



MEDIA RELEASE



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To: All Media

**From: Tom King (BFNL General Manager)
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Subject: 2026 Interleague Fixture announcement

The Bendigo Football Netball League and the SS&A Ovens and Murray Football Netball League are pleased to jointly announce their intention to play representative fixtures in 2026 and 2027. This will see matches played across Under 18 and Senior football grades, with 15 & Under, 17 & Under and Open netball to also feature. Queen Elizabeth Oval in Bendigo will host the fixture on Saturday 23rd May 2026 under a two-year home and away based agreement.

The Bendigo Football Netball League had a successful interleague arrangement the VAFA in 2024 and 2025 but see this new fixture as an opportunity to align their representative football and netball programs. The SS&A Ovens & Murray Football Netball League have played interleague football and netball the past four seasons against the Goulburn Valley League.

This fixture will also mark the first time in 29 years the two leagues have clashed in senior football, with the OMFNL edging out the BFNL by 9 points in their Round One clash of the former Vic Country Championships in Bendigo.

Re-igniting a special rivalry, both leagues anticipate the fixture will generate enormous interest amongst players and spectators alike, with many eager to witness a rematch almost three decades in the making.

BFNL Chair, Professor Carol McKinstry, said, *"We are thrilled to confirm our Interleague partnership with the Ovens & Murray FNL and cannot wait to host the first edition in 2026 at the QEO while welcoming netball back into the Interleague program."*

"Representative football and netball have been a cornerstone of our League's history providing a fantastic opportunity for us to showcase the depth of high-level talent within the BFNL while giving our players the chance to test themselves against some of the best regional talent in Victoria," McKinstry added.

OMFNL Chair, David Sinclair also commented, saying, *"We are excited at the prospect of taking O&M squads to the Bendigo region for the first time since 1997. As a league, we see representative fixtures as a critical level of competition for our football and netball participants. Particularly given the number of recent examples of the concept providing an additional pathway for those aspiring to play at state/national level, who through circumstance may not have been afforded the opportunity via more traditional talent pathways."*

Further details regarding coaches, playing squads, schedules and ticketing will be released in due course.

ENDS