



Media Release

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Australia's top Indigenous Sports and Cultural Festival kicks off in Brisbane tomorrow with history making "test" match

The first national Indigenous touch football team ever selected to represent their country will play the Australian national touch team, the current world champions, in Brisbane tomorrow.

The history-making match, which kicks off at 12.35 on Saturday, headlines this year's Annual Indigenous Sports and Cultural Festival, at Whites Hill Reserve in the Brisbane suburb of Coorparoo.

Run by First Contact, a small local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community organization in Mt Gravatt, the festival is one of the biggest and most successful Indigenous sports and cultural events in Australia.

First Contact chairman Robbie Williams said the festival, which starts at 9.10am with a traditional welcome from Community Elder Fred Coolwell and the opening Burragubba performance, will attract more than 10,000 people over the two days.

A record turnout of 2000 players from 117 teams will play in the tournament, which offers \$30,000 in prizes.

Mr Williams said the Australian Indigenous team will give the Australian side test match quality opposition in the lead up to their World title defence in South Africa in January.

While the lead up game, NZ Maoris vs Papua New Guinea, will be the first international match ever held at the carnival.

Rugby League legend Artie Beetson and a bevy of federal and state ministers will present the Indigenous team and officials with their Australian jerseys before the game.

The third headline on Saturday night will see Queensland and New South Wales state teams play off for "bragging rights" as Australia's best, in the "Battle of the States".

Top players from the National Rugby League such as Benji Marshall, Justin Hodges, Nathan Blacklock, champion boxer Anthony Mundine and women's national touch star Bo De la Cruz, will play during the tournament.

Guest entertainer this year is NSW singer Victor Simms, who will perform the national anthem with local Indigenous singer Adam James before the main game.

Cultural performers on the Saturday include the Nunuckle-Yuggera dance troupe, Malu Kiai Torres Strait Islander dancers, the Black Cockatoos dance group and Adam James and Friends.

On Sunday performances include hip-hop, dancers from the Greek Community, the Yarrabah dancers, the Huntsmen, the KS10 dance show and NU Flow Kru with their "body heat fusion".

Festival sponsors include: Brisbane City Council, the Queensland government through the Department of Sport and Recreation, the Australian government's Department of

Communications Information Technology and the Arts, and the Brisbane Metropolitan Touch Association.

The Indigenous Sports and Cultural Festival is open to the public, alcohol free and provides free supervised rides for children, with non-indigenous people warmly welcome.

For information on the sports and the extensive cultural program see First Contact's website: www.firstcontact.asn.au

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