



**The Greatest Game of All**

**Submission to the Inquiry into Funding of Rugby League Facilities in Darwin**

The National Rugby League (NRL) and ARLC NT supports the Northern Territory Government's commitment to invest \$20 million into facilities that will benefit rugby league.

Historically, the NRL and Northern Territory Rugby League (now ARLC NT) have been involved in discussions with the Government about potential investment in facilities that would benefit rugby league. This has included investment in a new multi-sport venue at Marrara, upgrades at Richardson Park and upgrades at Palmerston.

The NRL was advised on 27 April 2015 that the Government would announce, as part of its 28 April 2015, budget plans to invest \$20 million to upgrade Richardson Park. Before this date the NRL was not aware of any Government budget allocations for new or upgraded facilities at Richardson Park or Marrara.

Whilst the announcement about \$20 million towards upgrading Richardson Park was unexpected, investment in upgrading rugby league facilities is always welcome. Ultimately the NRL aims to ensure our fans, members and participants can play and watch rugby league in the best possible facilities and we believe the Government's planned investment will help achieve this outcome.

With the support of the Northern Territory Government, a series of matches involving NRL teams have been hosted in recent years in Darwin and Alice Springs, including:

2006	Newcastle Knights v Penrith Panthers	Alice Springs
2007	Newcastle Knights v Penrith Panthers	Darwin
2009	Cronulla Sharks v Gold Coast Titans	Darwin
2010	North Queensland Cowboys v Gold Coast Titans	Darwin
2011	North Queensland Cowboys v Brisbane Broncos	Alice Springs
2012	North Queensland Cowboys v Sydney Roosters	Darwin
2014	Parramatta Eels v Wests Tigers (Trial match)	Alice Springs
2014	Parramatta Eels v Canberra Raiders	Darwin
2015	Parramatta Eels v Wests Tigers (Trial Match)	Alice Springs
2015	Parramatta Eels v Penrith Panthers	Darwin

The matches played in Darwin are currently hosted at TIO Stadium, which is an oval ground. Rugby League is a rectangular field sport and therefore our preference is to play our elite content on a rectangular field. Playing on a rectangular field improves sight lines for our fans, is preferred by our players and contributes to an overall superior experience for all rugby league stakeholders. Currently there are no rectangular facilities available in Darwin that are suitable for elite content, which could preclude content growth in the Northern Territory.



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In 2015 our player registrations reached 2,276 with a further 3,424 participants, and almost 6,500 engagements with rugby league (this includes gala days and in-class learning sessions). We have competitions running in Darwin, Alice Springs, Gove and Katherine, with 101 teams in total. As our participation and engagement numbers grow we need safe and appropriate facilities for rugby league and we are confident this can be achieved through upgrades at Richardson Park.

The NRL and ARLC NT are working with the Northern Territory Government, as part of the Richardson Park Advisory Group, to ensure an upgraded Richardson Park is suitable to host NRL content, accommodate weekly content played as part of the ARLC NT competition and be capable of being utilised as a multi-purpose venue by other rectangular sports.

As stated at the outset, the NRL and ARLC NT are supportive of the Government's commitment to invest in Richardson Park. We look forward to working with the Government to see the best possible outcome delivered.

Yours sincerely,

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