

# GLOBAL CONVERSION

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**RUGBY LEAGUE**  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION

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**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION**

**STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 - 2025**



# A PROUD HISTORY AND AN EXCITING FUTURE

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International Rugby League was created through the formation of the Imperial Rugby League Board in 1927 with Australia, Great Britain and New Zealand as its Founding Members. The game took root internationally and in 1948 the International Rugby League Board was created leading to the first Rugby League World Cup being played in France in 1954.

Today's world governing body for the sport, the Rugby League International Federation, was born in 1988 consisting now of 18 full member countries and a further 53 associated member nations. The 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow included Rugby League in its programme of sports, a recognition of the global expansion which our sport has enjoyed in the 17 years since the formation of the RLIF.

Today the sport is played in all Continents of the world from the Pacific Islands to the African nations, from the USA to Russia and from Europe to Australasia. The success of the 2013 Rugby League World Cup held in Great Britain demonstrated the great progress and expansion made by the sport and the viewing and spectator records set in that event are expected to be significantly superseded by the 2017 World Cup to be held in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea.

This plan demonstrates the RLIF's confidence and ambitious goals for the future of our sport. The foundations have been laid during our proud 88 year history but never has the game been growing more rapidly. The emergence of the Rugby League European Federation and the development work being undertaken in the Pacific Islands are bringing new participants into the game daily. Women's, wheelchair, beach, nines/sevens and touch/tag rugby are providing the opportunities

for the inclusive engagement of a new generation of participants from all parts of the world, all backgrounds and all ages. Therefore in 2015 the RLIF Board determined that in order to harness this growth and to provide renewed focus and structure to the international game the time had arrived for the RLIF to appoint our first Chief Executive.

This appointment signalled the start of a new era for the Global expansion of Rugby League, an international calendar recognising the strength of our domestic leagues, a desire to add context to our international matches, an expansion of our global events and the provision of funding to support the growth of our Member Nations.

These are exciting times for Rugby League. Global conversion will require financial stability for our top tier nations, it will require support for Continental championships, it will require funding for development, it will require the highest standards of integrity and governance and it will require common Laws and Regulations. This plan addresses those requirements setting goals, determining

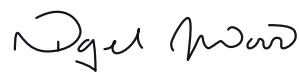
commercial imperatives, defining investment priorities and measuring our progress.

But this is not a plan to focus internally, it is a plan to engage with the millions of supporters and communities worldwide for whom Rugby League is more than a sport as it is also the heart of our family and our lives.

International sport has the power to bring nations as well as individuals together. It can serve as a barometer and a guide to an engaged and inclusive society. It brings families together and it provides activity for all our players and participants. The RLIF embraces these opportunities and challenges.

This strategic plan provides the roadmap, the focus and the initiatives to work together to ensure that we convert the opportunities for the long term health of our sport and for the enjoyment of many millions of individuals within the Rugby League family.

**Nigel Wood**  
RLIF Chairman



**David Collier OBE**  
RLIF Chief Executive







# VISION

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## GLOBAL CONVERSION

To develop the sport of Rugby League globally.

# MISSION

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To develop the international sport, stage world class events, deliver commercial value, grow audiences, participation and talent development with consistency of Laws and Integrity and to focus development on targeted markets.

# VALUES

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## INTEGRITY

- Operating to the highest standards of governance
- Protecting the image of the sport
- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Maintaining safety and security for Stakeholders
- Promoting a culture of leading by example

## LEADERSHIP

- Providing context, structure and income for the sport
- Placing the sport above individual needs
- Embracing inclusivity and diversity
- Investing in strengthening the sport as a whole
- Communicating openly and transparently

## CO-OPERATION








































- Working in partnership with Members & Stakeholders
- Creating trust, honesty and respect
- Utilising and sharing skills
- Making decisions which reflect the collective good
- Respecting views of players, supporters & partners

## EXCELLENCE

- Operating world class events
- Enhancing & innovating the sport with every action
- Measuring our success against goals
- Strengthening Members through best practice
- Inspiring individuals to join the Rugby League family

