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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** Tim Matthews  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** CHR - Inquiry into the Commonwealth Games Bid Background document  
**Attachments:** CHR\_InquiryCthGames\_Background\_FEB2024.docx

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Hi Tim.

Please find some background information for your participation at the Ballarat hearing of the Inquiry into the Commonwealth Games Bid. Please note that this information is not RDV advice. You may also wish to note that the Inquiry has and continues to receive media attention.

Cheers, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions

Wadawurrung Country  
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[djsir.vic.gov.au](https://djsir.vic.gov.au)



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We acknowledge the Traditional Aboriginal Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay our respect to them, their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and future Traditional Owners.



We respect and welcome people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, abilities and cultures.

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## Central Highlands Regional Partnership

### Background for CHRP Chair's appearance at the Inquiry into the 2026 Commonwealth Games Bid.

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#### LOGISTICS

**Date:** Wednesday 14 February 2024

**Location:** Mecure Ballarat, 613 Main Rd, Golden Point, Conservatory Room

**Time:** 11 am to 12 pm

**Inquiry contact on the day for any questions:** Kieran Crowe, Committee Manager (0402 474 907).

**Format:**

The hearing will be for approximately 60 minutes, consisting of a brief (up to 10 minute) presentation from you, followed by questions from Committee members.

A transcript of the hearing will be made and published on the Committee's website. You will have the chance to review the transcript for factual errors before it is published.

The full day's schedule of hearings will be available on the Committee's website once witnesses have confirmed at <https://new.parliament.vic.gov.au/get-involved/inquiries/inquiry-into-the-2026-commonwealth-games-bid/hearings>.

Further information about appearing at a public hearing is available at <https://new.parliament.vic.gov.au/get-involved/public-hearings/>.

More information on the Inquiry including previous hearings, prior submissions and associated reports can be found on the Parliament of Victoria website [here](#).

Prior submissions you may wish to review include:

- [The City of Ballarat](#)
- [Rural Councils Victoria](#)

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Select Committee will inquire into and report on the 2026 Commonwealth Games and the progress of the regional infrastructure build including the potential failures in governance, the impacts of the contract termination on Victoria, the Victorian Government advice received, the potential of undue influence by the executive, the timeline, progress and budget of the Victorian Government's regional infrastructure and housing build and the impact on community, social, amateur, and professional sport in Victoria. The formal terms are in Box 1 below.

**Box 1: Terms of Reference for the Inquiry into the 2026 Commonwealth Games Bid**

That a Select Committee of nine members be appointed to inquire into, consider and report on the 2026 Commonwealth Games and the progress of the regional infrastructure build, including but not limited to —

- (a) the potential failures in governance, probity and procurement processes in the Victorian Government's bid, contract, and termination of the 2026 Commonwealth Games;
- (b) the impacts of the contract termination of the Commonwealth Games on Victoria's reputation, business community, tourism, and major events;
- (c) the Victorian Government advice received from government departments, councils, agencies, consultants, and contractors;
- (d) the potential of undue influence by the executive on the independence of the public service;
- (e) the timeline, progress and budget of the Victorian Government's regional infrastructure and housing build;
- (f) the impact on community, social, amateur, and professional sport in Victoria;
- (g) any other relevant matter;

Interim Report due by 30 April 2024

Final Report due by April 2025

**MENTAL HEALTH, WELLBEING AND FINANCIAL COUNSELLING SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES**

Current support services for small business relating to or including mental health, wellbeing and financial counselling are outlined below.

<p><a href="#">Partners in Wellbeing Helpline</a>  (Funded by the Victorian Government)</p>	<p>This service is provided ongoing by the Victorian Government under its Wellbeing and Mental Health Support for Victorian Small Businesses, a program providing mental health support to Victorians dealing with the challenges of running a small business to help navigate the impacts of coronavirus (COVID-19).</p> <p>The Partners in Wellbeing Helpline (1300 375 330) is a free and confidential service available 7 days a week. It provides support for small business owners and employees through trained wellbeing coaches, financial counsellors and business advisers.</p>
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	<p>In addition to the free helpline, mental health clinicians have been embedded in some chambers of commerce to provide an extension of this service to small business owners and employees.</p> <p>In the Central Highlands, a mental health clinician was embedded at Commerce Ballarat. This service is currently recruiting again and is expected to be appointed shortly, with funding for a further 12 months.</p>
<p><a href="#">Ahead for Business</a> (Funded by the Australian Government)</p>	<p>This digital portal has been developed with and for small businesses to provide tailored resources, check-ups, personalised action plans and showcases the experiences of small business owners through podcasts, videos, blogs and case studies.</p> <p>Ahead for Business has been developed to support small business owners take action on their own mental health and wellbeing through personalised resources and tools tailored to their specific needs.</p>
<p><a href="#">Business Recovery Advisory Service</a> (Funded by the Victorian and Australian Governments)</p>	<p>Provides expert guidance and tailored support to small businesses affected by the 2022 Victorian floods. Business Recovery Advisers offer free, confidential, one-on-one support to plan for long-term recovery, and to help build sustainable business models for the future. Business Recovery Advisers can help flood-affected businesses identify immediate and long-term needs, build business capability, and create customised strategies for recovery, as well as provide assistance with accessing other support services including financial counselling and mental health and wellbeing support.</p> <p>All Central Highlands LGAs fall within the eligible LGAs for this program.</p>
<p>Financial Counselling Victoria</p>	<p>In person or phone support for sole traders, business partners, personal and family finances and dealing with financial hardship and debt. 1800 007 007 <a href="http://fcvic.org.au/find-a-financial-counsellor">fcvic.org.au/find-a-financial-counsellor</a></p>
<p>Rural Financial Counselling Service</p>	<p>Free, independent financial counselling. 1300 834 775 <a href="http://rfcsnetwork.com.au">rfcsnetwork.com.au</a></p>
<p>Assist Small Biz</p>	<p>Regional Small Business Support Program, provides free, independent and confidential support. 1300 834 775 <a href="https://assistsmallbiz.org.au/">https://assistsmallbiz.org.au/</a></p>
<p>Small Business Mentoring Service</p>	<p>One-on-one business relief advice for small business. 1300 032 332 <a href="http://sbms.org.au">sbms.org.au</a></p>
<p>Small Business Debt Helpline</p>	<p>Financial counsellors for immediate assistance and referral for ongoing support. 1800 413 828 <a href="http://sbdh.org.au">sbdh.org.au</a></p>

