



Sporting Shooters' Association  
of Australia (SSAA Inc)  
Submission

Inquiry into the 2026 Commonwealth  
Games Bid

October 2023

The Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia (SSAA Inc) is responding to the Victorian Government's Select Committee Inquiry into the 2026 Commonwealth Games Bid with the interests of 212,000-plus members of the SSAA state and territory associations front of mind. These members, the wider target shooting community, and the firearms industry are spread across the country and have a keen interest in the future of target shooting as a sport.

Target shooting is an all-inclusive sport where people of all ages and abilities can compete side-by-side in an active and healthy way. Communities thrive where opportunities for all genders, ages, skill levels and abilities can build strong relationships and challenge themselves. Target shooting is a sport that attracts children and adults to compete and go on to participate in the sport at local, national and international levels.

SSAA's state and territory associations have more than 450 target shooting ranges located around the country where almost every day you will find people enjoying their sport, volunteers helping run the facilities and people building strong connections with their community.

Shooting has not traditionally been among the core sports included in Commonwealth Games, however it has been a sport that has been relatively constant as a part of the event. In the most recent Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, shooting was not included in the line up and the target shooting community around the world expressed outrage and disappointment.

The fear among those in the target shooting fraternity was that this exclusion may ring the death knell for the future of the sport within the Commonwealth Games.

Following the announcement and planning for the Victorian 2026 Commonwealth Games, hopes were high within the global target shooting community that the sport would be on the register. Australia has a strong history of success at the sport in previous editions of the games and the opportunity for our shooters to compete at home was an exciting prospect.

Shooting Australia is the peak body and national sporting organisation for target shooting competitions and athlete development pathways. SSAA Inc, as the member association established in 1948 to promote the shooting sports and protect firearm owners' interests, fulfil separate functions within Australia's target shooting communities. As the service body for the state and territory associations, SSAA Inc was proud to support Shooting Australia in its campaign to have target shooting included in the Victorian 2026 Commonwealth Games. The groundswell of support for the cause among SSAA members and that of the target shooters who connect with other target shooting clubs and associations in Australia was immense.

Target shooting dates back to well before the advent of firearms in history, with archery being a sport of choice. Firearms were initially used in war the use for target shooting across Europe dates back to some time in the 1400s onwards. It has always been a sport associated with the pitting of skill in seemingly impossible situations where distance, stamina, strength and weather conditions test participants. The sport is deeply seeded within culture and social identification of many countries and in some parts of the world, participation in target shooting is more prevalent than even some of the sports that may be considered more 'mainstream' in Australia.

The Commonwealth Games on home soil would promote our sport and our country around the world. The funding given to the regions to develop and improve facilities for our sport would benefit current and future generations of target shooters.

The missed opportunities created through the cancellation of this event for Victoria directly impacts the regions and the corresponding facilities that were to hold the events and our athletes who were

about to compete on a global stage from their very own backyard. These missed opportunities extend to the development and support of those that work within the sport as coaches and officials, particularly as the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympics will need these resources down the track. Experience at an international level is key to ongoing development for these individuals and opportunities at this level of competition are few and require costly travel.

In conclusion, the impact this decision will have on our sport, facilities and opportunities for growth is immeasurable in many ways. It is the potential and associated benefits of having a prestigious international level event held 'in our own backyard' that is now gone. Athletes and officials will no longer have this experience, new and/or improved facility upgrades will no longer occur and positive messaging that can encourage people to join our sport or create awareness and acceptance of our community will no longer eventuate.