

Manawatu Car Club Presidents Report October 2016 – September 2017.

I believe the 2017 year of the Manawatu Car Club will be remembered as a landmark year given what was achieved both on and off of the racetrack throughout the year.

Flying Kiwi's were seen right around the Motorsport world and in nearly every category of Motor Racing from Motorbikes to Electric Race Cars, Hybrid Race Cars and of course in our more familiar petroleum powered Race, Rally and Drift Cars. It didn't matter where you looked a Kiwi was making a name for themselves on a global scale... MCC members Chris Pither and Fabian Coulthard performed with distinction in the Australian Supercar Championship competition, the competition year being highlighted by Brendon Hartley's outstanding season in sports car endurance racing that included winning the famous Le Mans 24 Hour Race. We are fiercely proud of what they have achieved and continue to achieve.

In the 2017 year we had over 25 different race events, which took up over 30 days, we also had a lot of off track action as well. We had a most impressive stand at Big Boys Toys inside the stadium at Central Energy Trust Arena, the great variety of cars helping to bring even more people to our stand and to join our club. The social highlight of the year was the MCC's 70th Birthday Celebrations where we opened up the Clubrooms to the public and later the same day we hosted 150 people in the Manfeild Stadium Suites for a dinner, or "Rev-Up" as we called it, that was definitely a day and night to remember for those who attended and it was great to see so many old faces come back to the club to relive and share old memories. The other highlight was the 80 strong group seeing the beautifully composed movie "McLaren", a most fitting tribute to one of our great champions. The monthly Track & Yak get-together at the Rose & Crown is still quite strongly attended, the nice relaxed atmosphere helps the flow of many a story from the previous months activities both on and off of the race track. Add in a couple of awesome Prize Giving Dinners and the social side of the club is in good spirits.

On the track the Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series remains the MCC's most prestigious race series with record numbers being achieved in 2017. Overall we had 449 entries across the four round Series, that's an average of 112 cars per round, up from the previous record of 106 entries per round which was only achieved the year before, throw in 99 Superkarts on top of that over three of those rounds and you have nearly 550 entries in total, which is truly outstanding. This year's series was made even more special in that we were able to live stream the racing and produce a DVD for each of the rounds which added a whole new dimension to the series and it was with great pride that with the blessing of the Amon family we were able to rename the "Champions of Champions Cup" the "Chris Amon Cup". The 2016 – 2017 Mitre 10 Mega Summer Race Series and the EnviroWaste Clubsport Events followed suit and broke their previous records for entries as well. Also breaking entry records is our Drift Tutoring Events run by our Drift Team headed by Jaron Olivecrona, all of these events were sold out within a couple of days of being posted up on Facebook. These exceptionally well run Drift Events have done a lot to break down some of the barriers between the drift and race communities, so well done Drift Team!

The OctoberFAST and what we now call the February Flat Foot are two-day meetings where we host IRC and HRC sanctioned series and other classes. 2K Cup, Honda Cup, Alfa Trofeo and BMW Race Driver Series join in with the likes of NZ Six, Pro7, Pre65, Formula First, K-Sports Sedans and SS2000. Over the two meetings we had 270 entries to add to the growing number of competitors using our circuit.

MCC Membership peaked at an all-time high with our “Annual Declaration of Membership for 2017” showing we had a total of 424 members (up from 379 in 2016) which I believe is the first time that membership has been above 400 for the club! While that number in itself is outstanding, what is even more exceptional is that out of the 424 members we have 107 female members which is 46 more than this time last year. I am excited by this number as it shows that the promotion of the club as a family friendly club, with events for everyone, is indeed working well.

What can I say about our volunteers, well we once again showed the rest of the country how to run a race meeting, the 2017 NZGP was the shining light of the Toyota Racing Series so we were told by all of the officials that were there on the day. All of our team of volunteers continue to perform to an impeccably high standard, a standard that you all should be incredibly proud of as I know I am. We are exceptionally pleased that in 2017 we were able to purchase many of our volunteer’s new overalls and other equipment as well as new radios, a new recovery trailer and the mighty Nissan Terrano to help make your time at a race meeting just that little bit easier.

Our relationship with the Manfeild Park Trust Board and the staff of Manfeild continues to be an incredibly strong, open and honest one, all of us have a common goal which is to make Manfeild: Circuit Chris Amon the best Racetrack in the country for not only the racer, but for all of our volunteers, and for the public who come to view our race meetings. A special thank you to Julie Keane and Gordon Smith for continuing to work with us to make sure we both realize this goal.

The MCC is in an incredibly strong financial position at the moment thanks to the astute management of the club by the current committee and this has let us finish some of the projects we had lined up to complete in 2017, most notably the complete rebuild inside and out of the Archives Room which means we can now keep our most treasured archives in a safe and dry environment so that generations can enjoy them for many years to come. We also redesigned the Entrance Way and refurbished and updated the honor boards. The clubrooms have been used a number of times over the year by outside groups and all have given us very positive feedback on our facilities which is always great to hear. Unfortunately my four month health hiatus meant that there were a few rather large projects not completed so these remain on the table for the coming year, most notably the finishing of exterior painting and re-roofing of the clubrooms, and the completion of the fencing along the embankment. We are also looking to invest in facilities on and around the race track to help make it even more enjoyable and safer for our many volunteers.

I want to finish by saying a massive thank you..., thank you to all of our volunteers who without their support we could not run a race meeting, our many beloved sponsors who without their support our entry fees would be a little bit more expensive than they currently are, our MCC family and racers, thank you for being a part of a record breaking year, and lastly to the MCC Committee and our MCC Magazine Contributors, notably our MCC Secretary and Racing Events Manager - Jeff Braid, Chief Magazine Editor Trevor Weir and main contributor and Club Patron Russell Harris, thank you all for your continued dedication and support in making this the best car club in New Zealand!

Now let’s make 2018 even better...

Richie Arber
President
Manawatu Car Club Inc