. During his career, Donaldson broke 13 world records.



*Jack Donaldson at the starting line..*

Self-trained and using a natural style, Donaldson was at his best at professional distances beyond 100yds and set times which, though not electronically clocked, stamped him as the greatest natural runners the world has known. The fact that his records survived into an era of better coaching, tracks and equipment (including starting blocks) is evidence of his exceptional talent.

With his manager, E. R. ('Mick') Terry, Donaldson sailed for South Africa in 1909. Always a professional, Donaldson turned in some of the most remarkable times for that era. In 1910 he flashed over 100yds to win a \$4000 race in Johannesburg beating America's Charles Holway and Australia's Arthur Postle in 9.37 seconds (a fifth of a second faster than the amateur record of the time). It took 38 years before America's Mel Patton bettered the time with a flat 9.3 seconds in 1948. His 130yds (119m) record stood until 1951.

In 1910 Donaldson defeated the 1908 Olympic champion, South African Reg Walker and the two had many tussles in Africa and England, with Donaldson usually the victor.

He had some memorable contests against Australian champion Arthur Postle who was five years his senior. While Postle was very quick over

the short sprints, he could not match Donaldson over longer distances. Their contests became part of the folklore of Australian professional running.

Among his world records, Donaldson ran a particular blinder 12 seconds for 130yds at the tight Sydney Sports Ground grass track in 1911. This time stood for 40 years until Lloyd La Beach of Panama clocked 11.9 seconds in 1951. There were claims that the Sports Ground track had a 0.6m drop towards the finish line, but this possible advantage was countered by a very sharp turn. To prove the run was no fluke, he ran 12.18 seconds the following year on a rough grass track at Pontypridd in Britain. At meetings held in the north of England, Wales and Scotland, he ran for appearance money, prizes and bets.

Donaldson was the epitome of the professional elite athlete, enjoying the good life. He was a serious athlete who was respected for his dedication and talent. At the age of 32, and without training for years, Donaldson was still able to break 10 seconds for 100yds.

With matches hard to come by, Donaldson turned to track management. Although he argued that as an Australian he could not be conscripted, in 1916 he was charged with being an absentee from service and ordered to join the British Army. After seeing 'something of the real war game' with the 7th Manchesters at Arras, Donaldson became a physical education instructor. He made a brief return to professional running in Britain before going to the USA in 1919. Declining chances to coach, Donaldson worked for Wanamakers, a New York retailer.



*Drinking fountain dedicated to the memory of Jack Donaldson at Central Park in Stawell, Victoria – the home of the Stawell Gift.*

## Paris 2024

### The most successful Games in Australian history.

Team	1	2	3	4
1  United States	40	44	42	126
2  China	40	27	24	91
3  Japan	20	12	13	45
4  Australia	18	19	16	53
5  France	16	26	22	64
6  Netherlands	15	7	12	34
7  Great Britain	14	22	29	65
8  South Korea	13	9	10	32
9  Italy	12	13	15	40
10  Germany	12	13	8	33

The total of gold medals won in Paris, 18, is the most ever won by an Australian team at any Games in history, placing them fourth on the medal table.

### 2024 In Perspective

In Melbourne 1956, Australia won an impressive 8.5 per cent of the 153 gold medals available, in Athens (5.65 per cent), in Sydney (5.33 per cent) and in Tokyo (5 per cent) the next best results.

If Australia were to match their Melbourne efforts in the Paris Olympics, which saw 329 gold medals go on the line, they would have needed to pick up 28 gold medals.

### Sweet, sweet Olympic redemption

Redemption was the theme of these Games for many Australian athletes. We witnessed resiliency and the heart of champions as they fought back from their lowest of lows to capture that elusive Olympic gold.

The first of which was flag bearer Jess Fox. Nobody will ever forget those heartbreaking scenes in Tokyo when she missed out on gold in the traditional K1. It was utter despair. But that would all become a distant memory, at least temporarily, after a jaw-dropping run at the Vaires-sur-Marne rapids in east Paris. Fox blitzed the field to finally grab that gold medal before backing it up in the C1 three days later.



History made as Jessica Fox wins 2 Gold.

And then there's Cameron McEvoy. Having flunked his only individual Olympic final, the 100m freestyle in Rio eight years ago, the star sprinter was out to make amends in the 50m dash in Paris. McEvoy powered his way to gold in a stacked field, and, like Fox, erased those past demons in an instant.



Cameron McEvoy's rise to become Olympic champion.

Completing the redemption trifecta was the men's cycling pursuit squad of Sam Welsford, Kelland O'Brien, Conor Leahy, and Oliver Bleddyn. The Australians had famously crashed out of this race in Tokyo three years ago at the qualification stage, and not many gave the new-look line-up much of a chance of making the podium in Paris. Yet they walked away from the Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines Velodrome with gold and a new world record in the event.



Oliver Bleddyn, Sam Welsford, Conor Leahy & Kelland O'Brien share Olympic gold.

Congratulations to all our Australian athletes who competed in our nation's most successful Olympic Games in history.

**Jokes Corner**

Two friends are walking down the street thinking of something to do. One friend turns to the other and says, "Let's go get a drink, there's this new place that does THE best punch you'll ever drink." So they make their way to the bar and walk straight up to the bartender "Bartender, two glasses of your best punch please."

The bartender replies in a stern voice, "If you want some punch you're going to have to get in line like everybody else."

The friends turn and look around but there's no punch line ...

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I told my boss three companies were after me and I needed a raise to stay at my job. We haggled for a few minutes, and he gave me a 5% raise.

Leaving his office, he stopped and asked me, "By the way, which companies are after you?" I responded, "The Gas, Electric, & Telecommunications Company."

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A man goes into a pet shop to buy a parrot. The shop owner points to three **identical-looking** parrots on a perch and says, "The parrot on the left costs \$500 dollars."

"Why does the parrot cost so much?" asks the man. The owner says, "Well that parrot knows how to use a computer."

The man then asks about the next parrot and learns that it costs \$1,000 dollars because it can do everything the first parrot can do plus it knows programming.

Naturally, the increasingly startled man asks about the third parrot, only to be told that it costs \$2,000 dollars. Needless to say, this begs the question, "What can it do?"

To which the owner replies, "To be honest, I have never seen it do anything, but the other two call him boss!"

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The chief engineer on a steam train got a new apprentice. "What's your name, son?" the older man barked.

"It's Charles, sir," the apprentice replied.

"Listen to me, boy!" the engineer shouted angrily.

"I have never called an apprentice by his first name! What's your last name, son?"

"It's Darling, sir."

"All right then, Charlie. Let's start shovelling some coal..."



Kind Regards  
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"The Running Scotsman"

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