STAR CRICKETERS SEE AUSSIE TAX DOLLARS SAVING LIVES IN BANGLADESH

Six Australian ICC World Twenty20 cricketers have taken time out in Dhaka to learn how Australian taxpayers’ money is saving lives in Bangladesh and other emerging economies.

The players – Aaron Finch, David Warner, Cameron White, Glenn Maxwell, Nathan Coulter-Nile and James Muirhead – were joined by Cricket Australia Chief Medical Officer Justin Paoloni on a visit to icddr,b’s Dhaka Hospital yesterday afternoon as part of Cricket Cares, Cricket Australia’s community action program.

They spent an hour at the acclaimed public health research institution, receiving a briefing on health issues and achievements in Bangladesh, and touring icddr,b’s hospital, which treats over 200,000 of Dhaka’s poorest residents each year free of charge. The players also chatted with Australian researchers working at icddr,b, and met a number of national staff who were able to study in Australia thanks to Australian government scholarships.

icddr,b has received Australian support for over 50 years, and has developed products, programs and policies that are credited with saving at least 50 million lives worldwide. Other funding comes from the British, Canadian and Swedish governments and major donors such as the Gates Foundation and the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States.

Australian cricketer James Muirhead, 20, said the visit to the research centre and hospital made him realise how fortunate he is.

“It’s a real eye-opener and something I’m really glad I’ve experienced. It was pretty hard to look at. It’s just good to see all the work that is being done. It comes at no cost to the people who need this help.”

He was proud that Australian aid money was supporting the work of icddr,b.
“It’s an amazing effort. It’s unreal. And there are lots of other things that can be done. I’m really happy it’s going towards treatment here in Bangladesh. Obviously it’s needed and it’s being spent wisely.”

Professor John D. Clemens, Executive Director of icddr,b, said the players’ visit extended the many existing links between Australia and the centre.

“I thanked them for the lives saved and transformed by Australian taxpayer funding, and said they should be as proud of this as they are when representing their country on the cricket field,” he commented.

Professor Clemens said Bangladesh had made excellent progress in recent decades in dealing with the numerous complex and tragic health issues related to extreme poverty.

Cricketers (from left) Aaron Finch, David Warner and James Muirhead meet with 16 month old boy Siyam and his mother Shuma in the icddr,b hospital in Dhaka. Siyam was admitted to an emergency treatment ward on 7 March with diarrhoea and severe acute malnutrition. He was relocated to the hospital’s Nutrition Rehabilitation Ward on 15 March.

“Although many challenges remain, we are sure icddr,b and other key players will achieve more great results in the next five years thanks to continued support from donors in Bangladesh and around the world.”

Established in 1960, icddr,b develops practical solutions to the key health challenges facing people living in poverty, with an agenda that spans maternal, neonatal and child health; infectious diseases; HIV and AIDS; vaccines; the control of chronic diseases; and the health consequences of climate change. More information is available at www.icddrb.org

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Photos and video of the visit are available from icddr,b and also Cricket Australia www.cricket.com.au

Issued by:
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About Cricket Cares

Cricket Cares, Cricket Australia’s community action program, encourages the cricket fraternity to contribute to the community and give back to the fans and participants of the game.

Through its official charity partners, Movember and the McGrath Foundation, individual player charities, disaster relief efforts, and broader community work, the Cricket Cares program uses cricket as a positive agent of change in the community.

For more information visit www.cricket.com.au/cricketcare