

**Making the Magic:**  
**an outline history of the**  
**Olympic Coordination Authority NSW**

**Report for the Olympics Coordination Authority**

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# 1. IN THE BEGINNING

## **1.1 Introduction**

The story of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games stretches back nearly thirty years – even before the birth of many of the athletes who took centre stage. And the end is at least as far away - when the 2000 athletes have become in their turn, the eager families cheering a new generation of Olympians.

The onstage action during the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games created magic moments that made this the ‘best Games ever’ – but the story of Sydney 2000 is as much about how that magic was made. It is the story of building the right theatre in the right way at the right time, and in the right place. It is a story shaped not in a vacuum, but in the context of the political and legal institutions and processes developed by the end of Australia’s first century as a Federation. It is a story that starts long before the Games.

The Sydney 2000 story is about creating the physical means to make Olympic magic, of providing facilities and venues that will serve the immediate purpose perfectly – and will continue to serve the communities and the companies whose investment they are. For the Games of the year 2000 the story also includes the challenge of meeting high standards of environmental protection. Because of the emphasis on the economic and environmental aspects, the story will not be over until the future value of these legacies is fully developed.

So important is this element in Sydney 2000 that the environment itself can be seen as a character in a story that starts with the place that became Olympic Park, Homebush Bay in Sydney’s west.

## **1.2 Bunning to Baird – 1973 to 1990**

Once a major tidal estuarine system on the Parramatta River, after two hundred years of Sydney’s growth Homebush Bay had become an urban wasteground. That is after all how 19<sup>th</sup> century cities grew – their margins were dumping grounds for debris kept out of sight by being kept at a distance. As a city spread, the sites for urban waste were relocated further out. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Homebush Bay became the site of the city’s abattoirs, its major brickworks, and the Royal Australian Navy’s Newington armaments depot. The creeks and foreshores became landfill sites for chemical and other industrial waste, as well as household rubbish. The growing environmental

awareness of the late 1960s meant that in cities around the world such areas, the by-products of urban growth, had become targets for planning solutions.

While more than nine million cubic metres of waste was being dumped at Homebush Bay in the 1960s and 1970s, an investigation was commissioned by the Askin Government. On 1 February 1973, a year after Australia's first fulltime environment centre was established in Sydney, the Bunning Report raised the possibility that Homebush Bay could be rehabilitated as a future Olympic site. This ambitious solution was revived briefly in 1980 when the Government of Neville Wran assessed a possible bid to hold the 1988 Olympic Games in Sydney. Part of this assessment process was an examination of sites throughout Sydney, including the recreational areas to the east of the city at Moore Park. The viability of the Sydney Showground was already in question, with the Royal Agricultural Society seeking funding to resolve problems highlighted in negative reports on facilities there including the condition of buildings, and implementation of health codes. The first step towards the redevelopment of Homebush Bay – and towards a Sydney Olympics – was made when Wran responded to the urgings of his Department of Sport and Recreation and work began on the State Sports Centre, opened in 1984.

When Nick Greiner became Premier in 1988, all three matters were on his Government's agenda. First the issue of turning a nagging problem into an economic opportunity by moving the Showground; second, addressing the critical environmental issues at Homebush Bay; and third, bidding for a Sydney Olympics. Seen in the context of the Government's enthusiasm for turning Sydney into Australia's 'global city', these issues fused into a single strategy – a Homebush imperative.

Greiner still regards the resolve to grasp the nettle of Homebush, to establish that imperative, as one of the big decisions of his four-year premiership. Homebush was "a big risk, one of the gut strategic decisions", a recognition of the realities that "you couldn't win by playing around with the Cricket Ground". Directing "massive" funds into Homebush Bay was an integral part of the decision to bid for the Olympic Games. That this involved deciding to relocate the Showground against the influential will of the RAS now seems less heroic than its implication – moving the "focal point of Sydney's recreational activities to a rubbish dump at Homebush".

Sixteen years after the Bunning Report was presented, it was back on the desk – though Greiner did not retrieve the files from the Wran Government's assessment of a possible Olympics bid in 1981. As Premier he needed no persuasion in principle, but needed evidence this would not be another aborted bid. This meant developing a practical plan that would work in the institutional and geographical realities of the city and the State. This was a Government enticed by the golden opportunity for Sydney, and for Australia - to "put Australia on the radar screen of world".

Greiner attended the Seoul Olympics in the Summer of 1988 in contemplation of Sydney bidding for 2000.

But at home, the Government's view was that "Olympics or not" the redevelopment of Homebush Bay should proceed as the solution to pressing urban planning problems. In any case, the infrastructure decisions had to be made and their implementation put underway before a bid could be delivered. While it was "always obvious that winning was no better than an even money question", the establishment of the Homebush imperative had few opponents – the RAS, those who feared the Showground site passing into private ownership, and those afflicted with nostalgia.

The Federal Labor Government supported proposals for the rehabilitation of Homebush Bay, viewing as untenable the perpetuation of a munitions dump in what had become the geographic and population centre of Australia's largest city. The RAN facility, under Commonwealth control, was relocated and the State Government closed both the State Brickworks and the State Abattoirs at Homebush. Tighter controls on dumping of industrial and household waste there had been in place for a decade and finally all the dump sites were closed. The Bicentennial Park was opened on schedule in 1988, when the Brickworks and Abattoirs were closed.

The environmental rehabilitation of Homebush Bay was part of the bid from the beginning. The IOC by 1990 placed great importance on 'greening' the Olympic movement and the Greiner Government had adopted a 'whatever it takes' attitude to winning. Greening the bid was an obvious strategy, and an easy one as the bid could be "dark green", even if the implementation had to be less ambitious, a few shades paler. Seen in hindsight, the bid "promised things somewhere between unachievable and ridiculous", setting targets that even then were recognised as involving an inevitable compromise.

This no doubt complicated the process of gathering support for the bid proposal. One of the key sites of opposition was within the public service. The Premier's own Department, and the Treasury, were "universally opposed" and there was in fact "no bureaucratic advice in favour". In contrast, the Cabinet room was largely in support of the proposal. The situation of having widespread support in "political government" but little in the government departments was reflected in the contrast between business interest and community disinterest. This no doubt contributed to losing the opportunity to bid for the 1996 Games – an outcome seen by supporters as "a bit outrageous". That defeat however created the time to extend the measured approach already adopted by the Premier. Nick Greiner reversed his usual practice in Cabinet by ensuring that each decision on the Olympic bid was arrived at by "going around the table", taking the view of each Minister in turn. Greiner himself "never had any doubt in his mind that hosting the Olympic Games would be good for Sydney and good for Australia".

Thus when the Vice-President of the Australian Olympic Committee, John Coates, met with Greiner on 12 April 1989 to discuss a bid, the Premier did not need to be convinced. Two weeks later a Homebush Bay Strategy Committee was established. By 30 June the Committee had reported, recommending the development of aquatic and athletic centres at Homebush. The Government accepted the recommendations on 7 August and the Premier assigned the project to the NSW Property Services Group.

The diversion of resources remained the major issue given the size of the necessary investment, but this long view put the emphasis on the legacy of a Sydney Games – the “very real direct economic and psychological impact on New South Wales and to a lesser extent, to the rest of Australia”. It was a view most stakeholders could support, including unions, ethnic communities, and the mass media. The very strong support given in the media to the bid proposal was, oddly, reversed after the bid was won. That initial strong support was not matched until the magic of the Games began.

When a Sydney Olympic Games Review Committee was formed with Minister Bruce Baird in charge on 23 October 1990, support for the initiative was growing rapidly. Two weeks later, on 16 November, the AOC provisionally endorsed Sydney, and on 11 December 1990 the Committee produced the Baird report and the bid was underway.

### **1.3 The bid – 1991 to 1993**

On 5 February 1991 the Federal Government announced that \$150m of Commonwealth funds would be made available for the development of Homebush Bay if the IOC selected Sydney as the site for the Olympic Games. Three weeks later the Federal Government agreed to allow the New South Wales Government to borrow an extra \$300 million to fund the construction facilities. On 27 February the Sydney Olympic Bid Committee Ltd (SOBL) was launched. Within a week, on 5 March 1991, construction began on Stage 1 at Homebush Bay.

Sydney became an official bidder when registered with IOC as a candidate on 16 April 1991, and on 27 May Rod McGeoch was appointed CEO of SOBL. As Greiner had planned, the building of infrastructure became part of the bid when on 25 March 1992 the competition to design the Olympic Village was opened and on 15 April 1992 work began on the Athletic and Aquatic Centres at Homebush Bay. By the time the design of the Stadium was released on 1 July 1992, John Fahey had replaced Greiner as Premier. It was Fahey who with Baird and the AOC met with the IOC on their visit to Sydney at the end of the following month. On 22 September 1992 the initial budget of the SOBL was announced as \$1.697 billion.

Greiner's first goal was attained. Sydney was an official and a serious bidder, receiving the full attention of the IOC and of competing countries. On 3 March 1993 the IOC Inquiry Commission visited Sydney and on 14 March IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch arrived. The SOBL attended the IOC Board meeting the following day. In June SOBL delegates attended the 100<sup>th</sup> IOC session and the inauguration of the Olympic Museum in Lausanne. As well as AOC President John Coates, Australia's senior IOC member Kevan Gosper, and Phil Coles, a member of the IOC in Australia since 1982, "worked harder than anyone" to win the bid for Sydney.

In July 1993 Premier John Fahey released the KPMG economic impact study of a Sydney 2000 Games and on 20 September 1993 Bruce Baird presented the Sydney bid environmental guidelines to the IOC.

Three days later, on 23 September 1993, the IOC announced the winner – Sydney was to host the Olympic Games in the year 2000.

#### **1.4 The beginning – 1993 to 1995**

Unlike the bid documents, the host city contract between the Fahey Government and the IOC was a firm and binding commitment. The contract required the State Government to fund the necessary facilities and to meet any operating losses, while any profits would be divided between the AOC trust fund for training athletes and the AOC and IOC.

The next step was to set up a Sydney Organising Committee (SOCOG) as in previous host cities. The SOCOG members were named and Phil Coles appointed Director on 20 October, with the necessary legislation enacted on 12 November 1993. The 1<sup>st</sup> SOCOG Progress Report was presented to the IOC three months later. With a Board that was "representational rather than functional", SOCOG was a political compromise rather than a body ideally designed to put on the Games. While this was not the view at the time of major players, with experience and hindsight John Coates later held that a far better model would have been a government coordinating authority and a sports commission, with a small marketing arm.

