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Kevin Walters Appointed Kangaroos Coach, Jess Skinner Stays with Jillaroos

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Kevin Walters has been named head coach of the Australian Kangaroos for the upcoming three-match Ashes tour of England, beginning 25 October 2025 at Wembley Stadium. The appointment was confirmed by the Australian Rugby League Commission (ARLC) on 23 July 2025.

Walters, a former Queensland State of Origin coach and long-time figure in the NRL, brings a wealth of representative coaching experience. He takes over from Mal Meninga, who departed earlier this year to coach the newly established Perth Bears. Walters' appointment aligns with the ARLC's preference for a national coach free from club commitments.

Meanwhile, Jess Skinner will continue as interim head coach of the Australian Jillaroos. Skinner first took over earlier in 2025 following the resignation of Brad Donald. Her leadership was on display during a commanding win against England in Las Vegas and has since been endorsed by players and league officials alike. She is expected to lead the Jillaroos into future international fixtures, including a rematch against England in March 2026.

Walters' return to representative coaching is seen as a move to build cohesion ahead of one of the most iconic tours in international rugby league. The three-Test Ashes series will test Australia's depth, strategy, and adaptability on foreign soil. Walters' experience, particularly at the State of Origin level, is considered vital to managing the pressures of touring and fostering unity in a side made up of players from across multiple NRL clubs.

For the Jillaroos, Skinner's continuation provides important stability. Under her guidance, the team has demonstrated both attacking dominance and defensive discipline. Her background in Indigenous programs and community-level coaching has also been credited with strengthening the cultural fabric of the squad.

The appointments come at a time when public debate continues over federal budget priorities. While the government has significantly

increased overall public spending in recent years, there are concerns that national sporting programs—particularly in women’s and regional development—could face funding pressure.

Maintaining Australia’s global standing in rugby league, both on the men’s and women’s side, will require continued investment in high-performance pathways, coaching resources, and international engagement. Walters and Skinner’s leadership will be pivotal, but long-term success depends on strategic funding and planning.