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BALLARAT'S BID TO HOST ASIAN CUP TEAM SUCCESSFUL

Ballarat has been selected to host the Bahrain national football team in the lead up to the Asian Cup that kicks off on 9 January 2015. The Bahrain team will use the brand new state-of-the-art facilities at the Ballarat Regional Soccer Facility at Morshead Park for their pre-competition training.

Premier Denis Napthine made the announcement this morning at a breakfast event hosted by Committee for Ballarat.

The Premier acknowledged the work of Council, the 'Back the Bid' campaign committee, and the community. "Ballarat is the first host city to be announced. It's a feather in the cap of everyone who supported the bid and Ballarat is certainly kicking some goals in this area," he said.

"It's great for Ballarat in terms of world recognition and opening up opportunities in the Middle East," he added.

Committee has been a strong supporter of the 'Back the Bid' Ballarat Asian Cup Host City campaign and will provide ongoing support as needed. Committee for Ballarat CEO John Kilgour said, "This is a great example of what can be achieved when local organisations and businesses work together towards a common goal."

Ballarat has been selected as one of 16 Asian Cup host cities from a large number of candidates around the country. "Being selected will be great for Ballarat on many levels. Part of what Committee does is look at ways to increase opportunities that will deliver long-term social and economic benefits for Ballarat and the greater region," Kilgour said.

The Asian Cup is huge throughout Asia and the benefits for Ballarat and our region will go well beyond the 16 nights that the Bahrain team is based here. In the short term it will bring an injection of tourism dollars. Longer term there is the opportunity to develop partnerships and increase business opportunities.

Kilgour further stated, "This announcement will help build Ballarat's profile within the Australian and international soccer scene. We have a world-class facility at Morshead Park. The Bahrain team will have the advantage of training on surfaces identical to those at the competition venues. At the same time they will get to enjoy everything our beautiful city and region has to offer."

"It's a win-win," said Kilgour.

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