



A letter to our supporters and volunteers about the proposed Independent Commission ...

4 February, 2010

Dear Parents, Guardians and Players

The proposed establishment of an independent commission for rugby league has created a great deal of community interest and comment (mostly incorrect) and we would like to assist our rugby league community to understand the proposal and the Queensland Rugby League's (QRL's) position regarding the commission.

The QRL believes the current structure of the game could be improved to benefit rugby league's long term development. Therefore, the QRL is committed in principle to the establishment of a single body to control the efficient administration of rugby league in Australia.

Any suggestion that the QRL is blocking the establishment of a new independent commission is incorrect.

What the QRL is doing is standing up for the Queensland rugby league community and its grass roots supporters to ensure the game's long term future.

The changes proposed by the National Rugby League (NRL) clubs are far reaching and it is vital the implications of such a change, including protecting the game's grassroots development programs and representative opportunities, are considered in detail.

Under the current proposal for the new structure, the Australian Rugby League (ARL) and News Ltd would hand over control to a new independent commission. Under their agreement, News Ltd is proposing to deliver its 50 per cent share of the game to the NRL clubs when they exit. The ARL has a 50 per cent ownership position and we believe it would not be in rugby league's best interests to eventually hand full control to the NRL clubs – who represent the game's elite. In other words, why would the ARL as custodians of the game walk away and place the game's future in the hands of the Clubs, a number of which are privately owned.

Whilst the NRL clubs play an important role in the promotion and funding, the game has many stakeholders including senior, junior and school players, parents and supporters, volunteers and referees – all of who need to be protected and represented under this new structure.

The QRL believes the best way of ensuring the independent commission serves the interests of all the game's stakeholders is for the QRL and New South Wales Rugby League (NSWRL), through the ARL, to jointly nominate four independent candidates to the proposed eight-member board of the commission with the NRL clubs doing the same. This structure proposed by the QRL, ensures equality and transparency.

The QRL has a proud tradition of fostering the game's development for more than a century and we want to ensure the culture and heritage of rugby league remain intact.

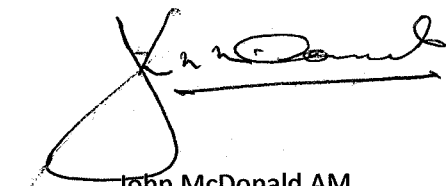
As a not-for-profit organisation, the QRL ensures the game makes the necessary investment to maintain the revenue producing elite level of the sport such as State of Origin, while expanding the investment in the development of junior and amateur levels across the State. In 2010, QRL development officers will involve approximately 90,000 juniors (43,000 club players, 46,000 school players) in rugby league based physical activity in Queensland.

We appreciate that rugby league is a way of life for many Queensland people and we are indebted to the selfless contribution of the code's estimated 18,000 volunteer workers each week, including coaches, managers, trainers, first aid officers, officials, canteen staff, groundsmen, registrars, jersey washers, timekeepers etc.

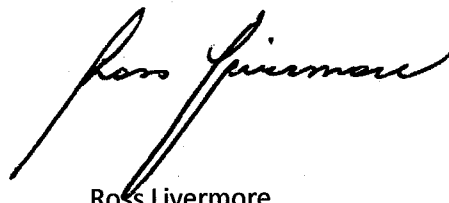
The QRL takes its role as the custodian of the game in Queensland seriously, which is why we will not compromise on our commitment to the grass roots of the game, nor are we prepared to gamble with its long term future.

Please find attached a fact sheet containing some frequently asked questions regarding the proposed independent commission. Thank you for your continued support of the QRL and our great game. If you have any views or further questions regarding the independent commission, please contact the QRL via email rugbyleague@qrl.com.au or phone (07) 3367 6000.

Yours sincerely



John McDonald AM
CHAIRMAN



Ross Livermore
MANAGING DIRECTOR



The real facts on the Independent Commission and the answers you need to know ...

