

Sunday 31 October 2004

COUNCILS ADOPT A SECOND COMMONWEALTH NATION FOR GAMES

Councils across Victoria have put their hands up to adopt another Commonwealth nation as part of their preparations for the 2006 Commonwealth Games.

The Minister for the Commonwealth Games, Justin Madden, announced the matches between municipalities and countries today.

“With 500 days to go to the Games communities are seizing the chance to establish an ongoing cultural exchange,” Mr Madden said.

“In nominating their preferred nations, some Councils wanted to build on existing relationships, some wanted to reflect local diversity and some simply wanted to find out about another culture.

“Bayside City Council, for example, already has a sister-city relationship with Beaumaris in Wales, and will use the Games to strengthen this link.

“Maribyrnong has a significant proportion of residents from Bangladesh, and will celebrate their diversity by supporting that nation.”

“Corangamite asked to support Jamaica, so local school children could learn more about a culture very different from their own.”

Councils may show support for their adopted teams by hosting welcoming ceremonies for athletes, establishing international pen-pal programs between schools and organising displays of dance, film or music.

Mr Madden said the City of Melbourne had been awarded India, so it could create a link with the host city of the 2010 Commonwealth Games in New Delhi.

Some nations have been adopted by more than one council because of the scope of possible activities, and to help build networks between municipalities.

Mr Madden said adopting a second team was one of the first initiatives of *Getting Involved* – a \$4.5 million program to help communities celebrate the Games in their own way.

“Like all aspects of *Getting Involved*, adopting a second team is designed to build stronger communities by connecting people, whether they’re across the world or across the street,” Mr Madden said.

“Many Councils have already established local organising committees, called *Get Involved Teams*, to plan Games-related activities, and have until 16 December this year to submit their funding applications.

“*Get Involved Teams* are planning sports demonstrations, local history displays and Opening Ceremony celebrations to help their area make the most of the Commonwealth Games.”

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

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