

Dean Widders

Indigenous Leader, Rugby League Legend, Advocate for Equality and Reconciliation

A proud Anaiwan man whose influence extends far beyond the rugby league field. Born and raised in Armidale, New South Wales, Dean Widders is an exceptional talent who was recognised early when league great Arthur Beetson selected him for a Sydney Roosters trial at just 14 years old. His outstanding NRL career saw him play for the Sydney Roosters, Parramatta Eels, and South Sydney Rabbitohs, earning a reputation for his versatility, strong defence, and powerful tackling ability.



Off the field, Dean has become a driving force for reconciliation, equality, and Indigenous representation. As the NRL's Indigenous Wellbeing Manager, he works passionately to inspire connection, cultural understanding, and empowerment across communities and sporting organisations. His dynamic speaking style, engaging storytelling, and lived experience make him a sought-after keynote speaker on leadership, teamwork, and social change.

Dean's vision and advocacy were captured in the acclaimed 2021 documentary *Araatika: Rise Up!*, which follows his creation of the 'Unity Dance'—a groundbreaking pre-match celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

A respected media figure, Dean hosts NITV's *Over the Black Dot* and regularly appears on FOX Sports. His outstanding community contribution was recognised in 2004 when he received the NRL's prestigious Ken Stephens Medal for using his platform to drive meaningful change.

Through his leadership roles, coaching, and ongoing advocacy, Dean Widders continues to champion a more inclusive and connected Australia—on and off the field.

Topics

- His journey as an Indigenous rugby league player and advocate
- The importance of reconciliation and social justice
- The power of sport to unite people
- The importance of leadership and teamwork
- The lessons he has learned from his life experiences



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