



Rugby union: *Australian Rugby Union*

*'Many of the values of rugby come from its rich history, traditions, camaraderie and community involvement with the sport.'*¹

Australian Rugby Union (ARU) has enjoyed a period of unprecedented growth and success since the advent of the professional game in 1996.

In 2000, Australian rugby's trophy cabinet contained every international trophy contested and in 2003 there was a once-in-twenty-year opportunity to host the Rugby World Cup. A record Australian television audience of 4.3 million viewers watched the final and the ARU recorded a net surplus for the year of \$32.9 million.²

Average home crowds the 2005 Super 12 (now Super 14) competition were up more than 1,000, to 26,000 (the sixth successive rise in average crowds); the Fox Sports TV audience for Super 12 was up 25% on 2004; and interest levels in rugby hit a record high of 44% according to the Sweeney Sports Annual Survey, surpassing rugby league for the first time.³

The history of rugby

Rugby gets its name from the Rugby School in England, where it was first played in 1823. Legend has it that the game originated when one of the school's pupils, William Webb Ellis, picked up the ball during a game of soccer and ran with it. Now every four years, rugby nations from around the world meet to compete in the Webb Ellis Trophy in the Rugby World Cup.⁴

There are reports of early games of rugby between the army and the crews of visiting ships being played at Barrack Square in Sydney in the 1820s, however it was not until 1864 that the first rugby club in Australia – Sydney University – was established. By 1874 there were enough clubs to form a Sydney Metropolitan competition, and in that year the Southern Rugby Union was established and administered from Twickenham in England (eventually being handed over to New South Wales in 1881).

In 1903, Australia and New Zealand played a single Test at the Sydney Cricket Ground in front of 30,000 fans. This was the beginning of intense rugby rivalry between the two nations. However, as popular as rugby had become, it would soon feel the impact of the breakaway professional game of rugby league, which was formed in 1908.

Following the tour by the New Zealand All Blacks, the Australian team was pressured to produce a war cry similar to the Maori Haka. The team were ordered to perform an Aboriginal war cry, but were embarrassed by it. The Australian Captain Herbert 'Paddy' Moran called it the first Wallabies gravest affliction.⁵

In 1947, the various State Unions agreed that the future of Rugby Union in Australia would be better served by forming one administrative body and in 1949 the inaugural meeting of the Australian Rugby Football Union was held with delegates from New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and Victoria.⁶

After a slump in the fortunes of Australian Rugby, in the early 1970's an in-depth survey of the past, present and future rugby union was carried out, resulting in a re-appraisal of coaching techniques and a restructuring of the administration.

Since that time, Australian rugby has gone from strength to strength; the ARU has invested heavily in the game and broadened the appeal of the sport by pushing for the creation of the World Cup (1987) and the Tri-Nations tournament.

Australian Rugby Union

The ARU is associated with member unions in each state and territory. Through this relationship, they are able to provide a strong and united front for Australian rugby. The ARU also has relationships with affiliated unions including: Australian Barbarian Rugby Club, Australian Juniors Rugby Union, Australian Rugby Football Schools Union, Australian Services Rugby Union, Australian Society of Rugby Referees, Australian Universities Rugby Union, Australian Womens Rugby and Classic Wallabies.

The ARU stages a number of national championships and competitions with the support of its member and affiliates unions. These tournaments are held annually and provide talented amateur rugby players the opportunity to compete at a higher level against other representative players. They also establish clear pathways for talented participants (players, coaches, managers, match officials, etc.) to progress through to the professional ranks.

From 2007, a new competition will form a third tier in Australian rugby, filling the perceived void between club rugby and the Super 14 competition. Three teams from NSW, two from Queensland and one each from the ACT, Perth and Melbourne – amalgams of existing clubs – will compete between July and October. Club rugby will be played from March until mid-July.

Who plays rugby?

Rugby is a game that is played in over 120 countries throughout the world. People participate in rugby in many ways – as a player, coach, match official and volunteer or administrator.

Through non-contact versions of the game, children as young as six can enjoy the game. The modified versions of rugby in Australia include: *Walla* rugby (7–8 years), *Mini* rugby (9–10 years) and *Midi* rugby (11–12 years). These games are played at both junior clubs and schools.

