



**NSW Positive Rugby Foundation**  
**IMPACT REPORT**

**2023**

# CEO MESSAGE



The NSW Positive Rugby Foundation exists to harness the power of rugby to create meaningful social impact across New South Wales.

In 2025, Rugby For Good continued to demonstrate that our game is more than competition - it is connection, opportunity and belonging. Through targeted programs, strategic partnerships and the collective commitment of the rugby community, we have invested \$918,000 in 2025.

Working in partnership with NSW Rugby Union the Foundation supported Rugby For Good initiatives focused on inclusion, education, wellbeing and participation growth - particularly across Western Sydney and regional NSW.

This year's report reflects not only financial stewardship and program delivery, but stories of resilience, leadership and opportunity created through rugby. From supporting disadvantaged young people to strengthening grassroots communities, the impact extends well beyond the field.

As we look to the future, we are pleased to welcome Karlene McKeown as General Manager of Revenue. Karlene brings a wealth of experience across partnerships, commercial growth and stakeholder engagement, and will play a key role in strengthening our revenue streams and expanding the impact of Rugby For Good. Her appointment marks an important step in ensuring the long-term sustainability and growth of the Foundation.

We remain guided by a simple principle: when we strengthen people, we strengthen the game.

Thank you to our members, donors, partners, and volunteers who continue to back Rugby For Good. Together, we are building a more inclusive, connected, and positive rugby community for the future.

A handwritten signature in white ink on a dark blue background, reading "Peter Murphy".

Peter Murphy  
CEO NSW Rugby Union



# ABOUT US



The NSW Positive Rugby Foundation was established in 2017 as the official charity and social impact program of the NSW Rugby Union. We utilise rugby's unique values, qualities, and characteristics to make a positive difference to people and communities.

## OUR VISION



Rugby as a vehicle to impact health and wellbeing



Create opportunities to experience the values, life skill, culture and opportunities unique to rugby



Improve access to high quality grassroots resources and programs

## RUGBY FOR GOOD



Rugby isn't just a game. It's a way of life. It has the power to bring communities together, to inspire and empower individuals, and to create lasting change. At the NSW Positive Rugby Foundation, we believe in the transformative power of rugby, and we're committed to harnessing it to create positive change in our communities.

# RUGBY FOR GOOD STATS

AROUND **\$1M** INVESTED INTO  
RUGBY FOR GOOD  
PROGRAMS

1 FULL-TIME  
**Mental Health  
Project Coordinator**

6 NEW  
**School Based  
Apprentices &  
Trainees**

760+ HOURS  
**Structured Program  
Delivery**

**6** RUGBY  
TACKLE LIFE  
PROGRAMS

RUGBY IN  
THE PARK  
PROGRAMS **2**

**35** GET TALKIN  
MENTAL HEALTH  
WORKSHOPS

KICK START  
PROGRAMS **4**

**140** NEW PLAYERS  
**30** NEW COACHES

TRACTAHS  
FORWARDS  
DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM

## RUGBY FOR GOOD

Rugby For Good is more than just Rugby - it's a podium for social impact, ensuring the game continues to grow while making a meaningful difference in people's lives across NSW Rugby ecosystem.

Rugby For Good core pillars continues to focus on Health & Wellbeing, Inclusion & Diversity, Education & Life Skills and Community Engagement.

## RUGBY TACKLE LIFE

A School-Based Program integrating rugby with wellbeing and education outcomes for students. It goes beyond developing players - it develops people, using the game as a platform to build resilience, confidence, and life-ready young individuals.

- 6 Rugby Tackle Life programs delivered across Western NSW
- 760+ hours of structured program delivery
- 177 students engaged through Tackle Life

## WOMENS & GIRLS RUGBY

Play Our Way is a flagship Women & Girls participation and engagement initiative amid to create inclusive, accessible, and sustainable rugby opportunities for women and girls, using rugby as a platform to drive confidence, connection, and long-term participation.

## FIRST NATIONS

In 2025 NSWRU presented its R.A.P with the announcement and appointment of Lakeisha Hull as the organisation's inaugural First Nations Manager a significant milestone that reflects NSWRU's commitment to reconciliation, cultural connection and lasting impact for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across the game. This appointment has been made possible by the support from the Foundation as we continue to support Lakeisha's work in developing a First Nations Strategic plan for rugby across NSW.

## WARATAHS IN THE WEST

With the support of the Macquarie Sports Foundation, we successfully delivered a Western Sydney junior participation Gala event.

The event served as both a community engagement platform and a strategic activation, reinforcing rugby's presence and long-term growth ambitions in Western Sydney.

A key outcome was the securing of \$25,000 in funding from Macquarie Bank, alongside strong engagement from clubs delivering the Star program, further validating its position as a high-impact grassroots initiative.

