

Tuesday 7 October 2025

AO 2026 launches with Million Dollar 1 Point Slam, expanded Opening Week and 21 days of music

Three weeks of world-class tennis and entertainment return to Melbourne in January with an expanded Opening Week featuring a world-first **Million Dollar 1 Point Slam**, alongside a reimagined precinct, a stunning array of food, and even more music and entertainment across the site.

"Australian Open 2025 set a new benchmark, and in 2026, we're raising the bar even higher," Australian Open Tournament Director **Craig Tiley** said.

"From the fierce rivalries and rising stars on court to unforgettable moments across the precinct, the AO continues to push the envelope as a global force in sport and entertainment. It's a platform like no other for our fans, our players and global brands.

"The growth of the AO over recent years has been extraordinary – we welcomed 1.2 million fans in 2025. That momentum brings a new challenge: how do we give even more people a spectacular AO experience? The answer is **Opening Week**, which we've taken to the next level in scale and experience for AO 2026.

"The entire site will be open from day one, when kids can come free of charge, and live music will light up Grand Slam Oval every night. Fans can claim front-row seats in Rod Laver Arena for **Open Practice**, offering rare, up-close access to the superstars of the game. Top players will inspire the next generation by handing out 5,000 racquets to kids, while 256 players battle it out in Australian Open qualifying, setting the stage for three weeks of unforgettable tennis and entertainment.

"I can reveal today that World No.1 **Carlos Alcaraz** will headline the pro player line-up in the Million Dollar 1 Point Slam – a thrilling new initiative where one point could win you \$1 million. Whether you're an amateur or a pro, the ultimate winner will walk away with the prize. Entries will open soon at clubs across the country, and during Opening Week, finalists will compete for a chance to face the pros on Rod Laver Arena. With more big names to be announced soon, you now have a million reasons to pick up a racquet and get ready for January.

"As we do each year, the precinct has been reimagined, and for AO 2026 we're quite literally taking it to new heights. The Highline is a new elevated viewing platform that will give more fans a fresh perspective on the action, additional shade to keep everyone comfortable, and easy access to the popular Courtside Bar."

"We can't wait to welcome everyone in January."

Australian Open 2026's three-week tennis and entertainment festival includes:

- **OPENING WEEK** will see the entire precinct open from day one for the first time, with affordable family tickets and free entry for kids on day one. Fans can enjoy AO Ballpark presented by Emirates, TOPCOURT, nightly live music on Grand Slam Oval, qualifying, open practice, four nights of charity events and Kids Tennis Day presented by Emirates. 5000 Hot Shots Tennis racquets will be given away.
- **MILLION DOLLAR 1 POINT SLAM** where 22 pros will compete against 10 amateurs from across the country for their chance to take home \$1 million. Qualifying will take place across Australia and at the AO during Opening Week with the final played on Rod Laver Arena.
- **SHAKE SHACK**'s first ever Australian pop-up is coming to the AO. Shake Shack will be serving its signature ShackBurger® and an exclusive AO Shake, only available at TOPCOURT during January.
- **AO LIVE** will transform the AO into Melbourne's ultimate summer festival, with 21 days of music across the precinct – from nightly performances on Grand Slam Oval, including Opening Week, to five huge

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nights of international headliners at AO LIVE Presents in John Cain Arena.

- **THE HIGHLINE** will give fans elevated views, extra shade, and a seamless connection to the reimagined Courtside Bar for the ultimate tennis viewing experience.
- **DOUBLE STOREY GRAND SLAM OVAL** will offer more seating, plenty of shade, and prime views of the big screens, creating the perfect spot to soak up the AO's electric festival atmosphere.
- **NEW DOUBLES FINALS SCHEDULE** will see both men's and women's doubles finals played during the afternoon on the final Saturday on Rod Laver Arena.
- **PICKLEBALL SLAM** will be back bigger and better after its successful debut at AO 2025.

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Australian Open 2026: Rivalries ignite, legends return and the next generation arrives

The stage is set for a spectacular summer of tennis as the world's best players descend on Melbourne Park for **Australian Open 2026** - a tournament brimming with blockbuster rivalries, historic milestones, and the rise of a new generation of global stars.

