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MEDIA RELEASE

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Commonwealth Games cancellation

Be.Bendigo (Bendigo's Chamber of Commerce) is disappointed at this morning's announcement regarding cancellation of Victoria's plans to host the Commonwealth Games 2026.

"Bendigo businesses had been working to understand the opportunities being presented by the Commonwealth Games, including during the preparation and construction phases leading up to the Games", according to CEO of Be.Bendigo, Mr Rob Herbert, "so this morning's announcement has come as a surprise and disappointment to those who have put in a great deal of time and effort to prepare for them".

"Be.Bendigo saw hosting the Games as a great opportunity to raise the profile of our City, with people coming from across the fifty six member nations of the Commonwealth to compete or watch the Games – and hopefully drawing more back in the future to visit, study or work, as they realise the attractions of our city", he said.

Mr Herbert acknowledged that the enormous projected cost blowout, as outlined this morning by Premier Andrews, made it very difficult to justify hosting the Games from a State perspective, recognising that there are higher priorities for limited Government resources.

"While we won't be acting as a Games host, there are still fantastic opportunities for us in maximising the "legacy" projects that the Government has announced as still proceeding within the original Budget commitment.

For Bendigo, ensuring that we receive a significant share of the promised 1300 social and affordable housing dwellings for regional Victoria is essential, as this will help to address the current desperate bed shortage and relieve some of the pressure on a sector that is currently under stress, and is limiting the ability of people to move to the City to take up many of the current work openings that remain unfilled", Mr Herbert said.

"Additional sporting facilities, including new courts at Red Energy Arena, redevelopment of the Bendigo Bowling Club, and the construction of a new Exhibition building at Bendigo Showgrounds are also welcome, and will provide increased facilities to meet the needs of our rapidly growing population, as well as provide further attractions to bring additional visitors here through the support of regional tourism funding", he concluded.

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