

MEDIA RELEASE

28 November 2007

Indigenous Festival goes National on Foxtel

First Contact's Indigenous Sports and Cultural Festival went National this year, 'taking it to the limits and beyond', with National Indigenous Television(NITV) and the first year of official recognition by the Australian Touch Authority

More than 20,000 turned up to see and participate in the 14th Annual First Contact Sports and Cultural Festival in Brisbane over the weekend, breaking all records which hosted national and international games of tough football for the second time in Australia.

As a result Carnival organisers, First Contact, announced today that the selection and hosting of the National Indigenous Touch Team to play against the Australian Indigenous Touch Team would continue next year in Brisbane as a annual component of the Festival.

Chairperson of First Contact Mr Robbie Williams said the Festival has put Indigenous Touch firmly 'on the map' in Australian Touch Football circles like never before.

"The first year of formal accreditation for the tournament opened up a whole new range of sporting opportunities for Indigenous people to represent their country in Touch Football," said Robbie

"It also strengthened Australian Touch Football by significantly increasing the number and flow of Indigenous players capable of winning places in national teams."

"The annual event continues to be 'an economic, cultural and sporting touchdown' for Touch Football.

Robbie has seen the community festival grow to become recognized as one of the biggest and most successful Indigenous run sporting and cultural events in Australia. This year the \$250,000 tournament drew over 2000 players and officials from 124 teams from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Canberra to battle it out for \$30,000 in prizes and for bragging rights as the 'Best in the World' of Indigenous Touch.

Community and Club fundraising food stalls increased this year and they experienced a steady trade as event patrons moved through the Cultural Arts, Crafts and Food stalls at the Festival. The Markets area was a sea of black, yellow and red as Aboriginal craft makers, stallholders and small business operators marketed, displayed and sold their crafts, products, artworks to local and interstate visitors.

Maori shock 6-3 lead over Indigenous Australia

Many festival-goers, estimated at over 20,000, were there to see the second annual 'exhibition' test match held between the National Australian Indigenous Touch Team and the New Zealand Maori Touch Team on the Saturday.

New Zealand won the competition but plans are already underway for specialist development and training clinics for commence in the first half of 2008 for Australian Indigenous Touch Players.

An excited first day crowd of more than 10,000 people saw the Indigenous Australian Team clash with the New Zealand Maoris in the second ever in touch.

The Hon Judy Spence MP, Queensland Minister for Sport and Recreation, presented the Indigenous teams and officials with their jerseys before the game. The National Anthem was sung in English then in Maori before the main game.

Other Highlights and Results

More than 350 games were played over the 3 day event.

Sporting mentors Nova Perez, Nathan Blacklock, and Patrick Johnson participated in the games and signed autographs for patrons throughout the event.

In the second Indigenous Touch international held at the tournament, the New Zealand Maoris defeated the Indigenous Australian Team by 6-3.

In the Battle of the States, Queensland took the honors 3-0, with a clean sweep across all divisions.

Top honors for schools division went to Cultural Connections who defeated PCYC Kurri United 6-3.

In the Schools Boys division Mulli Young Guns defeated Sandgate Young Guns 8-2

A fast game seen That's Da Paka defeat Trackadigenez 10-6 in the Mixed open division.

Mixed plate saw Nova Unearthed put out the fire in Juss Blaze with a 5-3 victory.

North Queensland kept a strong defense in the Men's Plate with Cairns Cobras defeating New South Wales Yuddendalis 5-4.

The highlight of the day saw Gold Coast team Galaxy and local team, That's the Paka clash for the Men's Open Division title with a landslide win by That's the Paka 9-4.

Major partners in this year's event were: Queensland Departments of Sport and Recreation, Education and Arts, the Australian Government Department of Communications, Information Technology and Arts, and the Brisbane City Council.

Minor partners in this year's event was: 98.9fm, National Indigenous Television, Queensland Touch Association, Touch Football Australia and Brisbane Metropolitan Touch Association.

Photos and information on this years sports and the extensive cultural program will be posted on First Contact website from 3 December www.firstcontact.asn.au

For further Comment by Robbie Williams

Contact Trish Williams, General Manager, First Contact Ph 07 34204291