



## Media release

### Successful "Rugby in the Park" pilot program in Airds, Claymore and Minto winds up for the year on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2005

**Monday 5th December 2005:** With young people in Airds, Claymore and Minto facing significant barriers to participation in activities that many take for granted, the new Rugby Youth Foundation selected the three areas in Sydney's Campbelltown region for the 10 week pilot of its program "Rugby in the Park".

"Rugby in the Park" is based on engaging disadvantaged and at-risk youth through rugby. Based at school ovals and community parks, it provides a structured but fun after-school program which is designed to build self-esteem and teach important values and life skills. "Rugby in the Park" is free, all equipment is provided and participants receive fruit and a free sausage sizzle each session.

More than 300 children and young people have registered for the program since it commenced in October. Participation is open to any young person residing in the region.

Participants from the three locations will come together at **Airds High School, from 4 pm to 6pm on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December** to celebrate the program's success in 2005 and its continuation in 2006.

A key element of the program is the development of high school students who volunteer to become Coach Mentors and role models to primary school children.

Rugby Youth Foundation CEO Carrie Elton said "Building confidence, skill, interest levels and commitment of young people, some of who may be overlooked in other programs, to become youth leaders and role models in their communities, is at the heart of program."

Rugby training has been provided by NSW Rugby Union, and more than 20 students have successfully completed the course and are now accredited Smart Rugby coaches."

The Foundation has been working closely with Airds High School, Sarah Redfern High School, Eagle Vale High School, Briar Road Primary School and community workers in Airds, in the development and implementation of the program

Andrew Phelan of Airds High School who co-ordinates the Airds High School student volunteers remarks "Rugby in the Park has been a huge success in its inaugural year at Airds. Youth Coaches are taking great pride in the program, and the relationships developing between them and local primary school students will also assist in the Year 6 primary school students' transition to high school in 2006"

"Rugby in the Park" is set to kick off as a regular weekly after-school program in each of the three locations throughout 2006, and will provide a range of options to participants built around positive activities and teaching important values and life skills.

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"Rugby in the Park" is sponsored by Wests Leagues Club (Campbelltown), Macquarie Bank Sports and NSW Rugby Union

The ATO has endorsed the Rugby Youth Foundation as a Public Benevolent Institution with Deductible Gift Recipient Status.