The Northern Territory Government’s upgrade of Marrara Oval has begun.

Sport and Recreation Minister John Ah Kit said the reconstruction of the Oval involves several separate contracts with the first, to excavate the existing surface, awarded and underway.

Mr Ah Kit said about 8200 cubic metres of soil will be removed during the excavation with the work to be carried out by local company, Ostojic Pty Ltd.

The surface area of the oval is over 20,000 square metres.

"I am proud to be here today to see this historic work begin," Mr Ah Kit said.

"This Government has committed $2.5 million to the upgrade which will see Marrara Oval meet the standards of the Australian Cricket Board and the Australian Football League.

"It means that Test cricket and AFL matches will be played on a state-of-the-art surface."

Mr Ah Kit said the South Darwin Sporting League has agreed to allow use of areas of adjacent Warren Park to stockpile materials.

"The Government thanks the South Darwin Sporting League for their cooperation," Mr Ah Kit said.

"There will be some spin-offs for the League whose facility will receive some improvements in the process.

"It is a win-win situation."

Mr Ah Kit said future contracts for work on the Oval will include contracts for the supply of graded material for construction of the new field, quality control, reconstruction, turf supply and maintenance.

"These works will provide work for local companies and contractors and will result in a shot in the arm for local business," he said.

Mr Ah Kit said installation of turf on the newly-constructed oval will take place in August and the facility will be ready for use in January, 2003.

The upgrade of the surface at Marrara Oval is being overseen by MCG curator Tony Ware.