



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Minister for Major Projects

Saturday, 1 May, 2010

WORK STARTS ON THE MELBOURNE PARK REDEVELOPMENT

Construction is underway on the \$363 million first stage of the Brumby Labor Government's Melbourne Park redevelopment that will secure the future of the Australian Open in Victoria.

Major Projects Minister Tim Pallas and Sport and Recreation Minister James Merlino were joined by Australian tennis star Casey Dellacqua at Melbourne Park to turn the first sod on the project.

Mr Pallas said redevelopment of the famous tennis facility was the largest Government-funded sporting project in Victoria's history.

"The Brumby Labor Government is taking action to invest in projects such as the Melbourne Park redevelopment that generate thousands of jobs, stimulate the local economy and in this case, secure Grand-Slam tennis for Victoria," Mr Pallas said.

"This project will transform this whole area with new state-of-the-art facilities that will reinforce its position as the world's leading sports and entertainment precinct.

"Stage One of the Melbourne Park redevelopment will deliver more than 600 construction jobs on and off site and around \$1 billion in flow-on economic benefit to the building industry.

"These first works include the installation of a 4.5 megalitre water tank under the oval beside Rod Laver Arena, an extension of the arena's western concourse, taxi rank improvements on Olympic Boulevard and landscaping works along Batman Avenue.

"Stage One will also upgrade Margaret Court Arena with a new retractable roof and additional seating to increase crowd capacity to 7500, create a new Eastern Plaza with indoor and outdoor courts, refurbish Rod Laver Arena and Hisense Arena, and create additional parking and a footbridge linking Melbourne Park to AAMI Park."

Mr Merlino said the Australian Open would continue to grow, with annual crowds of more than one million people forecast in the next 20 years.

"This project will benefit players and fans alike and secure Grand-Slam tennis in Melbourne for years to come," Mr Merlino said.

"As well as extending the life of our tennis arenas, this investment will also open up opportunities for other sports, such as netball and basketball, as well as concerts and other events.

"As part of the greatest major projects program in Victoria's history, work is finishing on AAMI Park across the road as we begin another large scale project to improve our sporting facilities."

Tennis Australia president Geoff Pollard said the redevelopment provided a major boost for the tournament and the future of the game in Australia.

"This is another giant step in the continued evolution and growth of the biggest sporting event in the world in January. Since moving to Melbourne Park the Australian Open has become a

Media contact: Bill Kyriakopoulos 9651 5799 or 0400 510 802

www.premier.vic.gov.au

more than equal partner with other Grand Slams on any criteria you wish to measure whether it be facilities, attendance, player support, ranking points or prizemoney,” Mr Pollard said.

“The Victorian Government’s incredible support means we can maintain this momentum and this event and venue remains the players’ favourite.”

Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust chairman Russell Caplan welcomed the start of works on the redevelopment.

“Today’s announcement, together with the completion of AAMI Park, cements our position as Australia’s number one sport and entertainment precinct,” Mr Caplan said.

The complex works will be staged so the Australian Open can continue to function successfully for the duration of the project. Stage One is expected to be finished in 2015.