Senior club rugby (including colts) offers players an opportunity to experience the camaraderie of the game, while women's rugby is also popular at clubs and schools. Rugby is played as a 15-a-side game, seven-a-side and as ten-a-side.

Rugby participation has grown at a strong rate, with registered player numbers increasing from 89,760 to more than 150,000 between 1996 and 2003. Participation continued to grow following the success of the Rugby World Cup, with almost 177,000 registered players in

2005 (including 36,574 seniors, 41,533 juniors, 1,996 women and 17,115 Golden Oldies)⁷ – a seven percent increase on 2004.⁸

Regular schools rugby competition is played by over 43,000 students throughout Australia and another 36,000 students participate in non-regular schools rugby competitions.⁹

However, sustaining such significant growth when sports participation in general is declining, and capitalising on the groundswell and momentum generated by Rugby World Cup 2003, remains a key issue for the ARU.¹⁰

Indigenous participation

As of 1 January 2006, there have only been seven Indigenous players to represent at the national level: Lloyd McDermott, Mark Ella, Glen Ella, Gary Ella, Lloyd Walker, Andrew Walker and James Williams. This is very low compared with the vast numbers of Indigenous talent who have represented in rugby league and AFL.

In 1991, a group of concerned rugby enthusiasts thought this scenario needed to change. They established the Lloyd McDermott Rugby Development Team (LMRDT) to bring about a change in the number of young Aboriginal men participating in the sport. The Team set about conducting a yearly rugby training camp to expose potential players to the necessary skills and fitness required to compete successfully at a senior level. A group of 15 players attended the first ever camp in Sydney.¹¹

Now 15 years old, the LMDRT works in partnership with the ARU to assemble Indigenous rugby teams to compete at the National U/16 Championships; the Australian Schools Division 2 Championships; and the Telstra Women's Invitational Tournament each year. In 2001, the LMDRT also established a scholarships program with several schools.¹²

The program is now widespread – from Darwin to Melbourne young Aboriginal boys and girls are participating in rugby activities. In 2005, over 500 U16 boys played in their events.¹³ Indigenous participation in the game has risen from 1037 in 2004 to 1623 in 2006.¹⁴

The ARU does not compile data on the number of Indigenous players in the game or those from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds. The introduction of the ARU's *'MyRugbyAdmin'* – the online registration/administration system – will provide easy registration, administration and accreditation of club members, coaches and match officials and may also assist in helping to compile more comprehensive data on members.

Research into drop-out rate

The ARU has conducted several research projects to understand the drop-out rate in rugby after school and issues around retention of 18–21 year old players. More specifically, they wanted to assess current attitudes to competition structure, club administration and the factors that influence motivation to play.

The research indicated that the overall attitude of current players to the existing competition was positive. Most players believed that they were getting a “fair go” from their club, player's opinions were listened to, and club spirit was relatively high. Follow up research has been recommended to further understand the differences that exist between university students and full-time workers who play the game.

'True Vision' – a plan for Australian Rugby



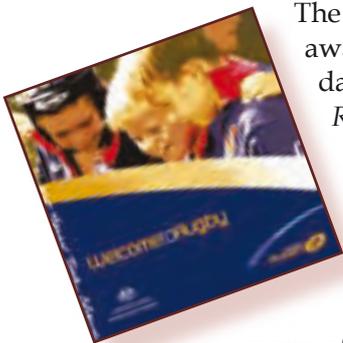
Rugby union is trying to take advantage of the ongoing growth and profile of the game, which reached an all-time high during the 2003 Rugby World Cup. As well as boosting rugby's profile, the tournament also delivered a financial legacy which should provide a lasting benefit for the game.

'True Vision' is the Australian Rugby Union's plans for future development of all aspects of the game; this includes programs for developing and growing community rugby.