Australian Open Tournament Director **Craig Tiley** says this year's AO could mark a defining moment in the sport's history.

"We're witnessing the birth of what could be the greatest rivalry tennis has ever seen," Tiley said.

"**Jannik Sinner** and **Carlos Alcaraz** are pushing each other to extraordinary levels. They force each other to new heights every time they compete; their contrasting styles make for electric matches and they both fight to the final point. This is a rivalry that could define the sport for years to come."

World No.2 Sinner returns to Melbourne as the defending champion, fresh off a Wimbledon title and runner-up finishes at Roland Garros and the US Open. He's chasing a rare three-peat at the Australian Open, a feat only achieved in the Open era by **Novak Djokovic**.

"If Jannik wins again, he joins Novak in an elite club. That's the level he's playing at. But Carlos (Alcaraz) is right there. He's the world No.1, he's chasing his first Australian Open title, and with it, a career Grand Slam. That's a huge motivator."

And then there's Novak. The 10-time AO champion. The man who has defined greatness in Melbourne for nearly two decades. Still ranked No.4, still a force at the top of the game, and underestimated at peril.

"Novak thrives on defying expectations and adding to his extraordinary legacy. If he wins here, he becomes the oldest Grand Slam singles champion in the Open era, surpassing the legendary Ken Rosewall, and claims a record 25th major. That's not just adding to his already incredible honour role, it's creating history."

The women's draw is equally tantalising. World No.1 **Aryna Sabalenka**, No.2 **Iga Swiatek** and No.3 **Coco Gauff** are locked in a fierce battle for supremacy, with Swiatek also chasing a career Grand Slam in Melbourne.

"There's no clear favourite. Sabalenka's power, Gauff's athleticism, Swiatek's precision - it's a fascinating mix. Any one of them could dominate 2026," Tiley said.

Two-time AO champion **Naomi Osaka** has also surged back into the top 20 and loves the surface at Melbourne Park. World No.4 **Amanda Anisimova** reached the final at both the US Open and Wimbledon and **Emma Raducanu**, currently ranked 32, has a chance to be seeded come January.

AO 2026 will also showcase the sport's brightest young stars, such as Brazil's excitement machine, **Joao Fonseca**, powerful young Brit **Jack Draper**, sensational teenagers **Mirra Andreeva** and **Maya Joint**, along with **Jakub Mensik** and **Victoria Mboko**, all making waves.

"These players aren't just talented - they're building new fan bases around the world," said Tiley. "Fonseca in Brazil, Eala in the Philippines, even **Janice Tjen** in Indonesia - they're inspiring the next generation."

The resurgence of American tennis continues, with 15 men in the top 100, led by **Taylor Fritz**, **Ben Shelton**, **Tommy Paul**, **Frances Tiafoe**, **Alex Michelsen**, **Brandon Nakashima** and **Marcos Giron**, all inside the top 50.

The women's field is just as strong, led by world No.3 **Coco Gauff**, **Amanda Anisimova** at No.4, and defending AO champion **Madison Keys** at No.6.

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“The depth in American tennis is phenomenal. They’re not just competing, they’re contending for titles,” Tiley said.

Italy’s tennis renaissance continues, led by defending AO champ Sinner, with **Lorenzo Musetti** at No.9, **Flavio Cobolli** rising at No.25, and **Matteo Berrettini** returning to form. On the women’s side, two-time Grand Slam finalist **Jasmine Paolini** is leading the charge.

“Italian tennis is having a moment. They’ve got flair, fight, and a real belief they can win on the biggest stages,” Tiley said.

Australia’s own **Alex de Minaur** is coming off a career-best season, reaching the quarterfinals at all four majors and playing a starring role at the Laver Cup where he was instrumental in Team World’s victory. He’ll be joined by **Alexei Popyrin**, coming back from injury and ranked inside the top 40, rising stars **Adam Walton** and **Tristan Schoolkate**, along with **Jordan Thompson** and **Aleksandar Vukic**.

