

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP
Minister for Environment
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events
Minister for Outdoor Recreation



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MELBOURNE TO START 2026 F1® WITH A BANG

Melbourne will once again roar to life as the world watches on, with the Formula 1® Australian Grand Prix locked in as the season opener for the 2026 calendar – racing into town from Thursday 5 March to Sunday 8 March, backed by the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos today confirmed the 2026 dates, following a record-breaking 2025 event that saw a total estimated attendance of more than 465,000 fans across four days – smashing previous records and cementing Melbourne as the natural home of the first Formula 1 race of the season.

The 2025 race day crowd reached more than 130,000 with huge attendances across every day of the event, demonstrating Victoria's unmatched enthusiasm for world-class sport and major events.

Having the season opener in Melbourne is a major win for Victoria – ensuring global attention, delivering a boost to local businesses, and reinforcing our position as a leader on the international sporting stage.

The 2025 Grand Prix also thrilled fans with performances from home-grown talent Oscar Piastri and Jack Doohan, as well as a spectacular entertainment line-up, fan festivals, and full-capacity crowds that lit up the city.

With the event secured in Melbourne until 2037, the Grand Prix continues to be a significant economic driver – filling hotels, restaurants and bars across the state, while backing local jobs and businesses.

The 2025 event once again showed the immense draw of the Grand Prix, with hotel occupancy across Melbourne reaching 94 per cent on the Saturday night – up 15 per cent on the previous year.

As part of Victoria's blockbuster major events calendar, the Grand Prix helps deliver more than \$3.3 billion in annual economic value to the state and reinforces Melbourne's status as the Major Events capital of Australia.

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

"Melbourne is the natural home of Formula 1® opener and kicking off the 2026 season right here in Victoria is a huge win – keeping our city front and centre on the global stage."

"After a record-breaking 2025 event, we can't wait to do it all again – with the world's best drivers, huge crowds and a city that knows how to celebrate big moments."

"The Grand Prix doesn't just bring the buzz – it brings real economic benefits, with thousands of visitors filling local hotels, venues and attractions across the city and beyond."

Quotes attributable to Australian Grand Prix Corporation CEO Travis Auld

"The Formula 1 calendar announcement is always an exciting moment, and in the coming weeks we will be sharing on-sale dates for tickets to the Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix 2026, which we know will be eagerly anticipated."

"There is something special about being the first race of the season, and we're looking forward to sharing that with hundreds of thousands of fans once again in 2026."

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