

SEPTEMBER 16 1995 is a big day for the Redland Junior Rugby League Club. It's the date of the official opening of their clubhouse at the Pinklands Sports Grounds.

But for a small group of dedicated parents and lovers of the sport of Rugby League, it is also a day they envisaged 25 years ago.

In September 1970, the Redland Junior Rugby League Club was formed at a meeting in the Cleveland Methodist Hall.

The idea for the club actually was born in Nev Ball's lounge room in 1968 when he and his wife Gwen sought a club for their three young sons. At the same time, Cleveland State High teacher John Scraggs recognised the need for a local club as boys were travelling to play for Wynnum-Manly Junior Rugby League.

It didn't take long for word to spread, the initial meeting was held and a committee elected. And so began a 25-year stretch of hard slog, raising funds to build a club from scratch.

The inaugural committee members were then Member for Redlands Ted Baldwin as patron, president Nev Ball, vice-president Keith Slater, secretary John Scraggs, treasurer Paul Green and registrar Col Twist. The established Wynnum-Manly Club were early supporters and played a significant role in helping the new Redland club get off the ground.

In the early days, the Cleveland Showground was the club's base. However, this soon became impractical with games and training interrupted by other events at the grounds, as well as changing needs due to expanding membership.

By 1972, the club was seeking a permanent home. Application was made to Redland Shire Council to lease six hectares in Wellington Street where the Redland Hospital now stands.

There was some local objection to this proposal and it wasn't until 1978 that then Council chairman Dick Woods suggested the Pinklands area on the Cleveland-Redland Bay Road at Thornlands be utilised.

According to a past president and early club member Dudley Richards, the Pinklands site was a daunting challenge as it was nothing but bushland, but the club seized the opportunity and secured the lease.

It was at this stage in the club's history that the commitment and dedication of its members came to the fore. An enormous amount of funding was needed, as well as contributions of hard yakka and free time.

With \$10,000, enough bushland was cleared to make way for playing fields. This revealed the first stumbling block - there was insufficient land for two fields.

Mr Richards said Council was reluctant to release more land but a resolution was finally reached and the extra 30 metres needed to create two fields was made available.

Current club secretary Geoff Hegarty, who has been involved with Redland Junior Rugby League since 1971, secured a \$71,000 grant from the Federal Government, believed to be the largest sports grant to that time.

The money was put to immediate use creating the playing fields. Members themselves set to work with picks and shovels, taking on seemingly impossible tasks of laying stormwater drains, underground irrigation, wiring the area and then installing the lights, apart from grassing and maintaining the fields.

Fund raising was ongoing. Raffles at the Cleveland Sands Hotel were popular and Bingo nights were held at the Cleveland Community Centre in Smith Street - anything and everything was done to reach their goal.

as including anyone who was still able to run around a football field for more than 10 minutes.

At 4pm on Saturday September 16, Member for Bowman and Minister for Veterans' Affairs Con Sciacca will officially open the Redland Junior Rugby League Club's clubhouse before invited guests and dignitaries.

Present at this special occasion will be most of the club's founding members who set out in 1970 to give young boys and girls of the Redlands a game of football each weekend. Many of those original members are still involved in the club and now delight in seeing their children's children run onto the playing fields representing Redland Junior Rugby League.

*by Lisbeth Wilmont*  
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