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Minister for Mental Health
Minister for Healthy Lifestyles
Minister for Western NSW



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Minister for Citizenship and
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MEDIA RELEASE

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ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES AND NSWRL JOIN FORCES ON INNOVATIVE WEIGHT LOSS CHALLENGE

Aboriginal communities from across the state will team up with NSW Rugby League as part of a unique weight loss challenge designed to encourage Aboriginal people to lose weight and embrace a healthier lifestyle.

Minister for Healthy Lifestyles Kevin Humphries and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Victor Dominello today joined NRL stars Nathan Merritt and George Rose to launch the 2013 NSW Knockout Health Challenge.

“The Knockout Challenge is a unique event that sees 22 teams of up to 30 members each go head to head to see who can lose the most combined weight over a 16 week period, under the guidance of some of the biggest names in rugby league,” Mr Humphries said.

“By encouraging contestants to increase their exercise level and develop healthy eating habits they will not only lose weight but reduce their risk of contracting a range of chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke and diabetes.

“It is an innovative program that works; last year’s teams lost a combined 1100 kilograms while learning the skills to help keep the weight off in the long-term.”

NSW Rugby League Indigenous Programs Manager, Ricky Walford, said some of the game’s most prominent Aboriginal stars will act as mentors for the teams, including:

- **Greg Inglis** (South Sydney Rabbitohs)
- **George Rose** (Manly Sea Eagles)
- **Ben Barba** (Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs)
- **Reece Robinson** (Canberra Raiders)
- **Andrew Fifita** (Cronulla Sharks)
- **Joel Romelo** (Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs)
- **Ryan James** (Gold Coast Titans)
- **Jamie Soward** (St George-Illawarra Dragons)
- **Timana Tahu** (Newcastle Knights)
- **Joel Thompson** (Canberra Raiders)
- **Brad Tighe** (Penrith Panthers)
- **Jonathan Wright** (Cronulla Sharks)

“These players have a genuine interest in improving health outcomes of Aboriginal people and will act as mentors for the contestants during their weight loss journey by providing messages of support and training tips for the teams,” Mr Walford said.

Mr Dominello said the key to the success of the NSW Knockout was that it offered Aboriginal people the opportunity to be part of a community challenge.

“By linking Aboriginal culture with an individual’s participation in their own weight loss, the Knockout Challenge is about far more than losing weight; it is about building healthy families and communities,” Mr Dominello said.

“Through the challenge we see mums getting fitter to keep up with their kids and children training alongside their parents and Aunties and Uncles.

“Furthermore, rugby league is an important part of contemporary Aboriginal culture and this partnership with NSW Rugby League is a powerful way to connect with Aboriginal people.

“Players such as Greg Inglis and Timana Tahu are role models for all Australians, and the opportunity for contestants to be mentored through the challenge by these prominent Aboriginal sportsmen will provide added inspiration for these players to achieve their weight loss goals.”