



New South Wales Rugby Referees Association Inc.

Established 1892
C/- NSW Rugby Locked Bag 1222 Paddington NSW 2021

Strategic Plan 2026 – 2028

Clarity, fairness, and collaboration in support of match officials and the game

Purpose

The New South Wales Rugby Referees Association (NSWRRRA) is a Sydney metropolitan, senior referees' association. NSWRRRA is committed to creating a positive, inclusive, and rewarding environment for match officials. NSWRRRA will support their development, education, and progression through clear and accessible pathways, regardless of experience or aspiration.

NSWRRRA exists to support its members and, through them, contribute positively to the broader Rugby ecosystem by working in partnership with New South Wales Rugby, Rugby Australia, competitions, and fellow referee associations.

As the largest senior referees' association in New South Wales, NSWRRRA recognises its responsibility to lead through experience, capability, and collaboration, doing so in a way that is supportive, respectful, and mindful of the roles and responsibilities of others within the game.

In balancing the needs of its members with the needs of the game, NSWRRRA does not seek to govern or control. Instead, it acts as a constructive partner—advocating for its officials while contributing to shared initiatives that strengthen officiating capability, improve match official experience, and support participation outcomes across Rugby.

Through this strategy, NSWRRRA sets out a clear, practical approach to developing match officials and match official developers, simplifying processes, strengthening collaboration, and improving the experience and retention of officials. NSWRRRA will provide transparent pathways, roles, and expectations so members understand how the system works, where they fit, and how they can progress within a fair and consistent environment. NSWRRRA will play its part, in partnership with others, to support the broader Rugby ecosystem in New South Wales and Australian Rugby.

Guiding Principles

Develop (Right Support):

Support the development of match officials and match official developers through structured pathways, aligned frameworks, and access to education and learning appropriate to experience, aspiration, and role.



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Engage (Right Environment):

Build a positive, professional, and connected environment by promoting clear and constructive communication across our membership, supporting engagement between individuals, squads, and roles within NSWRRRA, while maintaining open and respectful communication with key stakeholders across the Rugby ecosystem.

Support (Right Support):

Provide the right support, at the right time, through clear roles, accessible resources, and consistent processes that enable officials and developers to perform confidently and sustainably.

Recognise (Right Environment):

Recognise contribution across officiating and development roles through clear, consistent, and appropriate channels, acknowledging that contribution may look different across performance, community, squad, tournament, and match-day development contexts.

Protect (Right Environment):

Promote welfare, dignity, and respect by ensuring members know how and where to access support, and by maintaining environments that are safe, inclusive, and aligned with Rugby values.

Measure (Right Information):

Use appropriate data and feedback to inform decisions, track progress, and continuously improve the experience, capability, and retention of match officials and match official developers.



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Our Role in the Rugby System

NSWRRA is a senior referees association operating within the Sydney metropolitan basin. It is one part of a broader Rugby system and works collaboratively with New South Wales Rugby, Rugby Australia, competitions, junior associations, and other referee bodies.

NSWRRA:

- Supports match officials and match official developers focused on adult rugby, while maintaining collaborative links with junior associations where appropriate; and
- Contributes experience, capability, and delivery capacity where appropriate

Clear boundaries, mutual respect, and shared accountability underpin these relationships.

Match Official (MO) Development – Right Support

NSWRRA supports the development of match officials through:

- Clear induction and transition pathways into senior rugby;
- Structured education aligned with Rugby Australia frameworks;
- Ongoing feedback, coaching, and assessment; and
- Progressive match exposure aligned to capability, readiness, and safety

Development pathways recognise that officials have different motivations and aspirations, ranging from community participation through to performance environments. Success is defined by confidence, competence, enjoyment, and retention—not solely advancement.

Match Official Developer (MOD) Development – Right Support

Match Official Developers are critical to system sustainability, capability, and consistency.

NSWRRA supports MOD development through:

- Identification and preparation of potential developers;
- Education in observation, coaching, and feedback delivery;
- Clear role definition and expectations;
- Alignment with Rugby Australia developer frameworks; and
- Opportunities across community rugby, squads, tournaments, and representative environments.

MO and MOD pathways are distinct but connected, recognising different skill sets, responsibilities, and contributions.



