

Athletics Canterbury Merit Awards – 16th October 2020

Andrew Stark

Some of you may remember 17th February 2017 when Lianne Dalzell and the Minister of Sport turned the first sod of soil on this site.

I want you all to look outside toward the track. I know it is dark and you probably can't to see it.

But one thing I do know is that you will be able to visualise it.

How did the start of that visualisation happen?

I had a trawl through some of our Athletics Canterbury minutes recently.

We talked of Escrow accounts,

We talked of the 4 sports looking at setting up a Trust Fund.

We heard that the control tower has still not been finalised.

We talked of needing to start applying for funds.

And the list goes on.

This was at a time when the President of Athletics Canterbury's health was in question. Kevin Jago was having some health issues which meant he was not able to carry on with the same vigour and see the build at NPW through to fruition. Kevin had stated that he would see this through to the end. The baton was about to be passed.

It was the 4th May 2017 Minutes, where Kevin asked Andrew Stark to Chair the Board meeting. As people know the Athletics Canterbury Board was at the time too heavy on operational roles, but quickly that changed to one of governance where now after 3 years we are practically 100% governance. Andrew was elected to the position of Chair of Athletics Canterbury at their AGM in July 2017. With no experience in governance, Andrew was on the fast train.

Since 2017 Andrew has been one of the driving forces behind Athletics Canterbury's desire to be more professional about how we deliver and operate the sport in Canterbury. This need was identified because of us being a part of the Nga Puna Wai Sports Hub community involving the four sports. His first role as the Board Chair was ensuring Athletics Canterbury updated their Strategic Plan through community engagement, identify where changes were needed to align ourselves with the new environment going forward and preparing the organisation for the appointment of a General Manager. He was also proactive with funding applications to ensure the role of a General Manager would be possible. As a result, Ian was appointed in August 2018.

During 2018, Andrew was the Athletics Canterbury representative attending the Nga Puna Wai Project Steering Group meetings and working through the operational structure of Nga Puna Wai. This not only involved regular monthly meetings, but also hours of reading the various documents required by a CCC project, plus numerous phone calls and discussions about 'issues' relating to the project that came up and needed answers. His willingness to be available showed his commitment to the project. He will agree - Meetings, meetings and more meetings.

Fortunately, Ian now handles a lot of these tasks, but Andrew now has the role of managing him and upskilling him to ensure he understands the sports requirements going forward.

While Andrew has a strong governance role within Athletics Canterbury, he also contributes in other ways. He helped co-ordinate the funding applications for the purchase of new equipment to make sure the sport was ready for when the Nga Puna Wai Sports Hub was operational. Through his efforts and initiatives, he has helped raise nearly \$250k.

He also co-ordinates the delivery of the track & field area of the sport in Canterbury as Chair of the Athletics Canterbury Track and Field Committee. And he officiates during the season. It has been great seeing him compete successfully over the last season, both locally, Nationally and Internationally. Long may this continue.

Through his efforts at a local level, masters athletes are now part of all Athletics Canterbury events rather than being separate. He has worked with Athletics New Zealand to obtain a MOU to co-ordinate the way New Zealand Masters Athletics and the masters athletes within Athletics NZ work together as one group, which has resulted in more masters attending the various championships throughout the year. His role within Oceania Masters Athletics is to work with Oceania Athletics to see if combined events between the two groups are workable. He was instrumental in forging a MOU with Canterbury Children's Athletics to bring them more closely under Athletics Canterbury's umbrella, so we can all work strategically together.

I could go on and on with Andrew's contribution to our sport, but I think the reason for this Merit award is more for the contribution that you Andrew have made in enabling us to have a World class facility on our doorstep. I know we have others (and some of them are in this room) who have made massive contributions to NPW, but I know that everyone here will agree with me that we wouldn't be where we are today in Canterbury without you. It is through your tireless hours and hours of work that has enabled Athletics Canterbury to have a track facility at NPW that everyone can be proud of.

Andrew can I please ask you to come forward and receive your Athletics Canterbury Merit Award, for Exceptional Service to our sport.