There had been much stronger government involvement from the outset in Seoul and Barcelona for the 1988 and 1992 Olympic Games. The tensions of these first two years in Sydney were more similar to the tensions marking the preparations for the 1996 Atlanta Games. In Sydney these tensions developed into "turf wars" within the Government as responsibilities were spread across multiple ministries and agencies. No less than four different Ministers and five separate departments had core responsibilities for the Government's involvement. These were the Office of Olympic Coordination in the Premier's Department; the Olympic Construction Authority within

the Department of Public Works and Services; the Homebush Bay Corporation; the Olympic Facilities Unit of the Department of Sport, Recreation and Racing; and the Department of Planning.

Progress was being made even under this arrangement and on 12 March 1994, two years after construction began, the first Olympic venue, the Sydney International Athletic Centre was officially opened. In September 1994 Ric Birch was appointed Director of Ceremonies and a month later the second venue, the Sydney International Aquatic Centre, was officially opened.

Under the host city contract SOCOG depended for half its income on the sale of international television rights. The first sale negotiated was for the Australian TV rights when the Seven Network agreed on 9 February 1995 to pay \$45 million. In the same month, the Preliminary Social Impact Assessment of the Sydney Games was released. The Government had failed however to produce an agreed masterplan for the redevelopment of Homebush Bay, though the first plan for the proposed bid had been released by the Greiner Government in 1988.

The following month John Fahey's Coalition Government lost the State Election, and Bob Carr led a Labor Government to victory. Rather than a functioning model for Olympic preparations, the new Government inherited the legal responsibility to hold the Games in 2000 with a set of "less than ideal" arrangements to meet the goal efficiently, effectively and economically. Two years in, the organising committee model was judged a very limiting concept in the Australian context. Mobilising the public sector and the community, as well as business, were equally important in achieving major undertakings in the states as well as for national projects in Australia. In the case of the Olympic Games a wide range of government agencies would necessarily be involved, such as the State Rail Authority, Tourism NSW, the Water Board and electricity authority, the Police, and Treasury. With the core Olympic functions also fragmented, the Labor Party had made a streamlining policy part of its election platform. The election proposal was for a single agency under a single minister responsible for delivering the physical requirements for a successful Olympic Games.

Those who backed the bid for the 2000 Olympic Games and delighted in Sydney's success were not blind to the enormity of the challenge, nor to the reality that winning the bid was just the beginning. Even with this recognition though, moving from scoping notional solutions to designing and implementing the real thing was salutary. This 'morning after' syndrome characterised 1994, the year between the Fahey Government's success in winning the bid late in 1993, and the election of the Carr Government early in 1995. High on the new Government's agenda was the need to translate the bid success into Games success by putting in place workable

organisational structures and processes to deliver what they must – a successful Olympic and Paralympic Games in Sydney in the year 2000.



## 2. THE CHALLENGE

### ***2.1 Developing the coordination model***

In Australia, strategic planning requirements for public works include monitoring not only against efficiency benchmarks, performance indicators, and outcome assessment, but to meet older and broader requirements of democratic governance itself. Public works undertakings within the Australian federal system must work within the legal and institutional frameworks of three tiers of elected government, national, state and local. These processes include statutory reporting and fiscal accountability fundamental to the evolved federal system of responsible and representative constitutional government. No less fundamental to this system is media scrutiny and community consultation, with particular emphasis on issues of equality and other areas of contemporary concern such as environmental conservation.

For the Sydney 2000 Games – on a scale earning the title of the largest peacetime operation in Australia’s history - there were additional dimensions of overall control by a global non-government organisation, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and international scrutiny by media, world sporting federations, and governments, investors and markets. Olympic Games planning magnified by millions the management needs of major projects. Sydney 2000 was a unique challenge to the design, development, monitoring and delivery processes as Australia entered the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

This project of projects involved many and varied participants, with discrete roles, varying priorities and their own strategic interests. The approach of the Greiner and Fahey Governments was based on the organising committee model used in preparing for the Atlanta Games in 1996. This “corporately-driven” model has an organising committee that is “essentially an operator of the Games, a promoter, a Paul Dainty” with government providing facilities via the various existing agencies.<sup>1</sup> The Carr Government thus inherited a structure with the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games in the role of operator, and sections set up within the five different government agencies responsible for providing the facilities. Coordination was through an Office within the Premier’s Department.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nick Greiner, interview 28 August 2000 Tape1A

<sup>2</sup> The existing agencies were the Office of Olympic Coordination in the Premier’s Department; the Olympic Construction Authority within the Department of Public Works and Services; the Homebush Bay Corporation; the Olympic Facilities Unit of the Department of Sport, Recreation and Racing; and a section within the Department of Planning.

For the State Government's newly appointed Minister for the Olympics, Michael Knight, a key task was to establish a vantage point from which it would be possible to view the whole picture. He was required to order a million flying fragments into the patterns that would bring them to ground in formation, on target and on time. The structure for this 'control tower' was created by amalgamating the sections within all five State government agencies responsible for delivering the venues. This amalgamation created a single Olympic Coordination Authority (OCA) under legislation introduced in the first sitting of Parliament after the election of the Carr Government in March 1995 and enacted on 9 June 1995. The State Government thus became a party to the Olympic Games contract, under a clause in the original endorsement contract.

The establishment of the OCA was proclaimed on 30 June 1995, with David Richmond appointed to head the new agency. The OCA was responsible to the Minister for the Olympics for coordinating, monitoring and reporting over the five years in which the venues had to be built and Games operations planned and carried out, and for all the post-Games requirements. Under the new model, the OCA was charged with ensuring that the facilities met national and international requirements, including the exacting specifications of each world sporting federation for competition venues.

While staging an Olympic Games and a Paralympics are no small challenges in themselves, an added challenge of the 2000 Games was the emphasis on the legacy of the Games, ensuring the new facilities were also public assets which would serve the long-term needs of the State and of local communities. This meant that the organisation model also had to involve a means of minimising negative impacts, such as loss of housing, employment or transport facilities. Equally important was optimising the investment return by planning for ongoing social, cultural and economic benefits for the people of New South Wales. One of the means already identified for achieving this was effective coordination of private sector participation in the construction and management of venues and facilities. As the OCA built venues and facilities, it was also essential to develop systems to maintain and manage them as future community assets. A key aspect of this planning for the post-Games future was meeting contemporary expectations and demands for demonstrable and sustainable environmental benefit.

The coordination challenge was like keying together a giant mosaic, each fragment the responsibility of a different blend of commercial developers, private investors, private contractors, and government agencies. Without a grand designer to lay down a majestic template showing where each piece would fit, the OCA had to ensure that a coherent picture was developing, recognising that nowhere else could the whole picture be plotted. As Director-General of the OCA it was David Richmond's task to design, build and direct the operations of the 'control tower',

maintaining an overview of the daily changing scene, and reporting directly to the Minister for the Olympics.

The first task of the new Director-General was to appoint as Executive Directors the best people to “get the job done”, but who would also encourage the flexible management culture essential to coordinating the assembly of a giant jigsaw puzzle. The OCA was a government agency designed from a standing start, to work in this climate of constant change as priorities and responsibilities evolved. It had a very definite “use by” date, plus the highest possible public exposure of outcomes and outputs. There could be no better theoretical exercise to test the public administration student – nor a more intriguing challenge to a professional with experience of public sector management before, during and after the emergence of the ‘New Management’ in Australia in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century. For the person charged with designing, developing and directing such an organisation, the appointment of the key lieutenants was clearly a vital element, in the category of those “make or break” decisions. The key start-up functional areas identified were Construction (CD), Environment Planning & Estate Management (EPEMD), Community & Government Relations (CGRD), and Finance (FD) and the four Executive Directors appointed to head these Divisions were Bob Leece, Colin Grant, David Pettigrew and Bob Adby.<sup>3</sup>

The challenge was to provide international standard facilities for the Sydney 2000 Games which would be economically sustainable for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This meant designing multiple-purpose facilities and developing multiple models for funding, construction, property, and management. Construction of both the Stadium and the Superdome commenced in 1996 under what became known as BOOT schemes (Build, Own, Operate and Transfer), with private developers funding most of the development costs in return for a license to own and operate facilities. The asset would then return to public ownership after 30 years. The contribution of public funds to the development of the Stadium was \$128 million; the final asset value around \$700 million.

This apparently simple means of drawing the necessary capital for such an intensive public works program was not without problems. Among the most obvious were the implications of transferring rights to the private sector for the long-term commercial strategy for the whole of Homebush Bay, and the challenge of ongoing management of these complex contracts.<sup>4</sup> How effectively these challenges will be met will be part of the full story of the Sydney 2000 Games - and indeed of the history of government in New South Wales.

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<sup>3</sup> Quotes from David Richmond interview

<sup>4</sup> David Richmond 26 October 1999, p.4

No aspect of the organisational model developed for the Sydney 2000 Games was static, and the mobility extended from ministerial responsibilities to the internal structure of the OCA. On 6 September 1996 Olympics Minister Michael Knight succeeded John Iliffe as SOCOG President. In April 1997 the State Government established a second agency, the Olympic Roads and Transport Authority (ORTA), to co-ordinate the delivery of transport services for the Olympics, Paralympics and other major events. Chaired by the Director-General of OCA, ORTA comprised members drawn from SOCOG, and the three major State Government agencies involved - the Department of Transport, the Roads and Traffic Authority, and the Police Service.<sup>5</sup> Like the OCA, ORTA was the direct responsibility of the Olympics Minister.

The shape and scope of OCA itself changed to suit the changing requirements and in 1997 an Operations Division (OD) was added to the original four divisions. The OD took charge of development and operations of the Olympic Village and the Media Village; concept planning for the Millennium Parklands; and commercial strategies for managing Homebush Bay and other sites. This streamlined the former EPEDM which became the Planning, Environment and Policy Division (PEPD). Expanded responsibilities turned the CD into the Development Division (DD); while the other two Divisions retained their original names and scope of responsibilities.

In 1998, two years from the Games, the focus was on the vital construction and remediation works, preparation for the test events, and management of the increasing number of visitors to the Homebush Bay site. In 1999 the OCA again had four divisions, DD, OD, FD, and Government & Environment Coordination (GECN), with a media relations unit and specialist advisers in information technology and on the environment.<sup>6</sup>

The coordination network also involved an Urban Design Review Panel, chaired by the Government Architect, Chris Johnson, to report independently on Olympic projects before they were approved<sup>7</sup>, and nine special committees reporting to the Minister for the Olympics through the Director-General of OCA. Two of these, the Access Advisory Committee<sup>8</sup> and the Names

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<sup>5</sup> The *Olympic Roads and Transport Authority Act* (NSW) was enacted on 9 November 1998.

