



## News Release



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Thursday, May 19, 2011

### **WTA ANNOUNCES UPGRADE OF BRISBANE TOURNAMENT TO PREMIER LEVEL**

- *Upgraded Brisbane event to strengthen start of women's tennis season*
- *Investment by Tennis Australia to enhance pre-Australian Open swing for fans and players*

ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA – The WTA (Women's Tennis Association) announced today that the Brisbane International will be upgraded to Premier level status beginning in 2012, strengthening the start of the women's tennis season. The upgraded event, to take place the week of January 2 in 2012, will feature an enhanced array of top WTA stars, and increased prize money of US\$655,000 in 2012 and US\$1,000,000 from 2013. Along with longstanding successful season starting events, the ASB Classic in Auckland, the Medibank International in Sydney and the Moorilla Hobart International, the beginning of the women's tennis calendar in the lead-up to the year's first Grand Slam promises to reach new heights of competition and entertainment.

The upgrading of the Brisbane event to Premier status represents the realization of a key original component of the WTA's "Roadmap" to strengthen the women's tennis calendar for fans and players, particularly at the start of the women's tennis season. Designed to ensure that fans of women's tennis are able to see their favorite stars on a more consistent basis and that players are able to stay healthier, since being unveiled in 2009 the Roadmap has resulted in a 15% increase in top player participation at the WTA's Premier events, a 46% decrease in player withdrawals, and a 36% increase in prize money, all of which has driven the continued growth of the sport.

"For fans and players, the kickoff to the WTA season will be more exciting than ever with Brisbane becoming a Premier level event," said Stacey Allaster, Chairman & CEO of the WTA. "Tennis Australia and the Queensland government have once again shown their incredible support for women's tennis with this major commitment to promote and grow women's tennis in Australia and Brisbane, and to optimize the opportunities for our players to prepare for the Australian Open in a world class facility and ideal location."

The state-of-the-art Queensland Tennis Centre at Tennyson in Brisbane, where the Brisbane tournament is held, was officially opened on January 2, 2009 and was the result of an AUS\$82 million investment.

In parallel to the success of the Roadmap, the WTA has attracted unprecedented investment to the sport over the past 15 months, securing US\$80 million in revenues through the signing of three major new sponsors in Europe (Oriflame) and Asia-Pacific (Jetstar and Peak); the renewal of the WTA's landmark partnership with Sony Ericsson; renewals of USANA and Travelex; and year-end WTA Championships revenues. Additionally, WTA attendance in 2010 was up 5% at Premier events and 4% at International events, while more players than ever before (19) earned over US\$1 million.

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The WTA is the global leader in women's professional sport with more than 2,400 players representing 99 nations competing for more than \$87 million in prize money at the WTA's 53 events and four Grand Slams in 33 countries. More than 5 million people attended women's tennis events in 2010 with tens of millions more watching on television and digital channels around the world. The WTA competitive season concludes with the WTA Championships in Istanbul, Turkey from October 25-30, and the Commonwealth Bank Tournament of Champions in Bali, Indonesia, from November 3-6. Further information on the WTA can be found on [www.wtatennis.com](http://www.wtatennis.com).

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