



29 May 2023

Chair
Senate Standing Committees on Rural
and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Chair,

Australia's preparedness to host Commonwealth, Olympic and Paralympic Games

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport's inquiry into Australia's preparedness to host Commonwealth, Olympic and Paralympic Games.

AusCycling is the national sporting organisation with responsibility for all cycling disciplines in Australia. We represent nearly 60,000 members and 450 community cycling clubs around the nation and support the interests of more than three million Australians who ride a bike for sport or active recreation. Our vision is to make Australia a nation of bike riders, to advocate for our riders' safety, build strong club communities and make all forms of cycling accessible to everyone.

It is appropriate that the Committee takes this opportunity to consider Australia's preparedness to host the Commonwealth Games in Victorian in 2026 and the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Brisbane in 2032. These are iconic events that showcase the pinnacle of athletic excellence. They also provide a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a sporting legacy in Australia that supports both elite performance and community participation in sport.

The Green and Gold Decade

The Commonwealth, Olympic and Paralympic Games comprise three peaks of a decade-long program of events hosted in Australian communities that include world cups, world championships and major international competition. This decade of competition, punctuated by the major Games, provides myriad benefits for Australia as the host nation.

First and foremost, hosting international competition is an opportunity for Australian athletes to compete on home soil in front of a home crowd. For many athletes, this will be the highlight of their careers. For some, the prospect of a home Games will be a driving motivation as elite athletes. Home competition can deliver personal best performances and recognition by the community of the dedication and sacrifice that is needed to qualify, let alone reach the podium.

The international events leading into and after the major Games will also ensure the economic benefits of hosting are extended over a longer period and can impact more of the community. International events deliver boosts in tourism, both during the event for spectators and through international exposure of Australia as an attractive destination. International events assist sports in growing a larger and more experienced workforce.

Finally, the program of major events is a catalyst for sports participation, with Australian athletes competing in front of home crowds inspiring new interest in participation and providing the opportunity to deliver lasting health, wellbeing and community benefits.

Sporting legacy

Creating a lasting sporting legacy for a host nation requires successful Commonwealth, Olympic and Paralympic Games. The success of any home Games is judged primarily on the success of the home team. Australians want to see the Australian team deliver strong performances underpinned by humility, integrity, fair play and Aussie grit. Beyond any other factor, this sporting success requires us to have the right athletes and the right coaches.

High-performance funding that supports the identification, development, qualification and competition of the Australian team is a central investment in the success of home Games and the creation of a meaningful legacy. High performance programs require funding that is secure, consistent over the long term, and meets the needs of sports to develop and support athletes throughout their careers.

AusCycling, like many Olympic sports, has seen its high-performance funding considerably eroded over recent Olympic cycles. Available funding has become the dominant factor in how many athletes AusCycling can support in training and development, and how well AusCycling can support those who do get selected for competition.

AusCycling has joined with the Australian Olympic Committee, Commonwealth Games Australia and other Olympic sports to ask the Australian Government to restore the level of high-performance funding that is needed to give Australian athletes a fair chance at qualifying for, competing at and winning these major events. Insufficient high-performance funding is a major risk in delivering Australian success at future Games and providing a meaningful legacy as host nation.

The athletes who will represent Australia at Victoria 2026 are already in our high-performance system. And while Brisbane 2032 is nine years away, the structures and preparations that will deliver success at that event are being developed now.

The role of infrastructure

Beyond athletic achievement, infrastructure is one of the major enablers of major sporting events and brings with it the potential to deliver an important legacy.

In recent Olympic cycles there has been a significant shift towards valuing sustainability in infrastructure provision and moving away from massive investment in new facilities for every sport. This approach has been shared by Commonwealth Games organisers and is now effectively a new norm of sport facility planning. Host cities are now required to consider the environmental, social, and economic impacts of their infrastructure projects, ensuring that they align with sustainable development goals and leave a positive legacy for future generations.

