

**RL: Hegarty signs with Souths**

League Souths

SYDNEY, July 2 AAP - The Shane Richardson revolution at South Sydney has netted former Australian rugby league winger Shannon Hegarty.

The Rabbitohs today announced they had signed Hegarty for the next three seasons - only 48 hours after the Sydney Roosters posted a message on their website insisting the 25-year-old would see out the remaining year of his contract.

Hegarty is the third player to sign with Souths since Richardson became chief executive and will join Peter Cusack and Scott Logan at Redfern next season.

"Shannon is a very talented footballer and is a group leader which is the type of player we want to attract to Souths," Richardson said today.

"He is a quality human being and will be taking a leadership role both on and off the field for the South Sydney club over the next three seasons.

"He is a young man with a wealth of experience and a bright future in front of him and we are delighted he will be in red and green for the next three years."

Roosters chief executive Brian Canavan said the situation with Hegarty had changed in recent days.

"His manager was looking for an extension," Canavan said.

"We couldn't give him any guarantees."

Hegarty will play his first top grade game this season against North Queensland tomorrow night - he has struggled to break into first grade since missing the start of the year with an ankle injury.

An integral member of the Roosters' premiership-winning side in 2002, Hegarty played for both Australia and Queensland last year.

He has played three State of Origin matches for the Maroons and three Tests for the Kangaroos, touring New Zealand and Europe at the end of last season.

He has scored 50 tries in his 100 first grade games with the Roosters.

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