



MEDIA RELEASE

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Rugby New Zealand 2011 welcomes 20-team decision Tournament format will deliver on NZ's "Stadium of Four Million"

The organisation responsible for planning and delivering Rugby World Cup (RWC) 2011, Rugby New Zealand (RNZ) 2011 Ltd, has welcomed the IRB's decision to maintain the existing 20-team format for RWC 2011.

RNZ 2011 Ltd CEO Martin Snedden said the decision reaffirms the tournament format and will also allow visiting teams, officials and fans to experience New Zealand's "**Stadium of Four Million**" as envisioned in New Zealand's RWC bid.

"The New Zealand Rugby Union bid for RWC 2011 on the basis of a 20-team tournament and all of our initial vision and planning was built around that format.

"We are delighted with this outcome which will allow more teams and their fans to experience a Rugby World Cup in New Zealand, and will also give us the opportunity to take the tournament further around the country than would have been possible if the tournament had been reduced."

While the IRB had been considering the merits of a reduced tournament, this decision maintains a field of 20 teams, which dates back to RWC 1999, and the format which has been in place since RWC 2003.

Mr Snedden said the announcement allows Rugby New Zealand 2011 Ltd and its stakeholders to move forward with certainty on the operational planning around Rugby World Cup 2011.

"New Zealanders will welcome the decision as will the players and fans of some of the smaller rugby nations who proved themselves during RWC 2007 and won the hearts of rugby fans in France and around the world. We look forward to more of the same in 2011."

As previously announced, Rugby World Cup 2011 will be held during September and October with the final to be held on New Zealand's Labour Day holiday weekend that year (October 22-23).



About Rugby New Zealand 2011 Ltd: Rugby New Zealand 2011 Ltd was established in June 2006 and is the organisation responsible for the planning and delivery of Rugby World Cup (RWC) 2011 in New Zealand on behalf of its shareholders, the New Zealand Rugby Union and the New Zealand Government. The New Zealand Rugby Union was selected as the Host Union for RWC 2011 by the International Rugby Board Council in November 2005.

About IRB Rugby World Cup: The IRB Rugby World Cup is the third largest sports event in the world. The inaugural tournament took place in 1987 and it is held every four years. In 2003 the tournament was held in Australia and enjoyed a cumulative worldwide broadcast audience of over 3 billion. The sixth tournament in 2007 was hosted by France, which saw more two million tickets sold. For the latest on RWC visit www.rugbyworldcup.com

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