



## **Paradise Beverages to sponsor Fiji Drua rugby team**

### **Joint Media Release from FRU & Paradise Beverages**

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The Fiji Rugby Union (FRU) today announced that Paradise Beverages (Fiji) Limited will sponsor the first Fijian team to compete in Australia's National Rugby Competition (NRC), which kicks off on September 2 in Brisbane.

The newly-created Fijian Drua rugby team was officially launched by FRU last week and is named after the historic Fijian double canoe used in naval battle and transporting warriors.

Hailing the announcement, Fiji Rugby Union CEO John O'Connor said that the Fiji Rugby brand and Paradise Beverages were both standouts in their respective fields and it is great to begin what he hopes is a long and winning relationship.

"Paradise Beverages is the first official sponsor to come on board for the Fijian Drua team and it is fantastic that we have such a quality sponsor for the team. Their support at this time is hugely appreciated and it will give both our brands a stronger global presence," he said.

Said Mike Spencer, General Manager of Paradise Beverages, "For the past 41 years, Paradise Beverages has been, and continues to be, the major sponsor of grassroots rugby in Fiji.

"Much of this sponsorship has been of Sevens tournaments around the country with all the gold medal-winning Fiji Sevens members playing in many of our sponsored tournaments. We are extremely proud and honoured to be sponsoring the Fijian Drua, a 15s side that contains many members of the Flying Fijians.

"Based on our Flying Fijians' performance this year, beating Scotland, Italy, Tonga and Samoa, I am sure that the Fijian Drua will give a good account of themselves in the NRC, against many Super Rugby players, and trust our sponsorship will further help the development of rugby in Fiji."

The new Fijian Drua team kit will feature the logo of the award-winning Ratu Premium Rum by Rum Co of Fiji on the back of the jersey and the country's most popular beer brand, Fiji Gold beer, on the left sleeve.

The 2017 NRC competition will be contested over nine rounds run for 11 weeks, with four games hosted in Fiji. The Fijian Drua will kick off their season opener on Saturday, 2 September against Brisbane City at Ballymore in Brisbane at 3pm (AST). On 9 September, they play against Melbourne Rising at the Harlequin Oval in Melbourne.

Fans of the Fijian Drua will see their heroes in action in Round 3 and 4 in their first home fixture against NSW Country Eagles at Lawaqa Park in Sigatoka on September 16 and then against Perth Spirit on 23 September at the ANZ Stadium in Suva.

Rounds 5 and 6 sees the team travelling back to Australia for their match against the Canberra Vikings on 29 September at Viking Park in Canberra and Greater Sydney Rams on 7 October at TG Millner Oval, Sydney.

Round 7 the team will be on bye, but Rounds 8 and 9 sees them hosting QLD Country at Churchill Park in Lautoka on 21 October and Sydney Rays at the ANZ Stadium in Suva on 28 October.

"We are extremely excited at the opportunities and possibilities that will open up not just for the Fijian Drua team but for Fijian rugby as part of their participation in the NRC," added Rowena Taito, Paradise Beverages Head of Marketing & NPD. "We are very excited to be partnering with Fiji Rugby Union at a national level for both local and international exposure for our brands."

O'Connor also urged all the fans to come down and support the Fijian Drua team at any of their match venues either in Australia or Fiji. "I'm sure every Fijian rugby fan will be keen to watch our team in action against some of the Super Rugby Player not only in Australia but here on home ground with tickets as affordable as \$10 for the Grandstand, \$5 for the Embankment and free for Children under 12.

"I encourage all fans throughout the country to get on board with the Fijian Drua team and show your support by attending all their home games.

"I would also like to thank World Rugby and the Fiji Sports Commission for their continuous support towards the Fijian Drua team."

Among the Pacific region's largest employers, Paradise Beverages employs over 300 staff across Fiji and Samoa. Paradise produces world class beers, ready-to-drink products (RTDs) and spirits. The well-known range includes Fiji Bitter, Fiji Gold, Fiji Premium, Vonu Beer, Tribe range, Joskes Brew, Bounty Rum with Cola and its award-winning spirits range including Bounty and Rum Co. of Fiji, as well as Katia Triple Distilled Vodka, Regal Whiskey and Regal Gin.

For further information including interview opportunities please contact Nicki Drinkwater on 0451 944434.