

IRB Excited about RWC Progress

Written by RUGBYMag Staff
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New Zealand is poised to hold an excellent Rugby World Cup with Tournament preparations well on track and a wonderful celebration planned for teams and fans, International Rugby Board Vice Chairman Bill Beaumont declared today.

Beaumont joined New Zealand Prime Minister the Rt Hon John Key in celebrating the milestone at a special ceremony at New Zealand's Parliament in the capital Wellington.

The event included a symbolic rolling out of a giant welcome mat on Parliament's front steps featuring greetings in the language of each of the 20 participating nations.

"New Zealanders are renowned for their hospitality and the giant welcome mat summed up to me the warmth of the welcome New Zealanders up and down the land will be extending to teams and more than 85,000 fans in 100 days time," said Beaumont.

Beaumont also said he was pleased with the Tournament's state of readiness. "Preparations are well on track. Tomorrow, I will visit the magnificent fully enclosed Otago Stadium which will be handed over to Tournament Organisers in August as planned."

"All other stadia redevelopments have been completed on time, match day preparations are well advanced and I know teams will be well looked after so I have no doubt the platform has been laid for an excellent Tournament."

"And it will be extra special for fans as for the first time at a Rugby World Cup there will be a nationwide festival happening across the country. The REAL New Zealand Festival is shaping up to provide fans with a really special taste of what this country has to offer across sport, entertainment, art, culture, food and wine."

Martin Snedden, CEO for Tournament Organiser Rugby New Zealand 2011, said the company was now entering an intense period of preparation. "Our team is really focused on delivering an excellent Tournament and one New Zealanders will be proud of."

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The Rugby World Cup is the chief source of revenue for the IRB, and that revenue is used to help rugby development all over the world. The 2007 Rugby World Cup produced net revenue of £122.4 million, with £48 million going to strategic grants and programs for various unions, including USA Rugby.

“Each Rugby World Cup in succession has provided the catalyst for Rugby to grow worldwide. Not just through international exposure and profile, but through the commercial revenues that underwrite the extensive IRB development and funding programmes aimed at increasing global competitiveness,” said Beaumont “Indeed, Rugby participation has grown 19% since Rugby World Cup 2007 in France thanks to such programs.

“I have no doubt New Zealand will deliver a unique and ultimately a successful RWC 2011. It will be a Tournament that New Zealanders and the global Rugby family will be proud of and an event that will strengthen the importance of Rugby World Cup in delivering the financial platform to grow the reach and development of global Rugby.”

RWC 2011 Roadshow touring New Zealand in July

Prime Minister Key also unveiled plans for the nationwide RWC 2011 Roadshow which will visit 27 towns and cities across New Zealand in July. “This will help make people understand why this Tournament is so much bigger than 48 Rugby matches,” said Snedden.

“It will be a really valuable way for New Zealanders to find out the many ways they can enjoy the wider Tournament and the things they can do to warmly welcome teams and their fans in 100 days time.”

The Roadshow is supported by RWC 2011 Worldwide Partners ANZ, DHL and Land Rover and the Office of NZ 2011. It will feature a custom built truck jam-packed with interactive displays and videos on Rugby World Cup history and legends. Fans can have their photo taken with the Webb Ellis Cup, get a taste of the REAL New Zealand Festival events in their area and buy match tickets.

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The Roadshow kicks off on July 4 in Bluff, the same day tickets for RWC 2011 go back on sale. See the full Roadshow schedule at www.rugbyworldcup.com/roadshow .