

Media release



FROM THE MINISTER FOR SPORT & RECREATION, MINISTER FOR THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

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REGIONAL VICTORIA TO HOST COMMONWEALTH GAMES BASKETBALL

Sporting venues across regional Victoria are one step closer to hosting preliminary rounds of the Commonwealth Games Basketball Program in 2006.

The Minister for the Commonwealth Games, Justin Madden, said an agreement with the Commonwealth Games Federation had given the Government the green light to put more events within the reach of more Victorians.

"We want as many communities as possible to share in the excitement, as well as the prosperity, that the Games will bring to our State," Mr Madden said.

Regional centres being considered to host competition for the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games include Traralgon, Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong.

"The Basketball Program will bring elite athletes to regional Victoria – and those athletes will bring thousands of spectators with them," he said.

Mr Madden said hosting Commonwealth Games events in the four centres was made possible through the Government's ongoing commitment to upgrading regional sporting facilities.

Infrastructure funding arrangements with the local councils involved will be finalised shortly.

"We are looking to invest \$500,000 to improve the Traralgon Basketball Centre and another \$500,000 to upgrade Ballarat's Miner Dome in time for the Games," Mr Madden said.

"This is in addition to the \$2 million already spent refurbishing the Bendigo Schweppes Centre."

Mr Madden said the \$1 million contribution the State Government made in 2002 to retain the Geelong Arena was a critical factor in bringing the Games to that area.

"Better infrastructure, international exposure and stronger communities are all part of the legacy that the Commonwealth Games will leave behind in 2006," he said.

Bendigo will also host the Full Bore Shooting Program at Wellsford Rifle Range.

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