



Push for Melbourne 2032 Olympic Games bid prompts calls for national co-ordination

774 ABC Melbourne

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The Committee for Melbourne wants the city to bid for the 2032 Olympics Games, but experts have called for any Australian bid to be co-ordinated nationally.

It comes as Brisbane undertakes a feasibility study to prepare for a bid in 2028.

The Committee for Melbourne has discussed a potential bid with the State Government, who yesterday announced a strategic review of Victoria's major events program.

Before winning last year's state election Labor said it was open to the idea of a Melbourne Olympic bid.

Committee for Melbourne chief executive Kate Roffey said the city was capable of hosting an Olympic Games.

"I think we should be in there bidding," she told 774 ABC Melbourne's Red Symons.

"We are the world's sporting capital, so we should have the world's best sporting event here."

Simon Balderstone, who has assessed Olympic bids for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and was involved in successful bids by Sydney and Tokyo, said any Australian bid had to be co-ordinated on a national level.

"Australia went through a pretty silly phase, for a long time I think, of Australian cities bidding against one other for major events and being prepared to fork out large amounts to secure them," he told 774 ABC Melbourne's Jon Faine.

Former IOC vice president Kevan Gosper said the decision as to whether Brisbane or Melbourne made a bid must be based on the enthusiasm of the cities' populations.

"It would be very important to get public support before you did anything," he said.

"These cities have got to really go into the community and see what the community thinks."

Olympic Games now less expensive

It can cost up to \$50 million just to bid for the Olympics, however Mr Gosper said mounting the games had become less costly.

He said there was now a greater focus by the IOC on a city using existing or temporary stadiums rather than purpose-building stadiums from scratch.

"With the rules of today you can put an Olympic games into position at much lower cost," he said.

Mr Balderstone said an Olympic host city could now spend their money on infrastructure that would have longstanding benefits to its citizens.

"The key thing is to integrate your games plans with the long-term plans of the city," he said.

"I think hosting an Olympic Games has enormous benefits and legacies for a city if it's done well."

Ms Roffey said that Melbourne already has world-class facilities for sports including swimming, cycling and equestrian.

"We, in the scheme of things, need very few facilities," she said.

"What we can do ... is use this as an opportunity to build important infrastructure like rail systems and tram systems."

She said while the IOC would like an African city to bid for the games she "can't see that happening".

"There are some cities that really shouldn't host Olympics because it really is too much of a drain on their finances, their buildings and infrastructure," she said.

"The numbers of cities that are capable of and are coming forward [to bid] will tend to decline rather than increase."

Mr Gosper said Australia could realistically bid for the 2032 games if it started planning now.

"I think if we look well enough out to the 2030s and start doing some planning in the next two years it's not an unreasonable prospect," he said.

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