INTERNATIONAL CRICKET COMING TO PALMERSTON

8 April 2014

The Country Liberals Government is bringing international cricket to Palmerston for the first time later this year with an investment of more than $150,000 to transform Northline Oval into a first-class cricket ground.

"I'm thrilled that the Top End will host the Quadrangular One Day series from 20 July to 2 August. Territorians love their sport and this tournament is yet another top-class sporting event brought to the Territory by the Country Liberals," Chief Minister Adam Giles said.

The tournament will feature India A, South Africa A, Australia A and the Australian Under 23 performance squad, with three of the 14 Top End games scheduled for Northline Oval in Palmerston.

Mr Giles and the Minister for Sport Recreation and Racing Matt Conlan joined Australian cricketer Phillip Hughes for today’s announcement.

“This is exciting news for Top End cricket fans and sport lovers with some of the world’s top cricketers to play in Darwin and, for the first time, Palmerston too,” Mr Giles said.

“This is a great outcome for the Palmerston community with families able to watch top-quality cricket games right here in their own backyard and see Aussie stars like Phil Hughes in action.

“We have excellent cricket facilities at Marrara and the Gardens but have never hosted international cricket in Palmerston before. This is being made possible by a $163,000 spend by the Country Liberals Government to upgrade Northline Oval from a footy field to a world-class cricket ground.

“This investment will see the installation of a new irrigation system to cater for a centre wicket pitch, as well as new sightscreens and a pitch roller to bring the ground up to international standard. The Government will also help NT Cricket relocate its drop-in wicket, that’s currently at Marrara, to Palmerston.

“We’ll also start the ball rolling on the installation of proper practice nets at the venue later in the year so that international cricket, like the Quadrangular series, can be held there on a regular basis.

“These upgrades by the Giles Government will see the oval developed into a multi-use facility which will benefit Palmerston’s sporting community all year round with both cricket and Aussie Rules able to be played at the same venue."

Cricket Australia Executive General Manager Team Performance, Pat Howard said Cricket Australia was thrilled to be bringing international cricket back to the Top End.
“We have previously held tournaments in Darwin during Australia’s winter months and the community has really embraced the chance to see international teams and some of Australia’s best players in action,” Mr Howard said.

“We prepared in Darwin before the successful 2012 tour of the United Arab Emirates and the conditions were ideal. We have received great support from the Northern Territory Government and NT Cricket, who are all looking forward to hosting some high quality and entertaining cricket.

“From a team performance point of view, the conditions will give our next tier players a great opportunity to press their claims for higher honours against some very strong opposition.”

Mr Conlan said the Territory Government had lobbied hard to secure the tournament.

“It’s been a priority of the Country Liberals Government to get international cricket back to the Territory in all forms of the game and it’s fantastic to see Cricket Australia work with us to achieve that goal,” he said.

“Today’s announcement follows last year’s historic Ashes Tour Match between the Chairman’s XI and England in Alice Springs, as well as the Under 19 International cricket series held in Darwin.

“These games are an important opportunity for our junior cricketers to see the elite stars of the game in action up close and see first-hand what is needed to perform at the top level of the sport.

“Some of the big names coming up for the series include Phillip Hughes, Mitchell Starc, all-rounder James Faulkner, one of the best finishers in One Day International cricket, Australian Twenty20 top order batsman Cameron White and the Territory’s own Kane Richardson.

“Having these high calibre cricketers in town will help grow the sport at the grassroots level, particularly in Palmerston which is the Top End’s fast growing region.”

NT Cricket Association President, Dr Bruce Walker, said it’s a big day for Territory sport.

“This is an exciting opportunity for NT Cricket, in partnership with Cricket Australia, the NT Government, Charles Darwin University and the Palmerston Magpies,” he said.

“This will increase the presence of and participation in cricket in the Palmerston community which has been a strategic objective for NT Cricket for a number of years. It is nice to know we are now in a position to go ahead.”

See schedule attached.

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