

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



Saturday, 4 December 2021

FOOTY FESTIVAL TO KICK OFF MASSIVE MONTH OF SPORT IN MARCH

Sporting eyes will turn to Victoria next March when the state hosts 12 blockbuster games of AFL and AFLW across 10 days under a new partnership between the Andrews Labor Government and the AFL.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula today announced details of the new footy festival, which will be a first of its kind for the code and is set to attract hundreds of thousands of footy fans to the CBD, Ballarat and Geelong.

The 10-day extravaganza will kick off on Friday, 11 March with all 14 AFLW clubs to play their Round 10 matches in Victoria.

Days later, the 10 Victorian AFL teams will play five games across five days as part of the opening round of the 2022 season. On Wednesday, 16 March, Melbourne will take on the Western Bulldogs at the MCG in a rematch of the 2021 grand finalists and the first AFL premiership game of the year.

Carlton and Richmond will play on Thursday night at the 'G, followed by St Kilda vs Collingwood at Marvel Stadium on Friday night. Geelong will host Essendon in the teams' annual Country Game at the MCG on Saturday afternoon, with Hawthorn vs North Melbourne to round out the footy festival at the MCG on Sunday, 20 March.

The MCG, Marvel Stadium, GMHBA Stadium, Victoria Park, Arden Street, Casey Fields, RSEA Park (Moorabbin), Swinburne Centre Punt Road Oval and Ballarat's Mars Stadium will all host matches across the 10-day period.

The footy festival will further bolster the major events "Mad March" calendar which will feature events across fashion, sport and culture. These include the Melbourne Fashion Festival, *Elvis: Direct from Graceland* exhibition in Bendigo, the opening of theatre production *Hamilton* and the Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

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

"This festival will celebrate the best of the AFLW and AFL in the home of football, cementing our standing as the nation's events and sporting capital."

"The anticipation for the return of football is growing even now and come March thousands of Victorians and visitors will be getting out to grounds around the state, supporting local businesses and jobs."

Quote attributable to AFL Chief Executive Officer Gillon McLachlan

"We look forward to seeing fans return to our venues in huge numbers as well as to all the surrounding business and venues that rely on footy and big events being staged across the city."