



"CUT & COME AGAIN"

a personal perspective on
THE BILBY

Inaugural 2025 Sydney EASTER tournament
Cheltenham Recreation Club, 11-21 April 2025
by Tournament Director Dick Friend

Capturing the Easter time slot seemed a good idea: Sydney has an agreeable climate that time of year; Australians love to take "flex days" or a few of their 20 or more statutory holiday allocation to span the weekend before Easter, the Easter Weekend itself, and/or the week following that; and overseas visitors can use some of their Easter break down under. Yes, some people see it as family time – so Dick Friend said "Bring the Family".

After 20 years without a court in Sydney, the task of raising the funds from scratch, seeking a good site, building a court, creating all the infrastructure surrounding it, and recruiting staff and active volunteers – well, what could go wrong?

A new court in 2025 - the last few months!

Building costs in Sydney have doubled on numerous recent projects since inception, and early discovery of asbestos & "biblical" rains in the early days both caused costly delays. It was hard to envisage how events would play out at Cheltenham, when the court and buildings were still under construction. The whole site was receiving a makeover with the Cheltenham body corpus receiving surgical changes: electrical connection needed upgrades like a pacemaker to a heart; the plumbing was upgraded with many new pipes and by-passes; the air-conditioning lungs were upgraded, and a facelift undertaken (a lift on the front of the building and disabled access).



Finishing the court in the final months took all the energies of the key Sydney personnel, and Chris Cooper was doubling up with organisational roles at the Cheltenham Recreation Club, seeking licence from the CRC. With a fortnight to go, some 36 separate sign-offs from contractors, officials and consultants had to be achieved before Council would issue a Certificate of Occupancy. A close-run thing, but they got there!



Chris Ronaldson has a first look, discussing the bounce with Chris Cooper & Sav Cremona (mid-Feb 2025)



Sav has the plans as they approach the finish line (drawing courtesy of Mikko)

Why “the Bilby”?

Perhaps not as cute as a little bunny rabbit, the bilby is an Australian marsupial (not an introduced pest as rabbits are in Australian agriculture). And the Bilby is an endangered species, needing recognition to survive. But when people abbreviated the “Sydney Real Tennis Club Opening Easter tournament” to simply the “Bilby” we knew the branding had worked.



Peter Gouldthorpe’s black-and-white sketch of a tennis-playing Bilby was successfully adopted, and a coloured version requested. This proliferated to invitations, name tags, the print program, table runners, on-line materials and the unforgettable polos commissioned by Claire Cooper.

Rigorous cost control and oversight by designer/project manager Sav Cremona, engineer & President Michael Fitzgerald and accountant & Secretary Chris Cooper, and the choice of building contractor Cash McInnes Projects limited cost over-runs. This committed team achieved a court some months late, but with our heads still above water, while paddling furiously underneath. Fund-raising led by James Willis continued throughout. The Cooper household, which had resembled a warehouse of SRTC memorabilia, with accumulated furniture & fittings for the clubrooms crowding out their garages and living spaces, began to be decluttered.

Chris & Maggie

Professional Chris Ronaldson had taken six months leave from Radley, volunteering his time to get us underway, with the support of the dynamic Maggie Henderson-Tew. Pity we didn’t get the court open in November as planned; but Ballarat, Romsey and Hobart all benefitted by dedicated time spent at each Club. And all through Chris made sets of balls from scratch, and strung scores of racquets. Maggie was vital to recruitment and organisation of visas and travel for our new pro and gappies.



