

SYDNEY: OLYMPIC CITY

by Ron Edgeworth

Sydney, the recent IOC selection as the site for the 2000 Olympics, is the largest city in Australia. With a 1992 population estimate of 3,700,000 people, it serves as the capital of the state of New South Wales, one of the eight large states which make up Australia. Sydney occupies an area of 1,738 sq. mi. (670 mi.²), and is located in the southeastern corner of Australia, centered on the southern shore of Port Jackson. It is built on low hills, surrounding a large harbor with multiple bays and inlets.

Sydney is Australia's largest manufacturing center, with more than 10,000 establishments employing more than 272,000 people. Sydney's plants and factories account for almost 26% of the nation's total. Industry is awaiting the completion of the Advanced Technology Park which will pool the talents of the city's three major universities with local and international researchers and companies. Most of Sydney's industries deal with consumer goods but also include state-of-the-art steel rod and bar, aluminum, glass production and sawmilling for the building industry, engineering, chemicals, plastics, aerospace industries, electronics, petroleum products and refining.

Sydney is a major international transportation center. Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Airport is the busiest in Australia with more than 500 international flights a week provided by more than 40 airlines to more than 100 destinations. Plans are afoot to build a city-to-airport rapid rail link to enhance the efficiency for travelers to the city. The city's two major harbours, Sydney and Port Botany, handle more than 20 million tons of cargo a year.

Sydney possesses numerous large parks and has abundant sandy beaches, such as **Bondi Beach**. The principal parks are the **Royal Botanic Gardens** and **Taronga Zoological Gardens**, both situated on Port Jackson, and **Hyde Park**, situated near the center of the city. Port Jackson is spanned by the Sydney Harbour Bridge, which dominates the city's skyline, and is a favorite site for yachting, which will be held there during the 2000 Olympics. There are a few skyscrapers, but the Sydney skyline is of relatively low elevation. Most of Sydney's citizens, termed Sydneysiders, live in one- or two-story houses.

Sydney is the home to three major universities: the **University of Sydney** (founded 1850), the **University of New South Wales** (founded 1948), and **Macquarie University** (founded 1964). Sydney is also the home to the **New South Wales Conservatorium of Music**. There are numerous museums, including the **Art Gallery of New South Wales**, the **Australian Museum**, the **Church Missionary Society Aboriginal Art Gallery**, the **Geological and Mining Museum**, and the **Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences**. Other cultural sites include the Library of New South Wales, housing about 1.35 million volumes, and the beautiful **Sydney Opera House**, which is located on Bennelong Point jutting out into Port Jackson.

Condé Nast Traveler, recently discussed the travel pleasures of Sydney, and noted that its major distinguishing factor is the **Sydney Opera House**. Designed by Jørn Utzon on a site he proclaimed as "unequaled in the world," and opened in 1973, it has four main performance spaces, and delivers up to ten performances per day, along with excellent acoustics. While in town for the opera, or for the Olympics, *Condé Nast Traveler* recommends **The Regent** as the city's top hotel, especially for its views of Sydney Harbor. (No doubt the IOC will have this hotel reserved for its members and dignitaries!) Next door to the **The Regent is The Rocks**, a former redlight district that has now become a fashionable shopping area. Other top tourist sites recommended by the magazine were the **Royal Botanic Gardens**, which house 70 acres of Australian flora and fauna. It is described as an oasis in an otherwise urban landscape.

Sydney is located at 33° 52' 00" south latitude, and 151° 12' 00" east longitude. Its average elevation is 25 feet in the downtown business area. The average mean temperature varies from 22.3° C. (72.1° F.) in February (the Australian summer) to 12.2° C. (54.1° F.) in July. In summer the average daily maximum is 25.3° C. (77.5° F.) and the minimum is 18.0° C. (64.4° F.). In winter the average maximum is 16.6° C. (61.9° F.) and average minimum is 8.6° C. (47.5° F.). The climate can be described as warm and sunny, but temperate. Average annual rainfall is 113.8 cm. (44.8 inches), but most of this falls during short, tropical deluges in the summer. The prevailing wind is from the northeast but it is tempered from time to time by a stiff wind blowing from the south known as a 'Southerly Buster' which often heralds the arrival of a cold front.

Sydney's time zone is 10 hours ahead of Greenwich Meridien Time, or 15 hours ahead of the United States' Eastern Time Zone. Telephone exchanges to Sydney begin with the country code of 61 and the city code of 2. The currency is the Australian dollar which, as of December 1993, was worth, approximately, \$0.62 (US). Entrance visas are required of all visitors to Australia except for New Zealand nationals.