On the women’s side, world No.20 **Daria Kasatkina** is set to be seeded, while teenager **Maya Joint**, currently ranked 36, is on the cusp of a top-32 seeding following a stellar year. **Priscilla Hon** has also just cracked the top 100 and is showing strong form heading into summer, along with fan favourites [85] **Kim Birrell** and [94] **Ajla Tomljanovic**.

“We could see multiple Aussies seeded in singles this year, which is a huge boost. The Demon is leading the charge, but there’s real depth coming through and we know the fans will come out in force to cheer the Aussies on.

“AO 2026 is shaping up to be one of the most competitive and compelling in recent memory. With rivalries heating up, legends of the game chasing records, and fresh talent breaking through, fans can expect world-class tennis and more unforgettable moments at Melbourne Park this summer,” Tiley continued.

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More fun at AO Opening Week in 2026 - whole precinct open and kids go free day one

Opening Week at Australian Open 2026 will be bigger and better than ever before, with the entire precinct open for the first time from day one on Monday 12 January.

“Opening Week has continued to grow each year and I can’t wait to see the whole site jumping from day one – Monday 12 January – and fans can enjoy the full AO experience from just \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids,” Australian Open Tournament Director **Craig Tiley** said.

“We want the AO to be as accessible and family friendly as possible, which is why we’re making day one of Opening Week free for all kids. We’re also introducing an affordable family Ground Pass for two adults and two kids.

“From the family-favourite **AO Ballpark presented by Emirates** to **TOPCOURT** which is back by popular demand after its debut in 2025, plus all of the AO’s incredible food and beverage offerings, fans will be able to discover everything the AO has to offer from day one of Opening Week.”

In addition to the incredible tennis on display during AO qualifying where 256 men and women battle it out for a spot in the main draw, daily open practice is back, allowing fans to watch their favourite players up close from the front row of Rod Laver Arena.

There will be more opportunities for fans to interact with players in the **Practice Village** and on **Grand Slam Oval**, where top players will hand out **5000 Hot Shots Tennis** racquets over the course of Opening Week.

The game’s biggest stars will again take centre stage in four nights of star-studded charity events in **Rod Laver Arena** as well as on **Kids Tennis Day presented by Emirates** on Saturday 17 January.

“The team has been busy creating more incredible activations and memorable experiences including live music every night on **Grand Slam Oval**.

“We are very excited to launch the new **Million Dollar 1 Point Slam**, with the ultimate winner – whether amateur or pro player - walking away with \$1 million in prize money. In the coming weeks we’ll open entries at clubs around the country, and during Opening Week the finalists will battle it out for a spot to face the pros on Rod Laver Arena on Wednesday night – so you now have one million reasons to pick up a racquet and get in shape for January,” Tiley said.

The inaugural 1 Point Slam at AO 2025 featured 16 amateur Victorian tennis players taking on 16 pros for the chance to win \$60,000. Victorian pro **Omar Jasika** took out the prize in front of an enthusiastic crowd in **Kia Arena**.

For the first time, Grand Slam Oval will feature live music every night of Opening Week, cementing its status as the AO’s summer festival playground.

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AO 2026 takes fan experience to new heights

Australian Open 2026 will take the fan experience to new heights with the debut of two-storey structures in the precinct, expanded shaded seating, innovative food and drink options and the return of fan-favourite **TOPCOURT**.

“The Australian Open is reaching new heights – literally,” Tennis Australia’s Director of Product and Customer Experience **Amanda Del Prete** said.

“Every year more fans join in the festival of tennis and entertainment, and for AO 2026, we’re taking the experience to the next level. From enhanced ways to view world-class tennis, to a range of gastronomic delights, we’re creating new spaces that invite fans to immerse themselves like never before.

“At AO 2026, we’re going up, we’re raising the bar and introducing more upper-level, two-storey structures across the precinct. On the **Western Courts** the new, shaded ‘**Highline**’ offers elevated views of the matches below, more shade and more choice for fans who want to stay close to the action.

“Connecting seamlessly with the reimagined **Courtside Bar** – now with grandstand seating – more fans can sip, snack and cheer from a prime vantage point.

“On Grand Slam Oval we’ve designed a new two-storey fan hub with extra seating and shade, giving fans the perfect spot to soak up the electric atmosphere, enjoy the entertainment while catching every moment of the tennis on the big screens.”

