

Game, Set, Match: Jim Elphick Tennis Centre serves up a winner for Wagga Wagga

A state-of-the-art facility set to elevate Wagga Wagga's standing as a premier tennis and sporting destination, was officially opened to the public at a ceremony held at Bolton Park today (10 April 2025).

Wagga Wagga City Council delivered the transformative redevelopment of the Jim Elphick Tennis Centre in partnership with the NSW Government and Tennis NSW.

Forming Stage 1 of the Bolton Park Sports Hub project, the revitalised venue will play a significant role in cementing the Bolton Park Precinct as a key hub for local, regional, and national sporting events for years to come.

Independent Member for Wagga Wagga Dr Joe McGirr MP was on hand to formally declare the site open on behalf of NSW Minister for Sport, The Hon Stephen Kamper MP.

Dr McGirr was joined by other guests including Deputy Mayor of the City of Wagga Wagga Councillor Georgie Davies, Tennis NSW President Melissa Achten and CEO Darren Simpson, Director of Pathways for Tennis Australia, Lawrence Robertson, Tennis Legend and Grand Slam champion Tony Roche AO MBE, and Tennis Ambassador and champion Casey Dellacqua.

The city's thriving local tennis clubs and community were equally represented by President of the Wagga Tennis Association, Michael Marien, Chris Elphick – grandson of the late Jim Elphick – and Daryl Schipp, representing the late Joseph (Joe) Schipp after whom one of the centre courts is named.

Wiradjuri Elder Auntie Mary Atkinson delivered the Welcome to Country, while proud Wiradyuri man Luke Wighton performed a Smoking Ceremony for attendees in acknowledgement of the cultural importance of this refreshed and dynamic sporting space.

The upgraded venue now boasts eight International Tennis Federation-standard cushioned acrylic hard courts designed for elite competition, along with two cushioned warm-up courts and five synthetic grass courts for community use.

A dedicated netball court and a multi-use court add to the facility's versatility, while the modern clubhouse – offering premium amenities and panoramic views of the tennis courts and Robertson Oval – will provide an exceptional experience for players and spectators alike.

The redevelopment delivers world-class facilities to nurture local talent and attract high-profile tournaments, positioning the Jim Elphick Tennis Centre as a key driver of sports tourism and economic growth for Wagga Wagga and the broader Riverina region.

By providing a top-tier sporting venue, the project also fosters community engagement and promotes active lifestyles, ensuring long-term benefits for residents and athletes at all levels.

The first such high-profile tournament is already scheduled for the Centre, with Tennis Australia confirming that in September 2025 Wagga Wagga will host its first ever Australian Pro Tour event on the new courts.

Held over two weeks and expected to generate over \$750,000 in economic benefit, the event format will include back-to-back women's ITF World Tennis Tour tournaments as part of the Australian Pro Tour.

The Australian Pro Tour is a series of professional tennis events held throughout the year to bridge upcoming players with the ATP and WTA tours, providing an opportunity to earn significant world ranking points.

The \$9.15 million project was made possible through a collaborative funding effort, with the NSW Government contributing \$5 million through the Multi-Sport Community Facility Fund, Wagga Wagga City Council investing \$2.9 million, and Tennis NSW providing \$1.25 million.

This strong partnership has been instrumental in bringing the vision for the Jim Elphick Tennis Centre to life, reinforcing the commitment to enhancing sporting infrastructure and opportunities in regional NSW.

Above all, the successful revitalisation of the Centre is a testament to the power of collaboration in delivering high-quality sporting facilities that benefit both the local community and the broader sporting landscape.

To find out more about court and venue bookings, please contact Manager Wagga Leisure Marc Geppert on geppert.marc@wagga.nsw.gov.au, or 0408 680 984. For more information on the project to upgrade the Jim Elphick Tennis Centre, visit www.haveyoursay.wagga.nsw.gov.au/bolton-park-sports-hub.

ATTRIBUTABLE QUOTES

QUOTE FROM NSW MINISTER FOR SPORT, THE HON STEPHEN KAMPER MP:

“Local sports infrastructure brings communities together, helping them to stay active and connected and this redevelopment will foster participation from the grassroots to the elite level. Having access to these facilities provides a clear pathway for athletes to develop their skills and strive for sporting greatness.”