Few cities in the world can equal Sydney for sports opportunities. Australians are often accused of being sports-mad, and Sydneysiders are greatly devoted to their sports. Sydney is probably unrivalled in the world for access to swimming, surfing, sailing and other water sports. It is still possible to swim from several beaches in the harbor itself. Sydney boasts numerous golf courses, and there are excellent facilities for cricket, tennis, and football (soccer). Sydney boasts 70 golf courses within its environs with 12 of them being within an 8 kilometre radius of the city center.

Sydney's beaches provide the venues for exciting surf carnivals and the harbour hosts many 18-foot sailing craft races, the Sydney ferry boat race held each January, and the start of the Sydney-to-Hobart yacht race on each 26 December.

In addition to the harbour, Sydney is surrounded by other great waterways: Pittwater and the Hawkesbury River to the north, Botany Bay and Cook's River on the southern edge, with Port Hacking further south, and the Nepean River to the west running along the base of the Blue Mountains.

History

Sydney was first sighted by Captain James Cook in 1770, who named it Port Jackson. The first European settlement in Australia was established in what would later become Sydney on 26 January 1788 by Captain Arthur Phillip and the First Fleet. He named the area Sydney Cove, after the then British home secretary, Thomas Townshend, the 1st Viscount Sydney. Most early "Sydneysiders" were convicts sent from Great Britain, as with much of Australia, but in the early 19th century many free settlers arrived and the area was developed by sheep, cattle, and wheat farmers.

The early history of Sydney was dominated by its existence as a penal colony. With the settlement of New South Wales, Sydney grew quickly. In 1851, gold was discovered in Victoria, and Sydney quickly grew, increasing from a population of 60,000 in 1850 to 400,000 in 1890. The governorship of Lachlan Macquarie (1810-1821) was crucial to Sydney's development as he began a program of public works. He was helped in this project by a former convict/architect, Francis Greenway, who had been banished from England for forgery. Macquarie is generally credited as being the "maker of modern Sydney." He was responsible for the preservation of Hyde Park in the center of the city.

Sydney's population doubled by the time of World War I and reached 1 million shortly thereafter. Melbourne was growing even faster, however, as the gold rush hit that city in the early 20th century. Melbourne briefly overtook Sydney as the heart of Australia's financial district, but Sydney today enjoys that status.

The lifting of height restrictions on buildings in 1957 ushered in an era of unprecedented building activity and the city's skyline changed dramatically. The 1960s and 1970s were years of rapid growth. -Australia's tallest building, the 325 metre Centrepoint Tower, was completed in 1981. Today, Sydney blends an 18th century heritage with modern skyscrapers on both sides of the harbour.

The Equestrian Question

In 1956, the Olympics were also held in Australia, in the Queensland capital city of Melbourne. However, the equestrian events were held in Stockholm in 1956. This was because, in 1956, the Australian government's insistence on following the strict quarantine laws on animals being brought into the country.

No such problem will exist in 2000 for Sydney and the Sydney bid committee addressed this question during the Bid Process. A recent communique from David Roberts, Project Officer for Venues Planning & Design for Sydney 2000, discussed the equestrian quarantine issue:

"Sydney will have no problems whatsoever in staging the equestrian events at the 2000 Olympic Games. In 1956 Australia's strict quarantine standards could not be met by many of the competing countries, hence the decision to host the event in Stockholm. At present nearly all of the competing horses are from approved countries as their own quarantine standards have since risen to a level similar to that in Australia. Approximately 95 % of the horses competing in Barcelona were from approved countries. The remaining horses must spend 60 days in an approved country prior to travelling to Australia. Most importantly the Sydney Organizing Company will pay for the transport and accommodation of horse, groom, and rider for this period as well as their transport to and from Australia. It is expected that competitors from non-approved countries would already be competing in approved countries in the lead up to the Olympics. It is also important to note that once the Games are finished, the horses will be permitted to travel directly back to their place of origin without delay.

'As you can appreciate it is a relatively complex issue and one that we have thoroughly addressed throughout the Bid period. During the Bid it was obviously very important to dispel the perception that the equestrian quarantine issues would be a problem for Sydney. Both Flor Isava-Fonseca (IOC Member to Venezuela) and Philipp von Schoeller (IOC Member to Austria) were briefed on the equestrian proposal and were thoroughly satisfied."

Australian Reaction to the Selection

As might be expected, on the night of 24 September when the IOC decision was announced, Australians danced in the streets and wept with joy. Australian stocks soared and the local dollar jumped in value as thousands of revelers poured into the streets of Sydney.

New South Wales Premier, John Fahey, speaking in Monte Carlo after the bid announcement, said he expected the Olympics to inject about \$US4.8 billion into the economy, add about 160,000 full- and part-time jobs, and boost tourism by some 1.4 million people over the next seven years.

Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating noted, "It is a defining decision that marks out the Australian nation as one that can carry the greatest international pageant of our time. We are there as a country in our own right, on the brink of a new millenium, on the edge of the centenary of our federation.

