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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**13 August 2009**

## **WALLABIES SUPPORT HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN**

The Australian Rugby Union has thrown its weight behind a campaign to fight discrimination against Australia's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (GLBT) community.

Wallabies captain Stirling Mortlock has joined forces with players Dave Pocock, Al Baxter and Steve Moore to be part of the *This Is Oz* campaign being run by ACON, Australia's largest community-based GLBT health and HIV/AIDS organisation.

Part art project and part human rights campaign, *This Is Oz* is an online photo gallery where participants can upload pictures of themselves with messages that challenge homophobia or celebrate diversity and social inclusion.

The project aims to improve services and opportunities for GLBT Australians by demonstrating public support for GLBT rights as well as illustrating the impact that homophobia has on the whole community. The web address is [www.thisisoz.com.au](http://www.thisisoz.com.au)

The Wallabies have also shown their support for gay rugby union club the Sydney Convicts by having photographs taken with several members of the world champion team for inclusion in the *This Is Oz* project.

ACON CEO Stevie Clayton says she's delighted to have members of the Wallabies making a contribution to *This Is Oz*. "Having the Wallabies and the Australian Rugby Union demonstrating their support for social inclusion for GLBT people will hopefully increase visibility for the campaign, help change attitudes amongst some rugby supporters who might otherwise think it's okay to be anti-gay, and send a message to young GLBT people that there is a place for them in rugby union. I'd like to congratulate the players and the ARU for their support and encourage other sports to get on board *This Is Oz* and help make Australia a place where everyone belongs."

Sydney Convicts president Charlie Winn says the enthusiasm shown by the Wallabies in supporting *This Is Oz* is a huge development. "To have representatives of the national rugby union team taking a public and positive stance against homophobia speaks volumes to counter negative stereotypes. It also sends a message to the many young players that their role models at the professional level accept diversity and support our community. This shows rugby as a whole is changing and modernising and becoming more inclusive of gays and lesbians. I could never imagine this happening 10 years ago."

The Wallabies' *This Is Oz* signs are as follows:

*"It's not who you are it's how you play the game"* – Stirling Mortlock

*"Everyone deserves a sporting chance. Stand up against homophobia"* – Al Baxter

*"We support diversity in sport"* – Steve Moore

*"All rugby players are boofheads? All gay men are weaklings? Reject stereotypes, accept people"* – Dave Pocock

To view these images, find out more about the project or to get involved, please visit [www.thisisoz.com.au](http://www.thisisoz.com.au)

### **ENDS**

For more information or to arrange an interview or photo opportunity, please contact

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