Presidents Report - Steve Bevan

2025 - We did it! One for the ages

This, is going to be a hard one, and it's hard to know just where to start. Today I stand before you all for the last time as the president of the Brisbane Hustlers. I stand before you a better man than I was in 2019, a wiser and more knowledgeable man, I stand before you a more humbled man. But the best part about standing before you today is standing in front of a club who has achieved so much over the last 3 years.

I firstly would like to acknowledge all of the club presidents that have stood here before me, and all of the presidents from all of our family clubs from Australia and New Zealand. You are the reason our clubs continue to make change in this world, for the better. You are the reason people feel safe to participate in sport again. There are people out there that think that we do this job for the title and the glory. I rewind to 2003, 1 year before our club existed. I had started at a new highschool, a catholic all boys school in Toowoomba. I had come from living on a farm and knew no one at this school. For the next 5 years of my life, I would be relentlessly bullied, made fun of because I was different, put down because they all thought that I was gay. I had NO friends. Fast forward to 2017 and I gave sport a go again, I hadn't played any sport for 10 years. I tried indoor soccer with a random team in a Thursday night comp. I didn't feel welcome, they knew I was different. I knew I was never going to fit in. I was just about to give up on it all, when at the start of 2019 I had remembered seeing the Brisbane Hustlers years before on instagram. Just like most of you here today, I reached out and came down to training. Ever since that day something changed. I found my friends, I found family, I found where I belong, I felt wanted. After 29 years of my life I finally found something I was beginning to think I would never find, and all thanks to a gay rugby club in Brisbane. How could I ever repay this club for giving me this? To give back to that club and say thank you, I joined the committee. I started in a general committee positon, I didn't go straight to the top job. When COVID hit, a small group of only about 7 of us remained. We worked tirelessly to rebuild our club over the next few years, and prepare for Bingham Cup in Ottawa in 2022. In 2023 I wanted to give back even more, and accepted the nomination of president. Over the next 3 years, I would give countless hours of my time to this club. Meetings, partnership deals, sleepless nights, weekends full of club admin and events, all while playing, working a full time job, and having a home life. But why? Because I wanted to give back to a club that had given me so much. I wanted to give back to a club that had given me friends. So to those that think I did it for the glory and the title, now you know the real reason.

From 2023 to now, our club has achieved so much. We have increased our member base, continued partnerships, obtained new equipment like the large tackle mat, and VEO camera, secured hosting rights to international tournaments, and even won the second largest tournament we play in.

In 2023, we secured a second big corporate sponsorship deal, held successful fundraising events with the addition of our carwash and dance party fundraisers, and traveled to Perth for Purchas Cup. We had 29 player members and 7 supporter members.

2024 was a BIG year for our club. We celebrated our 20th anniversary, not something many IGR clubs can say they have done yet. We introduced two new perpetual trophies for our cabinet, The Old Boys Hall of Fame, and the Presidents award. We held many successful fundraisers, one of our favourite events Bootcamp at Tyalgum, and flew half way around the world with a touring group of 42 members, including all of our amazing staff and supporters, to Rome for the 2024 Bingham Cup. We went undefeated in the pool round, with the only points scored against us being a penalty kick by Cologne Crushers, overall finishing 3rd place at the Bingham Cup. The best result at a Bingham Cup by our club in 10 years. The Brisbane Hustlers would also be named as the hosts of the world cup for gay, lesbian and inclusive rugby, the Bingham and Amanda Mark Cup. This would be huge for our club and our region. We had 27 player members and 8 supporter members.

