



ACTA National Skeet Hall of Fame Dinner

March 4, 2024



ACTA Chairman Malcolm Dyson

The much anticipated 2024 Skeet Hall of Fame gathering commenced with the 140 attendees enjoying some pre-event refreshments in the ACTA Range Function Centre lounge area before making their way into the dining hall.

members in attendance and then invited ACTA Chairman, Mal Dyson, to the stage to say a few words.

Mal welcomed the Skeet shooting community and wished them well for the week ahead and thanked the ACTA staff and the ACTA Range Function Centre staff for the fabulous presentation of the venue.

Our MC, Richard Sammon, then acknowledged the tremendous support that our sponsors provide to the Skeet Nationals. This year we thank and acknowledge the following businesses:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Power Ammo | National 410 and 28g |
| CR Kennedy (Pilla) | National 20g |
| Kreighoff | National Skeet Handicap |
| Winchester | Commonwealth Title |
| Clay & Hunt | National Skeet 12g |

MC for the night, Richard Sammon, welcomed all the guests and the ACTA Board



Australian and New Zealand 2023 Glenn Trophy Teams: Kelvin Gutsell, Paul Saliba, Mason Reed, Jack Stockdale, Jackson Hann, Michael Buttigieg, Andy Peter, Glenn Walker, Clark Pirie, Shane Bennett

On Target Sporting National Skeet
 Doubles Arms
 Perazzi Australia Champion of
 Champions
 Casella-Bronze Wing High Guns

ASSA Life Membership

The formal presentations then commenced with the President of the ASSA, Nigel Hughes, awarding of ASSA Life Membership to Wallace Clarke, David O’Sullivan and Michael Buttigieg.

We then moved onto recognising the wonderful shooting achievements of the 2023 shooting year.

First State Title Winners

Austin Gibbes, SA 12 Gauge Skeet Championship 2023

Darren Quinn, TAS Skeet Handicap 2023

First National Title Winner

David Muir, AUS National 20G Skeet Championship 2023

James Sacchetta, NZ National Skeet Doubles Championship 2023

VALE - Jim Turner

There was a moment of reflection on the passing of Melbourne Gun Club Life Member and much loved member of the Shooting community, Jim Turner. Jim’s contribution to his club and our sport will be long remembered and will be celebrated at a 2 day skeet shoot held at Melbourne Gun Club in early May 2024.

2023 Glenn Trophy

With the 2023 Glenn Trophy being shot in New Zealand, it was great to see the Australian Team retain the Glenn Trophy. The Australian Team of Michael Buttigieg, Shane Bennett, Paul Saliba, Glenn Walker and Jack Stockdale on a score of 245/250, defeated the NZ Team of Andy Peter, Mason Reed, Kelvin Gutsall, Jackson Hahn and Clarke Pirie on the score of 243/250.

Annual Long Break Awards 2023

20 Gauge Long Break Matthew DePaoli (145)

12 Gauge Long Break Matthew Depaoli (322)

Skeet Doubles Long Break Michael Buttigieg (111)



20 Gauge Long Break & 12 Gauge Long Break Awards went to Matthew DePaoli



Michael Buttigieg, winner of Skeet Doubles Long Break



MC Richard Sammon & Sarah Bennet who received the Ladies 12 Gauge Long Break Record Award



Sarah Bennett received the Grand Slam Award, with husband Shane, a past winner of the Award

Australian Long Break Record

Sarah Bennett was awarded the Ladies 12 Gauge Long Break Record, being the first Lady in Australia to shoot over 200 straight. Sarah has set the new record at 230 which beat the previous record of 191 held by Lorraine Hughes of Queensland.

Grand Slam Award

The Grand Slam in Skeet shooting is 200 target breaks in 12g, 100 target break in 20g and 100 target break in Skeet Doubles.

With her 230 straight in 12 Gauge, Sarah Bennett was the 14th recipient of the Skeet Grand Slam award. Notably Sarah is the first Lady to achieve this award, and joins her husband Shane Bennett as a Grand Slam award recipient. Sarah achieved her Grand Slam with:

- 100 Skeet Doubles Cecil Park 2017
- 100 Skeet 20 Gauge World Shoot 2022
- 200 Skeet 12 Gauge AUS Nationals 2023



Nigel Hughes congratulates Life Membership recipient, Wallace Clarke



Life Member, David O'Sullivan



Life Member, Michael Buttigieg

Adrian Cousens Award

The finalists for the evening were:

- Danny Sacchetta VIC 40 Points
- James Sacchetta VIC 50 Points
- Michael Buttigieg VIC 170 Points

The Adrian Cousens Medal for 2023 was won by Michael Buttigieg from Frankston Australia Clay Target Club in Victoria. Michael was presented the award by Chris Hughes.

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Finalists for the Adrian Cousens Award, Daniel Sacchetta, James Sacchetta, Michael Buttigieg



2024 Hall of Fame Inductee, Antony Ballarino



Michael Buttigieg received the Adrian Cousens Award, presented by Chris Hughes

2024 SKEET HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE – ANTONY BALLARINO

Our 2024 Skeet Hall of Fame induction was a chance to learn more about Antony Ballarino, the young man from Far North Queensland who was being inducted to the Hall of Fame.

Antony joined our MC on the stage for a conversation about his journey, not just in shooting but in his life, that had bought him to this wonderful achievement in his shooting career.

