

# Media Release

**Steve Dimopoulos MP**

Minister for Environment

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Outdoor Recreation



Monday, 1 December 2025

## MCILROY MAGIC TEES UP MAJOR BOOST FOR VISITOR ECONOMY

The eyes of the sporting world will be on Melbourne this week, with golf superstar and The Masters champion Rory McIlroy headlining an all-star cast of the world's best golfers when the Australian Open begins on Thursday, thanks to support from the Allan Labor Government.

It will be the first time McIlroy, the world number two, has played in the country in more than 10 years – creating demand for tickets rarely seen for a golf tournament in Australia, with general admission tickets exhausted for Saturday and Sunday and limited tickets remaining for Thursday and Friday's action.

The event will provide a major boost for the visitor economy, with a quarter of fans coming from outside Victoria and new data showing golf tourists spend more and stay longer than the average visitor.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos today revealed that visitors to Victoria who played golf on their trip spent \$1.28 billion in total for the year ending December 2024, up from \$1 billion at the same time in 2023.

Data also shows golf fans also enjoy extra experiences such as wineries or restaurants while visiting – with golf visitors staying for four nights on average last year, higher than the total average of 2.8 nights.

McIlroy is one of the most high-profile sportsmen in the world and this year became just the sixth man to complete golf's career grand slam, and only the second man after Tiger Woods to exceed US \$100 million in career earnings on the US PGA Tour.

He will be joined by a host of Australian and international stars at Royal Melbourne, including Adam Scott, Cameron Smith, Min Woo Lee and Ryan Fox.

In addition to the domestic broadcast on Nine and Kayo, the event will be broadcast internationally to more than 180 countries, providing global exposure for Victorian regions showcased to viewers around the world.

McIlroy will play at the 2026 Australian Open at Kingston Heath from 3-6 December, with Minister Dimopoulos also announcing that tickets for next year's event will go on sale from Thursday.

It adds to a huge pipeline of events supported by the Labor Government including the Boxing Day Test, Grand Prix and Grand Slam, NFL in season games, NBA games, and the 2028 Presidents Cup at Kingston Heath.

More visitors mean more jobs, with our record-breaking \$43.7 billion visitor economy supporting 288,000 jobs across the state.

Tickets for next year's Australian Open go on sale on Thursday, December 4, with tickets for both the 2025 and 2026 tournaments available via [Ticketek.com](https://www.ticketek.com.au).

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

*"This is another major win for Victoria and shows why we are the major events capital of Australia."*

*"This event will shine an international spotlight on our state and attract thousands of visitors, filling our hotel rooms, restaurants and cafes – and boosting our regions."*

**Media contact:** Jen Salter 0487 296 984 | [jen.salter@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:jen.salter@minstaff.vic.gov.au)

### **Quotes attributable to Visit Victoria CEO Brendan McClements**

*“Rory’s fame truly transcends golf. He appeals to a large, diverse audience which creates demand for visitors to come to Victoria.”*

*“Golf tourists spend more time and money in Victoria than the average visitor, meaning businesses all over the State can connect with them and benefit from this event.”*

### **Quotes attributable to Golf Australia CEO James Sutherland**

*“This year’s Crown Australian Open will set a new benchmark for the tournament, not just in the quality of the field, but the fan experience and global attention. The presentation of the course will be another reminder as to why Royal Melbourne and the Melbourne Sandbelt are revered around the world.”*

*“Golf is enjoying its strongest participation growth in more than 30 years, with more than four million Australians playing in the past year. Big moments like this, and global stars like Rory, supercharge that momentum and inspire more Australians to play more golf.”*

*“We’re proud to work with the Victorian Government and Visit Victoria to deliver an event that drives the visitor economy, and brings more people to our sport.”*