

## **Southland Outdoor Stadium Trust \$275,000 grant 18 November 2010**

### **Green light for Rugby Park development**

A \$750,000 development to ensure Rugby Park meets international standards for next year's Rugby World Cup has been given the green light.

Southland Outdoor Stadium Trust chairman Ian Tulloch said a \$275,000 grant from the ILT Foundation had enabled them to "press the go button" on construction of a media tower on the terrace side of the ground and complete a vital upgrade of the lighting.

"The project couldn't be commenced until all the funding was in place," he said. "The cooperative approach of our community funders in working together for the people of Southland should be commended ... it's a great example of what can be done by a relatively small province."

Specifications would now be finalised before the Southland Outdoor Stadium Trust board meets on Monday night and, once signed off, building consent applications would be submitted the following day.

Tulloch said the aim was to have the project completed by April 30 when Rugby Park hosts the Highlanders' Super 15 clash against the Waratahs.

"We'd like to use that game as a shake-down for the Rugby World Cup ... that's the logic behind the timeframe," he said.

The four-storied media tower would feature specific commentary areas and also include public amenities, while the installation of high-tech lighting would increase capacity to the current international standard of 1500 lux – "almost twice what it was three years ago".

"It's going to stand us in really good stead for other international games and events well into the future," Tulloch said.

"We've committed to making this happen for the Rugby World Cup and having two really great international games is a real coup for Southland and Invercargill."

The city will be thrust into the global spotlight when it hosts Scotland and Argentina, who each take on newly-qualified Romania on September 10 and 17 respectively.

"This really is going to be Southland on the world stage. We've certainly hosted international sporting events in the past but I think the Rugby World Cup is truly something else," Tulloch said.

"It's a new level and I'm really thrilled for the people of Southland that our city and stadium are going to be part of the action."