



# Melbourne's Golden Age

As the countdown continues to the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games, construction at venues across the State is in full swing

Victoria is preparing to host the biggest sporting and cultural festival in its history in March next year.

Some 4,500 athletes from 71 nations will compete in 16 sports at the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games.

And one million spectators, including 90,000 interstate and overseas visitors, are expected at venues across Melbourne and Victoria.

The 12-day competition will also leave a lasting infrastructure legacy for the whole state.

The MCG will be a focal point for the Commonwealth Games.

The current redevelopment is the biggest in its 150-year history and more than 55,000 new seats will be added in three new grandstands.

The MCG, which will have a capacity of about 84,000 spectators, as well as media facilities, during the games. It will host the athletics program, the opening and closing ceremonies.

After the games, the MCG will have a capacity of 100,000 people, making it one of the biggest and best stadiums in the world.

A new outdoor competition pool at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre at Albert Park is also being built for the games.

The pool shell is complete and the permanent roof has just been installed.

The outdoor pool will host almost 8,000 spectators during the games.

Work is also continuing on the Athletes Village in Parkville which will be home to 5,800 athletes and officials.

The majority of houses are at lockup stage or complete and all of the roads have now been paved. Work is also well under way on the buildings in the heritage precinct and the landscaping works have started.

After the games, the village will become Parkville Gardens, a new urban precinct with a mix of social and private housing, an aged care facility and community infrastructure, such as a child care centre, community centre and playground.

Substantial progress is also being made on the five-hectare wetlands being created between the village and Royal Park.

The wetlands will provide a recreation area, improve the water quality in Moonee Ponds Creek and surrounding habitat, and recycle water to irrigate nearby parkland and sports fields.

Construction of the two basins and the weir is nearly completed and about 160,000 aquatic and terrestrial plants will be planted.

Construction has also been undertaken at the State Netball and Hockey Centre at Royal Park and the State Lawn Bowls Centre at Thornbury.

At Lysterfield Park, at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges, a new 6.4-km world-class mountain bike course has been built.

One of the most ambitious challenges of the games was to link the city to the MCG, and this is being done with the construction of a new pedestrian bridge in the Yarra Precinct.

The 524-metre bridge stretches from Birrarung Marr over the rail corridor to the MCG.

Construction of the bridge is progressing well.

The Birrarung Marr landing is complete, steelwork has been installed over Batman Avenue, the plaza deck is nearly completed and the bridge already stretches over Brunton Avenue to the MCG.

The final stage of the bridge will see the section over the rail corridor launched in late September and the project due for completion by the end of 2005.

When the games are finished and the athletes and visitors have returned home, Melbourne will be left with a permanent legacy of world-class facilities in this iconic sporting city.