



## Around the Clubs, Sport & Entertainment

# Top honor for stalwart John

By CHRIS KARAS

**ONE** of rugby league's true gentlemen John Robertson was bestowed with life membership of the Balmain Junior League during last week's AGM at Balmain Leagues Club.

*Robertson - a former player, coach, committee-man and long time sponsor - was a deserved recipient for his sterling service during a 54 year involvement with the BJL.*

John, who runs the established J & J Robertson & Sons Transport business, is pictured right receiving his life membership pin and a revised edition of the "Fraser to Farah" book from BJL chairman Bob Henderson.

He was a dashing centre or fullback with Drum-moyne Juniors E Grade team in 1956 and played two seasons with Glebe Police Boys D Grade in 1957-58 before lining up for Leichhardt CYO in 1959-60.

John first began sponsoring rugby league teams in the early 1970s after watching an U/8 team give their all in a Grand Final at Birchgrove Oval - and come away empty handed.

"I saw the disappointment on those boys' faces during the presentation ceremony and decided to

help out" recalled John.

It prompted Robertson to go out and purchase jackets for the entire squad - thus beginning a long association with Junior League sponsorship that still exists today.

John began his coaching career with the Balmain Police Boys JRLFC in 1976 and took the reins of the U/18 side in 1980 - the same year that a raw boned 17 year old prop named Steve Roach arrived at the club from Wollongong.

Robertson - a life member of the 'Coppers' club and former vice president - was Roach's first Sydney coach.

He later sponsored the Five Dock RSL JRLFC and coached the U/15s before preparing the Cricketers Arms' A Grade teams during the 1990-91 campaigns.

John's four sons - John jr (130 games); Barry (60 games); Paul and Steve (50 games each) all served Police Boys with distinction

on the football field.

But it was in the sport of water ski-ing that they gained international stardom.

Paul won the World Water Ski Racing Championship in 1991 as part of the "Firebird" team with brothers John and Barry in the boat before Steve won world titles in 1999 (Spain) and 2001 (Las Vegas).

J & J Robertson & Sons Transport have sponsored Balmain's junior representative teams since 2003; Dundas Shamrocks JRLFC since 2005 and Camden Rams since 2006.

"It is a great honor to receive life membership of the Balmain Junior League - the oldest Junior League association in Australia," beamed Robertson.

"I rate it one of the great experiences of my life - on a par with watching Balmain defeat South Sydney in the 1969 Grand Final at the SCG; Wests Tigers winning the 2005 NRL premiership and my sons claiming world water ski race titles."



## Moran century boosts Students