<sup>6</sup> OCA Annual Report 1999

<sup>7</sup> Other members of the Urban Design Review Panel were Professor Lawrence Nield, Michael Keniger, Leo Schofield, Wendy McCarthy, and Leon Paroissien.

<sup>8</sup> Set up in 1996, the Access Advisory Committee advised on strategies to ensure facilities were accessible to people with disabilities. As well as members from SOCOG, OCA, and the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games, the committee, chaired by Ms Jane Woodruff, Director-General of the Department of Ageing and Disability in NSW, drew members from thirteen additional organisations: the State Department of Ageing and Disability; State Department of Transport; NSW Government Architect Design Directorate; NSW Anti-Discrimination Board; Disability Council of NSW; ACROD NSW; People with Disabilities NSW Inc; Royal Blind Society; Self Help for the Hard of Hearing, NSW; NSW Council

Committee<sup>9</sup> were active in the development of the venues, their input all but completed before the Sydney 2000 Opening Ceremony. Two more, the Olympic Security Working Committee<sup>10</sup> and the Olympic Health & Medical Working Committee<sup>11</sup>, were essential to the successful operation of the Games, their roles winding down after the completion of the Paralympics. The remaining five committees, the Local Government Liaison Committee<sup>12</sup>, Local Business Forum<sup>13</sup>, Homebush Bay Events Co-ordination Committee<sup>14</sup>, Olympic Waterways Working Committee<sup>15</sup>, and the Social Impacts Advisory Committee<sup>16</sup>, were key 'legacy' committees, geared to outcomes which would long outlast the 6 weeks of the Olympic and the Paralympic Games.

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for Intellectual Disability; NSW Association for the Deaf; the Consultative Committee on Ageing; and the National Federation of Blind Citizens.

<sup>9</sup> The Names Committee provided advice and recommendations on naming public places, streets and roads at Homebush Bay. Chaired by OCA, members were drawn from SOCOG, five State Government agencies (the Geographical Names Board; Roads and Traffic Authority; State Rail Authority; Department of Aboriginal Affairs; and the Ethnic Affairs Commission), Local Government (Auburn Council); and the NSW Royal Agricultural Society.

<sup>10</sup> The Olympic Security Working Committee was responsible for the executive co-ordination of an integrated security operation for the Games. Chaired by the NSW Police Commissioner, Peter Ryan, this Committee comprised members from SOCOG, the OCA, and the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department.

<sup>11</sup> The Olympic Health & Medical Working Committee was a review committee, chaired by the Director-General of the NSW Health Department, and had oversight of planning by SOCOG, the Paralympic Games, the Department of Health and other external agencies for the delivery of the medical program. Members comprised the three bodies and the OCA.

<sup>12</sup> The Local Government Liaison Committee comprised members from the five Councils surrounding Homebush Bay (Auburn, Concord, Parramatta, Ryde and Strathfield), providing opportunities for OCA to brief and consult on issues arising from the development and operations at Homebush Bay.

<sup>13</sup> A Local Business Forum was established with representation from businesses in the Homebush Bay area to provide information to businesses on site operations and proposals for the 1998 Royal Easter Show and on OCA's planning and construction timetable, and an opportunity for local businesses to provide input into OCA planning.

<sup>14</sup> The Homebush Bay Events Co-ordination Committee is a forum for planning and organising events involving multiple venues, for crowd and traffic management, and for general site management such as security and waste management. Chaired by an OCA officer and with members including SOCOG until 2001, post-Games membership is drawn from local Councils, existing and future venue managers and service providers including police and emergency services, and local business representatives.

<sup>15</sup> The Olympic Waterways Working Committee advises Government, and statutory agencies, on the co-ordination of the range of issues associated with Olympics and Paralympics activities impacting on Sydney Harbour waterways, including the area outside Sydney Heads and the Manly circle. Chaired by an OCA officer, membership comprised SOCOG and the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games and all eight State government agencies: the Office of Marine Administration; Sydney Ports Corporation; Waterways Authority; NSW Department of Transport; Environment Protection Agency; National Parks and Wildlife Service; Darling Harbour Authority; and the NSW Department of Urban Affairs & Planning.

<sup>16</sup> Established in 1996, the Social Impacts Advisory Committee provides advice and recommendations for appropriate strategies and actions on matters relating to the assessment and management of the social impacts of the Games. The committee was chaired by the Reverend Harry Herbert, Chair of the Board of Social Responsibility for the Uniting Church of Australia, with membership drawn from SOCOG and OCA, and from five State Government agencies: the Cabinet Office, the Department of Community Services, the Ageing and Disability Department, Department of Urban Affairs & Planning, and the Department of Consumer Affairs. Members were also drawn from nine other organisations:

Other groups in the network of interest groups and specialist advisory bodies included the Environment Forum; Business Roundtable; Precinct Operations Planning Group; Showground Precinct Group; Protocol Working Group; and Event planning, Event transport, and Event debriefing groups.

The number of fulltime officers in the OCA was never high, growing from 87 in June 1995 to 213 in June 1999. In contrast, some 40 000 people were employed in construction projects, the most intensive being the Showground. The number of people employed in the preparation and staging of the Olympics also included significant numbers of public sector staff other than those on the establishment of the OCA, SOCOG and ORTA. The Premier's Department took the role of lead agency in devising and implementing strategy for reassignment of public sector employees for Games purposes. There was also deployment of skilled people from training programs to provide the specialised workforce necessary in areas of high demand before and during the Games. These areas covered a wide range such as transport, health, security, waste disposal, fire protection, environment protection, airspace control and the special preparations to the city to ensure visitors an enjoyable, safe and memorable experience.<sup>17</sup>

With construction of the venues all but completed by the end of 1999, 'overlay' priorities were set in train and fixtures and fittings specifically for the Games were installed at all the venues from early in 2000. Homebush Bay was by now a focus for sporting, recreation and entertainment events, with OCA responsible for site management.

OCA's coordination role emerges as a key to any assessment of the success of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games and the 2000 Paralympics. Envisaging the 'big picture', charting the course, managing the complex dynamics, adjusting priorities and resources to keep an integrated and coherent picture emerging evokes something of epic voyages of exploration into uncharted waters, or the world's first manned space flights. When so many triumphs were recognised, the less celebrated skills of organisational design and public sector management deserve their places with the winners – and the careful dissection of 'what went wrong' is just as essential to the long run, as in other epics of navigation.

A key feature in shaping the organisational model for delivering the physical infrastructure for Sydney 2000 was the emphasis on fluidity, and the coordination concept itself flowed into an

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the NSW Council of Social Services; the NSW Ecumenical Council; Shelter NSW; the Local Government Association; the Ethnic Communities Council; the Public Interest Advocacy Centre; NSW Aboriginal Land Council; the Pensioners and Superannuants Federation; and People with Disabilities NSW Inc.

<sup>17</sup> Richmond 26 October 1995, pp.7-8.

integration in the year of the Games. From December 1999, a Games Coordination Group (GCOG) chaired by the Olympics Minister and SOCOG President Michael Knight, linked the senior executives of the six key government agencies – John Coates, David Richmond, Mick O’Brien, Sandy Hollway, Jim Sloman, Michael Eyers, Bob Leece, Geoff Amos, Peter Ryan and Paul McKinnon.<sup>18</sup>

In February 2000 the OCA took responsibility for a package of venue operational programs and budgets, under an agreement to assist SOCOG’s financial position by guaranteeing both price and service delivery. The following month SOCOG, ORTA, OCA PR and communications units merged to deliver a single Sydney 2000 information strategy. An Executive Communications Group, chaired in rotation by the three CEOs, was supported by a Sydney 2000 Working Group of management staff from the three agencies.

At ‘Games Time’ all agencies involved were thus integrated at operational level, streamlining all their functions. The final linking was put into place when on 29 August 2000 David Richmond became Director-General of Sydney 2000, the key manager of policy and operations for the entire Games team and workforce for the period of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

## **2.2 Delivering the venues**

Under its originating Act, the OCA was responsible for construction of venues and facilities, and also for negotiating and implementing agreements for the use of existing venues for SOCOG. Such agreements were made for road cycling; for the Olympics triathlon (Opera House forecourt, Botanic Gardens and Government House); and included the use of Darling Harbour convention and exhibition facilities, Bondi beach; Rushcutters Bay reserves, and interstate venues for football.

Temporary facilities constructed ranged from the largest - perhaps the water polo venue at the Ryde Aquatic Leisure Centre, where capacity was expanded from 4 500 to 17 000, and 4 000 of this additional seating retained for permanent use. Among the smallest temporary facilities projects were the barriers and pontoons for the triathlon, or the ‘long blue line’ along Sydney streets that marked the route of the marathon.

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<sup>18</sup> John Coates, President of the AOC, chaired the SOCOG Sports Commission; Mick O’Brien was the Deputy CEO of OCA under David Richmond; Jim Sloman and Michael Eyers were Deputies to SOCOG CEO Sandy Hollway; Bob Leece was CEO of ORTA and Geoff Amos his Deputy. Police Commissioner Peter Ryan and OSCC Commander Paul McKinnon completed the top level group.

New, permanent sporting facilities were built in Sydney at six satellite venues, Penrith, Horsley Park, Cecil Park, Bankstown, Blacktown and Fairfield. After rehabilitation of a former sand and gravel quarry near Penrith, the first stage of the canoeing and rowing facilities at Penrith Lakes opened in July 1995, with competition facilities opened on 12 March 1996. The final stage comprised the two boatsheds, the \$6.6 million Regatta Centre Pavilion with retractable seating and roofing, and another facility, the Penrith Whitewater Stadium, near the warm-up lake. Managed and operated by a company established by Penrith City Council, the Whitewater Stadium seats 5 000 spectators on grassed banks, with temporary grandstands seating 8 500 constructed for the Games. The Sydney International Regatta Centre officially opened in January 1998.

Construction of the \$37 million Equestrian Centre at Horsley Park, 28 kilometres west of Homebush, began in November 1997 and was completed in July 1999. Temporary grandstands were built to take the main arena seating capacity to 20 000, with stabling for 340 horses for the Olympics and Paralympics. With an additional \$6 million development of surrounding parkland, the Centre provides 25 kilometres of horse trails.

Development of the Sydney International Shooting Centre on a 78-hectare site at Cecil Park near Liverpool began six months later, in March 1998. Built at a cost of \$30 million, including \$3.2 million for electronic targetry, the facility, with its main complex featuring a sweeping angled roof extending to nine metres in height, was opened on 30 October 1999.

