



27th February 2010

Media Release

Parramatta Stadium Trust – Setting the Record Straight

The Parramatta Stadium Trust today expressed its disappointment at attempts by some officials of the Parramatta NRL Club to make it the scapegoat for the club's mishandling of scheduling around the first game of the NRL season against St George Illawarra.

For the past twenty years, the Trust has had an excellent relationship with the Parramatta NRL Club built on mutually agreeable terms and is dismayed at the inflammatory comments made by the Parramatta NRL Club suggesting that the existing hire agreement is in any way unfair or outside a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Trust officials said it was ill-considered of the Club to announce a move of a sell-out game to another venue, without first assessing their obligations under the hire agreement with their home ground, and the potential costs involved.

And it is not as if they hadn't time to consider the move earlier. The Trust understands that the Parramatta NRL Club was insistent on staging the first game of the 2010 NRL season against St George at the Parramatta Stadium at the time the draw came out in November 2009.

For the Club at the 'eleventh hour' to decide the game is now so important for the code, that it should be moved to another venue, shows total disregard for their contractual obligations to the Trust and gross disrespect for the Trust that has supported the Eels and the code of rugby league for the past 20 years.

It appears lack of foresight has prevailed and the 'flexibility' of the hire agreement carries no weight in the blame for this error.

According to the Trust, the Parramatta NRL Club signed an agreement in 2008 that included a clause stating, that a mutually agreed sum of \$100,000 would be paid to the Trust, should the Club take another game to another venue. This amount was an agreed estimate of damages that would be suffered by the Trust should the Club elect to take this action, and reflected the Club's recognition of the negative financial impact on the stadium with such a move.

Under the agreement the Eels are contracted to play ten games per year, over a five year term. As part of this agreement there are also significant concessions that have been made to the Eels including:-

- Minimum 20% discount across rental and hire fees
- 40% discount on commercial rent for the gymnasium at Parramatta Stadium
- Training facilities provided at less than 50% of commercial hire fees
- Use of dressing rooms
- No fee for use of stadium for promotions/media calls/ barbeques and NRL community and youth events
- No fee for the use of the Cumberland Lounge for functions and other activities

At a meeting with members of the Eels Board and their CEO last Thursday night, the Trust made their position entirely clear to the Club, and the Club's CEO, Paul Osborne, gave an undertaking to inform the Trust when the Club had made a decision.

The Parramatta Stadium Trust is still awaiting that communication at the time of this media release.

According to the Trust, The Eels season ticket holders and members are the winners in retaining the game at Parramatta Stadium, along with the players being able to play the opening round of the NRL season at a packed home ground with an electric atmosphere.

Contact:

Luke Coleman – Venue Manager

Parramatta Stadium Trust

Mb: 0438 744154