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS RELATING TO THE CANCELLATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES.**

Some of the possible impacts on the Central Highlands from the cancellation of the Commonwealth Games noted at the time include:

**Compensation for time invested in preparations.**

- Many organisations invested significant time and effort in preparatory work on aligned projects relating to the Commonwealth Games.
- The Victorian Government has provided a \$25 million Council Support Package to acknowledge this investment of time and effort, especially from hosting Hub' Councils including the City of Ballarat. Regional Development Victoria are working with Councils to support their applications for funding.
- The Games village planned for Ballarat was to be designed collaboration with the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners. Regional Development Victoria are currently working with Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation on the provision of compensation in recognition of the time and effort they invested as well as seeking alternative platforms to celebrate their rich culture and stories.

**Permanent infrastructure legacy**

The Commonwealth Games was to provide significant legacy infrastructure to the benefit of the Central Highlands communities. This infrastructure is largely still being delivered through the alternative \$2 billion Regional Support Package, including:

- An investment of \$150 million to upgrade Ballarat’s Eureka Stadium will continue. The stadium will be expanded to hold an additional 5,000 permanent seats, with improved accessibility.
- The new community sporting facility at Miners Rest will include a competition-grade oval and sports pavilion with carparking, amenities and changerooms all designed to accommodate local sporting activities.
- A \$50 million upgrade of the historic Ballarat Railway Station to improve accessibility and capacity will continue.
- The Games Village was to be situated at the disused saleyards in Delacombe. The City of Ballarat are working with Development Victoria and the community to plan the long-term use of the site.
- The mountain biking event for the 2026 Commonwealth Games was to be hosted in Creswick in Hepburn Shire on 6km of the planned 60km mountain bike trails. Construction of the trails is due to for completion in mid-late 2024. None of the track was to be funded through the Commonwealth Games. However, Hepburn Shire Council spent significant time and effort in planning for hosting the Games events, and will not receive any direct grants or support to acknowledge that preparatory work.

**\$2 billion Regional Support Fund**

Further detail on the \$2 billion Regional Support Fund specifically relating to addressing potential regional impacts from the cancellation of the Commonwealth Games include:

<b>\$25 million Council Support Package</b>	Established to ensure that work and the ideas generated – particularly those from the host cities and event locations – doesn’t go to waste.
<b>\$1 billion Regional Housing Fund</b>	This will deliver more than 1300 new homes across regional Victoria. The new homes will include a mix of social and affordable housing. Working with councils, regional partnerships, and local communities to determine the right mix of stock and locations for each region is a priority.

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<b>\$150 million Regional Worker Accommodation Fund</b>	This will provide new housing options for regional communities where key workers are struggling to find affordable places to live.
<b>\$150 million Regional Tourism and Events Fund</b>	This will ensure the regions have the best of everything on offer with new events, new attractions, and more accommodation. Every one of the permanent new and upgraded sporting infrastructure projects planned as part of the Games will still proceed and delivered.
<b>\$60 million Regional Community Sport Development Fund</b>	This will encourage regional Victorian families and children to keep physically active, including \$35 million for Regional Community Sport Infrastructure and \$25 million to deliver Community Sport Programs for football, netball, basketball, cricket, soccer, golf and shooting.
<b>\$60 million Regional Tourism Infrastructure</b>	This fund will focus on attracting visitors to key destinations and to support tourism businesses like wineries, breweries and distilleries to add much needed accommodation to their offering.
<b>\$5 million Regional Tourism Industry Development</b>	This will focus on attracting workforce and building the skills of people working in Tourism in Victoria's regional cities and towns.
<b>\$20 million Aboriginal Economic Development Fund</b>	This funding will support Aboriginal business and employment programs and support Aboriginal cultural tourism initiatives.
<b>\$10 million Tiny Towns</b>	This will focus on projects that will provide better public places and spaces to Victoria's smaller cities. This is in addition to the \$10 million already allocated to the Tiny Towns program in the State Budget.
<b>\$70 million Visit Victoria</b>	This funding will aim to bring even more visitors and dollars to communities right across the state .