

To the Committee

## **Submission to Inquiry into the advertising and promotion of gambling in sport**

My comments are specific to the promotion of gambling in the coverage of NRL games.

Like many other team sports, Rugby League is nurtured in young children with the strong support and involvement of the family. As such, it is a reflection of many of the values that our society holds dear - exercise, teamwork, the will to succeed, fairness, amateur status and a strong work ethos. Over generations, it has become more than just a game; it is a part of our culture and family life.

**Firstly**, I would like to express my view that the promotion of gambling in NRL is inconsistent with the culture of rugby league in the community, as:

- it introduces the concept of winning money from a game that is first played by children and supported by their families. Playing to win money is not one of the core values that we want to instill in our children
- the high frequency and timing of gambling advertising (ie often 'first up') is disproportional to the role of gambling in the game. This also creates the false impression that gambling is fundamental and overly important to the game
- children are watching more and varied form of media and the League must tailor its media promotion accordingly. The NRL cannot simply transfer all responsibility for the evolution of values to parents and teachers.

**Secondly**, I consider that the NRL does not own the game of rugby league at the national level; it is only the *custodian* of the game. The game belongs to the players, both children and adults, their families, friends and other supports, whether present, past and future. As the trusted custodian, the NRL should not treat the game as just a business. It should protect the long-standing integrity and values that are fundamental to the game. Clearly it is not doing so; its thirst for income is in disregard of the values from which the game is grown. This shortfall may also be reflected in areas such as scheduling games on Easter Friday, and privacy considerations such as giving tv access to change rooms.

The promotion of gambling is damaging the game. Any return from this promotion is secondary to the need to protect the values of the game across the community.

Like many others, I am winding down my viewing of the game and will ensure that my children do the same. What a shame. Hopefully your Committee can reverse this outcome by better keeping sport and business in balance.

Yours in sport

Christopher Dodd