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NCAA COLLEGE FOOTBALL HEADING TO SYDNEY

Sydney has secured one of the hottest codes in sport in an Australian first next year, with University of California set to play the University of Hawaii in the opening round of the 2016 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division One College Football Championships.

Minister for Trade, Tourism and Major Events and Minister for Sport, Stuart Ayres said the American Football event, secured for Sydney by the NSW Government through its tourism and major events agency Destination NSW, will provide a fantastic afternoon of entertainment, a huge live broadcast audience and a significant boost to the local economy.

“The University of California and the University of Hawaii have well recognised and established football programs which will ensure that this game delivers all the excitement and atmosphere of college football to Sydney. Both Universities have enormous followings in the USA, and will see thousands of fans from across Australia and around the world travelling to our State to watch this opening round game,” Mr Ayres said.

“The match will be held on 27 August 2016 at ANZ Stadium and is anticipated to attract more than 15,000 domestic and international visitors to Sydney – an influx which is estimated to inject more than \$10 million in visitor expenditure into the local economy.

“Sydney is globally recognised as a destination for world class sporting events. Sydney has been named as a World Festival and Events City six years in a row by the International Festivals & Events Association and has recently hosted major sporting events such as the Opening Series of Major League Baseball and hosting football giants Manchester United, Juventus, Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur.

“The NCAA’s decision to schedule a regular season game in Sydney highlights the continuing allure of the city to international sports looking to showcase their product on the world’s stage.

“The game will be broadcast live in the United States and will be the only NCAA competition match that is played on that day, which will give our State fantastic exposure across the entire nation,” he said.

The University of California Golden Bears are based in Berkeley, California, and play in the Pacific 12 Conference. They have a rich football history, winning five NCAA titles since their inception in 1916.

The University of Hawaii Rainbow Warriors are based in Honolulu, Hawaii and play in the Mountain West Conference. Like the University of California, they play in Division I of the NCAA tournament, with their football program operating since 1909.

Division One of the NCAA Football competition contains 127 universities across the USA, split into ‘conferences’ based on their geographical location. The match will be an official NCAA season fixture, with the result counting towards each team’s conference rankings.

Destination NSW Chief Executive Officer Sandra Chipchase said the event will give Sydney and Australia a first-hand experience of the excitement of college football.

“College football is hugely popular in the USA, with last year’s inaugural College Football Playoff Championship Game between Ohio State and Oregon attracting more than 30 million TV viewers. Both Cal Berkeley and the University of Hawaii will be bringing their fans, cheerleaders, mascots and marching bands so it promises to be a unique experience for any sports fan and I encourage everyone to book their trip to Sydney to be a part of it,” she said.

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