2006 MILESTONES

The year that was...

FEBRUARY 2
John Connolly is appointed National Coach.

FEBRUARY 9
The ARU announces a six-year deal with Telstra Stadium to play a minimum two Tests every year at the venue including at least three Bledisloe Cup matches.

FEBRUARY 10
The inaugural Tooheys New Super 14 kicks off with local derbies in Australia between the Western Force and Brumbies, and NSW Waratahs and Queensland Reds.

MARCH 16 & 17
Sevens Rugby takes centre stage at the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games, where a world-record Sevens crowd of 51,389 watches the final session at Telstra Dome.

APRIL 21
Australia defeats New Zealand 17-13 to win the Final of the iRB U19 World Championship in Dubai.

APRIL 27
The Australian Rugby Union announces a record trading surplus of $9.5 million for 2005, a record level of grants to its Member Unions ($9 million) and its highest ever participation figure (176,000).

MAY 29
The Qantas Wallabies launch the 2006 Bundaberg Rum Rugby Series in Sydney and then join supporters for their annual Fan Day.

JUNE 17
George Gregan becomes the most capped Test player in Rugby's history (120) when he comes off the bench against England in Melbourne.

JUNE 25
New Zealand defeats Australia 39-36 in a thrilling 3rd/4th Playoff at the iRB U21 World Championship in France.

JULY 6
The Wallabies are named in the Top 10 Australian Trade Marks by IP Australia.

JULY 12
South Australia wins the right to host a leg of the iRB Sevens World Series from 2007-2011.

JULY 17
The Suncorp 2006 Bledisloe Cup Roadshow kicks off in Bundaberg, Queensland before taking the iconic Bledisloe Cup to nearly 5,000 children in more than 20 schools and rugby clubs in South East Queensland over 10 days.

JULY 26
The Bledisloe Cup clash at Suncorp Stadium sets a new crowd record of 52,498.

JULY 27
The ARU formally recognises 21 Australian Test referees at a capping ceremony in Brisbane and a further 17 referees in Sydney the next day.

AUGUST 5
George Gregan becomes Australia's leading Test captain (56 Tests) in the match against South Africa in Sydney.

AUGUST 8
Referee Scott Young announces his retirement after 26 Tests and 49 Super 12/14 Rugby matches.

AUGUST 31
Australia's Women's Rugby team – the Wallaroos – open their iRB Women's Rugby World Cup campaign with a record 68-12 defeat of South Africa. The Wallaroos finish the tournament in a credible seventh place.

SEPTEMBER 6
A new eight-team National Competition is approved to begin in 2007 with teams based in Victoria, ACT, New South Wales (2), Perth and Queensland (2).

SEPTEMBER 12
Chris Latham becomes the first back to win the John Eales Medal. At the same gala event Australian Rugby inducts three new legends into the Wallaby Hall of Fame – Cyril Towers, Sir Nicolas Shehadie AC OBE and John Hipwell OAM.

SEPTEMBER 12
Sarah Corrigan becomes the first female to referee a Women's Rugby World Cup Semi Final when she officiates the Canada v England match.

SEPTEMBER 22
EdRugby, the ARU's award-winning national education program for schools registers its 1,900th school.

OCTOBER 9
The ARU moves to new purpose-built premises in St Leonards, Sydney.

OCTOBER 25
Investec Bank signs on as new naming rights sponsor of Super 14 in Australia.

NOVEMBER 4
The Prime Minister's XV plays Japan in Tokyo to mark the Australia-Japan Year of Exchange. Australia wins the match 61-19.

NOVEMBER 26
Australian scrumhalf Josh Holmes is named iRB U19 Player of the Year at a gala ceremony in Glasgow. ARU Referees Manager and former Test referee Peter Marshall claims the Referee Award for Distinguished Service at the same function.

DECEMBER 8
The ARU announces a 9.5% nationwide increase in Rugby participation. 193,000 people now play Rugby in Australia.