

Subject: South Australia and the Return of Professional Rugby League

Dear [Member of Parliament's Name],

I am writing to you as a South Australian resident and as someone who believes that the possibility of bringing a professional rugby league team back to Adelaide deserves serious consideration.

I am not writing on behalf of a political party, sporting organisation or business. I am simply writing as a member of the South Australian community who believes that rugby league has an important place in our state's sporting future.

For a period in the late 1990s, South Australians had their own professional rugby league team — the **Adelaide Rams**.

The Rams' time in the national competition was relatively short, but their arrival demonstrated that there was an audience for professional rugby league in Adelaide. Their first home match in 1997 attracted 27,435 people to Adelaide Oval, while their first season produced an average home attendance of around 15,300.

The circumstances surrounding the Rams' eventual departure were complex, and I am not suggesting that simply recreating the Rams of the 1990s would be the answer.

However, I do believe there is a case for asking whether the South Australian market has changed sufficiently in the decades since then to warrant another look.

Rugby league already has an audience in Adelaide

One of the clearest examples is the reception that major rugby league events have received in Adelaide.

When State of Origin has been played at Adelaide Oval, South Australians have demonstrated that they are willing to attend major rugby league events in significant numbers. The 2023 NRL Annual Report recorded an attendance of **48,613 for State of Origin in Adelaide**.

That is not necessarily proof that an NRL club would automatically succeed in Adelaide.

But surely it is enough to justify asking the question.

Is there a sustainable market for professional rugby league in South Australia?

I believe that question deserves proper research rather than simply assuming that the answer is no.

South Australia's changing population

Another factor worth considering is South Australia's large community of people who have connections to New South Wales and Queensland — the traditional heartlands of rugby league.

Many people from those states have moved to South Australia over the years for work, family, lifestyle and other opportunities.

They have brought their passion for rugby league with them.

For many of these people, supporting a team from Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne or elsewhere means following a club that is hundreds or thousands of kilometres away.

An Adelaide-based NRL team would potentially give these South Australians the opportunity to support a professional rugby league team in their own community.

It could also introduce the game to a new generation of South Australian children who currently have no local NRL team to identify with.

The opportunity goes beyond the NRL

I believe the discussion should also be about what a professional rugby league organisation could contribute to South Australia more broadly.

A successful professional team could potentially provide:

- pathways for South Australian junior rugby league players;
- development opportunities for coaches, referees and administrators;
- employment and career opportunities;
- partnerships with local businesses;
- community and school programs;
- increased participation in rugby league;
- opportunities for talented South Australian athletes;
- interstate visitors travelling to Adelaide for games; and
- another major sporting attraction for South Australians and visitors.

It could become much more than 17 players taking the field on a Saturday or Sunday.

Could Adelaide do it differently this time?

I recognise that the Adelaide Rams experience of the 1990s should not simply be ignored.

If professional rugby league were to return to Adelaide, it would need to be based on a sustainable long-term model.

That would require proper research into population growth, membership, sponsorship, corporate support, stadium arrangements, grassroots participation, junior development, broadcasting, commercial opportunities and the broader South Australian sporting market.

The question I am asking is whether that work should now be undertaken.

South Australia has changed significantly since the Adelaide Rams last played in the NRL.

Perhaps it is time to take another look.

My request to you

I am asking you, as a representative of the South Australian community, to support further discussion and investigation into the potential for professional rugby league to return to Adelaide.

I am not asking you to promise that South Australia will receive an NRL licence.

I am asking you to support the idea that the question deserves to be properly investigated.

If the research ultimately demonstrates that an Adelaide NRL team is not viable, then at least we will have a better understanding of why.

But if the research demonstrates that there is a genuine and sustainable opportunity, South Australia should be prepared to have that conversation with the NRL and other relevant stakeholders.

I believe South Australia has a strong sporting identity and should be prepared to consider new opportunities for our state.

There is already a passionate rugby league community here.

There are people who remember the Adelaide Rams.

There are people who have moved here from New South Wales and Queensland.

There are families who enjoy rugby league.

There are junior players, coaches, volunteers and supporters who continue to participate in the game.

And there are thousands of South Australians who have demonstrated that they will turn out for major rugby league events when they are given the opportunity.

Perhaps South Australia is ready to have its own professional rugby league team again.

I hope you will consider this issue and support further investigation and discussion about the future of professional rugby league in South Australia.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Yours sincerely,

[Full Name]

South Australian Resident

[Suburb]

[Email Address]

[Phone Number]