

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Friday, 11 August 2023 2:54 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: RE: NRL - announcement of Southern-hemisphere tournament [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii).

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Note the name is now the 'Pacific Championships'.

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we'll contribute over \$7 million s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Director | Pacific Sports Section
Polynesia and Sports Branch | Polynesia, Micronesia and Development Division
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Monday, 14 August 2023 4:13 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: RE: NRL - announcement of Southern-hemisphere tournament [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Here are some additional points.

- Australia and Pacific countries are connected by our geography, longstanding historical ties, shared values, and enduring love of sport – in particular rugby league.
- Sport endures as a rich part of our bilateral relationships, transcending national boundaries
 - it has a unique ability to connect people and gives us more ways to come together.
- The Australian Government is proud to partner with the National Rugby League to establish the Pacific Championships.
- This partnership represents a two-year \$7 million investment to deliver on our commitment to fostering sporting excellence in the Pacific.
- The inaugural Pacific Championships will feature men's and women's rugby league teams from Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and Cook Islands.
- The funding will highlight elite pathways for Pacific athletes as well as create opportunities to develop coaches, referees, and administrators and bolster the sports economy in the region.

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Cheers

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 14 August 2023 6:54 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: RE: NRL - announcement of Southern-hemisphere tournament [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

OFFICIAL

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Regarding point four your are 100% correct.

And on point five, there is pathway elements for player development s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Hope this helps

Cheers

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Monday, 14 August 2023 5:08 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Subject: RE: NRL - announcement of Southern-hemisphere tournament [SEC=OFFICIAL]


Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks so much. Just thought I'd lay out the main questions we had as well:

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- s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Can I confirm that's what the \$7 million will be going towards?

• s 22(1)(a)(ii)



Cheers,

s 22(1)(a)(ii) Adviser


Melanesia | Pacific | International Division

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

s 22(1)(a)(ii)


| w. www.pmc.gov.au

Ngunnawal Country, One National Circuit, Barton ACT 2606 | PO Box 6500 CANBERRA ACT 2600



The Department acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and emerging Elders and Traditional Custodians of Country, and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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MEDIA MESSAGES

- I'm pleased to announce Australia is committing over **\$7 million over the next two years to support the new Pacific Rugby League Championships**, in partnership with the National Rugby League.
- This new competition demonstrates Australia's long-standing commitment to **fostering sporting excellence** in the region.
- The event will showcase **elite-level Pacific rugby league**, played in Australia and expanding to the Pacific, reaching a Pacific audience.
- The Pacific Championships will feature **men's and women's teams**, ensuring women's teams also have increased access to elite-level competition.
- Tournaments like this bring the Pacific together, increase mutual understanding, and strengthen connections between our people and countries.

If raised – How will the \$7 million be used?

- The \$7 million will be used to fund the Pacific Championships tournaments over the next two years, including logistics and game expenses.
- The Australian Government's broader partnership with the NRL delivers enhanced elite-level pathways for coaches, referees and administrators in the region.

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If raised – Will Australia financially back the PNG bid for an NRL team?

- Australia will continue to engage with the PNG Bid Board and the NRL to determine how best we can support the bid.

- The Government has not yet considered funding beyond announcing support for player pathways and our long-standing support for rugby league in PNG through PacificAus Sports and Team Up programs.

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MS23-000859

To: Prime Minister

SUBJECT: Announcement of the Pacific Rugby League Championships
EVENT WITH: Minister for International Development and the Pacific; Peter V'landys; Andrew Abdo; Mal Meninga; media
TIME/DATE: 9.00-10.00am 16 August 2023
VENUE: Gambaro's Hotel, 33 Caxton Street, Brisbane

Event Details

- You will attend the launch of the Pacific Rugby League Championships, alongside the Minister for International Development and the Pacific, the Hon Pat Conroy MP. You will announce \$7 million over two years to support the series, which will be delivered by the NRL with support from DFAT.