With over 150 junior participants attending, the gala-style event successfully:

- Launched NSW Rugby's Western Sydney Junior Strategy for 2025
- Introduced Simon Kacimawai, Head of Western Sydney
- Built awareness and credibility of the Star program
- Strengthened engagement with clubs, families, and local communities
- Promoted the NSW Waratahs presence in Western Sydney

Overall, Waratahs in the West represents a high-impact, multi-dimensional activation, delivering strong outcomes across participation, partnerships, and community connection. We thank Maquarie Sports for their ongoing support.



## 16 x Our Turn Program Locations in 2025

- Eastwood
- Penrith
- Lismore
- Newcastle
- Sydney - Inner West / Concord
- Kempsey
- Taree
- Hornsby
- Southern Zones - West Wyalong
- Armidale
- Inverell
- Dubbo, Coonamble, Bourke
- Southern Districts - Rockdale / Sylvania / Burraneer

Led by **Angus McDonald** our Dubbo Hub continues to deliver outstanding Rugby For Good programs across Western NSW. The Dubbo Hub continues to lead in the delivery of educational, health, employment, and community engagement outcomes in some of NSW's most disadvantaged regions.



The Dubbo Hub continues to play a critical role in delivering Rugby For Good outcomes across Western NSW, using rugby as a vehicle to drive participation, wellbeing, and opportunity in regional and remote communities.

Over the past three years, the Western Plains Junior Rugby Union has experienced significant and sustained growth in junior participation, including year-on-year growth of approximately 39%. The region now supports of 700 registered junior players, highlighting the strength and impact of Rugby For Good delivery across the Western Plains.

## **CLUB GROWTH AND EXPANSION**

This growth is underpinned by a strong and expanding club network, including Narromine Gorillas, Macquarie Emus, Bourke Rams, Walgett Lambs, Coonamble Rams and Gulargambone Gulars. The establishment of Brewarrina Juniors and Nyngan Juniors represents a significant milestone, expanding rugby into new communities and creating sustainable participation pathways for young people across the region.

## **PROGRAM DELIVERY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The Western Hub continues to deliver impactful Rugby For Good programs across schools and communities.

A cornerstone of this delivery is the Tackle Life program, a 40-week school-based initiative delivered in Coonamble High School, Delroy High School, South Dubbo Campus, Bourke High School and Brewarrina Central School. The program supports Year 9 and 10 students, building leadership, confidence and life skills through rugby while creating coaching and employment pathways.

In 2025, the program engaged 177 students, with 6 School-Based Apprentices and Trainees (SBATs) employed across regional NSW. These SBATs act as young leaders within their communities and play a key role in delivering programs locally.

The Dubbo Hub also delivered a strong calendar of community rugby events, including gala days in Walgett, Coonamble and Bourke, along with the highly successful Friendship in Rugby Day. These events provide important entry points into rugby while strengthening community connection and engagement.

Players have also been provided with aspirational experiences through trips to Sydney, including opportunities to play at half-time of NSW Waratahs matches, connecting regional players to the elite level of the game.

## PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

A key performance highlight was the success of the U13 Boys 7s team, who won the Plate Final at the NSW State Championships, demonstrating the growing strength and depth of talent emerging from the Western Plains.

## PATHWAYS AND FUTURE GROWTH

Aligned with the Rugby For Good strategy, the Dubbo Hub continues to build sustainable participation and development pathways. The strong growth across the region has created increased demand for structured competitions, workforce development, and ongoing engagement programs.

Planning is underway for the introduction of a U12 competition model in 2026, designed specifically for regional delivery. This model will consider travel distances, player numbers and club sustainability, and will support the next stage of growth across the region.

Further focus will remain on strengthening school-to-club links, expanding **program delivery into new communities, and creating employment and leadership opportunities for young people through rugby.**

## LOOKING AHEAD

With participation now exceeding 700 registered players and strong year-on-year growth, the Dubbo Hub is well positioned to continue expanding its impact across Western NSW.

The Western Plains continues to demonstrate the power of rugby to create positive, long-term outcomes across regional communities, building stronger connections, developing young leaders, and providing opportunities that extend far beyond the game.

Led by **Joey de Dassel**, the Northern Hub has continued to grow as a leading Rugby For Good model in regional NSW, demonstrating how rugby can drive meaningful social impact while strengthening participation, partnerships and community connection.



## STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

A key milestone in 2025 was the establishment of a partnership with the Hunter, New England & Central Coast Primary Health Network, which funded the Rugby For Good - Community Wellbeing & Resilience Program. Delivered by Northern Hub staff across all three regions, this initiative enabled a coordinated approach to improving mental health outcomes, strengthening community connection and increasing access to support services through rugby.

