

TRANSCRIPT

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE 2026 COMMONWEALTH GAMES BID

Inquiry into the 2026 Commonwealth Games Bid

Melbourne – Tuesday 5 December 2023

MEMBERS

David Limbrick – Chair

Joe McCracken – Deputy Chair

Melina Bath

David Davis

Jacinta Ermacora

Michael Galea

Sarah Mansfield

Tom McIntosh

Rikkie-Lee Tyrrell

WITNESSES

Jane Flemming, President, and

Steve Moneghetti, Director, Athletics Australia.

The CHAIR: Welcome. We will now resume the committee's public hearings for the Inquiry into the 2026 Commonwealth Games Bid.

All evidence taken is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the *Constitution Act 1975* and provisions of the Legislative Council standing orders. Therefore the information you provide during the hearing is protected by law. You are protected against any action for what you say during this hearing, but if you go elsewhere and repeat the same things, those comments may not be protected by this privilege. Any deliberately false evidence or misleading of the committee may be considered a contempt of Parliament.

All evidence is being recorded. You will be provided with a proof version of the transcript following the hearing, and transcripts will ultimately be made public and posted on the committee's website.

For the Hansard record, can you please state your name and the organisation that you are appearing on behalf of.

Jane FLEMMING: Jane Flemming, President of Athletics Australia.

Steve MONEGHETTI: Steve Moneghetti, board director of Athletics Australia.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much. I will just briefly introduce our committee.

Melina BATH: Hello. Melina Bath, Eastern Victoria Region.

Rikkie-Lee TYRRELL: Hello. Rikkie-Lee Tyrrell, Member for Northern Victoria Region.

David DAVIS: David Davis.

Joe McCRACKEN: Joe McCracken, Western Victoria.

The CHAIR: David Limbrick, South-Eastern Metro Region.

Michael GALEA: Hi there. Michael Galea, South-Eastern Metropolitan Region.

Tom McINTOSH: Tom McIntosh, Eastern Victoria Region.

Jacinta ERMACORA: Jacinta Ermacora. I went to boarding school in Ballarat.

Sarah MANSFIELD: Sarah Mansfield, Western Victoria Region.

The CHAIR: We welcome you now and invite you to make your opening comments and ask that they be kept to a maximum of around 10 minutes. Thank you.

Jane FLEMMING: Thank you very much. Members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity of appearing before you today and addressing the Inquiry into the 2026 Commonwealth Games Bid. At the outset I wanted to make the disclosure, along with my fellow Athletics Australia Director Steve Moneghetti, that we are both very proud Victorians, so the decision to cancel the 2026 Commonwealth Games has a very personal and direct impact, not just on us as athletes who have represented Australia at Commonwealth Games but also as custodians, through our roles at Athletics Australia, for the development of the current and the next generation of athletes, who have now lost this unique pinnacle international event.

The committee has received a copy of Athletics Australia's submission to the inquiry, and you will note that the submission addresses matters relating to clauses (f) and (g) of the inquiry's terms of reference. Athletics Australia is the national governing body for the sport of athletics in Australia and is recognised as such by

World Athletics, Commonwealth Games Australia, Australian Olympic Committee, Paralympics Australia and the Australian Sports Commission.

Together with our state- and territory-based member associations, AA – Athletics Australia – is charged with ensuring the encouragement and promotion of athletics in Australia and acting in the best interests of the sport of athletics, from grassroots participation and athlete pathways through to high performance and community. AA is also charged with ensuring adequate representation of Australia and driving successful outcomes of athletics at the Commonwealth Games, the Olympic Games, the Paralympic Games and other international meets.

Specifically, the Vic 2026 cancellation has impacted the reputation of Victoria and Australia as an event host and therefore our ability to attract elite athletes to Australia to participate in our domestic competitions, including the highest profile event in the Southern Hemisphere, the Maurie Plant Meet in Melbourne, a World Athletics continental gold meet. That meet was reinvigorated this year, and it was the first time a gold meet has been brought back to Australia – in fact to Oceania – for a very long time. It was a really successful event.

It has also impacted the return of the regular four-year competition cycle for Australia's elite athletes, already disrupted over the previous three years, as you would know, by COVID – more so in Victoria probably than anywhere else – and now further impacts our athletes' competition plans with uncertainty over 2026, although it looks even less certain now with no host for the games being confirmed as yet.

It impacts our structural pathways for the next generation of Australian athletes trying to break through into international competition. Notably, many of our Australian stars first launched their international careers and came onto the scene through a Commonwealth Games, including 16-year-old Catherine Freeman at the Auckland games in 1990 and a little-known 23-year-old Victorian pole vaulter named Steve Hooker, who launched his international career at the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne in 2006. There are a million other athletes we could name as well that also launched their international careers through a first appearance at a Commonwealth Games.

It impacts our ability to inspire Aussie kids watching homegrown heroes take on other nations on home soil. It is a competitive advantage that those sports which participate in Commonwealth Games only get a few times within a life cycle. It impacts Athletics Australia's ability to identify, develop and retain technical knowledge required to successfully deliver international events of this stature, and that technical knowledge will obviously play out all the way through to 2032. It impacts our opportunity for financial recovery from overseas and international competitions with a homegrown Commonwealth Games, a celebration of Commonwealth Games sports and the pathways towards the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics and Paralympic Games and ultimately Brisbane 2032. It impacts our commercial opportunities for Athletics Australia, its member associations through increased participation and registration fees, our grassroots participation programs and commercial opportunities and profile building for our high-performance athletes, who now have zero opportunity for maximising the interest in and success of Team Australia at what was to be the Vic 2026 games.

None of these impacts are going to be just confined to Victoria. These are Australia-wide impacts. They will carry forward all the way to Brisbane. And with the reports in the media yesterday that the Gold Coast has now pulled out of potentially hosting those games, the opportunity of a home games in 2026 or 2027 appears almost certainly lost.

We had hoped for fit-for-purpose athletic infrastructure, and we had hoped that the games may have helped deliver that. In our submission and again today we call on the Victorian government to embrace the four recommendations that we have set out in our submission as sensible and much-needed investments to be delivered as part of the government's \$2 billion package to ensure regional Victoria still receives the benefits that would have been facilitated by the games had they happened.

Thank you. I will hand over to my colleague Steve, who will briefly address the recommendations made in our submission.

The CHAIR: Thank you.

