

INTERNATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 15 OCTOBER 2022

VIA ZOOM

MINUTES

CHAIR Troy Grant

PRESENT ASSOCIATE MEMBERS Dean Andrew, Dave Butler (ERL - European Rugby League).

FULL MEMBERS Peter Beattie, Wayne Pearce (ARLC - Australian RL Commission), Charles Carlson, Karl Temata (CIRLA - Cook Islands Rugby League Association), Luc Lacoste (FFRXIII (Fédération Française de Rugby à Treize), Orazio D'arro, Ileana Iacopetti (FIRL - Federazione Italiana Rugby League), Viliame Naupoto (FNRL - Fiji National Rugby League), Nayef Albert Abi Said, Assaad Feghali (LRLF - Lebanese Rugby League Federation), Greg Peters (NZRL - New Zealand Rugby League), Stanley Hondina (PNGRFL - Papua New Guinea Rugby Football League), Simon Johnson, Ralph Rimmer (RFL - Rugby Football League), Adam Cox, Jim Reynolds (RLI - Rugby League Ireland), Andrew Dixon, Georgia Lowe (RLJ – Rugby League Jamaica), Faafouina Su'a, Fritz Tuiavii-Savaiinaea (RLS - Rugby League Samoa), Krappie Eloff (SARLA - South African Rugby League Association), Jon Harris, Victoria Hogg (SRL - Scotland Rugby League), Darren Fisher (SRLF - Serbian Rugby League Federation), Brian Juliff (WRL - Wales Rugby League).

AFFILIATE MEMBERS Robert Burgin (CBRL - Confederacao Brasileira Rugby League), Josh Knight (CRLA - Canada Rugby League Association), Lukas Hergott (CZRLA - Czech Rugby League Association), Yamina Abdesselem (FMRL - Fédération Marocaine de Rugby à XIII), Terry Liberopoulos, Stuart McLennan (GRLA - Greece Rugby League Association), Gideon Van Kleij, Daan Van Rossum (NRLB - Nederlandse Rugby League Bond), Bob Doughton (NRLD - Nationaler Rugby League Deutschland), Anne Haigh, Tom Haugen (RLN - Rugby League Norge), Fatih Cetinkaya, Gurol Yildiz (TRLA - Turkish Rugby League Association), Peter Illfield (USARL -United States Association of Rugby League).

OBSERVER MEMBERS Xhino Drangu, Orion Jucja (ARL - Albania Rugby League), Vladislav Parizov, Tihomir Simeonov (BRLF - Bulgarian RL Federation), Charles Cardovillis (Kenya Rugby League Federation), Rabie El Masri (PRL - Palestine Rugby League), Rajendra Shah, Misa Vakadrano (SvRL - Svensk Rugby League Forening), Ben Howard (VRL - Vanuatu Rugby League).

PRESENT Remond Safi (ERL), Joren Vervliet (NRLB), David Birchall, Reon Edwards, Danny Kazandjian, Mark Martin, Charlotte Monkman, Emma Young (IRL).

APOLOGIES Jeremy Edwards (APRLC - Asia Pacific RL Confederation), Jon Christie (ARLK - Russian Association of Rugby League Clubs), Jean du Christ Rusiga (BRL - Burundi Rugby League), David Axisa (MRL – Malta Rugby League), Jafaru Mustafa (RLFG – Rugby League Federation Ghana), Artur Martyrosian (UFRL - Ukrainian Federation of Rugby League).



ABSENT AERL - Asociacion Española de RL, ARBH - Asocijacija Ragbi 13 Bosna i Hercegovina, BRLA - Belgian RL Association, CRL - Colombia Rugby League, CRL13 - Cameroon Rugby League 13, DRLF - Danmark Rugby League Federation, DCRL - Congo Rugby League, ERLA - Ethiopian Rugby League Association, ESRLA - El Salvador Rugby League Association, GRLF - Georgian Rugby League Federation, HRLF - Hungarian Rugby League Federation, JRL - Japan Rugby League, KSARLA - Saudi Arabia Rugby League Association, LRL - Latvia Rugby League, LRLA - Libya Rugby League Association, MERL - Montenegro Rugby League, NRLA - Nigerian Rugby League Association, PNRL - Panbansang Ragbi Liga Ng Pilipinas, PRXIII - Polska Rugby XIII, RFL13Chile, RLU – Rugby League Uganda), SIRLF - Solomon Islands Rugby League Federation, SLRLF - Sierra Leone Rugby League Federation.

