



NRL ANTI-DISCRIMINATION & VILIFICATION FRAMEWORK

Developed in partnership with



Australian
Human Rights
Commission



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Discrimination and vilification must be addressed swiftly and effectively.



This Anti-Discrimination and Vilification Framework is an initiative of the NRL in partnership with the Australian Human Rights Commission in consultation with the States, Leagues and their affiliated organisations.

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WELCOME



Welcome to the NRL's Anti-Discrimination and Vilification Framework, which outlines how we are working to create a more inclusive, non-discriminatory sport.

Included in the core values of our sport is a principle that every participant, whether as a player, parent, spectator, coach, volunteer, referee or official, should respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person, regardless of their personal traits, preferences or appearance.

The NRL promotes a safe, welcoming and inclusive sporting environment for all, through comprehensive member protection policies, codes of conduct, rigorous complaint processes and disciplinary measures, all of which are promoted and enforced throughout every level of our game.

Whilst our aim is to ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all, rugby league is not immune from issues of discrimination, vilification or exclusion, that can occur at every level of society.

Unfortunately, on occasion, the misconduct of one individual can negatively impact the wellbeing, health and safety of many people.

That is why discrimination and vilification must be addressed swiftly and effectively.

We all have a role to play in ensuring that together, our game is a safe one, that is welcoming and inclusive.

This framework brings together our policies and codes, complaints and member support information in one place, to ensure that everyone involved in our sport is aware of their legal and ethical rights and responsibilities.

I'd like to thank all of our partners, including our expert community and mental health partners, together with our State Leagues, Clubs, players, members, fans and staff, for their ongoing support in helping ensure that everyone, irrespective of their cultural background, religion, sexual preference, gender or ability, continues to feel welcome and included in our game.

Todd Greenberg
CEO
National Rugby League



DISCRIMINATION & VILIFICATION



Discrimination and vilification come in many forms. It can be overt or covert; it can be crude or subtle. It can be expressed through beliefs and stereotypes, prejudices and biases, and it occurs at many levels. *

Research shows that while discrimination and vilification can contribute to weakening social cohesion, it is also linked to personal health issues for those targeted, such as depression, stress, alcohol and substance abuse and peer violence.

See a range of facts sheets which provide information and facts on discrimination and equality for the following groups

- » [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#)
- » [Multicultural/Pasifika – cultural diversity](#)
- » [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex \(LGBTI\)](#)
- » [Women and girls](#)
- » [All Abilities](#)

To help ensure sporting environments are inclusive and non-discriminatory, laws exist across Australia that makes certain forms of discrimination and harassment unlawful in all areas of life, including sport.

The NRL recognises its legislative duty of care under the relevant Federal and State Anti-Discrimination Laws (for example, the Racial Discrimination Act, Sex Discrimination Act and Disability Discrimination Act).

* www.humanrights.gov.au/news/speeches/combating-racism-reclaiming-patriotism



OUR COMMITMENT



At all times, and in all situations, the NRL is committed to eliminating all forms of unlawful discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation.

We recognise that people cannot participate, enjoy themselves or perform at their best if they are treated unfairly, discriminated against or harassed.

We will take all reasonable steps to identify and eliminate unlawful direct, indirect, and systemic discrimination from our structures and practices and ensure that all members are afforded reasonable opportunities to participate in and gain access to our programs and services at all levels.

The NRL is committed to providing for all participants, particularly children, an environment that promotes respectful and positive behaviour and values. In general, all participants in Rugby League are encouraged and expected to:

- » role-model good sportsmanship
- » demonstrate the highest level of respect
- » lead by positive example
- » celebrate the 'good news' stories
- » understand and accept that the integrity of the sport is of paramount importance.

As such, we have developed a range of policies and codes to provide guidance on core values, good governance, inclusion, child safety, non-discrimination and appropriate behaviours and attitudes for Rugby League clubs and associations and their players, coaches, volunteers, administrators, officials, parents/guardians and spectators.

Good clear policies give direction and guidance for people in your club or association about their rights and responsibilities. The successful implementation and enforcement of Rugby League's member protection policies and codes requires the cooperation and commitment of associations, clubs and participants at all levels.

The NRL, the States, Leagues, associations and clubs are encouraged to promote these policies as well as their own adapted policies and procedures to members and volunteers, and to actively assist with their promotion and implementation.

