



# The mascots of the Games of the XXVII Olympiad



## Syd, Millie and Olly come to town

The mascots of the Sydney Millennium Olympic Games were unveiled in Sydney on 24 January: they are a platypus named Syd, an echidna called Millie and a kookaburra who answers to Olly.

The trio, who have teamed up to tell the Sydney 2000 story leading up to the Games, will come alive for families and children all over the world.

These native Australian animals represent the earth, air and water and were chosen after extensive research was conducted both throughout Australia and overseas.

"What people wanted was something uniquely Australian", said SOCOG's gen-

eral manager for marketing, John Moore. "We had a huge choice of animals that filled the criteria but we felt that the platypus, echidna and kookaburra really personified what Australia and Australians are all about."

"We are a country of cultural contrasts. We are easygoing, friendly, sporty, optimistic and lovers of the outdoors - that's the spirit Syd, Millie and Olly capture." Of the hundreds of submissions received from artists, children and others from around the world it was a sketch of a platypus by Australian graphic designer and illustrator Matthew Hatton that captured the essence of SOCOG's brief, and Hatton was appointed to lead the official design project.

"This is a chance to show the world the extent of our natural wildlife". Hatton

said. "Internationally the kangaroo and koala are well known and widely used; this was our chance to showcase some of our other exotic wonders."

SOCOG also sought international design advice from another Australian designer, Sharon Box, at the Adrienne Weiss Design Group in the United States of America.

The mascots first live appearance will be mid-year.

## Three unique Australian animals

The platypus must be the most unusual animal in the world. This Australian native has the beak of a duck, the body of an otter and the tail of a beaver. It lays eggs and has mammary glands but no



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eats. The platypus and the echidna are the only egg-laying mammals (“monotremes”) in the world. The male averages about 50cm long and weighs about 1.7 kg. It is a smooth swimmer thanks to its special webbed fore-feet. The webbed hind feet are folded back, except when “steering” or “braking”. Platypuses live in elaborate tunnels or burrow inside the riverbank that can be up to 20 metres long. They live on a diet of crustaceans, molluscs, frogs, worms and insect larvae.

The echidna is probably the most successful mammal in Australia, and is found in a wider variety of habitats than any other species. It has a uniquely well developed brain and shows strong signs of high intelligence. Often known as the spiny anteater, the echidna is covered with stout spines and bristly hair. It has a diet of ants and termites. It uses its extraordinary long tongue (up to 18cm long!), covered with a sticky secretion like treacle, to catch its prey. The echidna is the platypus's closest living relative. A monotreme like the platypus, it also lays eggs. Echidnas are rather solitary in their habits but are mutually tolerant. The echidna is about 30cm long and weighs about 7 kg. Echidnas vary in appearance, generally depending on climate, with a coloration that ranges from blond to very dark brown.

The kookaburra is the largest of all kingfishers. It roosts in leafy trees, and eats small mammals, snakes, large insects, termites, etc. Kookaburras are very family-oriented. The older offspring will often help raise younger siblings. Kookaburras grow up to 42cm in height and weigh up to 500gm. They are brown with a greyish white underside. The tail has dark bands and the face has cheek patches. The males have distinctive blue markings on their wings. Kookaburras are a common sight all over Australia, in both the city and the country. Their call is highly distinctive and resembles a very loud, strange, human-like laugh.

### **The Olympic mascot legend**

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One hot summer evening not so long ago...

The sky was split in two by a spectacular storm of thunder and lightning.

As the wind howled through the bushland valleys and rain turned the dusty earth into a river of mud, three young Australian animals were swept from their homes. Blown by the wind and rain they desperately searched for shelter.

As if by fate, all three reached a protected hollow at exactly the same time and huddled together for safety. Suddenly, the storm stopped, the clouds parted and 2,000 stars lit the night sky. The three animals sat up and blinked at each other in surprise. The echidna and the platypus stared at one another's shiny bald heads and pointy snouts and grinned; the kookaburra took one look at their odd features and immediately burst out laughing.

As other beasts emerged from their hiding spots, the Spirit of the Southern Cross announced that the three young animals had found their way to a special place in Sydney called Millennium Park, and that at the dawn of the new millennium people from all over the world would come together here for a dazzling festival of sport and culture, a global celebration of peace, friendship and universal understanding.

The Southern Cross asked the three animals if they would be the mascots for this great event. Each animal accepted the honour with a solemn nod and a full heart, aware that this was a responsibility outside their present understanding, but determined to do

their very best. In honour of their new, role each was given a name, an Olympic attribute, and the mark of the Southern Cross.