The ARU understands that players, the club and school administrators, the coaches, referees and other volunteers are rugby's lifeblood. As such, the ARU will spend \$18 million dollars from 2004–06 to support a range of grassroots initiatives by:

- boosting player numbers in junior and senior clubs and schools,
- targeting talented school age players with special development programs, and
- making ARU technical and database resources available to clubs to support their own objectives.¹⁵

Promoting the game to juniors



The ARU has developed a 'Welcome to Rugby' season starter kit designed to help create awareness about junior rugby in the community and help clubs promote their sign-on days. The pack includes promotional and technical resources including: a 'Welcome to Rugby' book, Wallaby posters and stickers, an *EdRugby* flyer, referee flyer, a Super 14 rugby poster and an 'expectations of behaviour' guidelines form.

Rugby is an exciting, free-flowing game, but it is quite complex and requires a range of individual and team skills. The ARU believe that younger rugby union players should be introduced to the game in a safe, progressive manner through its Junior Player Pathway games of *Walla*, *Mini* and *Midi*-rugby for players up to 12 years of age, along with the U19 modified game for players 13–19 years old.

These games have been specially adapted to be more suitable for the player's stage of life, physical capability, health status, skill level and previous experience. The games also have revised rugby rules to make them more suitable for children, such as the size of the ball, the playing area, the length of games and the playing numbers on the field.¹⁶

Walla Rugby (7–8 years) is a simple, non-tackling introduction to the game that allows children the opportunity to use the ball by combining the skills of passing, catching and running. It is played on a smaller field and with only seven players.

Mini Rugby (9–10 years) continues the theme of free flowing, running and passing rugby action. Most importantly it introduces the young player to the contact elements of the game such as tackle, ruck and maul. It is played with 10 players.

Midi Rugby (11–12 years) is the stepping stone to the full game. It is played between 12 or 15 players on a standard field. It continues the theme and principle of *Mini* Rugby with a greater emphasis on the contest for possession.

Under 19 Rugby (13–19 years) is the full 15-a-side game, which incorporates specific safety laws tailored to the developing player.¹⁷

The modified games are also incorporated into the community-based *TryRugby* program and the national curriculum school-based *EdRugby* program.¹⁸

Tryrugby

TryRugby is a 'sampling' program for boys and girls aged 5–16 years that was developed in 2001 to make rugby available to children and parents in a welcoming, fun and convenient environment.

The program can include a preliminary four weeks sampling program in surrounding schools leading into the start of a *TryRugby* centre; a six week *TryRugby* program focusing on fun, physical activity and skill development, and in some cases; a subsequent six week 'Walla' competition where participants play *Walla* Rugby.

Over 7,000 children have participated in the program since it began, and it has been extremely successful in attracting a new audience, with 90 per cent of participants having never played rugby before. In 2005, more than 2500 children attended *TryRugby* centres nationally.¹⁹

TryRugby has already been successful in offering an introduction to the game, resulting in parents and children signing up at local clubs or in school programs. The program has also been designed for the needs and lifestyles of the modern family. Sessions are short and held in a central location, and there are community barbecues and other activities for parents and children.

In 2004, Wallaby legends and Indigenous role models Glen and Gary Ella visited Nhulunbuy in the Northern Territory, as part of a five-day trip to the Gove Peninsula to promote *TryRugby*.

EdRugby

EdRugby is the ARU's national education program for schools. It has been developed around the key values of rugby – pride, teamwork, camaraderie and tradition. The program, established in 2003, helps teach life values to young Australians through sport. More than 1,650 primary and secondary schools across Australia have embraced the program (more than 15% of Australian schools), which includes an online resource, prizes and competitions.²⁰

EdRugby gives teachers access to a wide range of resources and activities to promote interest and participation in rugby, including:

EdRugby in the classroom: Primary and Secondary school teachers can access over 100 rugby-themed, cross-curriculum resources, including: lesson plans, interactive games and word puzzles, which emphasise values education, literacy, numeracy and ICT.

EdRugby for the field: Teachers can access a number of resources and activities to help them grow participation in rugby union at their school. It includes lesson plans for the field, access to the *EdRugby* Walla Challenge, information about *TryRugby*, and contact information.



EdRugby for the experience: Teachers can continue the rugby-themed learning experience by encouraging students to participate in a number of unique programs celebrating rugby union, including: question and answer forums, media team challenges and national writing and design competitions.²¹

The ARU, in conjunction with member unions and education bodies, aims to continue to expand the program to increase the number of rugby-related lesson plans for teachers, as well as developing a national schools database for use by development officers and rugby administrators from the club to a national level.

