

Media Release

The Hon Ros Spence MP
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Community Sport
Minister for Carers and Volunteers



Wednesday, 21 February 2024

EARLY WINS FOR COUNTRY FOOTY AND NETBALL IN 2024

With the start of the 2024 season just around the corner, the Allan Labor Government is making sure more community sporting clubs across Victoria have the sporting facilities they need to succeed this season.

Minister for Community Sport Ros Spence and Member for Macedon Mary-Anne Thomas joined representatives of Riddell Football Netball Club to announce an investment in 12 new projects across the state, backed by the Labor Government's *Country Football and Netball Program* – ensuring sport remains the lifeblood of communities across the state for generations to come.

The 12 new projects will share in more than \$2.5 million from the program that's been kicking goals for country sport since 2005. Developed in partnership with the AFL, AFL Victoria and Netball Victoria, the Program has invested more than \$21.3 million in 180 country football and netball infrastructure projects over the past decade.

This year's round will see the Riddell Bombers Football Netball Club score support for new oval lighting to boost female and all abilities participation at their home, the Riddells Creek Recreation Reserve.

Gaskin Park, home of the Churchill Junior Football Club, Churchill Football and Netball Club and Gippsland Power Football Club can now install new 100 lux LED competition sports lighting whilst Daylesford Football Netball Club have secured investment to upgrade the netball court and oval lighting at Victoria Park.

Home of the Penshurst Football Netball Club and Mininera and District Football League has also scored funding for new drainage and to replace turf with drought resistant grass and upgrade the irrigation.

The *Victorian Budget 2023/24* is providing more than \$213 million to deliver and improve community sports infrastructure and support initiatives that boost participation and inclusion in local sports clubs and organisations.

The new *Regional Community Sports Infrastructure Fund* is also investing up to \$60 million to help local clubs update their infrastructure and facilities to welcome more people to community sport and recreation.

More than \$1.9 billion has been invested by the Government into community sport and active recreation infrastructure over the past decade.

For latest information about the program and successful grant recipients visit sport.vic.gov.au

Quotes attributable to Minister for Community Sport Ros Spence

"At the heart of our rural and regional Victorian towns is country football and netball. This boost ensures even more clubs have the modern, welcoming and accessible facilities they need to continue to bring communities together."

"Better infrastructure allows clubs to nurture volunteers, encourage more participation, host more all abilities events and draw bigger crowds, creating a real buzz and boosting local economies."

Quote attributable to Member for Macedon Mary-Anne Thomas

"These upgrades will give the Riddell Bombers a more inclusive home space, and help more people in the Macedon electorate engage with community sport."

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Quotes attributable to the Head of AFL Victoria Greg Madigan

“The funding support provided via the Country Football and Netball Program continues to have a major impact on local football clubs and communities across Victoria, which benefit greatly from the development of new and up-graded facilities.”

“AFL Victoria recognises the ongoing partnership and support of the Victorian Government, with the program to build on the significant investment in community sporting infrastructure it has delivered over the last two decades.”

Quotes attributable to CEO of Netball Victoria Andrea Pearman

“Community sport is the lifeblood of many of our regional Victorian communities.”

“The Country Football and Netball Program offers invaluable support, enabling greater participation and delivering improved facilities across the state to help meet the growing demand in our game.”

Quote attributable to Secretary of Riddell Football Netball Club Lauren Nolen

“Thanks to this boost our much-loved home ground will be brought back into the modern era, providing the club more opportunities to expand our teams and host the big games.”