



GingerCloud Foundation wins 2018 Play by the Rules Award for their Modified Rugby Program

Feature articles

- ▶ **The year that was - innumerable reasons to be positive**
- ▶ **Member Protection and the importance of confidentiality**

Plus

Keeping sport safe, fair and inclusive in 2018

New Governance section

New complaint handling video case study

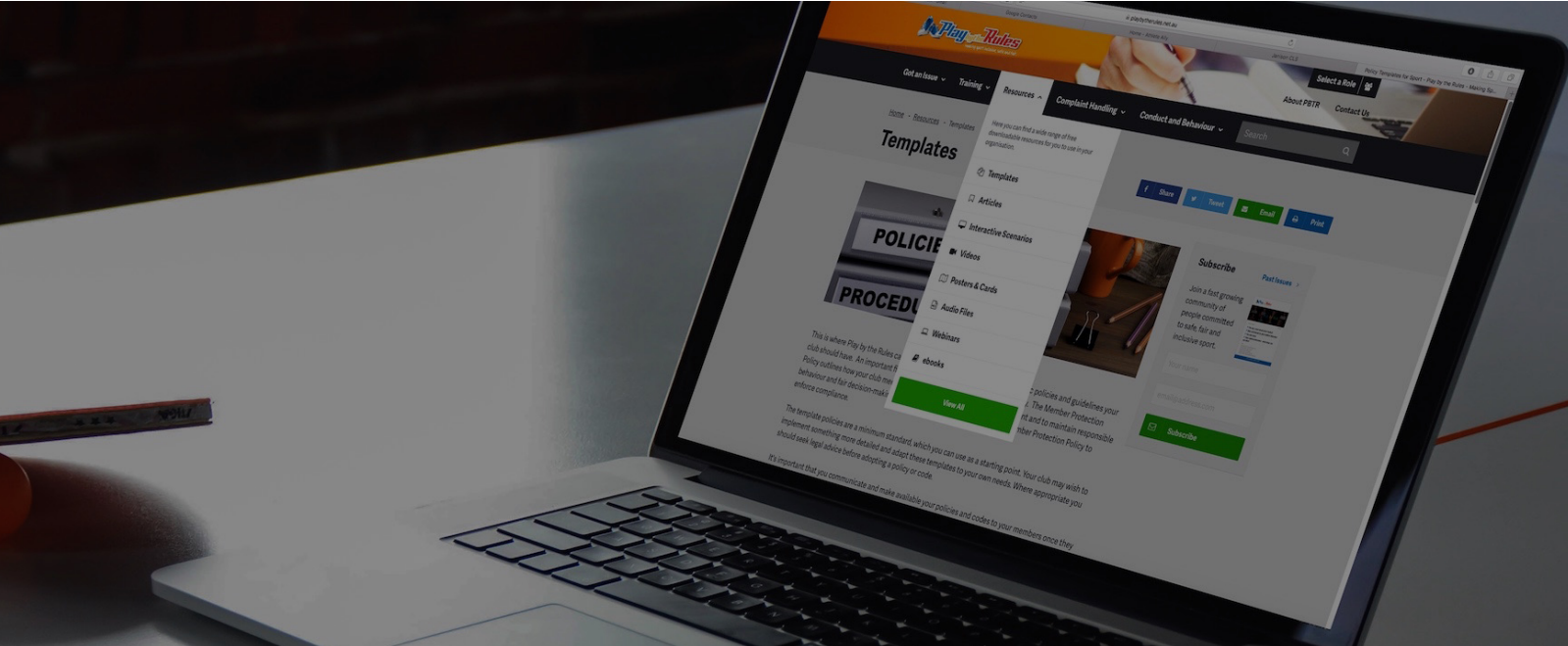


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STATE/TERRITORY Play by the Rules CONTACTS

ACT - Sean Willis (02 6207 2073)
sean.willis@act.gov.au

NSW - Shannon Dixon (02 8754 8814)
shannon.dixon@sport.nsw.gov.au

NT - (08 8999 4174)