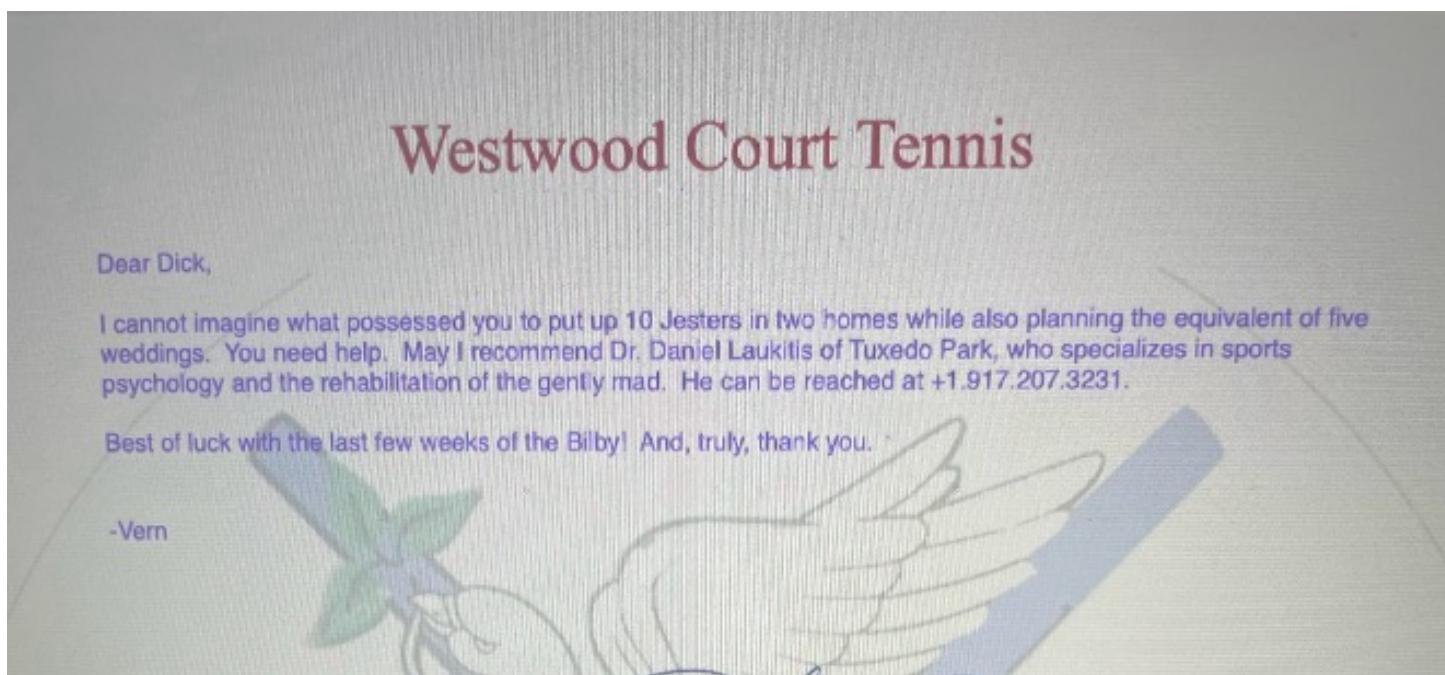
Bilby Organisation

Relentless promotion of the opening tournament began in April 2024 both overseas through ARTA and domestically via the various Clubs, resulting in 141 players registered along with 60+ non-playing partners. We wanted it to be a huge celebration, **but it was going to be a battle to keep them all active and entertained with just one court!** It was lucky the Tournament Committee had organised a plethora of off-court diversions: tours to gardens, museums & galleries; native bushland walks & panoramas; exhibition matches; Sailing on the Harbour; golf, lawn tennis & croquet; and three major evening functions were all promised ahead of time.

Organisation of the Bilby had fallen almost completely in Dick's lap, and his summer days became dominated by organisational details and his nights turned to nightmares. Envisaging how it was to come together on-site, while based in Hobart and Melbourne was just one complication. **The Club had no office, no phone, no paid staff. There was no accounting system in place. It was literally an amateur operation!** But it survived on goodwill.

Plans were complicated by many players being a bit rusty, and arrival times affected by a list of afflictions, complaints and conditions as extensive as a medical library. Mental states led one to question one's own sanity (as happens to psychiatrists); and Relationships Australia could never have resolved all the internecine family disputes. I'll stay Mum on all those!

A furious pace was maintained. Vern Cassin, touring in a US Jesters team witnessed this while staying with Julie & Dick at their vineyard on the Mornington Peninsula on 3 & 4 April.



