

INTERNATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 25 NOV 2020

VIA ZOOM

MINUTES

CHAIR Greg Barclay

PRESENT

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS Jeremy Edwards (Asia Pacific RL Confederation), Alison O'Brien, Mahdi Choudhury (RL European Federation).

FULL

MEMBERS

Andrew Abdo, Wayne Pearce (Australian RL Commission), Charles Carlson, Robert Graham (Cook Islands Rugby League Association), Orazio D'arro (Federazione Italiana Rugby League), Anne L'Heuillet (Fédération Française de Rugby 13), Napolioni Batimala, Don Natabe (Fiji National Rugby League), Adrian Hall (Jamaican Rugby League Association), Nayef Albert Abi Saïd (Lebanese Rugby League Federation), Reon Edwards, Greg Peters (New Zealand Rugby League), Stanley Hondina (Papua New Guinea Rugby Football League), Simon Johnson, Ralph Rimmer (Rugby Football League), Dave Fitz-Henry, Peter Robson (Rugby League Ireland), Tagaloa Su'a (Rugby League Samoa), Roman N. Guschin, Alexander G. Kolikov (Russian Association of Rugby League Clubs), Ollie Cruickshank, Keith Hogg (Scotland Rugby League), Vladan Kikanovic (Serbian Rugby League Federation), Frans Erasmus, Frans Parsons (South African Rugby League Association), Artur Martyrosian (Ukrainian Federation of Rugby League), Brian Juliff (Wales Rugby League).

AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Bob Jowett, Joshua Knight (Canada Rugby League Association), Robert Burgin (Confederacao Brasileira Rugby League), Lukáš Hergott (Czech Rugby League Association), George Stilianos (Greece Rugby League Association), David Axisa (Malta Rugby League), Daan van Rossum (Nederlands Rugby League Bond), Jonatan Dam (Rugby League Norge), Gurol Yildiz (Turkish Rugby League Association), Jamie Dowse, Peter Illfield (United States Association of Rugby League).

OBSERVER MEMBERS

Jean du Christ Rusiga (Burundi Rugby League), Adamou Sadjou Bouba (Cameroon Rugby League), Yamina Abdesselem (Fédération Marocaine de Rugby à XIII), Bob Doughton (Nationaler Rugby League Deutschland), Ade Adebisi, Abiodun Olawale-Cole (Nigerian Rugby League Association), Rabie El Masri (Palestine Rugby League Association), Kareem Captan (Rugby League Federation Ghana), Ben Howard (Vanuatu Rugby League).

PRESENT

David Birchall, Troy Grant, Danny Kazandjian, Mark Martin, Charlotte Monkman, Paul Nicholson, Graeme Thompson, Nigel Wood, Emma Young (IRL).

APOLOGIES

Mathieu Khedimi (Fédération Française de Rugby 13), Tiziano Franchini (Federazione Italiana RL), Sandis Tsaka (Papua New Guinea Rugby Football League), Radoslav Novakovic (Serbian RL Federation).



ABSENT Albania Rugby League, Asociacion Española de RL, Asocijacija Ragbi 13 Bosna i Hercegovina, Belgian RL Association, Bulgarian RL Federation, Colombia Rugby League, Congo RL, Danmark RL, Ethiopian Rugby League, Georgian Rugby League Federation, Hungarian Rugby League Federation, Latvia Rugby League, Libya Rugby League Association, Polska RL XIII, RFL13Chile, Sierra Leone RL Federation, Solomon Islands Rugby League, Svenska RL Forening, Trinidad and Tobago Rugby League Association.

1.0 WELCOME, ROLL CALL & APOLOGIES

Mr Barclay formally introduced himself and welcomed the delegates to the inaugural virtual IRL AGM. Mr Barclay explained that all sports are dealing with the challenges Covid-19 has imposed, nevertheless, he was hopeful he would meet all members in person at the 2021 IRL AGM, scheduled to be held in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne in England prior to the world cup.

Mr Barclay took the opportunity to recognise it was Mr Wood's final AGM as the CEO of the IRL and shared his sincere thanks for his considerable efforts on behalf of the sport. Mr Barclay was sure Mr Wood would remain closely involved in the sport in some capacity and wished him well for the future.

