

## MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 16 August 2019

### Wynyard Sports Centre celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary

The Wynyard Sports Centre will notch up a significant milestone on Friday, August 23, as it celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Home to the Wynyard Wildcats, the centre also hosts badminton and volleyball.

Initially known as the Wynyard Youth Centre, its establishment was influential in creating some of the Coast's biggest sporting names, said Waratah-Wynyard Mayor Robby Walsh.

"Look at Carla Boyd. If this stadium wasn't here, we wouldn't have had an Olympic-medal winner from our community," Mayor Robby Walsh said.

Prominent Wynyard sportsmen Brian Wilson (committee President) and Rhys London (committee Secretary) were both key to the centre's establishment.

Beset by early frustrations, in 1965 the committee got the green light after it raised its first \$3000 via a raffle, and received a \$10,000 donation from Council, with work starting in July 1966.

Mr Wilson and Mr London organised two more raffles and lobbied for government funding.

"The raffles gave us enough funds to get the foundation underway," Brian Wilson said. "With voluntary labour, we used to work every weekend."

"The centre was established with many volunteers from the community: electricians, builders, hardware suppliers, but it wouldn't have happened without people like Rhys and Brian," Mayor Walsh said.

Their important roles are recognised with their names included on the official opening plaque, alongside former State Premier Eric Reece, at the centre's entrance.

The wisdom and advice of George Russell, who at the time ran the Devonport Sports Centre, was a huge help to the committee, Rhys London said, and the quality of the work was such that the building still stands in excellent repair.

"The floor hasn't needed replacing," Mr London said. "Ernie Johnson made absolutely sure we had pure concrete foundations the length of the court, and the floor is still perfect."

"It's great to see the stadium in this condition," Mr Wilson said. "It's been maintained beautifully for 50 years and it's a credit to the Council."

**Authorised for general media distribution by Shane Crawford, General Manager, Waratah-Wynyard Council on Friday, August 16, 2019**

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