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Nicho Hynes 2024 Ken Stephen Medal – Man of the Year

NRL COMMUNITY

SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT 2024



OUR MISSION

USE THE GAME OF RUGBY LEAGUE AS A PLATFORM TO BUILD STRONGER, MORE INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES BY ADDRESSING KEY SOCIAL CHALLENGES, SUPPORTING WELLBEING, AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR POSITIVE CHANGE — PARTICULARLY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS, AND REGIONAL COMMUNITIES

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74 Social Impact Ambassadors



78 NRL Social Impact Staff





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

THE NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE ACKNOWLEDGES ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES AS THE TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND CUSTODIANS OF THIS COUNTRY AND THEIR CONTINUOUS CONNECTION THEY HAVE TO THE LANDS, WATER, VALLEYS, AND MOUNTAINS.

WE PAY OUR RESPECT TO THEM, THEIR CULTURES AND CUSTOMS AND TO THEIR ELDERS PAST, PRESENT, EMERGING AND THE STOLEN GENERATIONS.

WE BELIEVE THAT RECONCILIATION IS A JOURNEY THAT ALL AUSTRALIANS PLAY A PART IN.

AS A GAME WE ARE COMMITTED TO THE ONGOING JOURNEY TOWARDS TRUTH TELLING AND RECONCILIATION.

WE RECOGNISE AND VALUE THE CONTRIBUTION ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES HAVE MADE TO THE GREATEST GAME FOR ALL, RUGBY LEAGUE.



OPENING

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2024 Social Impact Report. Rugby league has always been more than just a game; it's a platform for bringing people together, creating opportunities, and making a positive contribution to people and communities. Through our programs and initiatives, the NRL is committed to driving meaningful outcomes that extend far beyond the field of play.

The stories and results presented in this report are a testament to the tireless efforts of our social impact staff, ambassadors, clubs and players, and the positive contribution from our expert partners and funding partners who share our vision of creating real, lasting change.

As we reflect on the achievements of the past year, we are filled with optimism for the future. We remain dedicated to expanding our impact and continuing to use sport as a force for good in society. Thank you for your ongoing support as we continue this important work.

Nicola Skinner

General Manager – Social Impact

OUR IMPACT AGENDA

THE LARGEST AND MOST CONNECTED SPORT ACROSS AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND THE PACIFIC

The 2024 season marked a significant step forward for the NRL's social impact work, with strong growth in the reach and delivery of programs across our four strategic pillars. In collaboration with leading experts, our team continues to showcase how rugby league can drive positive change beyond the game—using its platform to spark meaningful dialogue and challenge societal norms.

The NRL Social Impact team remains committed to tackling key social issues across Australia and the Pacific, working alongside NRL and NRLW clubs and players to deliver impactful, community-driven programs.

NRL SOCIAL IMPACT PILLARS

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ENGAGEMENT

The NRL recognises the ongoing collaborative commitment required to succeed in closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and reconciliation.

We support our communities through providing education and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and celebrating the strength and resilience of Australia's oldest living culture on a national platform.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Developing mentally fit and physically healthy communities is a core objective of the NRL's social impact work.

Delivering preventative mental and physical health education to communities supports this core objective.

RESPECT & SOCIAL COHESION

Our work aims to create safer, more inclusive communities by promoting respectful behaviours, reducing discrimination, encouraging social harmony, and using the influence of the game to challenge prejudice and foster a sense of belonging for all.

COLLABORATING TO ENHANCE THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO ARE DISADVANTAGED

The game of rugby league provides tremendous opportunity to support those in our community who face inequity or disadvantage. The NRL collaborates with partners to provide platforms for awareness, fundraising and experiences to bring a smile to the faces of those who need it most.



KEY STATISTICS ACHIEVED IN 2024

680

Schools and Community
Rugby League clubs received
social impact programs

75,682

Participants attended social
impact programs (34,000 during
Roads to Regions initiative)

143

Respect workshops in Australia and
across Pacific

9,145

Respect workshop participants

153

Health & Wellbeing workshops

7,005

Health and Wellbeing workshop participants

1,260

Indigenous participants supported
through School to Work

\$427,571

Raised for community causes in the
5050 Charity Raffle

353

A total of post-school participants started their employment or
educational pathways after finishing their schooling in 2024

In 2024, School to Work Year 12 completion rate is **92.69%**,
which is above the national rate for the non-Indigenous Year 12 completion cohorts

\$813,000

worth of community care packages delivered to
Australian and Pacific communities



NRL COMMUNITY AWARDS

The NRL Community Awards presented by Westpac are Rugby League's most prestigious community-focused awards, connecting the grassroots to the elite. The awards honour the individuals who work tirelessly in the community to make Rugby League Australia's favourite sport.

The NRL Community Awards includes a total of 8 categories; 2 elite medals dedicated to our NRL and NRLW players who showcase how they use their platform to give back and enrich the lives of the people around them, and 6 grassroots categories, awarded to volunteers and individuals who work tirelessly to make rugby league Australia's greatest sport. Australian Rugby League Commission (ARLC) Commissioner Dr Gary Weiss chaired the Ken Stephen Medal Man of the Year; ARLC Commissioner Professor Megan Davis AC chaired the Veronica White Medal Woman of the Year elite categories.



COMMUNITY AWARDS
Presented by 



2024 KEN STEPHEN MEDAL MAN OF THE YEAR

Nicho Hynes
Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks

As one of the most requested players at his club, the Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks, Nicho Hynes dedicates significant time to community activities, balancing these commitments with his busy training schedule. He is particularly supportive of individuals facing difficult seasons, frequently visiting hospitals and engaging with community members. Nicho is deeply involved in school initiatives and played a key role in creating the One Heart Diversity and Anti-Racism program, sharing his personal experiences with racism.

As a proud Wiradjuri and Darkinjung man, he advocates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs, supporting Deadly Choices and the NRL's School to Work program. His dedication to mental health awareness led to the club's first Mental Fitness Round, partnering with Gotcha4Life to promote mental fitness. Nicho champions the inclusion of young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players. His positive attitude, inclusiveness, and discipline inspire his peers and the community. Nicho exemplifies how athletes can use their platform to make a meaningful impact on society.



2024 VERONICA WHITE MEDAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Kimberley Hunt
St George-Illawarra Dragons

A proud Wakaid woman from Badu Island, Kimberley has represented the Indigenous All-Stars and the Prime Minister's XIII. She has shown exceptional dedication to community service since joining the Dragons, particularly in supporting the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Kimberley actively participates in the Healthy Deadly Kids program and other initiatives with the local Aboriginal Medical Service. Kimberley's commitment to her community promotes healthy lifestyle choices among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, utilising rugby league and the Dragons' standing to reach and connect with community members.

Despite relocating to Wollongong, Kimberley remains committed to her Far North Queensland roots. She balances her athletic career and her passion for mental health advocacy, particularly for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth. Her leadership and enthusiasm extend beyond the field, making her a respected and influential figure at the Dragons and in the broader community. Kimberley's efforts embody her commitment to her cultural heritage and the mission of making a meaningful impact on those she serves.



