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MEDIA RELEASE

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LIBS WELCOME ICE SKATING CENTRE – BUT WON'T HOLD OUR BREATH

Reports today that the Bracks Government will support an ice skating centre in Docklands is long overdue considering it was one of Steve Bracks' 1999 election promises.

In 1999 Labor pledged \$10 million towards a national ice skating centre that would feature two international sized rinks and would be used for events and training for ice sports as well as recreational skaters (policy attached).

Victorians have waited six years for the Bracks Government to get moving on this policy which it again rehashed in 2002.

When I asked Labor's Sport Minister Justin Madden in Parliament in May last year when the centre will be built and how much the government would contribute, he responded "*we are looking forward to making very positive announcements soon in relation to that*" (Hansard, 19 May 2005).

The Liberal Party welcomes news that the government is finally progressing with this project but we are concerned it will face the same fate as all other Bracks Government projects – it will be mismanaged, over time and/or over budget.

The *Herald Sun* today revealed that after Labor rehashed it's 2002 promise to build the centre, it failed to brief rink operators, developers, financiers, designers and builders until March last year.

This is a clear indication that this ice skating centre was not a priority for the Bracks Government and it has been forced to get its act together because there is an election coming up.

Justin Madden has signaled that he will continue to sit back and fail to push this project with his lazy statement "*so it's now up to the private sector to make this work*" (*Herald Sun*, 22.02.06).

I've got news for Justin Madden – it's his job to make this centre, a Bracks Government election promise, work.

The Liberal Party believes this centre will be a great addition to Melbourne's great sports assets and will be an excellent training and events venue for professional skaters. Recreational skaters will also enjoy the new facility.

Justin Madden has had six years to come up with a plan for this centre. He must now tell Victorians when building will start, when it will finish and how much this facility will cost.

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