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MEDIA RELEASE

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MADDEN MUST RESTORE VICTORIAN OPEN TO ITS PRE-EMINENT POSITION

Labor's Sports Minister Justin Madden must ensure that the Victorian Open Golf Tournament returns to its pre-eminent position in world golf.

With the announcement that the Heineken Classic has been abandoned after failing to attract a principal naming rights sponsor, the Bracks Government must get behind the Victorian Golf Association and restore the Victorian Open.

The Victorian Open was the second most important golf tournament after the Australian Open before the Heineken Classic was attracted to Melbourne under the major events strategy.

The Bracks Government contributed around \$1.8 million to the Heineken Classic but left the Victorian Open out in the cold with no funding support.

The Heineken Classic also competed in the same corporate sponsorship pool as the Victorian Open forcing golf clubs around the state to provide funding to continue one of the state's classic sporting events.

With the emergence of commercial developers and entrepreneurs promoting golf tournaments in other states, the Bracks Government must now back the Victorian Golf Association in restoring the Victorian Open as one of the top events on the golf circuit.

While the Heineken Classic had a \$1.8 million price tag, the Victorian Open could cost the Bracks Government as little as \$300,000 to start rebuilding its standing as a tournament with national and international interest.

Justin Madden must support the Victorian Open and provide adequate funding to ensure the tournament is restored and able to attract tourism to Victoria.

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