

**Australian Rugby Union
Rugby CONNECT - Disability Action Plan
Green to Bronze Level 2008 - 2010**

Rugby CONNECT aims to make Rugby accessible to all Australians.

Australian Rugby Union (ARU) is committed to promoting the greater inclusion of those groups currently under represented in the game of Rugby Union. One of the objectives of Rugby CONNECT is to encourage participation and engagement from those who may not have considered Rugby as their sport of choice.

Through our Rugby CONNECT program, Australian Rugby Union is determined to ensure that all people, regardless of disability, gender or ethnic background are given the opportunity to participate to their full potential. Rugby CONNECT will encourage involvement on and off the field; from playing, coaching, officiating and volunteering in Rugby.

Rugby CONNECT - Disability is aimed at making **Rugby More Inclusive of People with Disabilities**. The ARU is committed to promoting awareness and education, development and competition pathways that promote inclusion of people with a disability in Rugby through our **Rugby CONNECT "Disability Action Plan" (DAP)**.

Australian Rugby Union would like to recognise the contribution of **Matt Laffan** who passed away on 1st March 2009. Matt was a tireless campaigner for all people with disabilities, as well as passionate about Rugby, and we acknowledge his commitment to both as a member of the Rugby CONNECT Steering Committee.

Matt will be sadly missed but his personal contribution to Rugby and disability inclusion will not be forgotten.

We look forward to the support of the Rugby and broader community in making our great game more inclusive!



John O'Neill AO
Managing Director & CEO
Australian Rugby Union

15 March 2009



1. Organisational Commitment, Education and Advocacy

	Initiative/Action	Timeline	Responsibility & Partnerships	Achievement Yes/No/Progress	Comments
1.1 Organisational Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Disability Action Plan (DAP) for Rugby outlining a vision for making Rugby more inclusive of people with disabilities. 	Dec 08	RC Steering Committee	Yes	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an inclusion statement for Rugby CONNECT DAP that encourages participation and engagement in Rugby and promotes Rugby as a game for all abilities. 	Dec 08	GM, Community Rugby & ARU Management	Yes	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Register Rugby's Disability Action Plan (DAP) with the Australian Human Rights Commission. 	March 09	RC Project Coordinators		
1.2 Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop education and awareness resources/tools for Rugby CONNECT promoting inclusion in Rugby. 	Jan to Dec 09	RC Project Coordinators	WIP	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot a disability awareness session for Steering Committee and ARU Community Rugby staff. 	Sep 08	RC Project Coordinators	Yes	Delivery by State S&R
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver disability awareness sessions to ARU management and staff, and boards and staff of Member Unions. 	Dec 08 to Dec 09	RC Project Coordinators		Delivery by State S&R
1.3 Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint Ambassador(s) to advocate Rugby Connect and promote opportunities for inclusion in Rugby to the Rugby Community and the wider community. 	Jan -Jun 09	RC Project Coordinators	WIP	Eg National Ambassador
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage high profile teams, players and management in supporting disability groups and promoting awareness of the Rugby CONNECT values. 	Ongoing	Wallabies Team Management / EdRugby	WIP	eg Wallabies support of wheelchair rugby team
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate an ongoing flow of relevant media stories throughout the rugby network. 	Ongoing	ARU Media		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve relationships with nationally recognised disability groups aligned with Rugby (ie Paralympics Committee) and other disability organisations. 	Ongoing	RC Project Coordinators		

2. Development – Clubs, Coaching, Officiating and Schools

	Initiative/Action	Timeline	Responsibility & Partnerships	Achievement Yes/No/Progress	Comments
2.1 Clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase awareness of Rugby CONNECT through the rugby community through website, e-mail, and promotion. 	On-Going	Admin Education Manager	WIP	Eg posters,
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide content and resources of inclusive club practices including tips, tools, workshops/training etc. 	Jan-Jul 09	Admin Education Manager		
2.2 Coaching & Officiating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce awareness of Rugby CONNECT through Smart Rugby/Junior Coaching resources. 	On-Going	ARU Coach Education	WIP	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide access to information for coaches/officials on considerations for inclusive practices. 	Mar 09	RC Project Coordinators	WIP	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for the sampling of disability education modules by State Coaching/Officials and Development Officers. 	Mar-Sep 09	RC Project Coordinators		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the inclusion of elements of disability education modules in Coach/Official content, resources, training and delivery. 	Sep-Nov 09	ARU Coach Education		
2.3 Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research the current Rugby Union activity of 'Special Schools' through EdRugby – the ARU's National Education Program. 	Nov 2008	EdRugby	WIP	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information to Development Officers to encourage 'special schools' to participate in EdRugby 	On-Going	EdRugby		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the EdRugby Walla Challenge (an education model that involves students organisation and participation) as the delivery program of choice for schools. 	On-Going	EdRugby		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide resources through EdRugby to encourage and challenge teachers to be inclusive of students with a disability. 	On-Going	EdRugby		

3. Competition and Classification

	Initiative/Action	Timeline	Responsibility & Partnerships	Achievement Yes/No/Progress	Comments
3.1 Competition *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review relevant IRB Laws & Regulations, and provide submissions to IRB for amendments which may encourage greater "inclusion" in Rugby. Review relevant national policies and make recommendations (where possible) to amend policy to encourage greater "inclusion" in Rugby. Promote awareness of policy changes to stakeholders. Provide education and awareness to clubs, match officials, competition managers and state unions of the opportunities that exist to provide greater inclusion of members and athletes with a disability within competitions. Ensure coaches and team managers have an awareness and understanding of strategies for the inclusion of athletes with disabilities in their teams. Promote opportunities for players, supporters and volunteers to be more inclusive of athletes with disabilities and their supporters (ie parents, carers, grandparents, etc) within their club. 	<p>June 09</p> <p>Mar-Jun 09 (implement 2010)</p> <p>On-Going</p> <p>On-Going</p> <p>On-Going</p>	<p>General Manager ARU Community Rugby</p> <p>Admin Education Manager</p> <p>Admin Education Manager</p> <p>Admin Education Manager, ARU Coach Education</p> <p>Admin Education Manager</p>		<p>* Rugby operates within International Rugby Board (IRB) Laws of the Game and Regulations, and at times these may provide some restrictions to encouraging greater inclusion of participants with a disability in competitions.</p>
3.2 Classification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge existing disability groups aligned with Rugby. (i.e. Wheelchair Rugby, Deaf Rugby, etc) 	On-Going	RC Project Coordinators		

Support Platform

	Initiative/Action	Timeline	Responsibility & Partnerships	Achievement Yes/No/In Progress	Comments
Project Coordination	Establish Project Coordinators, Steering Committee and Case Manager	Sep 07	ARU, ASC, Steering Committee members	Yes	
Relationships & Links	Build relationships with targeted industry bodies	Ongoing	Project Coordinators, Steering Committee, State Unions	In Progress	
Funding and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASC investment • ARU budget • Case Manager 	2007-2011	Project Coordinators, ASC	In Progress	
Communication and Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish section on ARU website • Include in newsletters • National Audit 	Jan 08 Ongoing March 2008	Project Coordinators, State Unions	Yes In Progress Yes	
Marketing and Promotion	Develop a marketing strategy to promote Rugby CONNECT	Dec 08	Project Coordinators, ARU Marketing/ Media Manager	Yes	

Rugby CONNECT Steering Committee – special thanks to:

Simon Darcy
 Matt Laffan *
 Sean Barrett
 Karen Greedy
 Catherine Barnetson
 Brendan Lynch
 Tessa Pentony
 Greg Denny

* Deceased