QUOTE FROM INDEPENDENT MEMBER FOR WAGGA WAGGA, DR JOE MCGIRR MP:

“The official opening of this amazing centre is a landmark day for Wagga Wagga and another great testament to our city’s well-earned reputation as a home of sporting excellence. With international standard courts for elite competition as well as facilities for every-day community use, the revamped centre is a jewel in the crown of the Bolton Park precinct that will enhance our city’s economy, health and amenity. This is a fitting tribute to the legacy of Wagga’s ‘Mr Tennis’, Jim Elphick, and I congratulate Wagga Wagga City Council, the NSW Government, Tennis NSW and the tennis community for making this incredible facility a reality.”

QUOTE FROM TENNIS NSW PRESIDENT, MS MELISSA ACHTEN:

“It is incredibly satisfying to see the vision for this regional tennis hub come to fruition, which has only been possible because of outstanding partnerships between Council, Tennis NSW, the NSW Government and the local tennis community. The Jim Elphick Tennis Centre will be one of the few venues within NSW capable of hosting ITF-level events and will provide young talent the opportunity to develop their skills on a grand slam surface. Upgrades such as these provide more opportunities for our regional players, support the growth of tennis and ensures our sport is more accessible for players of all abilities.”

DIRECTOR OF PATHWAYS FOR TENNIS AUSTRALIA, MR LAWRENCE ROBERTSON

“Hosting international tennis in communities such as Wagga Wagga is so much more than prize money and ranking points for both Australian and international players. These events will deliver over \$1m in economic benefit to the City of Wagga Wagga whilst providing a focal point for tennis community and a platform to promote our sport and get more people playing tennis more often.”

QUOTE FROM MAYOR DALLAS TOUT:

“The completion of this extensive redevelopment marks a significant milestone for the city, solidifying Wagga Wagga’s reputation as a leading sports and events destination. We’re excited to see what the future holds given the Jim Elphick Tennis Centre’s revamped capacity to host regional and national tennis competitions, and we look forward to welcoming the many players, officials, and visitors from across the country who will visit our city in the process.”

QUOTE FROM MR BEN CREIGHTON:

"This first-class facility is a testament to the hard work of many. Over the past 18 months staff have worked closely with our construction and project delivery partners at Monarch Building Solutions, and the dedicated sporting community members and stakeholders whose valuable feedback throughout the project helped shape its final design."

QUOTE FROM MR MICHAEL MARIEN:

"The Jim Elphick Tennis Centre has continued to develop over its many transformations at the present site, from grass courts in 1929, clay, synthetic grass and now to these international standard hard courts and synthetic grass. The Wagga Wagga tennis community is very much looking forward to playing social and competition matches and making use of the clubhouse facilities."

QUOTE FROM MR TONY ROCHE AO:

"I have so many fond memories growing up and playing in Wagga Wagga and around regional Australia. Don't underestimate what these venues and putting on these types of tournaments do for growing interest in tennis and finding the next Lleyton Hewitt or Ash Barty. The area has such a rich history producing some of the country's greatest champions, like Evonne Goolagong Cawley, Margaret Court and Rex Hartwig. Wagga Wagga deserves this opportunity, and everyone involved in delivering this wonderful facility are to be congratulated."

QUOTE FROM MS CASEY DELLACQUA:

"Tennis is an incredibly powerful platform for bringing communities together and inspiring people of all ages and interest levels to get moving and get involved to the best of their ability and interest. Venues like this are for everyone and will support participants from our Hot Shots programs to schools to competitive and social play opportunities. How fantastic will it be for these amazing young women and men to play and train in their own backyard, in these amazing facilities and on the same grand slam surface as we have for the Australian Open."

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About Wagga Wagga City Council

Wagga Wagga City Council serves more than 68,000 residents across an area of 4825 square kilometres with an overall budget of \$240 million. The organisation manages more than \$2.48 billion in assets, including a 2300km road network, Wagga Wagga Airport, Livestock Marketing Centre, and the Oasis Aquatic Centre.

Council also provides important community facilities such as Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, Wagga Wagga City Library, Museum of the Riverina, and Civic Theatre, as well as maintaining countless parks, playgrounds, and sporting facilities to ensure Wagga maintains its reputation as 'the City of Good Sports'.

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