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Key Points


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- The Government's \$7 million in funding will cover delivery of matches in PNG in 2023 and Fiji in 2024, including travel, accommodation, game operations, event logistics and tournament activities. NRL-led development and knowledge-sharing workshops will take place alongside the matches.
- The Australian Government's broader partnership with the NRL helps to deliver pathways for male and female athletes, coaches, referees and administrators from the Pacific.

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Papua New Guinea Bid for a National Rugby League team

s 22(1)(a)(ii)



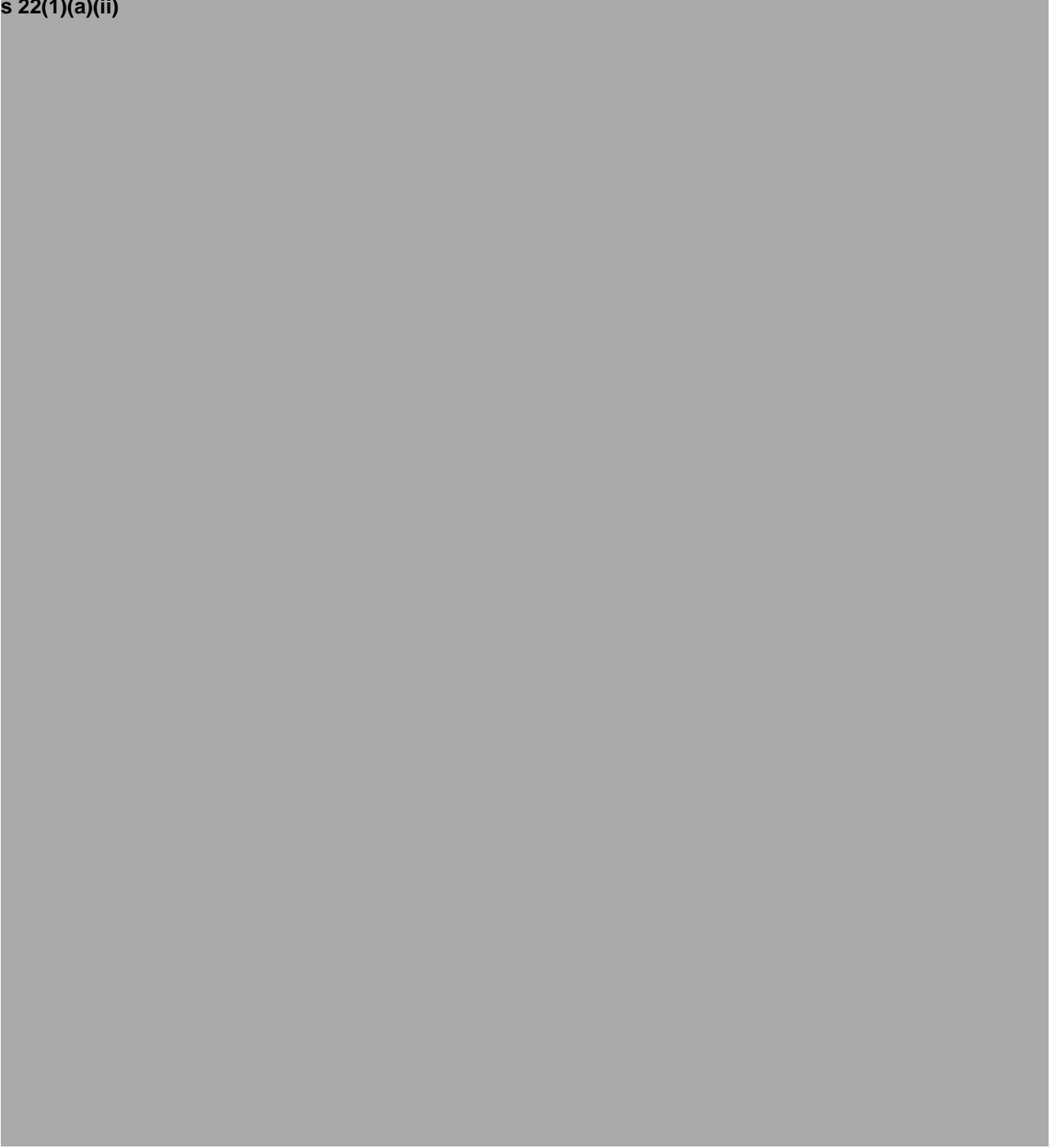
Does the Australian Government support Papua New Guinea's bid for an NRL team?