From the water came the platypus, who was named Syd after Sydney, the site of the Games. A dynamic, natural leader, he would embody the character of Australia and the environment. From the land came the echidna, who was named Millie, personifying the dawn of hope and optimism in the new millennium - the year 2000. And from the air came the kookaburra, who was called Olly, the trusted custodian of the five rings that symbolize the ethos and history of the Olympic Games.

United by their unique destiny, the mascots formed a friendship, and as the journey towards Sydney 2000 Olympic Games began the mascots worked tirelessly to fulfil their special duty.

### **Syd**

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A team player and natural leader, focused, dynamic and enthusiastic, Syd captures the vigour and energy of Australia and its people.



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power to excel at most sports, although swimming is his favourite.

A “stubborn little stayer”, Syd might not win every time but he’ll always finish the race. But if he sees another player fall he won’t hesitate to stop and lend a hand. For Syd it’s not winning that counts so much as how you play the game.

Because he is a real player, Syd is also the athletes’ champion. To him all athletes are special. If a runner is having a bad day or a rower is feeling a bit low, he’ll be there as quick as a shot, offering support, advice or maybe just a sympathetic ear and a kind word.

Deep down, his dream is to coach the Australian swimming team. Or maybe athletics. It doesn’t matter because his dedication and energy can inspire anybody to bring home the gold.

Two things get up Syd’s snout - bad sports and environmental vandals. An even-tempered bloke most of the time, someone littering or polluting the water he won’t hesitate to thump his tail and let them know what he thinks.

Syd’s home is a cosy little burrow in Millennium Park. He loves paddling around, letting the ebb and flow of the cool water restore his natural good humour. He needs this time out because he is naturally shy, and finds it embarrassing to be in the spotlight.

But he’s a tenacious digger who’s not afraid to roll up his sleeves when there is a job to be done. This is why Syd’s a crowd-pleaser - a great cheer leader who’ll thump his tail to wind up the audience and spur the athletes on.

Syd’s one problem is that he’s shy of technology and new-fangled, whiz-bang computer gizmos. This is why he relies on Millie’s technical skills. And he never fails to be impressed by Olly’s awareness of global issues and events.

Candid and self-effacing, Syd has lachonic, Aussie sense of humour. Unlike Olly he’s not one to indulge his ego and doesn’t take himself too seriously. He enjoys Millie’s wit and cynicism hut

s o m e t i m e s he wishes she’d lighten up a bit. He is a loyal friend who’s always ready to lend a hand, loves his fellow mascots and would do anything for them.

If there is one word to describe Syd it would have to be “dynamic” because in every way he represents the focused energy and vitality of the Olympic athlete.

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### Olly

Gregarious, honest, enthusiastic and open-hearted. Olly encapsulates the Olympic spirit of generosity and universal friendship.

He’s the fact-finder, commentator and flighty communicator who’s always whizzing around collecting the latest news from all corners of the world. A chuckling raconteur with a devilish glint in his eye, Olly loves to tell a yarn or to catch up on the latest gossip.

He can be an unpredictable animal of emotional extremes. Most of the time he’s the comedian who can make a joke out of anything, but deep down he has a sensitive soul which is why he’s so dedicated to upholding the Olympic spirit of friendship and fair play. He sees his role as the custodian of the Olympic Charter. And, boy, doesn’t he love letting everybody know about it.

A bit on the cocky side, he doesn’t mind having a go with the other athletes now- and again. And what he lacks in patience he makes up for with speed.

His home is the tallest tree in Millennium Park. From its lofty heights he surveys the world with a twinkle in his eye, looking for new developments on which to report or thinking up his latest



But he doesn’t spend a lot of time at home because he has a vast network of kingfisher cousins and friends around the world that he’s always visiting. They’re his translators and tour guides and it’s thanks to them that he’s able to keep up with events internationally.

A “do-it-yourself” philosopher. Olly’s eye is always on the big picture. The trouble is, concentration is not his strong point and he’s always in such a rush that he sometimes gets confused. Like the day he found out about an exciting new holiday resort for spiders - the World Wide Web!

Luckily, Syd and Millie are always around to bail him out. He might not admit it hut he’s very grateful to his pals. He’ll joke about “chilly Millie” being nerdy with all her statistics and facts but deep down he’s amazed at her analytical skills. He also relies on her for support and reassurance. She’s like a big sister - someone to tease one minute and then call on for help the next.

And there’s no doubt that Olly would be totally lost if it wasn’t for his best mate “Syd the kid” and his earthy advice and tolerant good nature.

Altruistic and loyal, Olly is never motivated by self-interest or greed. If there was one word to describe him it would have to be “unselfish”.