NOMINATED BY THEIR CLUBS, THE FOLLOWING PLAYERS MAKE UP THE 2024 NRL AND NRLW COMMUNITY TEAMS OF THE YEAR. WITH THE SUPPORT OF WESTPAC, EACH TEAM MEMBER IS PROVIDED WITH A \$1,000 GRANT TO DONATE TO THEIR COMMUNITY RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB OF CHOICE.

NRL COMMUNITY TEAM OF THE YEAR

Ben Lovett

South Sydney Rabbitohs, Parkes Spaceman

Brian Kelly

Gold Coast Titans, Ballina Seagulls

Connor Watson

Sydney Roosters, Kincumber Colts

Dylan Lucas

Newcastle Knights, Albion Park Eagles

Jacob Liddle

St George-Illawarra Dragons, Wyong Roos

Jahrean Bula

Wests Tiger, Runaway Bay Seagulls

Jake Trbojevic

Manly-Warringah Sea Eagles, Mona Vale Raiders

Josh Papalii

Canberra Raiders, Logan Brothers

Luke Garner

Penrith Panthers, Bilambil Jets

Nicho Hynes

Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks, Umina Bunnies

Reece Walsh

Brisbane Broncos, Nerang Roosters

Reuben Cotter

North Queensland Cowboys, Sarina Crocs

Shaun Lane

Parramatta Eels, South Eastern Seagulls

Toby Sexton

Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs, Currumbin Eagles

Tohu Harris

New Zealand Warriors, Tamatea Sports Club

Tom Gilbert

Dolphins, Norths Devils

Young Tonumaiepa

Melbourne Storm, Northern Thunder

NRLW COMMUNITY TEAM OF THE YEAR

Emma Tonegato

Cronulla-Sutherland Sharks, Helensburgh Tigers

Jaime Chapman

Gold Coast Titans, Kurnell Stingrays

Kayla Romaniuk

Newcastle Knights, Kurri Kurri Bulldogs

Kimberley Hunt

St George Illawarra Dragons, Tully Tigers

Mahalia Murphy

Parramatta Eels, Doonside Roos

Millie Elliot

Sydney Roosters, Bermagui-Cobargo Eels RLFC

Romy Teitzel

Brisbane Broncos, Tully Tigers

Sarah Togatuki

Wests Tigers, Glenmore Park Brumbies

Simaima Taufu

Canberra Raiders, Belconnen Sharks

Tallisha Harden

North Queensland Cowboys, Logan Brothers JRL



OUR IMPACT OFF THE FIELD

1



**ABORIGINAL
AND TORRES
STRAIT ISLANDER
ENGAGEMENT**

- NRL School to Work
- Indigenous Youth Summit
- Project Pathfinder
- Reconciliation Action Plan

2



**HEALTH AND
WELLBEING**

- State of Mind Workshops
- Mental Health Campaign
- Mental Health
Community Scrums
- Leagues Stars Inspire –
Health and Wellbeing

3



**RESPECT & SOCIAL
COHESION**

- Voice Against Violence
Program
- League Stars Inspire
Respect
- In League In Harmony
- League Stars Inspire –
Inclusion & Diversity

4



**COLLABORATING
TO ENHANCE LIVES
OF THOSE WHO ARE
DISADVANTAGED**

- Fundraising & Donations
- Charity Partnerships
- Memory Making
Experiences

1



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ENGAGEMENT

NRL School to Work



Indigenous Youth Summit



Project Pathfinder



Reconciliation Action Plan



NRL SCHOOL TO WORK

The School to Work program uses the positive profile of rugby league to support and encourage Year 11 & 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to achieve their HSC and support their transition from school to employment or further education.

The program is funded by the Australian Federal Government and corporate partners, and supported by NRL Clubs- Canberra Raiders, Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs, Cronulla Sharks, Melbourne Storm, Newcastle Knights, Parramatta Eels, Penrith Panthers, St George Illawarra Dragons, Sydney Roosters, Gold Coast Titans and the Wests Tigers.



Throughout 2024 the School to Work Project Officers supported 1,260 participants:

460

Year 11 students

447

Year 12 students

353

participants successfully transitioned from post-schooling to education or employment opportunities

The completion rate for Year 12's in the S2W Program is

92.69%

School to Work provides services to

140 schools

across 11 NRL Club catchments



UNIVERSITY CAMPS

The NRL School to Work University Camps are a key initiative under the NRL's School to Work program, designed to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in their transition from secondary school to higher education. These camps provide culturally safe, immersive experiences that expose students to university life, academic pathways, and future career opportunities.

