

Olympic Proposals and Bids by Australian Cities

Ian Jobling
Department of Human Movement Studies
University of Queensland

Many Australians are aware that Sydney's bid to host the Olympic Games in the year 2000 was the third attempt in succession by Australian cities. Brisbane bid for the 1992 Olympics and Melbourne followed suit in 1996. There has been a long history of Australian Olympic proposals and bids which have occurred since the start of the modern Olympic Games. It is useful, in this article, to distinguish between a 'proposal' and a 'bid' to host an Olympic Games. A 'proposal' is an informal expression of interest in hosting the Games which is not fully developed. A 'bid', by contrast, is presented to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) who select or reject it. An evaluation of these proposals and bids is illuminating. It throws light, firstly, on Australia's perception of its role and importance in the Olympic movement. It is also useful to explore why these proposals and bids ultimately failed.

Early Australian Proposals to host the Games

Following the success of Edwin Flack, the sole Australian competitor at the 1896 Olympic Games in Athens who won the 800 and 1500 metres track events, the editor of the Argus speculated on 11 April 1896 that these 'new' Olympic Games 'may even in due course offer themselves to the delighted gaze of Melbourne'. A decade later Richard Coombes became the IOC member in Australasia and expressed similar sentiments. He wrote to Baron de Coubertin on 19 February 1906: 'It is certainly hoped and expected that in due course the Olympic Games will be allotted to this part of the world'.¹

Expressions of interest in Australia hosting the Games also emanated from the Commonwealth Government in the early twentieth century. Following a request to send a team to Stockholm in 1912 from

SPORTING TRADITIONS

representatives from the newly formed Victorian and New South Wales Olympic Councils for financial assistance, Prime Minister Andrew Fisher was reported to have stated that 'if the Commonwealth government were to take part ... the team should be accompanied by an invitation from the Govt. to the controlling body to hold the Games in Australia'.² Fisher added that 'if Sweden can manage it, surely the same can be done by Australia'. Although the government did not provide Olympic funds, Coombes pursued the possibility of hosting the Games with the Prime Minister suggesting that ES Marks should convey an invitation on behalf of the government. Coombes elaborated this point in a letter to the Prime Minister: 'Either Melbourne or Sydney would be admirably suited for the Games without any expense in the building of stadiums, as both cities have suitable playing grounds that would hold large crowds'.³ Coombes' suggestion was considered by Federal Cabinet on 17 May 1912, but it decided 'not to entertain the proposal'.⁴

The next proposal came from a syndicate in Western Australia 'to secure, if possible, the holding of the Sixth Olympiad in Perth at the time of the Trans-Australian Exposition'.⁵ The Chairman of the Exposition, WB Cox, with the unanimous backing of the General Committee, argued that if Perth 'got the Olympic Games it would give a good tone to sport in Australia'. Coombes, who was the Editor of the *Referee* at this time, was optimistic about Australia's chances commenting that 'it is almost certain that the Sixth Olympiad will be held in Berlin'.⁶ Despite this opinion, the Exposition Secretary, GE Wheatley, was instructed to communicate with both Lord Desborough, President of the British Olympic Association, and Coombes, thanking them for valuable suggestions and promises of support. It appears that the Perth syndicate had a limited knowledge of the Olympic movement and its ideals because their proposed program included reference to 'professional events'. It stated: 'Olympian Festival - Full programme of athletic events, both amateur and professional, the former to be as far as possible under the conditions of the International Olympic Committee'?

The 1916 Olympic Games were already awarded to Berlin but there were suggestions that Australia attempt to secure the Games of 1920. Coombes answered critics who felt it was 'too gigantic a concern for the country to undertake'. He wrote that 'in all classes of sport in Australasia is not in the rear, and huge concerns have been carried out here, therefore with the combined assistance of all branches, failure need not be entertained'.⁸ Coombes added that 'the value to the country of such a gathering (as the seventh Olympiad) can be understood, and the publicity gained by an influx of athletes and visitors from all parts of the globe would be the finest advertisement that Australasia could receive'.⁹ Unfortunately, Coombes could not attend the meeting of the IOC in Stockholm in 1912. In a letter to IOC President de Coubertin, Coombes nominated ES Marks, Honorary Secretary of the Amateur Athletic Union of Australasia, as his representative to try 'to get the seventh Games (1920) allotted to Australia or New Zealand'.¹⁰