Steve MONEGHETTI: Thanks, Jane. Members of the committee, I also want to thank you for the opportunity of appearing before you today to address the Inquiry into the 2026 Commonwealth Games Bid.

There are 3.7 million Australians who participate in athletics through running, walking, jumping or throwing, taking in track and field, road running, race walking and cross-country running. We are a foundation sport, providing opportunities for all walks of life. We exemplify diversity and gender equity within our sport. Internationally our athletes are doing us proud, as was shown at the World Para Athletics Championships in Paris in July, where we finished 18th on the medal table, with 14 medals – three golds, eight silver and three bronze – and at the World Athletics Championships in Budapest in August, where we had our best ever championship, with one gold, two silver and three bronze, six medals in total. But none of this is an accident. The performances of our athletes at these championships are the culmination of a lifetime of training and commitment from them and their support teams as well as many months of work by Athletics Australia to prepare the teams to compete so successfully on the world stage.

Pinnacle events, international events such as the Comm Games are critical to the structural pathway development of our athletes. Before its cancellation, the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Victoria was the only fully integrated multisport event that was to be hosted in Australia prior to Brisbane 2032. It would have been the perfect pathway accelerator to a home games ahead of Brisbane. For our Para athletes, the cancellation has taken away their one opportunity to be part of an integrated team and build their profile leading into those 2032 games. In terms of classification, which enables them to compete at international events, the cancellation removes a critical international opportunity.

But today we are here not just to complain, we are here to speak with you about looking forward and what we can do together to fix the problem we now have. As Jane mentioned, we have set out in our submission what we believe are four very sensible recommendations and much-needed investment that can be delivered as part of the government's \$2 billion package to ensure regional Victoria still receives the benefits that would have been delivered by the games. Basically these recommendations can be summarised as: a greater focus on fit-for-purpose infrastructure to directly benefit athletics rather than the professional codes, which has historically been the case – and I can give you examples of that; ensuring our athletes have priority access to existing and proposed infrastructure to adequately prepare and train for the games and other lead-up events, which is currently not the case; providing appropriate government funding for our sport, reflecting our status in the public domain, our contribution to the commercial success of the games and our ability to strongly influence the health and wellbeing of communities throughout Victoria and the nation through our large participation rates.

At Athletics Australia we know that not everyone can stand on the podium, but through athletics as a foundation sport they can be an active part of their communities for life, wherever they live in Victoria. So as I say, we are here to look forward and work with you all to ensure that the legacy benefits 2026 would have delivered for Victoria actually do happen. Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for your evidence. I think one of the things that is very clear from your submission seems like a frustration, if I could put it that way, with what has been happening in the past and what has happened with the games in the way that athletics is being treated as a sport. Do you feel like athletics as a group of sports is being treated as a second tier compared to some of these other sports, in terms of facilities and that sort of thing?

Jane FLEMMING: Absolutely, in terms of facilities, and I think if we are talking around history, we have been shown that even if we have had a major facility built, inevitably it ends up being handed to a professional code that has way more resources.

The CHAIR: Like Olympic Park, you mentioned in your submission.

Jane FLEMMING: Indeed – you know, way more resources with which to be able to stand on their own two feet. Then even if we have a look at Olympic Park, the consequences of Olympic Park having been given over to AFL was that we were supposed to have the home of athletics at the Lakeside Stadium, and the Lakeside Stadium is locked up almost 90 per cent of the time. It is a multi-use facility so, for example, when the grand prix is on, we cannot access the track, and when the Matildas were training before the Women's World Cup, it was being used for football, and our athletes do not even get access. This happens across the country. We have an enormous issue with access to facilities for our elite athletes, but it is not just our elite athletes. The idea of us having a Parkrun around Albert Park Lake and then the people that are interested in running not even getting an opportunity to perhaps go in and run on a piece of a running track, when it is right there – it is like almost a white elephant to a degree, the amount of time it is completely locked up from our athletes, but we

have that across the country, and in Victoria even more so. It is horrendously frustrating for our sport, and we are a sport that is gender-equal, that is the most accessible financially. We are the easiest and cheapest sport to participate in financially, which, given the economic times we have at the moment, is really important. We are a sport that caters for every size and shape, that most other sports are based upon. We have the highest participation rate and are easily accessible for Paralympians and athletes and humans with disabilities. There are whole series of things that only athletics can deliver and deliver to a really broad base of the community, and yet we get very little support. I think what has gone on with regard to the Lakeside Stadium and Olympic Park and a series of other facilities – you know, if we do not get the Ballarat track, regional Victoria as well, then there are a whole series of implications that that can have on athletics but also the broader community.

Steve MONEGHETTI: I would reinforce that. You know, obviously, I live in Ballarat. You need a card to get into the gate currently; it is a turnstile. If Cathy Freeman turned up in Ballarat, she could not get access to the track. So whilst it is a community asset, we are not actually opening it up to the community. Lakeside Stadium is a good example. I was a chair of the VIS and we were relocated to Lakeside Stadium, and yet access is even difficult. The VIS is in the complex. It is right there; it is a part of that facility, and yet a lot of the athletes cannot get access. So athletes either have to book a time to get in there, or they cannot get in. Even when it is not being used, it is still locked up. So we just want to open that up.

One great thing – Jane and I were in different events, different disciplines within athletics, but what we did do was we shared the track. That social fabric of sharing the track, where you have got coaches, you have got athletes and role models, you have got old athletes and you have got younger athletes coming through and all sharing a facility, is such a significant thing in athletics.

You are seeing the Parkrun model and recreational running booming at the moment. We want to bring that model to open up our venues. We talk about working with you to have a statewide plan for facilities. At Lucas, build a 200-metre track. We do not call it indoor athletics anymore. World Athletics has just changed that to ‘short track’, which is 200 metres. We can put a 200-metre track out at Lucas, which Joe will be familiar with, and we can have schools use that, so you get that interplay between the elite right down to the grassroots. You could run a Parkrun from that location at 8 o’clock on a Saturday morning. It is having that accessibility. Not only is it having the infrastructure – and obviously I am concerned because we had a time line for the Commonwealth Games in 2026 and that new athletics facility was going to be built in Ballarat. Now, if it is watered down, we do not have a time line, so what facility are we going to get? It was a great opportunity. That was one of the things. It was a legacy item, but we wanted it to be a category 1 track, not just a warm-up track for the Commonwealth Games. We wanted that to be able to stay so we could get all-schools championships and we could get international meets there. That is obviously very beneficial for the economy, not just for the runners but for the people who are overnight stays and the families that come and visit Ballarat, not only at games time but then using that facility in the six years, leading up to somewhere like Brisbane, and for the future.

