

LIGHTNING

SUNSHINE COAST



In the community 2019

SEASON 3 REVIEW

COMMUNITY CONNECT

Striking the Coast

When Sunshine Coast Lightning (Lightning) was established three years ago as a joint venture between Melbourne Storm Rugby League Club and the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) as part of the Suncorp Super Netball (SSN) national league, one of its core values was to be a team for the community.

As the only regional team in the SSN competition, the Club is in a unique position to create something extra special and involve the community at all levels. The Club has worked hard to live by this value and integrate across many facets of the Sunshine Coast region.

From community appearances to partnering with local business and supporting local events and groups, there are so many connection points that have already been touched along the way. You'd be hard pressed to find a local who hadn't heard of Lightning in one way or another!

Every interaction with Lightning contributes towards building community foundations. That's a large part of the team's overall success – Lightning respects and appreciates all that the community has done to help support its growth, especially those who have been on the journey since the beginning.

And that journey is quite an incredible one. In three short years Lightning has made three grand final appearances, winning back-to-back Premierships in 2017 and 2018, as well as being awarded Minor Premiers in 2019, making it the most successful start-up professional sporting team in Australian history.

As highly visible members of the community, Lightning players, coaches and staff understand their unique position and aspire to make a positive contribution. Lightning provides hope, inspiration and empowerment.



YEAR THREE *In Review*

“LOVE THE COMMUNITY BASED INITIATIVES THAT LIGHTNING ALWAYS FOCUS ON! GRASS ROOTS IS WHERE IT'S AT IN ESTABLISHING A SOLID CLUB! THIS PROMOTES EVERYTHING THE GAME STANDS FOR!”

With two years under the belt, Season 3 offered the chance to build on the community roots already established and explore new opportunities and experiences. Lightning worked hard to improve its community programs including providing greater opportunities for some of the more disadvantaged community groups, an area Lightning is extremely passionate about supporting.

Community programs executed by Lightning in Season 3 included:

- Netball Association Player Ambassador Program
- Charity Partnerships
- Community Appearances
- Community Champion Award
- Game Day Connections and Workforce
- Lucy Lightning
- Requests
- Thank You Event



NETBALL ASSOCIATION PLAYER *Ambassador Program*

Lightning has forged strong bonds with each of the seven Suncoast Region Netball Associations, with the main touchpoint being the Lightning developed Player Ambassador Program.

This well received program allows Lightning to engage with the Associations on a regular basis including holding an open day, exclusive competitions, player appearances and game day benefits and interactions. This program has allowed the Associations to 'adopt-a-Player' each season and has bonded the netball community closer to the team.

**“THANK YOU LADIES FOR
WHAT YOU DO FOR OUR
COMMUNITY. FABULOUS
ROLE MODELS.”**

In Season 3, this program was extended to include extra benefits including:

- a pre-season Player introduction and presentation,
- invitation for Presidents to Lightning's business event,
- the establishment of a Facebook page to connect and share information with associations; and
- additional game day benefits including a community presentation segment.



CHARITY PARTNERSHIPS

Lightning partnered with local disability charity, The Compass Institute (Compass), as well as strengthened and expanded their partnership with national charity partner, The Confident Girls Foundation.

The partnerships with both charity groups were holistic – everyone from the players to coaches and staff played a role in delivering them. From tailored clinics to game day experiences, event opportunities, coach appearances and on-site volunteering, everyone was able to take something positive away from the interactions.

So successful was the execution of the Confident Girls Clinics Program, that the Foundation offered additional funds to further expand the reach in the regional community, affording five players and the Assistant Coach to head north and engage with the Hervey Bay community during the Netball World Cup break in July 2019.

Compass and Lightning also mutually benefited from the partnership, with a new Lightning fan base created across the multitude of Compass facilities and business connections made to further support the Institute's programs, including relationships with Downer, Event Cinemas, NCP Bathrooms and Springfree Trampolines.

A BIG THANK YOU FOR INCLUDING NSC IN THE CONFIDENT GIRLS PROGRAM. OUR STUDENTS HAD AN AMAZING TIME AND DEVELOPED IN BOTH SKILL AND CHARACTER. LAURA L, LAURA S AND ANNIKA WERE AMAZING ROLE MODELS AND WE WERE FORTUNATE TO WORK WITH YOUR INCREDIBLE TEAM.