1.0 WELCOME, ROLL CALL & APOLOGIES

Mr Grant formally introduced himself and welcomed the delegates to the 2022 IRL AGM. He presented Ms Monkman with an award for her excellent organisation and management of the 2022 IRL Congress. Mr Grant reminded delegates that each member is only constitutionally allowed two delegates to attend today's meeting and any queries raised will be addressed at the appropriate juncture. Members are in attendance in person and via zoom and Ms Monkman would be monitoring the latter. He noted that the meeting will be simultaneously for both IRL companies. Both have same members & Board, although resolutions specific to each will be taken separately. Mr Grant invited Mr Kazandjian to call the roll. With 16 out of 18 full members present, Mr Kazandjian confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

Mr Grant acknowledged that there is no universally agreeable time to hold the AGM and particularly thanked those members in attendance outside their usual business hours. He noted that while some IRL Directors are in the room, only Emma Young is here in that capacity, with the others all representatives of their national federations. He said how gratifying it is to see so many representatives in person after years of covid-enforced separation.

Mr Grant paid tribute to the RLWC2021 organisers and described what a wonderful opportunity the event gives the sport. He congratulated Nigeria, who two weeks ago successfully defended their Middle East Africa Championship, and said it was good to see more high profile players appearing in the competition, a sign of its growing credibility. He confirmed Ghana and Nigeria are progressing to the next round of France 2025 men's qualifiers in 2023.

2.0 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS AGM

The Chair proposed adopting the minutes of the previous meeting, held virtually on 21 October 2021.

RESOLUTION 1: *motion to approve the minutes from the IRL AGM held virtually on 21 October 2021. Motion moved by Mr Pearce (ARLC) and seconded by Mr Peters (NZRL). The minutes were adopted.*

3.0 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS AGM





Mr Grant reminded members that in the 2021 AGM they passed a resolution to run a procurement process to seek a new auditor for the Australian company for FY2021. After running the procurement process, the Written Resolution to appoint Newmerical as the independent reviewer of the company was carried on 23/2/22.

Mr Grant then confirmed the new members admitted by the Full Members:

- i. Greek RL Federation assumed Greece's affiliate membership on 25/2/22, replacing Greek RL Association (noting they are essentially the same entity, whose legal status has changed to facilitate govt recognition – which was achieved in August). Mr Grant congratulated GRLF, which is celebrating Greece's 1st RLWC and is now legally recognised by the Greek state after a long and extraordinary struggle for legitimacy & sovereignty.
- ii. Kenyan RL Federation was admitted on 31/1/2022; then RL Uganda and Ivory Coast RL Association on 22/9/22. Both Kenya & Ivory Coast have government recognition, showing the growing legitimacy of RL in the international sporting community.

4.0 CHAIR AND DIRECTORS' REPORT

Mr Grant reported on the following items:

- Changes to the Board in 2022
 - NZRL's automatic Director lapsed on 1/4/22, with Mr Edwards continuing as Nominated Board Observer (and as Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee)
 - Graeme Thompson resigned on 16/9/22, replaced by ERL nominee Brian Juliff
 - At the conclusion of this AGM, Wayne Pearce will not seek a second term. He will be replaced by Peter V'landys; Peter Beattie is resigning, and will be replaced by Andrew Abdo; Simon Johnson's 1st term expires, and he has been re-appointed by RFL for a 2nd term; Troy Grant's 1st term expires, and he was re-appointed by the Board to a 2nd term and remains IRL Chair
 - All five of the above serve until AGM 2025
 - Mr Lacoste was elected Deputy Chair by the Board on 12/10/22
 - Finally, Mr Grant confirmed that Mr Kazandjian was appointed to the France 2025 Board as the designated IRL representative
- On the field
 - This year saw a first ever women's European Championship, underlining growth of the women's game globally
 - A full house in Auckland for June's NZL v TON double header
 - U19 European Championship in Italy, won by England, featuring a Ukrainian team despite the hardships their country is facing
 - The launch of France 2025 by the French PM in Paris in January
 - Confirmation, in July, after a 12-month process, of the biggest RLWCQ competition in RL history, including the 1st women's comp. 46 national teams will have been involved when the RLWCQs conclude in 2024, compared to 20 for RLWC2021
- Communications





- Strategy consultations with membership. Mr Grant noted that, while the first iteration of the calendar had been drafted and gained Board approval, until the long-term calendar is settled a final strategy cannot be implemented
- Regulatory
 - After Covid-induced delays, the Funding Mechanism element of the IRL member policy will be implemented for 2023. The secretary general will write to Full Members in December but the KPIs detailed in the member policy will be applied to the 2023 season, with 2024 payments based on AMA 2023 results
 - Classifications Advisory Group completed the sport's 1st PDRL classifications manual. Mr Grant paid tribute to the volunteer group members and their dedication since October 2020 and said how much he is looking forward to the PDRLWC in Warrington
 - Mr Grant praised Mr Edwards for his leadership of the Audit & Risk Committee
- Staff
 - MO Manager Stuart Cummings left for ICC and will be replaced after the RLWC. Stuart successfully introduced a tiered system whose MOs are now evaluated professionally
 - Niel Wood was replaced as media manager by Brad Walter. Mr Grant paid tribute to Niel's many years of service to RL and now Brad provides exceptional access to high media value players

Mr Grant noted that all the above are signs of IRL's evolution into a genuine IF, owning core functions of an IF.