In the case of sporting facilities, legacy can be seen broadly to include the five factors identified in the AusCycling Infrastructure Strategy, these being:

- Growing grassroots participation and supporting more Australians riding bikes more often
- Building united, inclusive and empowered communities and supporting our community cycling clubs
- Enabling our athletes to maximise their potential through leading edge performance and competition environments and pathways
- Staging high quality events at all levels that inspire the next generation of athletes and the nation – in this case both before and after Commonwealth, Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Growing the bike economy to allow both communities and businesses to benefit from bike riding

Significant outcomes against each of these factors can be pursued through sensible investment, collaboration, innovation and early planning. With respect to the infrastructure provisioning for Victoria 2026 and Brisbane 2032, we have sought to address specific elements of the Committee's terms of reference below.

a. the adequacy of existing sporting infrastructure to host Games events;

Australia already enjoys a significant amount of world-class cycling infrastructure suitable for elite competition including at Commonwealth, Olympic and Paralympic Games. Organising committees for both Victoria 2026 and Brisbane 2032 are planning to make use of some existing facilities with minor upgrades and maintenance planned to support their use.

For example, Victoria 2026 will make use of the existing BMX Supercross Track in Shepparton. This is one of only six tracks of this standard in Australia and has previously hosted BMX World Cup rounds. Having recently sustained flood damage, the track has been repaired and will be ready to host the first occasion that BMX Racing has been contested at the Commonwealth Games.

Brisbane 2032 will make use of the Anna Meares Velodrome and BMX Supercross Track at Sleeman Sports Complex. Anna Meares Velodrome is one of the best track cycling venues in Australia and has already hosted competition at the 2018 Commonwealth Games. The BMX Supercross Track is another venue that is already capable of hosting elite competition and slated to host a BMX World Cup and a BMX World Championships in the lead up to Brisbane 2032.

Planned maintenance scheduled over the next few years will ensure that both venues at Sleeman Sports Complex are ready to host competition at Brisbane 2032.

b. investments in the provision of new or upgraded sporting infrastructure to host Games events, which will have legacy applications for elite and community sports;

New venues will be required to host some cycling disciplines in both Victoria 2026 and Brisbane 2032. Where new venues are required, AusCycling has provided advice to the relevant organising committee on venue requirements for competition and the impact of venue locations on sport operations.

For example, Hepburn Shire Council with the support of the Victorian Government is building a new mountain bike facility at Creswick which will host the Cross-Country Olympic event at Victoria 2026. As well as meeting the needs for competition during the Commonwealth Games, both council and state government are focused on ensuring the venue provide an ongoing opportunity for recreational riding, sport and act as a tourism drawcard for the community.

A temporary velodrome will be built at Bendigo to host the track cycling during Victoria 2026. The creation of this temporary facility will allow Bendigo to host an event that it would be able to using its existing facilities.

A new mountain bike facility will also be built to host the Cross-Country Olympic event at Brisbane 2032. Similar to Creswick, there is a desire to ensure the facility inherited by Sunshine Coast Council after the Olympic Games will provide recreational, sport and tourism opportunities for the community.

Finally, a temporary BMX Freestyle facility will be built for Brisbane 2032. Although other alternative venues exist – notably the National BMX Freestyle Park on the Gold Coast – Games organisers are taking the opportunity to deliver competition closer to other Games venues to provide a greater spectacle and increase exposure of the sport.

Both Victoria 2026 and Brisbane 2032 will host road racing and time trial events. However, as these disciplines take place on road circuits, specific venue investment is not required.

- c. consultation by responsible state and Australian government agencies with peak national and state sporting representative organisations to ensure any new investments in Games sporting infrastructure meet the needs of elite and community sports now and into the future;*

The involvement of national sporting organisations in the planning and delivery of Victoria 2026 and Brisbane 2032 is critical, both to ensure the success of the Games themselves and to ensure a meaningful legacy is created for host communities. AusCycling representatives have enjoyed productive relationships with the Australian Olympic Committee, Commonwealth Games Australia, and Victorian and Queensland officials responsible for delivering sporting infrastructure since the respective Games announcements. AusCycling has provided advice on the requirements of competition venues, various issues relating to sport and event operations, and potential legacy opportunities at both the elite and community participation level.

The remaining terms of reference reflect topics on which AusCycling is not able to provide comment. We trust the information above is of value to the Committee's deliberations.

Yours sincerely

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