

Major Events (2026 Winter Sports Season Events) Notice 2026

Disallowable instrument DI2026-

made under the

Major Events Act 2014, section 9 (Important sporting event - notice)

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Division 2.2 of the *Major Events Act 2014* (the Act) permits the Minister to give notice that an event is an important sporting event if satisfied on reasonable grounds that its making is necessary and appropriate for—

- (a) the safety of people attending the event; and
- (b) the avoidance of disruptions to the event.

The Minister is satisfied the events listed in the instrument meet this criteria.

This notice applies the provisions of the *Major Events Act 2014* (the Act) to the 19 matches at GIO Stadium from 6 March 2026 to 21 August 2026. These matches form the 2026 Winter Sports Season in the ACT. This notice is a disallowable instrument.

Sporting events hosted at GIO Stadium generally attract a family-oriented audience. Maintaining a safe and minimal risk environment is paramount to the ongoing viability of hosting major events in the ACT and is of particular importance to the Territory.

The expected attendance of these matches ranges from 6,000-9,000 persons for Super Rugby Pacific matches to 13,000-17,000 for NRL matches at GIO Stadium.

This event will include corporate hospitality and official functions which often include VIPS, Members of Parliament and the Legislative Assembly, and dignitaries. All matches played at GIO Stadium are broadcast and these events will attract national media attention.

Protecting playing areas and preventing unauthorised entry both during and in advance of each event is important part of hosting national matches and an increasing expectation from sporting bodies. Applying powers and offences under the Act prior to an event protects against those who may seek to disrupt the event before it occurs by damaging the playing surface.

The effect of this notice is to apply powers and offences under the Act, Part 3 (Crowd Management) to the event for police officers. Crowd management in Part 3 of the Act include offences in relation to the possession of prohibited items and interference with the event. Part 3 also provides crowd management powers including the power to search personal property, to conduct scanning searches and frisk searches.

While an important sporting event notice enlivens extraordinary powers for police officers, these additional crowd control powers under Part 3 of the Act will provide for the safe conduct of the event, and avoid disruption to the event, considering the number of attendees.

Terrorism and violent extremism continue to be highly dynamic and evolving threats at the national level, and there is an increased national focus on security arrangements for mass gatherings, including stadium sporting events. The Director-General of Security, Australian Security Intelligence Organisation has stated that politically motivated violence behaviours have become more common in Australia, and we can expect spikes in communal violence. Protections such as those in Part 3 of the Act support a reduction and deterrent to these risks.

The powers enlivened for an important sporting event notice and the reduced threshold for the exercise of crowd management powers engages and limits rights under the *Human Rights Act 2004* (ACT) (HR Act). This includes the right to privacy (s 12), right to freedom of movement (s 13), right to liberty and security of the person (s 18) and right to the presumption of innocence (s 22(1)).

Section 28 of the HR Act provides that rights may be subject to reasonable limits that can be demonstrably justified in a free and open democratic society.

The purpose of the limitation of human rights under an important sporting event notice is to ensure effective crowd control provisions are in place.

The powers enlivened under an important sporting event notice have proportionate limitations on the duration and scope of their application to provide for the safe and secure conduct of the event.

The power of detention by police officers is a power of last resort under an important sporting event notice to protect the community and the event and will only be used when it is reasonably necessary to do so. Strict liability offences enacted apply only to the conduct that may threaten safety or security to the event.

This notice supports the right to liberty and security of participants and people attending the event.

This notice limits the right to freedom of movement by requiring event attendees to not go onto a playing surface unless the person has permission of the event organiser, not to interfere with the event and to comply with directions to leave the event. These restrictions are enacted to protect against disruptions to the event and necessary for the safety and enjoyment of people at the event.

This notice takes the least restrictive means of achieving the objective under the Act.

1. It limits the period the notice is in force whereby human rights are limited in accordance with the times of the event.
2. It limits the exercise of powers under the Act to police officers and not to other authorised persons.

The application of crowd management powers does not affect the rights and duties of venue operators and property holders that apply under ACT or Commonwealth laws or the common law.

Clarification has been provided under the Act that permission may be given by the event organiser or venue manager for a *prohibited item* under s 12 to be within an event venue. For example, alcohol is authorised by the venue manager to be sold by licensed vendors during events under this notice, but is prohibited from being brought into the event venue by attendees. Therefore, alcohol has not been excluded from being a prohibited item under this notice.