



Media release

Premier and Minister for Trade

The Honourable Anastacia Palaszczuk

Friday, July 24, 2020

Palaszczuk Govt secures more AFL teams and games for Cairns

Cairns will stage at least three AFL Premiership games this year and host two AFL teams for up to a month in a deal secured by the Palaszczuk Government that will inject millions of dollars into the city's economy.

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk today confirmed the deal struck with the AFL to move two clubs to Cairns.

"Due to the way Queenslanders have managed this health crisis, we can now focus on Queensland's plan for economic recovery," she said.

"Queensland is now the home of Australian sport. We've worked hard to make sure that Cairns gets a piece of the action.

"Having more teams and more games in Cairns will pump millions of dollars into the local economy and support jobs – helping us execute our plan for economic recovery."

Tourism Minister Kate Jones said major sporting events would be crucial to rebuilding Queensland's economy and supporting local jobs.

"Not only are we bringing AFL games back to Cairns but relocating two teams to the city for three to four weeks," she said.

"This will fill hotel rooms, create business for local suppliers and give a boost to the tourism economy.

"Never before has Cairns hosted so many AFL games in one season so to be able to bring three games and possibly four to the city is a real coup."

Member for Cairns Michael Healy said the Palaszczuk Government would continue to work with the AFL to extract as much value as possible out of the deal for local businesses.

"I've lobbied for a long time to get more AFL premiership games to Cairns with the support of many in our community. This is a great opportunity to expose more AFL fans to what we have to offer here in the Far North," he said.

"Cazaly's Stadium has one of the best playing surfaces in the country in one of the most beautiful places in the world. Watching a game in Cairns is a footy fan's dream.

"Apart from the quality of our stadium, our mild winter should be another drawcard to bring more people to our city and region, supporting our local tourism industry."

Speaker of the Queensland Parliament and Member for Mulgrave Curtis Pitt said today the deal was an important milestone in Far North Queensland's economic recovery.

"AFL has a huge following right throughout Australia. This deal will enable us to show thousands of prospective tourists what they've got to look forward to if they book a holiday in the Far North during winter," he said.

"Aussies who have been stuck in isolation are itching for a holiday. Exposure from hosting major sporting fixtures like this will help to drive more visitors to Cairns post-COVID-19. This is a huge win for our tourism industry."

AFL General Manager of Clubs and Broadcasting Travis Auld thanked the Palaszczuk Government for playing a key role in ensuring the 2020 Premiership season could continue.

"We are thrilled to be again playing games at Cazaly's and to have teams staying in Cairns which has such a strong AFL support base," he said.

"We look forward to having teams in the community and contributing to the local economy.

"We are really grateful to the support of the Queensland Government for their ongoing support of AFL and their support for ensuring our season has been able to continue as well as the wonderful support of Tourism Queensland and Cairns Regional Council. "We are always excited to bring our games to the north of Queensland.

"We will work out which clubs will move to Cairns and the timing in the coming weeks."

Cairns Mayor Bob Manning said having the AFL in Cairns would lift the spirit of locals during a tough time.

"This could not have come at a better time for our city – it's gold to us – not only for our economy, but it will also lift our community's spirit," he said.

"Sport has a funny way of doing that, it brings people together, inspires them and can be incredibly uplifting.

"Cairns has an enduring relationship with Tourism and Events Queensland and Minister Kate Jones, we are absolutely thrilled to play a part in the spread of AFL teams and games across Queensland this season – especially the Tropical North.

"There is no better time in the year to be in Cairns; add top level football to our sensational winter weather and stunning natural assets, and you simply have it all.

"And certainly there is no better place outside a metropolitan centre to play elite football, Casalys Stadium in Cairns is quite simply the best AFL oval in regional Australia."

Between 2011 and 2018 the Gold Coast Suns played one regular season game a year at Cazaly's Stadium, facing off against the Tigers, the Bulldogs and the Kangaroos in that time.

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