

Manawatu Car Club Presidents Report October 2017 – September 2018.

The Manawatu Car Club's 2018 Year can best be described as one of steady as she goes... There were many things to be proud of and a few challenges to deal with throughout the course of the 2018 year.

Once again New Zealanders were at the forefront of Motorsport right around the world. On the local front MCC Club Member Callum Crawley took out the 2017/18 Formula First Championship and topped the class at the Elite Motorsport Academy. Overseas, MCC Club Member Fabian Coulthard had a somewhat indifferent year in the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship, he would ultimately finish up 9th in the Championship with the highlight of the year being a Race Victory at the Winton Supersprint. In the Dunlop Super2 Series the cream rose to the top and longtime MCC Club Member Chris Pither took out the Championship with two race wins and five podium finishes along the way, he also contributed greatly to a 4th place overall at the Bathurst 1000. Brendon Hartley reached the pinnacle of Motorsport by joining F1 Team Toro Rosso where he made his F1 debut at the US Grand Prix held in Texas on the 23rd October 2017 (NZ Time). Around 100 supporters attended a breakfast at the Rose & Crown to watch the Race. Brendon's achievements did not go unnoticed back home here in good old NZ with Brendon winning not only the Manawatu Sports Awards "Sportsman of the Year" award but also the "2018 Supreme Award". Brendon also was awarded the "Jim Clark Trophy" at the 2018 MSNZ Awards Dinner in April 2018... oh and there was a little road that leads into Manfeild: Circuit Chris Amon which was renamed "Brendon Hartley Drive" on the 28th December 2017. All accolades richly deserved for our most recognised MCC Club Member.

In the 2018 year we hosted 27 different race events, which took up over 40 days, throw in our monthly Committee Meetings, the well-attended Track & Yack get-togethers, our Prize Giving Dinners, MSNZ and IRC AGM's and that number of days quickly doubles. Indeed the social side of the club remains in good spirits with 65 people attending the Summer Series Prize Giving Dinner in April and over 100 people attended the Winter Series Prize Giving Dinner in September, we also had over 40 people attend a special Track & Yack night held at Mike Racing.

On the track the 2017/18 Mitre 10 Mega Summer Race Series continued to grow with each round, we had 64 entries for the first round, 69 in the second round (which was held in Taupo) and 77 entries (a record) for the third and final round, so 210 entries overall which was up substantially over the previous year.

The Feilding Auto Electrical Winter Race Series entries were down on our record 2017 year which we had expected given the predicted impact of the change to the safety apparel rule which had come into effect before the series started. Overall we had 361 entries across the four round Series which was an average of 90 cars per round which is still a tremendous result. A good positive was the number of Rookie Drivers that we saw over the Series, never has the New Drivers Briefing ever been so well attended. The Superkarts also joined us again this year, however only for two rounds and like us their numbers were down on the previous year with just 40 Karts attending over those two rounds. The Winter Series was once again live streamed and a DVD for each of the rounds was produced, the uptake on this was well ahead of the previous year.

Transpec and GT Oil came on board as the sponsors of our Track Day Series which incorporated 5 x Track Days, 1 x Multi Event Day and 2 x Back Track Autocrosses. Over the 5 x Track Day events we had a total of 93 Entries with 17 of those being Rookies. Across the Multi Event Day and Back Track Autocrosses we had

another 59 entries, with 21 of those also being Rookies. The number of Rookies attending both of these events is exciting for the future of the club.

The number of Drift Events we are holding has also increased this year, from Back Track Drift Tutoring to full on front track Drift Comps, we have had it all and every event was oversubscribed such is the popularity. The highlight of the 2017/18 year was the March Hardpark Event that saw 30 Drift Cars compete and 180 cars park up for the Hard Park section of the day. For a small donation all 210 cars lined the track at lunchtime and by the end of the day we were able to donate \$2,571.50 to Manchester House. Jaron Olivecrona heads up our Drift Team, he and his supportive group of volunteers continue to go from strength to strength as does Jaron's driving which saw him place 4th in the D1NZ Event held at Manfeild in the 2018 Championship.

The 2017 OctoberFAST and 2018 February Flat Foot events are two-day meetings where we host IRC and HRC sanctioned series as well as other invited classes. The OctoberFAST event had 150 entries which was down on the previous year by around 30 entries, however the February Flat Foot meeting boasted some 174 entries, so overall we had 324 entries across the two meetings which ended up being 54 entries above the previous year for these two meetings. The highlight of the two meetings was the Central Muscle Cars in February, the racing was absolutely superb and they enjoyed themselves so much, indeed commenting that this was the best, most organised and relaxed meeting that they had been to, that they would be back again next year.

Our MCC Membership peaked at an all-time high in 2017 with 424 Members and we thought we would not beat that total this year but our "Annual Declaration of Membership for 2018" showed that we had a total of 429 members which is a truly outstanding result for the club! Also our Facebook page passed the 3000 followers mark in September 2018 and continues to grow at a rate of around 50 new followers a month.

What can I say about our volunteers, our V-Force Team continue to raise the bar year after year and are still the best in the country, as told to us by our competitors and MSNZ Officials which is the important thing to note here. We showed the rest of the country how to run a race meeting, the 2018 NZGP was the shining light of the Toyota Racing Series once again, with the common comment from MSNZ Officials being we have the "best volunteers in the country". Volunteers are the lifeblood of our sport, without them there would be no competitive Motorsport of any shape or form, we must continue to look after them and celebrate their achievements as equally as we celebrate any other achievement within Motorsport. In conjunction with our Summer Series Prize Giving we hold our Volunteers Awards night where our volunteers attend the function free of charge and celebrate with all of the award winners on the night. Notable MCC Volunteer Awards this year went to Bob Higgison, Hugh Wilde, Malcom Glenn, Kaye Flannagan and Jacquie Mannes, while regular volunteers Naomi Bray and Helen Cameron were recognised at a national level, both receiving "Distinguished Service Awards" at the 2018 MSNZ Awards Dinner.

We continue to have an exceptionally strong, open and honest relationship with the Manfeild Park Trust Board and with Manfeild CEO Julie Keane and the rest of her team. We share many of the same issues so continue to work together to get an outcome that is beneficial to both parties. Our vision for Manfeild: Circuit Chris Amon of being 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 has not changed and we are both working very well together to realize this vision.

The MCC is still in an incredibly solid financial position thanks to the astute management of the club by the current committee. We were anticipating a slightly quieter year this year with regards to the revenue coming into the club and we knew that most costs to do with running our events were going to rise this year so spending was kept to a minimum and only the need to's were done. We have invested in some good kitchen equipment which has helped save us both money and time for the events that we hold at the clubrooms and it has also brought in extra revenue when the venue has been hired out, which seems to be growing every year as well. We can now easily cater for 100 people in house without the need to outsource anything. There are a few rather large projects still 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 finalize the design of the new Flagpoints 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 the many racers that come to our racetrack, thank you for being a part of another great year. Lastly to the MCC Committee and our MCC Magazine Contributors, notably our MCC Secretary and Racing Events Manager - Jeff Braid, who has renewed his contract with the MCC, our 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 see if we can make 2019 even better...

Richie Arber
President
Manawatu Car Club Inc