

Media Release

The Hon Martin Pakula MP

Minister for the Coordination of Jobs, Precincts and Regions – COVID-19
Minister for Industry Support and Recovery
Minister for Trade
Minister for Business Precincts
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events
Minister for Racing



Wednesday, 2 September 2020

DEAL DONE ON MCG GRAND FINAL CONTRACT EXTENSION

The Victorian Government has agreed to the relocation of the AFL Grand Final from the home of football – the MCG – to Brisbane for one year, with that year to be added to the MCG’s decades-long Grand Final contract.

The 2020 AFL Grand Final will be played at the Gabba on Saturday, 24 October with the AFL agreeing to schedule a start time that does not clash with the 100th running of the WS Cox Plate at Moonee Valley.

The coronavirus pandemic means it is impossible to plan with certainty for an event to be held with crowds in Melbourne in late October. Accepting this situation, the Victorian Government acted to ensure that football’s greatest spectacle would not be denied a crowd while delivering more guaranteed games for Victorian supporters.

Confirmation of the Grand Final date also means that the Government can lock in the popular AFL Grand Final eve public holiday for Friday, 23 October – a “Thank You Day” for Victorians who have made so many sacrifices as part of the community effort to contain the spread of coronavirus.

The MCG first hosted the Grand Final in 1902 and under the terms of the new agreement between the Government and the AFL confirmed last night, the match will be played at the ground until at least 2058 – a one-year extension on the existing contract.

In addition, the MCG has been guaranteed an extra two contracted games in each of the 2022 and 2023 seasons, taking the minimum number of AFL games at the ground in each year to 45.

The agreement also guarantees that Victoria will host the AFL National Draft in 2021 and 2022, with the Government to determine the venue in one of those years.

The MCG has hosted 115 VFL/AFL Grand Finals including Grand Final replays in 1948 and 2010. The only year since 1946 when the AFL season decider was not played at the MCG was 1991, when construction of the Great Southern Stand meant that the game had to be played at Waverley Park.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula

“We’ve acted in the interests of Victorians and all footy fans – this is a one-off deal in a one-off year that means the Grand Final can be played in front of supporters, as it should be.”

“The pandemic is a life and death battle and we cannot risk our hard-fought gains for the sake of rushing back to crowds before it is safe.”

“This agreement secures the Grand Final at the MCG until 2058 and reinforces our position at the heart of Australian football.”

Quotes attributable to Minister for Small Business Jaala Pulford

“Grand Final eve is a special day on the Victorian calendar and while it falls on a different day this year, this is a very real way of saying thank-you to everyone who has worked so hard to fight the pandemic.”

“Confirming the public holiday also provides certainty for businesses so that they can make necessary plans.”

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Quotes attributable to AFL chief executive Gillon McLachlan

“I want to thank the Premier Daniel Andrews and Sports Minister Martin Pakula for working with us to ensure the 2020 Toyota AFL Grand Final can be played in front of a crowd.”

“The Victorian Government has been a long-term partner and supporter of our game and a driving force behind the growth of our game. We know this is a tough time for all Victorians and our thoughts are with the Victorian community as we continue to deal with the impacts of this pandemic.”

“We look forward to returning our Grand Final to the MCG in 2021.”

Quote attributable to Melbourne Cricket Club chief executive Stuart Fox

“While we’re disappointed that the beloved Grand Final won’t be held at the MCG in 2020, we know this is an important decision to support the health of all Victorians and the AFL.”