NT sporting groups could miss out under Labor's Arafura Games plan

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Northern Territory sporting groups and families could be the big losers from Labor’s plan to spend millions of dollars bringing back the Arafura Games, Chief Minister Adam Giles warned today.

Mr Giles said the Northern Territory Government had focussed its efforts on encouraging more children to play sport by boosting funding for grass roots sports rather than spending millions on the Arafura Games.

“The Arafura Games were great in their heyday but these kinds of country-focussed, multi-sport events have fallen out of favour around the globe,” Mr Giles said.

“The Arafura Games model has passed its use by date and Labor needs to keep up with the times.”

Mr Giles said the CLP Government had increased grant funding for peak sporting organisations from $3.5 million to $5.3 million since coming to office, and had allocated $7.4 million in Budget 2015 to expand the hugely popular sports voucher scheme.

“The voucher scheme is helping ease the financial burden on families by reducing the costs associated with kids playing sport, and it’s also helping local sporting clubs grow,” he said.

“Since the CLP Government increased the investment in the program and opened the scope to include cultural activities and Learn to Swim vouchers, more than 140,000 families have been issued for Territory families to access and benefit from the scheme.

“I would hate to see local sporting groups and families miss out because Labor wants to spend five to ten million dollars bringing back the Arafura Games.”

Mr Giles called on Labor to come clean and say exactly how much their plan to reinstate the Arafura Games would cost and where the money was coming from.

“It’s time Labor removed the cloud of uncertainty hanging over grass roots sporting organisations,” he said.

“If Labor wants to bring back the Arafura Games, they have to say how they are going to pay for it.”

Media Contact: Scott Whitby 0438 531 583