



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Proposed Girls' Rugby Pathway Affiliation

between

FLIGHT PATH RUGBY UNION CANBERRA INCORPORATED

and

NORTHS RUGBY (ACT) / UNI-NORTHS OWLS

Committee Discussion Draft

A concise framework setting out the shared purpose, benefits and proposed operating principles of the Flight Path and Uni-Norths affiliation.

1. Purpose and status of this MOU

This Memorandum of Understanding records the shared intention of Flight Path Rugby Union Canberra Incorporated (Flight Path) and NORTH S RUGBY (ACT), operating as Uni-Norths Owls (Uni-Norths), to establish a formal affiliation focused on the development, participation, retention and progression of girls in rugby union across the ACT and surrounding region.

The parties intend to build a clear and sustainable pathway for girls aged 12 to 18, with Uni-Norths serving as the principal affiliated senior rugby pathway for Flight Path participants who wish to continue into women's rugby.

This MOU is intended to support committee consideration and agreement in principle. It establishes the broad framework for cooperation and is intended to lead into the detailed Affiliation Agreement and annual Seasonal Operating Plan. Except where the parties expressly agree otherwise in writing, it is not intended to create legally enforceable obligations.

2. Background and the opportunity

Flight Path is being established as an independent not-for-profit organisation focused on increasing participation in female junior rugby union and reducing player attrition through the teenage years. The programme is designed to create more reasons for girls to enter rugby, remain connected to the game and see a credible future in senior women's rugby.

- development programmes, camps, clinics and player development events;
- quality coaching, coach mentoring and representative preparation;
- interstate competition, tour and representative support opportunities;
- mentoring, leadership development and stronger player belonging;
- school and community engagement, including collaboration with other sporting codes where appropriate;
- team opportunities where permitted and appropriate; and
- structured, gradual connections into senior women's rugby.

Uni-Norths has established junior and senior rugby environments and is well placed to provide the club connection, facilities, senior-player exposure and senior women's pathway that can turn these development opportunities into a continuous rugby journey.

3. Why the programme is positive for Uni-Norths and Canberra rugby

The proposed affiliation is intended to create value beyond simply forming another junior programme. Its strength is that it addresses the points at which girls can otherwise become disconnected from rugby and links junior development to an established senior club environment.

POSITIVE OUTCOME	HOW THE PROGRAMME SUPPORTS IT
Player retention	A visible pathway from ages 12 to 18 into senior women's rugby gives players a reason to remain engaged through the teenage years rather than treating junior rugby as an isolated experience.
Stronger senior women's pipeline	Earlier introductions to Uni-Norths coaches, players, training and club activities can make the eventual move into senior rugby more familiar and less abrupt.
Broader participation base	Flight Path is open to girls from all Canberra clubs, schools and the wider community, increasing the potential reach of female rugby without requiring players to immediately change their existing junior club.
Quality development environment	A dedicated programme can provide additional coaching, mentoring, leadership, representative preparation and development opportunities that complement normal club rugby.

Stronger Uni-Norths community	Families, coaches, volunteers and players can become familiar with Uni-Norths earlier, strengthening long-term connection to the club and its women's programme.
Commercial opportunity	A defined girls' pathway creates a clearer proposition for grants, community partnerships, sponsorship and fundraising directed specifically towards female participation and development.
Leadership in female rugby	A structured, player-centred pathway gives Uni-Norths an opportunity to help lead the growth of girls' and women's rugby in Canberra through a model that can be measured, reviewed and improved.
Lower operational ambiguity	The independent governance model, annual Seasonal Operating Plan and clear allocation of responsibilities are intended to protect both organisations while allowing them to cooperate practically.

4. Shared objectives

Flight Path and Uni-Norths intend to work together to:

- increase participation in girls' rugby union;
- reduce attrition during the teenage years;
- provide girls with a clearer and more visible rugby pathway;
- improve access to quality coaching and player development;
- create stronger links between junior and senior women's rugby;
- support players transitioning into senior rugby;
- build confidence, leadership, belonging and long-term participation;
- improve opportunities for girls on the north side of Canberra and across the broader ACT region;
- establish sustainable programmes supported by sponsorship, fundraising and grant funding; and
- promote the long-term growth of female rugby union within the Uni-Norths community and the wider Canberra rugby environment.