Early life

Born in Mackay Queensland on the 5th of August 1998 to his parents Kylie and Peter Ballarino, Antony was 25 years of age at the time of his induction.

The family moved to Collinsville Queensland, in November 1999 where his parents purchased an Engineering and Mechanical business. Antony grew up in Collinsville, where



Antony with his family

he still lives and works to this day with his wife Caitlin and daughter Isabella.

Antony spent time as a boy trying many sports such as swimming, rugby league and rugby union before finding the sport of shooting at age 12. His secondary schooling as a boarder at The Cathedral School in Townsville was a big part of Antony's life and we heard from both his boarder master, and one of his boarding school mates via video, congratulating Antony on his induction. We also heard from Antony's maths tutor who suggested it was a great thing Antony was inducted into the Skeet Hall of Fame because it sure as hell wasn't going to be maths!

Growing Up Around the Traps

Antony was introduced to the sport of shooting by his father Peter, at the Port Denison Clay Target Club where Antony is still a member. Committee Member Col Edgerton sent in a message on behalf of the club, expressing how proud they are of his achievements.

The influence of many people has shaped Antony's shooting journey, not an exhaustive list, but people such as Mal Collins, Darryl Stevens, Aidrian Cousens, Suzy Balogh, Lauren and Russell Mark, and of course his father Peter. Antony then reflected on how he has been able to learn and take small elements from these many mentors and coaches to craft his own shooting technique which he credits as a significant reason for his success.

Starting to win...

The 2015 Australian Skeet Nationals were a breakthrough moment in Antony's shooting career. At the age of only 16 he managed to shoot one of 4 possibles of 100/100 on the penultimate day of the carnival, which happened to be the blue-ribbon event of the 12 Gauge National Title. This saw Antony enter a shoot-off with 3 others and after station 4 he was able to secure his first National Title, the youngest ever winner of the event to this day!



*Past Hall of Fame Inductee, Laurie Chelepy,
with 2024 Hall of Fame Inductee, Antony Ballarino*

This all happened before Antony had managed to win a State Title, which he duly did later that year with the Queensland State Skeet Doubles Championship.

We then heard about the many successes at State and National level through 2016 and 2017 before hearing about the 2023 Queensland State Titles in which Antony qualified for the Hall of Fame.

Shooting with his friends Steve Macris, Laurie Chelepy, Richard Sammon and friend and brother-in-law Cody Chapman, Antony won the Queensland State Skeet Handicap to finally get to the 200 points required to enter the Skeet Hall of Fame. Antony described a nerve wracking shoot-off with Cherie Reeves of Normanton Queensland where he shot 114/114 to secure the win. He then went on to win the Doubles and the High Gun at the same carnival.

Looking back on Antony's shooting career it was noted how he had not been able to travel to many State Titles other than the Queensland State Titles, largely due to his remote location in Far North Queensland. This makes his



Antony, Caitlin and baby Isabella

induction into the Skeet Hall of Fame at the age of 25 even more impressive, with 14 of his 15 State Titles coming in Queensland between 2015 and 2023.

2018 Skeet Nationals

In late April of 2018 Antony received some terrible news regarding his mother Kylie's health. After many discussions amongst the family, it was decided that Antony would still travel to Wagga Wagga for the Skeet Nationals with his girlfriend, now wife, Caitlin by his side.

For those of us fortunate enough to see Antony that year in 2018, we saw a young man that held himself with the highest levels of composure and grace, as he managed to secure 3 x National Runners-Up (Handicap, 12 Gauge, Doubles), on his way to winning the National High Gun, only 3 targets down.

All the while nobody at the shoot was aware of what Antony must have been dealing with internally with the unknown of his mother's medical condition. The family rang Nigel Hughes at the completion of the event to request he acknowledge this at the presentations. Nobody other than Antony and Caitlin were aware and it made this win even more amazing. Note it is wonderful that after such a long (and ongoing) battle, Kylie has been able to join us here to see Antony's Hall of Fame induction.

Family and the Future . . .

Antony's family have, and still, play an enormous part in his life.

Working in the family business and living close by to his parents in Collinsville, it is clear the strong bond they share. Antony was thrilled to have his parents and grandparents there on the night.

With the arrival of Isabella Ballarino on the 30th of October 2023, Antony and his wife Caitlin have some wonderful times ahead and when asked what the future holds for Antony, he described caring for his wife and daughter and spending time with his shooting friends.

Induction into the Skeet Hall of Fame

After getting to know Antony Ballarino, our 2024 Hall of Fame inductee, the MC then called on Antony's close friend and shooting companion through the years, Skeet Hall of Fame inductee Mr Laurie Chelepy to say a few words and to present Antony with his Hall of Fame Jacket.

At the time of his induction Antony had amassed 220 Hall of Fame points in his shooting career.

- 3 x National Titles
- 7 x National Runner ups
- 15 x State Titles
- AA Elite Number 34
- 8 x Australian teams
- 3 x Glenn Trophy Teams
- 6 x Tran Tasman Teams
- 7 x Queensland Postal Teams
- 9 x Queensland Shoulder to shoulder Teams
- 220 Hall of Fame points, inducted to Skeet Hall of Fame 2024

Antony is truly deserving of his induction into the ACTA Skeet Hall of Fame.



Antony Ballarino with past Hall of Fame Inductees