Holman Barnes Group Brings Wests Tigers and Wests APIA together for inaugural Wests Ashfield Cross Code Charity Event

Image link [here](#)

In a powerful show of unity and friendly rivalry ahead of the 2026 NRL season, Holman Barnes Group has announced its inaugural Wests Ashfield Cross Code Charity Event, bringing together Wests Tigers and Wests APIA for a one-of-a-kind cross-code exhibition match in support of three local charities – A Bloody Great Cause, Empower, and Let's Get Going.

Taking place on Saturday, 21 February 2026, from 10am to 4pm at Concord Oval, the free community event will officially kick off the sporting year, bringing fans, players and the wider Inner West community together for a full day of on-field action, player access and family-friendly entertainment.

Designed as a large-scale, inclusive community celebration, the event will feature cross-code exhibition matches starring Wests Tigers Legends and Wests APIA Legends, with half played as touch football and half as soccer. Fans will have the opportunity to meet the full Wests Tigers NRL squad and the full Wests APIA squad through meet and greet and autograph sessions, alongside appearances from NRLW, Wallaroos and West Harbour Women representatives. Wests Ashfield's 33 intra clubs along with Wests Magpies and Balmain Tigers Juniors will also be represented on the day.

The day will also showcase grassroots sport, with junior sprint races and medal presentations, thousands of free footballs and soccer balls handed out to families, and showbags filled with partner merchandise will be available for purchase. A major raffle will see one lucky person drive away in a brand-new Mazda CX-5, while food trucks, live entertainment and a wide range of family-friendly activities will run throughout the day. The program will also include a lower grades Trial Match between KOE Cup team Western Suburbs Magpies and Ron Massey Cup team Ryde Eastwood Hawks.

Daniel Paton, CEO of Holman Barnes Group, said the idea for the event had been building since Wests Ashfield's partnership with APIA Leichhardt began in late 2025.

"Since our partnership with APIA Leichhardt commenced in October last year, we've been talking about how we could bring these two clubs together in a way that felt meaningful, visible and genuinely exciting for fans," Paton said.

"With the 2026 season approaching, this was the right moment to do it. We wanted to set the tone by putting our clubs, our players and our community on the same field, united for a positive cause. We're in a unique position to bring different sporting codes together, and we're proud to use that platform to support local charities, create real access for fans and celebrate what sport does best – bringing people together."

Paton said the event represents a clear focus on momentum and the future. "This is about connection and moving forward. It's a celebration of our community and the role our clubs play beyond competition, and we want families to come down, meet the players, enjoy the day and feel proud of what we're building together."

Wests Tigers Interim CEO, Shaun Mielekamp said the event was a positive way to bring the community together ahead of the NRL season.

"Our fans are incredibly passionate and like me, excited for the season to begin, this event gives them great access to the playing group in a relaxed, community-focused setting before we officially get underway," he said.

"This event has been in the works for several months and is a great way to collaborate with Wests APIA and other local sporting clubs, all while giving back to charities that do important work in our community. A cross-code event like this demonstrates the power of sport – creating community, fostering inclusion and giving back. This is a fantastic initiative that we're proud to support."

Wests APIA & APIA Leichhardt General Manager, Matteo Maiorana, said the event highlighted the power of sport to unite across codes. "It's not often you get the chance to share the field with another elite sporting club from a different code, and we're really proud to be part of this," he said. "The moment Daniel approached us, the club was 100% committed and said 'let's do whatever it takes to get the entire club involved."

"The Wests Tigers are the Inner West's number one Rugby League club, so it made sense for the biggest association football club in the Inner West to also be involved. Both entities resonate well with the people in our communities, so hopefully we get big numbers attending and can raise some much needed money for the charities."

Proceeds from the event raised via raffle ticket sales, showbag purchases and donations made directly to the charities via QR codes around the venue, will be distributed to three respected local charities. A Bloody Great Cause, based in Concord, supports people affected by blood cancers through funding for treatment, research and essential patient services. Empower delivers education, resources and practical support to vulnerable women and families across Sydney's Inner West and South West. Let's Get Going, based in Sydney's Inner West, provides inclusive sport and wellbeing programs that give young, disadvantaged people the opportunity to participate, grow and thrive.

The day promises to be one of celebration, unity, friendly rivalry and fun, with fans, members and the local community at the heart.

Event details:
Wests Ashfield Cross Code Charity Event
Register attendance and more information: www.holmanbarnesgroup.com.au/cross-code-charity-event/
Saturday, 21 February 2026 | 10am–4pm, Trial Match starts at 4:30pm
Concord Oval, Sydney
Free community event

Image Caption: Image 1 L-R: Christian Pio – Wests Tigers 2026 NRLW squad member and *Franco Parisi - Head Coach, Wests APIA & APIA Leichhardt*

Image 2: Christian Pio , Barry O'Farrell, Matteo Maiorana, Daniel Paton, Frank Primavero, *Shaun Mielekamp, Franco Paris*i

Media Contacts

Wests Tigers
Matthew Townsend
mtownsend@weststigers.com.au

Wests APIA
Jude Dolan
contact@judejaydeedolan.com

Holman Barnes Group
Angela Cowley
angela@eightcommunications.com.au