

Our Business

The Wests Tigers Rugby League Club competes in the National Rugby League (NRL) competition. The club was formed in 2000 following the merger of two foundation clubs, the Western Suburbs Magpies and the Balmain Tigers. In 2005, the Wests Tigers claimed their first premiership, following a combined 15 premierships won by Balmain and Wests during their time in the competition. Whilst rugby league remains the core business and purpose of the Wests Tigers, there is a significant importance placed on community by the club who recognises the power of connecting with those that they come into contact with.

The vision statement of the Wests Tigers is Enriching the Lives of our Community and the club has developed a comprehensive community program which involves programs focusing on six key pillars:

- Education
- Multicultural
- Grass Roots
- Healthy Living
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- Women

A number of programs in the community strategy involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples within the Wests Tigers catchment regions but the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pillar includes programs specifically designed for the First Peoples of Australia. One such program in this pillar is the School 2 Work Program that the club supports significantly. We provide work experience, opportunities and celebrate the individual success of the participants to help the program maintain the 97% success rate of students graduating high school to further study or employment. The connection we have with this program is a powerful one which enables students to achieve their goals at school and beyond.

The School To Work Program (S2W) is an education and employment program that utilises the positive profile of the game of Rugby League to support and encourage young Indigenous Australians to stay at school, get a job, and be a legend for themselves, their families and their communities.

A combined initiative of the Canberra Raiders, Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs, Cronulla Sharks, Melbourne Storm, Newcastle Knights, Parramatta Eels, Penrith Panthers, St George Illawarra Dragons, Sydney Roosters, Wests Tigers, the Australian Government's Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and the National Rugby League; S2W provides young Indigenous Australians with work experience, mentoring and leadership opportunities to ensure they successfully complete school and transition into further study, training or meaningful employment.

The NRL and NRL Clubs joined forces to deliver the S2W Program to address the Australian Government's key 'Closing the Gap' targets for Indigenous students. They are:

- to halve the gap for Indigenous students in year 12 equivalent attainment by 2020; and
- to halve the gap in employment outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians within a decade.

Supported by community leaders, the Rugby League family and everyday 'local legends' who young Indigenous Australians respect and aspire to be like, the S2W program advocates the importance of education, training and employment for success.

Selected year 10, 11 and 12 students from participating schools conduct a one-on-one profiling session with their Project Officer to build Career Development Plans focussed on career aspirations and personal goals.

The other key element to this pillar is the Wests Tigers Tackle Truancy program which is being developed to help encourage students to stay in school and reduce truancy rates in the rural region of Walgett, which has a very high population of First Peoples of Australia. This program includes education around key areas such as nutrition and health, cultural activities and also provides students with incentives and opportunities that they would not otherwise have access to. It is important that this is a whole of community initiative for the town so other key stakeholders include the Aboriginal Medical Services.

Furthermore, combining the community program with big events is something that the club takes great pride in. This is particularly relevant to Indigenous Round where the Wests Tigers showcase the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to not only the game of rugby league but to Australian culture and society as a whole.

The club uses this day to display the cultures, tradition and history of the First Peoples Of Australia and involves as many different community groups as possible. Another important element of this day is to have a combination of Elders and young leaders who combine to create a big celebration and recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. The club plans to further expand this and be the benchmark of the NRL for this.

Another important element in this community strategy is the partnerships and connections with a number of charity organisations including beyondblue, White Ribbon, PCYC, Soldier On and Exodus. The Wests Tigers are, and will continue to, work with these charities on programs specific to First Peoples of Australia to make a positive impact.

In addition to the club's Vision Statement, the club has set out three key values, which will continue to be driven through all elements of the business including this RAP. The three values of Respect, Team and Excellence are values that are instilled in all staff and often recognised when they are displayed or conversely, when they are lacking. Currently, the Wests Tigers employs 141 staff, inclusive of commercial staff, coaching staff and players from the three grades being NRL, NSW Cup and National Youth Competitions. Over three percent of this staff (4) are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander players.

Throughout the the history of this club, there have been over 25 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples represent the Wests Tigers, which shows a history and connection with First Australian players, some of which we will ask to be part of the RAP Advisory Group.

The Wests Tigers have a very wide geographical reach including the Southern Highlands of New South Wales which form part of the Group 6 Competition, the Campbelltown region, Liverpool as well as the Concord, Balmain and Leichhardt areas. In addition to this, the club also in 2015 and 2016 performed Community Carnivals in the Coffs Harbour region and is exploring other areas in regional Australia as well as internationally, with the goal of becoming a borderless club.