

A history of Rugby League in Melbourne

(pre NRL/ Melbourne Storm)

A bullet point chronology:

- The first ever rugby league game played in Melbourne was between NSW and England at the MCG in August, 1914.
- England opened their 1924 tour of Australia with a match against Victoria (which England won 45-13).
- A rugby league club competition was formed in Melbourne in 1923. It only lasted for a couple of seasons, but had an enormous impact:
 - It was a contributor towards the formation of the ARL (a national, not state based, governing body for RL) in 1924.
 - It led to the decision to replace the Kangaroos' combined blue (NSW) and maroon (QLD) jersey, with green and gold. The Kangaroos were the first Australian sporting team to wear a green and gold playing strip. It was first worn at home in 1928 (in Brisbane) and first worn away in 1929 (in England).
 - It led to the formation of a Victorian RL team, which toured NSW & QLD in 1924. Harry Caples played for the Victorian team - he had already played for NSW, and later played for QLD – and is the only player to have turned out for three states.
- When sailing to/from the British Isles between 1908 and the 1940s, Melbourne was the main departure/arrival point for international rugby league teams. Both Australian and English teams were entertained by VFL clubs, the VFL and the MCC at various times.
- Serious attempts have been made to merge RL & Australian football on numerous occasions (from 1908 to 1933). See articles below by Sean Fagan:
<http://www.RL1908.com/articles/australeague.htm>
<http://www.RL1908.com/articles/AFL.htm>
- Australia played in Melbourne for the first time in August 1951. Captained by Clive Churchill, an 'Australian XIII' (i.e. not the full representative team) were beaten 34-17 by a touring French team at the Melbourne Showground.