



18 August 2023

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

Dear Chair,

Supplementary submission on cancellation of the Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games

Since AusCycling's initial submission to this inquiry on 29 May 2023, the Victorian Government has announced that it has withdrawn from hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2026. The announcement was not expected and AusCycling is continuing to learn the details on the impact on proposed infrastructure investments and potential other legacy outcomes.

Impact on infrastructure investment

At the time of writing, the Victorian Government has committed to continuing to invest in some infrastructure that was part of the Commonwealth Games preparation and which would have provided a legacy benefit to regional Victorian communities. For example, Shepparton BMX Club was to host the inaugural inclusion of BMX Racing in the Commonwealth Games sport program. To enable this event, the Victorian Government had committed to a series of upgrades at the Shepparton Supercross track. We understand these upgrades will still go ahead.

Construction of the Creswick mountain bike trails, which were to host the Commonwealth Games Cross Country Mountain Bike event, will also continue. The original investment in this venue preceded the Victorian Government's bid for the 2026 Commonwealth Games and was focused on providing a riding experience for local participation and to attract visitors to the region. While the Creswick community will miss out on an opportunity to showcase their new mountain bike trails via a Commonwealth Games broadcast, the trails themselves will still be built and are expected to be completed in 2024.

The Victorian Government had elected to host track cycling at a temporary velodrome in Bendigo and construction of this venue will not proceed. Any opportunity to re-use the temporary track or the structure covering it – either in Bendigo or elsewhere – has also been lost. While the decision not to host the 2026 Commonwealth Games is disappointing, particularly to the local cycling community, there remains an opportunity for the Victorian Government to invest in cycling facilities in Bendigo that will create a lasting legacy of increased participation and opportunities for local athletes. AusCycling will continue to work with the Bendigo and District Cycling Club to pursue investment in local facilities.

No further investment in facilities was expected to host the Commonwealth Games Road Race and Individual Time Trial.

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Non-infrastructure impacts

Beyond the investment in local cycling facilities, the Commonwealth Games presented an opportunity to deliver a range of legacy benefits to the Australian cycling community.

For athletes, the Commonwealth Games is a major international competition and an opportunity to perform on the world stage. For many athletes, the Commonwealth Games is the highest level of competition they will reach, and a home Games is a rare opportunity to compete in front of a home crowd. For others, the Commonwealth Games is an important part of their development as athletes and preparation for the Olympic Games. With Brisbane hosting the 2032 Olympic Games, the Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games had special significance as a preparatory event.

A home Commonwealth Games also affords sports the opportunity to grow their workforce of officials and volunteers and give them experience at a major international event. Attracting and retaining volunteers and officials remains a major challenge for all sports in Australia especially at the community level which is further compounded in regional areas. For cycling to thrive, we need to ensure we have a workforce of officials that have the requisite qualifications and experience to support competition at all levels in Australia. A home Games provides an opportunity for over 200 technical officials and volunteers to be part of a major international event, which is both a development opportunity and an incentive to commit the time and energy to continue volunteering in these roles.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this supplementary submission.

Yours sincerely

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