# GLOBAL REACH

## WORLD RANKINGS

NEW ZEALAND		R01	BELGIUM		R18	PHILIPPINES		R35	SAUDI ARABIA		U16
AUSTRALIA		R02	GERMANY		R19	MOROCCO		R36	THAILAND		U17
ENGLAND		R03	LEBANON		R20	BURUNDI		U01	UAE		U18
SAMOA		R04	NORWAY		R21	EGYPT		U02	HONG KONG		U19
FRANCE		R05	UKRAINE		R22	ETHIOPIA		U03	CHINA		U20
FIJI		R06	MALTA		R23	GHANA		U04	INDIA		U21
IRELAND		R07	GREECE		R24	NIGERIA		U05	PAKISTAN		U22
SCOTLAND		R08	NETHERLANDS		R25	SIERRA LEONE		U06	SINGAPORE		U23
WALES		R09	SPAIN		R26	NAMIBIA		U07	MALAYSIA		U24
USA		R10	DENMARK		R27	KENYA		U08	GEORGIA		U25
PNG		R11	SOUTH AFRICA		R28	TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO		U09	FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA		U26
ITALY		R12	JAMAICA		R29	GUYANA		U10	MONTENEGRO		U27
CANADA		R13	CZECH REPUBLIC		R30	MEXICO		U11	POLAND		U28
SERBIA		R14	SWEDEN		R31	BRAZIL		U12	ROMANIA		U29
TONGA		R15	NIUE		R32	ARGENTINA		U13	NORFOLK ISLAND		U30
RUSSIA		R16	HUNGARY		R33	JAPAN		U14	SOLOMON ISLANDS		U31
COOK ISLANDS		R17	LATVIA		R34	PALESTINE		U15	VANUATU		U32