On to 2025 and we had our biggest and best year yet and one that would be cemented in the history books. On the 19th of March the Brisbane Hustlers made history when our first women's team took to the pitch to play a friendly against the Brisbane Irish. But this team wouldn’t just be our first women's team, it would be the first women's gay, lesbian and inclusive rugby team in Australia and New Zealand. The Brisbane Hustlers would create a pathway and example for women's rugby for all the world to see. At the end of 2025 we have 15 women's player members, plus more who have been coming to trainings regularly and will sign up at the start of next year. Moving through the year we held our first double header where our mens and womens teams would play side by side for PRIDE round on the 14th of June. We held our successful Trivia Night and Rugger Bugger Hustler fundraisers in our preparation for Purchas Cup in Auckland in September. Purchas Cup came around and our mens team went undefeated through the pool rounds, 20-5 against NZ Falcons, 7-0 against Sydney Convicts, and 13-7 against the Melbourne Chargers. Playing Sydney Convicts in the Purchas Cup final would see our mens team beat Sydney Convicts 7-5 to bring home the Purchas Cup for 2025. This was a huge achievement for our club and has given us all the confidence, determination, and spirit going in to 2026 when we play for the Bingham Cup on home soil here in Brisbane. In 2025 we had a total of 46 financial player members, and 16 financial supporter members. Our club has almost doubled in size since 2023, because we provide a safe space where people can find friends and find family, and participate in sport.

Our club did it.

I’m so immensely proud of our members. To our womens team, I can’t wait to see you shine even more in 2026, and to see Australia's first ever gay, lesbian and inclusive womens team take to the pitch in an Amanda Mark Cup. This will be a momentous occasion, and I know you will wear that jersey with pride. You are Hustlers, and always will be.

To our mens team. We have what it takes to win the Bingham Cup next year, we showed that in Auckland. We have the team already, and I believe in every single one of you. What you showed out there on the pitch at Ponsonby is something I have never seen from our team before. And with some extra recruiting we should have two mens teams for next year, but I want to make sure that the members who should be there will be there leading the way and playing for OUR club.

All of what has happened over the last three years could not have happened without the help of some amazing people. I want to start particularly with our management committee for 2025, Jye, Avonn, Margz, and Dan, thank you for your hard work. We had a vision, and we made it happen. Where others had let us down or dropped off, each one of you stepped up and helped pick up the pieces. Being part of a committee is never easy and when you have people that don't take their positions seriously or do them at all, it takes us away from doing the most meaningful work. But we managed and we did it, no one can take that away from us.

Our general committee, Jarred Rogers, Jon Willis, Kieran Flemming, Dave Mildren, and Kate Moloney. Thank you for taking on these roles, completing your tasks, and always giving it your all. I must make mention of Brandon for stepping up with his experience of travel, in organising our tour to Auckland. You did a fantastic job, everyone had a great time, and you took the pressure off. A very special mention to Jarred for the immense amount of work he put into our fundraising events for the year. Events is one of the biggest gen com roles, and I know doing this role has prepared Jarred to succeed in future roles within our clubs committee.

To Dave, thank you for being our team manager. Thank you for helping me to organise game days, attending every single fundraiser, and thank you for the countless phone calls listening to me. I know you believe in this club and we are all grateful you came along.

Tara and Kate. I could never be more grateful for you both. Kate you pushed to make the womens team happen, and Tara you saw the potential and need. You both deserve full credit for the amount of work you did in making this happen, and your names will be forever in our clubs history. Tara you listened and adapted to the challenge of coaching a team from a club like ours, this is not something that many can do. Thank you.

Thank you to Zac Gregson and Saxon for coaching our mens team for the year. You both stepped up to the role this year, and you both did a great job. Thank you for all of your hard work.

I must also thank Collin, for all that you do to keep us all held together over the last two years.

A big thank you to Jason and the rest of the Bingham Cup Brisbane 2026 committee, for continuing the work of bringing this great tournament down under. We are all excited to see what is in store.

To our 61 club members, thank you. You are what makes this club what it is. I said at the end of my 2023 report that what we had planned wouldn't happen without YOU, and you all made it happen. This is YOUR club, it exists for YOU, it exists to make you feel safe, and it exists for you to play sport.

Finally to Mitch. Thank you so much for supporting me and allowing me the time to give back to a club that has given me so much. Thank you for traveling around the world with me to play a sport I love and be part of all of this. Now this is our time to enjoy Friday night rugby from the other side, to get some time back, and to enjoy more of our time together. I love you.

So this is it. I will still be around. I will be working on the Bingham Cup committee, organising an unforgettable experience for our IGR family. And of course I will be playing next year and can't wait to run on to the pitch at Bingham along side all of you to win that cup.

Thank you Brisbane Hustlers, for saving me, and thank you for giving me something I longed for…. FRIENDS.