5. Organisational independence and governance

Flight Path will operate as an independent incorporated not-for-profit association. The affiliation will not make Flight Path a controlled entity of Uni-Norths and will not create a partnership, joint venture, employment or agency relationship between the organisations.

- Each organisation will retain responsibility for its own governance, finances, assets, legal obligations, staff, volunteers and operations.
- Flight Path will have its own Committee, constitution, bank accounts, policies, sponsorship arrangements and programme administration.
- Neither organisation may bind the other or incur liabilities on the other's behalf without written authority.
- Uni-Norths may nominate 1 formal, non-voting liaison to relevant Flight Path Committee discussions. The liaison will not count towards quorum or carry Flight Path governance responsibility.

6. Senior rugby pathway and player choice

Uni-Norths is intended to be Flight Path's principal affiliated senior rugby pathway within the ACT. The pathway will be progressive and player-centred, establishing familiarity with senior rugby before a player reaches senior age.

- introductions to senior coaches and players;
- selected age-appropriate senior training activities;
- mentoring and development conversations;
- player transition planning and agreed handover points;
- invitations to appropriate senior club activities and events; and

- familiarisation with the senior women's rugby environment.

Player choice remains fundamental. Participation in Flight Path will not require a player to join Uni-Norths when entering senior rugby. Where another senior pathway is more appropriate for an individual player, that choice will be respected.

7. Programmes, teams, coaching and selection

Flight Path may develop and administer coaching and development programmes, camps and clinics, representative preparation and support, interstate competitions and tours, school and community engagement activities, pathway programmes, player development events and teams where appropriate and permitted under applicable competition requirements.

- Flight Path will retain responsibility for appointing and managing coaches working specifically within Flight Path programmes.
- Flight Path will retain final authority over player selection and team management for Flight Path programmes and teams.
- Uni-Norths may recommend coaches, provide coaching mentors and technical advice, assist with coach development and contribute to pathway planning.
- All coaching appointments must comply with applicable Rugby Australia, ACTSNOW Rugby, safeguarding, qualification and Working With Vulnerable People requirements.

8. Facilities and club support

Subject to availability and annual planning, Uni-Norths intends to support Flight Path through reasonable access to agreed facilities, resources and club support.

- training fields and match facilities;
- changing rooms and clubhouse facilities;
- storage and equipment;
- coaching and technical support;
- senior player involvement and pathway activities;
- club events; and
- administrative cooperation.

Specific arrangements will be recorded each year in the Seasonal Operating Plan. Unless otherwise agreed in advance, Flight Path will not incur open-ended liability for Uni-Norths facility or equipment costs.

9. Branding, sponsorship, grants and fundraising

Uni-Norths will remain the primary rugby club brand associated with Flight Path teams and the senior pathway, while Flight Path may maintain its own standalone identity for programme, fundraising, sponsorship, promotional and community engagement purposes.

- For playing and training kit connected with Uni-Norths, Uni-Norths will be the lead brand and Flight Path may appear in an approved secondary or sponsor-style position.
- Flight Path may develop and manage its own sponsorship, fundraising and grant opportunities, including applications to rugby, government, community and corporate funding sources.
- Flight Path will generally retain revenue it generates for its programmes, teams, camps and events unless another arrangement is agreed in writing.
- Where a proposed sponsor directly conflicts with a major Uni-Norths sponsor or creates a material reputational concern, the parties will consult before finalisation.
- Flight Path may sell naming rights to programmes, camps or events, provided the Uni-Norths team identity itself is not renamed without approval.

10. Equipment, assets and intellectual property

- Movable assets purchased using Flight Path funds, grants, fundraising or sponsorship will remain the property of Flight Path unless funding conditions or a written agreement provide otherwise.
- Assets already owned by Uni-Norths will remain Uni-Norths property.
- Permanent improvements to Uni-Norths facilities will be addressed separately according to the applicable funding arrangement and written agreement.
- Flight Path will own the Flight Path name, logo, programme materials and other intellectual property it develops. Uni-Norths will continue to own and control its own brand assets.

11. Player welfare, safeguarding, privacy and medical responsibilities

Player welfare and safeguarding will be fundamental to the affiliation. Both parties will comply with applicable Rugby Australia, ACTS NSW Rugby, Working With Vulnerable People, member-protection, child-safety, concussion, return-to-play and other relevant requirements.

