

Media Release

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



Sunday, 8 March 2026

RECORD-BREAKING F1 HITS FULL THROTTLE

Labor backs Victoria's major events calendar, because it boosts our economy and supports almost 300,000 jobs.

Minister Dimopoulos today opened the gates at the final day of action at the FORMULA 1 QATAR AIRWAYS AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX.

The Labor-backed event is on track to once again break records, racing towards the record-breaking attendance of more than 465,000 attendees, set last year.

But it doesn't stop there.

As of Monday, STR forward bookings show hotel occupancy for Melbourne Centre averaging 90 per cent across the past 3 days, peaking at 93 per cent on Saturday.

The race has kicked off the 2026 Formula 1 Grand Prix calendar, and it's been non-stop action on and off the track.

Saturday's thrilling final qualifying session for Formula 1 has seen Aussie Oscar Piastri start fifth on the grid.

Off the famous Albert Park Grand Prix Circuit, Lakeside Festival has been pumping with performances.

International artists Rita Ora and Basement Jaxx have performed, supported by DJ dameeeela and Rogue Traders.

Duke Dumont and home-grown multi-platinum duo SHOUSE will close the event in spectacular style this evening.

The free family-friendly fun at the F1 Melbourne Festival in Fed Square has also been a huge hit with fans.

Secured in Melbourne until 2037, the Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix is a significant economic driver for Victoria.

Victoria is the only place on the planet with a Grand Slam, F1 Grand Prix and an NFL regular season game – which will see the San Francisco 49ers lock horns with the Los Angeles Rams at the MCG later this year.

And this is on top of the Boxing Day Test, the AFL Grand Final, the Melbourne Cup and world-class major events.

Labor backs these events because they generate \$3.3 billion a year for Victoria's economy and support almost 300,000 jobs across the state.

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

"We continue to break records year after year – filling our hotels, restaurants, bars, and showcasing Victoria to millions of viewers around the world."

"The Grand Prix is a powerhouse for our visitor economy, driving record spending, boosting economic investment and supporting thousands of jobs."

Media contact: Lukas Jamieson 0477 373 170 | lukas.jamieson@minstaff.vic.gov.au