TOPCOURT, the AO’s vibrant precinct at Birrarung Marr which debuted in 2025 is back with fan-favourite **Game On**, more live music and entertainment, **POP** and **Pickleball** courts, fresh activations and shopping.

TOPCOURT will again be the place to be this summer, with **Shake Shack** bringing its first ever Australian outlet to the AO, serving up its world-famous burgers and shakes from TOPCOURT for three weeks in January.

“At AO 2026, we’re making it quicker and easier for fans to enjoy their day without missing a moment of the action. From mobile vendors roaming the grounds with refreshments to a major expansion of in-seat ordering across multiple arenas,” Del Prete said.

Adding to the experience, a brand-new express food outlet will launch at the Western Courts, tailored for fans after quick, flavour-packed bites.

The Village - nestled between John Cain Arena and Kia Arena – will return, offering fans an up-close view of the world’s top players as they practice and gear up for Grand Slam glory.

The Village will also host Pickleball come and try sessions open to all fans during finals weekend.

Family-favourite the **AO Ballpark presented by Emirates** is set to return, featuring a waterslide, stage, and **Hot Shots HQ** where kids can explore the stages of the **Hot Shots Tennis** program, practice techniques and play alongside friends and family using mini courts and interactive activities.

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AO launches tasty new food and drink lineup, headlined by Australia's first Shake Shack pop Up

Australian Open 2026 is set to deliver one of its boldest and most diverse food and beverage offerings yet, combining global names, cult local favourites, and specialties that can only be found at the AO during January.

Leading the charge is **Shake Shack**, bringing its first-ever Australian pop up to **TOPCOURT** and **John Cain Arena**. The iconic global brand that began in New York City's Madison Square Park is famous for its elevated versions of American classics including their signature ShackBurger®. As well as burgers they'll be serving an exclusive AO Shake, only available at TOPCOURT during January.

"We're committed to making the AO not just the best Grand Slam on court, but also the best off-court, and food and drink are central to that experience," Tennis Australia's Head of Product Growth and Innovation **Fern Barrett** said.

"From headline international debuts such as Shake Shack, to our popular AO exclusive items like Peach Melbourne and Grey Goose Lemon Ace, we're offering something fans can only experience at the AO.

"For many fans, their first Shake Shack burger or shake will be part of their AO 2026 experience which is so exciting. Shake Shack's arrival at the AO underlines how much this event has grown beyond the court, it's a festival of food, sport and culture.

"AO 2026 is all about ensuring fans don't miss a minute of the action. Innovations such as expanded in-seat ordering for those in accessible seating, precinct roving vending to cut down queue times, and new automated snack services across the precinct have all been designed to make it easier than ever to grab what you need and get straight back to the tennis."

AO exclusive items returning in 2026 include fan-favourite dessert, **Peach Melbourne**, with more than 112,000 serves of the delicious peach and vanilla soft serve topped with raspberry dust sold in 2025. Peach Melbourne has developed a huge fan base and its much-loved mascot, Pat the Peach, will appear in a new limited edition retail range in January.

The **Grey Goose Lemon Ace** cocktail is back, after selling more than 100,000 serves in its inaugural year. The Lemon Ace will be available as a freshly mixed cocktail or as a ready-to-drink beverage from the revamped **Courtside Bar**. Recently awarded **Nik Hill** of **Porcine** fame will curate a menu of delicious French-inspired snack boxes to complement Courtside Bar's drink offering.

Also back is the much-loved **AO Frappe**. The refreshing coffee drink became an instant hit with fans when it debuted at AO 2025 and will be elevated in 2026 with a new formula created in collaboration with **a2 milk**.

AO 2026 will also debut a reimagined express food outlet at **Western Courts**, designed for fans who want fast, high-quality meals without missing the action. Japanese-inspired eatery **Suupaa** will bring its signature konbini (convenience store) menu to the AO, featuring konbini classics with a Melbourne twist -including onigiri, katsu sandos, noodlebowls and Suupaa's cult-favourite fried chicken – Suupaachiki.

