

## QPF National Winner 2007

After finishing second to Rod Hatherly in last year's National Craig Allen, flying in partnership with father John and 12 year old daughter Hannah, went one better this year to win the National from Augathella (690kms) with a Blue Cheq Pied Hen QPF 2006 19535 doing 1284mpm. Its been a 30 year quest for Craig and John to win this race. For them the National is the "Holy Grail" of pigeon racing.

The Sire of the National winner is a Blue Cheq Cock bred by Len Argent of the Phoenix Invitation Club. Hannah calls this Cock "Door Cock" because of his selection of a nesting place behind one of the loft's doors. This pigeon was gifted to Craig as a squeaker and went onto fly 3 years in succession, his last race being the Mackay 10 birder in 2006 where he was clocked and placed at Club and Section Fed level. One pigeon was bred out of him for the 2006 season and she went onto win the Marlborough Fed (620kms). This cock has now bred a Fed winner in successive years (to two different hens) and is Grandsire to 9th Fed Morven (620kms) and other birds placed at club and section level.

The Dam of the National winner was bred by Carlos Brannon of Bellevue Lofts and gifted as a squeaker to Craig. Craig calls this hen the "Matriarch". She was placed at club level at Bundaberg and then went onto place 12th in the Miriam Vale Fed. She is down from Vanloon/Janssen foundation stock, her Sire colloquially known by Carlos' friends as "the Fighter Cock". The Dam of the Matriarch is a real cracker and scored 4 Fed places in Sydney for Carlos, including 4th Fed Taree 776 mpm, 7th Fed St Point 1123 mpm, 5th Fed Yamba 1126 mpm and 4th Fed Ballina 1208mpm. This pigeon loved the tough stuff, turning up time after time.

Len Argent's Cock and Carlos' hen will be the foundation pair of Craig's loft in years to come. Of six youngsters bred from this pair for this season, five remain, four of which completed the Augathella event. Most of these will be retained for stock.

As mentioned, the two pigeons that bred the National winner were 'gift' pigeons from mates who gave their best. Craig says that gift pigeons from good mates should never be passed over. He thanks Len and Carlos for providing great material to work with. His thanks also go to his father John who has supported his pigeon racing bug for 30 years and daughter Hannah who does the afternoon shift and gives the birds 'quiet words of encouragement' which Craig says is the secret to the loft's success.

