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MEDIA RELEASE



Setback to the 2008 Festival of Cricket

Cricket NSW confirmed on Tuesday 8th July that it would not support the 2008 Festival of Cricket nor authorise the event to run in conjunction with any of its games. The decision is a setback to Festival organisers who have been waiting several months for confirmation of a suitable date in the 2008/9 Season fixtures. The 2008 Festival of Cricket has now been put on hold while organisers urgently explore new options. At this stage it is unlikely that the event can be held in 2008, as planned.

"We are very disappointed with this development", said the Festival's founder, Elizabeth Nichols. "After the great success of the previous two events at Bradman Oval, we have had a large number of stallholders who were looking forward to taking the unique Festival to the newly refurbished SCG at the peak of the exciting upcoming first class fixtures."

"While we will be exploring other options, time is now certainly against us," said Ms Nichols.

A supporter of the Festival of Cricket, the Sydney Cricket Ground Trust is also exploring other options to enable the event to be staged. Chairman, Rodney Cavalier, believes that the festival can take place at the Sydney Cricket Ground on a non-event day. "The Festival of Cricket is all about celebrating the heart and soul of our beloved game. It goes to the very roots of cricket, as does the SCG," Mr Cavalier said.

Cricket NSW stated in its email to Ms Nichols that it was unable to authorise the event to run during its hire of the SCG and that "*we do not feel the Festival of Cricket fits with our activities this season*".

Ms Nichols added: "What keeps me determined to keep the Festival going is the many special moments it creates – like the time when Bill Brown OAM went over to Mark Waugh who was head down, signing autographs, and he said, "can I have an autograph Mr Waugh?"

I especially recall the young kids who have come to love the sport through attending the Festival. One particular case that touched my heart was that of a young partially blind and deaf boy who brought to the Festival by his family, in the hope that he might find inspiration and enjoyment in trying the game. He was taken to the NSW Blind Cricketers Association stand and was immediately taken under the wing of its enthusiastic members. His spirit was immediately lifted. At the close of the Festival that day, the young boy was still playing enthusiastically in the nets. He didn't want to go home! His parents and grandparents came to me with tears of gratitude."

"I realise that this is why the Festival is important to the future development of the sport. It is not about the elite players and stars. It's about how cricket inspires the best *in* us and the best *from* us," said Ms Nichols.

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