WHY A NEW FRAMEWORK?



The intent of this framework is to clearly outline how Rugby League is working to create a more respectful, safer, non-discriminatory and inclusive sport. It also aims to highlight ways for everyone to get involved in promoting inclusion and diversity across all levels of the game.

The goals of this Anti-Discrimination and Vilification Framework are to:

- » Identify the NRL's commitment to stamp out discrimination and vilification in all its forms in the game.
- » Demonstrate how we will promote an inclusive and welcoming sporting environment for all.
- » Promote all of our member protection policies and codes of conduct to ensure people are certain of their rights and responsibilities.
- » Make it clear how children and young people are protected and how we will maintain child-safe environments.
- » Highlight our complaints procedures, reporting processes and disciplinary measures so that they are easy to access, understand and follow.
- » Direct people to where to find further information or education/training.

Ultimately, the framework is aimed at providing a consistent approach to discrimination and vilification across the game to help prevent it before it occurs. The framework will assist to build the capacity of the NRL community to recognise, respond to and provide support to persons who are affected by any form of discrimination or vilification.

The framework is also designed to support the development and implementation of anti-discrimination or vilification initiatives in our States, Leagues and at the community level.



WHO IS THIS FRAMEWORK TARGETED AT?



Everyone in Rugby League has a role to play in ensuring that we continue to make our sport a benchmark in inclusive, non-discriminatory practices for people from all parts of our community.

This framework and its policies and codes apply to the following, whether they are in a paid or unpaid/voluntary capacity:

- » Individuals sitting on boards, committees and sub-committees
- » Volunteers
- » Support personnel (e.g. managers, physiotherapists, psychologists, masseurs, sport trainers)
- » Coaches and assistant coaches
- » Athletes and players
- » Referees and other officials
- » Members, including life members
- » Member associations
- » Affiliated clubs and associated organisations
- » Peak associations and the national body
- » Any other person or organisation that is a member of or affiliated to the National Rugby League
- » Parents, guardians, spectators and sponsors to the full extent that is possible.

Please note:

NRL paid employees are subject to internal policies endorsed by the National Sporting Organisation.

The NRL Competition also has its own Anti-Vilification Code under the NRL Rules which NRL Clubs, Club Officials and Players are subject to.

It is important that this framework continues to be developed collaboratively as a philosophical approach and guide that can be adopted and used by the broader Rugby League community.



RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES – CODES AND POLICIES



The NRL are committed to providing an environment for all participants that promotes respectful and positive behaviour and values. Our policies and codes ensure that everyone is aware of their legal and ethical rights and responsibilities, and provide the procedures to eliminate discrimination, harassment, vilification, child protection issues and other forms of inappropriate behaviour.

The following policies and codes reaffirm our commitment to eliminating these forms of behaviour from our sport. The policies are governed by the NRL and are adopted and promoted by all Affiliated States, Leagues, and their affiliated organisations.

- » [NRL Member Protection Policy \(NRL MPP\)](#)
- » [NRL Code of Conduct](#)
- » [Risk management guide](#)

Social media

The NRL will not tolerate abusive, discriminatory, intimidating or offensive statements being made online. Click [here](#) to see the Social Media Policy template and videos.

Relevant policies and procedures

The NRL Anti-discrimination and Vilification Framework is considered complementary to relevant NRL policies and procedures and those in affiliated states/territories.

For further information, see the [Inclusion](#) section of NRL.com.



CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN



The NRL are committed to promoting a safe environment for all children and to assist staff, officials, players, coaches, members and volunteers to recognise child protection issues and safeguarding procedures.

The NRL [Member Protection Policy](#) outlines the policies and processes to ensure a safe, positive environment for children and young people, while the [NRL National Code of Conduct](#) also highlights appropriate behaviours when dealing with children.

Play by the Rules has also developed useful [facts sheets](#) which outline strategies for Parents, Coaches and Clubs/Associations in creating safe environments for children in sport.

WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS

One way to manage the potential risks in your sporting environment is to ensure your club/association meet their Working With Children Check (WWCC) legal obligations. Details on screening requirements and the WWCC process are highlighted in the NRL Member Protection Policy. *Play by the Rules* also has useful information for [steps on how to respond to allegations of child abuse](#) and a handy [Reference Guide](#) for all relevant agencies and contacts.

