



# Media release

From the Minister for Sport and Recreation

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Thursday, 16 September, 2010

## MELBOURNE'S SPORTS PRECINCT REMAINS A WORLD LEADER

Record crowds of more than 1.96 million people flocked to Melbourne Park and the sporting and entertainment precinct last year, cementing the city as a world leader in hosting major events.

Sports Minister James Merlino said the Australian Open tennis and international music acts had helped the precinct secure its highest attendance on record and were highlights of the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust 2010 Annual Report.

"The Melbourne and Olympic Park sporting precinct is one of the world's best," Mr Merlino said.

"And the huge crowds that flocked to events at Rod Laver Arena, Hisense Arena, AAMI Park and Olympic Park show just how important major sporting events are to our great city.

"The 2010 Australian Open proved to be the most successful in its colourful 105-year history – attracting more than 653,000 people and smashing the previous attendance record by more than 50,000 people for the duration of the two-week tournament."

Mr Merlino said the tournament had also set a new record single day/night attendance for any Grand Slam event, with 77,043 people attending Melbourne Park on Saturday, 23 January.

"The Australian Open continues to go from strength to strength and its popularity will grow."

Mr Merlino said more than 839,000 people attended events at Rod Laver Arena, Hisense Arena attracted more than 225,000, Olympic Park attracted over 140,000 and AAMI Park over 100,000.

"While the Melbourne Park precinct is home to some of the best sporting events, it's also a leader in staging concerts which last year included major international acts such as Pink, Green Day, Beyonce, Andre Rieu, Fleetwood Mac, The Black Eyed Peas, Taylor Swift and Cliff Richard."

Mr Merlino said Rod Laver Arena was rated as the world's third highest grossing entertainment venue by Billboard Magazine, behind only London's O2 Arena and Madison Square Garden.

"The Brumby Labor Government continues to invest in our sporting infrastructure to ensure we remain a world leader in major events and attract the biggest and best events," Mr Merlino said.

"Work is underway on a \$363 million redevelopment of Melbourne Park including a major upgrade to fully enclose Margaret Court Arena with the installation of a retractable roof and additional seating to increase crowd capacity to 7,500 and new Eastern Plaza.

"These works will complement the fantastic new addition to the precinct – AAMI Park – which is the new home for Melbourne's newest clubs including Melbourne Heart and the Melbourne Rebels and established clubs including the Melbourne Storm and Melbourne Victory."

Mr Merlino said the Melbourne and Olympic Parks Trust had finished the year strongly with an operating profit of \$19 million – excluding interest revenue, grants, depreciation and borrowing costs – which exceeded the 2008/09 year profit by \$1 million.

"I would like to congratulate MOPT Chairman Russell Caplan and Trustees, Chief Executive Brian Morris and his staff for ensuring the sports precinct remains a success," he said.

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