

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Environment

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Outdoor Recreation



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LIONS FANS ROAR INTO MELBOURNE FOR FESTIVAL OF RUGBY

The roar of 40,000 British & Irish Lions fans is coming to Melbourne for a week of world-class rugby, interactive live sites and free, family-friendly events, supported by the Allan Labor Government.

Minister for Tourism Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos today announced a Lions Series Fan Zone will be set up at Federation Square from 23-25 July, featuring a range of free family activities including roaming entertainment, face painting, skills challenges and signing sessions with star players.

Fans will also be able to visit a free, outdoor site in Yarra Park on Test Match game day called the 'Wallabies Paddock', for pre-game entertainment, food and drinks vans and Q&A sessions with past and present players.

The Lions and their legion of fans from Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England are coming for two massive games – with First Nations & Pasifika at Marvel on July 22, before a blockbuster Test Match against the Wallabies at the MCG on July 26.

Victoria the only state in which the Lions will play two consecutive games during their tour. This is yet another win for Victoria's visitor economy, ensuring extended stays that increase spend, drive visitation, and create jobs across hospitality, tourism and events.

The total economic impact the last time the Lions visited the State was \$90 million, with nearly 25,000 interstate and international visitors. With larger venues this year – one at Marvel Stadium, and the Test against the Wallabies at the MCG – we are on track to better that result in Victoria.

The British & Irish Lions team brings together the best players from the UK and Ireland, with the side touring Australia every 12 years and their passionate fans providing a huge boost for Victorian businesses.

To drive even more visitation from the UK and Ireland, Visit Victoria has rolled out a marketing campaign that includes collaborations with former players, engagement with online travel agents and partnerships with rugby's leading social media channels – including The Good, The Bad & The Rugby.

The iconic team has built a legion of supporters since their first ever tour in 1888 and these matches mark the first British & Irish Lions Australian tour since 2013.

The games are part of a huge pipeline of major events supported by the Labor Government, cementing our reputation as the major events and sporting capital of Australia, driving \$40 billion in tourism spend and giving a huge boost to local jobs and businesses.

Victoria is the only place on the planet with a Grand Prix and Grand Slam, NFL in season games, NBA games, the Boxing Day Test and the AFL Grand Final, the race that stops the nation, gigs across the state and world-class major events all year round.

For more information and tickets, visit rugby.com.au/lions-tour.

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

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“Melbourne is the only city with two consecutive Lions games, so we will be a home away from home for tens-of-thousands of fans who stay here for a week of excitement and fill our pubs, restaurants and cafes.”

“Events like this create jobs for Victorians – from hotel staff and tour operators to baristas, bartenders, event crews and more – and deliver real benefits to local businesses across the state.”

Quotes attributable to Visit Victoria CEO Brendan McClements

“The Lions tour adds to a huge pipeline of events we have coming up across the state, which drive major economic benefits and showcase what makes us ‘Every bit different’.”

“Melbourne is the ultimate sporting city, where world-class events unfold just minutes from the CBD in a precinct surrounded by top-tier dining and cultural experiences.”

Quotes attributable to Rugby Australia CEO Phil Waugh

“The Lions have been thrilling crowds in Melbourne since 1888 and this year’s tour is shaping up as their biggest ever. We couldn’t be more excited for a huge week in Melbourne in July.”

“The Wallabies love playing in Melbourne, as their recent record of success against the Lions demonstrates, and the second Test at the MCG will be a highlight of the tour.”