Construction of the Dunc Gray Velodrome at Bankstown began on 11 September 1998, on land provided by Bankstown City Council, under an agreement by which the Council has responsibility for operating the facility after the Games. The Velodrome, a compact domed structure with an enclosed area of 11 000 square metres, was designed with a metal decked roof with skylights and light-controlled louvres to maximise natural lighting and eliminate shadows on the 250 x 7 metre Baltic pine banked track. The \$41 million facility was named after the athlete who became Australia's first cycling gold medallist in Los Angeles in 1932.

At Blacktown, facilities for Olympic softball were constructed which could later be used for baseball, athletics, shotput, discus, and javelin, and a mountain bike course of 6.9 kilometres was developed in the hills of Fairfield City Farm.

But the centre of this semicircle of construction activity was Homebush Bay, nineteen kilometres west of the city centre. The centrepiece of the Sydney 2000 bid, Homebush Bay was the arena of the most intensive building program for the Sydney 2000 Games. In 1984 the State Sports Centre had been built there, and in 1988 the Bicentennial Park was completed. As part of its bid undertakings, the Fahey Government had completed construction of two major facilities at

Homebush Bay in 1994, the Sydney International Athletic Centre and the Sydney International Aquatic Centre.<sup>19</sup>

But a key element was missing – a coherent plan for the development of Homebush Bay that would advance all three complex planning aspects – creating a successful centre for the Sydney 2000 Games, addressing the environmental requirements, and ensuring development would create assets for the future. This was a top priority for the OCA from its inception. Eminent urban designers as well as economists, engineers and traffic integration experts were brought together to produce a Masterplan for Homebush Bay. Approved in February 1996, the Masterplan concept involved four project elements: an urban core of sporting, entertainment, exhibition and commercial sites; the Newington urban district to serve as the Olympic Village and develop as a residential suburb thereafter; the Millennium Parklands; and waterfront development on the shores of the Bay.

The need to negotiate the relocation of existing operations from Homebush Bay in order to develop the Masterplan posed an immediate problem for the OCA. The proprietor of the Primo P & M Quality Smallgoods had been unwilling to move his business, the last of a number of smallgoods factories formerly operating adjacent to the Homebush Abattoirs. Negotiations reached a successful conclusion in December 1995, allowing the Masterplan to proceed.<sup>20</sup>

Successful outcomes for the urban core depended on the development of facilities to serve regular sporting, recreational and community events. A key event suited to the new site was the NSW Royal Agricultural Society's annual Easter Show. The existing Showground at Moore Park to the east of the city centre had been the venue for this popular and much loved event since 1882. While the decision to vacate the Moore Park site and move to Homebush Bay was made in 1988, negotiations to transfer the Show were protracted. In September 1996 the Royal Agricultural Society signed an agreement with the OCA for a 99-year lease of the new site, with the NSW government retaining ownership.<sup>21</sup>

The construction of the new Showground was planned along three fronts – developing an overall public domain design and constructing the main arena, wood-chopping stadium, horticulture building, and the pavilions for showing dogs and cats; constructing the Exhibition Building and RAS Administrative Building; and constructing the major pavilions. The target – to hold the 1998 Royal Easter Show in its new home – meant each detail of the planning and management on this

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<sup>19</sup> Construction of both commenced in April 1992; the Athletic Centre was opened on 12 March 1994 and the Aquatic Centre on 15 October 1994

<sup>20</sup> OCA *Annual Report* 1996, p.13

<sup>21</sup> *Moving the Showground Home* Sydney, OCA, 1998

triple front had to be unerring. No less essential was a fourth element - public transport facilities capable of meeting Show needs by Easter 1998, Olympic and Paralympic needs in 2000, and for future projections of the emergence of Homebush Bay as Sydney's heartland.

Construction of the Showground facilities started immediately agreement was reached in 1996. The design solution for the Exhibition and RAS Administrative buildings was based on a main building comprising three rectangular pavilions and a domed circular hall. Like all the new buildings, both were planned so as to serve multiple functions beyond the Games, including private events such as weddings and large parties. Woven into the design of the precinct is a 'Showground vernacular'. Many of the new buildings incorporate an iconic suggestion of their key role in the annual Agricultural Show – like the Charles Moses Stadium, the wood-chopping venue, with its circle of recycled telegraph poles. The dramatic Southee complex, for horticultural exhibitions, has boldly coloured, curving masonry walls setting a garden trend for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The Clydesdale Pavilion, a beautiful working building suited in style to the much-loved breed of horse, was built from recycled hardwood, including timber salvaged from an old bridge at Homebush Bay and former warehouses in Sydney's Botany industrial area.

Construction of the main Show arena commenced in October 1997. The centre of the Showground site, the arena has five stands seating 10 000 under curved roofs, with capacity for another 10 000 spectators around the arena. The venue for Olympic Baseball, outside Showtime this is now the State's Baseball Stadium. The Showground includes four pavilions designed on a north-south axis (three for cattle and one for horses) and three more horse pavilions lie on an east-west line. The Schmidt Arena is for horses, while ponies are shown in two arenas at the Kelly and Jenko Pavilions, adjacent to the horse trail through the Millennium Parklands. Dog showing takes place in the Howie Complex and the Wynne Pavilion, with its circular judging room and conical 'witch's hat' spire is for cats. The Paddington Pavilion houses pigs, goats and alpacas at the Show, and the Badgery Pavilion, a sprung structure relocated at Homebush, serves as the animal nursery. An outdoor theatre, a pavilion for sheep and wool and another for poultry, complete the Showground – these pavilions doubling as the Sydney Indoor Sports Centre at other times of the year.

Though extensive car parking areas were included in planning for Homebush Bay, the Games 'people movement' strategy was based entirely on public transport by trains, buses and ferries. The opening of the new Showground in March 1998 and the two Easter Shows that followed trialled successful movement using the new Railway Station, special routing of Sydney's buses, and the Homebush Bay ferry wharf opened in September 1997.

The key to the success of getting people to the first Show in the new location was the new Olympic Railway Station, begun in August 1996 and completed on time and on budget. The first train ran on 24 November 1997 and the official opening was held on 8 March 1998. Just before the opening the Primo site was finally vacated, the factory demolished, and the cattle lawns and a park created on the site for the opening of the first Easter Show in its new home in April 1998.

Prominent among other onsite obstacles to the coherent development of Homebush Bay were 47 transmission towers linking ten kilometres of high-voltage overhead powerlines, built in the 1960s. As well as making a substantial footprint on the site, the huge towers and mass of lines dominated the Olympic Park landscape. A sponsorship agreement enabled the \$40 million task of replacing these overhead power lines with underground cables to proceed. The task of laying the cabling underground began in 1997 - the 1.45 kilometre middle section was probably the largest cable rollout ever undertaken in Australia. Once the cabling was in place, electrified and fully functional, work above ground began, and by November that year half the towers and all the powerlines had been dismantled. Removal of the towers created new space for the Showground carnival area, and provided additional green space throughout the site.<sup>22</sup>

Work on the Showground had begun four weeks after Sydney Lord Mayor Frank Sartor was handed the Olympic flag at the closing ceremony of the Atlanta Olympic Games on 4 August 1996. Another major project began at Homebush that September, on a 16-hectare site that had been the main cattle holding yards for the Homebush Abattoirs. That unprepossessing site was to become the 'jewel in the crown' of the Sydney Olympic Park, the \$690 million Olympic Stadium. The statistics hint at the scale of the project – a workforce of 1 500 moved 55 000 cubic metres of earth, brought 90 000 cubic metres of concrete in 18 000 trucks, set 2 600 piles, erected 12 000 tonnes of structural steel and almost as much again of reinforcing, and laid 1 million masonry blocks and 180km of electrical cabling.

On 6 March 1999 a crowd of 100 000 people watched the first major event at Olympic Stadium, a Rugby League match, and on 12 June 1999 the Stadium was officially opened. Six months later, construction of the next venue, the Olympic Tennis Centre, was completed and in January 2000 the \$39 million Tennis Centre hosted the Adidas International (NSW Open). The Centre's most distinctive feature, its circular centre court stadium, was awarded first prize in the 2000 Royal Australian Institute of Architects annual awards. An innovative lightweight roof provides shade to 70 per cent of the 10 000 seats in the centre court stadium.

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<sup>22</sup> *Moving the Showground Home*, pp.54-55

The peak years of construction at the Sydney Olympic Park were 1997 and 1998. In addition to the Showground, the Stadium, and the satellite venues, the Hockey Centre, Olympic Village, SuperDome, Sydney International Archery Centre were all built in this period.

In May 1997 work began on the Hockey Centre; nine months later the hockey pitch was handed over and on 28 August 1998 the \$15.5 million project was complete. The curved roof, which looks like a sail floating in space, sits 25 metres above the ground and is suspended from a 41 metre high mast. This innovative design means there are no columns above the seating platform and all spectators get an uninterrupted view of the action on the field, with its Balsam 91.44x54.86 synthetic pitches, for warm-up and competition.

In June 1995, the Carr Government had purchased a 230-hectare site valued at \$70 million for the Olympic Village. Construction of the Village, to provide accommodation for the Olympic and Paralympic athletes, began in November 1997 with private sector funding and a government contribution to the costs of land and construction.<sup>23</sup>

The \$197 million Sydney SuperDome was the first structure of its kind ever built in Australia - a gigantic indoor sport and entertainment arena, with two seating configurations for Games events: 15 000 for gymnastics at the Olympics and 18 000 for wheelchair basketball at the Paralympics. Construction of the fully roofed complex began in September 1997 and was completed in September 1999.

In February 1998 building of the archery complex began on a 6.5-hectare site adjoining the Haslams Creek and Mangrove Creek wetland areas in Homebush Bay. Six months later, the \$3 million Sydney International Archery Park was officially opened, part of a network of open space forming the Millennium Parklands.

The successful coordination of these multiple projects to deliver the Olympic and Paralympic venues was a considerable achievement, recorded in the physical results, the theatre for the Games events. It was a success reported to the world as the magic of Sydney 2000 unfolded in that theatre.

### **2.3 Shaping the setting**

This was however only the first measure of success. The emphasis on environmental enhancement in Sydney's bid for the 2000 Olympic Games meant that both environmentally sustainable development (ESD) and design and planning standards were vital components in the seven years of

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<sup>23</sup> Richmond 26 October 1999, p.4

preparation for the Olympics and Paralympics. All preparations for the Olympics, including the satellite venues, were required to implement ESD principles and to meet appropriate design and planning standards. At Horsley Park for instance, the OCA and its contractors rehabilitated heavily degraded farmland, protecting the threatened Cumberland Plain Woodland and the headwaters of Eastern Creek. Water quality at the Equestrian Centre is managed with nine water-polishing ponds, a stormwater drainage and wetland filtration system and measures to minimise damage from heavy rains. At the Sydney International Shooting Centre at Cecil Park, recycled ironbark, blackbutt and red gum timber used in construction was sourced from a former abattoir located under Brisbane's Gateway Bridge, a Toowoomba sawyard, a rowing shed in Tweed Heads, and a Rockhampton railway. An electronic scoring target system was installed to eliminate the need for paper targets.