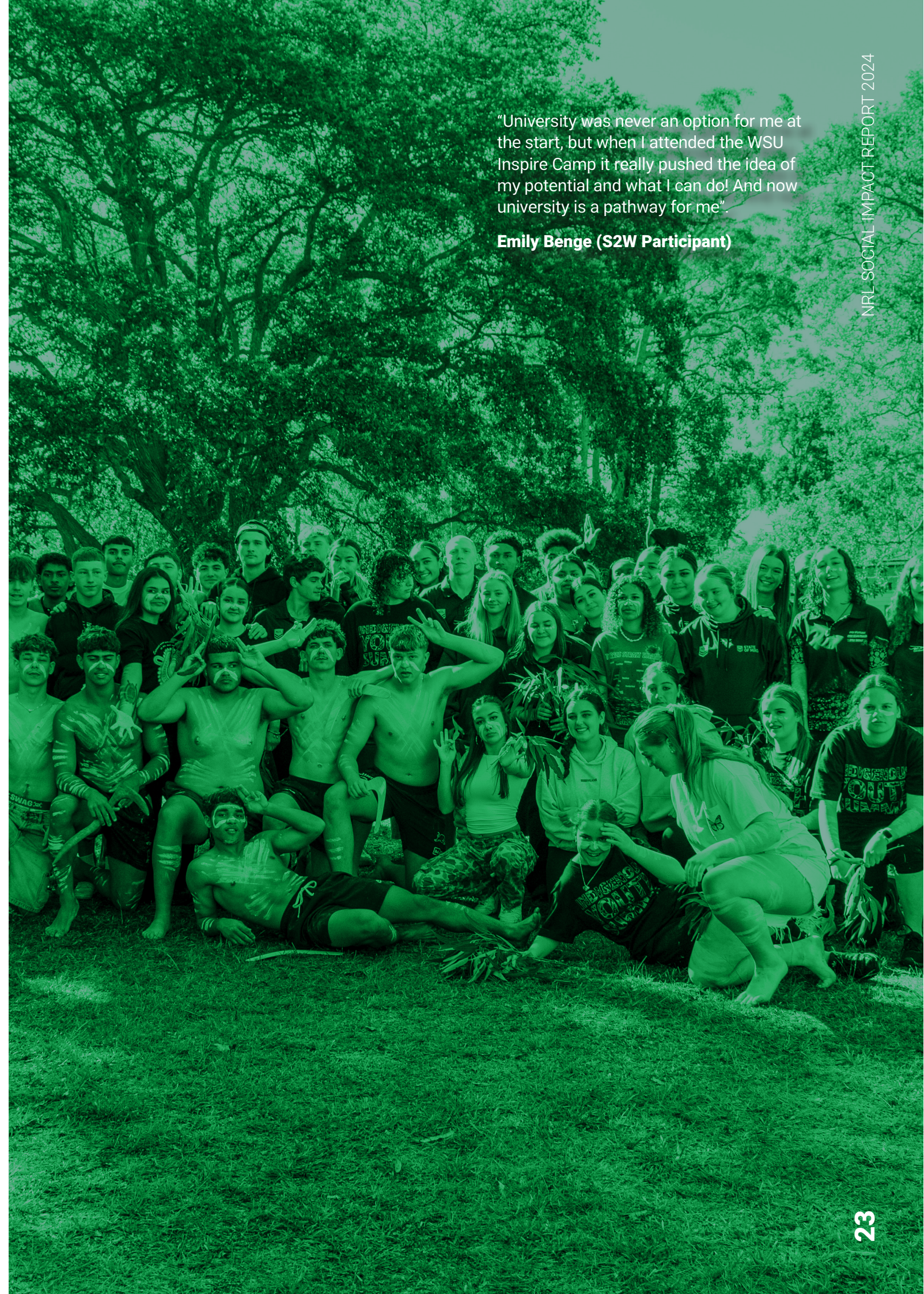
KEY IMPACTS

- **Increased University Aspirations:** Over 85% of camp participants report increased motivation to pursue tertiary education after attending, demonstrating the program's success in breaking down perceived barriers to university entry.
- **Stronger Cultural Identity and Belonging:** Camps incorporate cultural mentoring, community connections, and visits to Indigenous student support units, helping participants feel seen, supported, and empowered to succeed as First Nations students in higher education.
- **Pathway Clarity and Support:** Students gain practical insights into university life, including course options, accommodation, scholarships, and student services, resulting in clearer post-school planning and increased preparedness for tertiary study.



"University was never an option for me at the start, but when I attended the WSU Inspire Camp it really pushed the idea of my potential and what I can do! And now university is a pathway for me".

Emily Benge (S2W Participant)



S2W AWARDS NIGHT

A night where participants, teachers, businesses and schools are honoured for their achievements and support to the program.

2024 UNIVERSITY STUDENT OF THE YEAR

As a proud Bundjalung woman from Tweed, Jarrah Dick has overcome personal and systemic challenges through cultural strength, leadership, and education. Jarrah's passion for justice and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights led her to write the poem Rise Up, gaining national attention. Jarrah has captained national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander netball teams, danced at NAIDOC, and is the first in her family to attend university, studying law to honour her uncle, Australia's first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander barrister. Jarrah is determined to uplift Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, fight injustice, and make legal support accessible. Despite financial hardship, Jarrah remains focused, resilient, and committed to changing lives—one step at a time.



S2W ALUMNI

"The program has opened so many avenues for my cultural and career growth. I'm extremely grateful for them coming to my school and allowing me to engage with amazing opportunities and have so many new experiences. It has connected me closer to my culture and to my mob. I recommend this program to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student who wants to further their cultural journey and career path".

Taylor Kelly (S2W Participant)





INDIGENOUS YOUTH SUMMIT



The NRL Indigenous Youth Summit is an initiative aimed at empowering young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders and fostering a deeper connection to culture, leadership and community. Bringing 68 participants from across Australia and New Zealand representing all 17 NRL Clubs to Sydney to celebrate Indigenous Round.

Throughout the week the young people learnt more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Māori culture, participated in leadership, connection and wellbeing workshops. At the end of the summit four participants were selected to be the NRL Indigenous Youth Ambassadors. These inspiring young people will play a vital role as the voice of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Māori youth to the game.



NRL INDIGENOUS YOUTH SUMMIT AMBASSADORS



**KYRAN BLAIR – 2024 NRL
INDIGENOUS YOUTH SUMMIT
AMBASSADOR**

Kyran Blair is a proud Gamilaroi and Awabakal man, born and raised on Awabakal country. Kyran is a leader in his own community as he strives to be a positive person, showing respect and being there for others on and off the field in his sporting team. Setting a good example for the younger generations, Kyran is also on a career journey to complete training in becoming a school learning support officer which will allow him to further lead within his community. In 2024, the NRL Social Impact team invited Kyran to participate as a national judge alongside ARLC Commissioner, Kate Jones, in the 2024 NRL Community Awards for the Young Person of the Year category.



**MIA MAKOARE – 2024 NRL
INDIGENOUS YOUTH SUMMIT
AMBASSADOR**

Mia Makoare is a proud Māori wāhine born and raised in New Zealand. Belonging to the tribes of Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Maniapoto and Ngāti Whātua o Kaipara. One of four children, with one older brother and two younger sisters, Mia enjoys playing rugby and is very passionate about anything sports. Mia is heavily involved in cultural groups at school, leading her school's Kapa Haka group and advocating for Māori people within her school community. Mia hopes to go far in her sporting and schooling journey and looks forward to being the voice of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Māori Youth, making a difference one step at a time!

PROJECT PATHFINDER



Delivered in partnership with NSW Police Force and Youth Justice NSW, this diversionary program focuses on engaging and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth in regional NSW and in turn with the shared objective to reduce the rates of youth crime.

Designed to share messages of social cohesion, collaboration, skills building and mental health, this pilot program saw 13 young people from 10 regional towns participate in a behind-the-scenes NRL and Club operations experience. Each young person was paired with an NRL or NRLW mentor who engaged in regular check-ins to assist the young person to actively engage in school, work and their community.

The pilot program provided an opportunity for young people who live in regional areas of NSW to come together, earn, stay fit and grow together through the shared passion of rugby league. Included in the program was a visit to the Cronulla Sharks Captains Run and tour of Shark Park, participation in the NRL's State of Mind program, an NRL officiating experience with a tour of the NRL Bunker, an NRL.com studio experience which included learning to use video editing software and practicing their interviewing skills in the NRL.com studio. The Sydney tour was completed by attending the Sharks vs Wests Tigers match with each participant treated to an on-field sideline experience with NRL Social Impact Ambassadors Brad Takairangi and former Sharks player, Joseph Paulo.

"Coming from the regional areas the kids don't get to see much of the bright lights of the city so to see them get down to Shark Park for captain's run and then meet the referee's and go inside the Bunker all in one day, you could just see how much of an eye-opener it was for them."

