

# Shipping supports goals of the Games

Felicity Landon looks at the logistics challenges behind the scenes of the Commonwealth Games



Felicity Landon

One million spectators, 6,600 athletes and team officials, 3,500 media personnel – and that’s just the people. The Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games (GC2018) take place in April and the massive logistics operation involved could be seen as a kind of parallel to the athletes’ training: from planning, preparation and warming-up, to building up the intensity and the final sprint – and finally, of course, to the cooldown.

**Topic: Sports**

**Key words: Event, Logistics, Shipping**

**Background Info: Support for the Commonwealth Games will pull on local and international companies**

This is the first such event to be held outside a capital city in Australia, and Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games chairman Peter Beattie has said that the event will leave a “radically-different” Gold Coast. The plan is to leave “no white elephants” from the A\$1.7bn spend on the event. For example, the A\$550m games village, once the Games are over, will have a new life as a health sciences research centre linked to a university and a hospital, and an indoor sports arena will be used as a film studio.

The GC2018 events will be hosted across 18 venues, located on the Gold Coast and in Brisbane, Cairns and Townsville. And in contrast to familiar last-minute panic that has characterised some similar events around the world, in this case, all competition venues and the Commonwealth Games Village were completed well in advance, giving time for testing before the actual event.

When it was announced last year that Schenker Australia had been appointed official logistics provider for GC2018, the company’s chief executive, Ron Koehler, gave an idea of the scale of the task. In the weeks leading up to the event, Schenker would process and move close to 500,000 sports items, from shuttlecocks to pole vault landing pads, he said. It

would additionally distribute 96,000 pieces of furniture, 21,000 pieces of luggage and 3,000 individual sports items through its distribution hub to the Village and Games venues.

## SUSTAINABLE SOURCING

As part of its sustainability drive, the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games Corporation (GOLDOC) had a policy from the outset of sourcing locally wherever possible. Mid-2017, it announced that more than 70% of GOLDOC contracts had been issued to businesses with a Gold Coast-presence, and 84% were issued to companies with a presence in Queensland. This was on top of the construction contracts for venues and the Games Village – 90% of the total A\$606m went to regional businesses. However, shipping fans need not be disappointed, as significant volumes of goods, from furniture to equipment, have also arrived by sea from across the world.



Credit: Schenker

## Schenker is forecasting 15,000 pallet movements

Schenker’s operations have been based around a 20,000-square-metre warehouse and a workforce of up to 110 at peak periods, with a big focus on inclusion of indigenous and Torres Strait Islander employees, says Benjamin Wilson, Schenker Australia’s national operations and business development manager.

“They have received training for the process of receiving, storing, assembling and distribution of supplies and assets to various venues and locations, and the return logistics process and dissolution programme in conjunction with the GOLDOC legacy programme,” he explains.

Schenker is forecasting that there will be 15,000 pallet movements during the distribution process, he says.

Ninety percent of cargo moving through Schenker’s facility is furniture items for the Games Village and venues, along with sporting and timing equipment for the competition venues. Much of this arrived in 170 forty-foot containers from China and Malaysia, says Mr Wilson.

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## GC2018 facts and figures

- A total of **70** competing nations and territories will take part
- This is the **fifth** time Australia has staged the Commonwealth Games
- **18** sports, including seven parasports, will offer **275** gold medals
- **6,600** athletes and team officials are expected to travel to the Gold Coast
- **3,500** accredited and non-accredited media will cover the Games
- The Games are estimated to have a **A\$2bn** economic impact on the Gold Coast and Queensland
- **A\$320m** has been invested in sport and community-infrastructure
- The Games will generate **30,000** full-time equivalent jobs across various sectors
- More than **1m** spectators are expected watch the games across **18** venues located in the Gold Coast, Brisbane, Cairns and Townsville



“Schenker has also assisted with the movement of additional power units and supplies – approximately 110 teu – which have been shipped from various ports, including in Eastern Europe, the UAE and Southeast Asia, to clients’ laydown yards. This included arranging distribution from there to various venues and handling materials for onsite installation.”

The majority of cargo imported has come containerised. A lot of the furniture, such as lockers, was imported flat-packed, but there has also been a strong flow of assembled and “as is” items from major southeast China ports. Schenker provided consolidation points in Qingdao, Shanghai and Shenzhen for suppliers unable to fill 20ft or 40ft containers. The power units were shipped “as is” in 20ft containers or as breakbulk.

“As suppliers required a just-in-time (JIT) delivery solution to coincide with delivery schedules and reduce container detention and port storage fees, Schenker had to adapt, utilising various shipping lines over the various projects,” says Mr Wilson. “This allowed us to have flexibility with solutions for JIT requirements and combat the peak season congestion, which went on longer than forecast, and still be able to deliver.”

### TRANSPORT UPGRADES

In connection with the Commonwealth Games, A\$440m was invested in upgrading light rail connections in the Gold Coast, and Schenker played a part in this too, facilitating the movement of four new light rail trains from Europe to Queensland via a ro-ro vessel in the fourth quarter of 2017.

As the Games draw near, Schenker is responsible for assisting with the athletes’ arrival and departure process. “This requires Schenker to fit-out vehicles with specific equipment to handle the transportation

of athletes’ sporting equipment, such as bicycles and pole vaults,” says Mr Wilson. “GC2018 is also integrating and is running the Para-Sport program which incorporates specialised equipment being utilised.”

