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# Newcastle RL | Controversial former NRL star Paul Carter's bid to resurrect his career at Cessnock gets NSWRL approval

**BARRY TOOHEY**

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Green light: Controversial former Sydney Roosters player Paul Carter will be cleared to play for Cessnock by the NSW Rugby League in a huge boost to the Goannas. Picture: AAP

Controversial former NRL star Paul Carter’s bid to play with Cessnock in the Newcastle premiership this season has all but been given the green light with the NSWRL declaring it won’t block his registration.

Carter’s playing career has been in limbo ever since he was deregistered halfway through last season after being charged with a drug offence.

It followed his sacking by the Sydney Roosters, the third NRL club to axe the 25-year-old utility player for off-field incidents involving drugs or alcohol.

Carter escaped a jail sentence during a Sydney court appearance last month with a magistrate handing him a two year good behaviour bond.

He has since moved to Cessnock with his partner Elise Horscroft and Carter escaped a jail sentence during a Sydney court appearance last month with a magistrate handing him a two year good behaviour bond.

He has since moved to Cessnock with his partner Elise Horscroft and is hoping to resurrect his career in the Newcastle competition after signing with the Goannas.

But all that hinges on having his deregistration lifted by the NSWRL.

Newcastle RL CEO Matt Harris confirmed the NSWRL has stated it won’t block Carter’s registration.

But he won’t officially be given the green light until he is cleared by Group 2 club Coffs Harbour Comets.

Carter played two games for the Comets last season after his Roosters’ sacking and prior to his deregistration and it is alleged he still owes the club \$1000.

“The NSWRL has told us they won’t stand in Paul’s way which is good news for both he and the club,”Harris said.

“But there’ll be nothing official in that regard until after he is cleared by Coffs Harbour. That situation has to be resolved first.”

Country Rugby League operations’ manager Bert Lowrie confirmed on Thursday Carter is still a “defaulter”.

“He hasn’t been cleared to my knowledge because the club is claiming he owes them money,”Lowrie said.

“I’m not sure where that is at.”

Cessnock captain coach Al Lantry said it was his understanding the Goannas had already agreed to pay the outstanding money and recoup it from Carter during the season.

“But I think we were waiting to make sure he would be available to play for us first before the money was handed over,”he said.

“We may have to revisit that now if he needs to be cleared first.”

Carter told the *Newcastle Herald* earlier this month his personal life spiraled out of control towards the end of last year before he booked himself into the Dawn Medical Rehab and Wellness Centre in Thailand.

He credits the Centre with saving his life.

On playing rugby league again, he said: “I really think I need rugby league as part of my life for me to move forward as well.”

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