Ken Vowles
Minister for the Arafura Games

Media Release

Massive Boost for Arafura Games: China On Board

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The Arafura Games continues to grow with China officially signing up to take part.

Minister for the Arafura Games, Ken Vowles, said China is a significant trade and investment partner for the Territory, and Chinese participation in the Games will further strengthen that relationship.

"The Territory Labor Government is bringing back the Arafura Games, which the previous CLP government scrapped against the wishes of Territorians," Mr Vowles said.

"We know the Games provide opportunities to form and strengthen trade and business links with our Asia-Pacific neighbours. These links boost the Territory economy and help create jobs.

"In the last calendar year alone trade between China and the Territory totalled $2.06 billion – including exports worth $1.93 billion - making China our largest international trading partner."

China is the ninth country to sign up, joining Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Timor-Leste, Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu.

China’s confirmation of participation in the Arafura Games coincides with the recent announcement that Donghai Airlines will begin direct flights between Shenzhen in China and Darwin later this month.

"Minister for Tourism and Culture, Lauren Moss, has worked incredibly hard to secure this new route, and it is perfect timing for the Arafura Games," Mr Vowles said.

"China has competed in the Arafura Games multiple times and these direct flights will make it easier for Chinese athletes to take part this year."

Trevor Cox, General Manager for Tourism Top End, said the organisation had been preparing for an increase in Chinese visitors when incoming flights begin on 30 May.

"It’s great the Territory will welcome its first-ever direct flight from China later this month," he said. "We run the visitor centre on Bennett Street and have been busy translating maps into Chinese. We are also well-prepared for walk-in queries as we have a staff member who speaks Chinese."

President of the Chung Wah Society, Austin Chin, said Darwin’s large Chinese community would get behind the Arafura Games.

"The Chung Wah Society is a social and sporting club, and we are pleased to see the Arafura Games return," he said. "They are a great community event."

Mr Vowles encouraged people from across the Territory community to sign up as volunteers.

"I’ve been involved in the Arafura Games both as a volunteer and a participant and it is an awesome experience," he said. "Visit www.arafuragames.nt.gov.au to sign up."

The Arafura Games will run from April 27 – May 4, 2019. The sports are Athletics / Tennis / Muay Thai / Sailing / Volleyball / Weightlifting / Basketball / Hockey / Netball / Table tennis / Boxing /
Soccer / Badminton / Swimming / Archery. Sepak Takraw and Dragon Boating will be demonstration sports.

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