The first advocates for Sydney to host the Olympics got it dreadfully wrong when a non-Olympic year was proposed. Dr JS Purdy, Metropolitan Officer of Public Health, addressing the Millions Club Luncheon in 1921 was reported to have stated that a huge exposition should be held in Sydney in 1930 to mark the completion of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and to exhibit Sydney as a model city. Purdy was greeted with applause when he said 'Australia had won the right to have the Olympic Games held within the Commonwealth and no more ideal site or period could be chosen for the great sporting event than Sydney in 1930'.¹¹ This proposal was interesting in several respects. The Sydney Harbour Bridge was opened officially in 1932, an Olympic Games year, so the 'celebration' would have been appropriate. In response to this proposal, Coombes, still the IOC member in Australia, added a pertinent reference to what became the Commonwealth Games. Coombes stated that there was 'nothing to prevent the holding of a mammoth international meeting or, failing that, an Empire meeting in Sydney in 1930'.¹² It was a prophetic statement, the very first British Empire Games was held in Hamilton, Canada, in 1930. Sydney became the first Australian city to host these Games in 1938.

The Melbourne Bid and Games of 1956

The inaugural Winter Olympic Games were held in Chamonix in 1924. A curious proposal for Australia to host the Winter Olympics was put forward as part of the formal invitation to the IOC in 1948 for Melbourne to host the 1956 Summer Olympics. The *Age* made the suggestion on 24 January 1948 that ‘the Olympic winter sports, which are always held independently of the main Games, could be conducted at Mt. Buffalo, Hotham or Kosciusko (*sic*)’.

In 1946 a group of Victorians banded together to seek the 1956 Olympic Games in Melbourne. The Victorian Olympic Council (VOC) had reserves of just £6 7s 10d (that is, less than \$13) when it reconvened in June 1946, the first meeting in seven years.¹³ It is not surprising then that there was much laughter when Ronald Aitken moved a motion for the VOC to apply for Melbourne to host an Olympic Games. However, the motion was accepted unanimously.¹⁴

Edgar Tanner, Secretary-Treasurer of the VOC, forwarded its proposal to the Australian Olympic Federation (AOF) in July 1946, and asked the IOC how to proceed with the bid. He gained support from the then Lord Mayor of Melbourne, Sir James Connelly, and Sir Frank Beaurepaire, a former Lord Mayor (1940-2).¹⁵ Beaurepaire’s public profile in Australia and in the international Olympic movement was a key factor in the success of Melbourne’s bid. He had won three silver and three bronze medals at Olympic Games (1908, 1920 and 1924) and had been an official at the 1932 Olympics. Following his return from Los Angeles in 1932 he developed his motor tyre business utilising the brand name ‘Olympic’. Beaurepaire assumed the presidency of the VOC in May 1947 and was instrumental in urging the Melbourne City Council to establish an Invitation Committee comprising influential media and businessmen?

Lord Mayor Connelly announced that an application would be made to the IOC in May 1947 to host the XVI Olympiad in Melbourne¹⁷ and, in January 1948, an invitation was sent to the IOC for consideration

at its meeting in St Moritz in Switzerland.¹⁸ Copies of an Extravagant Invitation Book, with additional copies bound in either suede or merino lamb's wool, were sent to all IOC members, international sports administrators and public figures. The book outlined reasons why Melbourne should become an Olympic Games host: Australia was only one of four nations to attend every summer Olympics and consequently it was the senior Olympic country in the southern hemisphere; if the Olympics were truly 'world' games, it was time for them to be held in the southern hemisphere; and, with the development of pressurised aircraft, the thirty hours travel to Melbourne was comparable with other venues. The Invitation Book also claimed that Melbourne's bid had the 'active interests of all athletic organisations, government and the people'.¹⁹ To counter the criticism that northern hemisphere athletes would be competing 'out of season', it was suggested that this was normal situation for southern hemisphere athletes? The President of the IOC, Sigfrid Edstrom, commented that he had been impressed by the vigour and capacity of Australians when he visited there. He also stated that he would meet with the Melbourne International Committee during the 1948 Olympic Games in London.²¹ By October 1948, Beaurepaire quoted the 'betting odds' as: Melbourne - even money; Buenos Aires 6/4 against; Detroit 2/1; All others Buckley's chance.²²

