This year’s October Conference was held Ingham in far North Queensland and was hosted by Brothers Sports & Community Club, Ingham. Delegates from Clubs throughout Queensland and the Northern Territory were in attendance. With a membership of fifty one Clubs, the Confraternity of Brothers Clubs is a strong and powerful association providing enormous benefits to its member clubs.

The Confraternity is made up by Junior and Senior Rugby League Football Clubs located in all of Queensland’s major cities and towns from Cairns in the North to Beenleigh in the South as well as Darwin in the Northern Territory. There are nine clubs in the Brisbane, Logan, and Ipswich area alone and eight Licensed Leagues clubs across the State. There are also six Brothers Old Boys Associations involved.

An interesting agenda over the three days of the conference saw delegates addressed by a wide range of presenters who imparted a wealth of knowledge that clubs can use to improve their performance both on and off the field. During the conference delegates discussed topical issues revolving around Rugby League and the operation of their clubs.

At the commencement of the conference on Friday Confraternity Chairman Brian Roberts, welcomed all delegates and in particular new attendees. All were invited to have input during the course of the Conference and to ask questions at the appropriate times. Bevan Skinner from Ingham Brothers then welcomed Conference delegates and explained the weekend activities and house rules.

Licensed Clubs Sub Committee, Chairman Mark Hennelly, chaired the afternoons sessions, commencing with an interesting presentation on Charitable and Non Profit gaming legislation by Len Warrington a compliance Officer from the Office of Liquor & Gaming Regulation, Townsville. Len clarified the legislation around the different categories of raffles and free promotional games. Len answered a number of questions around the conduct of raffles by clubs and it
was pleasing to note that clubs appeared to be compliant. Len also clarified the record keeping requirements.

Following on was a presentation on Grant Funding & Legislation by Ray Beswick, Team Leader, Office of Fair Trading. Townsville. Ray with his assistant Cheryl Black spoke on the benefits of incorporation, how it works and obligations and responsibilities of clubs. Ray also distributed a very useful booklet, “Incorporated Associations - Small Business Guide”. Further information can be found on the Office of Fair Trading website: www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au or ph: 13 74 68

Lion Nathan sales representatives Glen and Trent updated delegates on the happenings in the liquor markets, decline in some products and popular trends. There will be nutritional information placed on labelling as market research had shown an increase in people considering their wellbeing when choosing drinks which necessitated a different approach to marketing.

Rhys from Asahi-Schweppes then spoke on their sponsorship proposals outlined at the previous conference. These had a limited uptake by clubs. Despite this Rhys announced the sponsorship had been renewed for a further five years with additional sponsorship which will only go to those clubs that are supporting Schweppes. Brian outlined a few points arising out of this presentation and urged clubs not already on board to support them as there were numerous benefits including free drinks for sign on days etc.

Unfortunately Hugh Thompson, Area Sales Manager Smiths Snack Foods, couldn’t make it to this conference but provided an update to the Chairman who apprised delegates of the sponsorship arrangements and urges clubs to avail themselves of the benefits.

Ian Cook from long term Sponsors, Triple Play reported good support from most member clubs. Ian has a number of options for clubs both for Australian made products and imported items should clubs wish to look at these. Ian advised as a result he would be very competitive with other sponsors and in most cases could match their offers.

Mark Hennelly from Ipswich Brothers and Confraternity Vice President delivered the Clubs Queensland update covering key issues for the Industry. Mark first spoke on the need for training for Directors to develop strategic directions for their clubs He then outlined a training program they have developed. Mark also spoke on the Queensland Government’s proposed policies to address the issue of alcohol fuelled violence. Clubs Queensland also put forward a range of comments to the government/industry round table on this issue. Particularly personal responsibility and the issue of illicit drugs. Clubs Queensland also provided detailed comments to the productivity commission into the workplace relations framework.
Another one of our new designated suppliers Steve Day the Managing Director from Timer Sports then addressed the clubs and outlined what he could provide clubs in the way of off field apparel, footballs and water bottles etc. As an introduction to clubs Steve outlined a great promotional offer on club polos. Steve can be contacted on 0413691860 or Email: steve@timersports.com.au.

Steve was followed by a power point Presentation on Villi’s. They are a Pie, Sausage Roll and Pasties bakery, whose products are very much in demand in New South Wales and South Australia, in which is their home base. Delegates were treated to some of their products prior to the Friday evening BBQ.

At the end of the day’s proceedings delegates enjoyed the hospitality of the Ingham Brothers Sports & Community Club who put on a bar b cue for attendees. Our sponsors provided the refreshments. The Confraternity wishes to acknowledge our most generous Sponsors and thanks them for their ongoing support and Sponsorships.

On Saturday morning the Conference was officially opened by Councillor Wally Smith from Hinchinbrook Shire Council spoke on some of Ingham’s attractions and history of Rugby League in Ingham. The Councillor also complimented the Confraternity on its success and the ideals it stood for.

The morning sessions then commenced with a Mates in Construction Presentation by Phil Hortz, a Field Officer with Mates in Construction. This is an independent charity supported by unions and employers. Phil spoke on the problems of depression and suicide in the construction industry and how it can be addressed by looking out for your mates. Phil spoke on what life events could cause stress such as Family Crisis. Relationship breakdown, death of family/ friend and financial stress. Phil was able to apply the indicators to our game and how we could recognise these symptoms in our players, officials and volunteers and hence be able to assist or direct then to those who are best equipped. Phil’s insight was well received by clubs and provides a way forward for clubs if these issues are identified. For those that wish to connect to someone who can help phone 1300642111.

