



The Hon Barry O'Farrell MP

Premier of NSW

Minister for Western Sydney

MEDIA RELEASE

NSW GOVT HITS A HOME RUN: SYDNEY WINS MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL SEASON OPENER

Sydney has won the right to host the Opening Series of Major League Baseball in 2014 – the first time such a match will be held in Australia and only the sixth time it's been held outside the United States, NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell and Minister for Sport Graham Annesley announced today.

"Sydney will host the first two games for the Opening Series of 2014 Major League Baseball, at the Sydney Cricket Ground, on Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 March 2014," Mr O'Farrell said.

"The Opening Series will feature the LA Dodgers and the Arizona Diamondbacks playing the first two games of the season.

"This is a significant win for Sydney and again delivers on my election commitment to bring major events to NSW.

"It's estimated the matches will deliver a direct visitor impact of more than \$13 million for the local economy, as well as attract visitors from interstate and overseas.

"The Major Baseball League Opening Series will showcase NSW to a worldwide tourism audience, including key markets in Japan, Korea, China as well as the United States," he said.

Mr Annesley said the Opening Series signals the beginning of the Major Baseball League season and has only been played five times outside the United States, including three series in Japan where baseball is hugely popular.

The Opening Series could be seen by an estimated global TV household audience of up to 168 million households in key tourism markets, including an estimated 75 million in the USA, 49 million households in Japan and 20 million households in China," Mr Annesley said.

"The LA Dodgers and the Arizona Diamond Backs will be in Sydney for six days, including the two games at the Sydney Cricket Ground and pre-match training sessions.

"Sydney has a long history of hosting significant baseball games at the Sydney Cricket Ground, with the Chicago White Sox playing against a combined NSW team in 1914.

"To host the two games, the Sydney Cricket Ground will be transformed into a Major Baseball League field, with the construction of an infield clay area, pitcher's mound, dugouts and additional grandstand.

"The match will played in front of the upgraded stand at the SCG which will be opened in time for the New Year Ashes cricket test," he said.

Destination NSW CEO Sandra Chipchase said the signing was a coup for Sydney.

“As the Sydney games will be broadcast live to the United States on ESPN, the focus of baseball fans will be on NSW in March 2014 ensuring we can showcase Australia’s global city and NSW as the natural home of major sport in this country,” she said.

Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust Chief Executive, Mr Jamie Barkley, said the SCG was honoured to host the first MLB games ever played in Australia.

“This is history in the making for the MLB and for sport in Australia, and I congratulate the MLB and the NSW Government in having the foresight and confidence to play two showcase games at Australia’s most internationally-recognised venue, the SCG,” Mr Barkley said.