

# 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



Thursday, 2 December 2021

## MELBOURNE NETS SIX FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP GAMES

Melbourne's AAMI Park will host six matches at the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup – the biggest women's sporting event in the world – with the elite action to feature Australia's Matildas.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula today welcomed the announcement of Victoria's place in the schedule, with AAMI Park to host four group matches and two round-of-16 games.

Melbourne's games will involve seven countries with the teams to be determined in the official draw next year. Other World Cup games will be hosted in eight cities across Australia and New Zealand.

The 2023 tournament will be the first time the FIFA Women's World Cup has been held in the Southern Hemisphere, and the number of competing countries will increase from 24 to 32. The World Cup will take place across July and August, with the Matildas' group-stage game at AAMI Park set down for 31 July 2023.

The Matildas will have a home base in Melbourne in time for the tournament, thanks to a \$101 million investment by the Andrews Labor Government to build a high-performance centre for the national women's team at La Trobe University's Bundoora Sports Park.

The project will deliver the perfect environment for the Matildas to launch their World Cup campaign, including a marquee pitch with grandstand seating, four other pitches, and high-performance facilities including a gymnasium and wet recovery area, medical and rehabilitation centre, meeting areas and player lounge.

Grassroots clubs will have access to the centre's pitches and community-level programs, including training for volunteers and administrators, referees and coaches conducted on-site. The Government's investment also includes the development of a Victorian State Rugby Centre at the Sports Park.

The Labor Government has invested strongly in community soccer, allocating \$127 million to support more than 220 projects since December 2014.

Further funding provided to Football Victoria as part of the Government's *Together More Active* program promotes participation across the community, while funding to Melbourne Victory provides programs to encourage female, multicultural, indigenous and regional participation, and to use soccer to help at-risk youth.

Participation in Victoria among women and girls is growing. The most recent Ausplay data showed the number of females playing club-based soccer in Victoria had more than doubled in five years to 55,000 – including 25,000 girls.

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

*"Victoria is a natural home for major sports events and global tournaments in 2023 won't get any bigger than the FIFA Women's World Cup."*

*"We can't wait to welcome the Matildas and other teams to Melbourne, along with thousands of soccer fans."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Community Sport Ros Spence

*"We're proud to be backing the growth of football and other sports in the community – the benefits in terms of health and wellbeing are enormous."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Women Gabrielle Williams

*"Participation in soccer continues to grow in Victoria, and the World Cup will further enhance opportunities for women and girls in the world game."*

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