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SPARC WELCOMES LANDMARK REPORT FOR FUTURE OF LEAGUE

SPARC congratulates the Independent Review Committee for completing a thorough and robust review which provides rugby league in New Zealand with a blueprint to be a sustainable, vibrant and growing sport.

SPARC also applauds the vision and courage of the New Zealand Rugby League (NZRL) Board for unanimously endorsing the Review recommendations.

“The Independent Review Committee has asked the hard questions, canvassing all major rugby league stakeholders. These have included grassroots supporters, communities, administration, funding partners, major sponsors, and international partners,” said SPARC CEO Peter Miskimmin.

“The recommendations are far reaching and extensive. However rugby league – a bedrock sport in this country – is in crisis and can’t be allowed to fail. The Independent Review Committee says major changes and not just tweaking are required and SPARC agrees with that position.

“This review contains practical, realistic, achievable actions to be taken to make a difference to league from the grass roots through to the international stage.

“Chairman Ray Haffenden and the rest of the NZRL Board have been cooperative and open, assisting the Independent Review Committee to produce a document of the highest quality. The Review findings examine governance and management structures, and are not about individuals.

“Sir John Anderson and the other members of the Independent Review Committee have done a tremendous job compiling the report in a short space of time. This review can be the circuit breaker for rugby league to arrest financial decline, low playing numbers and a loss of confidence from key funding and sponsorship partners,” Miskimmin said.

Should the NZRL vote to adopt the recommendations at next month’s AGM, SPARC is proposing to invest \$452,500 to cover NZRL costs during a transitional phase through to October 2009. SPARC would then consider entering into a multi-year investment subject to a robust value proposition from the NZRL.

Ends



The full report, background information and a question & answer sheet are posted on the SPARC website at www.sparc.org.nz

For more information and/or if you wish to arrange an interview with SPARC CEO Peter Miskimmin, please contact:

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SPARC is the government agency charged with promoting, encouraging and supporting sport and physical recreation in New Zealand. For more information, visit www.sparc.org.nz.