Rankings as at  
October 2015

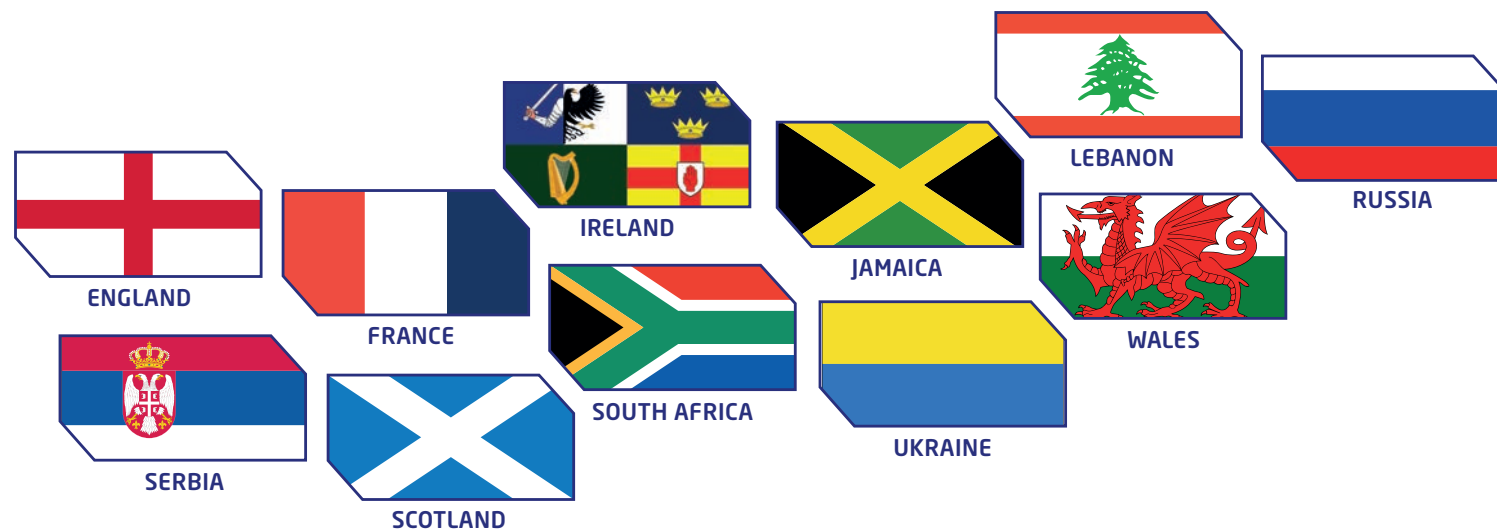
U: Unranked members  
R: Ranked members



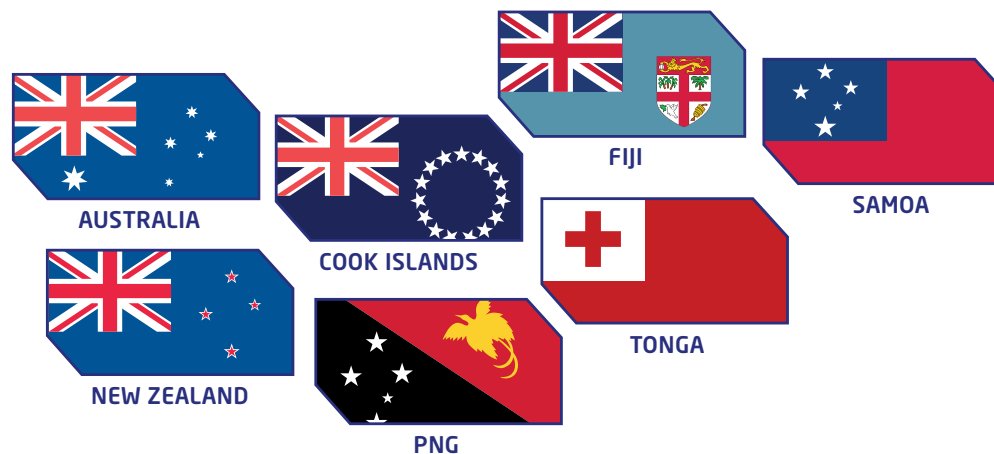
# RLIF FULL MEMBERS



RUGBY LEAGUE  
EUROPEAN FEDERATION



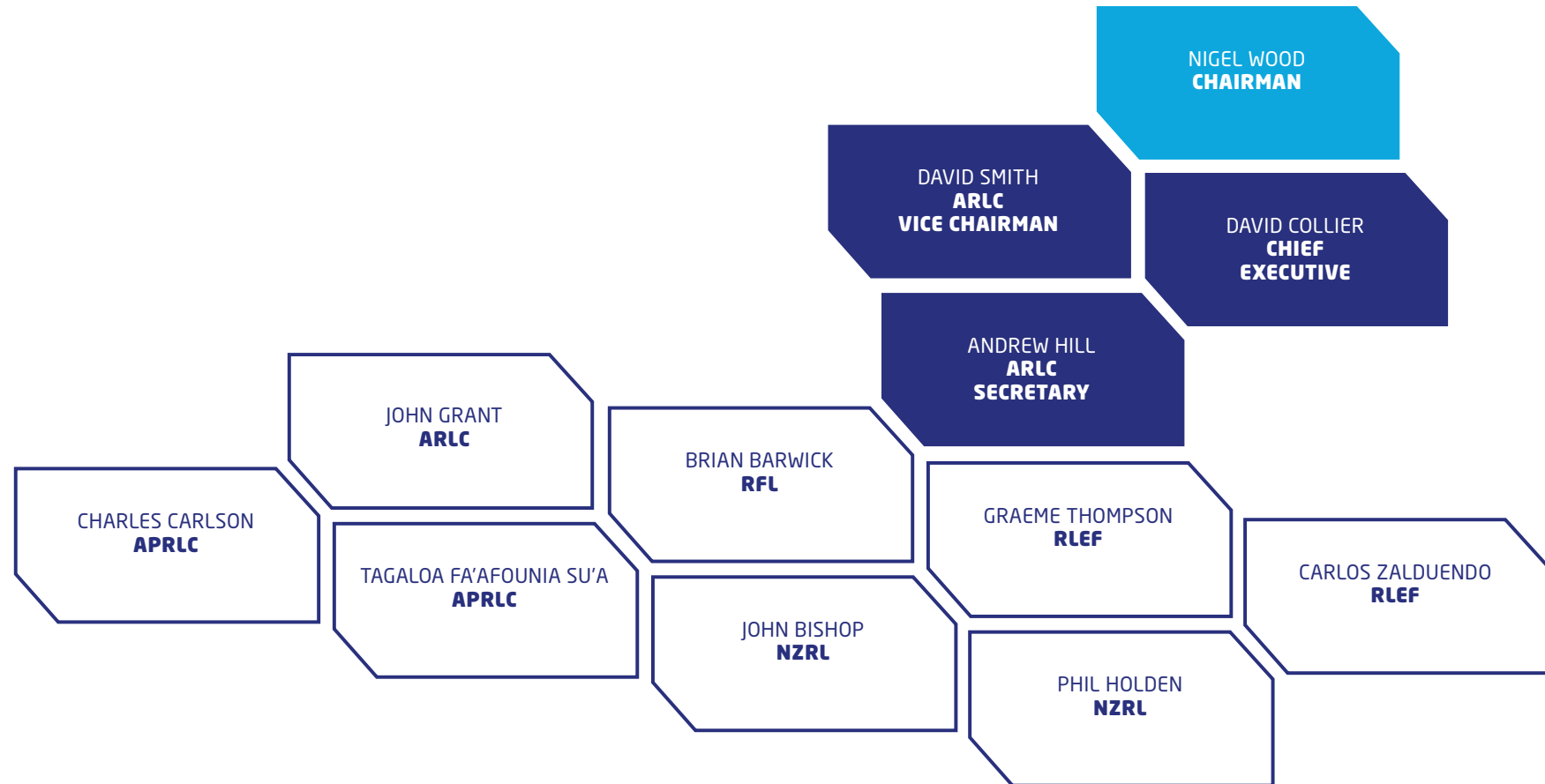
ASIA PACIFIC  
RUGBY LEAGUE  
CONFEDERATION