Jane FLEMMING: And there is an economic impact by having that level of track as well. You know, we have other state destination departments and the like and major events departments bidding for events like the Australian all-schools championships, because we get thousands of kids coming with their parents and the bed nights and the flights and the other economic impacts that that brings. But also bear in mind in the lead-up to 2032 – and this is really where we look at the impact this can have – we would have had countries full of teams coming to use that infrastructure as a base before they went on to participate in Brisbane. So there are a whole series of other ramifications by not having tracks built to that standard and being able to be open and accessible, not just to us but to have the benefits of the economic impact by bringing others to there.

Back to Steve’s point around this community of athletics that we used to have where you had role models and different groups of athletes all competing at the same venue, one of the most brilliant things about our sport is that teenage boys and girls and adult men and women compete at the same time at the same track in the same event for the same prize money. It is a really unusual situation for sport.

A member: Egalitarian.

Jane FLEMMING: Yes, it is. It is very unusual, because with most of them men and women are separated or age groups are separated, but we all come together as a community. And not allowing us that opportunity is having a massive impact not only on potentially health and fitness and the lifelong love of a sport but that social

cohesion that that allowed within this group of people that can access a sport that is really accessible. We have Paras training at the track at the same time as the able bodied, and we have adults at the same time as teenagers. It really is this wonderful sense of social cohesion. That obviously has been dreadfully impacted by COVID, but this was one way, by giving access to tracks and building this infrastructure, that would have allowed part of that to continue on for the future.

The CHAIR: Mr McCracken.

Joe McCracken: Thanks very much. I need to declare a conflict here because Steve and I are both Ballarat boys and both St Pat's boys as well. When the games were cancelled, the then Premier said he had made many hard decisions but cancelling the Commonwealth Games was not one of them. How did that make you feel?

Jane FLEMING: Undervalued, to start with, and I think it is a very simplistic way of looking at the impact, the broad-reaching and far-reaching impact that sport has on our community. I think you only have to look at the reaction to the Matildas and what it has done to our social cohesion – you know, the groups of people down here at Federation Square who all of a sudden were hugging a stranger next to them because they had a commonality. I think in times of economic hardship, where things are really tough, it is amazing for us to have. It is immeasurable. I do not know how we measure it, although I can say that when we won the rights to host the Sydney Olympic Games there was a measurable turnaround in consumer confidence. I think this is the impact that sport can have. It is very difficult for people to understand that, and it is hard to measure that, so when something like the Commonwealth Games gets cancelled, I think it has an immeasurable negative impact in the opportunities lost for our country as a whole, let alone for the city or the state that is hosting it.

I do not know how many of you remember Melbourne 2006. It was an incredibly successful games – sold-out crowds and the Kerryn McCann marathon moment when she was running through the streets of Melbourne – and the buzz around the whole town was just amazing. I think that lift in community morale is amazing, and I think it is those sorts of things. Even if there is no apology for the things that we realise, then you would expect there has to be some acknowledgement of that lost opportunity as well.

Joe McCracken: Do you think there should be an apology, at least to the athletes?

Jane FLEMING: Well, I think potentially to the athletes. The other thing, I guess, that has come with it is that there has been some damage to our international reputation within the sports hosting sphere.

Joe McCracken: Who should give that apology?

Jane FLEMING: Who was responsible for making the decision?

Joe McCracken: The government.

Steve MONEGHETTI: I am sorry. I am from Ballarat, so I know directly the impact that it has had and how flat the Ballarat region was. But other people were coming to Ballarat. You know, we are an Olympic city from 1956, and we still live on that. We are one of only three cities in Australia that are an Olympic city. We felt, justifiably, that we could be a Commonwealth Games city, and rightly so, so there is certainly a flatness and a disappointment within the economic –

Joe McCracken: It is probably an understatement, to be honest, Steve.

Steve MONEGHETTI: And for Ballarat, we talk about the \$2 billion or the money that is going to go into that community. That might be to affordable housing or it might be to infrastructure, but what was going to happen was – and I have got the figures from the Gold Coast – a 1.3 return on investment for the money that was spent. That does not go to affordable housing, it goes to the economy, it goes to the cafe down the road and it goes to the hotel – the person who bought the Market Hotel on the belief that there was going to be a village across the road. You know, that investment is so broad that it is not just picking one or two factors out; it really affects the total fabric of the Ballarat and western Victorian economy, the disappointment of losing that opportunity. As Jane said, it is international, but it also really has a heavy impact locally. I felt that flatness being a part of the community, as you would have, Joe.

Joe McCracken: Would you like to see the government apologise for that?

Steve MONEGHETTI: Well, you know, I want to move on, and I want to get some positive feel back into the region, because we came off COVID, we were locked down, and then we had the games and that sort of just lifted everyone's spirits, and we were upward and onward. I am really a positive person who says, 'Well, we're not going to have the games, but we are going to make sure that there is a flow-on effect for regional Victoria,' because that is where I live. I bleed Commonwealth Games. I am a gold medallist with three other medals as well, so I know what the Commonwealth Games is about. It is diluting the effort and hard work that I put in over a lifetime, but also I just see what the Commonwealth Games did for my career and my life. To have that dragged away, the inspiration of having role models coming to Ballarat or to regional Victoria, but then also the aspiration of someone who competes at 2026 who then six years later dons the green and gold of the Olympic uniform in Brisbane in front of a home crowd – that is so significant, and I have lived and breathed it.

Joe McCracken: Well, I see you are wearing your Birmingham stuff right now.

Steve MONEGHETTI: As I say, there is no-one – I have been involved at every Commonwealth Games since 1986. I was the last person picked in the 1986 team. It was the trigger for me having an international career. Without the Commonwealth Games, like Cathy, like Steve Hooker, I would not have had the international career that I had. The first marathon I ran was at the Commonwealth Games. You do not need to know the story, but it was almost an accident. I was watching Rob de Castella four years earlier in Brisbane – I was having breakfast – four years later I was on the team with him at the Commonwealth Games, running my first marathon, standing on the start line beside him. I mean, you cannot get a better role model than that. That inspiration from 1982, the aspiration of being in the race with him, then led me to have the career that I did.

