



FORTUNITY LINKS WITH THE CENTRAL COAST BEARS

In a boost to the Central Coast Bears bid for a National Rugby League (NRL) licence in 2013, Fortunity, the leader in integrated business and financial advice on the Central Coast, has agreed to become an official supporter of the fledgling club.

Fortunity Director Paul Bolton says the arrangement will involve his company providing business advice and office space to help house the Central Coast Bear's developing football club operations.

"Rugby league is an important passion for many Central Coast residents and we believe that it is important that our region is formally represented at rugby league's top tier, which is the NRL," explains Mr Bolton.

"The Central Coast is a burgeoning commercial hub and we believe an NRL team of our own will help promote the business opportunities potential of a growing regional centre such as the Central Coast."

Central Coast Bear's CEO Greg Florimo says, "It's critical we have a discernible business base in the heart of region and the Fortunity building in the Erina Business Park at 155 Entrance Road, Erina gives us this."

"It's also pleasing that a successful Central Coast business firm such as Fortunity is prepared to back our bid and we look forward to working with their excellent team of business and financial advisors," says Florimo.

Florimo considers the timing is perfect for the Central Coast to have its own team in league's top tier.

“Late in 2008, Perry Lopez, the Central Coast Bears' Bid Director and I saw an opportunity with the television rights for the NRL to be renegotiated. We met with NRL chief operating officer Graham Annesley, who indicated the milestones the Central Coast Bears must meet to win a licence.”

The Central Coast Bears plan to present a proposal to the NRL soon and are developing a strategy to engage with the Central Coast community. “As part of this strategy we have established our corporate office in the state-of-the-art Fortunity Building at Erina,” explains Florimo.

The Central Coast Bears CEO considers there are many compelling reasons for a Central Coast team in the NRL.

“The team will represent a combined population in excess of one million people, it has the third largest junior league in NSW and will play from a purpose-built playing arena in Gosford – the magnificent Bluetongue Stadium.

He adds, “To be admitted into the NRL we need to prove the Central Coast is an established rugby league heartland, with an existing and dedicated fan base, and an established junior rugby league competition.”

“We tick these boxes, and the Central Coast Bears also require the support of TV networks and Gosford and Wyong councils - which we have.”

On the financial side, it will cost \$12 million to \$15 million to win a place in league's top tier. In addition to NRL grants of more than \$4 million a year, the Central Coast is required to raise at least \$8 million through sponsorship, membership, ticket sales, stadium revenue and merchandising.

“This sounds like serious money, but these figures are nothing out of the ordinary. And given the size of the Central Coast and northern

Sydney along with the business support of local companies such as Fortunity, this is an achievable goal.

Apart from the support of Fortunity, the Central Coast Bears has also attracted interest from potential corporate backers after releasing an investor document in July.

“We have held preliminary talks with interested parties, including a number of major Australian and Central Coast-based corporations, as we ramp up the bid. We've had a positive response since going to the market and are pleased to report people want to talk to us.”

On the recruitment side, David Fairleigh will be responsible for football operations and will be operating from the Fortunity offices from November. The former Australian representative and Ourimbah junior is already sifting through the available talent on the Central Coast and further afield.

“Take a look at the ranks of the NRL and the British Super League and we're confident of producing a competitive team with plenty of Central Coast representation,” explains Fairleigh.

“It's important we can keep players such as Mark O'Meley, Tim Moltzen, Matt Orford and Chris Heighington playing rugby league on the Coast and working and living within our local communities.”

For Further information call Chief Executive Officer Greg Florimo on 0421 695 594.