Chief Minister Adam Giles has been named as the new patron of football in the Northern Territory at today's launch of the 2014 NorZone Premier League season.

"Soccer is one of the Territory’s biggest sports and I am proud to accept the invitation from the Football Federation of the Northern Territory to be their patron in 2014,” Mr Giles said.

“Football is a game that’s on the rise in the Northern Territory. Increasing numbers of Territorians are getting involved in soccer and I’m pleased that I can play a role in promoting it through this ambassadorial role.

“As part of this promotion effort, the Territory Government has started talking with football officials about the possibility of hosting the first ever ASEAN Football Federation General Meeting on Australian soil.

"In January 2015, Australia will also host the AFC Asia Cup tournament and Larrakia Park Darwin Football Stadium has been nominated as one of 22 potential pre-tournament camp training sites for participating national teams.

"It’s a long-shot but this would be an exciting opportunity for Northern Australia to build ties with our Asian neighbours though sport.

"I’m looking forward to discussing this and other opportunities with the Chief Executive of Football Federation Australia, David Gallop, when we meet in Darwin this afternoon."

The Country Liberals are also boosting the profile of the sport in the Territory through a two-year agreement with Adelaide United Football Club.

“The team will play an A-League pre-season game in Alice Springs in August 2014 and 2015. United will also run training camps for budding players and has based a full-time development officer in Alice Springs,” Mr Giles said.

"Under the deal, United will also play an Alice Springs representative side and from this match, two Territorians will be invited to train in Adelaide with the A-League and National Youth League teams for a week.

"We are currently talking to Adelaide United about the possibility of expanding this agreement to include a game in Darwin, which I know would be welcomed by Top End soccer fans.

“The partnership is more evidence of the Government’s commitment to bringing top-class games to Territory sport fans."

In 2013, more than 5500 Territorians participated in football competitions, programs, clinics, activities and events. More than 3000 boys, girls, men and women played some kind of structured football for local clubs last year and registrations have been strong in the lead-up to the 2014 season.

Media Contact: Danielle Parry 0413 081 801