Jane FLEMMING: And there are a million stories we could give you like that – and not just in our sport. And whilst we have a whole series of very unique aspects of our sport that make it so incredibly global and inclusive and the like, there are so many stories we can give you around that. But also for me, again, if I am looking at it in terms of economic impact, what would it cost the Victorian government to buy global advertising hours that every one of those television networks are going to be streaming into homes across almost every Commonwealth country for that number of hours?

David DAVIS: Well, they bought negative hours by cancelling it.

Jane FLEMMING: Yes. Well, it is probably a 10- to 12-day advertisement for Victoria. It goes into houses all over the world, and so there are those sorts of things that there seems to be no recognition of whatsoever with regard to this happening. But again, if we are looking at it from Steve's perspective and we want to move forward, what can we do that is going to give some of that impact and bring some of that impact to Victoria? Well, I tell you what, if we build a category 1 track, then we will be bringing that gold meet into those regional areas and we will be bringing people and bed nights and hopefully some economic impact and some television viewers and some other things into those regional areas as well as into Melbourne. But we have to have the facilities to be able to do that. It has to be a recognised track to World Athletics standards for us to be given those meets.

We are lucky with the Lakeside Stadium, the warm-up track there – do you know what the shortest race that we have in athletics is? Sixty metres, and normally it is indoors. The warm-up track there is only 60 metres long, the straight. So how do we think that an athlete is possibly supposed to warm up properly if you are running a 400 metres or an 800 metres? It is just not fit for purpose. And we are not saying that we have to build a whole new other eight-lane track on the outside of Lakeside Stadium, but if we had the Comm Games come in and we had half a dozen countries wanting to come in and prepare for the games and they went to Lakeside, you could use that track, and we have got a four-lane warm-up track that could be a 200-metre track, then those sorts of things make an enormous amount of sense. So not everything we have to do has to be category 1, but we have to have some of that.

And then we need to have fit-for-purpose facilities as well so we can throw the hammer and you can train for the hammer throw – which we used to do down over here on Swan Street before all of those fields got taken from athletics as well – without there being any potential damage or harm to people. We just do not have the fit-for-purpose facilities in Victoria to maximise the impact economically or healthwise on wellbeing, community and social cohesion. We have none of those facilities that are fit for purpose for us to maximise all those benefits.

Steve MONEGHETTI: And, David, that is why we are frustrated, because the Commonwealth Games and Brisbane give us an opportunity to publicly get attention to the facilities not being adequate. It is an excuse to build facilities that are adequate and allow our athletes to train in the environment. If it was a professional code, I can tell you they would have everything they want. They just put their hand up and ask for something and they get it. So why in athletics are we treated like second-class citizens? The Commonwealth Games being cancelled is just further demonstration – or the temporary facility being taken away. We have got two stadiums in Australia where you can actually run an international meet, and most of them –

Jane FLEMMING: And they are not in Victoria, by the way.

Steve MONEGHETTI: They are not in Victoria, obviously. They are warm-up tracks from past games, from 1982 and from the Sydney Olympics. Every time we get an international event, why don't we get a legacy item that can benefit athletics? We are the showcase at the event, and yet as soon as the closing ceremony is over, take it away and give it to some professional code. Well, no, let it be used, because we are demonstrating that athletics is one sport that is so inclusive, it is diverse, it is community, it ticks every box for actually getting people to participate, from grassroots to elite.

Jane FLEMMING: We can tell you there is a statistic that we often use: every able-bodied person in Australia has tried to run as fast as they can. So we are talking 25 million people, and let us say maybe 22 million of them has tried to run as fast as they can. When Rohan Browning runs across the finish line at the national championships, he is the fastest human in Australia, so it is those sorts of things that led to us being six of the top 10 pieces of viewing from the last Olympic Games – track and field, of all the sports.

The CHAIR: I might just pass to Mr Galea.

Michael GALEA: Thank you, Chair. It is quite interesting hearing as well that even when there have been other similar such events it has not guaranteed that there would be a legacy benefit. Time permitting, I will come back to that regional infrastructure build I believe, Ms Flemming, you mentioned as well in your opening statement, and I believe there was an announcement even today about the next stage of that becoming available, which hopefully will lead to some improvements in athletics. I know you have got some recommendations in your submission as well.

Just briefly on Lakeside: as I understand it, you were moved to Lakeside at the time of the Commonwealth Games when the new site was built at Olympic Park.

Jane FLEMMING: We were moved to Lakeside because Collingwood Football Club took over Olympic Park. The state government gave it to them, basically, so we were kicked out of a home we had had for years and years on the promise we would get a new home for athletics.

Steve MONEGHETTI: And that was a former Olympic facility.

Jane FLEMMING: Yes, it was a former Olympic facility. It has incredible legacy for anyone that knows anything about athletics, with Ron Clarke and John Landy and a whole series of historical significance to that track. It was super centrally located, so it allowed people to come from the east, the west, the north and the south all into that one community facility, which Mona talked around, which helped develop that community, and sadly, no matter how much fight Athletics put up at the time, we could not keep that facility. We were promised this Lakeside facility, which is supposed to be the home of athletics. Athletics Victoria is based there and Athletics Australia is based there and the VIS is based there, and we do not ever get to go on the track, pretty much. Very rarely –

Michael GALEA: It sounds like there is a committee recommendation brewing in the form of removing a certain football club from that site. It would be a very good thing for us to put forward.

A member: I do not know about that.

Michael GALEA: Much to the chagrin of my colleagues to my left. Lakeside Stadium – as you said, Athletics Australia as well as Athletics Victoria are based there. The site, as far as I understand, is run and managed by the State Sport Centres Trust. Do they charge a commercial rate for your tenancy there, or is it subsidised?

Jane FLEMMING: I would have to take that on notice.

Steve MONEGHETTI: Yes.

Michael GALEA: Thank you – that is a yes to take it on notice?

Steve MONEGHETTI: We will take it on notice, yes.

Michael GALEA: Thank you. Obviously we do not need precise details, but just an answer to that question would be great. You cited some of the barriers to participation at that venue, and look, I have not done athletics there, but I used to actually row on Albert Park Lake, so I know all too well about the annual grand prix closure, which for people that were probably a bit out of condition like me was maybe a good chance to take a break, but I understand that is not always the case. You spoke about some of the barriers with Lakeside Stadium in particular. What are any specific things that could be done? I think you touched on some additional warm-up track, but whether it is in terms of the infrastructure that we might be able to look through – there are obviously different grants – or whether it is in terms of the way it is accessible in terms of the infrastructure that is already there, what are some of the ways in which that could be improved?

