



Media Release

Tuesday, 31 May 2005

Eastern Grandstand “open for inspection”

The newly-completed Eastern Grandstand at EnergyAustralia Stadium will be “open for inspection” on Saturday morning.

The Hunter International Sports Centre Trust and the Newcastle Knights are inviting members of the general public to inspect the new facility, which is finally complete after almost four years of lobbying, planning and construction.

While many Knights fans have already taken the opportunity to watch a match from the new stand, Hunter ISC Trust President, Ted Atchison, said the decision to open the doors on Saturday responded to a growing number of requests from the general community.

“The Trust and the Knights are obviously delighted with the end result, which has delivered a world-class facility to the region,” Mr Atchison said.

“We’d like to share this achievement with the people of the Hunter and will be throwing open the doors on Saturday morning to give the general public an opportunity to experience the new stand.

Mr Atchison said gates would be open from 9am and, to get an idea of viewing action from the new stand, the Knights will be conducting their final training session prior to Sunday’s much awaited comeback by Knights captain Andrew Johns against the Brisbane Broncos. Access to the stand will end at 10.30am to allow for preparations for the following day’s game.

Mr Atchison, who has overseen the project from inception, said completion of work on the new stand this week represented the end of a long, tough but very rewarding process.

“It has been a very demanding project involving a large number of people but, in the end, we are confident that the NSW Government has an outstanding result for its \$30million investment,” he said.

“The Eastern Grandstand is comparable to anything available in metropolitan areas in terms of comfort, sight lines and standard of facilities.

“The Trust and the project team are very proud of what has been achieved and I have no doubt that those who turn up for the inspection from 9am on Saturday will be equally impressed.

”I’d encourage anyone who attends to bring their cameras. Apart from providing a bird’s eye view of action on the field, the grandstand also offers spectacular views the city and surrounding areas.”

The completed grandstand holds 12,500 spectators, with more than half seated under cover. The corporate level has 17, 20-seat suites, three 80-seat suites, and a large function room capable of catering for more than 300 guests.

Beyond the NRL and upcoming A League football matches played by the Knights and Newcastle United Jets respectively, the Trust will be targeting a number of sports and entertainment options for the new complex.

“This is more than a home ground for the Knights and Jets. It is a multi-purpose venue for the people of the Hunter,” Mr Atchison said.

“We are now in a very strong position to secure the types of events that have previously bypassed the region because our facilities were not up to standard, such as international sporting fixtures, outdoor concerts and other cultural events.

“Additionally, the corporate facilities in the new grandstand will be available for hire for corporate functions, seminars and other events.”

Mr Atchison said the project would not have been possible without the financial support of the NSW Government.

“I would again like to congratulate the Carr Government on its support of this project to this point, but its important to understand that the new stand represents a halfway mark in redevelopment of the entire stadium,” he said.

“The Trust will continue to work with the Hunter’s Federal Government representatives to secure the Howard Government’s support for the redevelopment of the Western Grandstand to bring EnergyAustralia Stadium up to truly international standard.”

For further information please contact

Ted Atchison
President, Hunter ISC Trust
PH: 0418 671078

What did it take to build the new Eastern Grandstand?

- \$31million in State Government funding
- 8000m³ of concrete – equivalent to what would be used in building 225 standard three bedroom homes or more than 1200 concrete truckloads.
- 2500 tonnes of precast concrete
- 83,000 concrete blocks.
- 500 tonnes of steel in the lower concourse
- 465 tonnes of reinforcing steel and 320 tonnes of structural steel in the superstructure.
- More than a kilometre of steel balustrade and handrails.
- 1300m of stairs
- 600 tonnes of recycled concrete to be used in new roads around stadium.

Other interesting facts

- At its highest point the Eastern Grandstand roof is 28 metres above the playing field; seven metres higher than the existing Western Grandstand roof.
- Nobbys Headland is visible from the top of the Eastern Grandstand.
- Completed works includes 12,500 seats, each worth around \$50.
- The new stand is three metres closer to the playing field than the old hill.
- Match day employment in hospitality has increased from approximately 150 in 2004 to 230 in 2005 following the opening of the new stand.