On Saturday 5 April, as the Jesters were leaving, a 16-page Information Booklet for Bilby participants was conceived: contributions sought, assembled, and fed to a graphic designer on the Monday; final playing draws for each of the 11 days were scheduled; revisions made while driving up the road from Melbourne to Sydney on the Tuesday & Wednesday; and miraculously the handsome booklet was delivered on the Thursday to the club by Rob Angell – a Sydney member from Macquarie days. Maggie co-ordinated placing it in the Welcome Packs, along with the Bilby polos commissioned by Claire Cooper in the appropriate ordered sizes, and a chocolate Bilby from Haig's in Adelaide, which had arrived the day before. Such was the pace, the commitment of all parties to make the Bilby happen.

And while I enjoyed every minute on the lovely new court, you will find little mention of the play (sorry), as I saw little or no other tennis while engineering other events, fussing about and issuing invoices.

The Tournament begins...

The Bilby consisted of 3 consecutive tournaments, all cleverly designed by the most experienced professional in the world, Chris Ronaldson, to ensure maximum court time for each player. And being conceived as a fun tournament, there were some unique twists! Players could choose to play one, two or three of the sub-tournaments, ensuring those with limited time could enjoy at least part of the festivities.



The Sydney Morning Herald (foreground) covered the "real" opening!

The FOUNDERS CUP: 11-12 April

40 of our most generous donors - including Graeme, Ian, Tony & Greg Bradfield - were awarded the honour of playing in the first official tournament, with three short games of doubles each followed by a first-round knock-out, quarter finals, semi-finals and a grand final. Oli Quarry, Alex Rackham & Justin Dery (by virtue of their family donations) just managed to bring the average age of players into the 60s, many of whom had not played for 20 years since the court at Macquarie University closed.

Due to late arrivals, Dick Friend was drafted to play the first match and, having won the toss, played the opening serve of the Bilby.

The **Bradfield** court played superbly, not one complaint was heard about the light (amazing given the old eyes!) and no major injuries occurred. Amazing. Court colouring was approved. The unique gallery posts were applauded: rather than a round pole, Sav Cremona designed a blade that when struck funnelled the balls clearly into one or other gallery.

The **Net Post** was another story...

Dan O'Toole is a Hobart engineer/businessman/blacksmith/artist and tennis player who, when cleaning out the back penthouse at the Hobart club, found the original Net Post from the establishment of tennis in Australia in 1875. That post was replaced when Hobart sculptor/artist Tom Samek was commissioned to create a gargoyle-like net post in honour of the achievements of local lad Robert Fahey becoming World Champion.

Strengthened, lengthened (the original was only 5ft 6" high), fitted with brackets to be removable, lacquered and hand-painted with Club logos, the new Sydney court has been gifted this handsome net post by the Hobart Real Tennis Club and by the skilled craftsmanship, engineering and artistry of Dan O'Toole. Further, affixed to the post is a new pulley plate he has engraved with "1875 - 2025", representing the beginnings of both Courts.

... and it was donated to become an enduring connection between Hobart (1875) and Sydney (2025).

[WENDY'S SECRET GARDEN](#) was the Friday night venue of our first soiree! Nestled between the garish extravaganza of Luna Park and the concrete towers of North Sydney, an oasis of wild labyrinthine pathways lead one past sculptures, nook & crannies, to more pathways – all a delightful overgrown enigma crafted by Wendy Whiteley – 18 Founders ventured into the early evening dark, barely illuminated by solar lights but enchanted by the surrounds and the company, and refreshed by superb comestibles prepared by Julie Hayes and Vicki Fitzgerald and refreshments organised by Dick.



WENDY'S
Secret Garden

Founders Cup Result:

Play continued early on Saturday when Sydneysiders Chris Cooper & Michael Fitzgerald played against James Willis & Hobart's Helen Rackham. A total of 40 matches were ably marked by Chris Ronaldson; by our newly-minted and newly married Pro Alex Marino-Hume; and/or gappies Archie Campbell & Hamish Dron, both recruited by Chris to assist the launch and freshly arrived from the UK. There was some sensational play with luminaries like World amateur Mike Happell, champions such as Jon Hamer, Graeme Bradfield and more.

