



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Minister for the Commonwealth Games, Sport and Recreation

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HELPING REGIONAL VICTORIA MAKE THE MOST OF THE GAMES

From East Gippsland to West Wimmera, every municipality in Victoria can share in \$4.5 million to celebrate the 2006 Commonwealth Games, the Minister for the Commonwealth Games, Justin Madden, said today.

Visiting Mildura to launch *Getting Involved* – a guide to building stronger communities through Games-inspired activities – Mr Madden said the event would be the ideal backdrop to showcase what's special about regional and rural Victoria.

“Much like the 1956 Olympics, the 2006 Commonwealth Games has the potential to be a defining moment for Victoria,” Mr Madden said.

“Realising this potential depends on local government, schools, sports clubs, community groups and individuals working together and planning ahead.

“The ideas in *Getting Involved*, and the \$4.5 million grants program that underpins them, will give every municipality practical support to make the Games meaningful to their area.”

Some of the activities suggested by *Getting Involved* include:

- welcoming the Queen's Baton Relay as it moves across the State;
- involving schools, local businesses and community groups in a week-long festival;
- organising 'come and try' events as a springboard to encourage people to be more physically active;
- adopting another Commonwealth nation to learn more about a different culture;
- creating a lasting reminder by upgrading civic infrastructure, like walking paths or street furniture; or
- developing an exhibition of local sporting history or heroes.

“The Games is a celebration of inclusion, diversity and shared history. By supporting these activities, our goal is to showcase local expressions of these universal themes – and build stronger communities in the process,” Mr Madden said.

Councils are invited to work with all sections of their community in coordinating ideas, funding applications and events. Up to \$20,000 is available for each municipality, with each Council also able to seek another \$80,000 through a competitive process.

Mr Madden said *Getting Involved* joined the range of initiatives helping all of Victoria make the most of the Games.

Media contact: Kym Carter on 9651 5799 or 0419 294 049 www.vic.gov.au

“Hosting the Commonwealth Games is more than a sporting event centred in metropolitan Melbourne. It’s about jobs, better facilities, cultural identity and bringing people together State-wide,” he said.

“Over the next 559 days, we’re planting native trees as part of the Games’ environment program, teaching students about other countries through our education program, and kick-starting careers through an employment and training program.”

Victorians are encouraged to contact their local Council to tap into support for their ideas. For more information on *Getting Involved*, visit www.dvc.vic.gov.au/commonwealth_games or telephone (03) 9655 2006.

The XVIII Commonwealth Games will be held from 15 – 26 March 2006, and will bring together 4,500 athletes from 71 nations. Competition will be held across inner Melbourne, its outer suburbs and regional Victoria.