# RLIF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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As at October 2015

# HOW WE WILL CONVERT OUR SPORT

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The starting point for this plan has been to review the current status of every Member and every aspiring Rugby League nation and to identify the roadmap and goals to progress those nations as a whole.

Leadership, Integrity, Co-operation and Excellence will form the foundation for our actions to achieve that progression.

Our actions will be driven by our mission to develop the International sport, stage world class events, deliver commercial value, grow audiences, participation and talent development with consistency of Laws and Integrity and to focus development on targeted markets.

Those actions will enable us to deliver our vision of Global Conversion to develop the sport throughout the world.

The actions will be underpinned by the building blocks of creating an 8

year calendar of events, enhancing governance and the recognition of our Members by National Olympic Committees/National Sports Agencies, programmes of development in targeted nations, driving incremental income from Global Events and investing in game development through performance related grants to Members and Continental Federations.

It is a vision formed from a growing Membership but requiring focus on

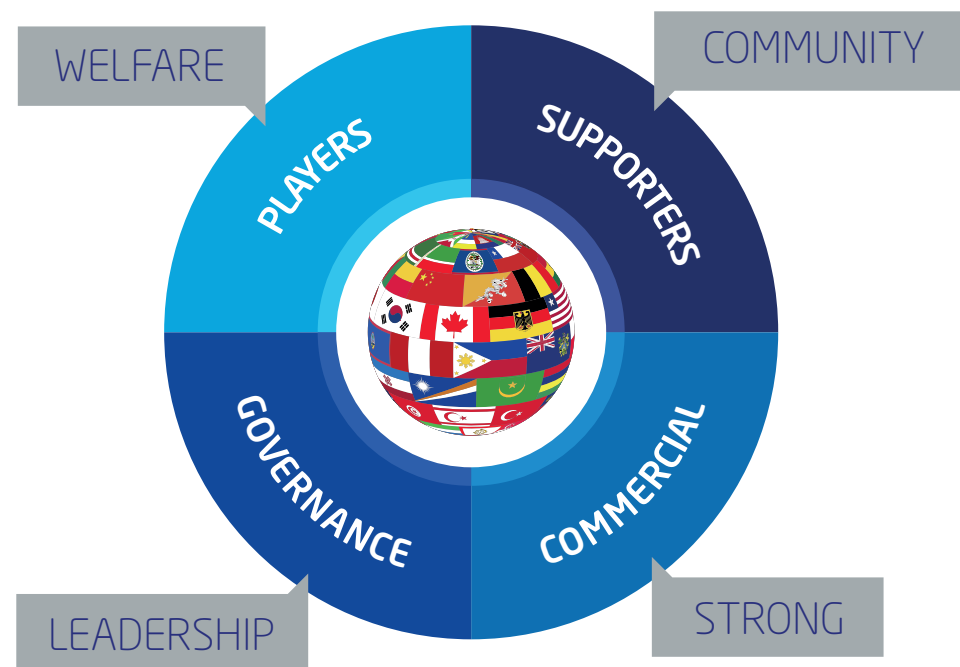
quality (i.e. participation and support numbers) as well as quantity. We shall work with the major Leagues in Australia and England to enhance the quality of the development of players of international calibre to the benefit of both the leagues and the global sport.

