

**MEDIA RELEASE**  
**11 March 2024**



## **Saints President Warren Smith OAM retires after 38 years of unparalleled leadership**

At the St Marys Rugby League Club Season Launch on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2024 esteemed President, Warren Smith OAM, announced his retirement at the end of this month.

After 38 years of dedicated service to the Club, 35 of those as President, Mr Smith decided to step down from his role, leaving behind a legacy of unparalleled leadership and commitment.

In his heartfelt farewell speech before more than 300 guests, including NSW Deputy Premier and Minister for Western Sydney, Prue Car, Mr Smith expressed gratitude for the privilege of serving as President for close to four decades.

Under his stewardship, the Club has witnessed remarkable growth including the impressive \$25 million Western Foyer Development, Saints Sports Bar and Saints Event Centre, and the 4-star Holiday Inn Sydney St Marys.

Reflecting on the journey, Mr Smith highlighted the evolution of the Club's rugby league operations and facilities over its impressive 116-year history, attributing its success to the collective efforts of the Board, staff, sponsors, volunteers, and members.

“What the Board and those that came before us have collectively created, on and off the field at Saints is truly something special, it’s something I’m immensely proud of,” Warren Smith OAM said.

“I strongly believe that you should always try and end on a high note and looking at the Club now, I could not think of a more fitting time for me to step aside and hand the reigns over to the next generation of Saints.” Adding that his successor would be David Cartwright.

The newly appointed President expressed deep appreciation for Warren Smith's exemplary leadership and outlined his commitment to upholding the Club's legacy. He acknowledged the significant contributions of Mr Smith and pledged to continue his vision with the support of the Board and fellow Directors.



*Top: Warren Smith OAM announces his retirement at St Marys JRLC's season launch on Saturday. Below: Mr Smith acknowledges hundreds of guests, who included NSW Deputy Premier Prue Car (seated right).*



*Continued p2*

Mr Cartwright has been associated with St Marys Rugby League Club for 55 years as a player, coach, trainer, mentor and Board Director. He was elected to the St Marys Rugby League Club Board in 1997 and appointed Vice President in 2013.

Rod Desborough, CEO of St Marys Rugby League Club, paid tribute to Warren Smith's remarkable tenure and credited his leadership for the Club's unprecedented growth and success.

"I know Warren considers it an honour and privilege to be President of the Club, but I consider it an honour and privilege to have had Warren as my President," Mr Desborough said.

Warren Smith's retirement marks the end of an era for St Marys Rugby League Club but also heralds a new chapter filled with promise and continuity.

Mr Smith now transitions into the role of Inaugural Patron, his invaluable contributions will continue to inspire future generations of Club members and supporters allowing him to continue to work with, and represent, Saints in the community and at industry events.

The entire St Marys Rugby League Club community extends heartfelt thanks to Warren Smith OAM for his unwavering dedication, exceptional leadership, and enduring legacy.

As the Club embarks on its next chapter, it remains committed to honouring his vision while embracing the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

#### **Warren Smith OAM career highlights:**

As 'Wazza' Smith, participated in the annual Variety Bash for over 20 years, driving Saints Bash Car 2760 throughout Australia, raising more than \$1.3 million for children.

- 1999 St Marys Rugby League Club Life Membership
- 2014 Leagues Clubs Australia Jack Martin Award;
- 2016 NSW Rugby League John Quinn Award;
- 2017 OAM, Queen's Birthday Honours;
- 2022 Life Membership Leagues Clubs Australia;
- ...and forever a SAINT!

St Marys Rugby League Club is one of the largest junior rugby league clubs in the world. In 2024 it boasts 58 sides and over 1000 players of all ages who don the mighty green and white jersey.



*Left: St Marys Rugby League Club CEO Rod Desborough; David Cartwright (incoming President); Warren Smith OAM; And Ron Coskerie (Vice President).*

*Right: (l-r): Incoming President David Cartwright; EA to the CEO Ms Donna Bentley and retiring President Warren Smith OAM.*



---

**For more information, contact:**

**Giulia Barron | Marketing Manager | St Marys Rugby League Club**

**Phone: 9677 7747 | Mobile: 0415 355 141**

**Email: [gbarron@saintsrl.com.au](mailto:gbarron@saintsrl.com.au)**