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Match Official Development Officer (MODO)

The Match Official Development Officer (MODO) supports the delivery of NSWRRRA's development objectives by:

- Coordinating MO and MOD development activity;
- Supporting squads and squad conveners;
- Aligning development plans to agreed frameworks and priorities;
- Working collaboratively with New South Wales Rugby Union and Rugby Australia;
- Supporting consistency and quality across development environments;
- In conjunction with the DAC, establishing a depth chart that identifies MO capabilities and areas of individual improvements; and
- Works in conjunction with the NSW Country RRA to promote their identified talented MO's and MOD's.

The MODO operates in alignment with the Development Advisory Committee (DAC) and the NSWRRRA Executive.

Development & Appointments Committee (DAC)

The Development Advisory Committee provides independent oversight of:

- Appointments frameworks;
- Grading systems;
- Development pathways;
- Interchanges and exchanges; and
- Alignment with agreed policies and frameworks.

DAC operates transparently and independently, with accountability to the NSWRRRA Executive for delivering outcomes aligned to this strategy. DAC does not manage individual disciplinary matters or operate as a governing authority.

Appointments, Exchanges, and Interchanges – Right Support

Appointments, exchanges, and interchanges are guided by:

- Capability and readiness;
- Development benefit;
- Fairness and transparency;
- Alignment with agreed pathways and frameworks; and
- Assisting members seeking opportunities in other regions by facilitating appropriate introductions with relevant referee associations.

Domestic and international exchanges are used to support development, experience, engagement, and retention, ensuring the right people are placed in appropriate environments at the right time.



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Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagement – Right Environment

NSWRRA works collaboratively with stakeholders to support shared outcomes:

Rugby Australia and New South Wales Rugby Union

Alignment of development frameworks, education, grading benchmarks, and recruitment and retention priorities in support of broader competition and participation plans.

Competitions within New South Wales Rugby Union

Strong, respectful operational relationships to align officiating capability with competition needs and support consistent, high-quality match experiences.

Representative Competitions, Championships, and Tournaments

Opportunities for match officials and developers to gain experience, exposure, and development in representative and tournament environments.

Metropolitan Junior Associations

Support transition pathways for officials who wish to move from junior into senior refereeing, recognising individual choice and aspiration, and working collaboratively across the system.

Annual Calendar

Coordination of key competitions, championships, and tournaments to support effective planning, development opportunities, and workload management.

Volunteer Experience, Inclusion, and Retention – Right Environment

NSWRRA recognises that a positive experience is central to retention and capability.

Recognition

Recognise contribution across officiating and development roles through clear, consistent, and appropriate channels.

Connection

Build a positive, professional, and connected environment by supporting meaningful connection across the membership, including between individuals, squads, and roles, and ensuring new members are welcomed and integrated from the outset.

Welfare

Make clear how and where members can access support, and promote a culture of care, dignity, and respect.

Measurement and Review – Right Information

Success will be measured through:

- Retention and availability of match officials and developers;



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- Participation across competitions, squads, and development environments;
- Capability progression aligned with agreed frameworks;
- Member feedback and experience indicators;
- Alignment with agreed stakeholder outcomes; and
- MO's transitioning into the role of MOD's.

Data will be used to inform decisions, support transparency, and enable continuous improvement.

Implementation

This Strategic Plan sets direction and intent.

Operational plans, policies, calendars, and delivery mechanisms will sit beneath this document and must align with its purpose, principles, and frameworks. The Executive, DAC, and relevant roles are responsible for implementation and review.

Closing Statement

NSWRRA's success will be measured not by control or scale, but by clarity, fairness, and contribution. NSWRRA will support its members to thrive while playing its part in a strong, connected, and sustainable Rugby ecosystem.

Through this strategy, NSWRRA sets out a clear, practical approach to developing match officials and match official developers, simplifying processes, strengthening collaboration, and improving the experience and retention of officials. NSWRRA will provide transparent pathways, roles, and expectations so members understand how the system works, where they fit, and how they can progress within a fair and consistent environment. NSWRRA will play its part, in partnership with others, to support the broader Rugby ecosystem in New South Wales and Australian Rugby.