

Subject: LMM 25/07/2027 - SUPPORTING NRLW STATE OF ORIGIN IN NEWCASTLE

MOTION:

That City of Newcastle:

1. Acknowledges the great success of the NRL Women's State of Origin 2023 series, with a record breaking 18,250 people attending the decider in Townsville, Queensland;
2. Notes that City of Newcastle has joined with City of Townsville to advocate for a permanent share of Women's State of Origin matches between the rugby league heartlands of Newcastle and Townsville;
3. Acknowledges the support of Venues NSW and McDonald Jones Stadium, who believe that Newcastle is the right location to host NRLW State of Origin in 2024 and beyond;
4. Continues to join City of Townsville, Venues NSW and McDonald Jones Stadium to advocate to the ARL Commission for Newcastle as the rightful New South Wales host city for WNRL State of Origin.

BACKGROUND:

Townsville City Council and Newcastle City Council Join Forces to Secure Women's State of Origin

Two of the nation's regional rugby league powerhouses, the cities of Townsville and Newcastle, have joined forces to campaign the NRL for a permanent share in the future of Women's State of Origin Matches.

A proposal sent by Townsville Mayor Jenny Hill to the Lord Mayor of Newcastle Nuatali Nemes outlined the potential for matches to be held in each city, effectively bringing origin matches to regional heartlands for the sport.

Mayor Hill said she was thrilled that her Novocastrian counterpart has agreed to put her full support behind the initiative and to join the fight to have both cities recognised as the logical homes for future Origin matches.

Mayor Hill said it made perfect sense to host these matches in true rugby league territory, and that a record attendance of over 18,000 at the Women's State of Origin Match at Queensland Country Bank Stadium was proof of this.

"Townsville has smashed the record for game attendance this week, and we put on an amazing show when Origin first came to the city in 2021," Cr Hill said.

"Townsville has proven to be the sporting and events capital of the North and we will now take the fight together with the people of Newcastle to secure permanent Women's Origin matches in both our cities."

Mayor Hill said a joint letter to ARLC Chairman Peter V'landys has been sent, requesting a meeting to hash out the details and make the proposal become a reality.

"I believe that once we have locked in Women's Origin, we both cities will have a strong case for taking a permanent share of one of the three Men's Origin Matches," Cr Hill said.

Newcastle Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes said that Newcastle and Townsville are the rightful cities to host Women's State of Origin.

"Both Newcastle and Townsville have rich rugby league histories, exceptionally passionate fan bases and an eagerness to work together with our colleagues at all levels of government to highlight our great cities as premiere sporting destinations in New South Wales and Queensland," Cr Nelmes said.

"I know Novocastrians would strongly welcome State of Origin, which would serve to boost our visitor economy, help to create local jobs and support local industries while continuing to highlight our city as an amazing tourist destination."

In a joint letter addressed to ARLC Chairman Peter V'landys, Mayor Hill and Lord Mayor Nelmes outlined their unwavering commitment to fight for their communities and emphasise the significance of regional heartlands for rugby league.

Both Mayor's reiterated their position in the letter that the game's governing body in Australia owes it to Australian rugby league's most ardent fans to give this proposal the fullest consideration.

The joint efforts of Townsville City Council and Newcastle City Council to secure the Women's State of Origin Matches in their respective cities not only reinforces their commitment to the fans but also signify the regional strength and importance of rugby league in Australia.

Attachments:

- Joint letter from Cr Jenny Hill, Mayor, City of Townsville & Cr Nuatali Nelmes, Lord Mayor, City of Newcastle to Australian Rugby League Commission advocating for Newcastle and Townsville as Women's State of Origin Host Cities



23 June 2023

Mr Peter V'Landys AM
Chairman
Australian Rugby League Commission
Locked Bag 5000
PADDINGTON NSW 2021

Dear Mr V'Landys

RE: State of Origin Host Cities

Please accept our congratulations on the outstanding success of the Women's State of Origin match last night in Townsville, with a record-breaking crowd of more than 18,000 people attending a fantastic game of Rugby League.

As community leaders and passionate rugby league fans, we are writing to you to request a meeting to discuss the opportunity of regularly hosting Women's State of Origin between the City of Townsville and the City of Newcastle.

While we acknowledge the Commission's ambitions to expand rugby league beyond Queensland and New South Wales, we believe that hosting Women's State of Origin at City of Townsville and City of Newcastle presents a fantastic opportunity to promote the game in our respective State's regional centres, while rewarding Rugby League's greatest fans.

Given the opportunity to host regular Women's State of Origin matches, we believe that our cities will be able to present a compelling case for further opportunities to host world-class Rugby League matches, such as the third Men's State of Origin match.

Once again, as representatives of Cities with rugby league's most ardent fans, we look forward to meeting with the Commission to discuss this matter in further detail when an opportunity arises.

Yours sincerely,



Cr Nuatali Nelmes
Lord Mayor
City of Newcastle, NSW



Cr Jenny Hill
Mayor
City of Townsville, QLD

CC:

- Hon. Peter Beattie AC – ARL Commissioner
- Professor Megan Davis – ARL Commissioner
- Mr Wayne Pearce OAM – ARL Commissioner
- Dr Gary Weiss AM – ARL Commissioner
- Mr Tony McGrath – ARL Commissioner
- Ms Kate Jones – ARL Commissioner
- Mr Alan Sullivan KC – ARL Commissioner
- Mr Paul Conlon – Chairman, New South Wales Rugby League
- Mr Bruce Hatcher – Chairman, Queensland Rugby League