

Vale: PETER ROONEY

16th May 1945 – 16th September 2026

Courtesy of Touch Football Australia
Remembering Peter Rooney



It is with great sadness that NSW Touch Football (NSWTF) acknowledges the passing of Peter Rooney, a pioneer of our sport, Life Member of both Touch Football Australia and NSW Touch Football, and one of the most significant figures in the early development of touch football in Australia and Internationally.

Peter's contribution to the game spanned more than four decades and reached from the grassroots of touch football through to the national and international development of the game.

Among his many contributions, Peter was involved in establishing the Cronulla Touch Football competition in 1972, became NSW Touch Football Graded Referee No.1, served as Referee Director for both Touch Football Australia and NSW Touch Football. He also later held Executive Director roles with both organisations in their early years of professional staffing.

He was the selector of the first ever Australian team that toured New Zealand in 1976. Peter also played an important role in the development of the inaugural National Championships, held in 1980. He was a significant stakeholder in the first eight National Championships demonstrating his commitment to fostering the game nationwide.

His contribution extended into the governance of the sport. Peter served as President of NSW Touch Football from 1981 to 1985 and as President of the then Australian Touch Association in 1983. He served on the national Board on two occasions, including as Chair in 2006/2007 during an important period in the development of the sport's national governance structure and the Unitary Model plan.

Perhaps most significantly, Peter was a driving force behind the international growth of touch football during the sport's formative years and played an important role in the inaugural Touch Football World Cup in 1988. Without Peter's drive and passion, and networking skillset, the sport would not have developed as quickly both here in Australia and across the international scene.

Peter was recognised for his contribution to the sport through Life Membership of NSW Touch Football in 1988 and Touch Football Australia in 2011.

The history of touch football is built on the commitment of people who were prepared to give their time, energy, passion and expertise to grow the sport. Peter Rooney was one of those people.

His contribution helped shape touch football from a developing Australian sport into a nationally organised and internationally recognised game. Many of the opportunities, structures and pathways that exist in touch football today have their foundations in the work undertaken by Peter and others of his generation. On behalf of Touch Football Australia, we extend our sincere condolences to Peter's family, friends and the many people across the touch football community who knew and worked alongside him.

Thank you, Peter, for your contribution to our sport. Your legacy will remain part of the history of touch football.

Courtesy of Touch Football Australia

Peter Rooney became involved in Touch Football in the late 1960s as a referee before helping establish the Cronulla competition in 1972. Peter formed the NSW Touch Referees, and later, the Australian Touch Football Referees Association.

During the 1970s Peter also became a Board Member, and later President, of the NSWTA. In 1983, he became President of the Australian Touch Association (ATA), making him President of both NSW and Australia at the same time for approximately 18 months. He was also the Referees Director of the ATA from 1980 to 1982, and the first Executive Director of the ATA in the early 1980s.

He was awarded **Life Membership** of the NSW Touch Association in 2011

Peter was involved in the formation of the first National Championships on the Gold Coast in 1980 and continued his involvement through until the eighth National Championships. He also played a major role in the creation of the Federation of International Touch (FIT). He became the Secretary General of FIT and organised the first World Cup on the Gold Coast in 1988. Peter was on the FIT Board from 1986 to 1989. He returned to the Touch Football Australia Board as Chairman for the 2006/07 period, and a Director in 2007/08.

Rugby League's First incursion into Touch Football

In the early 1980's Rex Mossop from Wide World of Sport met with Peter to assess if Touch Football was interested with integrating with Rugby League. Rex was amazed at the game and the old Union and League "war horse" was a regular player with his old mate Noel Kelly at Keirle Park Manly (NSW).



Peter with Ron Carroll (ATA Patron 1981-1982, NSW TA President 1980, Exec Director/General Manager 1980), Rex Mossop (Wide World of Sport)

Peter and the then ATA Executive rejected Rex's offer and stated the sport was a "stand alone" sport and the development would be along current policy lines not run by the Australian Rugby League. In 2013 the National Rugby League (NRL) signed a historic partnership agreement with Touch Football Australia, thus have the code deliver a joint development plan for the future of both sports



CELEBRATION OF LIFE
for

Peter Rooney

16/5/45 - 16/9/26



*Please join us to celebrate the life
of our beautiful Dad*

TALLEBUDGERA SURF CLUB

1505 Gold Coast Highway,
Palm Beach, QLD, 4221

Saturday 10/10/26
11am - 3.30pm

— RSVP —

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