Note: WWCC requirements vary across Australia. It is important to remember that when travelling to other states or territories, your sporting organisation must comply with their legislative requirements. Click [here](#) for [WWCC Fact Sheets](#) for each state and territory.

TAKING IMAGES OF CHILDREN

The NRL urges all clubs and associations to be aware of such risks and to take steps, where possible, to minimise them. Having a good policy in place, easy to use consent forms and promoting the issues and correct process to members is very important. See the [NRL Member Protection Policy](#) which highlights how to minimise risks and *Play by the Rules* also has a useful [fact sheet](#) for guidance on taking images of children.

COMPLAINTS AND MEMBER SUPPORT



Rugby League should be a place where you can develop friendships and enjoy competing at whatever level you like. It is not somewhere you should be subjected to discrimination, harassment, bullying or abuse. If this behaviour occurs, you have every right to make an informal or formal complaint, both within your organisation or to an external agency.

In the first instance, complaints should be discussed with a Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO). They will provide information on your options and details about the complaints process. If a complaint relates to behaviour or an incident that occurred at the State/club/association level, then it should be reported to and handled at that relevant level. Click [here](#) for a handy chart to assist you in working out who to contact and how at a national, state and local level.

THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

All complaints should be dealt with promptly, seriously, sensitively and confidentially. See the complaints procedure section in the NRL Member Protection Policy for a detailed explanation of the complaints process in more detail in the [NRL Member Protection Policy](#). Details on mediation, tribunals and victimisation are also outlined in the Member Protection Policy. For further information on complaints processes click [here](#).

You can also complain to external agencies under anti-discrimination, child protection and other relevant laws. For relevant organisations in your state/territory click on the [Quick Reference Guide here](#).

DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

Individual clubs are responsible for the conduct of their players, parents, coaches, volunteers, officials and club supporters. Full details of disciplinary measures are outlined in the [NRL Member Protection Policy](#).

MEMBER SUPPORT

Member Protection Information Officers (MPIO) are an important contact point to provide impartial information about the rights, responsibilities and options available to an individual making a complaint or raising a concern. These officers ensure all required policies are in place and are promoted in your organisation. If you need to contact an MPIO you should enquire at your club, association or visit the NRL [link](#) to find their relevant details.



PROMOTION AND EDUCATION



The NRL uses its extensive reach, brand and ambassadors as vehicles for the Rugby League community to be better educated on social inclusion issues and their impact and effects on individuals, clubs, the game and the wider community.

Through this framework and a raft of programs, campaigns, events, media and social media engagement, education and training courses, tools and resources, we aim to:

- » Raise awareness of the importance of Rugby League being an inclusive environment for all people irrespective of any characteristics or background.
- » Build the capacity of the Rugby League community to recognise, address and to provide support to anyone who is affected by discrimination or vilification of any form.

We have strategically partnered with leading expert organisations in these sectors in order to deliver best practice programs that leave a tangible impact across communities. Such partners include: the Australian Human Rights Commission, White Ribbon, Reconciliation Australia and Our Watch.

Click [here](#) to see what the NRL does to foster inclusion and diversity, reduce discrimination and actively engage and contribute to challenging social issues that adversely affect our members and the wider community.

EDUCATION AND RESOURCES

There are plenty of ways to educate yourself about discrimination and vilification and they are all free and easily accessible. Access the *Play by the Rules* [online courses](#) for 'Discrimination & Harassment' and 'Child Protection', or visit the [Inclusion](#) site on NRL.com for information on the various programs and initiatives.

If you want to know more about what an inclusive, non-discriminatory club looks like and how you can make it happen, check out our practical inclusion [tools and resources](#). Also check out [Play By The Rules](#) resources and education courses to help ensure your club is safe, fair and inclusive.





CONTACTS



There are a range of organisations and agencies, such as the Australian Human Rights Commission, that can provide specialist advice, support and services to help individuals and organisations resolve a complaint or deal with issues involving discrimination, harassment or vilification. The *Play by the Rules* [reference guide](#) provides links to key sporting and recreation bodies, government agencies and non-government organisations, along with a short description of the support they can provide.

If you have any questions about this framework please contact:
feedback@nrl.com.au





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