- s 22(1)(a)(ii)
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- \$5.5 million has been committed over three years (2023/24-2025/26) to support the PNG NRL Bid Board develop player pathways and a talent academy for PNG youth
 - : s 22(1)(a)(ii)
 - :
- A further \$7 million over two years (2023-24 – 2024-25) was announced by Prime Minister Albanese, Minister Conroy and the NRL in August 2023 to deliver the Pacific Championships
 - : s 47C
 - : the Australian Government's contribution will enable PNG and Fiji to host matches in 2023 and 2024 respectively.

Will Australia financially back the PNG bid?

- . The Australian Government will continue to engage with the PNG Government and the PNG NRL Bid Board to determine how best we can support the bid
 - The Australian Government has not yet considered funding beyond the recent announcements for the Pacific Championships and the PNG player pathways
 - complemented by our long-standing support for rugby league in PNG through PacificAus Sports and Team Up.


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Background


PNG's NRL bid

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On 19 July 2023, Minister Conroy committed \$5.5 million **s 47C**
s 47C) to support player pathways for boys and girls in PNG through coaching development, talent identification and player academy programs.

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PacificAus Sports also supports the delivery of the Pacific Rugby League Championships

- The Pacific Championships will showcase elite-level Pacific rugby league, played in the Pacific, for a Pacific audience and continue to build a strong sports economy in the region.
- The Pacific Championships will be co-hosted by Australia, New Zealand and PNG in 2023 (14 October to 5 November), and Australia, New Zealand and Fiji in 2024.
- Australian Government funding of \$7 million, announced on 16 August 2023 by Prime Minister Albanese, will enable PNG and Fiji to host matches in 2023 and 2024 respectively.

Team Up rugby league program: League for Life

Delivered through the Team Up program in partnership with NRL and their Pacific affiliates, the League for Life program uses rugby league to create positive social change with and for the people in the Pacific (\$7 million, 2020-2025).

As a 'sports for development' program, its goals are to use the sport of rugby league to engage and develop communities to improve health, gender equality, with a particular focus on prevention of gender-based violence, social cohesion, and participation opportunities for people of all abilities.

Questions without Notice

Nil

Questions on Notice

Additional Estimates: October 2023

- In QON 2667 Senator Birmingham sought clarification on the \$7 million funding for the Pacific Championships. The QON response advised that \$1 million of the \$7 million commitment will come from the PacificAus Sports non-ODA budget.

Recent Prime Ministerial and Ministerial Comments

- On 24 September 2023, the [Daily Telegraph](#) and [The Australian](#) reported that expanding the NRL competition to include a team in Papua New Guinea would minimise China's growing influence in the Pacific region. The articles quoted **Minister Conroy**:
 - "We've made no secret of the fact of the intense geopolitical competition in the region...Rugby league is critical in deepening our relationships in the Pacific. Some would find it unusual for sport to feature that essentially. I think it's a great opportunity."
 - [When asked about reports that the government is prepared to give a \$200 million, 10-year commitment to directly fund an 18th team] "Those figures have not come from us," Conroy said. "We can sell it (to the Australian people) and whenever I am on the street people see it as a no-brainer. Our security is linked with our region and us being the partner of

choice for our region. Nothing can bring our two countries closer together than a rugby league team. This is a really good investment from a national point of view.”