Brad Takairangi, NRL Social Impact Ambassador



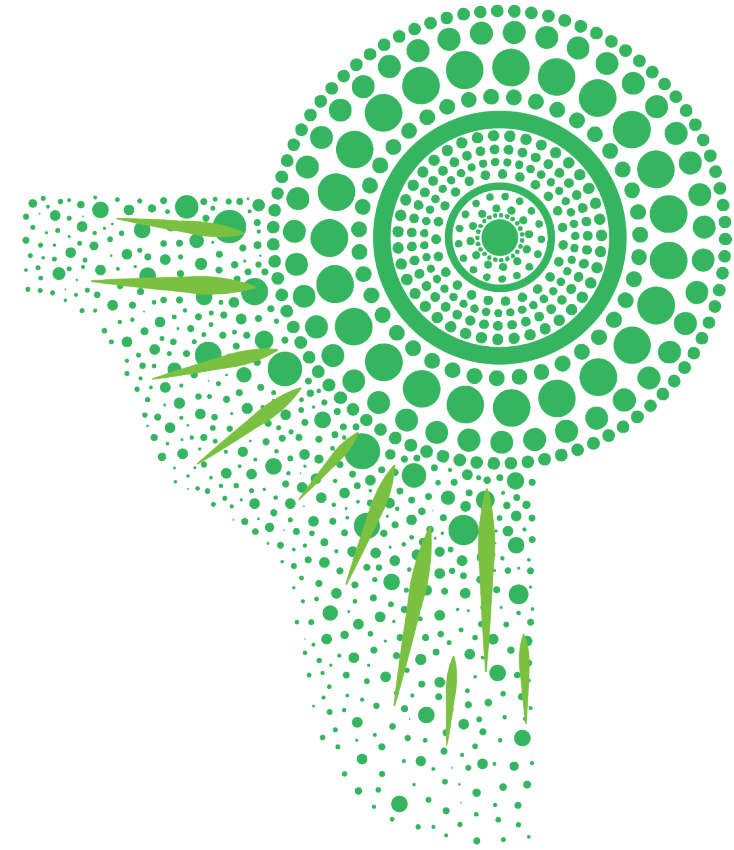
RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

The NRL became the first national sporting organisation in Australia to launch a second Elevate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) in 2024.

This initiative aims to align with the recommendations of Reconciliation Australia's aspiration of progressing the reconciliation movement from 'safe to brave' through transformation change and sets out a series of commitments for the NRL to deliver in the areas of relationships, respect and opportunity from 2024 to 2028.

2024 RAP ACTION PROGRESS

ACTION	TARGET MET
Relationship	18/18
Respect	20/24
Opportunities	18/18
Tracking	21/21



2



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Guided by health experts, the NRL's Health and Wellbeing pillar continues to deliver education through sport, fostering positive decision-making among children, youth, and adults across Australia. Connecting the values learned on the rugby league field— communication, teamwork, and resilience — to everyday life, helps support healthier choices off the field. Our goal is to inspire future generations to take a holistic approach to wellbeing, encompassing nutrition, physical activity, mental, spiritual, and emotional health, creating long-term impact for individuals and communities alike.

State of Mind Workshops



Mental Health
Community Scrums



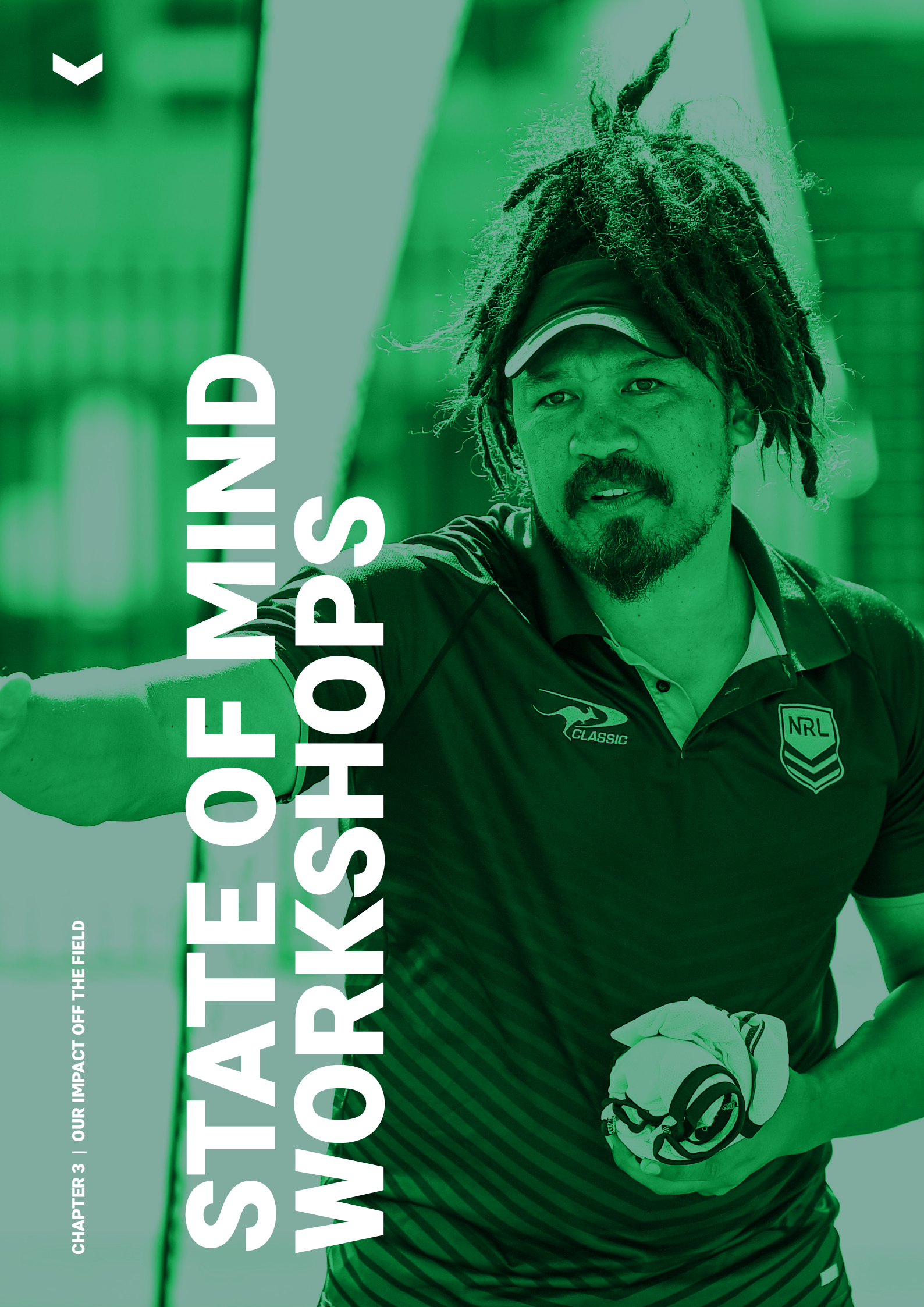
Mental Health Campaign



Leagues Stars Inspire –
Health and Wellbeing



STATE OF MIND WORKSHOPS



The State of Mind workshops continue to use the game's reach, profile, players and Social Impact Ambassadors to help remove the stigma surrounding mental illness. The key objectives of the workshops are to:

- Connect rugby league communities with our mental health partners and local service providers.
- Stimulate help-seeking behaviours by providing appropriate literature and resources.
- Educate and inform grassroots clubs through interactive face-to-face sessions that improve mental health literacy.
- Develop young people to be leaders in mental health advocacy within their schools, clubs and communities.
- A key component of the State of Mind workshops in 2024 was delivering to predominantly community rugby league clubs, high schools and primary schools with a high level of First Nations players and participants at a rate of 30% First Nation representation. These workshops focused on suicide awareness, mental health, and wellbeing.

