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MEDIA RELEASE

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RUGBY LEAGUE WORLD CUP NINES SET FOR SPECTACULAR SHOW

Excitement is building for the first Rugby League World Cup 9s with the tournament pools and first tickets released today.

Bankwest Stadium will be the backdrop for all the colour, camaraderie and culture on October 18 and 19, when 12 nations compete and tens of thousands of fans cheer on their sides.

"What a moment for Bankwest Stadium to host this world first event. We expect more than 50,000 fans will be at the ground to enjoy it," Mr Sidoti said.

"NSW is the proud home of rugby league in Australia, and the World Cup 9s will reinforce why teams and spectators love our State to host these big games."

"This format is fast-paced and exciting, and there's no doubt that rugby fans around the globe will be envious of anyone at the ground in Western Sydney."

Minister for Tourism Stuart Ayres said the inaugural Downer Rugby League World Cup 9s tournament is a blockbuster, high-energy event for teams and spectators.

"Western Sydney will come alive when great rugby league nations including England, Tonga, Fiji, New Zealand and Australia take to Bankwest Stadium. I encourage the fans to get out and enjoy Parramatta's hospitality and the associated festivities," Mr Ayres said.

"The Rugby League World Cup 9s is expected to attract more than 13,300 overnight visitors to Sydney, who will drive approximately \$11 million into the NSW economy."

The pools, released today, sets-up a tough challenge for Australia against New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the United States. The draw will be released in September.

The Women's pool features Australia, New Zealand, England and PNG.

NRL chief executive Todd Greenberg said all teams would play one match on Friday and a minimum of two matches on Saturday.

"The World Cup 9s will feature the most exciting players to watch in the game, representing their nations and their cultures," Mr Greenberg said.

Tickets for the Rugby League World Cup 9s are on sale to NRL members today. Two-day passes are available to the public on Wednesday. For more information www.nrl.com/tickets.