QLD - Jo O'Neill (07 3338 9253)
jo.oneill@npsr.qld.gov.au

SA - Marie-Therese Smith (08 8457 1408)
marie-therese.smith@sa.gov.au

TAS - Al Adams
(03 6165 5094)
al.adams@dpac.tas.gov.au

VIC - Jason Calleja (03 9096 9832)
jason.calleja@sport.vic.gov.au

WA - Grant.Trew
grant.trew@dlgsc.wa.gov.au

NATIONAL - Peter Downs (02 6259 0316)
manager@playbytherules.net.au

THE EDITOR

Wow, 2019 is just around the corner! This final magazine for the year reflects on some of the activities of 2018. I give a synopsis of a big year of progress for Play by the Rules, and Clyde Rathbone reflects on the issues that have dominated the media, and questions whether they really impact on community sport.

We also profile the GingerCloud Foundation—winner of the 2018 Play by the Rules Award. This was only the second year of the Award and the judging gets harder with so many great examples of what organisations are doing to keep sport safe, fair and inclusive. We're profiling many of these in the Case Studies section on Play by the Rules, and they are well worth looking through. We're planning to expand the categories for the Award in 2019 to recognise more of the great work going on. In the meantime, thanks again for your support and we wish you and your family a happy and peaceful end to the year.

See you in 2019.



Peter Downs
Manager - Play by the Rules

News:

Keeping sport safe, fair and inclusive in 2018

Another big year for Play by the Rules is coming to an end. First and foremost, a huge thanks must go to our supporters and followers—without you Play by the Rules would not be able to do what it does. Our subscriptions went up 52 per cent in 2018, from 55,000 in 2017 to over 84,000 by the end of November. Our impact and reach goes beyond subscribers of course, but these are our immediate family! At this rate we should crack the 100,000 subscriber mark in the first half of 2019! Maybe time for a celebration?

It's been a busy year, but here are a few highlights:

- a new 'conduct and behaviour' video series with ABC journalist Paul Kennedy: <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/conduct-and-behaviour>
- a new 'Governance' section with practical tips for club officials: <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/got-an-issue/governance>
- new mediation information under the complaint handling area: <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/complaints-handling/mediation>
- a new video complaint handling scenario with Matt Shirvington: <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/complaints-handling/dealing-with-a-complaint>
- an updated MPIO Deliverers Guide and presentation material
- a new Case Studies section profiling the achievements of organisations that nominated for the Play by the Rules Award: <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/resources/case-studies>
- a new infographics section providing visual downloads on issues that impact on safe, fair and inclusive sport: <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/resources/infographics>
- a dedicated section for the video presentations coming out of the Diversity and Inclusion in Sport Forum: <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/got-an-issue/inclusion-and-diversity/inclusion-and-diversity-videos>
- a redeveloped 'child safety' section with dedicated state/territory specific pages on child safety laws: <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/got-an-issue/child-safe-sport>
- delivery of the 2018 Diversity and Inclusion in Sport Forum at Melbourne Olympic Park with 180 attendees
- delivery of the 2018 Play by the Rules Award presented at the Diversity and Inclusion in Sport Forum, the winner being the GingerCloud Foundation: <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/pbtr-award>

Very pleasingly our online course completions increased 18 per cent across all courses. Child protection online course completions rose a whopping 26 per cent to 15,908 in 2018. This could be an outcome of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to

Child Sexual Abuse but either way, it's good to see more and more people taking child safety seriously and committing to training.

We also know that people are taking actions following completion of the online course, so for many people it's not just about improving their own understanding of the issues, it's about taking action to address child safety in their organisation. If this is you, great work and keep going!

Thank you once again for your support and commitment to keeping sport safe, fair and inclusive in 2018 and we look forward to continuing our work together in 2019.



Feature article:

Winner of the 2018 Play by the Rules Award - GingerCloud Foundation's Modified Rugby Program

GingerCloud Foundation's (GingerCloud) Modified Rugby Program (MRP), established in 2014, is a world-first, club-based modified form of touch-only rugby union that moves girls, boys and young adults with learning and perceptual disabilities off the sidelines and into the main game.