Helen Rackham was concerned that she hadn't been playing for a few months and therefore shouldn't enter the Founders Cup. She was persuaded by Dick that half the entrants hadn't played for 20 years since Macquarie closed, and so she succumbed. And a good thing too as, combining with James Willis who had the benefit of a half dozen games on the court before the opening, they managed to beat other senior Sydney officials Michael Fitzgerald and Chris Cooper (also with the short-term benefit of incumbency)!

The Founders Dinner

On Saturday night at the Australian Club involved 70 founders and partners paying (again) to formally acknowledge their joint success in leading the fund-raising effort. Hosted by President Michael Fitzgerald with other Australian Club members Commodore Brian Robertson, Major-General Aziz Melick AO and Robert Estcourt Esq, delicious fare and fine wine enlivened a celebration of the newest court in Australia.

The plush surrounds of the Club were easily accessed, being adjacent to Martin Place, the CBD train station from which the new Metro line whisks one to Cheltenham via Chatswood in no time.

Speeches by Michael, and by Graeme Bradfield, were followed by an Auction conducted by Tony Bradfield, whose patois from the saleyards and his commanding presence entertained and amused while extracting nearly \$8,000 from attendees. Items included special numbered Bilby racquets, and Tony donated some superfine wool scarves from his own business – all achieving great outcomes for our Infrastructure needs.

The FRIENDLY HANDICAP DOUBLES: 13-16 April

63 players registered and, when needed our gappies filled out the draw. After two days' play the two best doubles combos advanced to the Semi-finals, while all others competed in a repechage tournament for chances to re-enter the draw in the semi-finals. Even after four losses, you could still win the tournament. And every pair received one bisque per match, taking a point merely by directing a "friendly" wave to the marker.

Sailing-on-the Harbour: 13 April (& 15 April)

The yacht "Tula" was generously provided by owners Ivan & Gudrun Resnikov and Chris & Claire Cooper. Four hours with lunch & refreshments for 15 guests wedged between tennis commitments on two days. Gappie Hamish Dron had the greatest smile while crewing for Ivan. A very rich experience on the best harbour in the world and, on the Tuesday at least, I can attest that a stiff breeze provided an authentic sailing experience.



A quiet moment for Ivan and crew after sailing under the bridge

Welcome Cocktails, Vine-planting & Ribbon-cutting: 14 April

Cuttings from the Hobart grapevine planted by Pierre Etchebaster in 1975, propagated by Greg Kerin and transported from Van Diemen's Land by Sav, were nurtured by Sav and Claire ahead of this ceremony. Before planting the vines intended to grow up the outside walls of the court, a surprise interlocution by Allan Willingham yielded a gift he received in 2014 - a terracotta shard which formed the floor of the jeu de paume court at Suze-la-Rousse c. Charles IX (1564), buried with one of the vines to provide an enduring earthy link between Sydney and courts of France. On the count of three, three vines were then planted by Chris & Maggie, by Chris Cooper & James Willis, and by Fitz & Sav.

CRC President Colin Reid welcomed all present, including representatives of the NSW Government (who provided a \$1.4M grant which really kicked off the fund-raising two years ago) and local MsP and Councillors. The dignitaries included local Federal Member Julian Leaser, NSW Upper House Member Damien Tudehope & his daughter Monica Tudehope, the local member for Epping. Monica was given the honour to represent the NSW Government in cutting a red ribbon to open the court, after which people entered the service side gallery and, during a brief pause in play, walked on to the court, and/or proceeded to the Friendly Dedans for Welcome Cocktails.



Monica Tudehope cuts the ribbon at the opening ceremony

Exhibition Match by World-class Juniors: 15 April

Following a day of Repechage matches in the Friendly Handicap, Australian Clothier Cup (Aus v USA Under 25s) international representatives Alex Rackham (UNSW) and Darcy Webster-Jones (ANU) - both from Hobart - put on an exhibition match, along with our new pro Alex Marino-Hume and gappie Archie Campbell (both from the UK).



The match demonstrated to Sydneysiders that, while players can enjoy the game well into physical decline (as demonstrated by those who came out of the woodwork to celebrate a new court), it is the youthful display of ability and agility which is the healthy harbinger of the game's future. The children of a number of older members from Macquarie Uni days could see what their parents had rabbited on about, and some have subsequently taken up a racquet.

