



The Hawthorne Club

MEDIA RELEASE

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“While the debate rages in Australia, New Zealand has solved the problem.”

One of the greats of New Zealand Rugby, Brent ‘Buck’ Anderson, will visit Newcastle on Friday (20 July) to address the Mid-Season Rugby Luncheon organised by The Hawthorne Club to support local Rugby.

President of The Hawthorne Club, Mark Queenan, said Anderson knows what it’s like to attract kids to Rugby, which will be the focus of his speech on Friday.

“Anderson played No.8 for the All Blacks in the late 1980s and for New Zealand provincial sides Wairarapa Bush and Waikato, and was involved in New Zealand Rugby administration for more than a decade,” said Mark.

“Buck (pictured) certainly knows about kids and Rugby and any Junior Sports Administrator or Club Official should take the opportunity to hear Buck on this topic!

Anderson had just started in his role as General Manager of Community and Provincial Rugby in the early 2000s – looking after the structures that turn young Kiwis into All Blacks or life-long lovers of Rugby.



Football (soccer) was a threat to rugby in New Zealand. Something needed to be done if Rugby was not to lose increasing numbers of young children to football. **Rippa Rugby**, a form of tag rugby, was born.

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Many Kiwi kids now begin playing **Rippa Rugby** as five-year-olds and continue through their primary school years or with their local club side. The game has become hugely popular, developed into national competitions, and New Zealand Rugby (NZR) rates it as “the single best thing that we’ve introduced.”

Weight gradings are another fascinating NZR initiative – even if some provincial unions simply don’t have enough players to make them workable. The longer they play during their formative years, as teenagers, the more likely they are to play later as an adult club player, but also to be a spectator, a fan, a supporter of the game.

Mark said Anderson was a fascinating speaker and that The Hawthorne Club was lucky to attract a rugby player and administrator of his quality to Newcastle. He said while local rugby and many other sports were looking at how to attract kids to their codes, Anderson and his team have a winning formula.

The Mid Season Luncheon will be held from midday Friday in the Concert Hall, Newcastle City Hall. Tickets are \$120 per person or \$1,100 for a Table of 10 and will be on sale until Wednesday (18 July). Dress is smart business attire

Full details are on the website of the Hawthorne Club – www.thehawthorneclub/events - or by telephoning Mark on 0411 514 503.

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