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Andrew Forrest AO and the Western Force launch the 'Double the Impact – Own the Force' campaign

Western Australian of the Year, Andrew Forrest AO, launched a viral 'Double the Impact - Own the Force' campaign to allow Road Safety Western Force fans to buy shares in the club and, at the same time, bolster WA's junior rugby roots.

Mr Forrest is offering interest free, unsecured loans to those who want to buy shares in the Western Force but who can't afford it.

Mr Forrest will provide the \$1,000 per share to the 'Own the Force' fund and then the supporter will repay the loan, over time, direct to Rugby WA – not to Mr Forrest. This, essentially, provides rugby in Western Australia \$2,000 per applicant - double the impact. This unique model of philanthropy will enable the Western Force to remain financially viable and bolster the junior players' program.

"I whole-heartedly believe in this unique way at promoting community participation and doubling the benefit for the cause," said the committed philanthropist and Chairman of the Minderoo Foundation.

The video campaign, featuring star players and a group of youngsters, is aimed at boosting grassroots' ownership of the club. It also demonstrates to the Australian Rugby Union (ARU), that the entire WA rugby community is behind the Western Force.

"I want to be very clear to the ARU. You try to cut the Road Safety Western Force, you have to go through me first and then all of our players and then our supporters and then all of the parents of young players and, indeed, all proud Western Australians," Mr Forrest said. "This is bigger than just a rugby game. I stand behind all of these amazing people who believe in a fair go and the right for Australians to support rugby union as a national sport, not just one reduced to the eastern seaboard."

Mr Forrest said that ARU must acknowledge Western Force as one of the most successful rugby franchises, with one of the strongest support bases of all the Super Rugby teams and reward them for their efforts – not punish them.

"The Western Force has heart. It is punching way above its weight. It is producing a crop of Wallabies. It is growing its junior player base. It has the backing of its community," Mr Forrest said.

"How on earth can the ARU even consider causing harm to such a team and indeed to this rugby community?"

The campaign will be launched on Monday and will run, for as long as it takes to ensure the financial security of the club, and the future of the next generation of players, is achieved. ENDS

A copy of the video can be found here at www.rugbywa.asn.au

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