Results of the Friendly Handicap Doubles:

Dan O'Toole and Dick Friend took out the "Friendly". Cries rang out of "Nepotism. Favouritism. Booo! Bias. Sack the handicapper!" They beat Oli Quarry & Greg Cornish, both of whom had also played in the Founders! So, practice makes perfect. But they were all extremely closely fought matches, with supreme efforts and exceptional skills rewarded. Tic (= tongue-in-cheek).

THE BILBY HANDICAP DOUBLES: 18-21 April

The third and final tournament of the whole Bilby had the most intriguing rules. With such a disparity in handicaps among the 70 entrants, Chris devised a rule which required the server's partner to be standing closer to the net than the last gallery line at all times during play, and transgression of which would result in immediate loss of the point. It ensured that one player in the pair could not dominate all the play, giving everyone a fairer share of play and evening out the contests. It also caused much merriment when, with great alacrity, the markers declared the point lost when so much as a heel of the server's partner shoe was seen to touch the last gallery line.

A further embellishment was the award of a half bisque in each match to each player who wore an acceptable Bilby tail, claimed by said player when they approximated a Bilby hop. Some 90+% of players grew a tail for the event, whether slim, short, cute, fluffy, long or merely colourful!

Eight groups of 4 or 5 pairings played a round-robin over the first 3.5 days, with the sixteen pairs finishing first or second in their group proceeding to the finals. A plate event was scheduled for those eight pairs placing third in their group.

Blue Mountains excursion: 17 April

12 people were found between tennis commitments to fill a van chauffeured by volunteer Sav, who drove efficiently and safely, avoiding the odd kamikaze bogon on the roads, and arrived at the Norman Lindsay Gallery & Museum at Springwood. Itinerary organiser Maureen Bartlett, with husband Rob (former pro at the Macquarie Uni tennis club) met us there. An expert guided us through Norman's studio and house, filled with extravagant paintings of enthusiastic nudity as well as his history of political cartooning, children's book authorship and illustration (such as "The Magic Pudding"), adult books and even amateur boxing.



The 1994 film "The Sirens" was set in the gardens amongst his voluptuous works, illustrating his sybaritic lifestyle.

A la carte dining at the Conservation Hut followed, with breathtaking Blue Mountain views over the Jamieson Valley. Onward to the Scenic World to ride a funicular and/or cable car, where a 2-hour queue was avoided. Rob Bartlett, using his local knowledge as a Blue Mts resident, took us far from the madding crowd to lookouts where the spectacular views could be enjoyed in relative silence, and short walks undertaken in brilliant sunshine.

Refreshments were called for and the Mountain Culture Beer Co provided, before Sav safely returned us to Cheltenham in time for the evening party. Chris Ronaldson kept putting in 16-hour days at the Club, while maintaining his good humour, employing local slang in calling Dick a “bludger”, as Dick has spent the day in very fresh air!



Mid-Tournament BBQ: 17 April

Originally perceived as a premium Aussie BBQ, the organisation, the numbers and co-ordination with the Cheltenham Club over-ran us. The event morphed into a smorgasbord buffet in the CRC dining area, with the 67 registered expanded by a further 30 on the night. Socialising was enhanced by pre-printed name tags, again through the generous services of Rob Angell.

SRTC Opening Gala Dinner @ Dolton House: 19 April

What a triumph? Originally conceived nine months earlier as an on-court dinner, plans were stymied by delays, planning restrictions and licensing issues. Alternatives such as dinner in the CRC or marquees were discarded in a huge research project by Vicki Fitzgerald, resulting in the spectacular success at Dolton House (Jones Bay Wharf, Pyrmont). But finding a great affordable venue on Easter Saturday wasn't easy!