- On 23 September 2023, in a [radio interview in PNG](#), **Minister Conroy** said, “Bringing us together through rugby league is a vision of Prime Minister Albanese ...Rugby league is so significant, the Australian Prime Minister used it as a centrepiece for his speech to your parliament, saying that we want to see a Papua New Guinean team in the National Rugby League competition and we’re supporting that.”
- On 24 July 2023, in an article in The Australian, **Minister Conroy** reiterated the Australian Government’s support for a PNG NRL team: “The Government of Australia wants to see a Papua New Guinea team playing in our NRL competition...We want to see it happen and we’re here to support it where it makes sense. Ultimately, it’s a question for the NRL, but we’re supporting it.”
- On 22 July 2023, in a doorstep in Port Moresby, **Minister Conroy** said, “I want to see a team with a Papua New Guinean identity playing in the NRL to honour the shared history between our two countries. Like, we are the closest of neighbours and the dearest of friends.”
- On 18 May 2023, in an interview with [SEN Sydney Breakfast](#), **Prime Minister Albanese** said of rugby league in PNG that he was a ‘big fan and I think they deserve a team. They are so passionate about their footy.’
- In **Prime Minister Albanese’s** [speech](#) to PNG Parliament on 12 January 2023, he said, “And today I affirm my view that I want to see a PNG-based, Pacific Islander team compete in the National Rugby League competition.”

Relevant Media Reporting

- On 19 October 2023, a [7 News](#) online article said the expansion to 18 NRL teams had become a “one-horse race” for PNG according to a 7 News rugby league journalist. This story was subsequently picked up by [Fox Sports](#) and [News.com.au](#). All articles claim the Australian Government is backing the PNG bid with \$25 million per year.
- On 16 August 2023, when reporting on the launch of the Pacific Championships, the [Financial Review](#) wrote “the government has reportedly indicated privately it is prepared to help underwrite a team with up to \$25 million a year from the foreign aid budget.” The article also noted “PNG is the only country where rugby league is the national sport, and Prime Minister James Marape is heavily backing the bid as a way to unite the population. Mr Albanese threw his support behind the concept, which would have the team play games in both Port Moresby and Australia, with Cairns touted as a likely hub.
- On 24 July 2023, the Daily Telegraph reported that during his recent visit to PNG, Minister Conroy said ‘The Government of Australia wants to see a Papua New Guinea team playing in our NRL competition’. The article stated that Minister Conroy gave his commitment to a \$5.5 million development package which will help fast-track PNG’s desire to be part of a growing NRL competition. The article stated that the federal government is financially and publicly backing an ambitious bid to have PNG in the NRL

to help protect Australia's interests in the Pacific and ward off the growing influence of China in the region.

- On 20 July 2023, The Australian [reported](#) that Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape said a PNG NRL team would be a unifying force for the nation in response to the Australian Government's announcement of \$5.5 million towards PNG's bid for an NRL team. The article reported that Prime Minister Marape remarked 'even during challenging times, the pride of Papua New Guineans in rallying behind our national team is second to none' at a dinner event hosted by the PNG NRL Bid Board.
- On 5 June 2023, The Australian reported that Australian Rugby League Commission Chair Peter V'landys has revealed plans for an expanded NRL competition by 2026. Chair V'landys said "PNG is on the top of the list at the moment for expansion" and remarked "we are in commercially-sensitive discussions with the federal government". Vlandys went on to say "naturally we want to assist the government in Australia's national security and we see unlimited potential in a PNG team - the federal government is right behind this". V'landys also stated "we have a very good relationship with the prime minister (Anthony Albanese), the sports minister (Anika Wells) and Pat Conroy (defence minister), so we will start some pretty deep negotiations with them in the next few weeks".
- On 28 April 2023, the Australian Financial Review reported (following release of the Defence Strategic Review) that 'sponsoring a team in rugby league-mad Papua New Guinea is the simplest – and by far cheapest – option to secure Australia's vital northern sea approaches'. The article stated that PNG desperately wants it to happen and the NRL is interested but would require compensation for TV rights and commercial deals.
- On 14 March 2023, NewsCorp [reported](#) that the Australian Government was providing 'tens of millions of dollars in financial support to help fund a Pasifika team'. The article stated that a Pasifika franchise was the leading contender to win a license to an 18th NRL team, and would be based full-time in Cairns, hosting several games in Samoa, Tonga and Papua New Guinea.
- PNG Government announced its support for a PNG team in the NRL on 4 May 2022, which was picked up in reporting by Australian domestic media ([SMH](#) and [ABC](#)).

