

A MORE ACTIVE AND HEALTHY VICTORIA

Victorians are renowned for their love of sport. Since 1999, the Bracks Government has worked to strike a balance between boosting participation and activity at a grassroots level, while maintaining and enhancing Melbourne and Victoria's pre-eminence on the world sports stage.

Since coming to office, the Bracks Government has allocated funds towards more than 1,450 community sport and recreation facility projects across Victoria. This funding includes over \$50 million to 100 different aquatic facility projects.

The 2006-07 State Budget details an unprecedented \$87 million investment as part of the *Go for your life* program and the *Australian Better Health Initiative* to fight the obesity epidemic and promote good health and physical activity in the community. The funding will target a number of groups such as children, teenagers and seniors, as well as smokers and people with diabetes.

We have also allocated an additional \$6 million to the already successful Country Football and Netball Program, as part of the *Moving Forward* Provincial Victoria Statement. This is in addition to the Country Football Grounds Assistance Program, which has provided \$1 million towards ground rehabilitation and water-related projects across country Victoria.

The Bracks Government has made significant investments in national and international facilities across the State, including basketball facilities in Ballarat, Bendigo, Geelong and Traralgon for the March 2006 Commonwealth Games.

The upgrade to the MCG has seen a total transformation of this famous ground and increased public access. The new competition pool at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre was officially opened in December 2005, ahead of the Commonwealth Games and the Melbourne 2007 FINA World Championships. More than \$14.5 million has been invested in the Darebin International Sports Centre in Thornbury, which includes the State Lawn Bowls Centre, the State Training Velodrome and the State Soccer Centre.

The Commonwealth Games was the biggest event ever hosted by Victoria and more than 4,000 athletes took part. The Queen's baton relay passed through every local government area in Victoria, while 15,000 volunteers presented the welcoming face of Victoria.

We have also funded redevelopments of both Kardinia Park and the Whitten Oval, and the 2006-07 State Budget included \$143 million towards a new 20,000-seat soccer and rugby stadium to be built in the Olympic Park precinct.

The Government has acted to enhance the financial security, accountability and integrity of the Victorian racing industry. We have consolidated Victoria's position as a national leader in racing and introduced an Australian-first Racing Tourism Action Plan to help build co-operation between the two sectors.

The Bracks Government introduced the biggest reforms to the governance of thoroughbred racing in 130 years with the establishment of Racing Victoria, established and extended the "Living Country Racing Program" to fund improvements to country racing, assisted in the development of the harness racing industry resulting in significant financial growth, abolished the bookmakers turnover tax, supported and monitored the implementation of the Jockey Retirement Fund and Welfare Package, and legislated to ensure a fair return to the Victorian racing industry from interstate and overseas wagering operators.