**MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER**

John Lennon once sang "Strange days indeed. Most peculiar Mumma" It would seem quite an apt lyric for where we all find ourselves at today.

I have seen many things in my time as a proud Blue and General Manager of the NSW Touch Association. Never in my wildest dreams would I or could I have imagined a situation quite like that we all find ourselves today.

Our grassroots Affiliates should be ramping up registrations for our Season 1 or winter touch footy. Our rep players and referees should be working hard in preseason training preparing for the representative schedule that lies ahead. Our elite players and officials should be preparing for the Trans-Tasman, State of Origin and NRL Touch Premiership. Yet all of that is on hold.

COVID-19 has created a terrible and uncertain situation for everyone across Australia. Members of our community are already very aware of this, and many have been affected are more than missing out on a game of Touch Footy. But we do all want to get back to it; we do all want that fun of running around like the champions we think we are. Importantly we are all craving that social interaction that our sport is not just well suited but founded on. However, the reality is at the moment WE CAN'T.

To help us all get back on the field quicker, we all need to follow the public health orders and follow social distancing protocols:

You **must stay at home** unless you are going to

* work (where you can’t work remotely)
* school or an educational institution
* shop for food and essentials
* get medical care or supplies
* exercise.

Further details are available here. The Office of Sport also has useful information. Click here

Currently, all Touch Football competitions remain in suspension until May 4. Regardless, we are still here to support and service the needs of our community. In line with responsible management of staff at this time, all NSW Touch Football staff are working remotely. All can be contacted via their email or mobile phone. Click here to find the relevant contacts.

We want to stay connected with you through this unprecedented period. We will do this not just through this medium and EDM's but importantly through our social media network. Not just for the essential messages, but also to keep you engaged through the period self-isolation with different elements not only from our sport, but life in general. If you are not already following our Socials, you can do so via the links to stay both up to date and part of the Touch Footballing Community.

* NSW Touch Football Network
* NSW Touch Referees
* NSW Touch Instagram

During this time, it is also vital to look after both your physical and mental wellbeing. It is important to:

* Take breaks from watching the news stories, particularly those shared on social media
* Rely only on reputable sources to obtain current and up-to-date information on the outbreak
* Look after yourself physically – exercise regularly and eat a well-balanced diet
* Ensure you are practising good hand hygiene and regular sleep patterns
* Unwind by doing activities you enjoy
* Remain socially connected, especially during self-isolation.
* Where possible and within the Health Orders, it can help to maintain regular routines.

Being exposed to large volumes of negative information can heighten feelings of anxiety. While it's essential to stay informed, you may find it useful to limit your media intake if it is upsetting you or your family.

The Australian Psychological Society has advice about maintaining positive mental health during the outbreak.

We will be playing Touch Football again; it will just take a little time.

Best wishes and stay safe,

Dean Russell

General Manager

New South Wales Touch Association