2024 IN REVIEW

3,223

participants across all State of Mind workshops

70

schools and community rugby league clubs participated in State of Mind

105

State of Mind Workshops delivered

72

GAAME workshops were delivered

26

Grassroots workshops delivered

9

State of Mind Mental Health Community Scrums hosted with 253 participants



MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN



Through the NRL's All Stars grant funding via the Department of Health and Aged Care, this enabled the creation of an engaging and informative mental health campaign aligned with the State of Mind message to educate and create dialogue amongst our grassroots rugby league clubs, schools and broader community. A key aspect of this campaign is engaging our NRL Social Impact Ambassadors, both past and current players to encourage First Nations individuals and communities to make informed decisions about their own state of mind, encourage help-seeking behaviours and understand the signs of when someone in their community may be experiencing difficulties.



MENTAL HEALTH COMMUNITY SCRUMS

THE HEALTHY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA COMMUNITY SCRUM

Together with The Healthy Communities Foundation Australia (THCFA) and NSWRL, we were privileged to deliver our State of Mind Community Scrums across remote areas of NSW. A Community Scrum is an extension of the broader State of Mind program, providing an opportunity for members of the public to attend and hear from a panel on the topic of mental health and wellbeing. The Community Scrum panel incorporates members from the NRL, including a social impact ambassador, a member from THCFA, NSWRL and NRL social Impact staff. Throughout the session, members of the panel discuss the challenges of mental health in communities, hear from local experts, connect with service providers, and gain practical tools to improve mental wellbeing.

YOUI FUNDED COMMUNITY SCRUMS

With the support of Youi, the NRL Social Impact team were generously funded to facilitate State of Mind workshops in regions of NSW and QLD recently affected by floods. Communities including Mullumbimby of the Northern Rivers as well as the Outer Brisbane region in QLD were offered workshops delivered by NRL State of Mind Manager Clinton Toopi, alongside Social Impact Ambassador Zeb Taia and NRL referee Ziggy Przeklasa-Adamski. With Youi's commitment and investment, these workshops enabled local fans who form the heart of the game to generate lasting impact for people and places that live and breathe rugby league. Respectively, community rugby league clubs Mullumbimby Giants and Brothers St Brendan's were direct recipients of the State of Mind workshops in which both clubs received resource kits generously donated by Youi.

Community Scrums were delivered to the regions of Condobolin, Collarenebri, Coonamble, Coonabarabran, Narromine, Narrandera and Narrabri, Mullumbimby, Outer Brisbane and Gympie.

"I liked the way Joel (Joel Thompson) made all the drills relatable to situations in real life.... Everything he spoke about was good."

Get in the GAAME Participant

"What was most useful was finding a safe space and looking for ways to connect and learning how to cope with stress and actively listening to my friends."

GRASSROOTS Participant

"I enjoyed the evening at the State of Mind SCRUM, it was informative and interactive. The SCRUM helped challenge me to better understand, we all need help sometimes in our lives. Mental health challenges could happen to anyone, as we are only human dealing with emotions that can be so overwhelming. I felt more confident to reach out after the SCRUM"

State of Mind Community Scrum Participant



IN 2024, THE STATE OF MIND PROGRAM CONTINUES TO DELIVER POSITIVE EXPERIENCES, DELIVERING TO

3,223

participants across Australia.

In partnership with our expert partner headspace, Blackdog Institute and Kids Helpline, the State of Mind program continues to deliver high impact mental health primary prevention workshops with a mix of rugby league activities.



STATE OF MIND

NSW METROPOLITAN

- 1 Sydney
- 2 Ingleburn
- 3 Newcastle

NSW REGIONAL

- 4 Cessnock
- 5 Collarenebri
- 6 Condobolin
- 7 Coonabarabran
- 8 Coonamble
- 9 Forster
- 10 Lake Cargelligo
- 11 Lake Macquarie
- 12 Merriwa
- 13 Morisset
- 14 Mullumbimby
- 15 Narrabri
- 16 Narrandera
- 17 Narromine
- 18 Scone
- 19 Taree

NORTHERN TERRITORY

- 20 Darwin
- 21 Litchfield
- 22 Thursday Island

QUEENSLAND

- 23 Brisbane
- 24 Cooktown
- 25 Gympie
- 26 Innisfail
- 27 Logan
- 28 Mareeba
- 29 Murgon
- 30 Tamborine Mountain



LEAGUES STARS INSPIRE-HEALTH AND WELLBEING



The League Stars INSPIRE Health and Wellbeing module supports primary aged students with the knowledge to lead a positive, healthy and happy life. Integrating elements of play with learning, the Inspire Health and Wellbeing workshop continues to harness the powerful game of rugby league and its activities to pass on vital information both teachers and students can utilise in their classrooms and on the field.

48

League Stars Inspire Health & Wellbeing workshops delivered

50

primary schools participated in Health & Wellbeing Workshops

A total of

3,782

participants

“Hearing the personal stories of professional athletes and how they relate to everyday life was awesome for the students and helped them to understand and share their own experiences. Brilliant program. The use of interactive games to support the values was powerful and made for a memorable experience. Our students relate their experience with the stars when we talk about our own school values. Seeing their idols follow the same values in their own successful professional lives helps them relate to the school's values on a deeper level.”

**Participating Teacher – NRL
Inspire Health & Wellbeing**



3



RESPECT & SOCIAL COHESION

Voice Against Violence
Program



In League
In Harmony



League Stars Inspire
Respect



League Stars Inspire –
Inclusion & Diversity



VOICE AGAINST VIOLENCE PROGRAM



2024 marked an impactful year for the Voice Against Violence (VAV) program, as it reached a wide audience across senior football clubs, high schools, and primary schools throughout Australia, with a particular focus on New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria. Through collaborative partnerships and community support, VAV continued to use the powerful platform of rugby league to deliver crucial educational messages on preventing violence, promoting respectful relationships, and empowering communities to take a stand against violence.

NSW TACKLING VIOLENCE

The Department of Communities and Justice invited the National Rugby League (NRL) to bring VAV workshops to rural and regional New South Wales, targeting senior rugby league clubs. This partnership allowed VAV to expand its reach into underserved communities, emphasising education and primary prevention strategies against violence.

The Tackling Violence campaign reached a total of 21 x VAV workshops to senior rugby league clubs and high schools and 6 x primary school workshops delivered.

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION WITH MELBOURNE STORM

VAV partnered with the Melbourne Storm via funding from the Victorian Government to deliver workshops across high schools in Victoria. Collaborating with the Melbourne Storm reassured the game's commitment to creating safe and respectful communities through sport. Through this collaboration, Victorian youth were equipped with knowledge and skills to help prevent violence. A total of 17 x secondary school Voice Against Violence workshops.

ORGANISATION FUNDED PROGRAMS IN NEW SOUTH WALES AND QUEENSLAND

In addition to VAV's state and club-based collaborations, law enforcement agencies provided key support to expand the program's reach and educate the wider community about primary prevention education.