Garden Square will offer a feast of mouthwatering options including sandwiches from Melbourne icon **Hectors' Deli** for the first time. Classics from French-inspired Melbourne favourite **Entrecôte** will return while **Shane Delia**'s new offering **Layla** will serve up Middle Eastern flavours.

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Garden Square will also be home to **Vic's Meat**, The Chef's Butcher, which has co-curated the newest AO food icon set to rival the great Aussie snag in bread.

Grand Slam Oval will bring a multi-cultural, food festival atmosphere featuring seven cuisines across seven outlets. Fans will be spoilt for choice with exciting newcomers **Season Chicken** (by the team from **Good Days**), **Ho Jiak** and **Jollygood** and returning favourites **D.O.C**, **Fishbowl** and **Stalactites** all calling Grand Slam Oval home during January.

Local culinary legend **Angie Giannakodakis** from **Taverna** will pair up with the team from Stalactites to create an exclusive Greek collaboration only available at the AO.

Award-winning chef **Mindy Woods** is returning to the AO, creating a signature First Nations inspired dish, which is set to delight fans who have come to love Mindy's unique approach to cooking.

Renowned Melbourne chef **Ray Capaldi** will bring **Wonder Pies** back to the **AO Ballpark presented by Emirates**, this time with a menu inspired by nostalgic tuck shop classics. Serving family favourites, playful snacks and an affordable menu of delicious pies for a fun-filled day at the tennis.

The lineup for AO Reserve, the Australian Open's premium hospitality experiences, was announced earlier in the year and includes some of Australia's most celebrated chefs and hospitality brands as well as Michelin-star awarded international icons.

AO 2026 food and beverage highlights:

TOPCOURT

- **Shake Shack** – the global burger phenomenon's first Australian activation, serving made-to-order Australian Angus beef burgers and shakes (AO debut)

Garden Square

- **Hector's Deli** – famous sandwiches and house-made sodas (AO debut)
- **Layla** – Middle Eastern inspired menu by acclaimed chef **Shane Delia** (AO debut)
- **Entrecôte** – French Mitraillette Baguette and Entrecôte cheeseburger and frites
- **Vic's Meat, The Chefs Butcher** – The AO debuts their answer to the great Aussie snag in bread

Grand Slam Oval

- **Season** – Vietnamese fried chicken (AO debut)
- **Ho Jiak** – playful take on Malaysian classics (AO debut)
- **JollyGood** – classic Melbourne burgers (AO debut)
- **Stalactites x Taverna** - new Greek dining collaboration (AO debut)
- **D.O.C** – Italian street food style pizza slices
- **Fishbowl** – fresh poke style salad bowls and boxes

Western Courts

- **Match Ready Food & Drinks** – a brand-new fast-service concept curated with Japanese eatery **Suupaa**, offering sandos, noodles and fried chicken (AO debut)

AO Ballpark presented by Emirates

- **Wonder Pies** – nostalgic Tuck Shop family favourites

AO Reserve

- **Simon Rogan** – L'Enclume and Umbel Restaurants
- **Peter Gilmore** – Bennelong and Quay
- **Rodney Dunn** and **Severine Demanet** – Tasmania's Agrarian Kitchen
- **SK Steak and Oyster** – acclaimed Brisbane restaurant

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- **Shimpei Raikuni** – Brisbane's Sushi Room
- **Alejandro Saravia** –Victoria and Farmer's Daughters
- **Caretaker's Cottage** – one of Australia's most awarded cocktail bars

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Monday 6 October 2025

The Kid LAROI, Peggy Gou, Spacey Jane, The Veronicas, Sofi Tukker and more to headline expanded AO LIVE Presents in 2026

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The **Australian Open** has announced **The Kid LAROI, Peggy Gou, Spacey Jane, The Veronicas** and **Sofi Tukker** will all headline **AO LIVE Presents** at AO 2026, with more acts to be announced.

AO LIVE Presents will expand to five nights of concerts in **John Cain Arena** at AO 2026, up from three nights this year.

“After the huge success of AO LIVE Presents this year – with three incredible sold-out shows – we’re taking it to the next level in 2026, with five nights of headline acts in John Cain Arena to close out the AO,” AO Entertainment Experience Producer **Gus Carmichael** said.

