

Media Release
Sunday 23 August

National Indigenous Program Hockey Programme Launched Today

Hockey Australia and Fortescue Metals Group has today unveiled Australia's National Indigenous Hockey Program.

The National Indigenous Program will see the world's number one hockey team and Olympic gold medallists, the Kookaburras, establish one of international sport's most inclusive games, hockey, in the Pilbara Indigenous community and the wider Pilbara community.

Visits to Roebourne and the Pilbara region will be sponsored and facilitated by Fortescue. The Kookaburras will join Indigenous communities three times a year for the next five years.

The National Indigenous Program is designed to not only develop the sport of hockey in the Pilbara region, but also to develop leadership skills, encourage active participation, community engagement and talent identification.

The program will also be assisted by Indigenous Services Australia to help develop life skills of the participants.

"We chose the world's top Hockey team not only because they happen to be Australian, but because the game of hockey itself reaches all ages and peoples, boys and girls, young and old, men and women. It isn't socially confined. Hockey reaches the entire community," Fortescue Chairman Andrew Forrest said.

"This is a wonderful game that can encourage team work, health, initiative, competitiveness and a strong sense of purpose. There are many parallels between the Kookaburras and Fortescue. Setting stretch targets and achieving them, believing strongly in team work and having a never, ever give up attitude. The reason Fortescue decided to support the Kookaburras' National Indigenous Program is to help teach Indigenous children these same traits," Mr Forrest said.

Hockey Australia Chief Executive Mark Anderson commented that "the Kookaburras were committed to working in the area for the long term".

"We will be bringing members of the Kookaburras into the region three times a year over the next five years. The team are looking forward to the opportunity of working closely with the community. We have two great role models with Indigenous Kookaburra players and gold medallists Des Abbott & Joel Carroll who will serve as ambassadors for the program," Mr Anderson said.

"Through a program like this, you can help kids develop the confidence and individuality they need to stand on their own two feet and have a go. They learn to not rely on anyone else but themselves and their education and they can carve out their own futures.

"In addition to the team visits we are dedicated to working within this community. We will be establishing and developing long term community programs to ensure that the programs are sustainable. The visits from our successful national team are an important part of this program, but only one component of the larger plans."

We would like to thank Fortescue for supporting our concept and working with us to ensure this

program is successful and makes a positive contribution to the community,” Mr Anderson said.

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