



MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW/Victorian twin cities Albury-Wodonga to host the 2018 Australian Deaf Games

Deaf Sports Australia today announced that twin cities Albury-Wodonga will host the 2018 Australian Deaf Games, the pinnacle multi-sports event for deaf people in Australia. The Games will be held in January 2018.

The announcement was made at the close of the 2016 Australian Deaf Games in Adelaide, which saw more than a thousand deaf athletes and visitors from around the country and some Pacific nations come together to break long held records, enjoy the benefits of sport and establish new, life-long friends.

“At the end of a hugely successful week in Adelaide, it gives me great pleasure to announce the unique collaboration of the City Councils in Albury and Wodonga with Deaf Sports Australia, as well as vital support from the Victorian and NSW Governments,” said DSA President, Phil Harper.

“It is fantastic to follow up the backing we have had from the City of Adelaide and the South Australian Government with the partnership of another region, equally committed to creating a successful Australian Deaf Games.

“The Australian Deaf Games is a unique experience for deaf athletes. They give competitors the opportunity to be exposed to a national competition format which promotes the development and benefits of deaf sport as well as provides a major social and cultural festival.”

Mr Harper also announced the vital support to be provided by Destination NSW and Sport and Recreation Victoria. “To have the support of these two bodies is just fantastic. It enables us to really provide an outstanding sporting event.”

Sports focused region

Deaf Sports Australia General Manager Garry West-Bail said the Border cities won the bid to host the Games because of their focus on sports and investment in quality sporting facilities.

“We were impressed by the facilities, not to mention the passion and commitment shown by AlburyCity and Wodonga councils to hold a world-class sporting event that will truly be a community Games,” he said. “This region sits right at the heart of one



of the most active and sports focused parts of the country, and the investment in facilities by both councils reflects this.”

Strong support from the Border

AlburyCity Mayor Henk van de Ven said it was a coup for the Border, and was only the second time the Games had been held outside a capital city since they started in 1965. Geelong hosted the Games in 2012.

“We look forward to welcoming the athletes, interpreters, visitors, officials and volunteers from around Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Samoa,” Cr van de Ven said. “It’s anticipated the Games will bring an economic benefit of about \$3 million to the area.”

Cr van de Ven said a figure could not be put on the benefit to the community of hosting the Games. “This is a wonderful opportunity for us to come together to support and encourage our local deaf and hearing-impaired community,” he said.

Wodonga Council Mayor Anna Speedie said Wodonga and AlburyCity had worked together to submit a compelling bid to host the Games. “This is a great example of Victoria and NSW, Wodonga and Albury working together to attract a great event that will benefit the Border,” she said.

Cr Speedie added that the high standard of the Border’s sporting venues helped the cities win the Games. “Venues including the Wodonga Tennis Centre, Martin Park, Lauren Jackson Sports Centre and Albury Swim Centre, will host 17 sports such as swimming, netball, basketball, cricket and tennis,” she added.

Providing athletes’ with the best preparation

Normally held every four years, the Games moved to two years for this period to provide a pathway for athletes through to international competition, such as the four yearly Asia Pacific Deaf Games in 2019.

“Previously our Games were out of step with international competitions on the elite athletes’ competition calendar, such as the Deaflympics,” said Mr West-Bail. “By making this one-off shift for 2018, it allows organisers to use the Australian Deaf Games as part of the selection process for international competitions and ensure the best possible preparation for our athletes.”

The 2018 Australian Deaf Games will be held from 20-27 January, with community events planned for Australia Day.



About the Australian Deaf Games

The Australian Deaf Games is an inclusive sporting event bringing together the best competitors and the general deaf community from Australian and the Pacific Nations to compete in 15 individual and team sports. The Games are considered a great community celebration with various events held in addition to the sports competition.

It is one of the oldest ongoing deaf sporting events in the world with its origins of interstate deaf sport competitions in Australia traced back to 1895, when the Victorian Deaf cricket team travelled to South Australia for a friendly deaf cricket match.

The first 'Deaf Sports Carnival' was held in 1911 and continued until the Games' current format began in Sydney in 1964. Since then the Games are held every 3-4 years with the 17th and most recent being held in Adelaide in January 2016.

About Deaf Sports Australia – www.deafsports.org.au

Deaf Sports Australia is the peak body for deaf sport in Australia. Deaf Sports Australia (formerly the Australian Deaf Sports Federation) was established in 1954 and is affiliated with the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf.

Deaf Sports Australia hosts, facilitates and manages a range of deaf specific sporting events. One of its objectives is to foster, encourage and promote deaf people's participation and skill development in all forms of sport. Deaf Sports Australia also advocates, educates, informs and supports the mainstream sporting structure to make it deaf friendly and capable of including deaf people within the structure.

Additionally, Deaf Sports Australia fosters relationships with government, deaf and mainstream sporting bodies to support the access requirements and participation of deaf people in sport at all levels.

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