There was also speculation at this time that if Melbourne did not get the Games in 1956, it was certain to get them in 1960, 'provided it kept up the propaganda work'.²³ The Melbourne Invitation Committee produced a lavish publicity book and, largely through the efforts of Sir Frank Beaurepaire, who also organised the delivery of Australian food and wine to the London Lord Mayor's Banquet in 1948.²⁴ Gift-giving to IOC members has a long history but in one instance it almost backfired. A case of Australian wine sent to Chicago as a gift to the new President of the IOC, Avery Brundage, by the Melbourne International Committee was a ploy which led to complications. It led to a protracted period of correspondence between Brundage and the Illinois Liquor Board.²⁵

SPORTING TRADITIONS

Although it was expected that the IOC would decide which city would host the 1956 Olympic Games at the London Olympics of 1948, the decision was postponed until the following year in Rome. Australians lobbied extensively during the 1948 Olympic Games and Beaurepaire and Connelly actively promoted Melbourne's case in London and Europe for almost three months. Beaurepaire, respected among IOC members as an athlete-businessman, and the other members of the Melbourne delegation, were the last to present their city's case to the IOC in Rome in April 1949. Six United States cities were bidding, with Detroit and Los Angeles the main contenders. Other bidding cities were Buenos Aires, Mexico City and London. Forty-one IOC members voted in the fourth round. Melbourne won narrowly, by twenty-one votes to the twenty secured by Buenos Aires?

'Melbourne Gets the Games' was front page news in the Victorian press when it was announced on 30 April 1949. This should have completed the story of the Melbourne bid, but it did not because Melbourne subsequently came close to losing the Games. Melbourne's troubled preparations for the Games probably had a bearing on the limited success of future Australian bids.

The strategy of the Melbourne Invitation Committee before 'decision day' had been to proceed with anything likely to persuade the IOC to award the Games to Melbourne.²⁷ The extravagant plans for a new Olympic Stadium and Swimming Pool complex were two examples. The Olympic Organising Committee vacillated over the site for the main stadium - that is, Olympic Park, Princes Park, the Showgrounds and the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) - and Avery Brundage expressed deep concern over the lack of progress. On the day Brundage visited the MCG in April 1955 there were only six workers on site trying to do the work of one hundred men because of an industrial dispute.²⁸ Brundage lamented that in the six years since Melbourne had been awarded the Games at Rome in 1949 there had been 'nothing but squabbling, changes of management and bickering'. He regarded Melbourne's record in its preparations for the Games as deplorable - a matter of 'promises and

promises.’ At the end of his six-day inspection tour Brundage was quoted as stating that the IOC had made a serious mistake in allocating the Games to Melbourne. He intimated that, even at that late stage, several other cities (he seemed to favour Philadelphia) would be prepared to stage the 1956 Games. His scathing criticism seemed to work; it galvanised action and greater co-operative effort among the individuals, committees and agencies during those final eighteen months of preparation.²⁹

Another problem for future bids, which surfaced in 1956, was the revelation that Australia’s strict quarantine laws would prevent equestrian events being staged in Melbourne in 1956. They were held instead at Stockholm.³⁰ Despite the difficulties and controversies, the Games of the XVI Olympiad were staged most successfully and have been heralded as ‘the friendly Games’ ever since.

Proposals for the 1972 and 1988 Games

It took less than two decades after the 1956 Games for more Australian proposals to emerge. Sydney’s proposal to host the 1972 Olympic Games was an interesting one because, as late as May 1965, there were no other proposals to stage the Games. International politics played a role in discouraging Olympic bids. It was decided at a meeting of international sports federations at Lausanne, Switzerland, that the country staging the 1972 Olympic Games must issue visas to all athletes entitled to compete. This ‘automatically eliminated NATO countries as possible organisers because they would not issue visas to East Germany’.³¹ The Secretary of the Australian Swimming Union, W Berge Phillips, was quoted as saying that ‘many delegates (at the Lausanne meeting) were keen on the idea of Sydney applying for the 1972 Olympics’.³² Avery Brundage, President of the IOC, was receptive to the idea, and his ‘Sydney can do it’ comment was headlined in the Sydney press at the time?

The idea was not welcome in all quarters of the Australian media. The sports editor of Sydney’s *Sun-Herald* stated on 2 May 1965 that it was ‘crazy to suggest Sydney could stage the Games on a scale as grand

as Tokyo ... to get the Games ahead of other nations whose visa restrictions would rule them ineligible, would be a pyrrhic victory'. Another journalist, the state political correspondent of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, pointed out on 7 October 1965 that the Australian Government also had a policy which would prevent the issuing of visas to an East German team.

