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INCLUSION
PROGRAMS

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MEDIA STATEMENT

17 MAY 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRIDE IN SPORT STATEMENT ON RUGBY AUSTRALIA DECISION TO TERMINATE ISRAEL FOLAU CONTRACT

In response to today's announcement from Rugby Australia CEO Raelene Castle regarding Israel Folau, Co-Founder of the Pride in Sport Index and Vice-President of ACON, Andrew Purchas OAM said:

"Pride in Sport welcomes the recommendation of the independent panel and subsequent decision by Rugby Australia to end its contract with Israel Folau.

This decision sends a strong message that homophobia and transphobia will not be tolerated in Rugby Union.

The views of Mr Folau on LGBTQ people do not reflect community standards and expectations. Such statements work against the significant progress on acceptance and inclusion that is being made by sporting codes, clubs and organisations across Australia.

Homophobia and transphobia has no place in sport, whether on or off the field.

We know that statements of sporting figures can have a profound impact on our culture, as well as have great influence on the community – especially young people.

The statements made by Mr Folau can be detrimental to LGBTQ youth who already experience higher levels of mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, self-harm, suicide ideation and suicide as a result of prejudice, discrimination and exclusion.

We commend Rugby Australia, as well as NSW Rugby Union, for their leadership and courage throughout this process. Their swift and decisive actions shows that homophobic and transphobic discrimination is not acceptable in sport and individuals – irrespective of their social or professional stature – will be held accountable for their words and actions.

We look forward to continuing to work with Rugby Australia around inclusion at all levels of the sport, and urge all other sports wishing to do more on LGBTQ inclusion to contact Pride in Sport."

For more information about Pride in Sport, visit prideinsport.com.au

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