But Homebush Bay was by far the greatest environmental challenge. It was neither greenfields site nor town precinct. Despite the urban renewal works begun in 1984, at the time of the bid much of the area could best be described as a 'greyfields' site. The creation of areas that are neither town nor country, but borderlands for industry and waste, is a phenomenon of urban growth in an industrial age. Most of Australia's cities followed this pattern. By the 1830s Sydney had grown beyond its first sewage and rubbish dumps, and the Tank Stream and the waterfront reclamation began in Sydney Cove and Cockle Bay, silted and sullied with effluent. Next Botany and Glebe marked the borderlands, sites for necessary urban 'nuisances' like slaughterhouses, tanning and scouring factories, and waste dumps. By 1850 the mangrove borders and creeks had in their turn become noisome swamps, and reclamation created sites for the first government abattoir on Glebe Island, and wharves in Blackwattle and Rozelle Bays. By the turn of the century the city had pushed its borderlands to Homebush Bay and in 1907 land was resumed there to establish a State Abattoir and in 1911 the State Brickworks was established.

Fifty years later, with the city pushing further westwards around it, Homebush Bay had assembled a typical 20<sup>th</sup> Century collection of borderlands 'nuisances' – the Naval Armaments Depot at Newington, the State Brickworks, garbage tips and industrial waste dumps, the Abattoirs, and their associated industries. As the city grew, the problem escalated as successive governments passed it on.

That problem legacy was transformed when Homebush Bay was made the centrepiece of the successful Sydney 2000 bid. It was transformed into the toughest planning challenge, the 'greyfields' site which must be developed according to ESD in order to be successfully remediated, but which will also had to be designed and planned to suit the needs and expectations of a large city in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The story of the creation of Olympic Park at Homebush Bay is not only the story of successfully providing outstanding Olympic facilities with potential to serve long-term purposes. The greater story than the coordination and construction triumphs is the ongoing transformation of wastelands to wetlands, of borderland to heartland. What follows is a brief summary of how this transformation was set in train.

Planning, design and construction for the Olympics and Paralympics took place within a framework of legislation and regulation supporting ecologically sustainable development (ESD), design quality, the public domain, and public participation in the development approval process. A specific planning instrument, State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) No. 38, ensured consistent planning for all Games development, and that all development was consistent with ESD as well as incorporating the public consultation process required under the OCA Act.

The Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning was the consent authority for Olympic projects, and was responsible for ensuring all development applications were consistent with the Environmental Guidelines prepared by the Sydney Olympic 2000 Bid Company in September 1993.

The Government Architect's Office produced on behalf of OCA a public domain strategy developing standards and principles of design quality in publicly accessible areas at Homebush Bay. In May 1996 the Government appointed an Urban Design Review Panel, chaired by the Government Architect, Chris Johnson. This high-level panel's task was to report independently on Olympic projects prior to approval decisions, in order to ensure consistency with the Masterplan and a cohesive approach to design at Homebush Bay.

OCA produced development guidelines for Homebush Bay including the Masterplan and OCA's Environment, Transport and Landscape Strategies as guides to developers and facility operators on ESD practices and desired outcomes in planning, development and management of Homebush Bay. OCA's 1995 Environment Strategy for Homebush Bay identified three key ESD areas: conserving species, conserving resources, and pollution control. These measures of performance during development and in ongoing use of the site identified the protection and enhancement of ecosystems, and the quality of life for residents, workers and visitors as factors in conserving species. Conserving resources involved conserving and recycling water, managing energy and materials, preserving open space and minimising the import of topsoil. Pollution control required minimising and managing waste, soil remediation, improved water quality and flow from Homebush Bay into the Parramatta River, limiting the impact of night lighting, noise, and improving air quality.

Establishing a coherent strategy with practical and effective measures was the key to devising effective techniques and also to optimising compliance during the development process. A key example of the extent of the 'greyfields' challenge was Haslam's Creek, a waterway which for decades had been a dump for garbage, oil products, chemical waste and foundry debris. An estimated two million cubic metres of this refuse were heaped in mounds up to eighteen metres in height, lining the creek. Removal would have meant simply putting the problem somewhere else – continuing the pattern of successive borderlands of waste. Instead, the waste was consolidated into a few areas which were engineered to prevent leaching from the waste into the groundwater or into the creek. An impermeable clay cap was then placed on top and gabions, or retaining walls – the largest in the southern hemisphere – built to prevent material sliding into the creek. The work was finished with walking and cycling paths along the top of the gabions, with plantings of native trees and shrubs.

Other techniques for pollution control included building settlement ponds to catch and monitor stormwater run-off during construction, pollutant traps on all stormwater drains throughout the Olympic Park, and special ventilation solutions in the animal pavilions in the Showground.

Practices employed in conserving species also covered a wide range. Preservation of the former Brickwork's clay quarry has increased the population of an endangered species, the Green and Golden Bell Frog, while the relocation of mature trees from the Olympic Railway Station and Stadium construction sites enhanced open areas of the Olympic Park.

Every building incorporates ESD design features such as energy-efficient lighting, maximum use of recycled water, stormwater collection and re-use, low-water-use fittings and significant reductions in PVC use. The SuperDome has a 70kilowatt solar power system on the banquet hall roof, the biggest rooftop solar power system in Australia, providing power into the State electricity grid. The Stadium design allows maximum daylight through specially constructed light voids, reducing the need for artificial lighting, and gas-fired co-generators serve as a backup to the main electricity supply. All rainwater is collected from the Stadium roof and stored in four large tanks for irrigation of the pitch, while the toilets are flushed with recycled water.

An essential component of the Games preparation was the 'bigger picture' of an environmental and social legacy. The approach to developing Homebush Bay was formulated in the context of the national and international significance of the project, and of its long-term economic, environmental and social effects. For two months in 2000 the eyes of the world were on Sydney's Olympic Park. From then, the attention of the State's voters and taxpayers, and investors, are on the legacy of the Games, on the vital statistics of economic and environmental cost and benefit.



## 3 THE GAMES

### 3.1 Games Time

In September 2000, seven years after the bid was won and four years after Sydney's Lord Mayor received the Olympic flag at the closing ceremony of the 1996 Atlanta Games, all was ready and waiting for the opening ceremony of Sydney 2000. The 11 000 athletes from 200 countries and their support teams moved into the Athletes Village and other accommodation, and the members of the international media settled into their media centre. At the same time, thousands of people in government agencies and private enterprise plus an army of some 60 000 volunteers went into action.<sup>24</sup>

The operational procedures for the Olympic Games had been activated for some nine months. With the switch to operational mode in December 1999 the Games Coordination Group was established, bringing together the eleven top executives of the key agencies responsible for staging the Sydney 2000 Games. Operational integration across functional areas of the Games bodies followed the creation of GCOG, the first step the streamlining of authority with the Minister for the Olympics, responsible for both OCA and ORTA, also President of SOCOG. The final step, the appointment of David Richmond as Director-General of SOCOG, was made just one month before the Games.

The Sydney 2000 alliance of agencies aimed to optimise efficiency and coherence in service delivery, consistent communications, and quick and streamlined decision-making. With all agencies integrated at the operational level, one functional team delivered the Games. In February 2000 OCA took over venue operational programs and budgets for SOCOG, formalising the close working relationship that had evolved. The formal integration of these two groups at all management levels optimised the operational delivery of venue services for all venues other than the Athlete's Village and complemented OCA's role in providing the overlay in all venues.

From February 2000 the single consistent Sydney 2000 brand and strategy achieved a coordinated communications approach through the Executive Communications Group, coordinating the six program clusters: spectator communications, urban domain, business travel, ticket sales, environment, and lastly, the major attitudinal campaign, 'Welcome the World'.

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<sup>24</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald* 4 November 2000

By Games Time, government agencies were in practice fused into a unified organisational complex under one 'Sydney 2000' banner, with the Director-General of Sydney 2000 the key policy and operational manager for the entire Games team and workforce. As the core agency in this final team, the OCA had moved from its primary task of delivering new facilities & venues to its operational functions, including the implementation of financial management controls involving review and approval of all Games operating plans apart from the sports-specific functions of the SOCOG Sports Commission. These operational functions included the delivery, maintenance and removal of overlay, the temporary facilities specific to the 1 000% Games Time increase of use, such as temporary seating, tents, toilets, and construction such as the temporary underpasses and bridges around Homebush Bay. The attractive design of some overlay items – such as the Samsung Rendezvous, 'one of the most photographed sights of Homebush' and the added seating at the Aquatic Centre drew some regret that these were impermanent.<sup>25</sup>

During Games Time a 'Main Operations Centre' (MOC) commanded by the operations chiefs of SOCOG and OCA and comprising key functional and venue executives operated on a 24-hour basis. The 'engine room' of decision-making was the Games Coordination Group who met each morning to consider reports from the MOC and the Olympic Communications Centre. These meetings decided ongoing strategy and resolved questions, and developed media strategy for that day. After their meeting, the GCOG then met with the Games Time IOC Coordination Commission to resolve issues of mutual importance. Representatives of National Olympic Committees and international federations also attended these meetings.

### **3.2 Facilities & services**

At Games Time the OCA coordinated the provision of health services, management of waterways, and provision of hospitality venues for VIP guests. The OCA was also responsible for non-sport venue-based operational functions. Among the venue operational programs and budgets outsourced to OCA by SOCOG were venue acquisition, overlay, environment operations, spectator services, look, catering, cleaning and waste management for all venues other than the Villages.

If the construction of venues and facilities was 'building the theatre' for Sydney 2000, just as vital was the staging of the Games. The importance of the operational status of all facilities at Games Time was the responsibility of the OCA, including the special Paralympics facilities. The detailed specifications to assist spectators at every venue, as well as Paralympians at specially designed venues, covered a wide range, including such commonsense items as providing each seating tier at the Stadium with its own enclosed concourse with food, beverage, merchandise and toilet facilities.

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<sup>25</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald* 7 October 2000, pp.34 and 35

Other provisions for the Stadium include lifts to all levels with audio signals and tactile signage controls within reach of people in wheelchairs; a guidance system using tactile floor tiles warning of the tops and bottoms of stairs, ramps, escalators and lift entrances; an assistive listening system, counter heights suitable for wheelchairs, plenty of accessible toilets, and an accessible entrance at each bank of turnstiles. These facilities not only had to be in place, they had to be kept at optimal function every day of the Games.

