

A league of their own

Australian police stormed to victory in a high profile rugby league showdown.

A crowd of 20,000 was on hand to watch the Australian Police Rugby League Team defeat the Kiwi police last month and confirm our status as world champions.

The match was played as the curtain raiser to Australia's Four Nations match against England at Melbourne's AAMI Stadium on 2 November. It pitted the winners of the 2013 Police Rugby League World Cup against the New Zealand police team, which had not been able to travel to the UK for the World Cup.

Coached by State Planning Unit Commander, Supt Craig Sheridan and sponsored by Crimsafe, the team included eight NSWPF officers: Snr Csts Josh Murphy and Rob Mears, and Csts Sean Jenkins, Lee Cameron, Brayden Sharrock, Mitch West, Matt Johnstone and Andrew Atkins.

In the lead-up to the big game,

the Australian team was presented with their jerseys by Melbourne Storm coach Craig Bellamy. Ex-Australian and Roosters legend Brad Fittler addressed the players before sending them out to face the Kiwis' haka.

The Australian police jumped to an early lead with a try under the posts to fullback and captain, Cst James Bartholomew from Queensland. Five-eighth Snr Cst Murphy converted to make it six points to nil after two minutes. The Australians were relentless in their attack, scoring tries at will with Snr Cst Murphy kicking goals from all over the park. At half time, Australia led 40-10 after conceding two late tries.

The Kiwis came out all guns blazing in the second half, scoring another two quick tries to reduce the margin to 16 points. However, the Aussie boys kicked away again

with front rower Cst West carving up the Kiwi defence. Our other front rower Cst Sharrock then scored alongside the posts to make it 52-24. The Kiwis found another gear to score twice, but that was as close as it got. Three tries to 'super sub' Cst Johnstone sealed the game and Australia ran away with a 70-34 victory.

Australian hooker Snr Cst Mears, who had chalked up 156 first grade games during his NRL and Super League career, announced his retirement after game.

Word came from the NRL national team sheds that Australian coach Tim Sheens and his players had watched the match and were very impressed with the ability of the Australian police team. In the past year, coach Sheridan's team has gone undefeated during a run that has seen it beat every police rugby league playing nation.



TOP Australian police team manager, Insp Glenn McDougall and team coach, Supt Craig Sheridan were comfortable under the intense media spotlight

ABOVE Melbourne Storm Coach Craig Bellamy presented the Australian police players with their jerseys

BELOW The victorious Australian police rugby league team