New South Wales Police invited the NRL Voice Against Violence delivery team to the Mid-North Coast, including the communities of Forster and Taree, engaging a total of 1,290 participants.

4 x secondary schools

4 x primary schools

Queensland Police funded the Voice Against Violence delivery team including NRL social Impact Ambassadors Mitchell Allgood and Frank Winterstein to travel to Australia's top end, the Torres Strait Islands, facilitating workshops in regions such as Thursday Island and Bamaga.

This community blitz reached 323 participants across high schools, senior rugby league clubs and community groups. These funded initiatives have been instrumental in ensuring remote and regional communities across Australia receive vital education about violence prevention and respectful relationships.



Our Watch

Preventing violence against women



VOICE AGAINST VIOLENCE

VOICE AGAINST VIOLENCE IN THE PACIFIC

Throughout the Pacific, survey results indicated that VAV workshops have promoted positive educational outcomes and changes in attitude towards women and domestic violence. Further, the majority of participants indicated that VAV had helped them to develop a better understanding of how violence can be prevented, and enhanced awareness of where they can go to for help and additional resources.

An exciting new initiative delivered in High Schools by the PNG team, was the Power Meri Screening. This program is an extension of our VAV workshop targeting a younger audience. The Power Meri documentary has helped students understand the challenges and triumphs of female athletes, reinforcing the importance of resilience, dedication, and gender equality in sports.

This initiative has not only encouraged more young girls to pursue rugby league but has also sparked meaningful conversations about breaking barriers and creating opportunities for women in sports and leadership.



The NRL Voice Against Violence program was the most engaging school program that he had ever encountered. The manner in which Alan and Joseph interacted and communicated with the students was extraordinary. The Voice Against Violence program was delivered to the school students to the highest standard and the positive feedback which we have received from the school students says it all, the consensus amongst the students was 'It was the best real life learning experience they had ever been involved with.'

Wayne Green, Principal - MidCoast Christain College

"The contrast of fun footy drills with serious emotion and evoking statistics helped to display the seriousness of this issue"

VAV Participant, East Campbelltown Eagles Rugby League Club

"Excellent and engaging presentation. Ball work at the start served to set up a open and trusting atmosphere. The presentation was accessible and got powerful. There was a focus not just on the problem, males are part of the solution".

VAV Participant, Victoria

"This program brought my thoughts back to how my mother worked so hard to try and put me and my siblings through school and on top of that was always taking care of everything at home from cooking, cleaning and washing and taking care of us when we are sick. It made me realize that women do so much more work compared to men."

Mr. Iliesa Vuidreketi, Fireman at Fiji National Fire Station

2024 PARTICIPANTS

AUSTRALIA

2,549 participants

46 Workshops

FIJI

246 participants

14 Workshops

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

2,891

participants (1,066 female & 1,845 male)

49 Workshops

TONGA

1,029

participants (553 female & 476 male)

14 Workshops

SAMOA

594 participants

9 Workshops

7,892

Total Voice Against Violence participants

LEAGUE STARS INSPIRE RESPECT



On or off the sporting field, Respect is a fundamental competency children and young people will continue to learn as they grow and develop. The League Stars INSPIRE Respect module educates primary aged students to engage in respectful relationships with their peers within their school, sporting team, family and wider community. INSPIRE Respect teaches students learn to behave in respectful ways, promote the use of respectful language, and provide strategies in responding to situations by showing respect and being able to identify respect for themselves.

11

League Stars Inspire Respect workshops delivered

1,253

students received the Respect message



IN LEAGUE IN HARMONY



**IN LEAGUE
IN HARMONY**

With a focus on respect, responsibility and inclusiveness, the respect and social cohesion pillar aims to unite communities by addressing issues such as social disengagement, racism, gender inequality and bullying; empowering youth to be agents of change for a more cohesive society.

Encompassing programs such as In League In Harmony and League Stars Inspire, our objective is to leverage rugby league as the vehicle to educate key competencies of individuals and groups to contribute to personal development and sustainable social change.

IN LEAGUE IN HARMONY PARTICIPANTS

- 132 workshops delivered
- 22 schools
- 633 participants
- 2 x celebratory gala days

YOUTH SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS

- 91 Youth Advocates from 14 schools

PARTNERSHIPS

Continuing our long-standing relationship with Moving Forward Together (MFT), we continued implementing the Harmony Walk initiative at the In League In Harmony Celebratory Gala Days cultivating positive conversations and respect amongst participants.

In early 2024 we connected with the Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP), a fellow COMPACT Alliance member. IEP's expertise is centered on how individuals and communities can build positive peace. Their research, framework and activities complement the existing cultural awareness and leadership skill development in the Youth Advocate program. In Term 2 2024 together with IEP we successfully piloted a hybrid Youth Advocate Program and look forward to further collaboration in the future.

"Students take more pride in themselves and are more respectful to others. They have built connections and formed new friendships. Students who didn't identify themselves as having leadership qualities before, now see themselves in a new light and have more confidence and self-esteem".

Nathan - Cardiff High School

"Great to see students engaged with external education programs again, especially with Rugby League. This school needs programs like "In League in Harmony". It keeps them focused on what's important and relevant".

Braiden Gilbert - Wollongong High School High School Teacher, Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts

"The content delivered to the students was exceptional. They learnt fundamental skills which opened an opportunity for classroom learning. We now often refer to the workshop when talking about respect, inclusion, and diversity. The students also loved the workshop, both indoors and outdoors."

Jemma Laverty – Student Support Officer Cumberland High School

LEAGUE STARS INSPIRE - INCLUSION & DIVERSITY



The League Stars INSPIRE Inclusion & Diversity module continues to provide primary aged students with the knowledge and inspiration to take action and lead a positive, healthy and happy life. Integrating elements of play with learning, the Inspire series continues to harness the powerful game of rugby league and its activities to pass on vital information both teachers and students can utilise in their classrooms and on the field.

TITANS INSPIRE INCLUSION & DIVERSITY

In 2024, the NRL and the Gold Coast Titans partnered together to deliver the Inclusion & Diversity program within the Gold Coast regions of Southeast Queensland & Northern NSW. The partnership included NRL Social Impact team training the Titans' Community staff to deliver the Inclusion & Diversity resource to the local Gold Coast school community.



INSPIRE INCLUSION & DIVERSITY IN REVIEW

24

schools

2,579

students participating

37

League Stars Inspire:
Inclusion & Diversity Workshops

"I would like to thank Preston (Preston Campbell) and Jaime (Jaime Chapman) for their visit to Induna School. It was fantastic how engaged and happy the boys were with both of your conversations, advice, giveaways and signatures. The feedback from the staff has been overwhelmingly positive with a comment from the principal that she has never seen the boys so engaged with any visitor to the school and has never heard them ask so many mature and worthwhile questions.

Participating Teacher, Induna School, South Grafton - NRL Inspire Inclusion & Diversity

"Both Chase (Chase Stanley) and Bradley (Brad Takairangi) were absolutely brilliant. The way they connected with the students, delivered the program and the message they delivered was both engaging and inspiring. Both 6B and 6P students were thoroughly engaged, enjoyed the activities, looked forward to going each Monday and responded so positively to the overall message. Both classes were motivated, and this was due to the effort that both Chase and Bradley put into connecting with the students."