A key strategy in delivering facilities was to minimise logistic problems, particularly for the Paralympics. For this reason fourteen of the eighteen Paralympic Games events were held at Sydney Olympic Park, with satellite venues for the four remaining sports all arranged within forty minutes of Homebush Bay. Both Olympic and Paralympic athletes were housed in the Olympic Village built next to Sydney Olympic Park, the accommodation also incorporating accessibility specifications. The population of the Village during the Paralympics was 6 943, including 3 824 athletes. With 123 countries competing, the Sydney Paralympic Games were the largest Paralympic Games ever, with 20 countries (including East Timor) more than the 1996 Atlanta Paralympics. The number of athletes made the Paralympics larger than at Australia's first Olympic Games, in Melbourne in 1956.

At Games Time the OCA was responsible for managing and controlling public spaces at Sydney Olympic Park. More than 5.5 million people attended the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games, with the attendance record set at Sydney Olympic Park on Day 8, Saturday 23 September when 400 345 people attended the day's events. The previous record crowd was on Easter Monday 1998, when 187 000 people attended the first Royal Easter Show at Homebush Bay. The public domain at Olympic Park was designed to provide attractive, functional and environmentally sustainable spaces not only for the vast Olympics crowds, but also for those attending every event staged there as Homebush Bay developed into Sydney's future recreational and sporting heartland.

Among the most striking features Olympic spectators noted were the fountains and water features that ordered and enlivened the exciting and unfamiliar surroundings. As new arrivals streamed from the Olympic Station, they were drawn to cross the high ground of the Boulevard to the Fig Grove by the sight of the veils of water from the fountain there, with water playing throughout the Olympic Plaza. The tree-lined Boulevard ran from Boundary Creek in the south to Haslam's Creek in the north, where a pier extended over water treatment ponds.

The large open space of Olympic Plaza with its 'backgammon' patterned paving simultaneously addressed the buildings on both sides of the Boulevard. The broad red paving extending over the entire space, created a vibrant place thronged with crowds, the very hearth of Homebush Bay.

During the Olympic Games this was one of Australia's busiest as well as largest civic spaces, where crowds gathered for events at the Stadium and the Arena.

The public domain, extending eastwards from the Olympic Plaza to the Millennium Parklands, includes five green corridors running east-west, each with a distinctive character. The corridors progress from the Olympic Station 'urban' green corridor with its grove of jacaranda and Manchurian pear trees bordered by cafes and shops, to the 'natural' corridor of casuarina, water gums and other wetland trees tracing Boundary Creek. The trees included eucalypts, brushboxes and figs in Plaza Park, with a Fig Grove comprising mature trees transplanted from the former abattoir paddocks.

The overall design concept for the public spaces of Homebush Bay enabled orderly control and Games Time management by the OCA. Overall Games Time security planning and implementation was developed on the dual security model adopted by the NSW Police Commissioner and the SOCOG Board. Ultimate responsibility for all Games Time core security rested with the NSW Police Service in partnership with SOCOG, responsible for ancillary security functions. The Olympic Security Command Centre coordinated all aspects of Olympic security.

### **3.3 Public transport**

ORTA was responsible for delivering the biggest public transport operation in Australia's history. From Friday 15 September to Sunday 1 October 2000, Sydney's main public transport system of rail, bus and ferry recorded some 38 million journeys, establishing all-time records for each mode of transport. More than 4.66 million people travelled to Sydney Olympic Park by public transport over the 19 days (including the dress rehearsals on 9 and 13 September). A further 1.5 million used public transport to reach other Olympic venues, with two thirds of this number travelling to the venues in eastern and western suburbs, and the remainder going to Darling Harbour. From Wednesday 18 October to Sunday 29 October 2000, 1.17 million people used public transport to travel to Sydney Olympic Park for the Paralympic Games.

ORTA, established in April 1997, coordinated delivery of all ground transport services for the Olympics and Paralympics, and serviced the specific transport needs of VIPs, athletes and officials and accredited media. During Games Time it was ORTA's responsibility to ensure the optimal functioning of Sydney's public and private transport networks for Olympic spectators, commuters and travellers. ORTA coordinated different transport organisations including rail services, management of the road system, the procurement of Olympic buses and drivers and Olympic bus fleet management. Key elements of Games Time transport planning included free public transport for all Olympic ticket holders, athletes, officials, and the Olympic workforce; providing 24-hour

train services; establishing the Olympic Park railway station and loop; providing nine key regional bus routes to transport Olympic spectators and workforce to Sydney Olympic Park; venue transport plans detailing the different routes for athletes, officials and spectators for each Games venue; resident parking schemes protecting streets in every competition venue precinct; free 'Park & Ride' sites for individual venues and 'Park and Ride' facilities at regional railway stations. Despite the systems testing, flexibility and responsiveness was also required. With bus delays occurring early in September, the fleet was supplemented with buses transferred from the regular city routes and additional interstate buses, with 500 guides recruited to assist the interstate drivers.

The Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games were Australia's biggest ever transport operation, with 3.52 million rail passengers and over 1.13 million passengers on the 13 Sydney Olympic Park bus routes. During the Games passengers using Sydney Ferries topped the 1 million mark – with the 80 322 passengers on a single day (Sunday 24 September) topping the record set a century before when 80 000 people travelled by ferry to participate in the founding of the Australian nation on 1 January 1901. Altogether, 4 662 250 people travelled to Sydney Olympic Park by public transport during the Olympic Games. This record public transport operation included 29.5 million trips on the CityRail network over the 19 days of the Olympic timetable, more than twice the normal schedule. Of the rail passengers, more than 3.24 million arrived at Olympic Park Station, while over 282 000 walked to Olympic Park from Concord West station. An additional 1.5 million people travelled to satellite venues. Included in the total 1.1 million people who travelled to Sydney Olympic Park during the Paralympic Games was Australia's biggest ever group travel operation, with 360 000 people in organised school and other groups.

Preparations for the Olympic and Paralympic transport operation included 17 transport test events from March 1998 to August 2000 with 3.9 million public transport passengers. The grand total of those who travelled on public transport to Sydney Olympic Park in events coordinated by ORTA was thus over 9.5 million people, more than half the entire population of Australia.

### **3.4 The 'best Games ever'**

Whatever the mode of transport, the first arrival at Homebush Bay was spectacular, and memorable. On the day of the Opening Ceremony, those pouring out of the buses at the north gate, near the Millennium Parklands and the Archery Centre, made their way past the Showgrounds to the Stadium. Those entering from the south gate progressed past the Tennis Centre, Hockey Centre, State Sports Centre and the Aquatic Centre to the Olympic Plaza. The most arresting impact on arrival at Sydney Olympic Park was experienced by those arriving underground, emerging from their trains up into the Olympic railway terminal, with its association with the iconic railway stations of the world.

At Games Time the Stadium was the heart of Olympic Park. The athletes staying in the Village reached it across Haslam's Creek to the west of Olympic Park, while media representatives housed in the Downes Pavilion, part of the International Broadcast Centre during the Olympics, passed the SuperDome to reach the Stadium. The Stadium was not however the tallest of the venues – that was the sailed roof of the Hockey Centre grandstand, with its 41-metre mast.

Once the capacity crowd of 110 000 were seated in the Stadium for the opening ceremony on 15 September 2000, there was nowhere else to be. For the 4.5 billion spectators who had the Stadium in their homes in 220 countries around the world, there was no doubt where the heart of the Olympics was beating. The stadium was the largest outdoor venue in modern Olympic history, with the stadia for the Los Angeles Games in 1984, the 1988 Seoul Games and the 1980 Moscow Games next in line.

The story of the OCA is of course incomplete without its climax, the six weeks of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. The 'best Games ever' seemed somehow to capture even the most cynical and least sports-minded, right from the spectacular start of the opening ceremony. The Olympics opening ceremony pre-empted the centennial celebration of the birth of the Australian nation on 1 January 2001, in the extraordinary success of its artistic director, David Atkins, in projecting a picture of the nation to the world. From the moment a lone stockrider burst into the vast space of the Stadium Arena, through the unfolding of the Deep Sea Dreaming segment with its unforgettable imagery and performances, and into the comic relief of cardboard-box sheep and lawnmower ballet – for Australians and for international visitors this was the start of the magic woven by Sydney 2000. By the time the Australian athletes completed the parade into the arena and the Olympic flag was carried in by eight former gold medallists, it was clear that this ceremony managed to integrate a welcome to the world, celebration of the host nation, and an honouring of the Olympic ideals, in a spectacularly successful entertainment. Not one of the spectators in the packed Stadium, nor anyone of the millions of television viewers around the world, will ever forget the culmination of the Sydney 2000 opening ceremony, the fire-and-water lighting of the cauldron by Cathy Freeman, handed the torch from a relay of women Olympians.

For the next six weeks the Olympic Stadium was the scene of more capacity events, the closing ceremony on 31 September, and the opening and closing ceremonies of the Paralympics on 18 and 29 October. During the Olympics, all track and field events, the finish of the marathon, and the men's football final were held in the Stadium, with its seating configuration including temporary open grandstands on both ends as well as the two permanent roofed grandstands seating 60 000 under cover. This configuration created the continuous lower seating bowl surrounding the athletics track which became so well known to the world when time after time, victorious

Olympians and Paralympians reached over the barrier to share the moment of a lifetime with families seated in this area.

Though Sydney's Spring weather was near perfect for most days of the Olympics, spectators had reason to appreciate the protection afforded by the Stadium's translucent, saddle-shaped polycarbonate roof on Day 14 of the Olympics. At 34.5C this was Sydney's hottest September day for 35 years, and the second hottest September day on record. Spectators at the Paralympics tested the Stadium in a fuller range of weather, both blazing sun, and wind and rain. Developed specifically for Australian conditions by allowing maximum natural light the Olympic Stadium is one of the few in the world giving spectators all-weather protection without creating the claustrophobic feel of a fully enclosed dome.

Olympic and Paralympic venues within the Showground at Olympic Park included the Dome and Exhibition Complex, with the circular hall beneath the 42-metre high, timber-framed dome, designed to meet the need to seat 10 000 people around a performance space; the Downes Pavilion, transformed from part of the Olympics international broadcasting centre to the venue for Paralympic power-lifting; and the Baseball Stadium, the main Show arena.

Located between the Baseball Stadium and the SuperDome, Hall 1 in the Sydney Indoor Sports Centre was used for Boccia. At the SuperDome, 15 000 spectators watched the gymnastics events, with 18 000 seats available for Olympics basketball and wheelchair basketball at the Paralympics.