COMMUNITY APPEARANCES

Without the local community, Lightning would not have a history to begin with. To grow from simply a name and logo to a national champion in a matter of months, and continue to be at the top of the game three years on is testament to the community buy-in. There has always been a concerted effort to involve the community along the way, particularly through the Club's playing group who are incredible role models and give so much back.

The Players along with the Coaches are extremely accessible and offer their time to attend a wide variety of appearances throughout the season. In Season 3, over 350 appearance hours were completed across 80 appearances, with many additional agreed and personal appearances above and beyond these hours.

The appearances are varied and include not only community events however schools, netball associations, hospitals, charities and media. In addition, Lightning partners have valued access to the Players for partner community events such as community unveilings, open days, race days and televised telethons.

Lightning events also offer a fantastic opportunity to connect with the community. From business and partner networking events to school holiday clinics and open training sessions, over 20 events held in-season provide a close bonding experience with the team.

Feedback from appearances and events has been extremely positive, heartfelt and uplifting, firmly cementing the team's position as the jewel in the crown of the community's sporting landscape.



COMMUNITY CHAMPION *Award*

As part of its continued focus on community outreach, the Club introduced a Community Champion Award during the season which was presented at the end of year awards night.

Cara Koenen was the inaugural winner of this Award, for her outstanding contribution at a local level. Cara demonstrated leadership qualities, going above and beyond to ensure community members felt welcomed and included as part of the extended Lightning family. Cara is a positive and dedicated role model, embracing and highlighting one of Lightning's key pillars – the community.



⚡ GAME DAY *Connections*

Lightning strongly values its community connections and is passionate about engaging with the wider community, as well as its Members, fans, partners and volunteers. Home games at the redeveloped USC Stadium, provide the Lightning community with excellent interaction and promotional opportunities. In Season 3 these included:

- ⚡ The Strike Zone – allowing Lightning sponsors and partners to engage with patrons pre-game. This included Compass placing recycling bins around the Zone to fundraise and netball associations running Net Set Go activities.
- ⚡ The Coaches Playbook pre-game event.
- ⚡ Downer's Lightning Lounge – using local catering and beverage suppliers as well as guest speakers from Lightning's community programs.
- ⚡ Link with Lightning – a local business connection to the playing squad.
- ⚡ Coin toss and ball delivery experiences.
- ⚡ A new community segment – with a pre-season dress presentation by a Compass trainee to each of the seven Suncoast Netball Associations.
- ⚡ The Compass run-through banner at match call on.
- ⚡ Suncoast Netball Associations receiving access to pre-sale and free tickets as well as an allocated game day Guard of Honour, Net Set Go halftime game and Ball Crew.
- ⚡ A dedicated charity round highlighting Compass and the Confident Girls Foundation.
- ⚡ Photos and engagement post-game, on-court, for the Confident Girls clinic participants.
- ⚡ Player meet and mingle post-games for all game day patrons.
- ⚡ Themed games involving local businesses and community groups.
- ⚡ Partnering with Sunshine Coast Council for Indigenous Round including a dress designed by a local Indigenous artist.



⚡ GAME DAY *Workforce*

Another large community program is Lightning's game day workforce, made up of over 50 local volunteers who are extremely passionate and proud of the team.

These volunteers perform varied duties including bump in and out, ticket scanning, meet and greet, corporate hospitality, sports presentation, team hosting and ushering. Lightning invests strongly in this program and values all its volunteers, as it understands the importance of these game day ambassadors for the Club.

**“AND THIS IS HOW YOU
CREATE A BRAND THAT THE
WHOLE COMMUNITY WILL
GET BEHIND AND SUPPORT.
FROM THE GROUND UP.
CONGRATULATIONS SUNSHINE
COAST LIGHTNING VOLUNTEERS
ON ANOTHER FANTASTIC YEAR.”**



LUCY LIGHTNING

Lucy Lightning, the Club's mascot, has been a key member of the team since the beginning. She is hot property on a game day, moving throughout the Strike Zone and in-Stadium, contributing strongly to Lightning's fan engagement. Lucy also makes appearances at several Lightning as well as external community events. Lucy epitomises Lightning – strong, healthy, engaging and fun.