## Millie

Millie is the “brains” of the trio, a born optimist and information guru whose eye is firmly focused on the future - when it isn't peering into ant holes in search of a tasty little snack.

Because she keeps her nose to the ground Millie is a storehouse of information. the clever techno-whiz with all the facts and figures at her fingertips.

Extremely confident. Millie's also the sharp and witty observer who's always taking notes and coming up with new ideas. She's always supportive and will go out of her way to find a creative solution to a problem.

Agile and precise, she has a strong, muscular body- and loves any sport that involves accuracy and strategy. Fencing, gymnastics and archery are her favourites although she'll have a go at anything else. as long as it doesn't involve flying.

Millie is terrified of heights!

And she doesn't suffer fools willingly either. Decisive and analytical, Millie can be very sharp and assertive. But underneath the bristles there's a gentle nature and sometimes the pace and excitement of the Olympic journey are too much for one little echidna to hear. Which is why, every so often, she simply goes under ground.

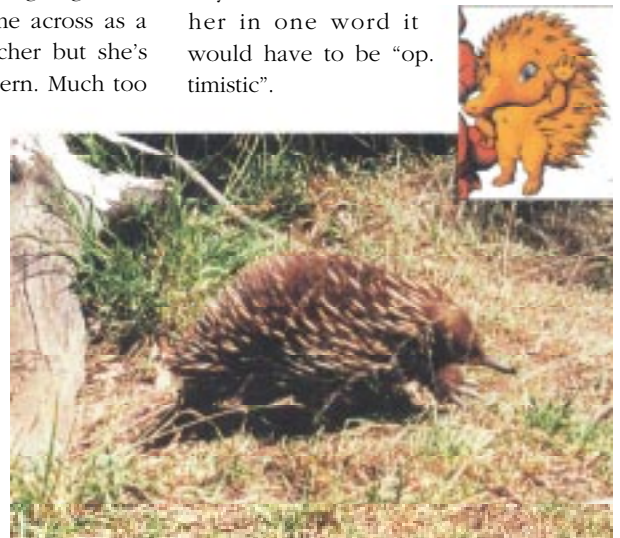
Millie's home is a stylish little burrow in Millennium Park. She loves going there to unwind. She might come across as a serious young insect-muncher but she's actually very hip and modern. Much too self-assured to be a fashion victim, Millie always knows what's new and what's cool. A loyal buddy, she admires Syd's leadership qualities. Both are level-headed and pragmatic and they rely on one another's advice and ideas. As monotremes they share a special bond - unlike Olly, Syd and Millie don't have much

family so they rely on one another for a sense of kinship and support.

As for Olly, Millie looks on him as her bratty little brother. He drives her mad but she loves his enthusiasm and will do anything to help him out.

Millie always looks towards the future with hope and confidence. A natural teacher she believes it's possible to help build a more peaceful world by educating through sport.

If you had to describe her in one word it would have to be “optimistic”.



## What people are saying about the Sydney mascots

*“Sydney's Olympic mascots are a reflection of Sydney - fun, colourful and vibrant. While they will appeal to people of all ages, I expect children will really fall in love with them. Importantly, Syd, Millie and Olly are very Australian and show the world that Australia is a place with many exciting and unique animals in addition to the kangaroos and koalas.” (Michael Knight, SOCOG President)*

*“Syd, Millie and Olly are mascots with personalities that are really Australian. There's a part of all of us in each of them.” (Mal Hemmerling, SOCOG Chief Executive Officer)*

*“They're terrific! The mascots provide us with the three elements of life - the water, the air and the land. It's great, too, to get a gender balance - I just love Millie, the echidna.” (Michael Bland, Greenpeace)*

*“These characters represent a special part of Australia's unique environment. The mascots are a symbol which will link our nation and the 2000 Olympic Games for all Australians and people around the world to enjoy.” John Coates, President of Australian Olympic Committee and SOCOG vice president)*

*“The decision about a mascot is very important because mascots really convey the atmosphere, the mood and the*

*style of the Games to everyone around the world. Above all, a mascot should be attractive to children - and these three are favourites that the children of Australia and the world will love.” (Kevan Gosper, IOC Executive Board member)*

*“I think they're fantastic! The Games mascot concept was launched way back at Grenoble in 1968. Of all the mascots since then, the Australian selection is of an extremely high standard and they will no doubt go down well with the international family.” (Phil Coles, IOC member in Australia)*

*“People will find them most endearing - the mascots are the quintessential Australian family.” (Frank Sartor, Lord Mayor, City of Sydney)*