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Media Release

AFL to be showcased at Mount Barker's Summit Sport and Recreation Park

As one of the premier playing surfaces in the country and set amongst the picturesque Adelaide Hills, the Summit Sport and Recreation Park in Mount Barker has been announced as the regional venue for the AFL's inaugural 'Gather Round ... A Festival of Footy' in April 2023.

All 18 AFL teams will play in South Australia in round five next year, with matches to be scheduled from Thursday, April 13 to Sunday, April 16.

Mount Barker will host the Adelaide Hills match between the Brisbane Lions and North Melbourne, scheduled for 12:40pm (ACST) on Saturday, April 15.

Mount Barker District Council Mayor, David Leach, said that the Summit Sport and Recreation Park represents the ideal venue to bring AFL to the regions and showcase the Adelaide Hills to the nation.

"Designed and built to AFL standards, the Summit Sport and Recreation Park in Mount Barker is one of the premier playing surfaces in the country," Mr Leach said.

"Mount Barker is South Australia's fastest growing region, expanding by 40 per cent off the back of a forecasted \$4.5 billion worth of public and private investment.

"With our population growth and the venue already in use by the Hills Football League - the largest regional football league in the state - this is a great opportunity to grow the game of Australian Rules Football within the region.

"The excitement and legacy of hosting a round of AFL football will be the shot in the arm the code needs in this region and will have significant impacts on the pathway of regional players to the professional element of the code."

The Adelaide Hills region has a visitor economy valued at approximately \$200 million per year, supporting over 1700 jobs, and is the fifth most visited tourism region in the nation.

"Mount Barker is well placed to sell South Australia, given the quality of the food, drink and experiences on offer, its proximity to Adelaide and the potential for flow on effects

to the neighbouring Barossa, Langhorne Creek and McLaren Vale tourism regions,” Mr Leach said.

“We look forward to working with the AFL and our regional partners to deliver an outstanding event and even greater legacy for our community. We thank the AFL and the state government for their trust in us.”

Iain Evans, Chair of the Summit Sport and Recreation Park Board, said: “The Council, State Government, Federal Government together with the AFL have invested \$21 million in the development of the Summit Sport and Recreation Park.”

“An opportunity such as this will ensure that these funding partners are rewarded for their investment and the community benefits from a strategy of attracting national and regional events to the district in action,” Mr Evans said.

“The Council and the Board are extremely supportive of the initiative to bring the AFL to the Summit Sport and Recreation Park and will partner with Government, SANFL and AFL to deliver a memorable round of football.”

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