

# 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



Monday, 12 July 2021

## AFL HEADS BACK TO BALLARAT FOR ROUND 18 DERBY

Greater Western Sydney will play at Ballarat's Mars Stadium for a second week in a row when they take on Sydney Swans in Round 18, giving locals another taste of AFL premiership-season action.

The Sydney derby will be played in regional Victoria with support from the Andrews Labor Government and marks the Swans' first time playing at the ground.

The match on Saturday, 17 July adds to the suite of home-and-away matches hosted by the Western Bulldogs at the venue in a five-year package supported by the Labor Government.

Mars Stadium has hosted six Western Bulldogs matches since 2017, attracting spectators from across Victoria and interstate and providing a significant boost to tourism and small businesses in the region.

The Government has helped to make Mars Stadium one of state's best sporting venues with a \$38.5 million investment to redevelop the Eureka Sports Precinct, followed by a \$6.6 million upgrade for new entrances, new ticket boxes and covered areas, and increased accessible seating in the Western and Eastern stands.

The 1:45pm Saturday match between GWS Giants and the Swans will showcase Ballarat to fans watching the derby in Sydney and others tuning in from around the country.

With some AFL clubs facing challenges with playing at home due to public health restrictions, Victoria is at the ready to help the AFL keep the season going for players and lovers of the game.

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

*"We are delighted to bring more AFL games to Ballarat, one of regional Victoria's premier sporting centres."*

*"It's great for local fans who get to experience the thrill of the game at the highest level, and increased activity and visitation provides a real boost for businesses."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison

*"Ballarat welcomes the opportunity to again host AFL at Mars Stadium this weekend. It is great news for our sports-loving community as well as our local businesses."*

### Quote attributable to Member for Buninyong Michaela Settle

*"It is amazing to see Mars Stadium hosting three AFL games over three weekends – our investment in the ground has really paid off."*

### Quote attributable to Visit Victoria chief executive Brendan McClements

*"With the Sydney derby to be played at Mars Stadium in Round 18, it's the perfect reason to head to Ballarat to enjoy the game and explore everything else on offer in this thriving regional city."*

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