Deputy Principal, Harrington Park Public School – NRL Inspire Inclusion & Diversity

4



COLLABORATING TO ENHANCE LIVES OF THOSE WHO ARE DISADVANTAGED

Fundraising & Donations



Charity Partnerships



Memory Making Experiences



FUNDRAISING & DONATIONS



5050 CHARITY RAFFLE

The 50-50 Charity Raffle has partnered with the NRL since 2020, raising funds for the NRL's State of Mind program and expert and community partners including LIVIN, Kids Helpline, headspace, Black Dog Institute, NSW Rugby League and Queensland Rugby League. In 2024, the NRL and 5050 hit the \$1,000,000.00 milestone!

\$427,571.00

Total Funds Raised

\$103,443.00

Highest Raffle Total (2024 State of Origin 3)

\$171,071

Total Funds to Charity Partners

213

Total Volunteers (average of 21 volunteers per event)

\$42,757.10

Average Raffle total

\$20.32

Average spend per transaction

OTHER CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES:

The NRL Social Impact team across the 2024 season provided over \$813,000 worth of community care packages to Australian and Pacific communities. This included a range of rugby league equipment including footballs and merchandise items including jerseys, training and supporter apparel.

NRL Corporate Golf Day raised funds for the State of Mind program resulting in over \$20,000 donated.

2024 TICKET DONATIONS

- 210 tickets provided to community
- Over \$21,689 worth of tickets were provided to the community

2024 NRL ALL STARS NRL FLOOD APPEAL

NRL Social Impact with the support of Channel 9 and Foxtel delivered an in-broadcast donation appeal during the 2024 All Stars to support the Bloomfield River communities of Far North Queensland devastated by flooding following ex-tropical cyclone Jasper in Dec 2023. Many residents of Wujal Wujal and surrounding communities lost everything and were forced off country and into temporary housing.

The NRL partnered with essential items and services relief organisation, GIVIT. GIVIT assisted the NRL with identifying the immediate and urgent support needed for the residents of Wujal Wujal, Degarra, Bloomfield & Ayton (Bloomfield River Communities).

Total funds raised from the 2024 Bloomfield flood appeal was \$8,295.80.



CHARITY PARTNERSHIPS



2024 WOMEN IN LEAGUE ROUND: PARTNERSHIP WITH OVARIAN CANCER AUSTRALIA

Ovarian Cancer Australia (OCA) is an independent national not-for-profit organisation supporting people impacted by ovarian cancer. Their focus is to provide care and support those affected by ovarian cancer and their families and represent them by leading change. Ovarian Cancer Australia is the only organisation in Australia that provides free access to specialist ovarian cancer nurses to anyone affected by ovarian cancer, no matter where they live.

The NRL and OCA partnered for the 2024 Harvey Norman Women in League Round to increase awareness and raise funds for OCA. The Harvey Norman Women in League Round was celebrated during Round 22 of the Telstra Premiership and Round 2 of the Telstra Women's Premiership. Harvey Norman and the Rugby League Community donated \$1,000 for every goal kicked at selected matches during the round to support OCA.

"A huge honour to stand as Ambassador and interview with Fox Sports to support the incredible NRL x OCA partnership. Well done NRL for shining spotlight on ovarian cancer and raising much needed awareness and funding during the Women in League round of the NRL...Incredible"

Christine Crupi



Throughout the week, matches, broadcast and social media featured interviews highlighting the stories of those affected by ovarian cancer.

\$14,000

Kick donation funds

\$2,800

Direct donation via QR code

\$16,800.00

Total funds raised



MEMORYMAKING EXPERIENCES



LUKE'S WISH COMES TRUE ON GRAND FINAL WEEKEND

Ten-year-old Luke, who has Duchenne's muscular dystrophy, had his wish granted to 'have a VIP experience at the 2024 NRL Grand Final' thanks to the NRL collaborating with Make-A-Wish Australia.

Luke and nine of his family members were invited to attend the Storm's captain's run and also invited by Panthers to stay on for their walk through, before getting to meet to The Kid Laroi who was at the stadium rehearsing for the grand final entertainment.

On the Sunday, Luke got to watch both teams depart the bus with his dad, every player and the coaches high fiving him when they jumped off the bus while Storm player, and one of Luke's favourites, Ryan Papenhuyzen wheeled his chair into the stadium.

When Luke was introduced to the referees on Sunday he offered this advice to the grand final match official - "ref good, make sure you're close enough to see if they score and don't let them fight".

"Luke loved it. For a young boy struggling with all the changes in his body and to be 'left behind' from most of his peers, being made to feel special and like a VIP means the world to him." Luke's mum Tonita said.

"We are all so grateful for the lifelong memories we made.

"Meeting all the players and even The Kid Laroi. Watching the game. Meeting some of the greats and a merch pack. Travelling to and from the game in style. He absolutely loved it!"

Make-A-Wish Australia CEO Sally Bateman expressed their extreme gratitude to the NRL, Melbourne Storm and Penrith Panthers for making Luke's wish come to life. The support of the NRL and generosity of donors to Make-A-Wish Australia are critical towards helping bring unforgettable wishes like Luke's to life and inspire children to dream bigger and believe that anything is possible.

WUJAL WUJAL COMMUNITY GAME DAY EXPERIENCE

As part of NRL's impact for the Wujal Wujal community, the NRL provided 125 tickets for families affected directly by the flood. Residents who attended the All Stars match were given the opportunity to walk through the stadium tunnel, view the cultural welcomes from the side of the field and meet NRL legend, Greg Inglis.



SOCIAL IMPACT PROJECTS

ROAD TO REGIONS

NRL Road To Regions presented by Your Local Club is a social impact outreach initiative that sends NRL and NRLW players, along with Rugby League ambassadors, to regional and remote communities in Australia & New Zealand to inspire young people, connect communities, and support local clubs and volunteers.

The 2024 Road to Regions message was themed 'Simply Your Best', encouraging students to simply do their best and have a go at the task at hand, no matter the result. This interactive workshop incorporated elements of education through movement and the chance to get up close and personal with our NRL and NRLW players!

With a new educational resource at hand, NRL Game Development Officers and Social Impact staff, along with NRL Ambassadors and current NRL and NRLW players kicked off R2R on the Sunshine Coast with a Community Blitz seeing over 30 schools in one day.

SIMPLY
your
BEST 

 **ROAD TO REGIONS**
Your local club

SCHOOLS FEEDBACK

"The timing was perfect leading into our senior's leadership speeches and committee formation. By emphasising the "Simply Your Best" Message and educating that that is different for every person had a very positive effect on students and on their mindset.

"The concept of being your best is very relatable to all areas of the curriculum so can be easily incorporated and applied in school context. Being a lower decile school we aren't exposed to such cool experiences as often so it was a real highlight for the students, was definitely a highlight for them."

