

Olympic Games

Sydney2000

The Torch Relay

"The Olympic Games is about being part of something bigger than yourself, sharing the history, spirit, ceremony and tradition of the most enduring and admirable human event of all time; and the Torch Relay literally and figuratively embodies this sense of sharing, from the simple connection of two individuals as the Torch is passed from one to the next, to the sharing of the spirit of the Torch Relay with all Australians and the entire world." (Sydney 2000 Olympic Torch Relay Mission statement.)



Ten thousand torchbearers will carry the Olympic flame on a 27,000 km journey that will pass, within one hour's drive of 85% of the Australian population, through 1,000 towns and suburbs over 100 days in every State and Territory. The Olympic flame will be lit in Olympia, Greece, on 8 May 2000. After spending ten days in Greece and twenty days travelling through 12 Pacific Island countries, the Torch will arrive in Australia on 8 June.

The Sydney 2000 Olympic Torch Relay will begin its journey at the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park and the flame will be carried by Olympic gold-medallist Nova Peris-Kneebone. This first Australian destination is an internationally recognized symbol of Australia. It is also a place of great historical and cultural significance. "It is the geographical heart of Australia. It is of great spiritual significance to many Australians and it

is part of the outback character of Australians", said SOCOG president Michael Knight. The Sydney 2000 Torch Relay has been designed to promote broad community involvement. It will highlight not only Australia's heritage, culture and landscape, but also its rich sporting tradition.

The Olympic flame will travel on a surf boat at Bondi; on the Indian Pacific train across the Nullarbor Plain; on a Royal Flying Doctor Service aircraft in the remote outback; and by camel on Cable Beach at Broome. It will be carried on horseback, by bullock team, on a Sydney Harbour ferry, on the Sky Rail at Cairns, on charter planes when travelling between remote areas, and it will be carried underwater past the Great Barrier Reef.

The Sydney Torch Relay will travel through 12 Oceania nations: American Samoa, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Guam, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. About 1,200 torchbearers will carry the Olympic flame 17,000 kilometres

through Oceania en route to Australia. Throughout the torch's travels in Australia, lunch-time and evening community celebrations will be organized to allow nearly 200 communities to partake in showcasing Australia's cultural history and heritage to the rest of the world.

Each of the 10,000 torchbearers will travel up to one kilometre. Among them will be Olympians, and community representatives from all walks of life. Details of the selection process to choose the 10,000 torchbearers will be released in mid-1999. Nominations will open in August 1999 and torchbearers' names will be announced on Australia Day, 26 January 2000.

Torch bearers will be escorted by 2,500 runners chosen from high schools around Australia. A full history of the Olympic Torch Relay and details of past torch designs will be added to the Sydney Olympic website in early 1999 to coincide with the announcement of the design of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Torch.

Excerpted from *Sydney Olympic News*.

