Chief Minister Adam Giles today announced the $2M all-weather tartan track and associated field sports including javelin, jumps, shot put, discus, pole-vault and hammer throws would soon be developed at Centralian Middle School.

Mr Giles made the announcement after months of community consultation and negotiations between the Country Liberals Government, Athletics NT, Alice Springs Running and Walking Club and local participants.

“This is an historic day for Alice Springs athletes and their coaches and a shot in the arm for the local athletic community who will finally get a facility they can be proud of,” Mr Giles said.

“The new track and athletics facilities will provide local participants with a world class centre that will enable them to train and prepare at a venue of high standard and it gives them access to a track that would be the equal of any running track in Australia.

“The Rio Olympics are less than three months away and who knows, the next Cathy Freeman or Australian gold medal winner might take their first strides toward Olympic or Commonwealth Games glory right here in Alice Springs.”

The facility, which will feature an eight-lane tartan track, secure fencing, training lights, in-field grassed area and toilet amenities, is currently in the design phase.

Minister for Sport and Recreation Nathan Barrett chaired numerous stakeholder meetings in Alice Springs in the past two months and he said Centralian Middle School was identified as the most logical venue.

“We listened to all the participants and the local community and after an extensive consultation the feedback indicated Centralian Middle School was the best venue for the future development of athletics in Alice Springs,” Mr Barrett said.
“Alice Springs athletes can now train and prepare for national competition in their own backyard giving the home grown talent in Central Australia more opportunity for success.

“The County Liberals Government is committed to nurturing grass roots sport to enable our next generation to compete on an even playing field with all athletes, no matter where they live.”

Minister for Education Peter Chandler said the athletics centre would have far-reaching benefits for the community.

“The announcement of the new athletics track at Centralian Middle School will be a sensational addition to the educational sector and sporting community of central Australia,” Mr Chandler said.

“The installation will assist in securing more nationally recognised sporting meets and assist in developing our future sporting stars.”

Champion Alice Springs runner Emma Kraft said the new facility would open up a new world of opportunity for budding athletes.

“This is a fantastic opportunity for young athletes and kids in Alice Springs,” Ms Kraft said.

“To be able train and compete on an athletics track instead of a grass oval will have massive benefits on the sport and this new facility might help us unveil the next Australian Olympic champion.

“It will increase participation in local athletics and it’s a big step forward for Alice Springs athletics.”

Athletics Northern Territory President Kevin Mulvahil applauded the announcement.

“It will be hugely beneficial to have a facility like this in the Red Centre,” Mr Mulvahil said.

“Alice Springs has been lacking a facility like this and this will encourage kids to participate and lead a healthy lifestyle.

“It will also enable us to host competitions and I’m confident it will attract interstate and international teams to use it as training base because Alice Springs has such an ideal climate.”

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