"Students from Years 1-6 attended the session. Some students have never been to an NRL game and have definitely not had the opportunity to meet current and emerging players in the flesh - (and Hindie was a hit with staff & kids). It is wonderful that regional areas are visited as the players present were from the 'bush' themselves. Kids were really engaged. I loved that the players highlighted the importance of eating well and getting a good night's sleep! "

13 Regional Locations

34,000 Participants

210 Schools

35 Community Rugby League Clubs engaged



ROAD TO REGIONS



"It's crazy to see how much we can impact a kids day in a positive way. It's always overwhelming to see how many kids look up to us as role models."

Corey Jensen (Brisbane Broncos)

"I really enjoyed promoting our game to the remote areas of Darwin. Seeing these kid's puts things into perspective and how good the students in the big cities have it."

Brad Takairangi (NRL Social Impact Ambassador)



Khalil Kouayder – 2024 NRL
Volunteer of the Year Winner

NRL COMMUNITY AWARDS



COMMUNITY AWARDS

Presented by 

2024 GRASSROOTS WINNERS

RECOGNISING THE TIRELESS CONTRIBUTION OF OUR GAME'S UNSUNG HEROES.

The NRL Community Awards presented by Westpac honour the tireless effort of the game's volunteers, mentors, young people and community clubs. The NRL Grassroots Award winners are selected by an expert panel chaired by an Australian Rugby League Commissioner.

The Teacher of the year category was chaired by Mr. Alan Sullivan KC, The Volunteer of the Year category was chaired by The Hon. Peter Beattie AC, The Women in League and Young Person of the Year categories were chaired by The Hon. Kate Jones, The Community Rugby League Club of the Year category was chaired by Mr. Tony McGrath and the Indigenous Community Award was chaired by Mr. Wayne Pearce OAM.

YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR

A young person aged 12–24 who serves as a positive role model and demonstrates the qualities of a future leader.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

A registered volunteer who provides exceptional service to the game and makes a measurable difference in their community.

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

A teacher who demonstrates exceptional support of Rugby League, encouraging participation both on the field and in-classroom.

WOMEN IN LEAGUE AWARD

An individual who advocates for the advancement and opportunities of women in Rugby League.

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY AWARD

An individual who champions the growth of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' participation in Rugby League.

COMMUNITY RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB OF THE YEAR

A club that enhances participation and enjoyment of Rugby League within its members and the broader community.

Each winner received their award at presentation within their community amongst family and friends, a VIP trip for 2 to Sydney for the NRL and NRLW Grand Final where they were celebrated on the field on the biggest stage, a cash prize, and \$1,000 worth of Westpac footballs.

"Their ongoing commitment to the game of rugby league is clearly evident which we hope provides inspiration for all grassroots volunteers."

Tain Drinkwater - Executive General Manager Operations & Technology



WOMEN IN LEAGUE AWARD

MARYANNE LONGSTAFF
(SOUTH AUSTRALIA)



INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY AWARD

JASMINE BOND
(QUEENSLAND)



TEACHER OF THE YEAR

MATTHEW O'DWYER
(CHARLES WESTON SCHOOL, ACT)



COMMUNITY RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB OF THE YEAR

BOWEN SEAGULLS
(QUEENSLAND)



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

KHALIL KOUAYDER
(GREENACRE TIGERS, NSW)



YOUNG PERSON OF THE YEAR

THOMAS OTTAWAY
(QUEENSLAND)



NRL SOCIAL IMPACT AMBASSADORS

In 2024, the re-introduction of the NRL's Social Impact Ambassadors Program kicked off, engaging a wide range of notable retired NRL and NRLW players to participate, facilitate and engage in a range of community programs and initiatives.

We understand the power rugby league has in the community. Combining the messages we deliver in the classroom, the dressing sheds and on the field, our NRL Ambassadors utilise their stories, voice and experiences to connect and inspire participants to continue to lead positive and healthy lifestyles in their communities.

NRL Social Impact Ambassadors were trained to deliver a range of community programs including State of Mind, Voice Against Violence, In League In Harmony and NRL League Stars Inspire. Apart of this facilitation process, Ambassadors were required to participate in relevant training workshops with expert partners, take a deep dive into training manuals and observe NRL Community Managers in program delivery with the aim to teach, reach and release our Program Ambassadors into the community to lead and inspire.

**2024 NRL SOCIAL IMPACT
AMBASSADORS**

Ben Roberts	Brad Takairangi
Chase Stanley	Christian Pio
Frank Winterstein	Joseph Paulo
Mitchell Allgood	Roy Asotasi
Quincy Dodd	Dean Whare
Bodene Thompson	Bree Chester
Bryson Goodwin	Darius Boyd
Sia Soliola	Jaime Chapman
Joel Thompson	Kennedy Cherrington
Preston Campbell	Matthew Bowen
Sam Tagataese	Tahlulah Tillet
Trent Hodkinson	Zeb Taia
Brett Kimmorley	Kurt Gidley
Ruan Sims	Sam Bremner
Sam Williams	Tallisha Harden

STATE OF MIND PROGRAM FACILITATORS

Clinton Toopi	Alan Tongue
Trent Hodkinson	Bryson Goodwin
Joel Thompson	Sam Tagataese
Zeb Taia	Kennedy Cherrington
Preston Campbell	

VOICE AGAINST VIOLENCE FACILITATORS

Alan Tongue	Frank Winterstien
Joseph Paulo	Mitchell Allgood
Roy Asotasi	Sia Soliola
Dean Whare	

"I couldn't speak more highly about Ben Roberts and the way that he presented himself, spoke to the students and conducted the presentation."

Gwynneville Public School – NRL Inspire Inclusion & Diversity Program

"Chase was an amazing presenter, kept the students engaged and most importantly talked about the important themes of diversity and inclusion."

Holy Family Catholic School, Parramatta– NRL Inspire Inclusion & Diversity Program

"Brad was absolutely brilliant - the students were engaged and excited to see him. He was personable and really took the time to work directly with our students and understand their home cultures and connections. The activities were relevant and fun, all our 3-6 kids were motivated by his interest in them."

Hillside Public School - NRL Inspire Inclusion & Diversity Program

SOCIAL IMPACT & EXPERT PARTNERS

MARQUEE PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS



**STATE
OF MIND**



**IN LEAGUE
IN HARMONY**



**VOICE AGAINST
VIOLENCE**



**SCHOOL
TO WORK**



**COMMUNITY
AWARDS**
Presented by **W**



**ROAD TO
REGIONS**
Your local club

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Communities
& Justice



Multicultural
NSW



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care



Your local club

NRL SOCIAL IMPACT STAFF



The Social Impact programs and initiatives delivered by our experienced Social Impact staff aim to deliver quality workshops and material to address key societal needs across the broader community in Australia. Collectively, our staff aim to uplift, inspire and impact all Australians to live healthy and inclusive lives.

2024 NRL SOCIAL IMPACT STAFF

POSITION	
General Manager	1
Social Impact Managers	5
School to Work Program Staff	19
Social Impact Program Staff	2



[NRL.COM/COMMUNITY](https://nrl.com/community)

