

Media Release

The Hon Martin Pakula MP

Minister for Industry Support and Recovery

Minister for Trade

Minister for Business Precincts

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Racing



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WORK UNDERWAY ON NEW ELITE WOMEN'S FACILITIES AT IKON PARK

Purpose-built AFLW change rooms and an elite indoor training facility will level the playing field for women footballers at Ikon Park, with work underway on the landmark project.

On the eve of the 2021 AFLW season, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula today joined Carlton president Mark LoGiudice, AFLW stars Maddy Prespakis and Tayla Harris and Federal Minister for Superannuation, Financial Services and the Digital Economy Jane Hume at Ikon Park to view progress.

Prior to the pandemic, women's football in Victoria was booming and with the anticipated return of community footy in 2021, that trend is set to continue.

The establishment of the AFLW in 2017 was a game-changer, with Ikon Park hosting a sell-out crowd of nearly 25,000 people at the first-ever AFLW match between Carlton and Collingwood. The 2021 AFLW season kicks off tomorrow night at Ikon Park with the Blues again hosting the Magpies.

Current match-day facilities are below par and the project will see the demolition of the Pratt Stand and the construction of a match-day pavilion with AFLW-standard change rooms, an elite indoor training facility and better views into the ground from Princes Park.

The existing training and administration building will be refurbished and upgraded to provide AFLW and AFL players and staff access to the same facilities and resources, reinforcing a culture of gender equality throughout the club. Lighting will also be upgraded to allow broadcasting of AFLW night matches.

The Andrews Labor Government has invested \$20 million in the \$42 million project, with the Federal Government providing \$15 million and Carlton with support from the AFL contributing the remaining funds.

The Labor Government has a strong record of supporting women's football, including providing \$13 million for the second stage of the Moorabbin Oval redevelopment, \$5 million for match-day and training facilities at Whitten Oval, \$5 million to upgrade Casey Fields and \$2 million to remake the Victoria Park change rooms.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/21* included new allocations to upgrade or redevelop facilities for AFLW at Essendon Football Club's Hangar (\$6.28 million), Richmond Football Club's Punt Road (\$15.48 million), North Melbourne Football Club's Arden Street (\$7.28 million) and the Western Bulldogs' Whitten Oval (\$36.6 million).

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

"Elite footballers like Maddy Prespakis and Tayla Harris deserve a level playing field – that's why we're backing this landmark project and others like it across Melbourne."

"It's a win for the current crop of elite players and also for the next generation of girls who will be inspired to follow in their footsteps."

Quote attributable to Carlton Football Club President Mark LoGiudice

"These new ground improvements will be a big win for the Blues and the entire AFLW community, giving us the facilities that players and fans deserve."

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