GingerCloud founders, Megan and Anthony Elliott, established a working party that included other families, allied health professionals, Brothers Rugby Club, and the Queensland Rugby Union (QRU) and Australian Rugby Union (ARU), to develop a new, modified set of laws that would allow their son Max, who has a severe learning and perceptual disability, and other families like theirs to feel safe, be understood, experience regular success and belong into the long term through rugby clubs everywhere.

From only 16 participants during 2014, the MRP now engages more than 250 participants in five cities, nine clubs in three divisions (MRP original, MRP 7s and MRP Colts) across Queensland, and is heading interstate in 2019 to be hosted in Canberra. Following the success of the MRP since its pilot program, it was endorsed in May 2017 as a new division of rugby in Australia by the sport's governing body, Rugby Australia.

Through the MRP, these young people

with learning and perceptual disabilities experience the sheer thrill of playing rugby (often their first team sport) at their local rugby club. Their club becomes a 'home' not only for the participants, but also their families. All MRP players are individually matched with their own PlayerMentor, who is specifically trained through the GingerCloud Leadership Program to become a leader of the future. With the support of their on-field PlayerMentors, participants learn to play a modified form of rugby, make friends and have fun just like everyone else.

The MRP and its community are supported by its Ambassadors: former Wallaby captains Nathan Sharpe and Tim Horan AM; rugby legend Stephen Moore; and former St George Queensland Reds player Andrew Ready. In August 2018, GingerCloud Foundation announced its collaboration with the Classic Wallabies in support of the MRP to encourage more children and young adults with learning and perceptual disabilities to play rugby. They learn more about the impact of the MRP and how it changes lives (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUJKPoRE7-k>).

The origin of GingerCloud

GingerCloud's founders, Megan and Anthony Elliott, and their family were unable to experience the joy of belonging to their local community rugby club because of Max's complex cognitive disability and the resulting difficulty in accessing

any team sport. Most importantly, they had felt the pain of watching life from the sidelines as other families experienced what they had always dreamed of doing. When they started the MRP, they wanted to ensure that other families didn't experience this same pain. Their vision is to ensure that families with girls, boys and young adults with learning and perceptual disabilities can be part of the inspiring rugby community just like everyone else. The MRP creates a place through rugby clubs where young individuals and their families can 'do rugby', but can also 'do life', now and into the future. What is so special about the MRP is that it creates bonds that won't break: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BN4GFQmgoUQ>

The growth of MRP

While there is continued organic growth of the MRP in metropolitan areas, including Norths in Brisbane, a key focus of 2018 was increasing the regional and young adult participation in the program.

This year, the MRP was hosted in Toowoomba at USQ Saints across two divisions—the MRP and MRP 7s—and the program was introduced to an additional club, the Toowoomba Bears, hosting its first MRP team. Brothers Townsville also hosted their first MRP team which was a great success. This allowed more girls and boys with learning and perceptual disabilities within regional locations to become part of the MRP community.

After a successful pilot in 2017, the MRP Colts division for young adults aged 14 to 20 years with learning and perceptual disabilities was established, adding a new team at Brothers, and in 2019 will also be hosted at UQ Rugby. This expansion engaged both new young adult MRP players as well as university-aged (18 to 25) PlayerMentors, supporting the vision to nurture a generation for whom disability is normalised.

Across 2018, GingerCloud maintained a strong focus on targets and measurement using feedback surveys, participant interviews, event feedback forms, reference groups, weekly coaching feedback forms and a strong focus on bi-weekly sideline discussions. These are linked to a large number of targets ranging from growth in Player and PlayerMentor numbers, participation in the GingerCloud Leadership Program, diversity, and social and community impact.



You can read more about GingerCloud's work and other nominations for the 2018 Awards in our Case Studies section on Play by the Rules at <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/resources/case-studies>

Feature article:

The year that was - innumerable reasons to be positive



As another year draws to a close, perhaps it's time to cast our eye back upon an eventful period in Australian sport.