Archie shaped up well in a jacket borrowed from Chris; and Archie being cool

135 people arrived by foot, car, ferry, Uber and water taxi to enjoy cocktails on the deck of the finger wharf with the coat-hanger in the background. Delectable savouries and generous refreshments were enjoyed by elegantly attired guests before being shown to assigned seating at tables of eight, beautifully decorated with table runners colour printed with the tennis-playing Bilby and SRTC and CRC logos. Each guest found a jewel box with an engraved key-ring gift enclosed (a surprise freebie which, along with the table runners, were donated by friends of the Fitzgeralds and new members of SRTC, Danielle & Aaron Van der Hoek.

MC duties began with Jonathan Howell and, while the live band kept playing, he introduced the key SRTC people as they progressively sashayed in to the ballroom. Michael & Vicki Fitzgerald, Chris & Caire Cooper, James & Allison Willis, Dick Friend & Julie Hayes, Damien & Sheila O'Meara all pirouetted and twirled onto the dancefloor, followed by Chris Ronaldson & Maggie Henderson-Tew, Sav Cremona to a loud cheer, and new pro Alex Marino-Hue with wife Charlotte. The band "Dusk till Dawn" upped the tempo and nearly everyone joined the throng on the dance-floor, staying for a number of numbers.



James Willis took over MC duties. Entrees were served, and Grace was said... well, not exactly grace, but an Amazing Chase, with words adapted for the occasion and backed by Josh Cooper, it was sung by Millie Cooper & Alex Marino-Hume.



Here are the first two verses:

*Amazing chase! How sweet the sound
Such skill, such poise, such class
A ball of length, there's no rebound
A chase one cannot surpass*

*To Sydney town the greats have come
The pride of Tennis fame
There's Yanks and Poms and Aussies too
Exponents of the game.*

President Michael Fitzgerald formally welcomed everyone. ARTA Chairman Alistair Curley spoke of the importance of Sydney joining Australian tennis and providing the necessary three states for government recognition as a national sport. Alistair also conveyed the best wishes of international real tennis associations.

Jonners Howell was asked to speak and conveyed a message from his friend the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Edward (also Patron of the UK's T&RA). The Duke regretted he was unable to attend after being present in Sydney on his world tour of courts when plans for the Cheltenham court were announced.



BAGSHOT PARK

Many congratulations to one and all on the successful opening of the Bradfield Court. I'm just so sorry that I can't be with you to celebrate. Well done to all members of the Sydney Real Tennis Club for bringing about this great new addition to the game of Tennis. It seems extraordinary that it has been 18 years since the court at Macquarie University closed and Sydney has been without a court. Mind you, it has been quite a journey since Michael Fitzgerald shared your plans with me at Government House in 2019. It is never easy trying to raise the funds to build a court, so congratulations on achieving that and thank you to all who have supported this venture from near and far.

Huge thanks must also go to Cheltenham Recreation Club for embracing the notion of including the original, royal and ancient game of Tennis in their offering to their members. I do hope many will take up and enjoy the challenge of trying this sport that those of us lucky enough to play it love so much. I look forward to the chance to visit your club and try out the court for myself at some point in the future.

Good luck for the day, good luck with your opening tournament and good luck for the future ... *TENEZ!*

HRH The Prince Edward, Duke of Edinburgh KG, KT, GCVO

April 2025

Main courses were served, and the band belted out tunes for young and old. The dance floor heaved. Respite occurred when Dick Friend auctioned some items:

- a Macquarie Uni racquet in mint condition signed by the Duke of Edinburgh gained the highest price and sailed back to the UK with generous Mancunian Peter McDonald
- "Melbourne to Myopia" by George Limb, was donated by the Limb family. This signed copy details the 45 courts in existence back when he was instrumental in RMTC's move from Exhibition St to their current Richmond home
- 7 "Bilby 2025" racquets numbered 4 to 10 (of 25) sold between \$1K & \$1.7K
- 3 Bilby Polos remained after all players had been allocated their correct sizes, and it was determined that the popularity could only be resolved by the highest bidders. One signer by CJR reached \$275.

\$14,905 was raised in total which, after cost of goods sold, contributed over \$13,000 to the club infrastructure. Dancing and drinks on the deck continued. People wished to buy the elegant table-runners as souvenirs and, while one was donated to each Australian club, many others have found their way to tennis players' homes. We lost money on the night, but did we have fun!