"The Olympics can be a defining moment in our history, a brilliant opportunity to celebrate our achievements and define our place in the region and the world. It was a wonderful outcome for this country. All of Australia's attractions will now be on show to billions of people."

Sydney's Bid: An Overview

(From Sydney Olympics 2000 Bid Limited)

- **Sydney's Olympic plan** is centred in providing the best environment to enable each athlete to perform at their peak.
- All athletes will live in **one Olympic village** - for the first time in modern Olympics history. All competition venues will be within 30 minutes travel of the Athletes Village.
- **Sydney Olympic Park**, 14 kilometres from the Sydney City Centre, will have venues for 14 sports including the 80,000 seat Olympic Stadium within walking distance of the Athletes Village. Sixty-five per cent of Sydney's competition venues have been built or are now under construction.
- The Games will be held between 16 September and 1 October 2000 in Sydney's spring which is an **ideal climate** for the athletes. Daily average temperature is 16° -21° C. with low humidity. September is also the driest month of the year.
- Sydney enjoys a **low security risk**, world class health care, **high environmental standards** and sophisticated television /telecommunication technology.
- Sydney is home to people of more than 140 nations - one of the great **multicultural** cities of the world living happily together. Athletes from all parts of the world will have an abundance of "hometown" cuisine, religion, culture and language as well as a ready cheering squad.
- Australia has a **unique Olympic record**, being one of only three nations to have competed in every Summer Games since 1896.
- The Sydney Bid enjoys **strong community support** - Government, Opposition Parties, ethnic communities, aboriginal communities, trade unions, media, business community, and environmental organizations including Greenpeace.
- Sydney has the **written endorsement** of all 25 International Sports Federations and will pay for athletes, officials, and their equipment to travel to and from Australia.
- Sydney has a **first class media plan** that includes an International Broadcast Centre and Main Press Centre that will provide a high technology working environment for all broadcasters, journalists, and photographers. The centers will be connected by optic fibre to all Olympic facilities and will operate 24 hours a day.
- Sydney has **ample accommodation** including more than 30,000 hotel rooms at present and a further 5,700 will become available between now and the Year 2000. Already Sydney has signed an agreement to fix hotel prices for the Year 2000, based on 1998 prices plus inflation.
- Sydney's **transport plan** has been designed to move up to 300,000 people a day in a safe, reliable, and convenient manner.

Sydney's Olympic Venue Schedule

(from Sydney 2000: Share the Spirit)

Sport	Venue	Seating	Start	Finish	Approved
Archery	Sydney Olympic Park	4,000	November 1999	May 2000	FITA
Athletics	Sydney Olympic Park	80,000	March 1996	April 1999	IAAF
Badminton	Sydney Olympic Park	5,000	March 1996	August 1999	IBF
Baseball	Sydney Olympic Park	10,000	June 1998	September 1999	IBA
Basketball	Darling Harbour	12,500	Built	Built	FIBA
Boxing	Darling Harbour	10,000	Built	Built	AIBA
Canoeing	Penrith Lakes	10,000	Under construction	December 1995	FIC
Cycling Velodrome	Sydney Olympic Park	6,000	January 1998	September 1999	UCI
Equestrian Events	Eastern Creek	20,000	September 1995	September 1999	FEI
Fencing	Sydney Olympic Park	4,500	Built	Built	FIE
Football	Various	Various	Built	Built	FIFA
Gymnastics	Sydney Olympic Park	15,000	March 1996	May 1999	FIG
Handball	Sydney Olympic Park	15,000	March 1996	August 1999	IHF
Hockey	Sydney Olympic Park	15,000	Built	Built	FIH
Judo	Darling Harbour	10,000	Built	Built	IJF
Modern Pentathlon	Various	Various	Various	Various	UIPMB
Rowing & Sculling	Penrith Lakes	10,000	Under construction	December 1995	FISA
Shooting	Holsworthy	10,000	March 1996	February 1997	UIT
swimming	Sydney Olympic Park	12,000	Under construction	March 1994	FINA
Table Tennis	Darling Harbour	10,000	Built	Built	ITTF
Tennis	Sydney Olympic Park	10,000	September 1998	September 1998	ITF
Volleyball	Sydney Olympic Park	15,000	March 1996	August 1999	FIVB
Weightlifting	Darling Harbour	3,800	Built	Built	IWF
Wrestling	Moore Park	5,000	Built	Built	FILA
Yachting	Sydney Harbour	N/A	Marina built	Marina built	IYRU
Olympic Village	Sydney Olympic Park	2,500 dwellings	January 1997	January 2000	IOC

Note: The above summary came from various sources: Encyclopedia Britannica, Funk & Wagnalls Encyclopedia, World Almanac, Australian Embassy to the United States, and various materials sent by the Sydney 2000 Bid Committee.