



9 February 2025

Patrick Nash
NSW Major Projects
Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure
Locked Bag 5022
Parramatta NSW 2124

Ref: 2026/005

Application Number: SSD-85149458

Re: Leichhardt Oval Refurbishment

Dear Patrick,

NSW Rugby League (NSWRL) writes to confirm its full support of the Leichhardt Oval Refurbishment that is currently on public exhibition.

Leichhardt Oval's Masterplan is critical to safeguarding the venue's long-term viability as both a high-performance rugby league facility and a deeply valued community asset. As one of Australia's most historically significant rugby league grounds hosting professional matches since 1934 its preservation and enhancement are essential to maintaining the cultural fabric of the Inner West and supporting elite and community rugby league. The Masterplan's goal of ensuring the oval's future relevance as a premier venue for elite-level events, training, semi-professional and community use provides a strategic framework that not only protects this heritage but also positions the precinct to meet the evolving requirements of modern sport and major event standards.

The planned upgrades including upgrading the existing grandstand, the development of a new northern grandstand, accessibility features, gender neutral changerooms, and enhanced amenities represents an intentional blend of heritage conservation and future-focused investment, ensuring Leichhardt Oval can continue to serve NRL fixtures, elite NSWRL pathway programs, and grassroots participation. The Masterplan's integrated approach strengthens the venue's role as a central gathering place, supporting local identity while enabling the precinct to accommodate increased demand for high-quality sporting infrastructure.

As a prominent user of the venue NSWRL will benefit significantly from the proposed upgrades. The venue hosts male and female Rugby League games across all age groups, as well as representative games and major competitions, making it a central hub for Rugby League.

NSW Rugby League Limited

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The urgency of upgrading Leichhardt Oval is emphasised by the rapid rise in female rugby league participation across NSW, which is placing significant pressure on existing suburban infrastructure. In 2025, over 33,000 women and girls are actively involved in the game, marking a phenomenal 41% increase over the past four years. A record that reflects both surging grassroots engagement and the growing prominence of the state's female representative programs.

As this participation base expands, so too does the need for accessible, safe and fit-for-purpose facilities, including female-friendly changerooms, upgraded medical and preparation areas, and modern lighting and field standards that support training and competition. Leichhardt Oval, as the Inner West's premier rugby league venue, must evolve to accommodate this demand. Investing in its upgrade ensures the precinct can continue to support the full female development pathway from juniors to elite while meeting NSW's strategic priorities for gender equity and participation growth in community sport.

NSWRL strongly supports the Leichhardt Oval Refurbishment. The redevelopment of Leichhardt Oval will allow players of all abilities, coaches, referees, and volunteers to enjoy their rugby league experience whilst at the venue. We know this project will make a significant and long-lasting contribution to rugby league and the local community.

Yours Sincerely,

Daniel Ristic
Government Relations and Infrastructure Manager
NSW Rugby League