



# Rugby Services

## AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER'S XV v JAPAN

The Prime Minister of Australia, the Hon John Howard MP, and the Australian Rugby Union joined forces during the year to select a Prime Minister's XV to play Japan.

The match, played at Tokyo's Prince Chichibunomiya Memorial Rugby Ground on November 4, was scheduled as part of the 2006 Australia-Japan Year of Exchange and also helped mark the Japan Rugby Football Union's 80th anniversary celebrations.

The team, featuring a host of Qantas Wallabies, Super 14 stars and emerging talent from around Australia was coached by Bob Dwyer with the support of Brumbies coach Laurie Fisher. Australia won the highly entertaining match, 61-19.

In the lead up to the match the Australian team attended a Prime Minister's reception at Parliament House, Canberra, a function at the Australian Embassy in Japan and a school coaching visit and cultural ceremony.

The match was supported by Tourism Australia, Accor and Qantas, and Wallaby captain George Gregan also traveled with the team as a non-playing captain.

The Japan-Australia Foundation also supported the visit by funding Mark Bell to conduct coach education sessions and Brett Bowden to support the game management.

## RUGBY SERVICES

Rugby had a full calendar in 2006 commencing with Super 14 trial games in late January and concluding after the Wallaby Spring Tour in November. In between, Rugby Services managed a number of domestic and international programs for the ARU.

### SANZAR

#### Super 14 and Tri Nations

The first year of these expanded competitions brought with it a range of competition issues and complexities that needed constant attention. Increasing the Super 14 competition to 94 fixtures and Tri Nations to 9 Tests increased the pressure on teams and operational staff in all three Unions. SANZAR, on a constant basis, examines the effect of these changes on players and supporters.

SANZAR contracted major reviews of the Citing and Judicial processes used across the tournaments, seeking to improve the delivery of this function. The reviews indicated that there were some changes that would lead to greater consistency in the results of both Citings and Hearings. From 2007, the SANZAR Judicial system will align with the International Rugby Board and appoint single Judicial Officers to hearings in all Super 14 and TNS fixtures.

SANZAR broadcast partners gathered, in conjunction with the Bledisloe Cup in Brisbane. Representatives from News Ltd, Supersport and host broadcasters Fox Sports, Sky NZ and Mnet (SA), as well as broadcasters from Japan, Pacific, USA and Europe gathered to discuss key issues impacting on Super Rugby and TNS productions.

### FEDERATION OF OCEANIA RUGBY UNIONS (FORU)

The ARU continues to play a role in the implementation of the IRB Regional Strategy for the Federation of Oceania Rugby Unions (FORU). FORU is now a full member of the iRB Council. Regional activities in 2006 included:

- Fiji and Samoa qualified for the 2007 RWC through FORU and third placed Tonga proceeds to the repechage v Korea

(Asian Qualifier) for the final place in the tournament.

- Two fixtures for Australia A, against Fiji in Melbourne and Adelaide. ARU will join the IRB Pacific Nations Cup in 2007 playing as Australia A.

### ANTI-DOPING

For 2006 the ARU enlisted the services of the newly legislated Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) to conduct a comprehensive anti-doping program, including testing and education, from the Wallabies to the State Academies. The ARU will introduce the anti-doping program with education and testing in the new Australian Rugby Championship in 2007. ASADA has become the government's agent for drugs in sport and, briefly, its functions include:

- Ensure compliance with the World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) Code.
- Assume the existing drug testing, education, and advocacy functions of the Australian Sports Drug Agency (ASDA) and the Australian Sports Drug Medical Advisory Committee (ASDMAC).
- Conduct investigations on allegations of Anti-Doping Rule violations under the WADA Code; and ARU/IRB Anti-Doping Policy.

### COMMONWEALTH GAMES

While the Australian Sevens team finished out of the medals, the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games was a great success for rugby. The Games provided a world record crowd for an international Sevens tournament. The ARU were intimately involved in the conduct of the event with many of the staff volunteering as part of the Melbourne 2006 workforce. Their expertise in managing major



Peter Rowles, Head of Rugby Services

events was recognised by both the organising committee and the IRB.

The ARU continues to work with the Australian Commonwealth Games Association as preparations are already underway for Delhi 2010. The ACGA supports the ARU and players preparing for the event.

### AUSTRALIAN RUGBY CHAMPIONSHIP

In 2006 the ARU undertook an extensive Rugby Competition review with the view to creating a truly national competition. From this review, the Australian Provincial Championship was introduced as an interim measure to what would become the Australian Rugby Championship in 2007.

The Australian Provincial Championship was contested by the four Australian Super 14 franchises (minus Wallaby players) and was held in September over four weeks. The Brumbies overcame the Reds 47-12 in front of a near capacity crowd at Canberra's Viking Park in the final.

Part of the Competition review was a consultative process which involved some 70 key rugby stakeholders from across Australia. As a result of the review recommendations, the ARU Board approved the concept with eight teams from Sydney, Western Sydney, Central Coast, Brisbane, Gold Coast, Canberra, Melbourne and Perth to compete for the Australian Rugby Championship commencing in 2007.