



PRESS RELEASE

18TH JULY 2023

Ballarat Athletics community disappointed by cancellation of Commonwealth Games

The announcement today of the cancellation of the 2026 Commonwealth games has come as a great disappointment to the Ballarat Athletic Community.

Since the announcement of the games in April last year, local athletes of all ages and abilities were buoyed by the idea of having some of the world's greatest athletes competing in their backyard, and some of Ballarat's elite prospects excited by representing their country in front of family and friends. That excitement has quickly turned to disappointment and let down.

The prospect of the games also gave hope to junior and amateur athletes around the country, hoping to compete on the same track as their heroes in the lead up to the event.

Alanna Peart, a local athlete with Ballarat YCW and one of Australia's brightest race-walking prospects shared her thoughts. "It's pretty disappointing. We have a great athletics community in Ballarat that would have got around the games. It's especially disappointing for the younger generation that don't get to see the best athletes in the world in Ballarat, it's great motivation to compete at a high level"

As the governing body of athletics locally, BRAC were excited by the spotlight the games placed on the sport, and the opportunity the Commonwealth Games gave to build on a great history of athletics in Ballarat. After earlier this year finalising its strategic plan for 2026 and beyond, many steps were already in place to capitalise on this opportunity including improved infrastructure, new initiatives to increase participation of athletes, coaches and officials, and the attraction of some exciting new events.

Despite the initial disappointment, it is not all bad news, with a commitment from the Premier Dan Andrews and Deputy Premier Jacinta Allan of a \$2bn legacy package for regional Victoria which includes a new Regional Athletics Facility in Ballarat, as well as funding for other initiatives for participation and growth in sport.

BRAC Chair, Matt Jenkins is still hopeful that the opportunity is not lost and that the work done to this point is not wasted. "Since the announcement last year, BRAC have been working with key stakeholders including the State Government, City of Ballarat and Athletics Victoria to ensure the games established a long standing legacy for Athletics locally. While it is clearly extremely disappointing that the excitement of the games will be lost, we look forward to continuing to work with the relevant parties so that our objectives to enhance the sport can still be brought to life." he said.

"We have been clear with State Government on what a legacy piece should look like for the region and look forward to continue to work with the relevant parties to deliver on the objectives" Jenkins says

As further information is known to BRAC we look forward to providing more comment and detail.

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Further Information			
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