

Media Release

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500 SIGNIFICANT SPORTING EVENTS AND MORE TO COME

The Andrews Labor Government has supported 500 sporting events, with a key initiative that offers Victorians even more reasons to visit towns and cities across the state.

Gippsland Rally has raced to become the 500th event delivered by the Labor Government's *Significant Sporting Events Program* since 2014 – with the latest round supported by the \$4.65 million program for national, international, or regionally significant events.

The rally marks the first time an Australian Rally Championship event has been held in Central Gippsland, and the first Australian Rally Championship event to be held in Victoria since 2019. The Labor Government's support means Gippsland will remain the host for the next three years.

Broadcast live across Australia and New Zealand, on August 27 the Championship will draw 3000 spectators to Heyfield with 120 competitors, 200 service crew and officials – delivering a significant boost to the town and surrounding regions.

New funding through the Significant Sporting Events Program will deliver the 2022 Australian Ice Hockey League Finals Series at O'Brien Icehouse in Docklands from 2-4 September, featuring the top four teams in the Men's national ice hockey competition while attracting up to 6,000 spectators.

From 3-6 November the 2022 Handball Australia Senior National Championship will descend on Parkville's Melbourne Sports Centre. The competition provides players with an important pathway to national selection while supporting administrators and coaches to upgrade their skills.

Almost half of the program's events to date have been held in regional locations, with the new funding round set to support even more regional sporting attractions.

Ballarat Badminton Stadium will host the 2022 U17 and Para National Championships from 24-29 September and feature around 230 of the top junior and para players from across Australia, with the new funding support securing the event in Ballarat for the next three years.

Bendigo Stadium will also host the 2022 Bendigo International tournament for the next three years, with this year's event from 12-16 October featuring 200 athletes from 18 countries and broadcast live to a worldwide audience.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos

"Victoria is the nation's sporting capital and we're backing even more of the sporting drawcards that support communities, businesses and athletes, while delivering thousands of visitors to destinations across the state."

"More sporting events means a win for sport fans and for locals jobs – drawing visitors and delivering more benefits to regional businesses across accommodation, hospitality, tourism and retail."

Quote attributable to Gippsland Rally Event Director Andrew Roseman

"We are very grateful for the government's support that assists us to bring this major event to Gippsland."

Quote attributable to Member for Eastern Victoria Harriet Shing

“The Gippsland Rally is a major coup for Heyfield and Gippsland that will give the region a real boost, with international media coverage inviting even more visitors to experience the best our region has to offer.”