Indigenous rugby

Aboriginal Australia's first representative rugby union player was Frank Ivory, who played for Queensland in 1893–94, while Lloyd McDermott was the first to play for his country in 1962.

Indigenous rugby has produced many talented players, none more so than the famous Ella brothers, who toured England in 1977–78 as part of the Australian Schoolboys side and scored 25 out of an overall 103 tries.²² However, as mentioned before, the number of Indigenous Australians playing at the top level of rugby is very low when compared to other football codes, such as rugby league and AFL.

The ARU is seeking to redress this situation by supporting initiatives to actively increase the exposure of rugby to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders through Indigenous rugby programs. The programs are for school students in targeted communities and schools around regional Australia. To participate, players must attend school and have the support of their school staff. The programs are a joint initiative of the Indigenous Sports Program, the ARU, the LMRDT and member unions.

The ARU Community Rugby Development Manager Matt Grimison said the talent that Australian Rugby Union, the 'Lloydies' and the Indigenous Sport Program are uncovering in remote Aboriginal communities is huge.

"These kids are very natural athletes who pick up the game real quick. They do in four or six weeks what would be a 12-week program anywhere else. In terms of development, Indigenous rugby is where we have the possibility for most growth," Grimison said.²³

The 2005–06 Indigenous rugby program will provide over 2,000 participants with skills training, followed by an opportunity to participate in a school based tournament. All participants are encouraged to join local clubs during or after the program. Volunteers are provided with match management and coaching experiences and encouraged to further their knowledge through coach education.

With the support of the LMRDT, players and volunteers who take part in the program are provided the opportunity to participate in the Santos National Indigenous 16s Championships and be selected in the 16s and 18s National Indigenous teams, which compete against state and territory teams at national championships and tour New Zealand on an annual basis. This unique national rugby pathway for Indigenous schoolboys is improving and expanding each year.²⁴

Fostering inclusion

Rugby is a truly international game that is played in more than 120 countries around the world and provides players of all ages and levels with opportunities to visit different countries and experience different cultures.²⁵ The nature of the Super 14 competition is unique compared to other domestic sporting competitions, as it involves provincial teams from three different nations (Australia, New Zealand and South Africa). This means that the players are regularly exposed to different cultures, races and traditions.



Australian Rugby Union Managing Director and former CEO Gary Flowers, says rugby has a proud history of promoting cultural diversity.

“Our last two Wallaby World Cup captains, George Gregan born in Zambia, and John Eales with his Italian heritage, have been outstanding leaders for Australian Rugby,” said Flowers. “The Ella Brothers, Toutai and Steve Kefu, Patricio Noreiga, Tiaan Strauss and Clyde Rathbone, Lote Tuqiri, David Campese, Sir Nicholas Shehadie, Jules Guerassimoff, and George Smith are all proud Wallabies and all proudly Australian.”²⁶

However, the diversity of rugby is not unique to the Wallabies. Cultural diversity is strong from players at the Super 14 level right through to the grass roots. In 2006 more than 40 Australian players in the Super 14 competition were of a Maori, South African, Fijian, Samoan, Tongan, New Zealand, Zambian, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background.²⁷

In 2006, the ARU and the Qantas Wallabies supported Harmony Day by promoting the values of national pride, understanding, inclusion, respect, teamwork and tradition.

South African born Wallaby and NSW Waratahs lock Daniel Vickerman says Harmony Day is a chance to celebrate the diversity of the many backgrounds in Australian rugby.

“This is a great opportunity for everyone to recognise how diverse a country Australia is and I’m proud to see the Wallabies, Waratahs and Australian Rugby supporting such a good concept,” said Vickerman. “Harmony Day is about giving everyone a fair go and saying no to racism.”²⁸

‘Ed Rugby’ encouraging cultural diversity

As well inviting players to support Harmony Day, the ARU backed the concept through its *Ed Rugby* program and encouraged students to explore a range of topics surrounding cultural diversity.