Results of the Bilby Handicap Doubles

Who cared? With the success of the Bilby assured, those who had lived and breathed the opening for months no longer concerned themselves with the results. The tournament could have been a one-off, but its popularity created talk of another in a year or two.

Energies were flagging, and some required replacement on court by our willing gappies Archie & Hamish. Owen Guest doubted his strength to endure a tournament, yet boasted a ball off the tambour across the court and into the winning gallery on the full! The competitive fire remained strong in so many and, despite Bilby tails, half-bisques and new restrictions on footwork, their determination could not be extinguished.



Like mother like daughter: the McCahey girls with their cute Bilby tails

Results Below...

PRIZE-GIVING CEREMONY: 21 April

Immediately following conclusion of play, a table adorned with trophies was set up on court under the logo. We thank David Pinsent & the Coopers who bought some of the vases and Bilby mugs.



Damien & Francis with their cute Bilby ears fashioned by Kate & Lisa

Perpetual trophy for BILBY HANDICAP DOUBLES

A large glass vase which decorated the Clubrooms with greenery provided by Jo McInnes – it will be engraved with the first winners, a Sydney-Hobart combination:

2025 Damien O'Meara & Francis Spilsbury

To take home they also received engraved glasses filled with Easter Eggs & Bilbies, as did the other Finalists, the UK/Sydney combination of Archie Campbell & Hamish Oates

Prizes of engraved glasses, again filled with Easter eggs and Bilbies, were also presented for the:

Founders Cup Winners:
James Willis & Helen Rackham

Founders Cup Finalists:
Michael Fitzgerald & Chris Cooper

Friendly Handicap Winners:
Dick Friend & Dan O'Toole

Friendly Handicap Finalists:
Oli Quarry & Greg Cornish

Bilby Cups:

Thirteen (13) boxed chinaware Bilby-decorated cups were awarded to people not on the Committee but who contributed to the success of the inaugural 2025 Bilby:



* **PRESIDENT'S AWARD:** 2 x longest distance travelled to attend: Awarded by Fitz to **Mancunians McDonald & Mortimer** (and because we know how much they prefer tea to any other beverage!?)

* **FIRST LADY AWARD for BEST-DRESSED** at the Gala Dinner: Vicki awarded this to **Jo McInnes** who, with David Pinsent, provided long-term previous service to the Club

* **CHRIS COOPER AWARD for OVERALL EXCELLENCE:** for contributing to the Bilby (eg the Net Post) & buying so much memorabilia (racquets/book etc):
Dan O'Toole & Rosie Harrup

* **SAV's AWARD for SARTORIAL EFFORT:** for the best Bilby tails, not just made by Karen, but made available for all-comers to borrow
Karen Toates (2 cups to take home and enjoy a tea with Barry)

* **MAGGIE AWARD:** 2 x best dressed on court for their elegant Bilby ears head-dress
Kate Paton & Lisa Galbraith

* **RONALDSON AWARD:** 1 x most extraordinary shot played during the Bilby finals: CJR chose a strong volley direct to the winning gallery in the Semi-Final of the Plate
Josh Cooper

* **TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR AWARD** for services to the Bilby above-and-beyond any call of duty: for printing & graphic design services, not just the 16-page colour print program turned around in 4 days, but also multiple runs of sticky labels to enable identify participants at 4 events, as well as multiple print runs of brochures and flyers
Rob Angell



The 'Mini Coopers' on court – Dylan (left) with his brother Josh

Wrap-up: the MAGIC PUDDING

It was an emotional Tournament Director who struggled through the last presentation of the prize giving. Dick barely kept it together, and demonstrated his determination to ensure Sydney took off with a flying start at Cheltenham, whatever the personal cost physically and financially. SRTC was not to be worse off financially, and finish with better facilities. In the emotional release of having delivered the tournament, he paid particular tribute to the exceptional support of his wife Julie over the previous months of concentrated effort.

The Bilby saw the best sport of real tennis; there was also a little lawn tennis & croquet; there was culture, art & sculpture; there was nature, bushwalks & panoramas, there was song and dance & musical interludes; there was sailing on the world's best harbour; there was conviviality, food & wine.

