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PNGRFL NAMES SENIOR MEN'S & SENIOR WOMEN'S SELECT SIDES AHEAD OF 2026 PM'S XIII

PORT MORESBY, 23 September 2026: The Papua New Guinea Rugby Football League (PNGRFL) has named the Prime Minister's XIII Men and Women's select sides for their respective clashes against Australia on Saturday, 3 October at Santos National Football Stadium in Port Moresby.

PNGRFL Chief Executive Officer, Stanley Hondina, said: "The Prime Minister's XIII is an important annual fixture for Papua New Guinea, and we are pleased to once again welcome Australia to Port Moresby. This fixture is more than just a game of footy. It reflects the strong bilateral relationship between our two countries — from government to government and country to country, but more importantly, the strong people-to-people connections we share.

"Most of the players and staff selected have come through our national domestic competitions, and that is something PNGRFL is very proud of. It reflects the investment we have made in our pathways systems over the past few years and the progress we are beginning to see.

"Congratulations to all the players selected in the men's and women's sides, as well as the coaches and support staff who will lead them. "

PRIME MINISTER'S XIII MEN

The Prime Minister's XIII Men's side features a strong blend of established players and emerging talent from the SP PNG Hunters, Digicel ExxonMobil Cup and other domestic competitions, alongside players gaining experience overseas.

Leading the side is Wellington Albert, who is in his first season as Head Coach of the Port Moresby Vipers in the Digicel ExxonMobil Cup. The appointment also marks Albert's first opportunity to coach the Prime Minister's XIII Men.

20-Player Squad

1. Sanny Wabo – SP Hunters
2. Chris Benjamin – ENB Gurias
3. Stanford Talita – Western Clydesdales
4. Jayden Numapo – Kandes RLC
5. Bruce Bawase – PNG Hunters
6. Victor Ario – Mendi Muruks
7. Francis Sam – Mendi Muruks
8. Koso Bandi – PNG Hunters
9. Stanza Tandoa – Kandes RLC
10. Sylvester Namo – PNG Hunters
11. Murray Connors – PNG Hunters
12. Jacob Taulani – Newcastle Knights
13. Ila Alu – PNG Hunters
14. Emmanuel Alfred – ENB Gurias
15. Xavier Turi – Hela Wigmen





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16. Jordan Pat – Mt Hagen Eagles
17. Modekai Waim – Enga Mioks
18. Dou Tapako – Mendi Muruks
19. Lote Kuman – Hela Wigmen
20. Jeremiah Ben – Port Moresby Vipers

For Albert, the opportunity to lead the Prime Minister's XIII Men comes with the responsibility of bringing the group together and preparing them to represent PNG against Australia.

Wellington Albert said: "Congratulations to all the players selected in the Prime Minister's XIII Men's squad. To earn a place in this team is a great achievement, and I want the players to take confidence from the opportunity while understanding the responsibility that comes with representing PNG.

"We have a strong group of players with a good mix of experience and emerging talent, and I'm looking forward to seeing them come together and give their very best against Australia.

"I also want to thank PNGRFL for the opportunity to lead this team and for continuing to provide a platform for our players to test themselves at this level."

PRIME MINISTER'S XIII WOMEN

The Prime Minister's XIII Women's side brings together leading players from the Santos Cup and those currently playing overseas, providing an opportunity for established representative players and emerging talent to test themselves against Australia.

The side will be led by Cathy Neap, who brings a wealth of coaching experience after guiding the Gas Resources Central Dabaris to back-to-back Santos Cup premierships in 2025 and 2026.

Neap has coached the Dabaris since the Santos Cup was introduced in 2024 and will now take on the opportunity to lead the Prime Minister's XIII Women against Australia.

20-Player Squad

1. Alice Alois – Port Moresby Vipers
2. Anika Butler – Maitland Pickers
3. Belinda Gwasamun – Mt Hagen Eagles
4. Cynthia Peters – ENB Gurias
5. Doreen William – Lae Tigers
6. Gemma Schnaubelt – Western Clydesdales
7. Gian Kaupa – Lae Tigers
8. Jafinda Sap – Central Dabaris
9. Ivania Wong – ACT Brumbies
10. Jacinta Gerry – Mt Hagen Eagles
11. Jenny David – Brisbane Tigers
12. Josephine Howard – Central Dabaris
13. Joyce Hobert – Port Moresby Vipers
14. Lila Malabag – Port Moresby Vipers
15. Mala Mark – Central Dabaris





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16. Ruth Gende – Port Moresby Vipers
17. Sareka Mooka – Northern Pride
18. Ua Ravu – South Sydney
19. Sherinda Philip – Central Dabaris
20. Mya Muller – Penrith Panthers

Neap said the opportunity to represent PNG in front of a home crowd would be an important moment for the players and called on them to embrace the occasion and play for one another.

Cathy Neap said: “I would like to congratulate every player selected in the Prime Minister’s XIII Women’s squad. Each of these players has worked hard to reach this level, and now they have a wonderful opportunity to represent Papua New Guinea in front of their home supporters.

“I want the girls to believe in themselves, play for one another and show the commitment and determination they have demonstrated throughout their careers.

“We are grateful to PNGRFL for giving us this opportunity and for continuing to invest in the growth of women’s rugby league in PNG.”

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