We shall work with our Membership to define the role of Nines in both the development of our sport in new territories, in multi-sport events and in elite competition.

It is a vision which seeks to provide a calendar with clear priority periods of activity for domestic leagues and for international matches and events. It defines rest periods for athletes. It creates early notification of event dates to enhance planning for venues, supporters and stakeholders alike.

It is a vision which seeks to support Members to achieve the maximum recognition in their domestic market. It is a vision which is inclusive and transparent and seeks to utilise income received to optimise the future development of our sport and a vision which seeks global standards but recognises national priorities. It is a vision which embraces the importance of supporters, players, referees, partners and administrators within the Rugby League Family.

In summary it is a vision which seeks to bring leadership, structure and governance through co-operation with all interested parties within the Rugby League family to ensure our sport continues to grow and is recognised as one of the world's leading sports.





# WHAT WILL OUR SPORT LOOK LIKE IN 2025?

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A sport being played in more than **70 countries** with more than **20 million** supporters worldwide.

A structure in which the top tier **8 nations** are financially sustainable with reserves.

A sport with an established structure of a **16 team Men's World Cup & an 8 team Women's World Cup** with a minimum of half the teams in each gender having an opportunity of reaching the Final.

An established Continental Qualifier structure every two years to provide context leading into a **World Cup** and an **Intercontinental Cup/ Rugby World Cup Nines**.

**40 nations** recognised by their local National Olympic Committee/ National Sports Agencies.



A **doubling** of the global television audience to provide added value to the marketing of domestic leagues and a presence in two additional G20 countries.

Development Officers in each Continent to support participation growth & the sharing of **best practice**.

An International Federation with a turnover in excess of **\$10m per annum** distributing **\$8m per annum**.

A programme of Nines matches to develop new markets.

A development programme for referees to provide the best referees for the top matches, with **neutrality** of officials to enhance the image of the sport and **global Laws**.

# THE 10 KEY INITIATIVES FOR RLIF THROUGH 2025

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## #01

### CREATE 8 YEAR CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- RESPECTING DOMESTIC LEAGUES
- INCORPORATING WORLD CLUB SERIES
- PROVIDING PLAYER REST PERIODS
- SCHEDULING TWO GLOBAL EVENTS IN A 4 YEAR PERIOD
- INTRODUCING CONTINENTAL CHAMPIONSHIPS
- PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR BI-LATERAL MATCHES

## #02

### ENHANCE RECOGNITION OF MEMBERS BY NATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE / NATIONAL SPORTS AGENCIES

- SEEK RECOGNITION BY IOC OR SPORTACCORD
- PROVIDE SUPPORT MATERIALS FOR NATIONS TO APPLY FOR NOC RECOGNITION
- SUPPORT MULTI-SPORT EVENTS
- EMBRACE WADA AND ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES

## #03

### INTRODUCE PERFORMANCE RELATED GRANTS

- REWARD INCREASE IN PARTICIPATION NUMBERS
- REWARD DEVELOPMENT OF COACHES AND OFFICIALS
- REWARD GOOD GOVERNANCE
- REMOVE ONE SIZE FITS ALL GRANTS



## #04

### TARGET TWO ADDITIONAL G20 NATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT IN TARGETED MARKETS
- TARGET NATIONS WITH A GOOD FIT FOR RUGBY LEAGUE
- CREATE SPECTATOR AND MEDIA INTEREST
- USE INTERCONTINENTAL CUP/RUGBY WORLD CUP NINES FOR POSSIBLE EXPANSION IN KEY MARKETS

## #05

### PROVIDE CONTEXT TO INTERNATIONAL MATCHES

- INTRODUCE CONTINENTAL CHAMPIONSHIPS
- PRODUCE QUALIFICATION MATCHES FROM CONTINENTS
- PROMOTE RANKINGS
- SUPPORT LIONS/AUSTRALIA/NZ MATCHES

