

Media Release

Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Environment

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Outdoor Recreation



Wednesday, 1 October 2025

NBA STARS MAKE HISTORY IN SLAM DUNK FOR MELBOURNE

Melbourne will once again make sporting history this weekend, hosting the first ever NBA games in Australia in another slam dunk for the city's major events calendar, backed by the Allan Labor Government.

The landmark NBA x NBL Melbourne Series tips off on Friday, 3 October at Rod Laver Arena when the NBA's New Orleans Pelicans face Melbourne United, followed by a second epic clash against the South East Melbourne Phoenix on Sunday, 5 October.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos today joined Pelicans superstars to launch the series – which is set to attract visitors from across Australia and overseas.

Fans will also be treated to unforgettable entertainment, with global homegrown superstar Tones And I performing during half-time of the opening game and headlining the official Fan Night on Saturday.

Off the court, families and basketball fans will be treated to free events at Melbourne Park Oval starting today including player and legends appearances, basketball skills challenges, arcade games, DJs, roving entertainment, NBA merchandise, and more.

Tickets are also still available for the Pelicans' Open Training session tomorrow, Thursday, 2 October, where fans can get a taste of the action before the team hits the court this weekend.

NBA Hall of Famers Ray Allen and Kevin Garnett will be in Melbourne to celebrate the historic games and fans will have the opportunity to hear from the superstars during an on-court Q&A during the open session – with the legends to also appear at Saturday's Fan Night.

Both games will be broadcast live to more than 200 countries and territories on NBA League Pass – showcasing the best of Victoria to a global audience across on television, digital media and social media. At home, fans can view the games live on Channel 10 and Amazon Prime.

Australia now boasts more than a dozen active players currently on NBA rosters, and Melbourne is the only city in the modern NBA era to produce three number one overall draft picks – Ben Simmons, Kyrie Irving and Andrew Bogut.

Melbourne is also now the only city in Australia to host the NBA, National Hockey League (NHL) and next year, the National Football League (NFL) – three of the 'big four' American professional sports leagues.

The city's reputation as a global sporting destination continues to be backed by the Labor Government, with the growing major events calendar creating a massive \$3.3 billion in economic value and more than 15,000 jobs for Victorians every year.

The NBA x NBL series comes off the back of record-breaking crowds during the AFL Finals series and adds to a blockbuster pipeline of upcoming major events, including the Australian Open golf featuring Rory McIlroy, Lenny Kravtitz in Mildura, the Ashes Boxing Day Test and next year's NFL Melbourne Game.

Limited tickets remain for the NBA x NBL series. To purchase, please visit premier.ticketek.com.au.

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

“The NBA x NBL series marks a groundbreaking new chapter for basketball in Australia, and Victoria is proud to once again lead the way in bringing some of the world’s best to local fans.”

“This is a slam dunk for Victoria, with major events like these providing huge economic benefit to Melbourne, with visitors also filling restaurants, cafes bars, hotels and shops.”

Quote attributable to Visit Victoria CEO Brendan McClements

“We’re proud to have secured this event because it will shine a global spotlight on Victoria when these games are broadcast around the world – sharing what makes us ‘Every bit different.’”

Quote attributable to Executive Chairman NBL Group Larry Kestelman

“Today’s announcement is the culmination of a long-term vision: the NBL working together with the NBA and the Victorian Government to bring the world’s best basketball to our fans.”

“As these games are broadcast worldwide, they’ll showcase the Victoria’s incredible vibrancy while also inspiring the next generation.”

“My thanks to Minister Steve Dimopoulos, Visit Victoria and the NBA for their partnership and belief. This is just the beginning of what we can achieve together.”