For the Olympic Games, the eastern seating stand at the International Aquatic Centre was expanded, quadrupling the capacity to 17 500, with temporary equipment installed including timing, broadcast and communications systems.

The State Sports Centre was the venue for taekwondo at the Olympics and for table tennis at both the Olympics and the Paralympics, with the main arena seating more than 4 500 people.

The State Hockey Centre was packed to capacity with 15 000 people cheering at the finals of the men's and women's Olympic hockey competitions, and similar crowds for the Paralympics football. Australia has a strong reputation in Olympic hockey. The Hockey Centre upgrade included the addition of accessibility improvements including a lift, fully accessible toilets, wheelchair seating locations with good sightlines, hearing augmentation, tactile floor tiles and gently graded paths from public transport terminals to concourse level.

The Olympics tennis competition was held from 19 – 28 September at the State Tennis Centre, and Paralympic tennis from 20 - 28 October. An additional 7 400 temporary seats were added to

the show and match courts for the Games, and Olympic tennis included for the first time night games on centre court.

The installation of temporary spectator seating for the Olympic and Paralympic Games increased the capacity of the International Aquatic Centre to 17 500 in an expanded eastern stand. This added to the impressive spectacle of the building, rising above the arch truss atop a grassy bank planted with native vegetation..

The population of the Village during the Paralympics was 6 943, including 3 824 athletes. With 123 countries competing, the Sydney Paralympic Games were the largest Paralympic Games ever, with 20 countries (including East Timor) more than the 1996 Atlanta Paralympics. The number of athletes made the Paralympics larger than at Australia's first Olympic Games, in Melbourne in 1956.

### **3.5 Olympic City**

The work of the OCA during Games Time included management and control of the Olympic-related celebrations in the Sydney CBD. The OCA controlled the urban domain planning process that developed concepts for the City centre, with its parklands and foreshores, major retail and restaurant/entertainment precincts, a focus of celebration and entertainment during the Games. One of the distinctive features of the 'Sydney model' was the planned implementation of highly structured urban domain management processes.

Chief features in the City centre were the Olympics Live venues. At the six designated sites 30-square-metre outdoor video screens broadcast live Games television footage, with live entertainment, food and drink stalls, merchandising and visitor information services available at each site. The creation in the City centre of mini Games venues provided manageably dispersed crowds, while maximising the number of people able to witness the Olympic events and share the magic that was Sydney 2000. The sites attracted crowds of between 1 000 and 10 000 every day of the Games, thus also providing the opportunity for sponsor exposure, identified as a key issue in servicing sponsors during Games Time. More than a million people viewed the closing ceremony at the Olympic Live sites.<sup>26</sup> The closing ceremony celebrations around the foreshore of Sydney Harbour, the perfect backdrop for a spectacular fireworks display, were a memorable City event.

The mobilisation of Sydney's physical and social infrastructure for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games required substantial public sector involvement. A key element in the success of Sydney 2000 was the achievement of a working partnership of strong government support in establishing

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<sup>26</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald* 4 November 2000

infrastructure and delivering facilities and services, and of sporting and Olympic experts. Just as important was the process of guided integration of agencies into a unified Games Time team.

Assessing to what extent the very successful operational outcomes were the result of the outputs of the OCA would require a more substantial study than this brief outline history. The question of why these were the 'best Games ever' would canvass wider issues – for instance, about the part played by media and particularly television broadcasting and the Internet. The millennium Games have obvious advantages over the early Games of the modern Olympics. The extraordinary shared joy so many Australians, and overseas visitors, experienced would seem to have sources far deeper than attitudinal programs or promotional campaigns, and that shared spirit was widely remarked during both the Olympics and the Paralympics. Furthermore, as those involved in the first years of Sydney 2000 point out, the 'Sydney model' worked, but that does not necessarily mean the initial model, with higher private sector involvement and government in the background, would necessarily have failed to produce a successful result.<sup>27</sup>

This brief history does however offer evidence that OCA was a key player in making the magic that was Sydney 2000. The physical infrastructure is the essential precondition to a successful Games. Both the venues and the city itself must be shaped to build the theatre. The construction program was behind time when the OCA was established in 1995, and in 1996 the IOC had serious reservations about the likely outcome. Intensive replanning and policy formulation, and the recruitment of key executives to the new agency, did achieve the 'kick start' desired. The delivery of all venues on time was a considerable public works achievement that facilitated the operational stage. Other factors include the principle of inclusiveness adhered to in planning, that produced accessible facilities, and effective solutions such as the Olympic Live sites, intended to draw off crowds into manageable portions, but functioning as party venues for sharing the joy and excitement at Olympic Park. The quality of building design and construction, and of landscape design, demonstrably created a theatre in which magic could be made. Some extra and perhaps indefinable element was added though, to produce the magic of the opening ceremony, and to sustain that effect. This powerful effect continued to intrigue journalists and social commentators long into the post-Games era.

If the connection between the OCA and the magic is complex, the success of OCA in achieving the desired Games Time outcomes is evident. That Games Time was also assessment time for the OCA did not escape the attention of the journalist who noted

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<sup>27</sup> Nick Greiner, interview 28 August 2000 Tape 1B

They have passed the big test: Olympic mode. Along with the many local architects who answered to them, the OCA's technical members have emerged from the odyssey with encyclopedic know-how and experience to share.<sup>28</sup>

That the success of Sydney 2000 was also a success for public administration was also noted, for instance by columnist Adele Horin, who observed 'The Olympics have blown the fallacy that the private sector is always smarter. We need a strong public sector too.'<sup>29</sup> International media reports frequently made similar assessments, such as *The Guardian* writer:

Sydney . . . is indeed putting on the best run and most enjoyable Olympics of all time. . . . The city looks stunning . . . everyone involved is smilingly helpful. And even the public transport system works. Fantastic!<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> 'The big takedown' *Sydney Morning Herald* 7 October 2000

<sup>29</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald* 7 December 2000

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in *Sydney Morning Herald* 23 September 2000

## 4 THE LEGACY

When the President of the International Olympic Committee declared Sydney 2000 Games ‘the best Games ever’, this was as much a statement about the future as about closing off the success of Sydney 2000. One of the key aspects of planning the Sydney Games was this eye to the future. The Games were to provide a legacy to the city, to all Australians, and to the Olympic movement worldwide.

This outline of the history of the Olympic Coordination Authority would not be complete without a brief reference to each of these aspects of the legacy of Sydney 2000. In relation to the city itself, the legacy referred to here is the environmental legacy of Homebush Bay. In relation to the nation, the knowledge /know-how/knowledge broking. In relation to the Olympic movement, the goal/principle/ core of the modern Olympic movement.

### **4.1 Homebush Bay**

Homebush Bay was the centrepiece of the Sydney 2000 bid, the busiest construction precinct pre-Games, and the delight of everyone at both the Olympic and Paralympic Games. In the post-Games era Homebush Bay is the testing ground for the city’s biggest Olympic challenge – to mould a ‘Green Games’ for the second century of the modern Olympics.

From the 1960s, Homebush Bay presented governments with stark evidence of the price of a century of urbanisation in Australia, built on the premise that distancing waste is disappearing waste. With the gradual and expensive remediation of Homebush Bay now begun, that comfortable view can never be retrieved. Environmental repair is necessarily slow, and ongoing, and expensive, and it was essential that the remediation work for Sydney 2000 was a model of accountability.<sup>31</sup> This was required not only in relation to responsible management of the investment of public funds, but also in the involvement of peak environmental organisations.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> The problems were recognised from the foundation of the Olympic Coordination Authority. See for example, Michael Knight’s Olympic speech to NSW Legislative Assembly 24 May 1995

<sup>32</sup> See Olympic Coordination Authority *Environment Report 1998, 1999, 2000*; Environmental Performance of the Olympic Coordination Authority, Review II, January 1997 – December 1998

Reporting was both widely available and accessible. The Olympic Coordination Authority produced a steady flow of engaging Fact Sheets, and a comprehensive and well-designed OCA website.<sup>33</sup> Media strategy kept the environmental issues at centre stage. Hard questions, harsh criticism and records of triumphs were all served up in press, radio and television reports. All served the purpose of a wide recognition of the environmental problems, the solution technology, and the public responsibilities for the future.

The end result of 165 years of dredging and reclamation of the waterfront of Sydney Harbour and the Parramatta River and its bays was starkly evident in widely-shown aerial photographs of Homebush Bay, Wentworth Bay and Haslam's Creek. Each of the stages of work undertaken was recorded in photographs as well as in documents. The visual record was widely published. Notably, the message was conveyed with much more impact in the visual formats of posters, leaflets, television feeds, and the reproduction of professional photograph in the print media. The remediation of Haslam's Creek and Mangrove Creek wetland areas in a network of open space to form the Millennium Parklands was Sydney's open heart surgery. It was a dramatic and very public operation, as the post-operative care might continue to be.

For the the more people frequenting Homebush Bay, the more lessons for the city's third century will be learned from the landscapes there. Anyone attending any event in any venue at Homebush Bay can learn to read their surroundings. In a slow moment at the Stadium, for example, a spectator can not only watch the grass grow, but understand how the Stadium is designed to provide an environment to encourage turf growth.

The success of Homebush Bay for investors, developers, and taxpayers, and for Australian sporting organisations, is thus not in conflict with, nor even separate from, the environmental legacy. In an important sense the outcomes are interdependent.

At the popular Sydney International Aquatic Centre for instance, thousands enjoy the leisure area in an informal sunny space with play pools, spas, a water slide, rapid river ride, bubbling "beach" fountains, spray jets and spurting volcanoes. That enjoyment can only be enhanced by knowing how closely recreational advantage and environmental responsibility have been integrated. The technical achievements of the fully automated two-vessel ozone system, providing world-class water filtration and sanitisation while using chlorine levels three times lower than conventional pools could also be on display. How the water quality meets the stringent Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur competition requirements and Australian and international health standards is

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<sup>33</sup> This outstanding website offered regularly updated progress reports on venues and facilities for both the Olympics and the Paralympics, featuring current photographs of construction and an image archive as work progressed. By Games Time, the [www.oca.nsw.gov.au](http://www.oca.nsw.gov.au) website told a comprehensive and engaging story of Sydney 2000.

knowledge that can and should be transferred to users. Sydney's Olympic Park is a 'city within a city' and carries many potential messages to Sydney's residents and visitors about both the technology and social responsibility of environmental quality. Like the 'inside-out' Pompidou Centre in Paris, can become a means of engaging people with the technological infrastructure of cultural and recreational facilities.

