



## GREEN PAPER

### Queensland Junior Rugby Union Representative Pathway 2013 and beyond

#### PREAMBLE

The purpose of this Green Paper is to ask the BIG QUESTIONS around the Junior Representative Rugby pathway in Queensland and to outline at least some of the alternative models to be considered by all stakeholders.

***At this time in the consultative process all possibilities can be on the table  
and alternative models are encouraged from all stakeholders.***

The junior representative pathway should be viewed through the lense of the  
QJRU's Mission Statement of 'Lifetime Participation in Rugby' and  
**AFFORDABILITY, APPROPRIATENESS & INTEGRITY OF PROCESS**  
as key evaluation criteria.

In other words is every junior rugby player in Queensland getting an experience that their family can afford; at a level that inspires and encourages them to improve and is the process both transparent and fair?

Can club and regional coaches and their parents look a child in the eye and tell them that if they are not selected to the next representative level they weren't good enough this year?

Representative Rugby competes for resources with other functions of junior rugby. With every level of representative rugby we compete for the limited resources of sponsorship and family dollars, volunteer time and junior participant time. If creating representative rugby starves local competitions of funds, the discretionary time of key local volunteers and creates burn out so the boys prematurely 'retire' then we have failed our Mission Statement of Lifelong Participation.

I believe it is also important to understand the concepts of de-selection and spreading experiences.

De-selection is a concept based on 'that every time we select a representative team the boys that miss out feel like giving the game away'. There are certainly ways to mitigate this risk and they involve communicating with those that miss out and focusing them on what they need to do to make it next time.

*If we don't resource this communication process then maybe we should not be selecting rep teams.*

Spreading experiences is a concept based on not giving a child everything too early. If a child gets to experience the whole junior rep pathway early then they can tick all their boxes and move to some alternative experience. It has been my experience that parents of 12 year olds want their children to be Reds and Wallabies way to early.

I believe that the representative pathway should be extended slowly over a number of years. Each year the child and their parents should be on the verge of frustration and not exhaustion.

We need to give junior rugby families a new experience to come back for next year.

# KEY QUESTIONS WE NEED TO COLLECTIVELY ANSWER

How do we put processes in place to guarantee integrity around selection? For the last few years I have been working to make sure selection at City, Country and State Junior level have integrity and have become frustrated to hear a number of stories from around the state where some junior players of considerable ability have not been able to make it to first base due to local barriers like being in the wrong local club.

*How can we entrench integrity in our selection process from start to finish?*

What is the role of the QJRU? Is its primary role to co-ordinate State Championships and the representative teams that flow out of those championships?

If so what resources does it need to fulfil these functions and where would they come from?

Is it necessary to hold all age group (U13-17) State Championships at the one venue and at the same time of the year?

Would it make more sense for the U13 and U14 Championships to be held in one school holiday e.g. September and the U15, U16 and U17 Championships to be held in another e.g. July?

This change would potentially reduce the risk for host venues, double the number of host venues and allow more flexibility to accommodate school rugby seasons and school based tours.

Should we be inviting more interstate and international teams to participate in our State Championships? The potential benefits are a broader experience for our boys and greater financial sustainability for our events. I believe we have all enjoyed having PNG, NT and Victoria at our State Championships. Should our State Championships be opened up to even more participants?

We could have a 'State Champion' and a 'Winner' of the event.

The key question is do our stakeholders enjoy playing a wide range of new participants?

Should the U12 and U19 age groups be included in the Junior Rugby Representative Pathway and what would this mean? The QJRU and AJRU have U19 level included in our constitutions so should we be including an U19 representative pathway in our planning?

Is the BJRU the best provider of the junior representative rugby participation in Brisbane or are there other models that broaden participation e.g. the premier clubs and regional council areas becoming representative regions 'sub-unions' with teams from Sunnybank, Brothers, Easts, GPS, University, Wests, Norths, Logan, Redlands, Ipswich and Moreton attending the State Championships?

Is selecting teams like CITY (Brisbane) and COUNTRY U15 and U17 an important step in the junior rep pathway to allow more players, coaches and managers a pathway to the Queensland Junior and higher representative teams?

It is not the role of Junior Rugby Union bodies to focus on talent identification for professional rugby (Super 15 franchises). It is however our collective role to find and select the junior club rugby player who is performing the best in the position today irrespective of future potential. The junior representative pathway planning can provide opportunity for elite talent identification to take place.

There appears a need to co-ordinate representative junior rugby in consultation with the various talent identification processes at state and national level to maximize opportunity for junior club rugby players.

Is it important that at U15, U17 and possibly at U19 level we give our best junior club rugby participants the opportunity to play in interstate and perhaps in national and international competitions?

The Queensland and Australian Schoolboys process is important and valuable to Australian Rugby development but could and should we extend representative pathway opportunities to junior rugby pathways outside what is a relatively narrow opportunity provided by the schools system?

Should State Championship events, particularly in NSW and QLD be better co-ordinated so that interstate and international teams can attend both as part of a tour e.g. where a Pacific Island team can play in a Queensland and NSW State Championship as well as attend a National Age Championship?

## **CONCLUSION**

I am convinced that we all want boys from our club, region and state to progress to becoming a Red and Wallaby and at the same time none of us want to see a player become a teenage retiree.

**The opportunities we design for our junior rugby players need to be**

**AFFORDABLE, APPROPRIATE & CREDIBLE**

The QJRU invites and welcomes positive input from all stakeholders to create the best junior representative pathway we can for all involved. Your full participation is encouraged.

Don Parry  
President

