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Media Release

Mount Barker ready for AFL again in 2024

Mount Barker District Council Mayor David Leach is calling for the Summit Sport and Recreation Park to become a permanent venue for the AFL Gather Round event as long as it is held in South Australia.

The AFL Gather Round will be held in South Australia for the next three years, and the Mount Barker District Council is eager to build on the success of the 2023 match held at the Summit Sport and Recreation Park in Mount Barker in the Adelaide Hills.

At the pre-training session in Mount Barker for the April 15 game between the Brisbane Lions and the North Melbourne Kangaroos, Brownlow medallist and proud South Australian, Lachie Neale, commented that “the oval was on par with the MCG”.

AFL Chief Executive Officer, Gillon McLachlan, was also impressed with the Hills venue, telling Mayor Leach that “Mount Barker couldn’t have done it any better than we did and that we will be in his mind moving forward”.

Mayor Leach expressed his gratitude to Council staff, businesses, and community and sporting groups that worked together with the AFL and the State Government to create an exciting and memorable event for the region. He also highlighted that the Summit Sport and Recreation Park at Mount Barker is a scalable facility that is suitable for local and regional games, as well as major events like the AFL Gather Round.

Mayor Leach congratulates the AFL and Premier Peter Malinauskas on the success of the inaugural Gather Round and is thrilled by news that it will stay in South Australia for at least the next three years. He also emphasised that the success of the April 15 game demonstrated Council's ability to deliver a smooth and successful major event.

In light of this success, Mayor Leach has thrown Mount Barker’s hat in the ring for the Summit Sport and Recreation Park to become a permanent venue for the AFL Gather Round event. He stated that with the experience of this year's event, the Council is ready to build on the investment and make Mount Barker's next AFL game even better.

Mayor Leach said: “With only five months’ notice, preparing for the game was a mammoth task, but the efforts of Council staff, businesses, and community and sporting groups working in partnership with the AFL and the State Government helped to create an exciting and memorable event.”

Mount Barker District Council is excited at the prospect of continuing to work with the AFL, State Government, businesses and the community to create memorable events that benefit the region as a whole.

“While the Summit Sport and Recreation Park is a regional facility it was always designed to be scalable; to accommodate local and regional clubs and games, as well as being suitable for major events such as the AFL Gather Round game held last Saturday,” Mayor Leach said.

“Council congratulates the AFL and Premier Malinauskas on the success of the Gather Round across the state. The announcement that the AFL Gather Round will stay in South Australia for the next three years is great news for the state, all grades of local football, businesses, and the entire community.

“With the experience of this year’s Gather Round under our belt, we are ready to go again for another fixture next year, and build on the significant infrastructure and personnel investment to make Mount Barker’s next AFL game bigger and even better.”

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