

The Committee Manager,
Select Committee on the 2026 Commonwealth Game Bid
Parliament House, Spring Street
EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002

By email to commonwealthgames@parliament.vic.gov.au

To whom it may concern,

On behalf of the Committee for Geelong I provide the following submission to the Inquiry into the 2026 Commonwealth Games Bid.

The Committee for Geelong was disappointed to learn of the cancellation of the Victoria 2026 Commonwealth Games. This represented a unique opportunity to showcase Geelong on a global stage, boost our visitor economy, and deliver a range of legacy benefits for the region.

Local businesses who had already spent considerable time and effort in tendering, or had begun planning or scaling up their operation in anticipation of the Games, were particularly impacted by the cancellation.

The announcement of the Government's \$2B Region Fund in its place is welcome, and it was pleasing to hear Geelong will continue to receive the legacy infrastructure benefits the Games promised to deliver. In particular, the creation of more affordable housing is desperately needed, and we would be hopeful that additional dwellings can be added.

While any investment in permanent community sporting infrastructure is welcomed, there remain some unanswered questions as to why specific locations were selected as Games venues. The release of the business case in support of the Games bid has highlighted this issue; proposed upgrades to the Kardinia Park precinct in the business case were overlooked in favour of new facilities in the southern growth corridor of Geelong (Armstrong Creek and Waurn Ponds).

It would be helpful to understand the rationale for this.

With regards to the construction of the housing and sporting infrastructure, there are some important questions that need to be addressed. What is the timing? The Games provided a firm deadline. Without that deadline, we seek assurances that these projects will be delivered in a timely manner.

Local procurement was a key component of the Victoria 2026 procurement approach and provided Geelong businesses access to significant Government work. It is imperative on the Government to maintain this approach, and support local businesses in supplying the legacy projects. We have the skills and talent here. Use it.

We have sought assurances that local businesses will be used through the procurement process for both permanent infrastructure builds, as well as being a requirement of grant funding relating to the Region Package.

There were verbal commitment to this approach provided at a Government briefing held in Geelong in September, and we look forward to seeing this included in grant guidelines.

There remains missing detail on other components of the support package, specifically the Regional Tourism & Events Fund. Geelong was set to host more events and Games activity than any other hub. The Committee for Geelong has been seeking commitment that Tourism & Event Grant Funding allocated to Geelong be proportionate with the level of Games activity.

This information cannot come soon enough for local businesses that had been planning for the economic boost to Geelong's visitor economy and we look forward to receiving further updates from the Government.

Geelong is well placed to host major events, international tournaments, and mass participation events. Bring them on.

Much has been said of the opportunity cost to Victoria in delivering the Games at the reforecast amount of \$6-7B; this is money that could be better spent on hospitals, schools, road, and rail. We agree. There is an opportunity for the Government to show further support to Geelong here by prioritising investment in these areas; particularly transport. This remains the single biggest issue facing Geelong, and now is the time to address it.

At a time when many in Geelong and other parts of regional Victoria are feeling deflated, the need for community-based leadership is important. This is ideal timing for the Government to continue its support of community leadership in regional Victoria and provide further funding of the regional community leadership programs who have no commitment beyond the end of 2023.

Geelong is resilient. We are Pivot City in more than name. As a city and region experiencing unprecedented growth, we have moved past the disappointment of the cancellation and are instead focussing on maximising the opportunities available under the Region Package and continuing to drive Australia's fastest growing region.

I would be happy to participate in a public hearing should you deem it appropriate.

Regards



Michael Johnston

CEO

Committee for Geelong