REQUESTS

Lightning proudly donates items to not-for-profit organisations, fundraising groups and individuals including signed memorabilia and tickets. Special experiences and wishes have also been granted to groups and individuals in time of need; including post-game on the court, closed training sessions, surprise meet and greets and guest speaking appearances.

THANK YOU EVENT

At the end of each season Lightning, in conjunction with Principal Partner Sunshine Coast Council, holds an event to allow the Club to thank the entire community, including all its partners, for their amazing and on-going support.



SEASON 4 *And Beyond*

Lightning is excited to see what Season 4 brings. Inaugural Head Coach and mastermind Noeline Taurua handed over the reins to former Assistant Coach Kylee Byrne at the end of Season 3, offering a fantastic opportunity for Kylee to lead the Club into its next chapter.

Kylee, a netball mastermind in her own right, is well connected to the netball community, including being the current U21 Australian Head Coach as well a former Queensland Firebirds Player. With the entire 2019 playing squad all re-signing for 2020 under Kylee's guidance, the Club's future continues to be bright.

Community connections are at the forefront of Kylee's agenda, understanding the importance of local support for the continued growth of Lightning. The Club plans to further engage with other local, state and national sporting teams and codes, including USC's high-performance networks, to continue to build the profile of sport on the Sunshine Coast and regionally.

Lightning will also continue to work in the netball community, with a strong focus on assisting talented pathway athletes reach their potential. Through close connections with the USC Netball Academy and USC Thunder Netball teams, Lightning will provide opportunities for emerging athletes to stay on the Sunshine Coast and pursue their dreams under the watchful eye of Lightning's coaches.

Charity Partners Compass and the Confident Girls Foundation will remain as the dedicated charity groups, with youth, mental health and well-being also remaining key focus areas for the Club. New programs are being scoped, and with others expanding, it's an opportune time to join with the Club and be a part of its continued success.



Feedback from the community

We are so proud • So much good for the community • Inspiring • Amazing role models • Helped to develop both skills and character • Encouraged and made each kid feel comfortable not pressured or judged • Excitement • Promotes everything the game stands for • What a great thing to do • Fabulous way to lead by example • Lovely to see netball giving back to the community • Great job you girls are doing • Very impressed with the Lightning team members and how they interacted with the children • Extremely positive and encouraging • Genuine ladies • Great role models for my daughters • Thank you for everything you did for our girls • Very inspirational • Sure it won't be our last • Caring • This is why we love Lightning so much • Seeing my daughter bursting out of her skin with excitement is priceless • It was unreal • So wonderful • A positive experience, rarely offered to this cohort • Thank you Sunshine Coast Lightning for giving clubs such amazing opportunities • Thank you all • It is very much appreciated • Great ambassadors for Sunshine Coast Lightning and our sport • That's why I am a member, brilliant community work • Friendly and professional • Genuine ladies and great role models • The region is lucky to have inspiring leaders • I am very grateful • Inspirational • The girls absolutely loved it • The Confident Girls Clinic has such a positive result in many different ways • The students will never forget the experience • The whole day will be a highlight for them for years to come • For two little people it made their day and won't be forgotten • Role models • Thanks again for the opportunities given • We're happy Foundation Members • Lovely experience • I'm forever grateful • Brilliant community work • Words are certainly not enough to express our gratitude • Sharing their skills, words of encouragement, passion and enthusiasm • Ambassadors • This program definitely has a massive impact on our students • You couldn't wipe the smiles off their faces • They were so positive • Thank you for organising the clinic • Love these girls, looking forward to the coming season • Netball made me a confident girl • Great initiative • We applaud you for coming up with an amazing, innovative way to connect with the community • Great job in our community • Fantastic opportunity • What Lightning is doing for the associations in their region is amazing • Amazing program for these young girls • Go Lightning • Thank you • A special occasion for these young girls to witness and listen to such incredible role models • It can really make them aspire to reach for the stars • You hear nothing but positive feedback whenever Lightning engage with the community



#TogetherWeStrike