New deal signed to keep AFL in the Territory

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The Northern Territory Government has signed a new agreement with the Australian Football League, Melbourne Football Club and AFLNT to keep AFL Premiership matches in the Territory for the next two years.

Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing Matt Conlan announced today the agreement will see Melbourne Football Club will play four Premiership matches in the Territory over the 2015 and 2016 seasons – one game in Darwin and a second game in either Alice Springs or Darwin each year.

“This is a fantastic win both for the Territory and the AFL game,” said Minister for Sport, Recreation and Racing Matt Conlan.

“Territorians will continue to experience the thrill of seeing AFL stars in action live at local venues, and the Melbourne Demons will continue to build support in the NT as their second base, playing two home Premierships matches a year in the Territory.

“This year’s first ever premiership match in Alice Springs was a huge success and we look forward to working with the AFL to stage a match there again in 2015 and 2016.

“Having these AFL games in the Territory will help the sport grow at the grass roots level across our region and help produce even more Territory champions of the sport.

“The new deal with the AFL forms part of our FestivalsNT calendar of arts, culture, business and sporting events Territorians can enjoy throughout the year.

“With sporting events already on the calendar like the V8 Supercars, international cricket and NRL matches through our partnership with the Parramatta Eels, the Territory is quickly forging a deserved reputation as a major sporting hub in Northern Australia.

“The new agreement with the Demons will also further promote the Territory as a must-visit holiday destination through our sponsorship of the club by Tourism NT and our Do the NT branding, which will help draw AFL fans from southern states to the Territory, boosting our tourism industry and economy. Live telecast of the AFL matches will further expose the Northern Territory to a television audience of hundreds of thousands of footy fans around Australia.”
The new deal with the AFL comes at the completion of the existing agreement that has seen Melbourne play in the Northern Territory for the past five years including this Saturday’s Round 16 clash against Fremantle at TIO Stadium in Darwin.

AFL General Manager - Broadcasting, Scheduling and Major Projects, Simon Lethlean, said: “As part of the AFL’s national footprint we are committed to taking AFL matches to all corners of the country and we’re delighted to be staging two games in the Northern Territory as part of the 2015 and 2016 Toyota AFL Premiership Seasons.

“Next year will see the Melbourne Football Club play in Darwin for the sixth consecutive season, along with a further match in Alice Springs or Darwin - Alice Springs having successfully hosted the region’s first ever AFL Premiership match in Round 11 earlier this year.

“The outstanding support from the Northern Territory Government is greatly appreciated and ensures the continued growth of the game by bringing the AFL’s best players to a region that has longstanding links to Australian Football and is culturally significant to this country’s Indigenous code.

“We congratulate the Melbourne Football Club for embracing the opportunity to engage with fans in the Territory and appreciate the additional support provided by AFL NT in making these matches such a highlight of the Toyota AFL Premiership Season,” Mr Lethlean said.

Melbourne Football Club CEO Peter Jackson thanked Northern Territory Government and Minister Conlan for their support and encouragement for Melbourne to be the team of choice for the Territory.

“Minister Conlan has a clear vision for the game in the Northern Territory, and we were honoured to be part of the first game in Alice Springs back in May, and this two-year renewal will ensure our Club has a strong footprint in Northern Australia,” he said.

“Melbourne Football Club has had a long association with the Northern Territory, through champion players such as Aaron Davey, and now Dom Barry, who made his AFL debut last round. Melbourne also has NT links via its partnership with the University of Melbourne’s Indigenous Eye Health Unit, which is working on public health campaigns to eliminate trachoma eye disease in Central Australia and remote Indigenous communities.”

The new two-year agreement with the AFL and Melbourne Football Club is worth $2 million.

Melbourne Demons play Fremantle Dockers at Darwin’s TIO Stadium this Saturday 5 July, with a 7.10pm start.

Get along early and support our representative team Territory Thunder in the NEAFL curtain raiser match against Redland at 3.30pm. Tickets can be purchased online from www.ticketdirect.com.au or at the gate.

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