



Office of the Mayor

City of Gold Coast

22 May 2023
Our ref: MS2#A87903376

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Committee Secretary
The Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee
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Dear Committee Secretary

Inquiry Into Australia's Preparedness to Host the Commonwealth, Olympic and Paralympic Games

The Council of the City of Gold Coast (City) welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the adequacy of Australia's preparedness to host the 2026 Commonwealth Games in Victoria and the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Brisbane.

The City recognises the value of international events and the multi sector value such events can bring to a city/region. Major events that bring all levels of Government together to address areas including infrastructure, transport, tourism, international security and community development can have significant local and regional benefits, often by fast tracking investments.

A world event and brand such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games will undoubtedly contribute a significant cultural, social and economic benefit to South East Queensland and the City is delighted to be a key Games Delivery Partner in the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games (Brisbane 2032).

Legacy planning for Brisbane 2032 is well underway, with the City recently adopting its [Gold Coast 2032 Legacy Framework](#). This framework will feed into the overall Brisbane 2032 Legacy Plan which is currently being developed post extensive community consultation. The City, working with the Federal and State Governments and the Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee, will seek to bring the identified outcomes for the Gold Coast to fruition.

The success that the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games (GC2018) brought to this city is now being recognised. It widely considered to be defining step in the history and

development of the Gold Coast. Post GC2018 we are a more confident city, a city known more broadly to the world, a city with a new global reputation for events and sport. The Gold Coast is currently 26th on the ranking of sports cities in the world (2022 BCW Ranking of Sports Cities). In terms of Australian cities, Gold Coast now ranks third behind only Melbourne and Sydney. This sends a very positive message globally and, in part, accounts for the significant interest shown by national and international sporting teams, event organisers and other related organisations.

The economic benefit for the Gold Coast hosting GC2018 in terms of Regional Economic Product (REP) is estimated at \$1.804 billion. From supporting our grass roots sporting clubs to celebrating our unique culture and way of life, growing our economy, promoting our unique natural attributes, empowering local business and delivering jobs, GC2018 has had a direct, positive and enduring impact on the Gold Coast.

The [Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Post Games Report](#) prepared by the Queensland Government covers many of the economic and legacy benefits of GC2018.

In relation to the reference points below, comment is provided for each where applicable:

a) *The adequacy of existing sporting infrastructure to host Games events;*

The City cannot comment on Victoria 2026 as we are not involved in the planning of this event. With reference to Brisbane 2032, it is proposed the Gold Coast will host eight Olympic sports and six Paralympic sports across six venues. The City has the capacity to host additional sports via the infrastructure put in place for GC2018. This has the potential to be a major cost saving for the Brisbane 2032 Organising Committee, who recently met on the Gold Coast and took a tour of city sporting venues expressing great enthusiasm for the quality and depth of Gold Coast sporting infrastructure including our major arenas, major indoor sporting venues, the world-class Southport Aquatic Centre, which hosted not only the GC2018 swimming and diving program but also the 2014 Pan Pacific swimming championships, and others.

b) *Investments in the provision of new or upgraded sporting infrastructure to host Games events, which will have legacy applications for elite and community sports;*

The success of the GC2018 and insistence on building legacy-based facilities ensured no "white elephant" constructions. The City secured around \$1.8 billion in new and upgraded infrastructure in the lead up to GC2018, which included around \$220 million in new and upgraded sporting infrastructure.

Two of the venues built as a result of GC2018 are proposed to be utilised for Brisbane 2032, namely Coomera Indoor Sports Centre and the Gold Coast Sports and Leisure Centre. Both sporting centres are heavily utilised by community sporting groups and host major sporting events. Coomera Indoor Sports Centre sees over 460,000 visitors on average each year, with a cost recovery rate of 100.6% for 2022-2023. Major



sporting events include the Pan Pacific Masters Games and Volleyball and Basketball State Championships. Gold Coast Sports and Leisure Centre has over one million visitors per annum with a cost recovery rate of 98.6% for 2022-2023. Major events include the BMX World Cup-Urban Fest, Touch Rugby League World Cup, Australian Gymnastics and Judo Championships, Harlem Globetrotters, Pan Pacific Masters Games and the Volleyball and Basketball State Championships, to name a few.

- c) Consultation by responsible state and Australian government agencies with peak national and state sporting representative organisations to ensure any new investments in Games sporting infrastructure meet the needs of elite and community sports now and into the future;**

This should be a non negotiable for any major international sporting event and was implemented for GC2018 and is already in operation for Brisbane 2032. Australia has a depth of event professionals that are good at doing this from the City's experience.

