

**World Deaf Rugby WDR  
Conference  
YHA Meeting Rooms, Sydney Australia  
April 25<sup>th</sup> 2018**

**Attendess:**

Country	Name	Position
Hong Kong RFU	Stuart Gunn	Rugby Participation & Inclusive Manager
Hong Kong RFU	Sures Gurung	Rugby Participation & Inclusive Officer
Japan Deaf Rugby	Takeyati Okra	Head Coach
Japan Deaf Rugby	Atsuhiko Hino	Chairman
New Zealand Deaf Rugby	Lyneen Allen	International Secretary
New Zealand Deaf Rugby	Kevin Pivac	Life Member
New Zealand Deaf Rugby Womens	Samantha Diaz	Player
England Deaf Rugby Union	No Show	
Mongolia Deaf Rugby Union	No Show	
Ghana Deaf Rugby Union	No Show	
Italy Deaf Rugby	Alan Velentino Convito	Chairman
Wales Deaf Rugby	Gwynne Griffiths	Chairman
Wales Deaf Rugby	Fixture Secretary	Matt Greenwich
Fiji Deaf Rugby	Paula Ranatawake	Manager
Fiji Deaf Rugby	S. Bukatavo	President
Fiji Deaf Rugby	Ms. Vani Cakau	Secretary
Australia Deaf Rugby	Doug Piper	Sports Trainer
Australia Deaf Rugby	Mick Conroy	President
Australia Deaf Rugby	Jason Boseley	Player
Australia Deaf Rugby Womens	Rona Lazo	Player
Australia Deaf Rugby Womens	Lauren Townsend	Player
Argentina Deaf Rugby	Mariano Matut	President
Argentina Deaf Rugby	Marcelo Reggiardo	Manager
Argentina Deaf Rugby	Agustin Reggiardo	Secretary
South Africa Deaf Rugby	Michael Oosthuyzen	President
World Deaf Rugby	Tony Stoyles	Chairman
World Deaf Rugby	Nick Marlor	Vice Chairman
Event Organiser	Johanna Plante	Australi
Event Organiser	Graham Leonard	Australia

## Aims

Review 2016 World Deaf Rugby aims

- *“WDR objective is the promotion, development and support of all levels of rugby, for Deaf and HOH persons.*
- *Act as the coordinating body for all Deaf Rugby Nations.*
- *Presenting possible changes/Amendments of Rugby Law(s) for presentation to World Rugby”.*

### *International Perspectives:*

#### **World Rugby Union**

WDR has had 4 meetings with World Rugby (WR) unsuccessfully (to date) seeking recognition, although WR do acknowledge WDR Aims and cause. WR preference is for each national Deaf Rugby Unions to be affiliated with their home national rugby unions. However, this has not happened in all cases. WR may be able to assist individual affiliations, if all the issues are highlighted - WDR need to understand the issues.

Affiliation has implications for touring groups e.g. recognition, insurance, access to referees, playing/training facilities and resourcing. It will help Deaf Rugby Unions in the long term.

Bylaw 3: *can't prevent the participation of individuals to play rugby*

Approach home unions from a perspective of recognition and affiliation rather than funding, it's important to get acknowledgements and recognition, if possible.

Each attending national team delegate presented an overview of who they are.

**Wales:** WDRU to be recognized by the Welsh Rugby Union, had to have approved:

- 1) Constitution
- 2) a 3 year plan, and
- 3) an Equality policy

WDRU started the process in 1992 and received approval 1998 and is recognized as a charity. This has positive benefits for sponsors.

Now rugby is an Olympic sport, more governments willing to fund rugby. Does your national rugby constitution include 'equality' statements? If not why not and is it enacted?

## **New Zealand**

Have to education the 'home union' at what 'deafness' is e.g. language, culture etc.

UN Convention of "Rights for People with a Disability" CRPD means it is against the law to discriminate against people with a disability. Needs to be a part of any constitution.

NZDRU started their process in 1998, became associated to the NZRU through the Auckland RU, which is a provincial entity. NZ are willing to share the documentation they developed.

