

Media Release

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



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BIG WIN FOR BALLARAT WITH MORE AFL & AFLW GAMES SECURED

Ballarat footy fans will have more chances to see the stars of the game up close, with the Allan Labor Government securing AFL and AFLW games in Ballarat for the next three seasons.

Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison representing the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events today announced the partnership will see two Western Bulldogs AFL home and away matches and one AFLW match at MARS Stadium each year – attracting visitors to the city and giving locals plenty to cheer about.

The renewed partnership will run from 2025 to 2027 – marking 10 years of AFL games in Ballarat, which first started back in 2017.

This announcement continues a long-standing partnership between the Labor Government and the Western Bulldogs. The deal has been made possible by Visit Victoria through the *Regional Events Fund*, which backs events in regional Victoria.

The nine AFL and AFLW games to be played between 2025 and 2027 are expected to drive more than \$7 million in visitor expenditure – supporting businesses, boosting local jobs and promoting the region to the travelling fans.

As part of the Labor Government's *Regional Sports Infrastructure Program*, Mars Stadium is also being upgraded – delivering 5,000 new permanent seats and better accessibility to the Ballarat Major Events Precinct.

The Ballarat Major Event Precinct has hit a new milestone today with the lead contractor announced – the project will be a joint venture between two Victorian companies, Kane Construction and Nicholson Construction

Kane and Nicholson Construction have extensive experience delivering high quality regional and community projects, including the multi-award-winning Ballarat GovHub and the recent Bendigo Law Courts Development. Construction at Mars Stadium is set to begin in early 2025.

Ballarat has benefited from a packed calendar of events in 2024 including the inaugural Ballarat Marathon, professional wrestling convention Starrcast Downunder, White Night Ballarat and the Food, Fire & Light Festival.

Victoria is the major events capital of Australia and major events secured by the Labor Government through Visit Victoria create thousands of local jobs and build the state's \$39.2 billion visitor economy.

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

"Victorians live for sport and that passion is well and truly alive in the regions. We are bringing elite footy to Ballarat so people can experience it in their own backyard – backing local jobs, businesses and the community at the same time."

Quote attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison

"Ballarat is the best city for AFL fans, offering an up-close experience at the magnificent Mars Stadium. I'm thrilled to welcome even more fans to Ballarat for AFL games over the next three seasons—bringing a boost to our local restaurants, cafes, and hotels."

Media contact: Liam Mcallister 0488 771 334 | liam.mcallister@minstaff.vic.gov.au

Quote attributable to Member for Eureka Michaela Settle

"Getting more AFL and AFLW games in Ballarat is a big win for our community—it means we can enjoy the thrill of live footy right here at home while giving our local economy a great boost."

Quote attributable to Visit Victoria CEO Brendan McClements

"Ballarat has a thriving major events calendar – with cultural festivals like White Night and the Food, Fire & Light Festival and sporting showpieces like AFL and AFLW games driving visitation and boosting businesses year-round."