- d) The adequacy of oversight and accountability processes for investments in new or upgraded sporting infrastructure to host Games events;**

The City has, in the past (GC2018), and continues now to work with the Commonwealth and State Government to achieve accountability and transparency for infrastructure decision making associated with Brisbane 2032. The legacy use should always be a priority consideration. It is crucial that local government are key stakeholders and contributors to the decision making processes, particularly on infrastructure that they will own and operate for local communities post event.

To ensure that investments are successful, a framework must be created to categorise and prioritise the potential benefits. This framework should consider the immediate and long-term impact of games investment on the local economy, as well as its potential to create jobs, attract new businesses, and promote tourism.

- e) Investments into the provision of transport infrastructure to facilitate the involvement of more Australians in the Games;**

The 2032 SEQ Olympic and Paralympic Games Feasibility Study identified that the Gold Coast Airport will be a key domestic and international airport to support arrivals and departures of Brisbane 2032 clients that plan to stay in the region. This was the case for GC2018, during which a significant number of the Games' family contingent, spectators, and workforce used this airport.

As previously stated, there are six venues on the Gold Coast identified to host Brisbane 2032 events, using existing infrastructure that was established for GC2018. The Gold Coast will also be responsible for providing accommodation (including a satellite village) to athletes, volunteers and spectators. Of the six identified venues, three are currently serviced by the existing Gold Coast Light Rail system. Stage 3 and 4 of the



Gold Coast Light Rail complete the last stages of a plan to connect northern and southern Gold Coast communities via a high quality, reliable mass transit facility. This extension of light rail from Broadbeach to Coolangatta is recognised as "critical transport infrastructure" in enabling the Gold Coast to support Queensland hosting Brisbane 2032.

The final light rail stage, Stage 4, provides this direct connection to the Gold Coast International Airport. This project is forecast to be completed by 2031 in readiness for Brisbane 2032 and has been elevated to 'priority project' status by Infrastructure Australia. By 2037, Gold Coast Airport passenger growth is forecast to more than double pre-Covid numbers to 16.6 million annually.

f) *The adequacy and accessibility of, and planning for, accommodation to host athletes, organisers, support staff and Games attendees and future use;*

Australian event expertise and Games organisers looking for flexible accommodation solutions (legacy) have seen good outcomes around recent major events and in the planning for Brisbane 2032. The GC2018 athletes village within the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct (GCHKP) could be discussed as another legacy consideration and decision. The acceptability of using other accommodation options has also been a regular part of Australia's approach to Games delivery with legacy always a key consideration. Accessibility will be a non negotiable in the planning for the Gold Coast satellite village.

g) *The adequacy of planning for visa requirements for athletes, support staff, officials and visitors seeking to participate in the Games;*

The City's experience of dealing with the Commonwealth Games Federation on this matter was very positive leading into GC2018.

h) *The costs and benefits to the Australian community of investments in infrastructure to support the Games, including any impacts on local government, communities and business in host locations;*

Queensland Government funding for GC2018 together with major infrastructure investments was approximately \$3 billion dollars.

While GC2018 was a great sporting success and secured for the City unprecedented international exposure and media coverage, it was the broader benefits that remained a key focus for the City. In summary, these included:

- \$220 million in new and upgraded sporting infrastructure resulting in increased community patronage and attracting new events to the City
- \$1 billion in transport infrastructure upgrades, including significant investments in heavy rail, light rail and road upgrades



- \$600 million in other strategic infrastructure including the Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct (Games Village), the new Village Roadshow Sound Super Stage 9, Broadwater Parklands Stage 3 and the City owned broadband fibre infrastructure
- Improved liveability for our residents with better transport options, enhanced safety and security infrastructure, upgraded public domain spaces and parks, and community access to new sporting venues
- Post games derivatives will continue to be driven by GC2018 infrastructure delivery (e.g. new and upgraded venues), enhanced tourism, Trade 2018 and Festival 2018 outcomes, new film production opportunities, new events, enhanced reputation, increased international student numbers, ongoing development and investment in the GCHKP and private sector investment in a city entering a new era of confidence
- Improved reputation and capacity in the City's art, culture and events sectors
- Gold Coast ratepayers contributed over \$300 million to operational and capital expenses of GC2018. Whilst a significant burden for ratepayers, it was considered a worthwhile investment for the legacy benefits achieved and referred to in this submission.

i) *Claimed economic and tourism benefits of the Games;*

The economic impacts of GC2018 began in 2010 when the Gold Coast was nominated as a candidature city for the XXI Commonwealth Games with significant national and international media interest in the city during this period. A number of local hotels, restaurants, bus companies and retailers benefited from bookings and contracts during the bid and early GC2018 phases.