Clearance

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2667 – Additional Estimates: 21 September 2023

Topic: Pacific Rugby League Championships

Senator: Simon Birmingham

Question

1. In respect of the \$7 million committed over the next two years supporting the establishment of the Pacific Rugby League Championships, how much of the funding is from within the Non-ODA Pacific Sports Program (PacificAus Sports.)
2. Please provide a list of any other programs from which funding is being drawn.
3. Has any additional funding been budgeted since presentation of the 2023-24 budget papers; and if so, how much and for which program/s.

Answer

1. \$1 million of the \$7 million commitment will come from the PacificAus Sports non-ODA budget.
2. No funding will be drawn from other programs to support the 2023 and 2024 Pacific Championships.
3. No further funding has been budgeted for the Pacific Championships since the presentation of the 2023-24 budget papers.

MEDIA RELEASE - SUPPORT FOR PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S NRL PATHWAY

21 July 2023

Minister for International Development and the Pacific

During my visit to Papua New Guinea this week, I was proud to announce \$5.5 million to support Papua New Guinea's pathway to having a team in Australia's National Rugby League competition.

This investment by the Albanese Government will support player pathways and a talent academy for PNG youth, recognising their great potential and passion for the game. It will help develop the business case for a PNG team to play in the NRL.

It is the next step in our support for rugby league in PNG, building on long-running support for the sport at the grassroots, through development programs like League for Life, and high-performance programs under PacificAus Sports.

Talent identification and player development are a critical part of developing a competitive and sustainable PNG NRL team.

Australia and Papua New Guinea share a passion for rugby league, and we know how important having an NRL team is for the people of PNG. Our countries are the close neighbours and friends and there's huge potential for rugby league to bring our countries even closer together.

I was pleased to convey Australia's commitment to work together to support the bid to PNG's Prime Minister James Marape and Chairman of the PNG NRL Bid Board Mr Wapu Sonk.

As Prime Minister Anthony Albanese acknowledged during his visit to PNG in January 2023, a PNG team in the NRL would strengthen Australia's bilateral relationship with Papua New Guinea.

MEDIA RELEASE – PACIFIC CHAMPIONSHIPS**16 Aug 2023****Prime Minister, Minister for International Development and the Pacific**

The Albanese Government is partnering with the National Rugby League to establish the new Pacific Rugby League Championships.

The inaugural Pacific Championships will feature women's and men's teams from Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, and Tonga.

The Government is committing \$7 million over the next two years so that seven Pacific countries are included in the Championships and for games to be played in Papua New Guinea and Fiji as well as Australia and New Zealand.

The Pacific shares a passion for rugby league. These Championships recognise a desire from Pacific rugby league communities for increased elite-level competition, played in the Pacific, for Pacific audiences.

The competition builds on Australia's long-standing support for developing sporting excellence in our region, particularly in rugby league, strengthening the Pacific family. It will deliver high-performance pathways for Pacific athletes, coaches, referees and administrators, and continue to build the viability of sport in the region.

Games will be played in Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea this year, with the 2023 tournament scheduled to take place from Saturday 14 October 2023 to Sunday 5 November 2023.

Papua New Guinea, New Zealand and Australia will co-host the tournament this year and Fiji will co-host the competition with Australia in 2024.

More information on the tournament, including the full match schedule, is available at [National Rugby League](#).

Quotes attributable to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese MP:

"The Pacific Championships mark the beginning of an exciting new phase of international rugby league competition in the Pacific for both women and men.

"Geography makes us neighbours, but through sport we build strong and lasting ties across the Pacific family."

