



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Premier of Victoria

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PREMIER UNVEILS VISION TO REDEVELOP MELBOURNE'S HOME OF GRAND SLAM

A major stadium redevelopment and a piazza-style Town Square are part of a new vision to ensure Melbourne Park remains a world-class sporting precinct and the home of the Australian Open tennis tournament until 2036.

Premier John Brumby today unveiled the proposal and said it would better cater for the growing popularity of the Australian Open and establish Melbourne Park as an unbeatable sports and events precinct.

"The proposal places a strong emphasis on the comfort of patrons with more open space and shade, increased seating capacity, better connections to public transport and the city and easier movement into and within Melbourne Park," he said

"The plan also proposes a new Town Square in the centre of Melbourne Park, which has the potential to become an important Melbourne meeting place. The vision includes a lightweight roof to provide shade and protection for patrons."

Mr Brumby said advancing Melbourne's reputation as the home of Australian tennis is a major focus of the vision.

He said the Victorian Government would invest \$5 million to progress the proposal to redevelop Melbourne Park, helping to secure the Grand Slam of Asia/Pacific on Victoria's world-class calendar of major sporting events beyond 2016.

"It has been 21 years since the Australian Open was moved from Kooyong to its new home at Melbourne Park, and since that time the Open has grown to impressive new heights, last year attracting 605,000 patrons, compared to 250,000 patrons back in 1988," Mr Brumby said

"The Open also makes a significant contribution to Victoria, generating around 1000 equivalent full time jobs, injecting \$164 million into the economy and raising the tourism profile of our great city with almost 240 million viewers worldwide.

"Now is the time to take a look at how we can refresh and improve this terrific precinct to ensure it remains a world-class facility and continues to meet the needs of the tournament.

"Improved players facilities, more practice courts, an International Broadcast Centre and better media facilities to showcase Melbourne to the world are also earmarked. A roof for Margaret Court Arena – the first of its kind in Grand Slam tennis – and new Tennis Australia Headquarters have also been proposed."

The President of Tennis Australia Geoff Pollard said he was delighted with the strong support shown to the Australian Open, and tennis in Australia from the Victorian Government.

"Tennis Australia is excited by the proposal to upgrade Melbourne Park to ensure the Australian Open remains in Melbourne for the long term. We look forward to working with the Brumby

Government to finalise a capital works program and new commercial and operating agreements with the Melbourne and Olympic Park Trust,” Mr Pollard said.

“The Victorian Government has always been a strong supporter of Australian tennis and the Australian Open. Today’s announcement is a great step towards an agreement which will ensure the Open remains in Melbourne until 2036.”

Mr Brumby said the \$5 million would be used to develop the capital works program for Melbourne Park.

“The funding will also be used to prepare detailed design and costings on the first stage of the project, ensuring it can be carried out while the Open continues to operate,” Mr Brumby said

“Our current arrangement to host the Australian Open until 2016 is now fast approaching and we are working to ensure Melbourne retains this important event for a further 20 years.”

The development of the proposal follows \$1.5 million of funding announced last year to scope the possible future requirements of Melbourne Park.

Melbourne Park is part of the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Precinct, which each year hosts around 600 events and attracts more than two million people. In recent years the Victorian Government has invested more than \$400 million in the MCG redevelopment, as well as the Melbourne Rectangular Stadium, which is currently under construction.