Adam Giles  
Chief Minister of the Northern Territory

Gary Higgins  
Minister for Sport and Recreation

**Cricket hits a six in the Red Centre**

13 May 2015

Australia’s best Aboriginal cricketers will display their talents in the Red Centre with Alice Springs confirmed as host of the inaugural National Indigenous Cricket Championships and Imparja Cup for the next three years.

“It’s a wonderful affirmation of Alice Springs as the birthplace of this great competition,” Chief Minister Adam Giles said.

“The Territory Government is thrilled to be working closely with Cricket Australia, Northern Territory Cricket and the Alice Springs Town Council to continue bringing this great competition to the Red Centre.

“We are committed to supporting national and international level competitions in the Northern Territory and Alice Springs and have invested $250 000 over three years for this competition under our new agreement.”

National Indigenous Cricket Championships has been a division of the Imparja Cup since 2001 and the move to a standalone competition has been made to provide a new high performance pathway to elite competition.

The championships cover the state/territory competition while the Imparja Cup will showcase teams from major centres, communities, schools and indoor divisions.

Cricket Australia Executive General Manager, Game and Market Development, Andrew Ingleton, made the announcement at Traeger Park today.

“Congratulations to the Northern Territory Government and Alice Springs Town Council for their outstanding effort by not only supporting Northern Territory Cricket’s successful bid, but also of cricket in the Northern Territory more generally,” Mr Ingleton said.
“Today’s announcement further entrenches cricket in the Northern Territory. Providing our most talented Indigenous cricketers with further development opportunities is central to the decision to create the National Indigenous Cricket Championships.

“The 22-year heritage and culture of the Imparja Cup – and the participation opportunities it presents for Indigenous men, women and children – will continue thanks to the partnership announced today.”

Minister for Sport and Recreation Gary Higgins said the announcement is another boost for Central Australia.

“The National Indigenous Cricket Championships will feature the cream of Australia’s Aboriginal cricketers battling it out at the top level. The Imparja Cup will continue to be a celebration of culture and participation which brings communities together in Central Australia,” Mr Higgins said.

“The very first Imparja Cup was held in Alice Springs on Australia Day in 1994, an initiative of Alice Springs Indigenous cricketers Shane and Mervyn Franey and Tennant Creek’s Ross Williams who wanted to promote cricket participation in Indigenous communities across the Territory, and it has grown from there.

“We’re very pleased that Alice Springs will continue a proud tradition of hosting this event, with the Government and Cricket Australia negotiating a three-year deal to keep this tournament at Traeger Park with the cooperation of Alice Springs Town Council.”

The Alice Springs Town Council has welcomed the new agreement.

“It’s fantastic to see a deal to secure the Imparja Cup for Alice Springs, after all Alice Springs is the home of Indigenous cricket,” Alice Springs Mayor Damien Ryan said.

“The event started from humble beginnings here in Central Australia more than 20 years ago. Today the competition has teams from right across Australia, with a reputation for helping develop young indigenous cricketing talent, and that’s something we as a community are very proud of.”

The announcement comes on the 147th anniversary of the arrival of an all-Aboriginal cricket team in England in 1868 – the first recorded overseas tour by an Australian sporting representative side.

The 2015 Imparja Cup involved more 52 teams and more than 500 participants. Since 1994 the tournament has evolved from a two-team competition between Alice Springs and Tennant Creek into a national tournament.

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