And with an eye on later this year, DB Schenker is working with all remaining suppliers closely, he says – especially those such as broadcasters covering the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea. Incidentally, Schenker was also the logistics provider for the Australian Open tennis tournament in January.

“With our dedicated sports division, Schenkersportevents, Schenker understands the needs and requirements of such events and can meet these demands in conjunction with our core products, such as DB Schenker ocean, to deliver. DB Schenkersportevents has dedicated personnel in key areas of the globe – over 1,000 staff in 50 countries.” This enables Schenker to create what it calls its ‘Controls Towers’, so that suppliers and customers have a dedicated contact point, explains Mr Wilson.

“Cargo and assets are then moved through our global network of 2,000 locations.”

As well as the physical moves, Schenker has been responsible for Customs formalities in Australia for suppliers shipping with the company, and this element will increase in March when the teams arrive. Other services included quarantine clearance and origin consultancy.

Schenker has been a major provider of transportation and logistics services for sports events since the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The company was the official logistics provider/supplier for the Commonwealth Games in Manchester in 2002, Melbourne in 2006 and Glasgow in 2014, and a major provider when the Games were

An athlete enjoys the views from the Sydney Harbour Bridge

held in Delhi in 2010. It also provided logistics services for the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City in 2002 and Torino in 2006, and for the Summer Olympics in Athens in 2004, Beijing in 2008 and Vancouver in 2010.

What would Mr Wilson highlight as the key challenges when organising logistics for events such as these?

“Every Games has its challenges, from shipping line congestion to infrastructure constraints for distribution to casual labour fulfilment,” he says. The fact that other key events were taking place close to GC2018 added to the challenges.

### SUSTAINABILITY BAR

Meanwhile, with the organisers of GC2018 having vowed to “demonstrate leadership in sustainability”, the Games aim to leave positive economic, environmental, social and community legacies that last beyond the closing ceremony.

Among the priorities, it has stipulated that packaging, including food packaging, will be minimised to avoid unnecessary packaging-costs, demand for raw materials and carbon emissions. Sustainable food and drink options will be provided at the event. With a specific focus on protecting the oceans, spectators will be encouraged to bring their own water bottles.

“The impact of event pollution on the city’s waterways and ocean environment is a key concern for the local community,” say the organisers. “Mass-released helium balloons, lightweight plastic bags and single-use plastic water bottles are regularly found in the ocean, washed up on beaches and in the waterways, and have been found to contribute to the death of marine life and sea birds.

“They are a challenge to manage locally and throughout the world. Microplastic is now working its way into the world’s food chains. In response to this issue, GC2018 will be a helium balloon-free event and games-time messaging will encourage spectators to bring their own transparent water bottles, with drinking water available for refills.”

GC2018’s sustainable procurement policy outlines its focus on sustainable sourcing and material selection, and the event’s recycling and waste-management systems and practices have been designed to minimise landfill. The public are being encouraged to use public and “active”



Schenker’s operations have been based around a 20,000-square-metre warehouse

transport to get to the venues. The event organisers have said that one of the biggest legacies out of the games will be the improved transport system – better roads, doubling the rail services to Brisbane and upgrading the light rail.

### PAST LESSONS

When the Olympic Games came to London in 2012, the emphasis on sustainability meant a strong focus on transport by water.

The event was described at the time as the biggest peacetime logistics operation in the world. UPS operated nearly 1m square feet of warehousing on behalf of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG). The main logistics centre was a 550,000-square-foot hub within the Port of Tilbury, which provided the advantages of deepwater container berths on the doorstep of the capital, with easy access by road or river.

Being based at Tilbury offered important advantages. LOCOG took on premises at 46 Berth at the port and there was some heavy investment in the multipurpose sheds and in creating additional quayside covered-storage.

The event itself shone a spotlight on the River Thames, the capital city and the importance of the port and river for efficient, green freight and passenger transport. No doubt Brisbane’s officials hope GC2018 will do the same for their city. **SN**

## Who’s who in GC2018

**Schenker Australia** has provided a range of services and functions to assist with the delivery of GC2018, including pre and post-games access to a global freight forwarding network; an integrated warehouse and distribution-service for receiving goods from suppliers and delivering these to venues; a distribution-solution for transferring athletes’ baggage on arrival and departure and for moving their equipment to venues; supply of a warehouse-management system; and a warehouse to consolidate and manage the disposal of assets after the Games.

Brisbane-based cargo and freight company **Winangali** has partnered with Schenker Australia to provide logistics for GC2018. An independent logistics company providing road transport, integrated logistics and supply chain solutions, Winangali operates a haulage fleet and warehouse network stretching from Brisbane to Cairns, and it has also extended its operations in Victoria and New South Wales. The company’s key focus is training and employing indigenous Australian people in all aspects of its operations.

**Royal Wolf**, a leading container provider in Australia, announced a partnership with the Australian Volleyball Federation (AVF) at the start of last year which would help the AVF team prepare for the Commonwealth Games. The company has provided Volleyball Australia with logistics and container storage needs for events across Australia. Royal Wolf also provided temporary ticket booths for Queensland station-workers while platform facilities were upgraded in advance of the Commonwealth Games. **SN**