Jane FLEMMING: There are a number of them, and again, I will take it on notice to give you more detail, but just as an example, there is no seating on the ends of the grandstands. When we need to have emergency access – if you think around a 100-metre track, at the end of that track is the only way that athletes can exit the track most of the time, but it is blocked during a major meet by emergency vehicles, so there is a whole series of design elements around the track that interfere with the manner in which that track can be used. There are certain things, for example, that might block a spectator's vision of sectors of the track. So there are a whole series of things along those lines. But we will take that on notice, and we can come back to you with more detail with regard to some of the design and infrastructure elements of that.

Steve MONEGHETTI: It is a 5000-seat stadium, but you really can only seat 3000 because of the limitations. Either people stand in that walkway, but then the people in the grandstand cannot see, who are your VIPs, or you block the walkway. So you are limiting the numbers. We do have a list of practical factors that are limitations at Lakeside as well. Access is one, but the facility itself is just not fit for purpose.

Michael GALEA: It is sort of the actual design of the infrastructure itself that has led to challenges.

Steve MONEGHETTI: The actual design as well, yes. We will take that on notice and would be delighted to give you a list of those concerns.

Michael GALEA: Thank you. I have got lots more, but I will allow others to ask some questions.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Davis.

David DAVIS: Thank you, Steve, and thank you, Jane, for your contribution to athletics and to Australia. We are very glad to have you here today. I want to pick up where my colleague finished off. In your submission you said:

The cancellation of VIC2026 has had and continues to have a devastating impact on our sport and our athletes.

You pointed in the testimony just a minute ago to the issues that it has caused, and, Steve, you indicated your desire to move on and go forward. But I think, picking up my colleague's point, an apology is actually the first step to clearing the decks and then moving on. So should there be some sort of clear apology – from the former Premier, for example?

Steve MONEGHETTI: Again, if it is an apology or it is not an apology, it is now the actions moving forward that I am more interested in. I am always a positive person. I do not live in the past. I do not want to talk to you about my performances. It is not a historical thing. We are involved in athletics currently on the board and as president because we want the next generation of athletes to get the opportunities that we were fortunate to have. Now, the Commonwealth Games in regional Victoria – Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Shepparton – certainly would have provided opportunities for all of Victoria, not only the athletes but the population, to see what a major event has. So for me it is now: how do we move forward? How do we replicate the benefits that we were going to get over that two-week period? How do we extend that over for the life of

regional Victoria so that we get the economic benefits, the social benefits and the inspiration and aspiration that we talk about out of the cancellation of the games?

David DAVIS: That is what I like about your submission. It has got some practical suggestions to go forward.

Steve MONEGHETTI: Exactly.

David DAVIS: So the first step should be for the former Premier and indeed the current Premier, who was the then minister, to apologise and then to come forward with some of the projects that you will put –

Jane FLEMMING: But an apology does not give us an infrastructure project.

David DAVIS: No, no, but then to come forward with the –

Jane FLEMMING: Almost for us it is irrelevant whether there is an apology or not, because it is not going to change anything. What changes something for us –

David DAVIS: Are the projects.

Jane FLEMMING: is for someone to say, ‘Yep, we’re going to upgrade Lakeside Stadium and put in a warm-up track, and we’re going to build a category 1 track in Ballarat.’ And we go, ‘Beautiful’. We do not care about the apology.

David DAVIS: The best form of apology, Jane, then sounds to me like a commitment to some of these projects.

Jane FLEMMING: So that is the practical part of an apology, absolutely.

David DAVIS: Yes, that would be excellent.

Steve MONEGHETTI: And some funding too – funding obviously. There is a time line that a games presents. I think we all understand that there will be things that will be fast-tracked in Brisbane, because you are talking about the Gabba redevelopment, all of those issues. It is fast-tracked because you have a time line. When you have got a deadline, things come to the front of mind a bit quicker. We are keen to make sure that we stick to the decisions that were going to have a positive impact on our sport of athletics. We want those still to be the actions that are backed up, because we want the flow-on effect to benefit not just games time, or what would have been games time, but obviously the future.

David DAVIS: The future and the lead-in to the next sets of games.

Steve MONEGHETTI: Yes.

Jane FLEMMING: But even if we talk around that, we are looking around programs that would have been run and would have been funded, like volunteer training and volunteer programs. Officials and technical expertise would have been delivered to 2026 and would have been carried through to 2032. So we would have got a really viable option for people to volunteer at this point, going, ‘Well, I’m going to do another eight – ‘

David DAVIS: Just on that, has the cancellation had an effect on volunteers?

Jane FLEMMING: It will have, definitely, in terms of our official and technical training, because now if we want to have a group of, for example, officials that are qualified enough and experienced enough, they are probably going to have to get that experience overseas. So there is absolutely a cost to those sorts of programs too. For example, in 2026 that would have been a year when Athletics Australia probably did not have to fund our team to go overseas, or if they did, it would have been minimal. They would have prepared in Australia, been accommodated in Australia and stayed at home longer, so it now costs our organisation more money to prepare a team for a meet we do not know where is going to be at this stage. There are those sorts of ramifications that come with that as well. There are the sunken costs that we already had in terms of advising around facilities that will not be built now but that were promised. There are things like the normal uptake, the Cathy Freeman effect, in our member associations registrations. So their income and revenues are affected.

There is a whole series of commercial opportunities that now probably will not be available given 2026, because we may have been able to do commercial deals that would have tied in the two, so we get these long-term, sustainable commercial opportunities which, now that 2026 is not here, will probably be delayed. So we are missing out. There are a whole series of unforeseen financial implications of the cancellation.

Steve MONEGHETTI: And just volunteering in itself. We came off COVID – I do not think anyone in this room would deny that volunteers have dropped away because of COVID, and we are struggling to get them back. What better opportunity? I had people stopping me in the street, saying, ‘I’m going to be involved in Commonwealth Games in 2026 as a volunteer,’ because it is their way of giving something back. And we were going to train officials. The technical expertise that you need to run an international athletics meet – we were going to get funding to train these officials and have these volunteers involved in a practical way at an event. Then obviously they stay involved in sport. And their memories of the games – it is not just the athlete experience. Imagine – has anyone here had a positive experience volunteering at a major event? I am sure I do not need to go far down the street to get that example. They are lifelong memories. Having chauffeured Usain Bolt to an event, and those stories – they are the experiences, that flow-on effect. That is the impact it has on people’s lives.