## PROGRAM DELIVERY & COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Northern Hub delivered a broad suite of Rugby For Good programs, engaging hard-to-reach communities with meaningful social outcomes:

- Kickstart Program (x4)  
Delivered across Frank Baxter Youth Justice Centre (Central Coast), Acmena Youth Justice Centre (Grafton), Armidale Secondary College (in partnership with PCYC Armidale), and Ellermore Vale Primary School
- Get Talkin' Mental Health Workshops (x35)  
Mental Health awareness & Suicide prevention programs delivered across clubs, schools and community settings
- Rugby in the Park (x2)  
Delivered in Newcastle and Coffs Harbour, providing connection, physical activity and support pathways for individuals experiencing homelessness and social isolation.
- Mental Health Awareness Round

## EVENTS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Hub successfully leveraged events driving participation and fundraising:

- Coffs Coast Festival of Rugby (Year 1)  
A landmark event featuring Japan U23, Australian Barbarians and Australian U20s, alongside the Coffs Coast Rugby Challenge; it was a celebration of International rugby and Grassroots participation. Also a fundraising Golf Day and Luncheon to support Rugby For Good.

- Byron Bay 7s  
Following two years of delivery by the Northern Hub, the event was successfully transitioned back to the local club for long-term sustainability and local ownership.

## **PARTICIPATION & PATHWAYS**

- NSW Youth Development Program (formerly Regional Academies)  
Expanded from 3 regional girls teams in 2024 to 6 teams (including 3 metro teams) across multiple age groups.
  - 450 players and 60 staff participated
  - Delivered through a 3-night camp model across 6 locations
  - Integrated Get Talkin' mental health workshops at each camp
- Tractahs – Forwards Development Program  
Position-specific development sessions led by world-renowned scrum coach Mike Cron, engaging 140 players and 30 coaches from across Northern NSW.

## **SCHOOLS & PRIVATELY FUNDED PROGRAMS**

We continued to expand privately funded rugby development programs in schools:

- NEGS Armidale
- Bishop Druitt College (Coffs Harbour)
- Woolgoolga High School
- Ballina Coast High School

## **WORKFORCE & SUSTAINABILITY**

Sustained investment in people and structure has been critical to the Hub's growth:

- Extension of the Mid North Coast hybrid/co-funded role following a successful first 12 months
- Employment of a full-time Mental Health Project Coordinator to deliver Rugby For Good programs across Northern NSW
- New partnership with Far North Coast Rugby Union to establish a co-funded full-time position, replicating the successful Mid North Coast model

These initiatives ensure the long-term sustainability and scalability of Rugby For Good delivery in regional areas.

## **SUMMARY**

The Northern Hub continues to demonstrate the power of rugby as a vehicle for social impact. Through strong partnerships, targeted programs and innovative event delivery, the Hub is improving lives, strengthening communities and building a sustainable future for rugby across regional NSW.

# 2025 COTERIE MEMBERS



## 1<sup>ST</sup> XV

Kevin Maloney • John O'Brien •  
Chris & Rhae Shaw

## 1<sup>ST</sup> XV SYNDICATE

Tony Crawford • Chris Mowle • Peter Eichhorn • Nic  
Thane • Bob Lee • Mark Gray Spencer • Scott Gray  
Spencer • Stephen Nugent • Oscar Done

## COTERIE MEMBERS

Andrew Heaven • Ben Edwards • Brad Harrison •  
Brenham Jones • Christine Jones • Chris Cooper •  
David Royle • David Sanders • Luke McCormack •  
Nick Waterworth • Sarah Davis • Stuart Barnard •  
Tim Wedlock

## CORPORATE COTERIES

Helping Hand • Peugeot •  
Gullivers Travel • Reckon Accounting •  
Macquarie Sports Foundation •  
Hunt Hospitality

# GET INVOLVED

## **COTERIE MEMBERSHIP**

**TOTAL INVESTMENT - \$8,300**

Tax Deductible Donation - \$5000

Donor Servicing - \$3,300

### **Membership Benefits**

- 14 Tickets to the PRF Suite @ all NSW Waratahs home games & discounted guest tickets
- Invite to Season Launch & Season Awards
- End of Season Coterie Party
- Behind the Scene Experiences
- Early access to an array of Rugby lunches
- Early access to NSWRU Partner offers



## **CORPORATE COTERIE MEMBERSHIP**

**TOTAL INVESTMENT - \$11,000**

Tax Deductible Donation - \$6000

Donor Servicing - \$5000

### **Membership Benefits**

- 14 Tickets to the PRF Suite @ all NSW Waratahs home games & discounted guest tickets
- Invite to Season Launch & Season Awards
- End of Season Coterie Party
- Behind the Scene Experiences
- Early access to an array of Rugby lunches
- Early access to NSWRU Partner offers
- Ability to send out company offers to NSWRU database via EDM & social platforms

## **DONATE THROUGH AUSTRALIAN SPORTS FOUNDATION**

Be a part of the change, scan the QR code to donate now!



# GET IN TOUCH



NSW Positive Rugby Foundation



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[@Rugby\\_For\\_Good](https://www.instagram.com/Rugby_For_Good)

