Rugby Australia Chair Rumours Super Rugby Departure

Discussing the Super Rugby Pacific competition over dinner, Rugby Australia (RA), chairman, Hamish McLennan, reportedly informed his New Zealand Rugby (NZR) counterpart, Stewart Mitchell, RA is considering leaving the competition.

“All bets are off from ’24 onwards with NZ,” McLennan told *Fox Sports*.

The $60 million imbalance in broadcast agreements is reported by the *Sydney Morning Herald* to influence the potential trans-Tasman split.

Currently $29 million is received by RA from Nine and Stan and a $91 million payment is going to NZR from broadcast partner Sky.

Previous broadcast revenue which was split equally between the SANZAR partners in past competitions has not been the case in over two years.

“We’ll honour our commitments in ’23 but we need to see what’s best for rugby in Australia leading up to the RWC (Rugby World Cup) in Australia in ’27,” McLennan told *Fox Sports*.

“Some board members have strong opinions that a domestic only competition like the AFL and NRL would generate more money for the game and that is fair comment,” he said.

NZR chief executive, Mark Robinson, offered a response to the *Sydney Morning Herald* regarding McLennan’s comments.

“From our view, NZR is committed to our relationship with RA and any discussions in relation to the future of Super Rugby will be had first and foremost with them, and not through the media,” Robinson said.

With COVID-19 protocols continually changing and affecting the competition, former NZR player and Stan Sport commentator, Andrew Mehrtens, said he is against the RA split.

“Yes, we know there were crowds that were good last year and supported Super Rugby AU but even more so, I reckon people have got excited about a full unified competition this year,” Mehrtens said.

Rugby Australia is set to hold two Rugby World Cups in the next decade, 2027 men’s and 2029 women’s, delivering $2.8 billion economic windfall for Australia and grassroots rugby.

The Super Rugby Pacific grand final between NZR sides Crusaders and Blues takes place Saturday 18 June at Eden Park in Auckland.