Jane FLEMMING: We talk with regard to the athletes – we know that a home games, let alone a Commonwealth Games, gives some of our athletes the opportunity to build their profiles. Some of them have small but commercial contracts that would have bonuses associated with medals. It has not only a direct impact on the sport, on the local communities and on the volunteers, but it has that financial impact on athletes. Your profile, if you win a medal in a home games, is way higher than if you win a medal in an away games.

The CHAIR: I might just pass to Ms Ermacora.

Jacinta ERMACORA: Thank you, and thank you for your passion and commitment. It is really great listening to you and seeing it all through the eyes of athletics. I was at the Warrnambool Gift on Saturday, and there were about 1000 to 1500 people at the Reid Oval, which has been completely redone – this is in Warrnambool – and people were just absolutely loving the facility and the new grass to run on, even though it is between cricket and football. Sorry, the other way around – it is football and then cricket, I think. My humble support of one of the women’s races meant that it was able to be split off from a mixed race. And yes, the volunteering and everything was fantastic. There is also Brauerander Park there in Warrnambool too, which is beautiful – I think it is one of those Italian running tracks, the red ones. So we are pretty blessed.

Steve MONEGHETTI: Sorry to butt in, but I opened that officially a few years ago at Brauer College.

Jacinta ERMACORA: Yes, I think you did. It has been redone since.

Steve MONEGHETTI: And I am down there for Surf T Surf next month, so I am aware of that.

Jane FLEMMING: And that track is called a Mondotrack.

Jacinta ERMACORA: Thank you.

Jane FLEMMING: They are really good for sprinting.

Jacinta ERMACORA: I do not have any expertise in that space at all other than at my own school at Little Athletics. In your submission you mention that you welcome the opportunity of working more closely with the Victorian government to maximise the legacy. And we have heard your aspiration, I think, which is fantastic, for the whole of sport and athletics. I am interested from Warrnambool all the way through, so can I ask whether you see opportunities to work more closely in the rollout of, say, the regional package that is a result?

Jane FLEMMING: I think we would be keen to see an infrastructure plan so that it has some strategy and some thought behind it and it is not just a particular area. But that infrastructure plan needs to have a look at – you know, do an audit – what the maintenance schedules are and what the accessibility is and have a look at all of that. Certainly I think Athletics Australia would be interested in being involved.

Jacinta ERMACORA: Do you mean right through Victoria – not just the five but equally through Victoria?

Jane FLEMMING: Yes, absolutely.

Steve MONEGHETTI: Absolutely. It was Victorians' games. One thing that we do here in this country extremely well – I was in Manchester; sorry, I will not demean Manchester. But what happens in Australia is we have a city that hosts the games, but the state and the country run them, so they become Australia's games and Victoria's games. Warrnambool is a great example. Their running club down there is booming.

Jacinta ERMACORA: Yes. We have got coaches and –

Steve MONEGHETTI: It is using that for our facilities. It is going fantastic. You have got a couple of really good sprinters down there, who I was down there to see. They were actually doing a running session for the younger generations, so they have been terrific role models. There is a Port Fairy marathon. There is a trail from, as you know, Warrnambool to Port Fairy. Why is that Port Fairy marathon on? Because they have an infrastructure that allows them to run the Port Fairy marathon. We run the Surf T Surf; we run on parts of trails. If you do not have the facility, you cannot run an event, so that is a classic example. Parkrun runs around Lake Pertobe because you have got the facilities. So why haven't we got a major track meet in Warrnambool? Because you do not have the infrastructure. You know the numbers are booming, so why wouldn't you have a facility there that encourages people who can, from cradle to grave, be involved in the sport of athletics? It is a foundation sport. It is integrated. It has got everything; it is diverse. There are no limits, no restrictions, to being involved. Why wouldn't you have that facility to help the wellbeing and benefit the social fabric of Warrnambool and regional Victoria?

Jacinta ERMACORA: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Dr Mansfield.

Sarah MANSFIELD: Thank you. Thank you for being here today and for your submission. Just to touch on the preparation that was underway for the games, what involvement did you have in that, if any, prior to the cancellation?

Jane FLEMMING: We will have to take a lot of that on notice, because it would have come from our organisation. But one of the things that is quite interesting is that in most sectors in the world, if you have a degree of expertise, if you want that expertise, you have to pay for it. For some unknown reason, in sport and particularly in Olympic sports, when it comes to something like this, our organisation is expected to give it. So there would be hours of which parts of our organisation would have consulted around officials, around infrastructure, around what kind of track you need, around what a category 1 track is and around a whole series of other information. It would have been mostly around – and I would have to, again, take it on notice to get you some detail – sunk hours of human resources and expert knowledge that is expected to be given, I think, under these circumstances.

Sarah MANSFIELD: Yes.

Steve MONEGHETTI: Certainly the facility in Ballarat, the expertise of the athletics fraternity, just even in the orientation – Olympic Park went north–south, Lakeside Stadium happens to go east–west. I can tell you that was a design in Ballarat for the games that the track was going to be east–west, and we said no. So the athletic fraternity had input just in that orientation, and that can make such a difference to the times, obviously.

Jane FLEMMING: To the outcomes, yes.

Steve MONEGHETTI: If you are a sprinter – you know, tailwind. So that was a very basic thing that they were not aware of that the technical knowledge of the athletics fraternity had input to. And obviously wouldn't it be embarrassing if we built a track that had the wrong orientation? You might get away with it at games time, but then as a legacy item, you are starting from behind. So it is almost better not having it, to be honest, an orientation the wrong way.

Jane FLEMMING: It sounds like an episode of *The Games*.

A member: *The Games*, with a short track – that's what you've got, isn't it?

Jane FLEMMING: The 90-metre track, where little Johnny just broke the record for the 100 metres.

Sarah MANSFIELD: So there was involvement of Athletics Australia in the planning of the venues and other aspects?

Steve MONEGHETTI: And Athletics Victoria. The member associations, yes.

Sarah MANSFIELD: Athletics Victoria as well. Yes. You may not have this information, but I would be interested in, when you were first engaged, what input you had and how many hours of input, if possible – the extent of that input.