- Flight Path will maintain its own safeguarding, welfare, complaints, travel, photography, conduct and related operational policies.
- Where activities involve shared facilities, personnel or responsibilities, the lead safeguarding, first aid, emergency and incident-reporting responsibilities will be identified in the Seasonal Operating Plan.
- Flight Path will control its own membership and player records. Information will only be shared with Uni-Norths where reasonably necessary for lawful pathway, registration, safeguarding, welfare, transition or agreed programme purposes.
- Particular care will be taken with information, images and stories involving minors, including appropriate parent or guardian consent where required.
- Each organisation will maintain insurance appropriate to its own operations and liabilities. Neither organisation's insurance will automatically be assumed to cover the other.

12. Annual Seasonal Operating Plan

Before each rugby season, the parties intend to approve a Seasonal Operating Plan that converts the affiliation principles into practical arrangements for that season.

OPERATING AREA	EXAMPLES OF MATTERS TO BE AGREED
Teams and competitions	Age grades, entries, registration entity, coaches, team managers and administration
Facilities	Training times, match arrangements, changing rooms, clubhouse, storage, equipment and access
Medical and safeguarding	First aid, emergency procedures, welfare contacts, incident reporting and concussion processes
Player transition	Senior coach introductions, training opportunities, mentoring, events and handover points
Kit and sponsors	Apparel supplier, design approval, Flight Path placement, sponsors and merchandise
Events and communication	Joint events, launches, community engagement, media activity and key communications
Costs and contacts	Any agreed contributions, payment responsibilities and nominated representatives

13. Review, measurement and relationship management

The proposed initial affiliation period is 3 years, with a formal review after the first 12 months and annually thereafter. The intention is to measure whether the pathway is delivering practical value, not simply whether activities have occurred.

- player numbers and participation growth;
- year-to-year retention and known reasons for disengagement;
- transition into senior rugby;
- quality and availability of coaching;
- facilities and operational support;
- safeguarding and welfare systems;
- sponsorship, fundraising and financial sustainability;
- communications and community engagement; and
- whether the affiliation continues to meet the objectives of both organisations.

14. Ending the affiliation and dispute resolution

The detailed Affiliation Agreement is intended to provide that either organisation may end the formal affiliation by giving one full season's written notice, with earlier termination available for serious breaches involving safeguarding, unlawful conduct, serious financial or governance failure, or material reputational harm.

- Where reasonably possible, an ordinary end to the affiliation should not disrupt players during an active season.
- Player welfare and continuity will remain the priority if the affiliation ends.
- Disputes should first be addressed through direct discussion between the Flight Path Chair and the nominated senior Uni-Norths representative, then independent mediation, with formal legal proceedings used only where necessary.
- Nothing will prevent urgent safeguarding, legal or protective action where delay could cause harm.

15. Proposed next steps

Following endorsement of this MOU in principle, the parties intend to:

1. confirm their nominated representatives;
2. finalise the governance and affiliation structure;
3. finalise the detailed Affiliation Agreement;
4. develop the first Seasonal Operating Plan;
5. agree branding and pathway arrangements;
6. identify the initial programmes and participation opportunities;
7. confirm safeguarding, insurance and operational responsibilities; and
8. develop a joint implementation timeline.

16. Committee decision sought

The Uni-Norths Committee is invited to consider whether it supports the proposed Flight Path affiliation framework in principle and authorises representatives of NORTHS RUGBY (ACT) to continue working with Flight Path to finalise the detailed Affiliation Agreement and first Seasonal Operating Plan.

PROPOSED COMMITTEE POSITION	SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE / SUPPORT SUBJECT TO AMENDMENTS / DO NOT SUPPORT
Requested amendments or conditions	
Nominated Uni-Norths representative	
Committee meeting date	
Minute / resolution reference	

17. Acknowledgement of proposed direction

The signatures below, if used at this stage, acknowledge the parties' intention to continue developing the proposed affiliation. They do not replace formal approval and execution of the detailed Affiliation Agreement.

FOR FLIGHT PATH RUGBY UNION CANBERRA INCORPORATED		FOR NORTHS RUGBY (ACT)	
Name:		Name:	
Position:		Position:	
Signature:		Signature:	
Date:		Date:	

Prepared from the Flight Path Affiliation Agreement Draft 19/09/2026.