Mr Barclay requested that all delegates respect the protocols for voting in any of today's resolutions, paying reference to the meetings protocol document that was circulated in advance of the meeting. He explained that each member is only constitutionally allowed two delegates and he hoped that was being respected. He also reminded members not to video or record today's meeting and that any relevant questions should be addressed at the appropriate juncture at each agenda item.

Mr Kazandjian called the roll and with 17 out of 18 full members represented today, the meeting was quorate. It was acknowledged that the one absent full member, PNGRFL, was expected to join the meeting shortly.

2.0 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM

The Chair proposed adopting the minutes of the previous meeting, held in Sydney on 18 October 2019. **Motion moved by Mr Johnson and seconded by Mr Hogg.** The minutes were adopted.

3.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS AGM

It was noted that there were no outstanding action items from the 2019 AGM.

Mr Barclay advised that three new independent Directors joined the IRL Board in January 2020, Emma Young, Troy Grant and himself as the independent Chair.

Mr Barclay further advised that an Emergency General Meeting had been called on 18th March 2020 that resulted in the expulsion of Tonga National Rugby League. Mr Barclay reported that a CAS hearing has been scheduled for 7-8 December 2020 to rule on this matter.





Finally, Mr Barclay informed members that Mr Kazandjian has assumed an expanded role as Secretary General of the IRL which will absorb some of the CEO responsibilities and will be effective from 1 December 2020.

4.0 CHAIR AND DIRECTORS' REPORT

Mr Barclay reported on the Chair and Directors report that had been circulated in advance of the meeting. Mr Barclay made specific reference to the following items:

- Impact of Covid-19. In response to the global pandemic, Mr Barclay advised that a Covid Response Committee was created whereby Directors on the IRL Board met on a weekly basis for a duration of five months. Mr Barclay further reported that this committee has since morphed into a Commercial Committee to discuss the international calendar and potential new revenue streams into the sport.
- WADA. IRL recently completed the WADA Corrective Action Plan and had been commended by WADA for its response to AD measures advised by WADA. IRL had already gained WADA approval for its new rules, which will be implemented on 1 January 2021
- Recruitment. The appointment of Match Official Manager and Head of Judiciary.
- New Committees. Audit & Risk Committee, Medical Subcommittee, Wheelchair RL Advisory Group, Women & Girls Advisory Group, Classifications Committee and Laws Advisory Panel were all established and active.
- Adopted new operational rules. Effective from 1 November 2020
- Branding and Membership Platform. The IRL rolled out its new brand globally and the new member platform will be available for interaction in two weeks.
- Annual Report 2020. Management will be preparing a full annual report, which will be published in March, and annually hereafter.

Mr Barclay said the organisation was assuming much more responsibility for core IF functions. He concluded by confirming Ms Young had been recommended for reappointment for a further three years as a Director, ending AGM 2023, and this matter was due before the Board, for election.

PNGRFL representative Mr Hondina joined the meeting.

5.0 CONSIDER THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED ACCOUNTING PERIOD

Mr Barclay advised that an Audit and Risk Committee had been established which is chaired by IRL Board Director Reon Edwards.

A finance presentation was shared with the Members. Mr Wood reported against the Rugby League International Federation Pty income and expenditure account and balance sheet as well as International Rugby League Ltd's income and expenditure account and balance sheet for the respective 2019 financial years. Mr Wood explained the background and reasoning behind the dual company





system and explained that both companies are still in operation, whilst noting they have difference year ends.

Mr Wood explained that the organisation, the IRL, works in four-year cycles in line with the world cups, whereby significant income is received once every four years. Mr Wood advised that the 2019 accounts were adequate and in line with expectations and forecasting however 2020 has seen very little generated income due to the absence of on field play and competitions.

Mr Wood advised there is an ongoing outstanding piece of work being carried out by the executive and independent advisors on tax provisions for both companies.

Mr D'arro asked if today's presentation could be shared with the members. Mr Kazandjian said this would be sent with the minutes and as soon as the audit had been completed the full accounts would also be circulated to members for review and formally adoption in line with the constitution.

With reference to the UK income and expenditure table on slide 6, Mr Su'a asked where the £2m income had come from. Mr Wood advised that this was income from the RLWC21 and was non-refundable.