## **Japan**

Japan Deaf Rugby is a 'not for profit' (NFP) organization. Sponsorship comes from companies while Japan Rugby provide the coaches.

Comment from the floor: "While many Deaf rugby organisations are incorporated, WDRU isn't. What if WDRU became incorporated, the national Deaf unions also become individual incorporated, then also become incorporated with/under/to the WDRU.

All of the deaf rugby unions need to work together with continuity of purpose.

## **Fiji**

Fiji Deaf Rugby Union (FDRU) approached Fiji Rugby Union for affiliation but were rejected. The FDRU and the FRU had had an earlier affiliation but this was dissolved through the FDRU not having a constitution.

The FDRU are in the initial stages of developing a constitution, strategic plan etc. similar to the successful processes WDRU and HKDRU provided.

## **Italy**

Italian Deaf Rugby Union (IDRU) recognized by the Italian Rugby Union IRU but given very little support by them. IDRU has no funds or resources. Rugby is a minority sport over shadowed by soccer.

## **Hong Kong**

Is a minority sport but one where the Hong Kong RFC (KHRFC) has a community person appointed. Introduced rugby into the two schools for the Deaf using the focus of "teaching rugby through rugby".

HKDRU is recognized as a charity (which has positive benefits for sponsors) through the *Charity Foundation* which comes under the HKDRUs' banner. Makes it easier to get sponsorship and dovetails into corporate goals. Their tours are funded by corporate donations not by HKRFU. Their focus is on the positive aspects of rugby.

## South Africa

Was told by the SARU to “look after themselves” although they do recognize them. Very difficult in terms of player numbers and where they are located to meet SARFU criteria for full recognition.

SARFU require eight full deaf teams, two teams per province for full recognition. Some provinces have enough players for two teams plus, but others may only have two players per province. The long distances between provincial centers also causes MAJOR difficulties.

Hearing loss eligibility is 55db as set by the *SA Deaf Sports* association. It is the same for the Deaf Olympics.

## Australia

Stressed the importance of the *Barbarian* teams as they provide the opportunity for Deaf players to play. This is irrespective of whether or not their home unions have full teams or not. Australia are affiliated with Deaf Sports Australia, it works for them on all terms.

## Argentina

Members of CADES, adhere to 55dB and no financial support from AUR. Very active rugby programme and extremely keen to grow Deaf Rugby.

## General Discussions:

### *World Deaf Rugby*

Each country to nominate 2 delegates and provide their email addresses to the executive committee

Each country to provide information as to what ‘social media’ they use and what they prefer. Will inform on the wider view

Each country only get ONE vote. No membership fee.

Is WDR an incorporated entity? ...Question of governance?

The establishment of a formal WDR organisation has to be continued and completed

e.g. Constitution, short and long term plans, and an equity policy.

Needs to be done ASAP, so all are involved in the discussion for the next World Deaf Rugby 7s.

### *Next World Deaf Rugby 7s*

Countries interested in holding the next World Deaf 7s will need to tender for it.

Questions raised as to how often, when are applications due, who to ?

*Kevin Privac New Zealand*

Advocated for games of 15 a side rugby. Having a possible 8 team World 15s over two weeks. Meeting stated while it is certainly a long term goal, it would depend on each unions player base, and their finances. At this moment in time wouldn't be inclusive of the majority of the developing Deaf home unions.

Discussion largely based on

- 1) Individual Deaf rugby unions' successful policy development and recognition,
- 2) The various physical, geographic and social differences between the various unions.

**ACTION:**

# Unions will send the WDR electronic copies of their documentation i.e. Constitutions, short/long term plans, Equality policies.

# The WDR will establish a resource collection of documents developed by the various unions eg Constitutions, short/long term plans, Equality policies. These can be used by other unions as 'idea starters' for other unions.

# Applications called for convening the next World Deaf Rugby 7's

The meeting was followed by a presentation by the Japanese Deaf Rugby regarding their desire and preparedness to hold the next Deaf Rugby World 7s in 2021.

Meeting closed 5:34 pm