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POWER CUP CARNIVAL KICKS OFF

Move over Motlop, watch out Wanganeen, take cover Tredrea ... it's time for about 120 young players in the inaugural Aboriginal Power Cup to make their debut at Alberton Oval.

The Attorney-General Michael Atkinson will today join with Power legend Gavin Wanganeen to open the two-day carnival, which involves students from six S.A. schools.

“The players have been working hard in all aspects of the program for months to give their team the best chance of winning the first ever Aboriginal Power Cup,” he said.

The carnival will culminate in the grand finalists playing a curtain raiser to the Port Adelaide v Collingwood Magpies A.F.L. game at AAMI Stadium on Friday night.

“This program is about much more than kicking a footy. The finalists and the ultimate winner will be decided on football prowess, school attendance and participation in designing team guernseys,” Mr Atkinson said.

S.A. Aboriginal Sports Academy students from six schools are taking part: Para West Adult Campus, Kurna Plains School, John Pirie Secondary School, Ceduna Area School, Port Lincoln High School and the Wiltja Program (Woodville High School).

The joint initiative between the Attorney-General's Department and the Port Adelaide Football Club responds to recommendations of Monsignor David Cappo's *To Break the Cycle* report.

“The Aboriginal Power Cup is based on a successful U.K. project in which the Charlton Athletic Football Club tackled youth crime in south-east London.

“This model demonstrates that engagement with at-risk youth through sport can break the cycle of crime and anti-social behaviour. It shows students they can lead happy and healthy lives, and they don't need to break the law,” Mr Atkinson said.

Since the program was launched on Anzac Day, past and present Aboriginal players have hosted school-based sessions teaching students football skills and giving advice about making positive life choices.

About 100 volunteers, mainly from the students' home communities, will help out with the two-day carnival.

“I thank those families and communities that are backing these players to achieve their goals. Their support is critical to the success of the Aboriginal Power Cup and the lives of these young people,”

Five guest umpires will officiate the grand final: the Attorney-General Michael Atkinson, Minister for Families and Communities Jennifer Rankine, Aboriginal Inclusion Commissioner Klynton Wanganeen, Youth Court Judge Stephen McEwen and A.G.D. Chief Executive Jerome Maguire.

“Although I’ve been attending football matches for 45 years, I haven’t paid close attention to what goal umpires do until now. At a game last weekend, in preparation for the Cup, I didn’t take my eyes off the goal umpire and I’m now practising the full range of umpiring gestures.”

The State Government is investing almost \$300, 000 over three years in the Aboriginal Power Cup as part of its strategy to prevent young people becoming involved in crime.

“Fun is the best way to show young people that there are alternatives to crime. Through football these students are learning skills that will equip them to deal with life’s troubles and steer away from danger.

“The program will no doubt also help identify and develop future leaders in the Aboriginal community and maybe a few football stars too.”