Jane FLEMMING: Yes.

Sarah MANSFIELD: In terms of the legacy: I think in your submission, in some of the information you provided, there were some concerns about the Mars Stadium upgrades being an appropriate legacy, or the only potential legacy for athletics. Can you elaborate on that a bit?

Steve MONEGHETTI: I can, if you want. Mars Stadium is going to get extra seating, so the capacity will go from 11,000 to 16,000, and that is still planned to happen. But again, that benefits professional codes; Western United played there on Saturday night. But there is also the warm-up track that was to be built, and that is why we wanted it, as we mentioned in the submission, to be a category 1 track – because rather than that not being a facility that we could use for state and international events, it would be at the level that we could then use it as a legacy item. It was planned that Llanberris, which is our athletics track now in Ballarat, would be then decommissioned after the games and that the regional centre would move to that facility. So that was a direct legacy item, and we are still hopeful that that will happen. But again, when and to what level is a contentious point.

The CHAIR: Mr McIntosh. Thank you, Dr Mansfield.

Tom McINTOSH: Yes, thank you. I just wanted to delve a little bit into the participating numbers. I read 3.7 million across Australia, and I think it was 1.2 million, seeing you have got a strong affinity. But as far as Victoria's participating numbers go, can you just give us a general overview of what we are looking at?

Steve MONEGHETTI: I would have to take that on notice.

Tom McINTOSH: It sounds like you are talking about competition with other professional codes or other professional sports for access to facilities and whatnot. Extending on that a bit, you touched briefly on sponsorship dollars before. Can you just talk us a little bit through that? What are the opportunities/challenges on that front for athletes and for Athletics Australia?

Jane FLEMMING: Well, I think you would only have to look at the television contracts for those professional sports and realise that they have multiples of God only knows what. At the moment I would suggest nearly every Olympic sport actually pays to try and get their sports televised, even if it is a pay-per-view streaming-type service. We pay for those services. Again, given economic situations and what is potentially going to happen over the next number of years – thank goodness we have got Brisbane – hopefully some of those corporate dollars may end up back into some of the Olympic sports. Athletics is no different to those. It is definitely challenging. The majority of our funding comes from the federal government. Certainly within Athletics Australia much of that is tied, so we do not have much say in how that is spent. It is a constant battle. We are an under-resourced, overworked organisation, and despite the fact that we have fantastic, knowledgeable, hardworking staff and programs, we are constantly surviving.

Tom McINTOSH: Was there a time –

Steve MONEGHETTI: Sorry. If I can continue on that line: our silver medallist gets NASS funding, which is national funding from the government, of \$40,000. I think we worked out the stats, they are probably there, that the 384th AFL male player gets \$100,000 or something. And this is a silver medallist – the second best in the world, for God's sake. To link it back to the infrastructure: if that person is then locked out of Lakeside Stadium – that person does not come from Victoria but if they did, some of that money would either need to go to regional Victoria, where they can get access to a facility or maybe they would need to go internationally. So they fly to Europe so they can get access to a stadium so they can prepare properly for a championship. So you

are linking it directly back to a facility. If the gate is locked, it does not matter – some of that money is going to them paying just to be able to do their training at an appropriate venue.

Tom McINTOSH: Yes. Do you think there was a period – perhaps before, maybe in the 30s and the 40s, nearly a century ago – when it had more economic viability from a commercial perspective?

Steve MONEGHETTI: No, not really. I am a classic example. Again, it is not about me, but I ran most of my international competitions at championships for zero dollars. But the reason, I can tell you, I ran well at the Commonwealth Games and then at the world championships and then the Olympics successively and then I got sponsorship was because my performance at those championship events meant that commercially companies wanted to associate with me. So being seen at championship events allowed commercial opportunities that meant that I was not dependent on government funding like our athletes are now. So that commercial aspect of a games, like 2026 – the profile-raising – is significant.

Jane FLEMMING: I feel like there is a gender issue here as well, because if you have a look even at the funding of sport – and I am talking commercial television – and the whole funding pool of that sector, it is so disproportionately driven towards male sport. I think that is where with athletics – we won six medals at the world championships, and five of them were won by women. Whilst you might say, ‘Commercial sports do A, B, C and D,’ we need to have those female role models as well. And as I said, our sport is so different to other sports in that there is something for everyone. We have won medals in the women’s javelin and in the women’s pole vault and in the women’s high jump, and they are all different shapes and sizes. I feel like it is really important for us to look at even how this supposed legacy money is going to be spent to make sure that it is spent where it makes a difference to those that do not have all the advantage, whether it is men or whether it is professional sports versus the Olympic sports, because they are the sports that people grow up with. Every child at a primary school pretty much does athletics. They relate to them. They have an opportunity there. It is easy, as I said, economically to participate; it is easier than other sports. I think it is really important that this legacy money is actually spent in a really smart manner and not just to give more privilege to the already privileged.

Steve MONEGHETTI: And pathways – you know, think now of an 18-year-old female who was going to represent their country at the Commonwealth Games in 2026 at a home games. Because of all the reasons we said – aspiration, blah, blah, blah – if they get a knock on the door from a professional code, it is a no-brainer where they are going to go.

The CHAIR: Thank you. I will just say to the committee we are running a little bit over time. The other two members are going to be angry at me if they do not get a chance, so I will pass to Ms Bath.

Melina BATH: You do not want me angry.

The CHAIR: No, I do not.

Melina BATH: First of all, I come from the town of Leongatha, where Eleanor Patterson has star status. When you talk about women role models – she goes to the primary school and she speaks to the Little Athletics club.

I am concerned that when the Premier said, ‘I’ve made a lot of difficult decisions about the job. This is not one of them, cancelling a 12 day-event. We are not going to do that’ – as in continue it on – we are going to see the cancellation of the Commonwealth Games, period, you know, into the future. What are your concerns? Do you think that could herald the demise of the Commonwealth Games?

Jane FLEMMING: We definitely hope not, and I do not think so. I think there is a call, and I think both the Olympic movement and the Commonwealth Games movement are conscious that there had to be a change in the model and how they were run. The change of the model was not to go and build a whole lot of new infrastructure and then pull it down, though. So I would suggest that there was advice perhaps not taken or expert advice not sought or not taken –

Melina BATH: By the government, in the model.