The AOF decided unanimously in May 1965 to support an application by Sydney even though it was considered a 'calculated gamble'.³⁴ A perceived hurdle was the IOC's decision that all events on the summer Olympic Games program, including equestrian events, must be held in the same country. However, Hugh Weir, a member of the IOC in Australia, was quoted as saying that 'there is nothing at this stage to indicate that the equestrian events will be on the same program for the 1972 Games'.³⁵ This was an unlikely possibility and the Lord Mayor, Alderman HF Jensen, suggested that he would ask the Premier (Askin) to make a special grant for the study of exotic horse diseases to help Sydney's application?

Support for the proposal needed to be forthcoming from both the State and Federal governments before Sydney's application could be prepared for submission to the IOC by the mid-1966 deadline." The *Sydney Morning Herald's* state political correspondent, under the headline 'Games Campaign a "pipe dream"', wrote on 7 October 1965 that:

The State Treasury is examining an estimate by Alderman Jensen that Sydney could stage the Games for 15 million pounds, and will report to the Premier, Mr. Askin ... But this proposal, in view of the political as well as the financial problems, looks to be moonshine.³⁸

Sydney was early off the mark to link the hosting of the Olympic Games with Bicentennial celebrations of 1988. *Olympic News*, printed by the New South Wales Olympic Council in March 1971, reported the policy announcement by the newly appointed Minister for Sport in New South Wales, Eric Willis, which included the proposal for the Olympic Games in Sydney in 1988.³⁹ This publication also reported that the Lord Mayor

of Sydney had formally written through the AOF to the IOC for the Games as a major feature of the Bicentennial celebrations. A Citizens of Sydney 1988 Olympic Games Committee was appointed with the Deputy Lord Mayor, Alderman Nicholas Shehadie, as Chairman. Others included: R Baker, LFJ Barraclough MLA, Mick Grace Jr, Syd Grange, AE Harris, Norman Rydge Jr, Arnold Stehn, Arthur Tunstall, Murray Walker, Hugh Weir and Gordon Young as Administrator.

Sports journalist and author, Jim Shepherd, was pessimistic about Sydney's chances; under the headline, 'The Olympics for Sydney - not very likely, Mr Wills (sic)', he wrote:

Australia has staged the Olympic Games once - in Melbourne in 1956 ... Less than 12 months before the opening ceremony building was drastically behind schedule and at one stage, the Chairman (*sic*) of the International Olympic Committee, Mr. Avery Brundage, threatened to take the games away from Melbourne ... Those memories have faded for all but the International Committee. It is highly doubtful if Melbourne would ever be considered as a future host city. Sydney's situation is hopeless, ludicrous, in comparison.

... The very day he [Willis] phrased the 'Olympics for Sydney, 1988' slogan he admitted that he had no budget, no firm ideas about raising money to assist sport and 'no bright ideas' about developing Sydney as an Olympic venue.⁴⁰

Another committee was formed in November 1978 to advise the New South Wales government under Premier Neville Wran on the feasibility of bidding for the 1988 Olympic Games. The report of this inter-departmental committee, entitled 'Records relating to a proposal to hold a 1988 Olympic Games in Sydney', persuaded the government to decide not to proceed as the likely \$2 billion cost was beyond the resources of the State.⁴¹ Current IOC member in Australia, Phil Coles, stated recently that Games climate then was very different because 'this wasn't long after Montreal's Games (1976) and the financial problems they were experiencing were very public'."

SPORTING TRADITIONS

Melbourne's proposal to the IOC to stage the 1988 Olympics was endorsed by the AOF in 1980. The Minister for Home Affairs, Robert J Ellicott, announced in September 1980 that the Federal Government had established an interdepartmental committee to examine the proposal, which had been made public by the Victorian Minister for Youth, Sport and Recreation, Brian Dixon.⁴³ An Australian delegation presented Melbourne's case to the General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF) in Monaco in October 1980 and Brian Dixon remained confident of Federal Government support.⁴⁴ It was promulgated that the Olympic Games for Melbourne Committee would send a delegation to Lausanne in late February 1981 to speak with IOC officials. A glossy booklet outlining Melbourne's venues was in final stages of preparation amidst speculation of whether the Federal Government would meet half the \$767 million cost of staging the Games and take a share in the estimated \$642 million revenue.⁴⁵ There was no trip to Lausanne. Federal Treasurer, John Howard, announced on 24 February that the necessary funds would not be made available. The Premier of Victoria, Dick Hamer, stated that it had been agreed by the two governments that Melbourne's bid would not proceed?

