

Monday 15 March, 2004

TWO YEAR COUNTDOWN TO COMMONWEALTH GAMES BEGINS

The covers have come off the new State Lawn Bowls Centre in time to celebrate the ‘two years to go’ countdown to the 2006 Commonwealth Games.

Acting Premier, John Thwaites, said the Centre in Northcote was the first purpose-built field of play for the Games to become operational, with bowlers already using one of four new greens.

“Two years from today, all eyes will be on Melbourne as we stage the biggest event our State has ever seen,” Mr Thwaites said.

“The Lawn Bowls Centre is the first of several world-class venues across Victoria where elite athletes will break records, win medals and create history.

“Beyond March 2006, this Centre will continue to serve the community as it forms part of the legacy that the Games will leave behind.”

The State Lawn Bowls Centre is one element of a \$17.3 million redevelopment with the City of Darebin to create a new sports precinct in Melbourne’s inner north.

The Darebin City Bowling Club and Victorian Soccer Federation have also contributed.

As well as club rooms, office facilities and meeting spaces, the redevelopment includes:

- **State Lawn Bowls Centre** – four outdoor greens, permanent seating for 400 spectators (expanding to 3,000 at Games time) and a fifth all-weather green inside the adjacent velodrome.
- **State Training Velodrome** – an indoor, 250 metre timber cycling track.
- **State Soccer Centre** – up to five grass and synthetic international-standard soccer pitches.

“While the Lawn Bowls Centre is the only Commonwealth Games venue in the precinct, all three facilities will help cultivate new sporting talent, contribute to a more active community and help Victoria attract more major sports events,” Mr Thwaites said.

The Minister for the Commonwealth Games, Justin Madden, said the ‘two years to go’ mark found Victoria well-advanced in its preparation for March 2006.

“Construction work is underway at the MCG, the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre and the Athletes Village, with all infrastructure on track for completion in time for the Games,” Mr Madden said.

“But less tangibly, we’re also creating opportunities for businesses, school children and volunteers across the State to be involved in this once-in-a-lifetime experience.”

For more information, visit www.dvc.vic.gov.au/commonwealth_games

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