

Cougars' Fundraiser Tournament at Easter in Newcastle was again a huge success – both tennis-wise and socially. The funds raised were once again near the \$10,000 mark, and Frank Kitcher is proud to announce that the progressive total is now almost \$70,000 for the Cancer Council, over the 7 years he has been running it. Frank is most appreciative of the support from Newcastle businesses, Politis Investments in particular, who have been extremely generous throughout.

This year 135 players participated - including 18-35s who were especially invited to participate for the first time. They were welcomed by those who played against them. We can call these youngsters "juniors" who were aged 18 to 35. The experiment worked well, and many of them vowed to come back again next year, especially since some of them will soon be turning 35, and can join Tennis Seniors officially! This may be a positive step to arrest our declining numbers and accelerate an increase that will allow us to appeal to sponsors in the future.

From Craig Edwards: *"it was quite strong and even grouping in Div 1, with no weak pairs...I did enjoy playing the younger ones, it made the game a lot more solid. I like the idea of bringing the younger ones in to boost numbers 'n' strength and give them a taste of the social side of seniors' tennis... the younger ones had a good attitude on the court.. overall a fun and enjoyable weekend of good tennis."*

Kerri Summerhayes commented: *"it was great to have a Ladies' Singles event actually run and the standard was quite high. I never mind if the age groups need to be combined to allow an event to run. The Doubles was a good standard with all pairs being capable players. I didn't play any juniors but would not mind if juniors were needed to fill the draw. This was a well-run weekend with very friendly committee and players."*

Kaye Nealon's words: *"Good Friday, the Men's & Ladies singles were played. Stef Asprey travelled up for the day and won. My sister Kerri was Runner Up. The 10.30am start was helpful for people who want to leave home that morning, saving a night's accommodation costs. Dean Robertson won his group in the Men's, with Antony Hook Runner Up.*

This year I only played Sat & Sun afternoon. All the events were well supported though, and Kerri & I won the Doubles. It's great to see that most of the original Newcastle players, from 4 or 5 years ago still compete. (Stephanie Bowler was making a comeback.) Dean and I came third in the mixed after having 4 or 5 really enjoyable sets.

There were raffles etc during the 3 days, lots of local items being donated and at the final presentation Frank said that overall, including other fund raising during the year, \$10,000.00 was raised for Cancer research. Loretta, Carol and Neville all gave a helping hand which was much appreciated by players and committee alike.

We travelled home on the Monday so once again it's perfect for all of us, we could beat the traffic. Perfect weather too!"