Perhaps Kronos Hill, prominent on the northern side of Olympic Park, will become a symbol of the environmental message for the city of the future. Containment, stabilisation and recycling of waste created that unique feature. Its 'similar scale, size and prominence' to Olympia's original Hill of Kronos is one of the few references linking the modern Olympic Games to their classical origins.<sup>34</sup> At Sydney's heart, it is a reminder of time, of how the city's history shaped that landscape and of how we in our turn will shape it in the unfolding future.

#### **4.2 The knowledge gain**

As expected, advances in environmental technology were an important aspect of the knowledge gain of Sydney 2000. Of the other key areas where significant advances were made, brief reference will be made here to three aspects. The technical and management skills gained by contractors large and small in construction of the sporting venues, and the value of these venues in the development of Australian sport are perhaps the most widely recognised legacies. Less obvious but just as significant is the knowledge gain in public administration evident in the development of the 'Sydney model' of public management.

Among the Olympic venues are outstanding examples of good design and best practice in construction. Buildings that are naturally ventilated and naturally lit, utilising recycled materials and avoiding problem materials provide a showcase for 21<sup>st</sup> Century domestic and industrial construction. For instance, while PVC is typically used in electrical and drainage piping, it was avoided in Olympic venues where recyclable products were substituted. Similarly, stormwater management systems, water recycling, planting of native species and replanting of mature trees removed from construction sites were all standard practice. The techniques and budget benefits of these approaches are legacies not only in the venues themselves, but to all those involved in their construction, fitout and operation. The investment of a quarter of the overall budget in technology

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<sup>34</sup> Laurence Nield, 'About Kronos Hill' 18 September 1998 (note from an unpublished conference paper)

- compared with, for instance, 16% at the Seoul Olympics – is one with a widespread ongoing return.<sup>35</sup>

Sydney's state-of-the-art sporting venues comprise a key advantage in the development of Australian sport. For example, the purpose-built facilities of the Sydney International Archery Park familiarises archers with every aspect of this precise, high technology sport as well as providing the first permanent home for the sport in New South Wales. Similarly, the State Hockey Centre is the top facility for the State's 30 000 hockey players. With the total number of people associated with the game throughout the State estimated at more than 100 000, the Centre offers a wide range of opportunities for information exchange and the development of relevant skills. The sport's peak body, Hockey New South Wales, is based in the State Hockey Centre grandstand.

Another key example of the increased opportunities for ongoing development of sports skills and knowledge is the State Tennis Centre. Formerly a racecourse, then the home of the Australian Jockey Club, and then a softball ground, the site is now a world-class home for tennis.

Construction of the \$39 million tennis centre was overseen by the Olympic Co-ordination Authority. After its completion in 1999, the centre's distinctive 10 000-seat circular centre court stadium was awarded first prize in the Royal Institute of Architects annual awards. The Tennis Centre, with two show courts, seven match courts, and six practice courts, has an innovative lightweight roof provides shade to 70 per cent of the seats. The State's tennis organisation moved its offices from White City at Paddington after the Olympics and is now more centrally accessible, and a new tennis museum there will honour Australia's outstanding contribution to the sport. Located at the southern end of Olympic Boulevard in the Sydney Olympic Park, the Centre is now the venue for all major tournaments played in Sydney.

The State Sports Centre provides another example of top class facilities for athletes from novice to elite. This indoor/outdoor sporting complex is also situated within Sydney Olympic Park. Since it was opened in 1984 the Sports Centre has hosted virtually every type of indoor event including big-league basketball matches. The Centre was the venue for Table Tennis and Taekwondo at the 2000 Olympics, and for Table Tennis at the Paralympics. The State Sports Centre also gives visitors a glimpse into Australia's rich sporting history with a Hall of Champions, the State's premier sports museum.

The challenge OCA set up, to provide the opportunity for the Olympic venues to act as an 'improving agent' integrated into the State's sporting facilities, is an ongoing challenge for athletes,

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<sup>35</sup> *Sydney Morning Herald* 2 October 2000, p.10

sporting bodies, and governments as well as an enduring legacy.<sup>36</sup>

The OCA's development of the 'Sydney model' of public management is another important area of knowledge gain from Sydney 2000. This is a radical model in the sense that it moved away from the contemporary trend in public administration or 'new public management' in combining multiple roles and in 'steering' as well as 'rowing'. As David Richmond noted, while the OCA shared some features of the 'new public management', it was more a 'command and coordination model' than the market-response model Australian governments adopted in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>37</sup>

The OCA was established to do just this, to put in place a flexible structure and adaptable processes, with the best elements of traditional as well as current approaches. By 1995 the market emphasis of the 'new public management model' had led to a situation where 'strategic development decisions were on the verge of being taken over by the private sector'.<sup>38</sup>

The conflicting approaches of the Liberal Government before 1995 and the Labor Government after 1995 provide a rich source of ideas and strategies in organisational theory. While the success of Sydney 2000 is the ultimate performance indicator of the OCA, Nick Greiner observed that this is no test of the approach of his Government, and that of his successor John Fahey. In his view, theirs was a workable alternative model not given an opportunity to work.

That approach was to keep SOCOG 'at arm's length' as essentially an operator, a promoter of the Games, a 'Paul Dainty' model in which the Government would provide the facilities and SOCOG run the Games. Noting this model was used at Atlanta, Greiner argued it could have been used successfully in Sydney had SOCOG not 'migrated from the corporate-driven model to become a government authority'. In Greiner's view, the 'Sydney model' received the approbation of the IOC not because it was the best approach, but because it meant Government underwriting the Games. The model 'produced predictable results' in that 'the more physical things are, the better governments are at doing them'. The OCA had rebuilt an historic model of the role of Australian government in taking on the Games as a major set of public works projects.<sup>39</sup>

It was the later development of OCA that reveals the most distinct difference in approach. The coordination of agencies and organisations with Olympic responsibilities was central to the 'Sydney model' from the establishment of the OCA in 1995. Its primary task was delivering new facilities & venues for use during the Games which would also meet long-term social, cultural and sporting requirements. Then, with the support of the IOC, a level of integration of agencies and

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<sup>36</sup> Allenby, Guy, 'Boulevard of dreams', *Sydney Morning Herald (Domain)* 21 September 2000, pp.10-11

<sup>37</sup> David Richmond, 'The Olympics and Public Administration – synergies and challenges', Institute of Public Administration Spann Oration, State Library of NSW, 26 October 1999, p.13

<sup>38</sup> Richmond 1999, p.15

<sup>39</sup> OCA, Oral history session 2: interview with Nick Greiner Sydney, 28 August 2000

organisations developed and from February 2000 this process accelerated. The OCA moved from its primary task to a role as the core agency of the final Games Time team.

While this debate on the pre- and post- 1995 approaches offers fruitful prospects for administrative theorists, it is the design and implementation of the ‘Sydney model’ that has built the knowledge gain for public sector management. What distinguished this model from the pre-1995 approach to Sydney 2000 was a high level of government involvement and financial backing; the leading role of Australia’s sporting community in decision-making; and the integration of agencies by Games Time.

Key elements of the Sydney model were:

- A Games financially underwritten by the New South Wales Government
- A formal and explicit relationship between the Organising Committee, the NSW government and the federal government
- A recognition of the inherent limitations of an Organising Committee in mobilising all resources needed for the Games, no matter how well the core management
- The establishment and coordination of specific-purpose entities such as the OCA, ORTA and the OSCC
- Strong State and federal government coordination, backed as far as possible by legislation
- A planned and structured approach to urban domain management, including major celebrations
- Preparation of and reporting to a global Olympic budget.<sup>40</sup>

The necessary private sector relationships were effected by contracts and by development partnerships. Dubbed the ‘BOOT’ scheme, these partnerships operated for instance in delivery of the Olympic Stadium, to be operated and maintained by the Olympic Stadium Group until 2031 under a lease from the OCA. The Sydney SuperDome is also managed under a 30-year agreement between the Olympic Co-ordination Authority and Millenium Agent (owned by Abigroup, Obayashi and Bank West). Taxpayers thus lined up with developers and financiers, and would reap the benefits of their investment. This was a new formulation of public sector management, and required changes too for the private sector contractors.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> OCA, ‘Overview of Games Time organisation and management’ (paper for official debriefing of the Sydney 2000) Athens, December 2000; OCA, Oral history session 3: interview with David Richmond Sydney, 29 August 2000

<sup>41</sup> See for instance, Department of State and Regional Development NSW *Building on Success: a post-Games strategy for New South Wales business* NSW Government, October 2000

### **4.3 The Olympic world**

The knowledge and experience gained in the Australian context was just part of the knowledge gain of Sydney 2000. The measures taken to ensure that the experience of Sydney 2000 become a legacy for the Olympic movement indicate how significant the knowledge gain is in this wider context.

The OCA initiated a ‘Transfer of Knowledge’ program (TOK) to run parallel to the work of the agencies involved in Sydney 2000. The aim was to build a repository where knowledge ‘deposits’ could be made by the people most closely involved, and concurrent with the experience. This capture of knowledge will perhaps emerge among the most valuable legacies of Sydney 2000 to the Olympic movement. For example, ORTA was an innovative experiment as the creation of one large government authority to coordinate all transport during the Games. Its success recommends the idea as part of the ongoing legacy from Sydney 2000 to the Olympic movement.

The building of the TOK program was one matter on which the competing Olympic administrations are in complete accord. Nick Greiner commented on the wastefulness of each Olympic city ‘starting from scratch each time’ and supported the idea of passing the intellectual capital to each host city. No matter how large or small the Olympic city, and no matter the organisational model used, the development of a ‘virtual management handbook’ with a new edition issued with each Olympic Games is a persuasive idea.<sup>42</sup>

The successful delivery of the Olympic Games and the Paralympics, the opening and closing ceremonies, and the sparkling welcome of the city itself made the magic of Sydney 2000. But perhaps most importantly of all, Sydney 2000 will stand as a proud example of the spirit of the Olympic movement. The Olympic, and the Paralympic, Games in 2000 provide an example of the realisation of the vision of an Olympic world, ‘a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity’. Commentators noted one extraordinary contrast with the mid-century Melbourne Olympics. Sydney 2000 was above all a celebration of human diversity, in a country that where deliberate demographic diversity marked the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> OCA, Oral history session 1: conversation with Michael Knight, David Richmond and Michael Evers Sydney, 22 August 2000; OCA, Oral history session 2: interview with Nick Greiner Sydney, 28 August 2000

<sup>43</sup> International Olympic Committee *Olympic Charter* 15 June 1995; Gerard Henderson, ‘Australia 2000 – we are the world’, *Sydney Morning Herald* 26 September 2000, p.10

In that sense Sydney 2000 was a celebration of humanity. And that was the real 'joy of effort' for all involved, and the enduring legacy of the Olympic Coordination Authority.

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