Funding gives tennis centre extra bounce

MORE high-profile sporting events will be held in Wodonga following a major funding announcement for the Wodonga Tennis Centre last month. Victorian Sport and Recreation Minister Hugh Delahunty announced the centre would receive $524,700 from the state government, along with $343,000 from Wodonga Council and $181,000 from Tennis Australia.

The money will be used to resurface 10 clay courts with plexicushion and to install flood lighting at six of those courts, as well as new perimeter fencing and landscaping.

Wodonga Mayor Cr Mark Byatt said the project would provide a point of difference to the city's tennis facilities.

"Already tennis provides significant economic benefits to the local region," he said.

"This funding will enhance what is already a significant asset in our city, and further increase its ability to attract state, national and international events."

Once complete, the Wodonga Tennis Centre will be the only facility between Melbourne and Canberra to have the plexicushion surface used at the Australian Open.

The more stable, all-weather surface will enable the centre to grow its winter and night competitions, and provide further coaching opportunities for its junior members.

Mr Delahunty announced the $1 million project at the Victorian Country Week tournament in Wodonga where 1200 tennis players were competing.

"Sporting facilities are important community assets," he said.

"They not only provide a social hub, but enable regional centres like Wodonga to attract and host big events like this one."

"As well as showcasing the best that regional tennis has to offer, events like these provide a boost to local tourism, participation and the economy."

The Wodonga Tennis Centre is one of the largest grass court complexes in Australia.

It has 48 courts in total, and caters for more than 300 members of the Wodonga Tennis Club, 270 members of the Margaret Court Tennis Academy and 122 members of the Midweek Ladies Tennis Association.

It is also used to play croquet, by schools for tennis coaching and competitions, and for major events. Events already held at the Wodonga Tennis Centre are estimated to inject more than $6 million into the local economy each year.

Additional events expected to be held at the facility as a result of the upgrade are estimated to generate a further $1.2 million a year.