



A.P.R.U vs Newcastle Representatives
Newcastle
10th October 2009

On the 10th October 2009, the *Bluetongues* travelled to Newcastle to take on the might of the Newcastle representative team as a curtain raiser to the Classic Wallabies. We were there to participate in the inaugural 'Mauling for muscles' rugby charity event to help raise money for muscular dystrophy.

The *Bluetongues* took to the field with high expectations from our forward pack due to most being from the win in Canberra. Our back line had changed once again due to injury and availability of players. However the new recruits for this game were held in high regard and were working well in the preparations.

The *Bluetongues* had a slow start in wet conditions and were immediately placed under pressure from the well drilled Newcastle team. The weather darkened and was more akin to swimming than rugby with heavy rain, which was evident in the ball handling from both teams. Neither packs would dominate through the first twenty minutes. The Newcastle team played an expansive game and along with well placed kicks, put the *Bluetongues* under pressure close to our line. The *Bluetongues* kept ball in hand during the later part of the first half and went to the break with a 10 - 5 lead thanks to tries from Dusty Elsom (NSWP) and Mario LaRosa (QLDP).

The second half commenced in similar fashion to the first with handling errors from both teams. The *Bluetongues* showed great commitment with scrambling and cover defence to diffuse potential tries from the Newcastle team. They continued to move the ball wide, but it was the tremendous phase play that kept the ball in the *Bluetongues* hands to allow us to remain in front. The forwards and backs worked well together to keep the pressure on the Newcastle team with several phases of five or more rucks and one with eleven rucks.

A great counter attack by the Newcastle team put pressure on the *Bluetongues* and placed them in a good position, which they took advantage of and scored, equalising the score. A further try to Matt Aiken (WA) and conversion by Adam Mundy (NSWP) put the *Bluetongues* out in front again to 17 - 10 with only minutes to go. Newcastle continued great pressure for the remainder of the game, as all good teams do and scored a converted try on the bell to conclude the game with a 17 all square score line. A fitting way to end the charity game with nothing between the teams across all aspects of the game.

The A.P.R.U committee and staff wish to thank the organisers of the charity event, *Bluetongue* sponsors and supporters and all players for giving their heart and soul once again. All players did themselves proud. Best on ground for the forwards were Dusty Elsom (NSWP), Nathan Ross (QLDP) and Matt Aiken (WA). Best on ground for the backs were Adam Mundy (NSWP), Adam Clift (NSWP) and Mario LaRosa (QLDP).