www.warugbyleague.com.au **www. westcoastpirates.com.au**

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Western Australian Rugby League Launches West Coast Pirates

The Western Australian Rugby League today launched the ***West Coast Pirates*** as the new face of Rugby League in the West. It is part of the WARL's Official NRL Franchise Bid for the potential future expansion of the game.

The presentation, held at Fraser's State Reception Centre, is an important step for the organisation as part of its drive to regain a WA team in the elite national competition. It included media, sponsors and other key stakeholders from the Rugby League community.

Chairman Richard Campbell was pleased to finally get the announcement in the public domain.

"We are excited with the brand and felt it time we opened it up to the community. Even though some people may question the deviation from the established Reds, our research has shown it will be a fantastic new identity for the game.

"The Reds will always be part of our heritage. This launch comes as the second phase of our bid process after launching our Vision 2020 two weeks ago. The next phase is the completion of the actual bid document which is well in hand," Campbell said.

Chief Executive Officer John Sackson went on to explain the decision and the process from here.

"The brand is fresh, exciting and new to Australian sport and we believe it has a marketing edge that will be enthusiastically embraced by both our stakeholders and those new to the game.

"While the bid process and any moves on expansion are very dependent on the Australian Rugby League Commission's strategic plan, there is an expectation that we need to be prepared and ready.

"From our conversations with the ARLC we understand there is a willingness to develop the profile of Rugby League in Western Australia and we expect that the television rights, being negotiated at the moment, will be announced in September with the strategic plan soon after.

"Equally important to this announcement is our message about presenting a 'whole of game' approach to our bid which ensures the local game not only survives but thrives with the introduction of an NRL license. Our statewide development of Rugby League through the grassroots club and school competitions will be tied to the success of the national team for the long term.

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"There is a genuine excitement for the game in Western Australia and we are prepared to work with the ARLC, the state government and our stakeholders to see it happen. We honestly believe it not to be a case of if, but more when this will occur. Hopefully our preparedness will assist that process," Sackson said.

The strength of the bid is strongly supported by the WA Government through the $96 million upgrade of nib Stadium, and their willingness to see the sport grow in WA. Furthermore, there is a growing population keen to see Rugby League prosper in this state.

The West Coast Pirates promotional campaign will be undertaken across all major media in the coming months.

It has been made possible through the support of sponsors who are already getting behind the bid. Founding Western Reds sponsor and current WARL sponsor Cash Converters have jumped on board along with new sponsors McDonald's, Player (Racing & Wagering WA) and The Complete Group.

All major media outlets in Western Australia have also contributed to the campaign.

The bid process will need to reflect strong community support, and the campaign will play a key role in getting people excited and committed to the West Coast Pirates. Through the new website, www.westcoastpirates.com.au, they will have the opportunity to become a supporter or be part of the Pirate Crew.

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