Predictably, the headlines in 2018 were often dominated by scandal. The unravelling of the Baggy Greens in South Africa springs to mind, with the ramifications of the ball-tampering affair continuing to haunt Australian cricket. It may be fair to say that we've never witnessed more unbridled outrage and boiling anger directed at a group of sportspeople than was foisted on Steve Smith and his team.

In my own sport of rugby union, an endless cycle of pessimism and despair appears to have engulfed the game. The Wallabies certainly haven't helped their media spin

doctors by lurching from one poor performance to the next. With that said, one must wonder if it's time for the media to take a different tack and begin exploring all that is positive with Australian rugby.

From texting scandals to the debate regarding the eligibility of transgender players and the outrage following Andrew Gaff's attack on Andrew Brayshaw, the AFL wasn't spared its own controversies.

The notion that 'if it bleeds, it leads' remains alive and well in the media at large, and no less so than on the back pages of our daily publications.

Author Jocelyn Murray captured the tendency of isolated tragedy to distract us from widespread progress when she wrote: 'When a tree falls it resounds with a thundering crash; and yet a whole forest grows in silence'.

The proclivity of the human mind to over-emphasise unpleasant news is what social psychologists refer to as a negativity bias. It appears that evolution imprinted our minds with a heightened sensitivity to negativity in order to protect us in a world that, for most of human history, has been very good at extinguishing us.

Unsurprisingly, the news media has latched onto this phenomena to feed us an endless cycle of hysteria, all of which has the toxic effect of miscalibrating our view of sport. Which is to say, it has become rather easy to believe things are far worse than they actually are.

It's also worth examining the extent to which sporting scandals translate to harmful outcomes at the grassroots level.

I've never met a child so crushed by a news article that they've abandoned so much as a minute of sport. Yet to believe the comments section of online forums or letters to the editor, one could reasonably conclude that Steve Smith has single-handedly broken the spirit of many a child. In truth, most of this hyperbole has more to do with dollars and cents. Sponsors take scandals seriously because they need 'heroes' to sell their products.

Flaws, the inescapable idiosyncrasies that make us human, aren't usually part of marketing campaigns designed to evoke a sense of awe. The hero narrative demands perfection, indeed it relies upon it. Sports stars wield tremendous marketing power and every fall from grace translates to unpalatable profit margins.

The truth is there are innumerable reasons to be positive about the effect of sport on our communities. Take the rise of women's sport. Who could have predicted its explosion just a few years ago. And the trend looks set to continue.

And what of people such as Kurt Fearnley and David Pocock. In Fearnley, we have someone who personifies the grit and determination champions are made of. And in Pocock, Australian sport has a moral compass of the highest order. Both Fearnley and Pocock are united by the desire to use their profiles to enhance the greater good, and in doing so have redefined what it means to be an athlete and a role model.

I was recently asked if current events in Australian sport have changed the advice I give to youngsters about pursuing careers in sport. My answer was that we should never let the chaos of the 'now' cloud our reading of the big picture.

Sport in Australia is burned into our national psyche precisely because it has engendered us with a sense of identity. The best facets of sport underpin how we view ourselves as a country.

Whatever grievances we may have about the current state of play, we should not forget that at its best, sport embodies an ethos of fair play, equality, loyalty and friendship.

The truth is that the responsibility for upholding these ideals falls on each of us, superstar and weekend warrior alike. What we do with this responsibility is entirely up to us..



Clyde Rathbone
www.karmawiki.com

Feature article:

Member Protection and the importance of confidentiality

Member protection plays a significant role in ensuring that clubs and organisations have suitable policies and procedures in place to create an environment where members can participate in sport free from harassment, discrimination, abuse and other harmful behaviours.

It is mandatory for all sports recognised by Sport Australia to have a Member Protection Policy. The Member Protection Policy will detail the procedures for handling complaints, and a key component of this process is ensuring that the complaint or report is dealt with confidentially.

Confidentiality—why it is important

Raising a member protection complaint can be daunting. Confidentiality helps build a relationship of trust and confidence, and can encourage members to have open conversations with the Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO). It is important that people feel comfortable throughout the complaints handling process so that they can provide as much information as possible about the issue.