Quotes attributable to Minister for International Development and the Pacific Pat Conroy MP:

"Given around half the players in the NRL are of Pasifika heritage, and our shared love of sport, this Competition will bring people from across the Pacific even closer together.

"The Championships will provide a new opportunity for athletes in the Pacific to play and develop professionally, and will inspire a generation of girls and boys across our region."

Quotes attributable to ARLC Commissioner Kate Jones:

"The Commission's focus on growing the international game will combine with an equally strong desire to grow rugby league in the Pacific.

"Importantly, the international matches will be highlighted by both men's and women's matches."

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Wednesday, 6 September 2023 3:45 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: International - Melanesia
Subject: FW: Grant Guidelines Approval: Pacific Rugby League Championships
 [SEC=OFFICIAL:Sensitive]

Hi s 22(1)
 () (ii)

Thanks for consulting PM&C. We are comfortable with the overall risk assessment.

The risks are those traditionally associated with international sport events and are nothing out of the ordinary (injuries, safeguarding, availability of trained staff in the Pacific). Risks with an assessed likelihood of possibly happening seem to be well mitigated.

- s 22(1)(a)(ii)
- Criticism of sports funding. It's \$6 million over two years and will likely be seen as a positive in the region. Seems to be no negative media coverage associated with recent funding given to the NRL PNG Bid (\$5.5 million).
- s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Best wishes

s
 22(1)

s 22(1)(a)(ii) Senior Adviser
 Melanesia | Pacific Branch | International Division
 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

s 22(1)(a)(ii)
 s 22(1)(a)(ii) w. www.pmc.gov.au

Nggunawal Country, One National Circuit Barton ACT 2600 | PO Box 6500 CANBERRA ACT 2600

The Department acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and emerging Elders and Traditional Custodians of Country, and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Wednesday, 6 September 2023 1:20 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii); Population Health, Primary Care and Sport
Cc: International - Melanesia
Subject: RE: Grant Guidelines Approval: Pacific Rugby League Championships [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: Pacific Rugby League Championships - Grant Guidelines.docx; Pacific Rugby League Championships - Risk Register.xlsx; Pacific Rugby League Championships - Risk Assessment.docx

Hi s
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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii) (though we will follow up with DFAT separately on the discrepancy between the \$7 million announcement figure and \$6 million here). Grateful for your thoughts.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Kind regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Adviser

Melanesia | Pacific | International Division

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii) | w. www.pmc.gov.au

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From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Wednesday, 6 September 2023 10:42 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: International - Melanesia s 47E(d)
Subject: RE: Grant Guidelines Approval: Pacific Rugby League Championships [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s
 22(1)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

The risk assessment (word doc) says - Total cost of program and cost over the Budget and forward estimates: AUD\$6 million. I thought we were committing over \$7 million but maybe this particular grant only covers \$6 million and the other \$1 million is from ODA/elsewhere?

Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Co-Sponsoring Entities:	N/A
Program/grant opportunity:	PacificAus Sports: Pacific Rugby League Tournament

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Total cost of project:	Total cost of program and cost over the Budget and forward estimates: AUD\$6 million
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From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Monday, 7 August 2023 3:05 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: NRL state of play [SEC=PROTECTED]

PROTECTED

Hi team,

Please see below a wrap up of recent NRL developments:

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- s 22(1)(a)(ii)
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- MIDP attended a PNG NRL bid board corporate dinner in Port Moresby (19 July), where he announced \$5.5 million of funding to support PNG's NRL bid and elite player pathways.

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From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Tuesday, 25 July 2023 1:27 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: PNG NRL notes [SEC=PROTECTED]

PROTECTED

Hi s
 22(1)

Please see below notes from your meeting with s. Let me know if you'd like a more condensed version to send to
 22(1) s 22(1)
 () (ii)

- During MIDP's trip to PNG (18-20 July) he announced \$5.5 million of funding to support PNG's NRL bid and elite player pathways
 s 45, s 47C

Thanks,

s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Adviser

Melanesia | Pacific | International Division
 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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