



The Place To Be

Media release

From the Premier of Victoria

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COMMUNITIES GROW TREES FOR 2006 COMMONWEALTH GAMES

The Premier, Steve Bracks, today called for volunteers to help grow seedlings as part of the 2006 Commonwealth Games' environment program.

Mr Bracks said up to one million trees would be planted to offset greenhouse gas emissions generated by the event.

"Today's announcement is an opportunity for all Victorians to share in the hosting of the 2006 Commonwealth Games," Mr Bracks said.

"We want interested Victorians to turn their back yards into part of the effort to ensure Melbourne hosts an environmentally friendly Games, by growing seedlings that will later be replanted at appropriate locations across the State.

"Through initiatives like this, we're working to make hosting the Games as good for our natural environment as it is for the rest of Victoria."

Mr Bracks said the trees volunteers grew in their back yards would act as carbon sponges, soaking up emissions and taking the State closer to its goal of delivering the first major multi-sport event to be carbon neutral.

He said growers' kits would be available to those who registered their interest by September 20.

"Between now and the start of the Games, groups like Greening Australia and Landcare will plant seedlings at sites throughout regional Victoria to help us reach our goal of one million trees," he said.

Minister for the Environment and for Victorian Communities, John Thwaites, said the program demonstrated the range of ways people could get involved in the Games.

"As well as those helping at venues and at ceremonies, volunteering at a local level will be a critical feature of these Games," Mr Thwaites said.

"All Victorians can lend a hand in organising Games celebrations for their suburb or getting their town to look its best."

Volunteers interested in growing seedlings can register their interest by 20 September 2004 at www.dvc.vic.gov.au/commonwealth_games or phoning (03) 9655 2006. A further call for people to help plant the trees in sites across Victoria will be made later this year.

Other parts of the Commonwealth Games' environment program include a new river barge patrolling the Yarra for litter, installation of water-saving devices at major venues and a Statewide anti-litter campaign.

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Recruitment for the core Commonwealth Games volunteer program will begin in early 2005.

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

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