



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Minister for the Commonwealth Games

Friday 13 May 2006

COMMONWEALTH GAMES INDIGENOUS STRATEGY UNVEILED

Indigenous Victorian communities today presented the Minister for the Commonwealth Games, Justin Madden, with a strategy to ensure indigenous cultural and business opportunities are maximised from the Games.

Chairman of the Games indigenous working group and taskforce, Kevin Coombs OAM, presented Mr Madden with the *Respecting Indigenous Communities* strategy.

“The 2006 Commonwealth Games will present our community with a unique opportunity to tell our story,” Mr Coombs said.

“The strategy is our community saying to the Government: ‘This is indigenous Victoria and this is how we want to be represented’.”

Key initiatives of the strategy include:

- a Koori Business Network (KBN) training program that aims to help emerging indigenous businesses gear up for major events like the Games;
- a showcase program to highlight indigenous businesses and artists during the Games, and
- an indigenous sports participation program carried out by the Victorian Aboriginal Youth Sport and Recreation Co-operative.

Accepting the strategy on behalf of the Bracks Government, Mr Madden said Victoria’s rich indigenous heritage would play a key role in Games events and celebrations.

“*Respecting Indigenous Communities* is a philosophy the Bracks Government believes is integral to every part of the Commonwealth Games,” Mr Madden said.

“Indigenous Victorian culture and heritage will be woven into all aspects of the Games - from the Education Program to the Cultural Festival, from the Opening Ceremony to the Closing and from the village to the Queen’s Baton Relay.”

“Together we can ensure indigenous Victorians, like all Victorians, enjoy and benefit from the Games.”

Mr Madden unveiled an original indigenous Victorian artwork commissioned for the strategy, titled ‘kaar-rat-pee-teen ween’, meaning ‘message stick’ by renowned local artist, Vicki Couzens.

“We wanted the artwork to reflect the spirit of *Respecting Indigenous Communities* and capture the themes of the Games,” Mr Madden said.

“The artwork will welcome and inform the international sporting community about Victoria’s rich indigenous heritage. It will be the main public art in the Athletes Village.”

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