

## OUR ROOTS #4



by Gary Bartholomeusz



**Bruce Naughton** started social games of junior football in Albany during 1957 and it lasted until a few people from the North Albany Football Club, led by secretary **Lance Cook**, organised an Under 13s game at Spencer Park Primary School oval on Saturday June 10, 1961. Kangas played Demons and, to everyone's surprise, it attracted 80 eager kids. A Club sub-committee with **Alf Colley** president, **Constance Trowse** secretary and **Aubrey Dunstan** treasurer was formed on July 20 to run the juniors. NAFC league players **Kevin Cook**, **Ted Daniels**, **Barry Kealy** and **Bob Sutton** doubled as coaches and, by the end of that season, an Under 11s and Under 9s also became active with 128 players involved in six teams. The numbers grew to around 200 by the 1962 season opening. North Albany, the oldest football club in Western Australia's Great Southern region, provided everything needed for the boys to continue the momentum.

Then, on February 25, 1963, an independent committee was elected and the Albany Nippers Football Association established as an official body with **Ken Corley** president, **Jim Cordery** secretary and **Aubrey Dunstan** treasurer. Mount Lockyer Primary School oval was also used as from this time onwards. Team colours were Bulldogs (white / red vee), Lions (blue / white sash), Magpies (black / white vee), Rosellas (red / blue vee), Saints (green / gold sash) and Tigers (gold / black vee). From 1963 to 1971, the ANFA hosted an annual carnival with teams from Cranbrook, Denmark, Mount Barker and Rocky Gully. Albany and Perth metropolitan area side Cockburn Nippers also met for annual challenge matches, in rotation against each other at respective venues, with around 50 players and officials being billeted in private homes whenever these took place. Eleven players from the Association travelled to Perth in 1972 to represent Claremont versus Swan Districts during half-time of the league match in front of a huge West Australia Football League crowd to become the first country Nippers to take part in Little League. Since its launch in 1963 and up to this point, Mount Barker Nippers Football Association also existed but, due to the lack of players in 1971 and 1972, went into recess before returning to competition in 1973.

On Tuesday April 9, 1974, junior football in our region changed direction when the Southern Districts National Football League met with Albany and Mount Barker Nippers associations and formed the Southern Districts Junior Football Association for Under 13s and 15s grades. **Clive Walker** became inaugural president with **Bevan Bowden** its first secretary and treasurer. North Albany, North Mount Barker, Railways, Royals and South Mount Barker were there at the beginning. Denmark Terriers Football Association, which started in 1964 (under president **Vic Beeck** and secretary / treasurer **Keith Hawkins**) continued with its established competition. **Joe Burton** and **Max Nockolds** were instrumental in starting Walpole Nippers in 1971. Albany and Mount Barker Nippers associations still ran its own competitions beyond this period - catering for Under 8s to Under 11s. It wasn't until 1978 that Denmark entered an Under 16s team in the SDJFA. Albany players **Danny Herbert**, **Neil Lester-Smith** and **Alan Rowe**, as well as **Paul Whittington** and **Colin McKenzie** from Mount Barker and Walpole's **Kim Smith**, represented Claremont Football Club in a one-off Under 16s carnival in Adelaide, South Australia, during August 1978.

Modified Rules was introduced locally in 1980. Another major reconstruction occurred on October 14 that same year when Nippers officials met with the Southern Districts Junior Football Association and agreed on amalgamation as of season 1981. Because the Southern Districts National Football League changed its colts age limit from Under 18s to 16s & Under, officials at the Juniors' meeting decided to discontinue alignment with the League clubs and encourage an unlimited amount of teams. Under 6s, 8s and 10s grades were played under non-competitive modified rules while the Under 12s and Under 14s stayed with conventional rules in 1981. The Denmark Terriers Football Association entered an Under 12s team in the SDJFA the same year but became extinct after the 1988 season. Throughout the 1980s, all preceding Nippers organisations continued to operate successfully into that decade.

In 1999, a Southern Districts Junior Football Association grand final was contested out of Albany for the first time when Mount Barker Under 16 rivals Eagles and Bulldogs met in the town.

Six pioneers, as far as I am aware, have been bestowed life membership during the Southern Districts Nippers era - they are **Edward 'Ted' Penter** 1967; **Jim 'JC' Cordery** 1968; **Cecil Lucas** 1969 and **Jack James** 1970 (Albany); **Ben Taylor** 1969 (Mount Barker) and **Rod Dhu** 1973 (Denmark / Walpole). #

*\*When initials are used and you know the christian name, please notify me on 0428 514 605 or [gj.bartholomeusz@westnet.com.au](mailto:gj.bartholomeusz@westnet.com.au)*

Albany Football Association 1897 - 1941

Recess 1914 - 1918 and 1942 - 1944 due to War



COPYRIGHT LAWS APPLY

Southern Districts Football League 1945 - 1990

Great Southern Football League 1991 - current