

Video transcript: Withdrawal from 2026 Commonwealth Games

About this audit

In April 2022 the Victorian Government signed the contract to host the 2026 Commonwealth Games in regional Victoria. It also approved a \$2.6 billion gross budget for the event.

Host cities usually have 7 or 8 years to prepare for the games. But Victoria only had 4.

In July 2023, the government announced it was withdrawing from hosting because the games no longer represented value for money. It said the cost had increased to more than \$6 billion.

In this audit we examined the cost of securing, planning for and then withdrawing from the games. We also looked at the quality of advice that departments gave to the government.

What we found

We made 4 key findings.

Key finding 1

First, it cost Victoria over \$589 million to bid for, plan and then withdraw from the games.

Key finding 2

Second, the games business case was inadequate to help the government make an informed decision on the likely costs and benefits of hosting.

Key finding 3

Third, agencies didn't always work together effectively to give frank, full and timely advice about the games to the government.

Key finding 4

And fourth, the original budget was unrealistically low. But the \$6.9 billion cost estimate, which the government publicly released when it withdrew, was overstated and not transparent.

What we recommended

We made 2 recommendations to the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Treasury and Finance about:

- reviewing the issues with advice to the government we identified in our report, and
- further supporting the public sector to give frank, full and timely advice to the government.

For more information please see the full report on our website.