Gary Higgins
Minister for Sport and Recreation

NT to host international hockey

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Australia’s men’s and women’s hockey teams are set to play international test matches in the Northern Territory from 2016.

Sport and Recreation Minister Gary Higgins said the Northern Territory Government has agreed to a three-year partnership with Hockey Australia to host matches from 2016 to 2018 with the Hockeyroos and Kookaburras.

“This is certainly a coup for the Northern Territory,” he said.

“I’m especially pleased the agreement will showcase our elite women hockey players to Territory fans just months out from the 2016 Rio Olympics.

“The Hockeyroos are one of Australia’s most successful women’s sporting teams, winning Olympic and Commonwealth Games gold medals as well as two World Cups.

“The Kookaburras will be just as exciting to see in action. They are ranked the number one men’s hockey team in the world and are the only male or female Australian team to win a medal at each of the last six Olympic Games.

“With a strong contingent of Northern Territory Institute of Sport alumni including Brooke Peris, currently in the Hockeyroos squad and Elizabeth Duguid in the National Development Squad, as well as Joel Carroll and Leon and Jeremy Hayward in the Kookaburras squad, there will certainly be plenty of local talent on display.”

Mr Higgins said the agreement with Hockey Australia includes game development for players, coaches and officials as well as coaching and skills clinics to develop junior hockey.

“The tournament will be another chance to grow grassroots participation in hockey and for the Territory to showcase its great sporting facilities while encouraging Australian and overseas fans to Do the NT,” he said.

Mr Higgins said the first tournament will be played in early April 2016.

“Negotiations are continuing around opponents for the tournament but fans can expect appearances from other big hockey nations,” he said.
Hockey Australia Chief Executive Cam Vale said the partnership with the NT is an important one.

“Providing more opportunities for Australians to see the Hockeyroos and Kookaburras on home turf is a significant priority for us over the coming years and this agreement allows us to do just that,” he said.

“The 2016 series will form a significant part of the Hockeyroos’ preparation for the Rio Olympic Games and the Champions Trophy and we look forward to having the backing of the Northern Territory at such an exciting time for Australian hockey.”

Hockey NT Executive Officer Ian Harkness said hosting teams of the calibre of the Hockeyroos, currently ranked number 2, and the Kookaburras, ranked number 1, reflected the joint approach of Hockey Australia and Hockey NT to grow participation and the development of athletes, coaches and officials.

“Having world ranked national hockey teams play in the NT provides an outstanding opportunity not only for devout hockey players and spectators but for sports lovers generally to see the best at their craft display their skills,” he said.

The Hockeyroos last played in Darwin in June 2004 in a tri-nations tournament with New Zealand and Japan, and the last time the Kookaburras played in Darwin was in May 2008 as part of a four-nation tournament with China, Korea and India.

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