Next Leigh Anderson, Chairman Northern Division, QRL then addressed the conference on the Northern Marlins and rugby league in the north of the State. Leigh spoke on the various teams and competitions such as the Outback Carnival in Mt Isa. Leigh also spoke on their annual summer camp and development activities. In concluding Leigh responded to a number of questions from the delegates.

Keeping clubs up to date on the happenings in rugby league, Leigh was followed by Brad Tallon, the Chairman S/E Division, QRL. Brad spoke on the “Richardson Report” and other goings on in rugby league. The report is about to go to the commission. It has a current focus on the top tier competition as the first phase. Second tier around such things as proposal to have State Cups becoming the support structure for the NRL and the future of other age based competitions.
Brad also spoke on the “QRL 2020 Vision” which covers a range of issues such as support for the NRL, Elite versus Fun, and getting the right balance, season structures, club v schools competitions, alternative games and the administrative stricture.

Discussion was also held around the need for proper Governance arrangements in clubs. Brad stressed the need for committees to understand everyone’s responsibilities and putting in appropriate controls to ensure proper management. Brad also spoke briefly on each of the southern competitions in Brisbane, Gold Coast and Ipswich outlining challenges, changes, and progress in each.

Brad also spoke on a number of incidents of aggression during the year and asked the clubs to take some responsibility for player and spectator behaviour. Brad encouraged clubs to rely on the systems the QRL have in place to investigate and deal with these incidents. They also have a number of programs to take the aggro out of the game and improve disciplinary procedures.

After morning tea Brian Waldron the CEO of Aspect Sportswear distributed brochures and displayed their new products including a wide range of off field gear such as a new range of hoodies and jackets, tracksuits and polos. Brian indicated he would look at sponsorship of clubs.

Mark Hohn the managing Director TJ’S cleaners then outlined the wide ranging services his company can provide clubs. These not only include cleaning, but maintenance, maintaining office equipment, security etc.

Next was Kristian Woolf head Coach of Blackhawks who gave an interesting talk on the Blackhawks success in their first season. Of particular interest was an insight into the game against Ipswich in the state Final. Kristian answered several questions round how the modern game is played.

A challenging and insightful presentation was then provided by Ray Giarola, Principal, Giarola Architects P/L who spoke on clubs raising the bar. Ray spoke on the state of club websites and Facebook sites and the need to have them up to date and maintained. Ray also spoke on a range of aspects in regard to marketing our clubs and catering for modern needs and expectations. Ray believes clubs need to rethink their image, décor and items for sale in canteens and bistros.

Delegates were then treated to samples of beef jerky provided by Cravin Good Food Company. Cravin Jerky Director Robert Reitano explained what his company can provide to clubs to sell in their canteens.

Sunday morning’s session commenced with Football Clubs reporting on their season and the year’s activities. All clubs reported excellent player numbers and same good results in the finals. It was also pleasing to note the numbers of Brothers players across all clubs that were selected for elite squads and representatives sides. The growing
number of Brothers Old Boys Associations also reported on their activities in support of the game and their associated Football Club. Most recently established Brothers Old Boys is Darwin.

The bagman then reported on our investments on Saturday afternoon and unfortunately we were not successful. Those that transgressed over the weekend were then subject to naming and the levelling of appropriate fines.

The Leagues Club then provided an update with all clubs progressing well with Ipswich and Cairns acquiring other clubs to cater for a wider community. The Chairman also spoke on other clubs that may join the Brothers fold. Following this was a general discussion on ways in which we can raise the profile of the Confraternity and encourage more members to attend the conferences. Delegates were urged to distribute the Communique to their members when they return from the conference. It was suggested clubs promote their support of local schools and the Confraternity Shield.

Brian Roberts then provided details for the next Conference scheduled for Logan Brothers on the 4th, 5th, and 6th of March at the Logan Recreation Club. It was then confirmed that the following Conference will be held in Darwin on 7th, 8th and 9th of October 2016. Delegates intending to go to Darwin are urged to book flights and accommodation early as it will be heavily booked at that time.

It was then decided that Ipswich would host the conference on 3rd, 4th, and 5th March 2017. The October 2017 Conference will be held in Cairns on 6th, 7th and 8th October 2017.

The Chairman then distributed the approved list of suppliers and explained the basis of the tenders and the new arrangements with 6 on field suppliers and 10 off field suppliers.

Executive invite your feedback on the content of the Agenda and any other aspects of this Confraternity Conference. Our aim is to ensure the Conferences provide useful and informative information and that the Presenters are of the highest quality. From your feedback and positive suggestions, the Executive will endeavour to continue to provide you, the Member Clubs, a first-class Conference.

The member Clubs of the Confraternity of Brothers Clubs Inc. wish to thank Ingham Brothers for not only providing the venue for this, the 75th Confraternity Conference, but for their hospitality also.

Unfortunately our Patron Brother Ted Magee was unable to attend the Conference so in his stead Life Member Mick Wilson officially closed the conference. In his address he mentioned the need to support our sponsors and ensure we respond to their requests and proposals. Mick also spoke on the good range of presentations and the need for all delegates to pass the information connections and contact details on to others in their clubs.
The Confraternity also wishes to acknowledge our most generous Sponsors and thanks them for their ongoing support and Sponsorships

For more Information about the Brothers Confraternity, please contact the Chairman Brian Roberts on (07 3208 1168 / mob 0418 380 059)

Brian Roberts

Chairman.

See you March 2016 at Logan Rec Club.

Thanks to all our most generous Sponsors -
Lion Nathan (XXXX), Asahi-Schweppes, Aspect Teamwear, Triple Play, Smiths Snack Food Company, Aristocrat, Australian Liquor Marketers, Alpha Sport, 5 Star Sports, Momentum.

Their Sponsorships are invaluable to the Confraternity