



# Media release

**The Hon Dr Denis Napthine MP**

Minister for Ports  
Minister for Regional Cities  
Minister for Racing  
Minister for Major Projects

**The Hon Hugh Delahunty MP**

Minister for Sport and Recreation  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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## First Australian Olympian Edwin Flack honored with new bridge

A new footbridge from the MCG to AAMI Park is to be named after Australia's first Olympian, 'The Lion of Athens' Edwin Flack, the Minister for Sport and Recreation Hugh Delahunty announced today.

"The new Edwin Flack bridge will connect with the existing Brunton Avenue footbridge to provide an unbroken pedestrian link between the MCG and AAMI Park," Mr Delahunty said.

"Edwin Flack is the perfect choice for this new bridge. By any account he was an incredible man and the story of his performance at the 1896 Athens Olympics has inspired many Australian athletes.

"Flack made his own way to Athens to unofficially represent Australia at the first modern Games. He won gold in the 800 metres and two days later backed it up with gold in the 1500 metres.

"The next day he took on the marathon, despite never having run more than 10 miles in a competition. He led the field until the 36 kilometre mark when he collapsed from exhaustion. Flack recovered and fittingly also competed in the men's singles and doubles tennis, picking up bronze in the doubles.

"The Greeks recognised his incredible spirit and he became the star of the Games earning the nickname 'The Lion of Athens'. Flack's have-a-go attitude is still astounding today and coupled with his community work with the Australian Olympic Committee and the Alfred Hospital after the games, and the enduring legacy of the Flack Trust which still provides grants to medical research, social welfare and aged care, he is a true local hero," Mr Delahunty said.

Minister for Major Projects Dr Denis Napthine said the bridge would connect with the new Eastern Plaza public space under construction between Hisense Arena and the new National Tennis Centre. The work is all part of the \$366 million Stage 1 of the Melbourne Park redevelopment

"Flack had a long association with the Melbourne Park precinct, he lived in East Melbourne near the current Hilton Hotel and would have known the Melbourne Park area well. AAMI Park was also built on the former Edwin Flack Oval and so it is great to re-establish the link between his name and the precinct," Mr Napthine said.

“The new footbridge will help clear crowds from the MCG and AAMI Park concourses after games and make it easier for everyone to get around the precinct. The bridge will feature two sets of Olympic rings from the 1956 Melbourne Games, further cementing it to the area’s sporting history.

Australian Olympic Chef de Mission and President of the Victorian Olympic Council Nick Green, said the Victorian Olympic Council was delighted with the announcement.

“It’s terrific that in the year following our Centenary celebrations, Australia’s first Olympic champion, Edwin Flack, will be recognised in perpetuity with the naming of this footbridge over Olympic Boulevard,” Mr Green said.

Chair of the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust, Russell Caplan, said Melbourne and Olympic Parks had a rich sporting history encompassing Olympics, athletics and tennis.

“No person transcends all of these sports more than Edwin Flack and we are proud to continue his legacy within our precinct,” Mr Caplan said.

Dr Napthine said the Melbourne Park redevelopment was due to be completed in late 2014, and comprises three elements including:

- the installation of a 4.5 megalitre water tank under the Oval with considerable associated landscape improvements;
- construction of the National Tennis Centre’s eight indoor tennis courts, 13 outdoor tennis courts, a 1000 space car park and the elevated Eastern Plaza public space with above-ground connections to both the MCG and AAMI Park; and
- an upgrade and expansion of Margaret Court Arena, including an extra 1,500 seats and a fully operable roof.

“With further funding provided in this year’s budget for the development and planning of Stage 2 of the project, the Melbourne Park redevelopment represents a solid, value for money project that will deliver dividends for Victoria for decades to come,” Dr Napthine said.

For further information about the Melbourne Park redevelopment, please visit [www.mpv.vic.gov.au](http://www.mpv.vic.gov.au)

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