Teachers were able to register with *EdRugby* and access the rugby-themed lessons for 2006 Harmony Day along with over 100 other rugby-themed resources and programs. The rugby-themed lessons for 2006 Harmony Day included:

Mark Ella – rugby legend: Students explore the significance of role models in sport and life, reflect on the value of diversity and teamwork in rugby, and discuss the contribution made by Mark Ella to Aboriginal culture, rugby, sport and the identity of Australia.

Shared values: Students examine the values shared by other people in the community and use rugby examples to explore values such as tolerance, understanding, respect, excellence, inclusion, trust, honesty, responsibility, care and social justice.

Advance Australia Fair: Students explore the values, qualities, emotions and image of Australia promoted by the national anthem and discuss how sporting events can positively shape national pride.

Working as a group: Students examine contributions made by individuals within a team and discuss the importance of group diversity in sporting teams and society.

This is me: Students explore their own values, attitudes, beliefs and other characteristics, compare their results with the class, and discuss the similarities and diversity within the group.

Mottos and mascots: Students discuss the roles of mascots in reminding us of the values, attitudes and heritage of sporting and other organizations and reflect on the mascots used in rugby which aim to mirror the rugby values of pride, teamwork and tradition.²⁹

Rugby Youth Foundation

The Rugby Youth Foundation is an independent, non-profit organisation which provides disadvantaged young people with programs and opportunities to build self-esteem, skills and resilience. The programs provide mentors, role models and material support to people who need it most.

Rugby in the Park is the Foundation's after-school program that has been running in severely disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Sydney's South Western suburbs of Airds, Claymore and Minto. The free program is held weekly in each location, all equipment is provided and participants receive fruit and a free sausage sizzle each session.

Based at school ovals and community parks, the program uses rugby to engage young people, build self-esteem and teach important values and life skills through a structured but fun after-school program.

Rugby in the Park is also a 'program within a program' offering a development experience for high school students to become youth coach/mentors, and acquire the confidence, skills and interest needed to design and implement projects. Young people volunteer to become part of the program and act as role models both to their peers and younger children in the program.³⁰

Racism and rugby

It was 35 years ago when five Test players in the 1971 Wallabies team, led by two former players, all but ended their careers when they refused to play against the all-white South African 'Springboks' at the SCG. The five players were protesting against the South African Government's apartheid policies. Indeed, the Springbok tour triggered violent demonstrations across Australia and resulted in Queensland declaring a state of emergency to allow matches to be played.

A cricket tour of Australia by the South Africans was cancelled directly afterwards and the head of Australian cricket at the time, Don Bradman, said cricket tours wouldn't go ahead until South Africa changed its apartheid policies.

Fast forward to 2005 and it was an Australian rugby player who was on the wrong side of racism protests. In a Super 12 game, Wallaby forward Justin Harrison sledged the opposition's winger Chumani Booii allegedly saying "Leave the ball, you stinking black c . . .".³¹

There was immediate and international condemnation at the behaviour. Following an ARU judiciary hearing, Harrison became the first Super 12 player to be found guilty of a racism-related charge. He was abject in his apologies and received a three-match suspension, a suspended \$20,000 fine and 30 hours of community workshops.

Former Wallabies Captain Nick Farr-Jones said: "Some people think sledging is acceptable in sport. There's certainly no room for racism. I don't want to be the judge but it's one thing to say, 'I'm sorry, I feel remorseful, I'm not a racist by nature'. Well, my view is that what you say and do in the heat of the moment does reflect your character".³²

It also emerged at the time, from comments made by former Indigenous Wallaby great Gary Ella, that Islanders playing in Sydney grade rugby are subjected to barrages of racial abuse. If they react to it they often find themselves, and not the sledgers, penalised by the judiciary.³³

Rugby writer Spiro Zavos wrote: 'The Harrison affair should be a wake-up call to players, officials, the media and fans about how easy and dangerous it is for racial stereotyping to seep into the language and culture of rugby'.³⁴

Tackling racism

In the aftermath of these recent events, the Rugby Union Players' Association (RUPA) launched a training program in November 2005 to promote diversity and prevent racial vilification on and off the field.

