



## News: The Age Kicks Off AFL Season at Premium Cocktail Event

~ hosts sporting inner circle at Melbourne's new Mercedes me venue ~

Melbourne March 27 2018 - The Honorable John Eren MP, Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Minister for Sport and Minister for Veterans, welcomed the new AFL season at a high profile invitation-only cocktail event hosted by The Age at Melbourne's newest luxury event space, Mercedes me.

Mr Eren's address included the anti-scalping legislation which is set to be debated imminently with the government looking to protect events like major musicals and concerts from scalpers - football is also on the agenda.

"We are the only news organisation in this town old enough to have been there for the very first match in 1858," said Mark Hawthorne, Publisher of The Age. "We were here for the formation of the league, we have reported every single season and every grand final, and this season we have reinvested in our football team. We have welcomed Jake Niall back into the fold as our Chief Football Writer, replacing the legendary Caroline Wilson who remains a key columnist. Martin Blake is back, Warrick Green is back, and Peter Ryan has joined our team from AFL.com."

Michael Gleeson, Senior Sports Writer for The Age led a panel that included perspectives and predictions ahead of the start of the 2018 AFL season from The Age's Chief Football Writer Jake Niall, dual Brownlow Medallist, Premiership player and Columnist for The Age, Chris Judd, and The Age's Chief Sports Columnist and Associate Editor Greg Baum.

"As always, we eagerly await the AFL season opening and it was a privilege to host this prestigious event with some of the most knowledgeable and experienced sporting and sports reporting talent around, as well the Honorable John Eren MP. It reflects the emphasis we place on providing Australia with the greatest insight into sports, and AFL in particular," said Alex Lavelle, Editor at The Age. "This year, we're particularly excited to see how people interact with our new platform which focuses on placing our award-winning content and imagery front and centre. It also gives our audiences the chance to really feel part of the AFL community via the commentary feature we've introduced, so we expect some lively debate online."

Melbourne Mercedes me is the seventh location of its kind worldwide, joining cities including Hamburg, Munich and Hong Kong. The space provides a prestigious environment in which to experience standout collaborations in art, food, fashion, sport, design and innovation.

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