

Media Release

The Hon Martin Pakula MP

Minister for Jobs, Innovation and Trade
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events
Minister for Racing



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Monday, 14 January 2019

MELBOURNE SET TO SERVE UP THE WORLD'S BEST TENNIS

Australian Open 2019 gets underway today and promises to be bigger and better than ever.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula joined Australian Open Tournament Director Craig Tiley to open the year's first tennis Grand Slam, with better facilities for spectators and players alike.

The Open is the largest annual sporting event in the Southern Hemisphere, bringing the world's best players to Melbourne Park including Serena Williams and Roger Federer, and home-grown aces Alex de Minaur and Ashleigh Barty.

This year, Rod Laver Arena's new Eastern Annexe will provide players with even better facilities including new restaurants, a rooftop terrace, and recovery spaces.

Protecting centre court is the newly upgraded retractable roof which can open and close in under five minutes.

Some of Australia's biggest music acts and artists from around the globe will be performing on the live stage, and this year's Open also features the inaugural Australian Open Sports Film Festival, providing tennis fans with even more entertainment.

Last year the Open attracted a record breaking 743,667 fans and close to a billion viewers watched online or on TV.

Work on the final stage of the upgrade at Melbourne Park will start after this year's Australian Open and includes a new multi-purpose 5,000 seat show court and a new function and media centre.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula

"Each year the Australian Open injects more than \$290 million into the Victorian economy and creates more than 1000 jobs, making it one of the most significant events on our jam packed major events calendar."

"We've invested \$972 million to upgrade Melbourne Park to ensure it remains the most successful Grand Slam tennis event in the world."