Former Olympian and journalist, Mike Agostini, wrote that the Fraser Government's rejection of the Melbourne bid was a blessing in disguise, 'most of all for the Australian taxpayer': 'While the Victorian Committee ... conservatively estimated a deficit of only \$144 million, the more realistic estimate by the Federal Government was much higher - at a staggering \$500 million'.⁴⁷ A Morgan Gallup Poll reported that only 51 per cent of Melbourne citizens favoured their city hosting the Games with 41 per cent against and 8 per cent undecided. Of those under thirty, 73 per cent were in favour.⁴⁸

Brisbane Bid of 1992

Pride and euphoria abounded in Brisbane following the highly successful XII Commonwealth Games in 1982, so much so, that within a month of the Closing Ceremony, the then Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Roy

Harvey, announced that the city would investigate the feasibility of hosting the 1992 Olympic Games. After receiving a report from a Project Team, which outlined proposals for a new international airport and an arterial road system to link existing and planned sporting venues and accommodation, the Brisbane City Council (BCC) sent a letter to the IOC in January 1983 outlining their intention to bid for the 1992 Games.⁴⁹ The next month Brisbane officials travelled to Lausanne for discussions about the bid process and in April that year the Resident of the IOC, Juan Antonio Samaranch, visited Brisbane. Following a change of government in the BCC, the newly elected Lord Mayor, Sallyanne Atkinson, attended the ninetieth session of the IOC in Berlin in June 1985. Atkinson was the key figure of this bid and the impact of her intellect, charm, and political sense on members of the IOC was utilised in the subsequent bids of Melbourne 1996 and Sydney 2000.

The proposed timing of the Brisbane Games was one of the more interesting arguments put forward. It was suggested that this 'Olympics Down Under' which would be held between 25 July and 9 August- when Brisbane enjoys 'idyllic dry weather' - would be beneficial northern hemisphere athletes because they would compete 'in-season'. There was, in addition, the regular refrain since 1896 that only one Olympic Games had been held in the southern hemisphere - 'surely to further the Olympic ideals in Oceania, and throughout the world, it is time to hold another'.⁵⁰

The catch-cry, 'Brisbane's ready', featured prominently in the video-presentation. It was argued that most of the venues already in place, and the plans for the remainder had been finalised, when the bid was presented in Lausanne in October 1986. The Brisbane bid organisers were sufficiently confident in the progress of their preparations that they were even ready to take over in 1988 following rumours that the preparations for the Seoul Olympics were 'tardy' and the Games there might falter. Brisbane, like any other bid city, has its critics as well.

There were many who who scathing of Brisbane's presumption to bid for the Olympics. Murray Hedgcock wrote *in the Weekend Australian* in 1984:

It's difficult to know whether to applaud, laugh, or cry about Brisbane's belated campaign to grab the 1992 Summer Olympics ... The last thing they [the European countries] want ... is to face a 1992 trek to the other side of the world and also be asked to complete out of season because Australia's summer is Europe's winter?

Hedgcock concluded this article with an unkind yet prophetic remark: 'He (IOC President, Samaranch) can hardly be blamed for seeking to round off his term of office by persuading his fellows that Spain is ready'.

Bids for the 1996 Games

Immediately after the announcement that Barcelona would host the 1992 Olympics, representatives of the media asked Sallyanne Atkinson whether Brisbane would bid again for 1996. Aware of the imminence of council elections, she responded that she would have to ask the people of Brisbane. In my opinion, it was the 'delay' by Brisbane which provided the opportunity for Sydney and Melbourne to make a running as the Australian city to bid for the 1996 Games. John Coates, the Executive Director of the Brisbane Olympic Project Office, was interviewed soon after his return to Australia: 'Coates has little doubt that the AOF again will endorse Brisbane as Australia's 1996 candidate if it wants to re-submit'. Climatically, Brisbane is by far our best candidate', he added. 'For a Sydney Games, you would be looking at October, and November for Melbourne, which is far too late for the northern hemisphere countries'.⁵²

Four Australian cities - Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney - expressed interest in hosting the 1996 Olympics and throughout 1988 an 'internal' selection process took place.⁵³ On the day after Melbourne was selected in November 1988 by the Executive Board of the AOF as the

Australian city to bid for the 1996 Olympic Games, 'Leahy', the cartoonist for the *Courier Mail* in Brisbane, depicted a frustrated torch-bearer attempting to kindle the Olympic Flame - in pouring rain.⁵⁴

Following the decision in Canberra that Melbourne should be the Australian city to bid for the 1996 Olympics, Sallyanne Atkinson was reported as having said quietly, 'I accept the umpire's decision, I just think the umpire was wrong'.⁵⁵ Similar sentiments abounded throughout Australia, but especially in Victoria when it was announced in Tokyo in September 1990 that Atlanta would host the 1996 Olympics. One of the slogans used by the Melbourne Olympic Committee was that it was 'Time For Another Continent'; not only had the northern hemisphere hosted all summer Olympics apart from 1956, North America had hosted five.

