

SPIKE IN INTEREST FOR VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT

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It may be 200km away from the nearest beach, but Moama will host a major beach volleyball tournament next weekend.

Organisers are pinning the Vic Beach Virgin Blue Regional beach volleyball series as a big coup for the region and something that will hopefully become a major event on the busy Echuca-Moama calendar in years to come.

Vic Beach operations director Greg Dury said he was excited the series was coming to Echuca-Moama for the first time this year.

"We are taking it to different regional places like the beautiful Echuca-Moama," he said.

"Being the first year, we will be interested to see how many people come and check it out. But, we are just generally excited."

Dury, who has been one of Australia's top beach volleyball players for more than a decade, said he hoped the Echuca-Moama venture would become a long-term event.

"We want to be here for the next 10 years," he said.

"This is not just a one-off thing. We know it grows.

"We have just got to promote it as much as we can."

The Vic Beach meets have been running for several years in Geelong and Frankston and have become "massive" events drawing some of Australia's best players, including Olympians.

However, it is the first year the organisation has ventured outside of the greater metropolitan Melbourne area, with an event in Bendigo two months ago.

"Bendigo in December was a huge set-up for us," Dury said.

"People who did come from the community absolutely loved it."

Vic Beach is hoping Echuca-Moama and district residents will also take a liking to the fast-paced and energetic sport, but concede it is not going to be a huge success overnight.

"The first year is clearly going to be our hardest year," Dury said.

"The regional series is about increasing the sports popularity at a community level.

"We feel we should get some pretty good crowds."

Continued page 23

