



**OUT OF THE DOLDRUMS:**  
Cronulla turned the Roosters  
to feather dusters at Toyota  
Park last Friday.

# WORD ME UP

**Sharks lift lid on the secret session that helped put their season back on track**

BY GLENN JACKSON

**A** SMALL whiteboard with seemingly random scribbles is being credited as the key to the Sharks' turnaround against the Roosters.

On it, in a corner of the Cronulla dressing rooms, 34 short phrases were written – now Sharks players are claiming they were the spark which snapped their three-match losing streak with a crucial 16-10 win last Friday.

"Everyone had to write what it takes to be an average player, and what it takes to be one of the best," says in-form second-rower Phil Bailey. "Mine were 'mentally weak' and 'want'. It was a little bit different, but it definitely made everyone stop and have a good look at what we were doing."

Written in blue and red marker pen, words like honesty and passion were lined up against weak, fatigue and whinging.

The idea was the brainchild of trainer Trent Elkin, who says he was inspired by the club's chiropractor. Elkin admitted he attempted "to get inside their heads a little" after losses to the Tigers, North Queensland and Parramatta.

"I believe a big aspect of what these guys do is mental," he says. "It doesn't matter how physically prepared they are if they're not also prepared mentally."

"They'd been down for a couple of weeks and it occurred to me the only thing missing . . . I knew physically they were there but mentally they were down a fraction."

"It came straight from the guys."

Sharks players admitted they have been stung into action by the unique motivation.

"It's a lot better when it comes from the players," says halfback Brett Kimmorley. "It's in front of you. It's 16 other blokes saying it."

Bailey conceded the Sharks would have been

at "panic stations" had the team slumped to a fourth consecutive defeat.

"It's been all over the shop," the former NSW back-rower says. "We put in two good first-half performances against the Tigers and the Cowboys but the second halves were just atrocious."

"There was no commitment, no effort."

Bailey made 31 tackles and had five offloads against the Roosters despite suffering from a "bung foot", which stopped him from training until the day before the game.

The Sharks have the bye this weekend, with Kimmorley admitting the timing is good for him after being dropped from the NSW side and struggling at club level.

Kimmorley is planning a few days with family on the Central Coast to refresh.

"We'll enjoy a few days off and we play Brisbane up there after the bye so we'll need a good rest for that," he says.