Up and coming touch players from around Australian schools have arrived in Darwin in preparation for the School Sport Australia Touch Tournament, commencing today through to Friday 23 September at the Northern Territory Touch Association (NTTA) fields at the Darwin Turf Club, Fannie Bay.

Students, referees and officials were today welcomed to Darwin by the Hon Syd Stirling MLA, Minister for Employment, Education and Training at an opening ceremony at the NTTA fields.

He said the many benefits of taking part in sport were being increasingly recognised. “School sport plays a vital role in our children’s development within the sporting arena, but also in setting values and attitudes that will be important in whichever role students fulfil as members of society.”

“School Sport isn’t just sport - but rather an educational program through the medium of sport,” he said. “The program is also a promotion of physical and active lifestyles and it is in these contexts that the Territory Government gives ongoing support and encouragement to these activities.”

The Touch Tournament includes a round robin of games at the Fannie Bay Touch Fields with a finals series for the 15 years and under students. The 12 years and under participants do not have a finals series, but will instead enjoy a mix-n-match component including animal handling opportunities from the Territory Wildlife Park and Aboriginal painting and spear throwing organised by Jim Smith and the Larrakia people.

Year 11 students at Darwin High School are also gaining valuable media and marketing skills by producing a daily newsletter for all teams and officials. They will act as reporters and publishers seeking information on daily scores and activities on and off the field.

The Touch Tournament is part of the School Sport Australia Program, in which all states are rostered on a rotational basis to host 35 different sporting events annually. An estimated 2 million students participate in the programs at various levels, 5000 of whom are Northern Territory students (through School Sport NT).

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