Looking Back

Looking back – Sydney 2000

The accolade ‘the Green Games’ was given to Sydney for the 2000 Olympic Games. The IOC’s adoption of an environmental brief in the mid-1990s has influenced all host city bids, and the success or failure of the Games are now judged on this alongside other aspects of the bid. In response to the United Nations’ adoption of the concept of sustainable development, the IOC formulated an environmental protection criteria, Olympic Agenda 21, as an Olympic movement goal. The President of the IOC also said Sydney’s Olympic Games were the benchmark for future Games. Because there are tangible and intangible benefits of the Olympic Games for host cities and countries it is hard to measure the benefits accurately. Here you can look back and consider some aspects of the legacy.

Focus
Aspects of the legacy of the Sydney Olympic Games for the host city, Australia and the Olympic movement.

Activity
Identify and evaluate some aspects of the 2000 Olympic legacy for Sydney and Australia.

Design an online exhibition of the highlights of the Sydney Olympic Games.

Below are a range of documents, official and general, which make comments about aspects of the Sydney Olympics and Paralympics 2000 legacy.

ABS: Looking back at Sydney Olympics and Paralympics


NSW Treasury


Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: Sydney, 2000


Our Green Olympic Games - The Olympic village

http://www.abc.net.au/science/slab/olympics/default.htm

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Australia and the Olympic Games
1956 Melbourne Olympics and 2000 Sydney Olympics

The Games

Parliament of Australia, Library: The Modern Olympics: an overview

Sydney Olympic Park - today

To investigate the way the Sydney Olympic Park is being used as an Olympics legacy site you can explore the SOPO website

The first ‘Green Games’, and its Environmental Audit Legacy
It was the Sydney Games which sought the label ‘green’, and collaborated with environmental Non-Governmental Organisation’s (NGOs) in doing so. Sydney was the first Games to be audited throughout by Greenpeace, who issued a detailed and fairly positive report. The Athens Games was also audited, both by Greenpeace and the WWF, according to the Sydney benchmark - and found wanting, with much resulting negative publicity. Any future Games’ environmental impact will be judged according to the Sydney benchmark, and therefore cooperation with NGOs (in information sharing, planning and execution as well as in establishing the principles for construction, raw materials procurement, etc) is vital. (page 15)

The Sydney Olympiad of 2000 was the first summer event to adopt wholesale the IOC’s environmental agenda. Indeed, the bid document went beyond the minimum asked for by the IOC. Existing facilities within the city were to be used for yachting, swimming and football, and in order to ensure a net regeneration and environmental gain, the city chose to house the principal athletics events at Homebush, a 760-hectare derelict former industrial site some nineteen kilometres from the city centre. This site’s previous users had included an abattoir, brickworks, petrochemicals, and an armaments manufacturer, and much of it had been subject to the flytipping of industrial waste as the old industries had moved out. As a result it was highly polluted. Cleaning and restoring the site to leisure and residential use was among the principal environmental targets of the ‘green Games’. (page 87)

The Olympics in 2000 was designed by its organisers to promote Sydney as a ‘global’ city; enhance international tourism to New South Wales and Australia and attract service based industries from within the Asia/Pacific region. The Sydney Organising Committee of the Olympic Games had support from local, state and national governments. The Committee also carefully established local community relations, particularly with the Aboriginal people, who threatened to disrupt the Games with protests aimed at highlighting the Australian government’s failure to recognise indigenous people’s rights. New sporting facilities were constructed for the Games, including the main stadium and an aquatic centre (opened in 1994, one year after Sydney had been chosen as the venue for 2000). The main investment, however, was in telecommunications, including the Sydney Media Center and the city’s transport system.

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The promotion of Sydney was intimately linked to the promotion of Australia by the Australian Tourism Commission (ATC). The ATC established a sophisticated strategy for using the Games to, in effect, re-brand Australia as a young, vibrant country rather than a distant nation with lots of ‘outback’ (IOC: 2001). The legacy of the Olympic Games for Sydney appears to be mixed. Tourist visits to the city were up by 11% in 2000 and £2.4 billion additional income from tourism was raised in 2001-2 according to IOC and official government figures; convention business also increased by 34% over the same period. Conversely, leading sports venues have remained underutilised since the Games ended. In 2001, the NSW government allocated $50 million to promote commercial development of the Olympics site, hoping eventually it would become self-supporting. 

Source: A Lasting Legacy for London? Assessing the legacy of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games, May 2007
Research commissioned by the London Assembly from the London East Research Institute of the University of East London (pdf 142 pages)
http://www.uel.ac.uk/londoneast/research/documents/lasting-legacy.pdf

Extension


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