



Media Release

7 February 2024

Local business cashing-in as Santos Festival of Rugby hits fever pitch

Footy fever is building in Roma as the town prepares to host its biggest event of the year, the Santos Festival of Rugby.

The weekend long event in February is expected to double the town's population and not only excite footy fans, but also provide a major economic boost to the local community.

Santos Executive Vice President, Brett Darley, said Santos, in partnership with Queensland Rugby Union and New South Wales Rugby Union, was proud to bring the Festival of Rugby back to Roma and support the local community.

"Footy fans aren't the only winners when the elite Queensland Reds and New South Wales Waratahs come to Roma and vie for the Santos Cup," Mr Darley said.

"More than 6,000 people are expected to visit Roma for the 9–10 February event and we know these visitors will be staying, eating and drinking locally.

"All hotel rooms in Roma and the surrounds will be booked and local vendors are now gearing up for record numbers.

"The local Echidna Rugby Club will play host to the event and are preparing their fields and installing additional infrastructure, including a temporary 2000-seat grandstand for the major event.

"In 2022, Santos funded more than \$200,000 of permanent infrastructure upgrades to the local footy club, including installing flood lights that benefit teams and community year-round.

"Corporate sponsorship and events such as these are so important for regional towns and Santos is committed to giving back and supporting the towns in which we operate.

"Last year within Maranoa Regional Council, Santos spent almost AU\$100 million partnering with local businesses, buying local products and using local services."

Mayor of Maranoa, Cr Golder, also expressed his perspective on the event and said the Santos funded upgrade to the local playing fields as part of the festival was an extra benefit.

"Beyond the playing fields, the festival extends its offerings to encompass family entertainment, live performances, junior coaching clinics, school visits, and a celebration of the region. Whether one is a rugby enthusiast or not, this event promises enjoyment for the entire community," Cr Golder said.

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“From a community standpoint, the 2022 event injected much-needed funds into Roma through both direct and indirect spending.

“Beyond expenditures related to rugby activities, significant contributions from spectators and visitors to the local economy, spanning areas such as food, beverage, accommodation, and fuel, were observed.

“With anticipated crowd numbers exceeding 6,000 for the 2024 Roma event, the cumulative return to the community is estimated to be approximately \$1.9 million + on a bi-annual basis, underscoring the enduring positive impact of the festival.”

Background:

In partnership with Queensland Rugby Union and New South Wales Rugby Union, Santos is pleased to present the Santos Festival of Rugby, 9 – 10 February 2024.

The centrepiece of the festival will once again be a pre-season game between the Queensland Reds and New South Wales Waratahs Super Rugby teams. Playing for the Santos Cup, this is a chance for the teams to get a good hit-out before the Super Rugby Pacific tournament kicks off.

The annual celebration of rugby will also include Roma Sevens, and men’s and women’s Super Rugby fixtures.

Besides the action on the field, the program of events includes junior coaching clinics and family fun activities. There will be live entertainment on the Friday and Saturday nights with a performance from Hot Dub Time Machine on Saturday 10th February.

WHEN: Friday 9 February to Saturday 10 February 2024

WHERE: Galas Fox Park, home of the Roma Echidnas Rugby Union Club (Warrego Hwy, Roma, QLD 4455)

More information: <https://www.santos.com/festival-of-rugby/>