



**3 September 2018**

Ms Helen Hong  
Council Officer Assistant  
Public Works Committee

**BY EMAIL**

Dear Ms Hong

**Rugby Australia Appearance - Public Works Committee - Monday 6 August – Response to Question on Notice**

On behalf of Rugby Australia, I refer to your email dated 13 August 2018 in relation to the above.

During our appearance, Rugby Australia undertook to provide the Committee with customer service feedback received following the Australia v Ireland Test Match at Allianz Stadium on Saturday, 23 June. The relevant extract from the appearance is below for reference:

*Mr JUSTIN FIELD: Notwithstanding the fact that we all know that the Sydney Football Stadium is not a modern stadium and there are issues with it, you are not having trouble with getting people to your events, are you? You have had some sellouts in the last period and actually there has been growth in attendance at events.*

*Ms CASTLE: I will answer that in two parts. Certainly we did, in the most recent Test series, sell out Allianz Stadium, but the safety element in the customer experience was a very long way away from what you would expect to be world class. Yes, we managed to get the people there, but they left thinking—we actually lost that particular Test match—*

*The CHAIR: Bugger!*

*Mr JUSTIN FIELD: No new stadium is going to fix that.*

*Ms CASTLE: —so there were a few frowns. But on top of that, there was also very concerns in feedback we got through our customer service station of safety issues; concerns around feeling crushed and squashed and thinking they are not going to be able to get out and leave. Then the time that it actually takes to exit the environment is really not what you would term world class. That is from the Wallabies.*

*Mr JUSTIN FIELD: You got feedback on that? Is there a report that you are able to provide to the Committee on that feedback?*

*Ms CASTLE: We could certainly look at providing some feedback for you, absolutely.*

Annexed to this letter is a selection of emails received by Rugby Australia, via the Sydney Cricket Ground and Sports Ground Trust, following that Test Match which are directly relevant to the above. Please note that Rugby Australia has redacted all relevant personal information.





We have also attached, for reference, an article published in the Sydney Morning Herald dated 29 June 2018 by Mr Andrew Webster. This article accurately summarises the customer experience and feedback received. We note that this article was also referenced in our testimony.

For completeness, we do not have any corrections to the transcripts provided.

We trust the above assists.

Yours sincerely

**Anthony French**  
Head of Professional Rugby  
Rugby Australia



[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Australia v Ireland

To whom it concerns,

I attended the Australia v Ireland final test at the Allianz Stadium on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

Whilst the game itself was fantastic, gaining access to the ground itself was chaotic and extremely unsafe. We walked to the ground in plenty of time and entered the outer perimeter via Moore Park Road. What can only be described as a bottle neck of people, we were crushed and could not move for 20 minutes. Children were screaming and people were scaling the fence to get out. I was genuinely intimidated by the situation. It got to the point that in order to relieve the concentrated crowds, the side gates ended up being opened and we did not even have to scan our tickets to gain entry. Ten minutes into the game 3 people sat beside us and told us 'we heard the gates were open so we just walked in'. These people did not pay for their tickets, yet I paid over \$500 for 5 tickets and got that experience. This is absolutely ridiculous.

The game was a sell out weeks in advance so proper procedures should have been put in place. I went up to a policeman once I gained entry and told him what was going on to which I received a reply of 'not my problem.' Seriously? This is the calibre of policing Allianz are employing? I want my money back or I can assure you this will be escalated further

I look forward to hearing from you

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Subject:** The Form 'Contact Us form' was submitted

**First name**

[REDACTED]

**Last name**

[REDACTED]

**Email**

[REDACTED]

**Phone**

[REDACTED]

**Enquiry type**

Feedback

**Message**

Hi, went to the test match June 23 with a group of 10 with Platinum tickets. Bar service needs rethinking. With a limit of 4 beers per person, 3 in our group had to wait 20-30 minutes to get one and miss watching it live. The queues were the same throughout the match. 2nd half and we went for our 2nd round, but the rules had changed, 2 beer limit per person. So 5 people have to miss 20-30 mins of the games, and all while paying \$9 a beer. It's not good enough. The point of a stadium is to handle peak demand, that's what they're supposed to do. Its not like with the queues anyone can manage to get drunk, so why the limits? It's about better management, there's technology that can help this problem (not the stadium's app could, "closed due to lines full"! ). Can you let me know what you're doing to fix this situation. How are you investing in being able to serve faster and better? And at a lower cost with less time away from the game? Look forward to hearing from, can even help with your digital transformation!! Regards [REDACTED]