# THE 10 KEY INITIATIVES FOR RLIF THROUGH 2025

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## #06

### GROW OUR SUPPORTER BASE

- ENSURE WORLD CUPS ARE ATTENDED BY MAXIMUM CROWDS
- ENHANCE WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION
- PRODUCE MAGAZINE PROGRAMMES WITH PARTNERS
- FOCUS ON FAN EXPERIENCE AT EVENTS

## #07

### ENHANCE NEUTRALITY AND GLOBAL CONSISTENCY OF REGULATIONS, OFFICIATING AND LAWS

- SEEK SPONSOR FOR REFEREES
- DEVELOP REFEREES AND PROVIDE DEVELOPMENT PATH FOR OFFICIALS
- SEEK TO PROVIDE A SINGLE CONSISTENT SET OF LAWS
- DEAL WITH NATIONAL DIFFERENCES THROUGH REGULATIONS
- ENSURE LAWS ARE PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT

## #08

### ENHANCE IMAGE OF RLIF AND THE SPORT

- DELIVER WORLD CLASS EVENTS
- DELIVER CHAMPIONS LEAGUE STYLE SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENTS
- FOCUS ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY OF THE SPORT
- RAISE PROFILE OF RLIF
- ENHANCE COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION
- FOCUS INVESTMENT ON TARGETED NATIONS TO INCREASE COMPETITIVENESS OF TOP 8 NATIONS
- WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LEAGUES TO DEVELOP WORLD CLASS PLAYERS



## #09

### CREATE LONG TERM SPONSORSHIP AND BROADCASTER PARTNERSHIPS

- DEVELOP ITT FOR 2018 - 2025 FOR VENUES, SPONSORS AND BROADCASTERS
- INTEGRATE BROADCASTING AND SPONSORSHIP
- DEFINE OPTIMUM MIX OF PAY PER VIEW VERSUS FREE TO AIR
- CREATE LONG TERM COMMITMENT WITH BROADCASTERS
- DEFINE WEBSITE STRATEGY

## #10

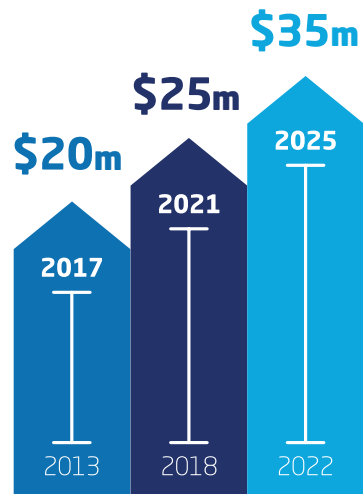
### ENHANCE RESERVES OF TOP TIER NATIONS AND RLIF

- DELIVER \$10M OF RESERVES FOR RLIF BY 2025
- DELIVER DOUBLING OF INCOME
- DEFINE RELATIONSHIPS WITH HOSTS AS A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH
- ENSURE MEMBERS RECEIVE A MINIMUM OF 75% OF INCOME
- PROVIDE A TAX EFFICIENT STRUCTURE TO DISTRIBUTE PERFORMANCE RELATED GRANTS



# OUR 2025 GOALS

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RAISE RLIF  
INCOME



RAISE NUMBER  
OF SUPPORTERS



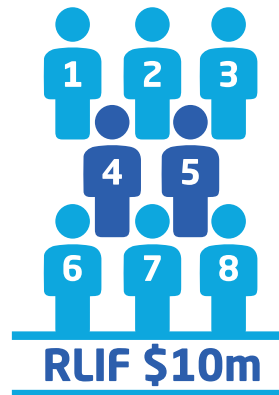
40 COUNTRIES TO BE  
RECOGNISED BY NATIONAL  
OLYMPIC COMMITTEE/  
NATIONAL SPORTS AGENCIES



70 MEMBER  
COUNTRIES



ONE SET OF UNIFIED LAWS  
AND REGULATIONS



\$10M OF RESERVES IN  
RLIF & FINANCIAL STABILITY  
OF 8 TOP TIER NATIONS



8 MEN'S AND 4 WOMEN'S  
NATIONS COMPETING  
TO REACH THE FINAL



AN ESTABLISHED RLIF  
OFFICE AND TAX EFFICIENT  
STRUCTURE





**RUGBY LEAGUE**  
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION

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