5.0 FINANCE

Mr Grant confirmed that all members had received a written finance report and both companies' financial statements, both of which have been approved by the Board to meet statutory deadlines. He handed over to Mr Edwards, the Audit & Risk Committee Chair.

Mr Edwards praised ARC colleague Ms Young and the executive for its financial management of the international federation's finances over the past two years. He pointed out that the financial oversight had historically been insufficient but under the current regime he was satisfied that best practice is being applied. Despite the improvements, Mr Edwards reminded the plenary that the IF was still reliant on RLWC revenue. By dint of the postponement, cashflow had been the greatest challenge over the last 12 months but the prudent approach and tight financial controls adopted by the organisation had resulted in an ever-improving position. He thanked the members for their cooperation and paid tribute to the group of five dubbed the high capacity members – Australia, England, France, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea – for foregoing their grants to reinvest back into IRL, which was a selfless and helpful act. Finally, Mr Edwards said that the organisation was looking forward to a continuing recovery and being able to





invest in key areas important to the membership and the international growth of the sport. He handed over to finance manager Mark Martin who reported on the financial accounts.

Mr Martin gave a finance presentation in two parts. The first part focussed on providing the members with additional information with regards to the 2021 accounts of International Rugby League Limited and Rugby League International Federation Limited. This started off with a recap of some of the improvements to the financial systems that have been brought in under the current regime. Members were then reminded of the historical relationship between the two companies. There then followed a presentation of the consolidated financial position of the organisation, including explaining in more detail savings in expenditure in the 2021 financial year. Finally, in response to a specific question raised in advance by a member, a breakdown of grants payable was provided.

Mr Martin opened the floor for questions. Mr Su'a suggested changing the Rugby League International Federation Ltd reporting year to match the English company.

ACTION: Management to follow up on this suggestion.

Mr Knight suggested that a priority for IRL must be increased investment in the membership. Mr Kazandjian responded that the IRL 2023 budget has, for the first time, a substantial technical education budget and significant levels of investment in the global calendar, particularly around RLWCQ in all four regions.

Mr D'arro asked IRL to provide a summary of key financial indicators in the context of other world governing bodies, to enable benchmarking exercises to be carried out. Mr Edwards commented that this was possible, however it was difficult to make direct comparisons against most other similar organisations, given the size and resources of IRL. There being no further questions, Mr Grant proceeded to read out two proposed resolutions in turn.

RESOLUTION 2: *motion to approve the 2021 accounts of International Rugby League Ltd. This motion was moved by Mr Su'a (RLS) and seconded by Mr Johnson (RFL). The motion was carried.*

RESOLUTION 3: *motion to approve the 2021 accounts of Rugby League International Federation Ltd. This motion was moved by Mr Su'a (RLS) and seconded by Mr Reynolds (RLI). The motion was carried.*

Mr Grant gave Mr Martin the floor. Mr Martin provided two slides which highlighted the predicted future financial impact of decisions being taken by the organisation. These consisted of a projection of future levels of financial reserves and summaries of future planned expenditure.

6.0 APPOINT OR APPROVE THE REAPPOINTMENT OF THE AUDITORS OF THE COMPANY

TG read out the following resolutions to the members:





RESOLUTION 4: *motion to retain Newmerical as the independent accountants of Rugby League International Federation Ltd for the 2022 financial year. The motion was moved by Mr Beattie (ARLC) and seconded by Mr Lacoste (FFR13). The motion was carried.*

RESOLUTION 5: *motion to retain Haysmacintyre as the independent accountants of International Rugby League Ltd for the 2022 financial year. The motion was moved by Mr Beattie (ARLC) and seconded by Mr Johnson (RFL). The motion was carried.*

7.0 APPLICATIONS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD

Mr Grant noted there were no applications recommended by the Board for the meeting.

8.0 ACCEPT INDEPENDENT DIRECTORS

Mr Grant noted he had previously informed the plenary that he had been re-elected by the Board.

9.0 ELECTION OF LIFE MEMBERS

Mr Grant noted that the meeting papers contain the Board's recommendation to the full members to elect Graeme Thompson as a life member. He said that while the Board has the power to nominate, as the AGM notice preceded the nomination we require members to propose and second the motion. Before seeking to move the motion, Mr Grant paid tribute to Mr Thompson, who had served IRL with aplomb as a volunteer for over a decade.

RESOLUTION 6: *motion to elect Graeme Thompson as a life member of IRL. The motion was moved by Mr Reynolds (IRL) and seconded by Mr Peters (NZRL). The motion was carried.*

10.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

With no further items raised by the members, Mr Grant 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 10am.