Jane FLEMMING: Yes – that potentially led to that decision. There have been questions, obviously, around the numbers, and we had a whole lot of other infrastructure that existed in Victoria that could have been

renewed, rebuilt – or different forms, more economical forms, of infrastructure built. So I think for the future other bidding cities will not look at that Victorian model and go, ‘That’s how we should do it.’

Melina BATH: Or look at what not to do.

Jane FLEMMING: Yes. So that is where, I guess, you come to that conclusion, but it is because we were trying to build the Taj Mahal –

Melina BATH: Yes – multiple Taj Mahals.

Jane FLEMMING: and then knock it down instead of us actually doing something that had a whole lot more economic sense.

Steve MONEGHETTI: I think we are demonstrating that the Commonwealth Games as an event is a lost opportunity, but it is far more than that. I think the Commonwealth Games movement will move forward but in a different model, and you know, we need to find hosts obviously for 2026 and 2030.

Melina BATH: This certainly has not helped, has it?

Jane FLEMMING: No. Indeed.

Melina BATH: The CEO of Visit Victoria Mr McClements sat where you are now and told us a couple of weeks ago that the decision to cancel the games has actually enhanced Victoria’s reputation in running events. Are you surprised?

Jane FLEMMING: Did he use those words?

Melina BATH: Very close to them – he said it has enhanced Victoria’s reputation for running events. Has there been any interchange between Athletics Australia and Visit Victoria?

Jane FLEMMING: No. Not that I know of. We would have to take that on notice, though.

Melina BATH: Sure. Thank you. You talk about pathways, which is really important because in regional Victoria we want our young people to have pathways – across Victoria but importantly in regional Victoria as well. What has the impact of this cancellation been on attracting athletes to come to Australia and train and provide that competitive battle between our own athletes?

Jane FLEMMING: To understand how an international team would work: you would not travel across to the other side of the world – we have to do this when we travel to the Northern Hemisphere – to participate in a major games or even to any meets. You get there early. You have to acclimatise; you settle in. So there would be teams of athletes coming from Commonwealth countries, not just in athletics but in all of the sports, to Australia, I would suggest for a minimum of two weeks prior to the competition and in some cases even more. And if you look at something like the Commonwealth Games, likely there would have been maybe not teams, although there still would have been because there would have been pre-games competitions, but that would have happened in 2024 and 2025 and 2026.

So that impact is spread, and we saw this before the Sydney Olympic Games. We then had squads of athletes. So for example, it could be a coach that brings 20-odd athletes to Australia for the whole of summer. They are coming out of the Northern Hemisphere, and they are now coming to Australia to base themselves in Melbourne. They would have been going to Olympic Park every day to train. And again, this is the access to facilities that is required.

Melina BATH: And spending good cash and stimulating the economy.

Jane FLEMMING: Yes. And so not only that, but it exposes them to the great weather that we have – you know, hopefully the good quality of life, the fantastic food, all the things that make Australia wonderful. It exposes a whole lot of others to that, and they go, ‘If we’re going to go somewhere –’. A lot of them would have gone to Florida, and then they decide, ‘No. We’re going to go down to Melbourne because we’re going to be competing there in two years time, so we’ll bring this whole group there.’ Not only will they be doing that; then they go, ‘Well, actually the Olympics are going to be on in another six years, so why don’t we become

really familiar with Australia? It gives us that advantage for when we're competing in other competitions as well.'

Steve MONEGHETTI: We saw that in Bathurst when Athletics Australia held the world cross-country in Bathurst in February this year, and the town embraced countries – so some of the shops adopted a country.

Melina BATH: A country. Yes. Sure.

Steve MONEGHETTI: Yes. So you are seeing that not only do the countries benefit but obviously the local economy. That was regional New South Wales, and it was a terrific success. In fact we got glowing response from World Athletics for the way we conducted that meet.

Melina BATH: Towns became ambassadors.

Jane FLEMMING: Yes.

Steve MONEGHETTI: The whole region, not just Bathurst – and Bathurst was sold out. I can tell you, you went 100 kilometres away to find accommodation, because it was such a successful event.

The CHAIR: We have gone over time a little bit, so just very briefly, I think Ms Tyrrell has a couple of quick questions.

Rikkie-Lee TYRRELL: Only a couple, and I will keep it quick.

The CHAIR: If you could keep it brief, please.

Rikkie-Lee TYRRELL: Okay. Mr Moneghetti, you keep mentioning that you are locked out of the stadiums. Why? It is driving me mad that I do not know why.

Steve MONEGHETTI: Yes. So you know, if a commercial activity – so if a school books a stadium like Lakeside, they get preference. So if I am Australia's best high jumper, I am not allowed access because the facility is generating a revenue return. Also from a security perspective, if I am a pole vaulter – you know, they lock up the equipment shed. Obviously they do not want to get that equipment damaged, so not only can I not get access to the stadium, I am then having trouble getting access to the equipment shed. They are some of the reasons, but it is normally the commercial viability and the management of the facility.

Jane FLEMMING: But you can even have a look to a degree, and I am going to try to be brief here, to the hours within which it is locked away. If it is commercially rented to a school, then often they have access from 7 am through till 4 pm, whereas if they could say, 'You've got to do your carnival from 10 till 4' – you know, there is a whole series of other intricacies around it. There are solutions, but we just never really had the opportunity to put forward those solutions or to be supported in those solutions. And one of them could be to have this four-lane warm-up track on the outside of it so you can still have your commercial booking but you are not locking out a high-performance athlete.

Rikkie-Lee TYRRELL: Beautiful. Thank you for that and for clarifying that. During a local Commonwealth Games event, what special events and extra opportunities arise as to the youth, such as schools and Little Athletics – because they are saying that, you know, it helps kids a lot when a Commonwealth Games is here. Were there any programs that Athletics Australia had in mind for the youth?

Jane FLEMMING: We have junior programs running all the time. So even under circumstances like that we have often had programs in the past where we would bring in junior teams to games, again in terms of the aspiration and inspiration that we get out of those. There can be volunteering programs, there can be schools that run projects where they are doing pieces of artwork along the course of a marathon – it is whole of community. And it is an opportunity to learn. It is an opportunity to learn about countries from around the world. There is adopt a country – there is a whole series of things that go on every time there is one of those major events.

Rikkie-Lee TYRRELL: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you so much for appearing today and for your testimony and for your contribution to athletics. You will receive a copy of the transcript for review in about a week, before it is published. The committee will now take a break to reset for the next witness. Thank you very much.

Witnesses withdrew.