



NSW COUNTRY RUGBY UNION CHAMPIONSHIPS

Warren to host on behalf of Western Plains Rugby

Wednesday 18th April: Western Plains Rugby Union, along with the community of Warren, are delighted to host the 2018 NSW Country Rugby Union Championships in Warren, on Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th of April.

Since its inception 65 years ago, the Country Championships has provided an impressive ground for breeding talent from the bush to the beach, with the likes of former and current Waratah and Wallaby players **Ben McCalman** (Warren), **Ned Hanigan** (Coonamble), **Pat McCutcheon** (Narromine) **Matt Sandell** (Mudgee), **Tom Robertson** (Dubbo) and **Paddy Ryan** (Tamworth) all commencing their rugby careers in country NSW.

The 2018 Country Championships will be a history-making tournament too, with Western Plains hosting for the first time. Warren, however has a strong history of hosting representative games.

Greg Whitley, chairman of the Country Championships Organising Committee recalls the most memorable games to be the when the Western Plain Zone played the All Blacks in Warren. "A few years ago, QLD County played NSW Country in Warren, however one of the most unbelievable games was in 1957 when the Western Plains Zone took on the mighty All Blacks on a ground that was truly from the archives and full of Khaki Weed and dust" said Whitley. A far cry from the rugged, unkempt field of yesteryear, Whitley assures that he Warren facilities have come a long way since then. "The Warren Council have been working very hard with us to get two first class playing surfaces ready for the Country Championships and we're looking forward to what should be a great weekend of Rugby.

"Rugby Union has always played a prominent role in country communities and even in times of hardship it gives the whole community a chance to come together to support their local teams" said Whitley.

The championships will bring a significant economic boost to Warren. "In addition to providing a great social opportunity for people, the projected \$250,000 that will be injected into Warren will be great for local businesses and the community as a whole," said Whitley.

The Country Championships are still recognised as a prominent talent identification process and a number of talent scouts will be attending this year. The weekend will provide the perfect platform for potential candidates to put their best foot forward.

The championships are set to bring 660 players from 9 different country rugby zones: Central Coast, Central North, Central west, Far North Coast, Illawarra District, Mid North Coast, New England, Newcastle Hunter and the Western Plains



together to compete across seniors,

under 20's and women's 7's.

When: Saturday 28th and Sunday 29th April

Where: Victoria Oval, Warren

For further information, images or interviews, contact:

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