

# Media Release

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



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## SLAM DUNK FOR VICTORIA WITH FIRST NBA GAMES IN AUSTRALIA

In another coup for the major events capital, the Allan Labor Government today announced that Melbourne will host two historic NBA games at Melbourne Park.

The New Orleans Pelicans will square off against Melbourne United and the South East Melbourne Phoenix in preseason NBA games on 3 and 5 October – just days after the AFL Grand Final at the MCG.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos today joined New Orleans Pelicans Executive VP of Basketball Operations David Griffin, NBL Executive Director and Owner Larry Kestelman and NBA Asia Head of Strategy Rajah Chaudhry to announce the games, which will mark the first time an NBA team will play on Australian soil.

Melbourne is now the only city in Australia to host NBA games, National Hockey League (NHL) matches and National Football League (NFL) games – three of the ‘big four’ American professional sports leagues.

The Pelicans feature two-time NBA All-Star Zion Williamson, NBA All-Star Dejounte Murray and former NBA Most Improved Player CJ McCollum.

Australia boasts 14 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.

Visitors from overseas and interstate are expected to flock to Melbourne for the first ever NBA games in Australia, in a major boost for Victorian hotels, restaurants and bars – on top of the global media coverage that will have eyes all over the world on Victoria.

Melbourne will be buzzing with activity that week as basketball fans fly in for these historic games. The city will host a range of activities so that fans and families of all ages can be part of the NBA experience, including an immersive Fan Zone, a Fan Night and community events across the city.

This is another major addition to Victoria’s blockbuster series of USA deals announced this year, including the first ever Australian NFL Regular Season games and a deal for Delta Air Lines to add three direct flights per week between Melbourne and LA – all contributing to Victoria’s record \$39.7 billion visitor economy.

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

*“The NBA has surged in popularity in Australia in recent years, and it’s going to be a great opportunity for basketball fans to see the stars of the game up close, providing a major boost for our tourism economy in the process.”*

*“This is a historic moment – Australians love basketball and we’re bringing the very best league to Australian soil for the first time – giving fans and families a once-in-a-lifetime experience, right here in Melbourne.”*

### Quote attributable to Visit Victoria CEO Brendan McClements

*“The best of Victoria will be on display to the NBA’s global fanbase, showcasing our state to audiences around the world and encouraging thousands more visitors to see what makes us ‘Every bit different.’”*

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