“From Wednesday 28 January to men’s finals on Sunday 1 February, some of the world’s biggest acts will take to the stage, including The Kid LAROI in an Australian exclusive, Peggy Gou, Spacey Jane and The Veronicas, with more names to be revealed soon.

“AO 2026 will be Melbourne’s 21-day summer music festival, with a packed schedule of live music everyday across the precinct, and more special events to be announced over the coming weeks.

“For the first time, **Grand Slam Oval** will feature live music every night of **Opening Week**, cementing its status as the AO’s summer festival playground. Adult Ground Passes start from just \$10 during Opening Week, presenting incredible value to fans.”

Kicking things off in John Cain Arena on Wednesday 28 January is Australian rapper and singer **The Kid LAROI** in an exclusive Australian show. Rising from Sydney’s hip-hop scene to global stardom, he has collaborated with artists including Justin Bieber and Juice WRLD, with his chart-topping hit *Stay* spending six weeks at No.1 on the Billboard Hot 100. With a No.1 debut project and millions of fans worldwide, LAROI is one of the most exciting young artists of his generation.

Spacey Jane will take the stage on Thursday 29 January. Since forming in Perth in 2016, the indie-rock quartet have become one of Australia’s most loved bands, with two critically acclaimed albums, multiple sold-out tours and festival appearances from Splendour in the Grass to Reading & Leeds. Their breakout hit *Booster Seat* won ARIA Song of the Year and reached #2 in triple j’s Hottest 100, while their 2022 follow-up album *Here Comes Everybody* debuted at No.1 on the ARIA Charts. With their third album *If That Makes Sense* released earlier this year, Spacey Jane are set to deliver their biggest and boldest sound yet to AO fans.

Much loved Australian band **The Veronicas** will perform in the evening on AO Pride Day on Friday 30 January. Since 2005, sisters **Lisa** and **Jessica Origliasso** have never been far from the top of the charts. Their smash hit *Untouched* was voted No.3 in the recent Triple J Hottest 100 Australian songs of all time. They will be joined by Grammy-nominated electronic duo **Sofi Tukker**, festival favorites known for their high energy live shows.

Closing out the AO is Korean-born DJ, producer and cultural icon **Peggy Gou** who will light up the stage on Sunday 1 February. From underground sensation to global star, Gou has become one of dance music’s most recognisable names, with international hits including *It Makes You Forget (Itgehane)*, *Starry Night* and her 2023 smash *It Goes Like (Nanana)*. Having played the world’s biggest clubs and festivals, Gou’s infectious blend of house and techno is set to electrify AO fans.

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Tickets for AO LIVE Presents start from \$99 which also includes Ground Pass access for the whole day, presenting great value for fans.

AO LIVE will feature music and entertainment across the precinct in 2026, including laidback acoustic acts in **Garden Square** and some of Melbourne's most in-demand DJs on Grand Slam Oval each day.

AO LIVE has been programmed by **Untitled Group**, Australia's largest independent music and events promoter.

Tickets for AO LIVE Presents go on sale at midday on Tuesday 14 October 2025. Visit [Ticketmaster](#) for tickets and more information.

Wednesday 28 January 2026 - 5-9pm AEDT

The Kid LAROI

+ Special guests

Thursday 29 January 2026 - 5-9pm AEDT

Spacey Jane

+ Special guests

Friday 30 January 2026 - 5-9pm AEDT

The Veronicas and Sofi Tukker

+ Special guests

Saturday 31 January 2026 - 2-7pm AEDT

To be announced

AO Women's Final – 7:30pm

Sunday 1 February 2026 – 2-7pm AEDT

Peggy Gou

+ Special guests

AO Men's Final – 7:30pm

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Australian Open 2026, supported by major partner Kia in association with Emirates, Luzhou Laojiao, Rolex and ANZ, will take place at Melbourne Park from 12 January to 1 February 2026.

Tickets on-sale Tuesday 7 October 2025 via [Ticketmaster](#). Visit [ausopen.com](#) for more information.

For further media information please contact

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