Subject: The Form 'Contact Us form' was submitted

## Form Results

**First name**

████

**Last name**

████

**Email**

████████████████████████████████████████

**Phone**

██████████

**Enquiry type**

Feedback

**Message**

Hi there, I just wanted to give some feedback in relation to the Australia vs Ireland game. After attending and paying over \$180 for 2 tickets the value for money and overall experience was terrible. We arrived at gate i with over 30 min to kick off and just managed to get in for the end of the Athems. The delays were shocking with no one taking control of the situation. There were 2 people at the door who seemed not to be able to use the scanners they had. There were no signs letting people know which side for phones or to turn the light up on the phone. After getting in there was no chance of seeing the math if you decided you wanted a drink or even to use the toilet. It was a very poor experience overall.

Regards, █████

[REDACTED]

**Subject: Complaint: Ireland V Wallabies**

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to you because I would like my money back for the Ireland V wallabies game.

I arrived at the ground 1 hour before kick off and wanted to enter through gate G. I followed the signs after coming in via the main entrance. The crowd was backed up for a couple of hundred meters and people were scaling the fence because there was a blockade not letting people through. My friends and I ended up having to walk back via the main entrance through the main carpark (Past the Roosters Gym) and to get to gate G. We waited for a long period of time and ended up missing the anthems and kick off. We arrived into the ground maybe 5 mins after the kick off.

The people at gate G were either under staffed or slow because we waited at that gate for quite a while. They were very slowly letting people through. and there were severe delays.

To compound the issue I went to the bar 5 mins before half time to get some drinks and I stood in line for 20mins before giving up because the second half had resumed. The line was around 30 deep when I joined it and probably went down to 20 deep. I paid \$109 for my tickets. I had also purchased tickets for 3 other ppl who had travelled from Ireland to come to the game. It spoiled our night and I am highly embarrassed.

Who do I need to speak with to get my money back? This event has caused me great embarrassment to me and I would like to be compensated the \$442 I spent on my tickets. My seats were [REDACTED]

Regards,  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Subject:** Australia vs Ireland

Hi,

Attended the Australia vs Ireland game tonight on the 23rd of June 2018.

We were extremely disappointed with the experience, due to;

1. Missing the beginning of the match due to excessive wait times for entry. 30 mins +
2. Missing almost an entire half of the game due to food and drink wait times. Even after using the express app we had to wait 30 mins for delivery of food and beverage items.

Customer ID: [REDACTED]

Transaction ID: [REDACTED]

Please hope you can respond as soon as possible as \$150 for platinum tickets does not constitute our experience.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

Andrew

Webster



## Crushing disappointment: Test farce showed Allianz just can't handle the strain

These are the images that confirm, once and for all, why Allianz Stadium needs to be knocked down and rebuilt.

They are from Saturday night's sold-out Test match between the Wallabies and Ireland, which attracted a ground-record crowd of 44,085.

Not everyone was happy. Thousands of furious fans couldn't get into the stadium well after kick-off — and well after the first try. Others later vented over long queues to get beer, food and use the bathrooms. Then there was the dilemma of getting out of the joint.

What these images don't show is the man caught in the crush outside one gate who suffered a serious medical episode but couldn't receive help from ambulance officers because there were too many people.

Fans directed their frustration at the SCG Trust and Rugby Australia, questioning why they had so little staff and security working that night. The simple fact

is they had as many staff working as they're allowed to employ in a stadium of that size.

The problem of Allianz Stadium is not a lack of staff. The problem with Allianz Stadium is that it's a 30-year-old stadium that doesn't have enough point-of-sale outlets, turnstiles, toilets, or even the space to hold enough kegs of beer to ensure bars don't run out before kick-off, as some did on Saturday night.

Allianz is due to be knocked down and rebuilt in August, although many continue to argue against it, claiming it's a waste of taxpayers' money.

We ask the question again: do these same people actually attend sport?

Because if they were at Allianz Stadium on Saturday night, or at the Anzac Day NRL match this year, or any event when more than 20,000 people are in attendance, it's quite obvious that the ground is not up to scratch.