For those that have yet to enjoy the delights of Norman Lindsay's children's classic "The Magic Pudding" – an endless pudding with magic ingredients - I commend this excerpt:

"You'll enjoy this puddin'." said Bill, handing him a large slice. "This is a very rare puddin'."

"It's a cut-an'-come-again Puddin'," said Sam.

So cut as much as you can on court for the next two years, then come and enjoy another slice of Magic Puddin' at the Bilby 2027.



Addendum: FEEDBACK

Nine questions were emailed to participants seeking feedback to inform future events. Admitting our failures, the form was prefaced by...

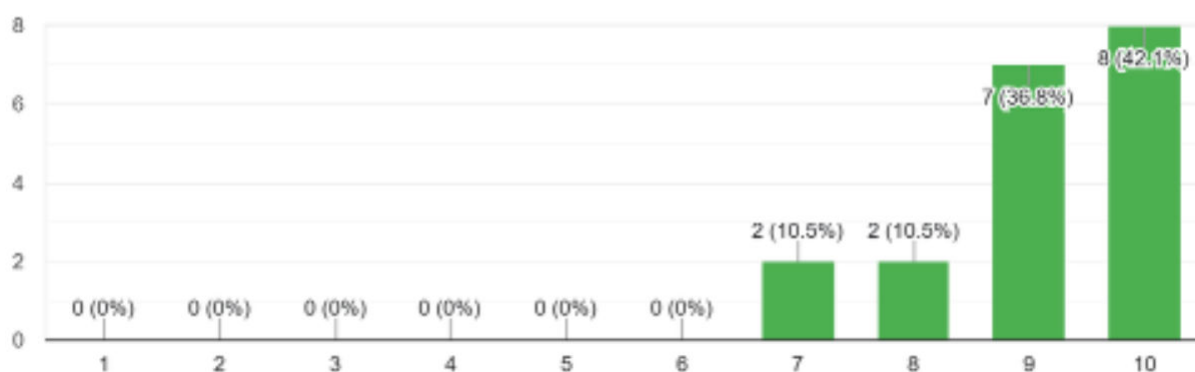
While we endeavoured to have everything in place for the tournament, we apologise for not having all the infrastructure completed, signage erected, and efficient accounting systems in place. We will fix those! We will also be doing our best to improve the ready availability for food and refreshments as well as having an automated tournament schedule available online and via a screen(s) in the club (a la airport Arrivals & Departures), which we achieved during the third tournament.

The results from 19 participants were summarised objectively by Artificial Intelligence (AI) rather than from one participant, thus:

• Positive Aspects:

How would you rate the 2025 Bilby Tournament overall?

19 responses



- Court and Atmosphere: The court's design, colors, and extended roof were praised for enhancing visibility and service impact. The overall atmosphere was described as friendly and welcoming, with many enjoying the vibrant social interactions and the chance to reconnect with friends.
- Organisation: Participants appreciated the well-organized tournament, excellent scheduling, and the hospitality provided by the staff and volunteers.
- Facilities: The viewing gallery and club environment were highlighted as enjoyable spaces, contributing to a positive experience.
- Overall, the tournament was seen as a success, with gratitude extended to the organizers and staff for their efforts, though there were clear areas identified for future improvement.

• Negative Aspects:

- Facilities Issues: Some felt the change rooms and pro shop were too small, and there were suggestions for more toilets and improved entrance aesthetics. Concerns were raised about the slippery court surface and the need for better food options.
- Delays and Scheduling: Participants noted delays in results posting and suggested earlier scheduling for final matches to accommodate travel needs.
- Rules and Regulations: Some rules were seen as confusing or restrictive, with calls for clearer communication about tournament rules in advance.

• Suggestions for Improvement:

- Additional Facilities: Recommendations included adding a bar, more seating, and a better food service system. There were also calls for secure storage for personal items.
- Transport Information: Suggestions to improve transport information on the club's website were made, including clearer directions and options for public transport.
- Activities and Events: Interest in adding new activities like pickleball, golf, and croquet tournaments was expressed, along with a desire for more social events during tournaments.
- Many participants expressed a desire for better signage and promotion of the club to attract new members.