

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MP

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovations, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business

Acting Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events



Sunday, 27 June 2021

FAMILIES, WINTER OLYMPIANS GET SKATES ON AT DOCKLANDS

New Victorian Government support will boost family fun on ice and training opportunities for Olympic athletes this winter with the O'Brien Icehouse at Docklands ramping up operations ahead of the school holidays.

The Government has provided a \$2 million injection for the Docklands facility – Australia's premier ice sports and recreation centre.

The dual-rink Icehouse attracts more than 200,000 visitors per year. It brings more than 100 events to Melbourne annually including semi-professional ice hockey matches featuring the Melbourne Ice and Melbourne Mustangs and national and international events and competitions.

It is also the training base of Olympic hopeful figure skaters Holly Harris and Jason Chan, who most recently competed for Australia at the 2021 World Championships, curling champion Dean Hewitt and a junior speed skating team looking to emulate the gold medal winning performances of Steven Bradbury.

The Icehouse has faced significant pressures due to the pandemic but the new support has enabled operators to re-ice the second rink, which is used as a training and competition venue.

The Government's support secures the Icehouse as a key training venue for the Olympic Winter Institute of Australia and home to the Ice and Mustangs clubs. The first rink will continue to be used for public ice skating.

The investment triggers the return of the popular School and Community Discount program, available to all Victorians, and enables O'Brien Icehouse to look ahead and secure new national and international events such as *Disney On Ice*.

The support will lock in administration, training and high-performance facilities for ice sports in Melbourne for the next six years, including for ice skating, figure skating, ice hockey, speed-skating and curling.

It also provides a base for Victoria's Winter Olympic champions as they prepare for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics in February, locks in the business tenancy and ensures access to facilities for sporting bodies based at the centre.

Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Jaala Pulford

"The O'Brien Icehouse is important on many levels – as a place for recreation and events, as a stadium for competition and as a training venue for our top Winter Olympic athletes."

"This support will help Victorians looking for a fun activity this winter and those competitors who use the Icehouse in the serious pursuit of sporting excellence."

"It will bring more people to Docklands, helping businesses recover from the effects of the pandemic."

Quote attributable to O'Brien Icehouse executive director Athol Hodgetts

"This support ensures the long-term future of all ice sports in Victoria – the Icehouse can continue to produce future Olympians and world champions at one of the best facilities of its type in the Southern Hemisphere."