

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Tuesday, 18 July 2023

UPGRADES FOR BALLARAT SPORTING VENUES CONFIRMED

With significant planning work and extensive market soundings completed, it is now certain that the cost of hosting the Regional Victorian Commonwealth Games will exceed \$6 billion – more than twice the estimated economic benefit the Games would bring our state.

In the face of these numbers, the Victorian Government has made the decision not to proceed with hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2026.

When the Commonwealth Games needed a host city to step in at the last minute, we were willing to help – but not at any price, and not without a big lasting benefit for regional Victoria.

Now the choice couldn't be clearer – \$6 billion is just too much.

The main reason we agreed to host the Games was to deliver lasting benefits in housing, tourism and sporting infrastructure in places like Ballarat.

That's why the Victorian Government will deliver a comprehensive \$2 billion package to ensure regional Victoria still receives all the benefits that would have been facilitated by the Games. Local councils will not be expected to financially contribute to the package.

Every one of the permanent new and upgraded sporting infrastructure projects planned as part of the Games will still proceed – and all will be completed as planned.

Now, instead of building temporary features for the Games competitions, we'll be able to get on with constructing the final form of these projects – meaning locals will get access to new and upgraded venues sooner than waiting for the Games to be completed.

For Ballarat that means a new athletics track will be built at the Eureka Stadium and it will be expanded to hold an additional 5,000 permanent seats, with improved accessibility access.

These upgrades will mean a bigger and better experience for spectators at Eureka Stadium in the years to come and ensure Ballarat continues to attract AFL games, major events and live music.

The historically sensitive upgrade of Ballarat's beautiful train station will still be delivered, with passenger lifts on both platforms and a connecting pedestrian overpass.

We will continue our delivery of 60 kilometres of world-class mountain bike trails built in and around the Regional Park, State Forest and plantation lands of Creswick, a new community sporting facility at Miners Rest and the Ballarat Sports and Events Centre will get upgrades to the show court and accessibility works.

We know there's no more important issue anywhere in the state right now than housing. That's why, ahead of the Housing Statement to be released later this year, we will provide a new \$1 billion Regional Housing Fund to deliver

more than 1300 new homes across regional Victoria – including new permanent homes in Ballarat for locals, not visiting athletes.

The new homes will include a mix of social and affordable housing – and we'll work with councils, regional partnerships and local communities to determine the right mix of stock and locations for each region, including in Ballarat.

Tourism is a vital part of the regional economy and a new \$150 million Regional Tourism and Events Fund will ensure our regions have the best of everything on offer with new events, new attractions and more accommodation coming to Ballarat.

Consultation with the community has already begun, with more feedback from the local community wanted in coming days and weeks about how Ballarat can get the most out of the \$2 billion regional package.

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"We were pleased to be asked to host the 2026 Commonwealth Games – but not at any price. I think all Victorians would agree that more than \$6 billion for a 12-day sporting event just doesn't make sense."

"The Ballarat community has told us that more places to live and more places to stay across regional Victoria is what really matters – so that's exactly what we'll deliver."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery Jacinta Allan

"Whether it's major upgrades at Eureka Stadium or many other smaller projects, every one of the permanent new and upgraded sports facilities will be delivered."

"We know how hard it is to find affordable housing in so many parts of regional Victoria – that's why we'll deliver more than 1300 new homes with a \$1 billion Regional Housing Fund."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Commonwealth Games Legacy Harriet Shing

"We'll deliver all the housing, sports infrastructure and tourism legacy benefits for our regions – but without the massive extra cost of hosting the Games."

"Communities are really enthusiastic about the local projects and outcomes they want to see, and we'll be sitting down with the Ballarat community in the coming weeks to plan the next steps for all of these projects to ensure locals have their say."

Quote attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison

"From a fully accessible Ballarat station to 5,000 extra seats at Eureka Stadium, athletics track and more affordable housing across our region, we'll deliver the lasting benefits people in Ballarat have asked for."

Quote attributable to Member for Ripon Martha Haylett

"We are still committed to delivering lasting benefits for regional communities - from affordable housing to local sports facilities, including world-class mountain bike trails in Creswick and a brand-new sports facility in Miners Rest."