

WEDNESDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2023

## COMMUNITY VOICE SOUGHT FOR COMMONWEALTH GAMES SPORTING LEGACY

The 2026 Commonwealth Games present a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for regional Victoria to ensure a valuable sporting legacy, and Federation University Australia is leading a project to give local communities a voice on how they can benefit from hosting the prestigious event.

In just over three years' time, five of Victoria's regions will play host to the Victorian 2026 Commonwealth Games, with Bendigo, Ballarat, Gippsland, Geelong and Shepparton hosting events as part of the twenty-third edition of the games.

At the request of Sports Focus, Dr Alana Thomson from Federation University is collaborating with researchers and experts in sport and event legacies from La Trobe University and Griffith University to design and implement a survey to hear from the broader community about their hopes, ideas and concerns for local sporting legacies.

The research team is keen to emphasise the importance of this survey project, given that many previous large-scale sport events have promised to secure legacies for sport in the bids and pre-event phases, only to fall short in terms of feeding long-term and meaningful benefits back to community grassroots sport once the dust has settled after the event.

The online survey is open to residents of Bendigo and surrounding areas and takes approximately twenty minutes to complete. It does not require personal or sensitive information from participants. The questions focus on participant views about the potential sporting legacies, impacts, and challenges, as well as the opportunities for realising sporting legacies.

The information collected will be analysed by the research team looking for key themes and areas for action. The insights will be delivered back to Sports Focus, providing an evidence base to prioritise their efforts in supporting sporting clubs within Bendigo and Central Victoria to manage impacts of the event, while securing long-lasting legacies for community sport.

The survey is now open at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Bendigo2026> and will close at midnight (1200am AEDT) on Wednesday, March 1 2023.

Anyone with an interest in local community sport is encouraged to complete the survey, whether they are a current participant or volunteer, someone who's participated in the past, someone who has family members that participate, or anyone who would love to be participating but for various reasons may not be at the moment.

*The project has ethical approval from Griffith University, study identifier: GU 2022/802*

### **Quotes attributable to Federation University Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Duncan Bentley**

*"The build-up to, and hosting of the upcoming Commonwealth Games will be an incredibly exciting time for regional Victoria. Although the games will focus international attention on the region during*

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*the event, by engaging with the community now, actions can be taken to ensure that the benefits of hosting the games are felt for years to come after the event has passed.”*

*“The games may be three years away but now is the perfect time to involve the community through this survey, so that their voice can help inform local authorities as they plan how to best ensure a valuable sporting legacy for the post-games future.”*

**Quotes attributable to Federation University Australia Lecturer, International Sport Management, Alana Thomson**

*“Research from previous large-scale sport events tells us that long-held assumptions about ‘trickle-down effects’, investing in elite sport to encourage uptake at the grassroots don’t always hold true. If we want those active participation outcomes, we need to carefully plan and resource initiatives around the hosting of an event to engage communities in sport.”*

*“This survey is the first step with our university collaboration with Sports Focus to identify the opportunities and challenges to securing sporting legacies around Victoria 2026. Based on the insights the community shares with us, we will then work up a plan with Sport Focus and the local sport sector to ensure that sport in Bendigo and Central Victoria see benefits beyond the two weeks of elite sport competition.”*

**Quotes attributable to Sports Focus Business Manager, Stuart Craig:**

*“The key ingredient to a successful and sustainable 2026 Commonwealth Games legacy plan is acknowledging and respecting the voice of the community. This survey provides the community of central Victoria with a platform to share their ideas, thoughts and aspirations on what the 2026 Games legacy plan should look like.”*

*“The response data collected and analysed by our collaborating universities will form the foundation of our future work leading up to, during and post the 2026 Games. Working in partnership with the Victorian State Government, we plan to bring your responses into reality.”*

*“We encourage all community members who are or have been, involved in community sport, whether that be as a parent, volunteer or direct participant to take advantage of this unique opportunity to have your voice heard, so we can all contribute to a successful regional games.”*

**About Federation University Australia**

*With a history spanning over 150 years, Federation University Australia is Victoria’s premier regional dual-sector university with campuses located in Ballarat, Berwick, Brisbane, Gippsland and Wimmera. From 2018-2022 Federation ranked first in Australia for first-generation student enrolments. In a first for Australia, the globally recognised co-operative education model will be embedded across all Federation programs from 2025.*