



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY  
13<sup>th</sup> Assembly

**Petition**

Registration No.	16
Title	FUTURE OF RUGBY LEAGUE IN THE TERRITORY
Presented on	23 November 2017
Presented by	Mr Gary Higgins MLA, Member for Daly
Referred to	Minister for Tourism and Culture
Date referred	23 November 2017
Response due	8 May 2018
Response received	22 February 2018
Response to be presented	13 March 2018

**Petition**

**Rugby League Future**

To the Honourable the Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, your petitioners therefore humbly pray that:

We the undersigned respectfully showeth:

Whereas; The Northern Territory Government intends to redevelop Warren Park, in part, for Rugby league,

Whereas; The redevelopment of Warren Park, as proposed, is not supported by the wider Rugby League community and majority of Darwin clubs,

Whereas; The proposal will unfairly advantage both South Darwin Rugby League, South Darwin Rugby Union and South Darwin Sporting League over the interests of both Northern Territory Rugby league and all other Darwin Clubs,

Whereas; The proposed facility will not meet requirements of Rugby League in the future and will be incapable of hosting major fixtures,

Whereas; Usage will be restricted by other events occurring at Marrara,

Whereas; The financial viability of the facility has not been supported by a Business plan,

Whereas; Richardson Park, the ancestral home of Rugby League, remains derelict,

Whereas; Richardson Park already contains most of the facilities required to satisfy the needs of the clubs,

Whereas; What will happen to the request and the fully costed financial proposal from at least 2 Darwin Clubs that Richardson Park be revived to the extent necessary to support training and afternoon home game matches, our petitioners therefore humbly pray that

The Northern Territory Government will take heed of our concerns, enter into meaningful discussions with the Rugby League Community to develop a suitable outcome preferably along the lines suggested by the main stakeholders i.e. The Clubs

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

## **Response**

Warren Park is an important project that adds value to the long-term future of Rugby League in Darwin. It is designed with families in mind and will allow the code to grow by providing multiple pitches and suitable facilities for women and girls.

The project has been fast tracked to stimulate the local economy and create jobs for Territorians. The tender for Warren Park was released on 15 September 2017, after extensive consultation with NRLNT and other key stakeholders. The tender was awarded on 31 January 2018, to local company Halikos Ply Ltd.

In addition to being the premium facility for weekly NRLNT games, Warren Park will meet the required standards for national tier two games. Additionally, Warren Park is capable of hosting other sporting codes fixtures or events with capacity of 4000-6000, depending on the use of temporary grandstands. However, TIO Stadium with a capacity of 13 500 and broadcast quality lights will continue to host major sporting fixtures such as NRL and AFL premiership matches.

Local NRLNT clubs have met with myself and my Department and discussions have been held throughout development. Although there have been some concerns raised by the clubs, my Department is confident that these concerns will be addressed. Government commissioned KPMG consultants to assist the clubs with their project related financial planning however some clubs chose not to avail of this opportunity.

Some local clubs raised concerns with a perceived unfair benefit to the South Darwin Sporting League (SDSL). As part of lease arrangements, the SDSL will retain rights to one field, with the use of the remaining fields and infrastructure being the responsibility of NRLNT. As part of this arrangement, NRLNT will work with local clubs to establish a schedule for use of the remaining two fields and will continue to work with the NRL to establish financial and governance models for the code in the Northern Territory.

With regard to Richardson Park, this site has only one main field and the facility is not suitable for large scale and ongoing development, due to land size restrictions and location. The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics is reviewing options for its future use and will consult the community, the adjoining local school, relevant NRLNT clubs, and NRLNT on the potential future use of the site. This has been discussed with clubs.

The development of three fields at Warren Park plus the adjoining fields ensures that Warren Park and the Marrara Sporting Complex (the Complex) is capable of hosting potentially large scale community sporting carnival events.

Due to the complementary surrounding infrastructure and associated car parking, facilities and traffic management currently available at the Complex, this site remains the most appropriate location for the new home for local Rugby League.

Warren Park is a priority job-creating project for this Government which will benefit the entire rugby league community.