

# 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



Sunday, 20 June 2021

## **BACKING OUR VFL CLUBS TO COMPETE SAFELY, STRONGLY**

Victorian Football League (VFL) clubs have received a major off-field boost to their 2021 campaigns – grants to help them respond to the effects of the pandemic and compete strongly in their new tri-state league.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula today confirmed that nine Victorian VFL clubs had received the maximum available grant from the near \$1 million *Strengthening Victoria's AFL Development Pathways Program*.

Victorian Government funding of \$130,000 has been granted to the six stand-alone VFL clubs – Coburg, Frankston, the Northern Bullants, Port Melbourne, Williamstown and Werribee.

Funding of \$65,000 has also been granted to three AFL-affiliated VFL clubs – the Box Hill Hawks, Casey Demons, and Sandringham.

Victoria's VFL clubs have histories dating to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and enjoy passionate community support, but all have been hit hard by the cancellation of the 2020 VFL season and disruptions to the 2021 season.

This funding will help reimburse clubs for costs related to complying with COVIDSafe protocols and practices, and interstate travel required as part of the restructured VFL competition, which comprises 22 clubs in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

The new competition is designed to enhance the pathway to the AFL for players, coaches and administrators along the east coast, optimising opportunities for participants to reach their potential.

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

*"The VFL has a famous history in Victoria, and provides an important bridge between local football and the AFL."*

*"These grants will help our clubs build on their legacy and recover strongly after a coronavirus wipe-out in 2020 and further disruptions this year."*

*"Supporters of VFL clubs are among the most passionate in any sport and having a strong secondary league is important on the community front as well as on any football measure."*

### **Quotes attributable to AFL Head of Talent Pathways Tristan Salter**

*"Our VFL and VFLW clubs have been pillars in Victorian football and their local communities for many, many years and they have been through a tough period over the last 18 months."*

*"The challenges of dealing with the pandemic and entering a new competition have been significant and this support will provide a real boost for players, members and supporters."*

### **Quotes attributable to Port Melbourne Football Club president Michael Shulman**

*"We're extremely thankful for the grant – we're the oldest and most successful stand-alone club in the league and it means we can recover from the effects of COVID-19 and the associated loss of revenue."*

*"We welcome the return to the field of our women's and men's teams this weekend and hopefully we will see crowds back at our games in the coming weeks."*

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