

# 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

## **STORM, UNITED, VIXENS – BIG NAMES TO RECEIVE GRANT SUPPORT**

Netball's Melbourne Vixens, soccer's Western United and rugby league's Melbourne Storm have been backed as part of a Victorian Government initiative to ensure professional sporting outfits can weather the coronavirus storm.

The \$9 million support package to ensure the short-term viability of professional clubs and national sporting organisations based in Victoria complements a \$40 million Government investment in community sport and recreation bodies, including clubs and leagues.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula today confirmed that 10 professional clubs had won grant support, also including the Melbourne Rebels (Super Rugby), Melbourne Aces (Australian Baseball League) and the Vixens' cross-town rivals Collingwood Magpies Netball.

Elite basketball outfits Bendigo Spirit and Melbourne Boomers (WNBL) and Melbourne United and South East Melbourne Phoenix (NBL) complete the roster.

Some 20 peak bodies and other organisations were awarded support under the program including Basketball Australia, the National Basketball League, the Australia 3x3 Hustle, Snow Australia, Motorsport Australia, Gymnastics Australia, Tennis Australia, Cycling Australia and the Olympic Winter Institute of Australia.

National organisations for athletics, motorcycling, pony club, blind sports, bowls, netball, swimming, disabled wintersport, hockey, baseball and golf were also successful. These grants will help defray reduced income from sources including competitions and events, membership and sponsorship.

The professional sport and national sport organisation program is part of the Government's \$150 million *Experience Economy Survival Package* which was announced in May to help sport and racing organisations, community sport and the creative and tourism industries.

The sports sector is a key part of Victoria's economy, employing more than 20,000 full-time-equivalent staff and making an annual economic contribution in excess of \$4 billion.

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

*"Top-level sport has copped a buffeting like all parts of society and it's important that our clubs and peak bodies are able to get through this time in relatively good shape."*

*"Professional sport and elite competition provide entertainment and inspiration and fans getting the all-clear to return to the stands will be a significant part of our economic recovery."*

### **Quote attributable to Melbourne Storm chief executive Dave Donaghy**

*"Like many in the community, Storm has been severely impacted by COVID-19. This backing will help us to continue giving all Victorians an NRL team to support and provide us with certainty for the future."*

### **Quote attributable to Melbourne Boomers chair Tony Hallam**

*"Receiving this support from the Victorian Government is a game changer for us. It will ensure that we can continue to play and work to grow participation in women's sport in this state."*

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