



Media Release

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TRU Welcomes State Government Grant to Upgrade Rugby Park

The TRU says a \$250,000 State Government Grant to upgrade Rugby Park at Cornelian Bay is a major boost for Tasmania's participation in the National University Women's Sevens Series.

TRU president Michael Ryan said the grant would assist greatly in developing local women's sevens and junior rugby competitions and open Rugby Park up as a facility for all broader community sports use.

"This is perhaps the biggest thing to happen for Tasmanian rugby in our history and will help us modernise the game by developing new forms of the sport to increase participation across all age groups," Mr Ryan said.

"We congratulate the State Government for recognising the opportunity that Tasmania's involvement in the National University Women's Sevens Competition presents for our sport, the University and for the State," he said.

Mr Ryan said the TRU vision for Rugby Park was to create a multiple-use, flexible community sports hub in the inner northern suburbs of Hobart.

The grant will be used to install lights to facilitate evening games and the TRU also has plans to upgrade the playing fields and changing room facilities.

In February the Australian Rugby Union announced that five states and territories will be represented in the inaugural competition, with ACT, NSW, QLD, SA and Tasmania all to field teams.

The Australia-wide spread of the universities matches the growing demand for women's Rugby Sevens across the country, especially following the gold medal efforts of the Qantas Australian Women's Sevens team at the Rio Olympics, which prompted a 33% increase in female club Sevens participation in 2016 (after a 33% increase in 2015).

"To adequately provide young women with the opportunity to play Rugby Sevens, the infrastructure at Rugby Park, which has traditionally catered for a male dominated playing population, urgently requires upgrading which this grant will go a long way towards providing.

"The TRU is partnering the University of Tasmania, with Tasmanian Development officer Luke Burgess – a former Wallaby and Australian Men's Sevens representative – to be appointed as senior

coach for the University team.

The TRU is also working with the ARU to enlist members of the Gold Medal Women's Sevens Olympic Team as ambassadors for the Tasmanian team.

The role of the TRU in this partnership is to facilitate competitions in Launceston and Hobart to underpin this elite program. We will also provide coaching and support. The participation agreement stipulates that half the squad of the UTAS team must be current students of the University whilst the remainder can be non-students.

Released by Mike Lester 0425 235 157