

Monday, 18 December 2023

MATILDAS BOUND FOR MELBOURNE FOR EPIC OLYMPIC QUALIFIER

Fans will flock to Melbourne's Marvel Stadium when Australia's beloved CommBank Matildas face Uzbekistan to secure a spot in the Paris 2024 Olympics, thanks to support from the Allan Labor Government.

Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos today joined the Matildas and Football Australia to announce that Australia's sporting capital has secured Round 3 of the Women's Olympic Football Tournament Paris 2024 Asian Qualifiers.

Tickets to the iconic clash, to be held at Marvel Stadium on 28 February, will go on pre-sale for Football Australia account holders at 2:00pm AEDT today, with general public tickets on sale on Wednesday, 20 December at 12:00pm AEDT through Ticketmaster.

Australia and Uzbekistan will play two matches, with the first taking place on 24 February in Uzbekistan before the deciding match in Melbourne – and the winner of the two-leg round will become one of Asia's two representatives in the 12-team field for the Paris 2024 Women's Olympic Football Tournament.

The match will be the only meeting between the two countries since 2007, where the Matildas took home the win, defeating Uzbekistan 10-0.

Earlier this year, a record-breaking crowd of more than 50,000 fans watched the Matildas defeat France 1-0 at Marvel Stadium in the lead up to the FIFA Women's World Cup.

The Labor Government is making sure more women in sport have the facilities and training they need to succeed, investing \$42 million in the Home of The Matildas at La Trobe University in Bundoora. The world-class training base has transformed women's football in Victoria, growing the game and supporting generations of female footballers.

The Home of the Matildas is the national training centre for Football Australia's national women's teams: the Matildas, U23s, Young Matildas, Junior Matildas and ParaMatildas, while grassroots community clubs also train at the centre's pitches.

This historic match is set to draw thousands of fans to the nation's sporting capital, boosting Victoria's jam-packed major events calendar that generates billions for the state's economy and supports thousands of jobs. A new independent report values Victoria's major events calendar at \$3.3 billion – up from \$2.5 billion since 2018.

More than 15,500 people bring Victoria's epic major events calendar to life, with these passionate local workers driving a 15 per cent increase in visitors who came to Victoria for our major events compared to 2018.

From the T20 Men's Cricket World Cup Final, the Australian Open and Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix to the Bledisloe Cup and FINA World Swimming Championships, Victoria continues to host the biggest sporting events.

Highlights of our cultural calendar include *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, *Moulin Rouge! The Musical*, *The Picasso Century* at NGV, and Billy Joel at the MCG for ALWAYS LIVE, while fans in regional Victoria saw Kings of Leon in Mildura, Rip Curl Pro Bells Beach, MotoGP Phillip Island, and White Night.

The Government's ongoing investment will see more exciting events in Melbourne and Victoria in the months ahead including an extended 15-day Australian Open, *Groundhog Day The Musical*, *Titanic: the Artefact Exhibition*, *Lisa Gorman + Mirka Mora* in Warrnambool, the Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race and more.

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Quote attributable to Premier of Victoria Jacinta Allan

“The Matildas captured our hearts at the World Cup and we can’t wait to welcome them back to Melbourne for this match, with thousands of fans set to witness the Tillies’ might firsthand at Marvel Stadium.”

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

“All eyes will be on the Matildas in Melbourne as we proudly host this exclusive qualifying match on their path to Paris, with this epic event boosting our major events calendar that supports jobs and economies across Victoria.”

Quote attributable to Member for Bundoora Colin Brooks

“It’s only fitting that we make this exciting announcement at the Home of the Matildas at La Trobe University in Bundoora, a world-class facility that ensures more female football players – from grassroots to elite levels – have the facilities and investment they need.”

Quotes attributable to Football Australia CEO James Johnson

“The fierce backing of Victorians was evident in 2023 and we are looking forward to seeing them, and fans from across the country, come out again in full force in another pivotal match for the CommBank Matildas.”

“We are pleased to once again have the Victorian Government as a partner through Visit Victoria, as they continue to host world class football events providing Australians with the opportunity to participate in historic moments.”