Mr Su'a further asked if all finances for the IRL going forward would come under the UK company. Mr Wood explained that the original decision of the IRL Board was to transfer the operations into a single entity. However there has been some discussions about retaining RLIF Pty as a vehicle for the southern hemisphere, nevertheless, this is a matter for the IRL Board to decide.

Lastly, Mr Su'a asked whether there had been any adjustments to IRL operational costs such as wages given the members had only received 50% of their grants. Mr Wood explained that there has been a series of measures taken to deal with the implications of Covid, including operational cost reduction, and that given 2020's income has been near to zero, a process of re-budgeting and re-forecasting has been carried out.

Mr D'arro asked who audits the UK accounts. Mr Kazandjian confirmed that the RLIF Ltd accounts are audited by Ernst & Young while Haysmacintyre are the independent accountants for IRL Ltd.

Mr Van Rossum asked what impact a cancelled RLWC21 would have on the organisation. Mr Kazandjian reported that the local organising committee for RLWC21, while having remodelled a number of scenarios, continued to work on a business as usual basis. That said, Mr Kazandjian advised that, given the reliance on tournament revenue, it would be extremely damaging for IRL if there was no world cup. Mr Barclay reassured members that the worst case scenario at present would be tournament postponement rather than cancellation.

Mr D'arro requested clarification over the number of registered UK companies for the IRL on Companies House. Mr Kazandjian explained that when the IRL carried





out its rebranding process a company under the name of International Rugby League was purchased purely as a defensive measure to make sure nobody else obtained that company name. Mr Kazandjian advised that a company name swap was carried out to make sure the existing UK trading company, RLIF Ltd, became International Rugby League Ltd, and that all filings were publicly available on Companies House.

Mr Su'a asked what the expected timeframe is for the audit. Mr Kazandjian explained that in light of the global pandemic, the UK authorities have extended the deadline for company account filing however the IRL Ltd accounts are expected to be concluded this side year. Mr Martin confirmed that the deadline to lodge the 2019 RLIF Pty accounts had already elapsed but the accounts were almost ready for sign off by both the auditors and the Board.

6.0 APPOINT OR REAPPOINT THE AUDITORS OF THE COMPANY

It was acknowledged by Mr Barclay that in 2019 there was a question raised by RL Samoa about changing the auditor. Mr Barclay confirmed that the IRL Board is supportive of a procurement process to ensure good practice and good value.

Resolution 2: motion to review the auditors of Rugby League International Federation Pty for the 2019-20 financial year through a procurement process, and to retain Haysmacintyre as the independent accountants of International Rugby League Ltd for 2020.

The Chair requested the motion to be proposed and seconded. **Motion moved by Mr Carlson and seconded by Mr R. Edwards.** The motion was carried.

7.0 CONSIDER ANY APPLICATIONS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD

Mr Barclay confirmed that affiliate member assessments for Nigerian RL Association and RL Federation Ghana had been circulated prior to this meeting. Mr Barclay explained that the RLEF Board commended both applications to the IRL Board, which is now commending them to the membership for their final approval.

The Chair proposed admitting Nigerian RL Association as an Affiliate Member to the company.

Resolution 3: motion to accept Nigerian Rugby League Association's application for affiliate membership.

Motion moved by Mr Knight and seconded by Mr Dowse. The motion was carried and NRLA was admitted as an Affiliate Member of International Rugby League.

Mr Barclay offered his congratulations to NRLA and welcomed Mr Cole to say a few words as President of NRLA. Mr Cole thanked the members for their support and assured them that NRLA would now redouble efforts to spread the sport in Nigeria.





The Chair proposed admitting RL Federation Ghana as an Affiliate Member to the company.

Resolution 4: motion to accept Rugby League Federation Ghana's application for affiliate membership

Motion moved by Mr Johnson and seconded by Mr Kolikov. The motion was carried and RLFG was admitted as an Affiliate Member of International Rugby League.

Mr Kazandjian offered his congratulations to RLFG and paid tribute to Mr Captan who, despite having no previous ties to the sport, has contributed exemplary service to Ghanaian RL, primarily through a sense of duty and integrity. Mr Captan was provided the opportunity to say a few words on behalf of RLFG. He thanked Mr Kazandjian for his words, said he was humbled by the members' support and paid tribute to the RLFG volunteers.

8.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

With no items raised by the members, Mr Barclay brought the formal business of the meeting to a close and thanked members for their attendance and contributions.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:15am