For the purposes of measuring economic benefits, the nominated benefits from 2013-2022 the Queensland Gross State Product (GSP) emanating from GC2018 is estimated at \$2.282 billion. This is 20% higher than the pre-Games estimate and is largely due to new national and international events secured in the City, new venue utilisation higher than previously forecast, strong tourism flow-on estimates and increased forecast trade benefits flowing on from the Trade 2018 Program.

The tourism impact for the 9-year period above is estimated at \$1.09 billion (2018 \$).

Looking to Brisbane 2032, a number of tourism programs and initiatives have already commenced. By way of an example, the Sustainable Tourist Program, including eco-destination certification. This newly recognised status will be amplified by Experience Gold Coast in building on our reputation as a first-class international tourism destination, particularly in the lead up to Brisbane 2032.

j) *Impacts on housing affordability in areas where proposed Games venues will be located and surrounds;*

The most significant positive influence on the housing market is likely to be seen in the years leading up to the Games, rather than during the four weeks of the Olympic and Paralympic Games themselves. Large infrastructure projects tend to have a positive influence on housing prices, with the extra requirement for workers creating additional demand for housing during the construction process.



Large projects also tend to leave a legacy of a permanent housing demand uplift, either through additional employment or via other benefits such as improved public infrastructure, transport options and travel efficiencies. This can have a negative effect on housing affordability.

Brisbane 2032 provides an opportunity regarding affordable housing. The proposed satellite village will house more than 2,600 athletes and officials during Games time. Planning and design of the village will need to be carefully undertaken to enable positive permanent residential and commercial legacy.

k) *The potential for regions to benefit in the short and long term from Games investments;*

Games investments present an opportunity for regions to benefit in the short and long term. The City's sporting infrastructure, delivered and enhanced by GC2018, is delivering growth in the high performance sport sector, in addition to providing essential community facilities for our growing population. Since the announcement of Brisbane 2032, the Gold Coast has been receiving a higher level of interest from all levels of sporting codes for training and events opportunities.

To ensure that these investments are successful, a framework must be created to categorise and prioritise the potential benefits. This framework should consider the immediate and long-term impact of games investment on the local economy, as well as its potential to create jobs, attract new businesses, and promote tourism. Additionally, it should consider how this investment can help to improve public infrastructure, community cohesion and build city pride.

Away from the tangible assets there was noticeable improved citizenship, inclusiveness, community spirit and improved liveability with better transport options, improved safety and upgraded public domain spaces. The Gold Coast has benefited from economic growth and diversification locally as well as improved awareness and reputation nationally and internationally both through the profile of the Games and investment in city's art, culture and event sectors. There have been many valuable lessons and an increased understanding of our capabilities for the future.

l) *Consideration of solutions*

A key lesson from GC2018 was the pivotal role local government plays in the hosting of a major event. It is critical to involve the local government authority at every phase of the program.

The specific and defining contributor to the fact that the City was not left with any 'white elephants' post games was our involvement from the planning / foundational phases, throughout the entire program. Keeping the legacy aspirations at the forefront of every decision and evidencing with data was paramount. The City is the one, at the end of the day, to inherit the infrastructure and operating costs associated. We can provide tangible examples of infrastructure that was originally proposed as temporary structures or overlay, then, through consultation became valuable permanent infrastructure providing an ongoing return to the city.

Venues need to be designed for legacy usage that can accommodate the required games specification overlay, not be designed based on games specific requirements.



The City Operations sub program for GC2018 ensured all preparation activities for our business as usual service delivery for cleaning, maintenance, water, waste, lifeguard, parking and regulatory services teams, whilst acknowledging the intent to deliver a heightened level of service for residents and visitors both leading into and during GC2018. To minimise the amount of corrective maintenance that was required during GC2018, activity within key precincts was bought forward and we also increased planned maintenance programs. Extensive planning went into continuing, and in most cases improving, City services whilst minimising operating or disruptions during peak periods.

The City coordinated a working group of all utility providers within the city to integrate and coordinate a schedule of works across the years leading into the Games so that precinct works were undertaken at the same time. For example, the same road wasn't dug up multiple times to preform upgrades, maintenance, or renewals.

GC2018 was the largest event held in Australia last decade. In terms of the Gold Coast's history, GC2018 was at a scale and complexity that had never been planned, delivered or experienced before. It also included Queensland's largest ever Arts and Culture Festival, delivered a record number of public transport users on the Gold Coast, and exposed the city to a global audience. It has left the Gold Coast with significant legacies and a strong platform for continued benefits realisation for many years to come.

Yours sincerely

TOM TATE
MAYOR

