

PRIDE IN SPORT STATEMENT ON ISRAEL FOLAU’S POTENTIAL RETURN TO THE NRL

In response to reports St George Illawarra Dragons have submitted a formal application to the NRL to sign Israel Folau, Pride in Sport, the national not-for-profit program that supports Australian sporting organisations and clubs in all aspects of LGBTQ inclusion, has issued the following statement.

Andrew Purchas OAM, co-founder of the Pride In Sport Index, said:

“Views previously expressed by Mr Folau about LGBTQ people do not reflect the standards and expectations that exist today in Australia.

“His past statements about LGBTQ communities work in direct opposition to the significant progress on acceptance and inclusion that is being made by sporting codes, clubs and organisations across the country.

“If the St George Illawarra Dragons go down this path, there is an expectation that there will be a zero-tolerance policy on harassment and discrimination against LGBTQ people.

“Further, if Mr Folau’s appointment as a player eventuates, he must abide by NRL’s policies on diversity and inclusion, and we encourage the Dragons to have in place strategies that will ensure best practice deliverables around LGBTQ inclusion policy, education, visibility, and cultural safety.

“NRL is a code that prides itself as being a sport for everyone with strong values of diversity and inclusion.

“History has shown Mr Folau’s repeated failures to abide by sporting inclusion policies despite assurances.

“Sporting clubs must take a stand against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia when it happens and send a clear message to all Australians that discriminatory words and deeds will not be tolerated.”

Beau Newell, National Program Manager of Pride in Sport, said:

“We know that the words and actions of high-profile sports persons have enormous impact on our culture and far-reaching consequences. Their statements have a profound influence on the community – especially young people.

“Derogatory and discriminatory remarks about LGBTQ people create division, take away people’s dignity and can contribute to people feeling marginalised, excluded, and inferior.”

“Australians know the importance of having a safe and inclusive sporting culture, no matter the code, and expect a zero-tolerance policy on harassment and discrimination. It is the right of every player, coach, volunteer, fan or spectator to be feel accepted, on and off the sporting field.

“Pride in Sport works with many of Australia’s most prominent sporting organisations, assisting them in their provision of a safe and inclusive environments for all people.

“We look forward to the opportunity to work with the Dragons, and any other sports, on all aspects of LGBTQ inclusion in sport.”

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Who are we?

Pride in Sport is Australia's first and only sporting inclusion program specifically designed to assist sporting organisations at all levels with the inclusion of employees, participants, volunteers and spectators with diverse sexualities and genders, as well as their allies.

Membership Program:

The Pride in Sport membership program is designed to:

- Assist Australian sporting organisations with all aspects of LGBTQ inclusion as it pertains to their sport and those working within the sporting organisation;
- Work with members to achieve best practice as benchmarked by the Pride in Sport Index (PSI);
- Create better health outcomes for LGBTQ+ players, coaches, fans and others by creating inclusive spaces through the reduction of homophobia, stigma and discrimination.

To find out more about the Pride in Sport Membership Program, please [click here](#).

Pride in Sport Index

The Pride in Sport Index is an initiative of the Australian Human Rights Commission and the Australian Sports Commission and a legacy of the Bingham Cup, Sydney. Following the release of the Out on the Fields study in May 2015, the largest international study examining homophobia in sport, these organisations commissioned Pride in Diversity to develop a Pride in Sport Index.

The Pride in Sport Index™ (PSI) is the first and only benchmarking instrument specifically designed to assess the inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex (LGBTQ+) people within Australian sport and sporting organisations. Participating in the index will allow Australian sporting organisations to not only assess their own practice, but determine that which constitutes good practice, along with the ability to benchmark their own initiatives against an external measure and other sporting organisations.

An advisory group was established to assist Pride in Diversity in the development of the Pride in Sport Index. The advisory group included; the National Rugby League (NRL), the Australian Football League (AFL), the Australian Rugby Union (ARU), Football Federation Australia (FFA), Cricket Australia, Swimming Australia, Water Polo Australia, Basketball Australia and Golf Australia.

To find out more on the Pride in Sport Index, [click here](#).