# Papua New Guinea Negotiations to Join NRL Face Uncertainty Amid Financial Concerns



Papua New Guinea’s aspirations to join the National Rugby League (NRL) as its 18th club by 2027 are under negotiation between rugby league representatives and the Australian government. On May 17, 2024, Australian Rugby League Commission chair Peter V’landys indicated readiness to withdraw from the expansion bid unless better support from the federal government is secured.

The NRL’s expansion plan, supported by a $600 million strategy over 10 years, aims to enhance rugby league in the Pacific region. However, the plan's success hinges on substantial financial and infrastructural backing. V’landys expressed the necessity for improved facilities and accommodations in Papua New Guinea (PNG) along with potential tax incentives for players.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has shown support for the PNG bid, highlighting its potential to bolster Australia’s diplomatic ties in the region. Nonetheless, federal legal obligations and logistic challenges present significant hurdles.

V’landys also mentioned separate bids from Western Australia and New Zealand, which are seen as less risky alternatives. Discussions continue as government officials and NRL representatives seek to address unresolved commercial issues before presenting the proposal to NRL clubs for final approval.