A Tim Nicholls-led Liberal National Government will lead a formal bid for a State of Origin match in Townsville.

The Problem
North Queenslanders are among the most passionate rugby league fans in the world, but they have to travel many hundreds or, in some cases, thousands of kilometres to see their beloved Maroons play a State of Origin match. State of Origin matches are now in Melbourne and Perth while North Queensland fans miss out on the chance to see games live. Some of the best rugby league players in the world hail from the North and it’s only fair that fans are given the opportunity to cheer for them back on their home turf.

Our Record
As a party that represents all parts of the state, the Liberal National Party recognises the benefits and importance of bringing major events into regional communities. Sydney’s major sports stadiums are set for upgrades and could be out of action for some years, with State of Origin matches due to be played in Melbourne and Perth in 2018 and 2019 respectively. The Townsville Stadium, for which the LNP pledged funding, is due to be built by 2020 and the time is right to make State of Origin in North Queensland a reality.

Our Real Plan
A Tim Nicholls-led LNP Government will make a formal bid to host a State of Origin game at the new Townsville Stadium in 2020 or 2021. Within the first 100 days of government, we will instruct Tourism and Events Queensland to begin negotiations on North Queensland’s behalf.

As part of the bid process we will request both the Blues and the Maroons to be based in other Northern rugby league strongholds such as Mackay and Cairns in the lead-up to the game. We will also look to undertake a rugby league-themed festival to run in North Queensland throughout the week so tourists won’t just travel for the game and leave but stay for longer and spend more.

This northern exposure will do wonders for tourism and business and promote North Queensland to an international audience, with the game beamed to more than 100 countries.

Frequently Asked Questions
Why is 2020 or 2021 the right time to make a bid for a North Queensland State of Origin game?
State of Origin games are scheduled to be played in Melbourne in 2018 and Perth in 2019, and the Queensland Rugby League has thrown its support behind a push to get a game to North Queensland in 2020 or 2021. This would mean one game is still played in Brisbane, but that a second Queensland game would be played in Townsville. The bid has also been timed to coincide with upgrades to major Sydney stadiums announced by the New South Wales Government to maximise the chance of success.

Has this ever been done before?
Despite being the home to some of rugby league’s greatest stars including Billy Slater, Gorden Tallis, Sam Thaiday and Matty Bowen, a State of Origin match has never been played in North Queensland. With a brand new stadium set to be built in Townsville by 2020, this is the right time to bring a game to fans in the state’s north.

What else will the bid involve?
This bid will be about more than just an Origin game in Townsville. If successful it would include a series of events and a rugby league-themed festival to ensure other North Queensland communities share the occasion. As part of negotiations, the LNP will also request for the State of Origin teams to be based in rugby league strongholds such as Cairns and Mackay leading up to the game. This will ensure more North Queenslanders get the chance to meet their rugby league heroes and that the benefits of the experience flow far and wide.

To learn more about Our Plan visit betterqueensland.org.au