



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Minister for the Commonwealth Games

Saturday, March 19, 2005

26 COACHES, 12 DEVELOPING NATIONS, 1 YEAR TO GO!

Coaches from 12 developing Commonwealth nations gathered in Melbourne to learn new techniques for helping elite athletes with a disability (EAD) achieve their best.

The 26 coaches from countries including Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Jamaica and Tanzania are taking part in a four day EAD Coach Development Program sponsored by the Victorian Government and run by the Victorian Institute of Sport.

The Minister for the Commonwealth Games, Justin Madden, said the program was part of the Government's efforts to make the most of hosting the Games.

"Bringing these coaches to Melbourne and sharing our expertise is helping to strengthen our friendships with other Commonwealth countries – several of whom are our near neighbours," Mr Madden said.

"As host city of the Games, and one of the world's sporting capitals, we are pleased to share some of the techniques that have made our elite athletes with a disability so successful.

"Not only will the 26 coaches receive internationally recognised accreditation for completing this course, they can stay in touch with their Australian counterparts as part of an ongoing mentor relationship in the lead up to 2006.

"The course is sensitive to the training environment in each country. Where there are potential resources issues such as lack of gym equipment, the coaches are presented with alternatives to help them make the most out of their EAD training schedules."

Nations taking part in the program are Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Vanuatu, Fiji, Lesotho, Cameroon, Tonga, Mauritius, Jamaica, Papua New Guinea and Samoa.

The Commonwealth Games is the only event of its kind to fully integrate competition for elite athletes with a disability into its core program – instead of separating it out into a different event.

A record total of 12 EAD events are on the program for the 2006 Commonwealth Games, spread across track and field, table tennis, swimming and power lifting. Many of these events will be held on the same day, at the same venue and in front of the same audience as events for able-bodied athletes – with medals contributing to their country's overall tally.

The XVIII Commonwealth Games will be held from 15 – 26 March 2006 and will bring together 4,500 athletes from 71 nations.

Media contact: Brent Hooley 9651 5799 or 0407 138 680 www.vic.gov.au