



WOMEN'S RUGBY LEAGUE
SAME GAME. OUR WAY.

2019 VERONICA WHITE MEDAL

ABOUT THE MEDAL

For the first time, the NRL have introduced an equivalent to the Ken Stephen Medal for the NRL Holden Women's Premiership. This new award will recognise the incredible contributions that so many female rugby league players are making to their local communities and beyond.

Each of the four NRL clubs participating in the NRL Holden Women's Premiership have nominated one player based on their community efforts. Criteria for the Veronica White Medal is in line with the Ken Stephen Medal, with the eventual female recipient having demonstrated their commitment to making a difference in their local community, whilst playing rugby league at an elite level throughout the year.

2019 FINALISTS

The 2019 Veronica White Medallist will be announced following the 2019 NRL Holden Women's Premiership Grand Final in Sydney. A panel of experts from across the game will selected the eventual winner.

Ali Brigginsshaw – Brisbane Broncos
Kezie Apps – St George Illawarra Dragons
Simaima Taufua – Sydney Roosters
Honey Hireme – New Zealand Warriors

ABOUT VERONICA WHITE

Former Jillaroo and President of the Australian Women's Rugby League, [Veronica White](#) has been confirmed as the naming recipient of the NRL's new women's rugby league community medal, joining the list of NRL Community Awards.

Ms White – a rugby league veteran of more than 20 years – has held numerous coaching and administrations roles within rugby league since 1993. Growing up playing rugby league in her backyard against her four brothers, White quickly gained a love for the game and was the first female player from Ipswich to represent Australia.

A judging panel, consisting of NRL and State representatives, made the final decision to name the medal after Veronica, following more than 60 nominations being whittled down to a short-list of 25 finalists.



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FINALIST BIOS

Ali Brigginsshaw – Brisbane Broncos

Ali Brigginsshaw is at the top of her game on the field, captaining the Brisbane Broncos to the inaugural NRL Holden Women's Premiership as well as captaining Queensland and Australia. But it is her desire to help off the field which is the most impressive.

In 2019, Ali has become a Beyond the Broncos Ambassador, spending time in schools mentoring young Indigenous students to be the best they can be and take every opportunity that comes their way.

Growing up in Ipswich, Ali has a passion to give back to the community which supported her. Ali is based in Ipswich and Bremer State High Schools when not travelling throughout South East QLD and Northern NSW with the Beyond the Broncos team.

Ali is first to put her hand up for any community visit, including visiting the Queensland Children's Hospital with fellow captain Darius Boyd, selling magazines on the street for The Big Issue and hosting the NRL's In League in Harmony at the Broncos Leagues Club. Ali spoke to students on how she struggled being the only female playing rugby league as a child, and wouldn't be where she was today without the acceptance of her male teammates who made her feel like she belonged. This inclusion is the driving force behind her success, and she wants to share this message of inclusion far and wide.

Ali understands the influence she has on not only young female athletes, but anyone who is struggling to overcome barriers. Her day to day work involves inspiring young Indigenous female students, but she doesn't clock off when the bell rings at school. The impact she had on the young students at Walloon State School has inspired them to continue to play sport, and not let anything or anyone stand in their way.

Kezie Apps – St George-Illawarra Dragons

St George Illawarra Dragons' second-rower Kezie Apps is one of the most decorated and recognisable players both on and off the field.

The second-ever Dally M Female Player of the Year (2016) is a Dragons Ambassador and has spent the past three years working with the club's community team. Kezie played a crucial role in the Dragons securing a place in the NRL Holden Women's Premiership and was a member of the Dragons' inaugural squad. This year, Kezie was named captain of the Harvey Norman NSW Women's Origin team.



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Kezie has a rare talent for connecting with people of all ages. She aims to brighten the room for everyone she comes in contact with and her relationship with Molly Croft through the Men of League Foundation is testament to this.

Because of Kezie's genuine interest in community, she has been recruited as an ambassador for a range of organisations including Fight Cancer Foundation, Footy Colours Day, NRL Voice Against Violence, Westfund Women in Sport and the Dragons 'Best You Can Be' program.

In 2019, Kezie took up a part-time role as a Dragons Community Officer and has proved herself a role model throughout the club's region and beyond thanks to her proactive approach. Though, Kezie's passion for helping others extends well beyond her employment – evident through her support for the 'Score Dragons' program, which allows people with disabilities to participate in the local Illawarra competition.

Despite a demanding schedule, Kezie ensure she helps out with training at the Dapto Canaries and Bega Roosters as often as possible and approaches these commitments with just as much dedication as her on-field approach.

Simaima Taufu – Sydney Roosters

Sydney Roosters lock, Simaima Taufu's, on-field talent is well-documented. She has received numerous awards including 2017 Dally M Female Player of the Year, 2017 Harvey Norman NSW State Player of the Year and 2018 RLPA International Player of the Year.

However, it's her dedication to her community that really sets her apart. Her positive attitude and energy means nothing is too hard for Simaima, and the positive feedback the Roosters regularly receive is testament to her character.

In addition to regular community-visits through her position as captain, Simaima is also currently employed as the Sydney Roosters Community Project Officer. In this role she develops and presents Roosters Community Primary and Secondary School Programs and assists with the NRL Junior Participation Program. This year, Simaima has visited more than 6,000 primary and secondary school students in the Eastern Suburbs, Central Coast and Adelaide.

Simaima is also an accredited NRL State of Mind and Voice Against Violence co-deliverer with the NRL. Through these programs, Simaima has delivered crucial community messages in Western Australia, Tonga and Adelaide, as well as taking part in NRL Youth Advocate panel discussions, the Road to Regions program in Dubbo and Roma, and the NCIE Arabic Leadership Forum.



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Not content to stop there, since the start of 2019, Simaima has regularly volunteered her time at the Mount Druitt Clontarf Foundation and gives back to the game she loves by managing the Penrith Emu Plains Men's U17s side.

Between the Roosters, NRL, Ambassadorships and volunteer work, it is fair to say that she lives and breathes Rugby League.

Honey Hireme – New Zealand Warriors

Honey Hireme's love of Rugby League came early when she began playing for the Putaruru Dragons in her native Waikato. Since then, the Kiwi Ferns Captain has succeeded in various codes before most recently signing for the NZ Warriors.

Honey has endured significant personal challenges this year, taking time away from football to care full-time for her mum who is fighting for her life in hospital. But it is this commitment to family that has shaped Honey and made her the person she is today.

Honey has been instrumental in the development of the women's game in New Zealand, particularly in her home district of Waikato.

Earlier this year, Honey saw a number of talented young girls playing Union, Tag and Touch who would fit into Rugby League perfectly. Off the back of a meeting with two colleagues, Honey approached the Hamilton Tigers - agreeing to become player-coach and soon held a muster to recruit players. Through Honey's dedication a three-team competition was created, and the fairy-tale ending came when Honey led her team to the inaugural Grand Final.

Between running training, setting-up fields, and arranging referees, the draw, and committee meetings, Honey dedicates hours of her free time every week to develop pathways that could eventually lead to the NZ Warriors' NRL Holden Women's Premiership team.

Off the field, Honey is employed as an adviser to the Halberg Foundation which aims to enhance the lives of physically disabled New Zealanders.

Her passion for sport drives Honey to engage with everyone in an inclusive way, ensuring each participant has an opportunity - regardless of talent, ability, gender or economic hurdles - to benefit from what all sport, and Rugby League in particular, has to offer community as a whole.