Member protection issues can relate to serious allegations of misconduct, so it is also very important to maintain confidentiality to ensure that the person responding to the complaint is afforded the opportunity to respond in a confidential manner.

Practical steps for ensuring confidentiality is maintained

Have a single point of contact

The club or organisation's MPIO should exclusively handle the complaint. The complainant should also identify who the MPIO can speak to about the issues; for example, a parent, guardian or club official. Having a clear line of communication reduces the risk of information being disclosed to another person without the complainant's consent.

Safely store documents

All documentation relating to the complaint should be stored in a place where no one else can access them. For example:

- hard copy documents should be filed and stored in a locked cupboard

- documents saved electronically should be saved securely with restricted access
- emails should not be sent to generic email addresses where others may have access to the account.

Discuss matters in a private place

Whether you are meeting someone face to face or discussing the complaint over the phone, make sure that others cannot hear your discussions.

Avoid having discussions on the sidelines or in the clubrooms. Not only could it make people feel uncomfortable, it could also allow someone to overhear something they shouldn't. If you need to meet to discuss the issue, arrange a time where a private room is available or at a location away from the club, and ensure that any telephone discussions are private.

When disclosure is required

There will be certain circumstances when an MPIO, club or organisation is required to disclose the details of a member's complaint.

If the complaint needs to be investigated, details of the complaint and often the identity of the complainant need to be disclosed to the person responding to the complaint. A person may choose to remain

anonymous, however this may make it difficult to resolve the complaint.

An MPIO, club or organisation may also be required by law to report the complaint to the relevant government authorities. The laws in relation to mandatory reporting differ from state to state. A detailed summary of mandatory reporting requirements can be found at <https://aifs.gov.au/cfca/publications/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse-and-neglect>.

Disclosure may also be required if the matter is subject to police investigation.

Conclusion

Confidentiality in handling member protection complaints is essential to protect the interests of both the complainant and the respondent. Members need to be confident and trust that their MPIOs will put in place all reasonable measures to maintain confidentiality throughout the complaints handling process.



Brianna Mercer, Lawyer,
ANZSLA Member
Football West | Legal and
Disputes Officer

Note: Details of MPIO training can be found at <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/online-courses/mpio-online-course>

Website Update:

New Governance section

Governance is just a fancy word for the way your board or committee goes about its business, but good governance is essential to keep your sport safe, fair and inclusive.

It may not be the sexiest of subjects, but it is important to get it right, otherwise all kinds of unnecessary problems can occur. Seemingly small problems can escalate quickly if they are not handled well. Poor governance can cause problems when issues get out of hand and processes are not followed.

Our Governance section provides a series of practical tips to help committees or board members get organised and conduct their AGM.

To see these tips go to <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/got-an-issue/governance>



Resource Profile:

New complaint handling video case study

As a club administrator it can be confusing to know what to do when problems arise. Most people know that a sports tribunal or hearing committee deals with on-field complaints, but are less sure about what to do about off-field behaviour (for example, sexual harassment) or unfair administrative decisions (for example, unfair rules).

Increasingly national and state sporting and recreation organisations are developing Member Protection and other policies and procedures to help guide their member clubs in dealing with these complaints.

It is important that clubs respond to all complaints, follow their organisation's policies, and seek clarification from their state or national sporting or recreation organisation (or an external authority) if they are unsure about what to do.

To help understand some of the pitfalls of complaint handling, we've released a new video case study. Matt Shirvington guides you through the sequence of videos. You will see that the scenario is not handled in textbook fashion. This is done to highlight some of the potential pitfalls of the complaint process. It also talks about the role of the Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO). This scenario will be beneficial even if you do not have an MPIO.

To view the case study go to our Dealing with a Complaint section at <https://www.playbytherules.net.au/complaints-handling/dealing-with-a-complaint>



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Share and spread the word

One easy way to keep up to date and support safe, fair and inclusive sport is to share Play by the Rules across social media. We post every day on Facebook and Twitter and have audio files on Soundcloud and an extensive collection of videos on YouTube and Vimeo.



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To make Play by the Rules possible, we also work with

