



MOUNT BARKER
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Media Release

Mount Barker Secures AFL Gather Round 2024

The Summit Sport and Recreation Park in Mt Barker has been selected for the second consecutive year as the South Australian regional venue to host two games during the AFL's Gather Round in 2024.

Mt Barker will host Sydney's clash with West Coast at 1pm on Saturday, 6 April and Gold Coast v Greater Western Sydney at 12pm on Sunday, 7 April. Home teams for each game in Gather Round will be confirmed when the full 2024 Toyota AFL Premiership Season fixture is released later this week.

The announcement today by AFL Chief Executive Officer Andrew Dillon and South Australian Premier Peter Malinauskas comes after the State Government voiced its support for Mt Barker in August.

The State Government has ensured that South Australia will host the AFL's Gather Round festival until the 2026 season, and Mt Barker Mayor David Leach has said he would like to see Mt Barker become a permanent fixture of the Gather Round.

In 2024, all 18 AFL teams will again play in South Australia in round four, with matches scheduled from Thursday, 4 April to Sunday, 7 April.

This year's Gather Round match at the Summit Sport and Recreation Park saw a turnout of nearly 7,500 spectators for the clash between the Brisbane Lions and the North Melbourne Kangaroos.

Summit Sport and Recreation Board Chair Iain Evans said: "With the experience of this year's Gather Round under our belt, we are more than ready to go another round next year and build on the significant infrastructure and personnel investment to make Mt Barker's next AFL game bigger and even better."

"These events will again bring attention to the area and provide local fans with the opportunity to experience high-level AFL matches in their community. It's a positive step for the sport, regional economy, and the community as a whole," Mr Evans said.

A significant aspect of these AFL matches is the ripple effect they have on the local economy. In collaboration with the South Australian Tourism Commission, local businesses, community groups, and other stakeholders, Mt Barker Council is geared up to roll out complementary events and activities throughout the district.

The short five-month notice for the 2023 game presented challenges, but Acting Mayor Simon Westwood said that with increased lead time, coupled with insights from the previous event, 2024 will be “bigger and better”.

“With at least 50 per cent of ticket holders expected from interstate, this represents a golden opportunity to bolster tourism in the region,” Acting Mayor Westwood said.

“Together with our regional partners, our goal is to support local businesses to highlight how magnificent the district and Adelaide Hills tourism region is to encourage visitors to stay longer and explore our townships over the duration of the AFL Gather Round weekend.”

The Adelaide Hills' reputation as a tourist hotspot is undeniable, boasting a visitor economy valued at \$200 million annually and ranking as the nation's fifth most visited tourism area.

Acting Mayor Westwood stressed the region's appeal and noted that, “Mt Barker and the wider Adelaide Hills is well placed to sell South Australia to the nation, 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.”

"We thank the AFL and the State Government for their continuing trust in us. Council is enthusiastic about crafting another unforgettable event, and we deeply appreciate their support and collaboration in entrusting us to host two of their matches next year.”

Ticketing information for the Gather Round games is expected to be released later this month.

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