Rugby League's Independent Commission Explained

The following document contains frequently asked questions relating to the independent commission. If you have any additional questions, please contact the Queensland Rugby League (QRL) via email at rugbyleague@qrl.com.au or (07) 3367 6000.

Who presently administers the game of rugby league in Australia?

At present the game is run by a partnership committee, comprising three representatives each from News Ltd and the Australian Rugby League (ARL). This was formed in 1997 when the game was unified following the Super League split.

What is the independent commission for rugby league?

Under proposed changes as a result of the establishment of an independent commission, News Ltd would exit the game and the partnership between News Ltd and the ARL would be disbanded. In the place of the partnership would be a new board of eight independent commissioners.

Who will be responsible for the development of the game under the independent commission?

The ARL and its affiliate state bodies such as the QRL and New South Wales Rugby League (NSWRL) along with the NRL clubs presently provide funding for the development of the game. The proposed independent commission would ultimately become responsible for development funding and control.

Is the QRL trying to block an independent commission?

No. The QRL believes the current structure of the game could be improved to benefit rugby league's long term development.

The QRL is committed in principle to the establishment of a single body to control the efficient administration of rugby league in Australia. The continued suggestion that the QRL is a stumbling block to the establishment of a new independent commission is incorrect.

The changes proposed by the independent commission are far reaching and it is imperative that we consider the implications of such a change, including how the game's grassroots development programs and representative opportunities will be protected.

The QRL has taken a leadership role in investigating the implications of an independent commission through convening an intensive workshop to explore its impacts. We have also taken all steps available to advance discussions on the independent commission with the ARL.

We have more work to do but the QRL will not compromise on its commitment to protect the game's grass roots and representative football.

What changes are proposed to the administration of the game under the independent commission?

Under the agreement with News Ltd, the NRL clubs will get its 50% of the game if News Ltd exits. The ARL must retain its 50% ownership and not allow the clubs to elect all commission members and take 100% ownership and control of the game as they have proposed.

The QRL does not believe it is in rugby league's best interests to eventually hand full control to the NRL clubs who represent the game's elite and a number of which are privately owned.

The QRL is the custodian of the game in Queensland which has a broad base including seniors, juniors, schools, parents, development, education, volunteers and referees.

Why would the ARL as overall custodians walk away and place the game's future in the hands of 16 Clubs each controlled by different boards.

How does the QRL believe the independent commission should be structured?

The QRL believes the best way of ensuring the independent commission serves the interests of all stakeholders is for the QRL and NSWRL, through the ARL, to jointly nominate four independent candidates for the proposed eight-member board of the commission. The same procedure should apply to the candidates nominated by the Clubs.

The structure the QRL proposes before these members could be elected ensures equality and transparency in the establishment of the commission.

Does the QRL believe all commissioners for the new body should be independent?

Yes. Furthermore, the QRL has proposed that candidates put forward by the ARL must first achieve 75% acceptance by the ARL and then they must achieve 75% acceptance by the NRL clubs. This approach would also apply to NRL club nominations for commissioner positions.

Why are we only now being told about the independent commission?

The clubs have been driving this campaign for an independent commission for some time but QRL members of the ARL only had their first opportunity to view details of the proposal when a four page document containing 29 points was tabled at an ARL Board meeting on 8 December 2009. A proposal of this magnitude needs analysis and informed debate and not just a media campaign in an endeavour to discredit people and force a decision favourable to the NRL clubs.

This commission structure as outlined was not acceptable and the ARL advised News Limited of its views.

We have requested further information from the ARL on the progress of the proposal as part of our campaign to ensure the grassroots of the game and representative football are protected.

The QRL takes its role as the custodian of the game in Queensland seriously, which is why we are standing up for the Queensland rugby league community, its grassroots supporters and the game's long term future.

We will endeavour to keep all stakeholders informed of any further developments relating to the independent commission. In the meantime, should you have any views or further questions, please contact the QRL by email – rugbyleague@qrl.com.au or Ph: (07) 3367 6000.

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