**CYGNET FC – PAST PLAYERS, OFFICIAL & SUPPORTERS FUNCTION - 22 July 2017**

Over 110 past players, officials and supporters of the Cygnet Football Club, along with representatives from other Huon and Channel Football Clubs and respected umpire Haydyn Nielsen, gathered last Saturday for the Port’s annual get-together. The theme for this year’s event was to commemorate the coaches, players and support staff involved in the final years of the Huon Football Association (HFA), which unfortunately folded at the end of the 1997 season.

MC Brendan Dare welcomed all along and kept everyone highly entertained throughout the day’s proceedings. Club President, David O’Neill spoke of the Club’s improvement and positive direction over the past few seasons, the excellent progress of the Southern Storm Colts and the introduction this season of a Port Women’s team into the SFLW competition. David then introduced the Port Senior squad prior to their game with Brighton, and proudly announced that home-grown Senior Coach, Ben Cato, had been reappointed for the next two seasons. Ben was then invited to say a few words on how he saw the team’s progress this season and where he saw the team’s direction over the next few years.

Ex-Collingwood Premiership Captain, Tony Shaw, was the guest speaker at the event and he spoke of his 40 years involvement as a VFL/AFL player, coach and media commentator since being recruited to Collingwood in 1977. The highlight of his career was captaining the 1990 Premiership team, in which he also was awarded the Norm Smith Medal for best player on the ground. Tony later coached Collingwood for four seasons from 1996 before commencing his role in the media.

Tony was an excellent speaker, keeping everyone enthralled with his frankness on issues impacting on AFL at the moment and jokingly mentioned that, despite his small stature, he was a serious Basketball player as well! Tony touched on the great players who have come from our Club over the years, including Horrie Gorringe and he also talked about the Club’s fine tribute to Club legend, Greg Gordon.

Brendan thanked Tony for coming to the Port, and for his openness on those issues which are of much interest to followers of AFL football, acknowledging that he had to soon return to Melbourne for media commitments that evening.

Brendan acknowledged the large number of sponsors and donors who had made the day possible and, importantly, a profitable event for the Club. He especially thanked Trent and Michelle Cowen, Proprietors of Abel Labels in Kingston, who were the major sponsor for the Luncheon and mainly responsible for Tony’s appearance.

Other sponsors and donors acknowledged for their generous financial contributions included Brereton’s Electrical, D & W Electrical Kingston, Lawrence and Hansen Electrical Suppliers, Hobart, Coulson Builders Kingston, Max’s Quarry & Quarry Products & Concrete Recycling, Stephen Pregnell Asphalting, Aaron Woods, Rip Clifford, Phil Dance and Pavel Ruzicka.

Brendan also thanked the following raffle donors: Bubbles Jetwash Kingston, Commercial Hotel Cygnet, Bridgestone Tyre Centre Huonville, Dave Zeitzen & the Middleton Store, Duggans P/L, Wilcox Electrical, Cygnet Glass & Glazing, R & D Quality Meats, Donald ‘Squid’ Gordon, Cygnet Pharmacy, Cygnet Newsagency, Leon Barrett, Justin Polley, Peter and Patricia Coad and Dr John Wilkins.

Finally Brendan thanked all those who assisted on the day, the Top Hotel kitchen staff and their helpers, the bar staff and everyone else who had assisted in some way to make the day such a success.

Stanley (Tidsy) Smith, President of the Past Players Committee, concluded the event by thanking everyone for their attendance, all those involved and inviting all to hang around, mingle with old team mates and past opposition players, enjoy a drink and watch the Senior match.