

Wests Ashfield and APIA Leichhardt Football Club Forge Historic Football Partnership.

WESTS APIA FC to debut in new National Second Tier (NST) competition



Wests Ashfield is proud to announce a landmark partnership between Wests Ashfield and APIA, uniting two of Sydney's most respected community sporting organisations under a shared vision of growth, inclusion and grassroots support.

The agreement sees Wests Ashfield take an equity stake in APIA Leichhardt Football Club Limited (a publicly listed company created to participate in the National Second Tier (NST)) and become the major sponsor of WESTS APIA FC – a co-branded team that will enter the inaugural NST Competition in October 2025.

The NST – officially known as the Australian Championship – is a new national competition created by Football Australia to bridge the gap between the state NPL competitions and the A-League. Launching in October 2025, the competition will feature eight Foundation Clubs from across Australia with APIA Leichhardt being one of them. The competition's opening season will include a group stage, knockout finals and a national championship match, all aimed at creating new opportunities for players, fans and clubs across the country.

"This is a proud moment for both clubs," said Daniel Paton, CEO of Holman Barnes Group. "Sport and community have always been at the core of who we are and this partnership with APIA is a natural evolution of our commitment to supporting initiatives and expanding opportunities for local participation and connection."

This milestone marks a significant step in expanding Wests Ashfield's sporting footprint alongside its focus on rugby league, aligning with its long-standing commitment to local sport, community engagement, and the development of inclusive, accessible pathways for participation.

Daniel continued, “This year alone we have contributed over \$2m in support across 33 Intra-Clubs, reflecting our deep commitment to community engagement. All this, alongside our championing of rugby league through our partnerships with Wests Tigers, Wests Magpies and Balmain Tigers, which we remain steadfast in our commitment.

“We are delighted to be strengthening our community ties and providing further development pathways and we are looking forward to working with APIA Leichhardt and the competition kicking off in October”.

WESTS APIA FC brings together APIA’s proud 70-year footballing legacy with Wests Ashfield’s deep-rooted community mission. The joint venture will open new pathways for players, strengthen ties across the region, and create new opportunities for fans and families to come together around shared sporting passions.

“We’re proud to join forces with Wests Ashfield in this exciting new chapter,” said Tony Raciti, President and Chairman of APIA Leichhardt Football Club Limited.

“This partnership unites two long-standing clubs with deep roots in the community and marks a significant milestone as we prepare for the inaugural Australian Championship. Competing as Wests APIA FC reflects both our rich heritage and shared vision for the future.

“Wests Ashfield have been the clubs Major Sponsor in the NPL space for over 3 decades, however this incredibly significant investment for the Championship competition truly is game changing. This partnership with Wests Ashfield will elevate APIA Leichhardt FC from a significant contributor in the Australian Footballing landscape into an unstoppable force into the Future”. Raciti added.

The formal signing of the joint venture took place at Wests Ashfield with Wests Ashfield CEO and Board of Directors as well as the APIA Board of Directors and shareholders, marking the beginning of a united journey towards sporting excellence and meaningful pathway programs.

Imagery from the signing, by Damian Briggs of Pitchside Media Solutions, is available by clicking [here](#), and additionally [VNR can be accessed here](#).

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