The program was developed in consultation with the Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW, with key players (including Justin Harrison) and other RUPA officers trained to deliver workshops to elite and academy rugby players. The two hour session features stories about players from culturally diverse backgrounds, informs participants about vilification laws, the procedures and consequences of breaches and teaches them how to handle difficult situations without being abusive.³⁵

The session looks closely at the Harrison incident (examining newspaper clippings and a DVD of the event) and asks participants to consider the impact of the events on Harrison's career and personal life and the expectations of players as public role models. Players are asked to identify what creates our beliefs, values and stereotypes and discuss experiences of people in rugby from different backgrounds.

The course is a very positive initiative which teaches players about cultural diversity, respect and their responsibilities as a role model. It aims to learn from past mistakes to help ensure similar racist incidents do not occur in the future.

Supporting Islander communities

NSW Rugby has invested in the ongoing health of rugby amongst Pacific Island and Indigenous communities. The NSW Waratahs and Academy players have embraced the concept, meeting in an informal setting to share ideas and build kinship within the squad under the guidance of NSWRU Pacific Island Communities Project Officer Masi Aho.

Players involved in the program hail from different Islander and Indigenous communities, including Tongan, Samoan, Fijian, Maori, Papua New Guinean and Torres Strait Islander.

“These players are role models for their various communities, as well as fans everywhere. Ultimately, we want to give them the chance to feel proud of their heritage and also, by interacting with their people through player appearances and the like, for their communities to feel proud of them,” Aho said.³⁶

Aho also puts in many hours working with NSW suburban rugby clubs, implementing education programmes and addressing any behavioural issues that arise. NSWRU has also converting rugby’s rules and regulations into four island languages to ensure communities can readily access the information.

NSWRU has also introduced a new weight-restricted game called Rugby 80. The average weight of players in a team must be 82kg per team, with no single player having a weight greater than 87kg. Midway through 2006, Australia’s inaugural U85kg National Championship was held.³⁷



'Expectations of behavior' guidelines

Rugby has always been a game that prides itself on fair play and enjoyment for all. As such, the ARU has developed guidelines to assist clubs when dealing with 'expectations of behaviour' from players, parents, teachers and coaches. The expectations of behaviour guidelines are a simple outline to ensure everyone is given the opportunity to maximise their enjoyment of the game.

In relation to players it specifies that they should:

- play by the laws of the game
- never argue with the referee's decision, and
- treat everyone equally regardless of sex, disability, ethnic origin or religion.

In relation to parents/spectators it specifies that they should:

- encourage children to play by the laws
- not publicly question the referee's judgement and never his/her honesty, and
- support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from the game.

In relation to coaches/teachers it specifies that they should:

- teach players the laws of the game and for them to play within the laws
- develop team respect for the ability of opponents, as well as the judgement of referees and opposing coaches.³⁸

Harassment-free policy

The ARU believes every member union and club should be committed to providing a work and sport environment free from harassment, and one in which harassment is not tolerated. Their harassment-free policy encourages the immediate reporting of any harassment incidents to the appropriate authorities.

The policy states that harassment consists of 'offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening behaviour directed at a person or group usually because they are different or perceived to be different by the harasser. The difference may be gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, age, power (relative to the harasser) or some other feature'.³⁹

It also says that racial harassment is 'behaviour that is directed towards those who look different, have English as a second language or belong to a particular culture or religion'. In the sporting environment, the harassment may take the form of: 'denigrating jokes; comments about family life or dietary habits; or inferences that all members of a racial or cultural group have a particular negative characteristic, such as laziness, drunkenness, greed or sexual promiscuity'.⁴⁰

The policy highlights that an act of harassment is legally prohibited by state and territory anti-discrimination laws, as well as Commonwealth legislation.

Consequences of harassment

Incidents of harassment in a club or member union can have far reaching consequences. For instance it can: diminish the reputation and image in the community; create a hostile or unpleasant environment; increase the liability, insurance and legal costs; create low morale or increase turnover of staff, volunteers and players.⁴¹

The effects are equally dramatic for individuals. It can: interfere with and affect an individual's health; reduce productivity and effectiveness; reduce job and playing opportunities; undermine self esteem; diminish work, academic and athletic performance and result in complete withdrawal from rugby union and social activities.⁴²

Unions and clubs are encouraged to provide an environment that promotes positive relationships between members which, in turn, will influence member's attitudes towards the general community. They should make all members aware of their member protection policies and procedures for reporting any incidence of harassment. They are also encouraged to develop a discipline strategy to deal with incidences of harassment at the club level.⁴³

Anti-discrimination Policy

The ARU believes no member union or club should tolerate any form of discrimination. 'All employees, officials, volunteers and players have the right to work and play in an environment free of discrimination and harassment'.⁴⁴

The policy states that discrimination occurs when a person is treated unfavourably due to one of their personal characteristics. Discrimination may take the form of:

- offensive jokes or comments about a person's racial or ethnic background, sex, sexual preference, age, disability or physical appearance
- expressing negative stereotypes of particular groups
- judging a person on their political or religious beliefs rather than their performance
- using stereotypes or assumptions to guide decision making about a person's playing or working career, and
- undermining a person's authority or work performance because you dislike one of their personal characteristics.⁴⁵

The policy also highlights that under federal and state anti-discrimination laws, discrimination on the basis of race, religion or social origin in employment, or other activities such as volunteering and playing sport, is against the law. It instructs all member unions and clubs to be aware of their 'vicarious liability'. If a person is acting on behalf of an organisation, the organisation can be held liable for the behaviour of that person, even if there is no deliberate contribution, by the organisation, to that behaviour.

In rugby union terms, if a volunteer harasses or discriminates against a player or other members while representing the member union or club, they can be held liable if the complaint is pursued in the courts.^{46y}

Code of Conduct

The ARU is committed to promoting and strengthening the positive image of rugby and its participants in Australia. In light of this commitment, their Code of Conduct seeks to establish standards of performance and behaviour to ensure that participants act in a professional and proper manner and to ensure that the game is played and conducted with disciplined and sporting behaviour.

The Code of Conduct also seeks to 'deter all on-field and rugby-related conduct that could damage the game by impairing public confidence in the honest and orderly conduct of matches and competitions, or in the integrity and good character of participants'.⁴⁷

All participants are bound not to: 'abuse, threaten or intimidate a referee, touch judge or other match official, whether on or off the field, or a selector, coach, manager or other team official' and 'not to do anything which is likely to intimidate, offend, insult or humiliate another participant on the ground of the religion, sexual orientation, disability, race, colour or national or ethnic origin of the person'.⁴⁸

The by-laws seek to ensure that every participant is liable to effective sanctions if they are found to have breached the Code of Conduct.

Disseminating information

The ARU has developed '*Running Your Club*' administration resources to provide volunteer club administrators with a variety of content, resources, templates and checklists, tailored to the local rugby club. This will help inform participants of member protections policies and codes of conduct.

Another new initiative - *MyRugbyAdmin* - also provides clubs with useful on-line communication tools to send instant information to their players, coaches, and supporters.

Endnotes

¹ http://www.aru.com.au/verve/_resources/ARU_truevision_web.pdf.

² http://www.aru.com.au/verve/_resources/ARU_truevision_web.pdf.

³ http://www.rugby.com.au/verve/_resources/Marketing.pdf.

⁴ Rugby Union - a basic guide in *Welcome to Rugby* booklet.

⁵ http://www.rugby.com.au/about_the_aru/history_of_the_aru/history_of_the_aru,183.html.

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⁷ http://www.rugby.com.au/verve/_resources/Community_Rugby_file.pdf.

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- ²⁵ ARU Managing Director and CEO Gary Flowers in the intro to *Welcome to Rugby* booklet.
- ²⁶ 'Australian Rugby supporting Harmony Day 2006' media release, 17 March 2006, at http://www.rugby.com.au/news/australian_rugby_supporting_harmony_day_2006,42668.html.
- ²⁷ 'Australian Rugby supporting Harmony Day 2006' media release, 17 March 2006, at http://www.rugby.com.au/news/australian_rugby_supporting_harmony_day_2006,42668.html.
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- ³² Nick Farr-Jones in 'The Fitz Files' in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, March 25, 2005.
- ³³ 'Sledge shows how racism can infect game' by Spiro Zavos in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, March 22, 2005.
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