Many of the IOC members and representatives from international sports federations who visited Melbourne were encouraging in their comments; this was evident in their formal reports, in the media, and in more informal comments to particular individuals.⁵⁶ David Miller, a respected journalist who specialises in writing about the Olympic Movement, supported Melbourne's case for hosting the Olympics in a London Times article which was reproduced in November 1989 in *Weekend Australian* under the headline, 'Clean, free, safe ... and morally justified':

Members of the IOC arriving in Melbourne to inspect Australia's bid for the 1996 Games can stand at the top of the Rialto Tower and see, with a single sweep of the eye, the venues for every sport, bar two. Those two, rowing and canoeing, will be 32 km distant ... everything else, except equestrianism and archery at the glorious parkland of Werribee -just beyond the city - is contained inside a 10 km radius.⁵⁷

Miller was also impressed with specific venues and the Olympic Museum which was 'without equivalent' in his knowledge. He also quoted opinion polls which indicated public support running at 85 per cent. Alas, in

Tokyo in September 1990, the hopes of Melbourne's Olympic Flame being kindled in 1996 were doused again when yet another North American city, Atlanta, was elected.

Sydney's Successful Bid

The Australian Olympic Committee was adamant that there would be no large-scale presentations or lobbying by the Australian cities wishing to nominate for the right to bid for the 2000 Olympics. Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney all nominated: but the newly elected AOC President, John Coates, stated 'ultimately we came down for Sydney because it is Australia's best known city internationally, it is bigger and easier to promote and because Melbourne had hosted a previous Olympics'.⁵⁸ In the *AOC Annual Report* of 1990, Coates wrote that the support for a Sydney bid 'was done in the knowledge that the residue of goodwill created first by Brisbane bidding for '92 and then Melbourne for '96 provided the Australian candidate city with a momentum that other cities would be pressing to match'.⁵⁹ The Melbourne bid for 1996 was regarded as outstanding; there is no doubt that Sydney benefited from the bids of 1992 and 1996 as it prepared its application for the 2000 Olympics.

The bid to host the 2000 Olympics has been considered in other articles in this issue of *Sporting Traditions*, so only a brief overview will be necessary. In May 1991 the Sydney 2000 Bid Committee unveiled the logo, a 'flash' representing the famous opera house, which was depicted on so many publications, awnings, posters, and featured in audio-visuals. Lawyer, Rod McGeoch, was appointed Chief Executive of the Sydney Olympics 2000 Bid Limited. A key feature of the bid was the construction of the athletic and aquatics sporting complex at what would become known as Sydney Olympic Park at Homebush Bay, just ten kilometres from the city. In May 1992, during the euphoria generated at a fundraising breakfast, Prime Minister Paul Keating pledged spontaneously \$5 million for the Sydney bid and Cabinet later ratified the promise. Australia's success at the Barcelona Olympic Games in

1992 added further impetus to the bid both from overseas and within Australia. Tickertape parades for the Barcelona gold medallists and home-state Olympians were held in capital cities throughout Australia and the medal-winning potential of Australia hosting the Olympics in Sydney in 2000 was promulgated widely. By September of that year a public opinion poll in Sydney reported 90 per cent support for the city to host the Olympics.

In January 1993, Sydney's Candidature File, comprising 550 pages, 1500 photographs and more than eighty technical drawings, was flown under tight security to Lausanne. Included in the Candidature File were letters of approval from the international governing bodies of all the twenty-five summer Olympic sports. Twelve IOC members were in Sydney for the Australia Day celebrations and, in March, the eleven members of the IOC's Inquiry Commission visited the bidding city for three days. When this Commission released its findings on all the bidding cities in July, it was stated that Sydney offered conditions beyond what was expected by the ICC, thereby placing them in a favoured position.

The three-day visit by IOC President Samaranch to Sydney in May highlighted the excellent progress which had been made in the planning of facilities and much was made of environmental aspects and guidelines for the proposed Games in Sydney. The bid documents showed that major facilities to be built included an 80 000 seat stadium, a 15 000 seat indoor stadium, a velodrome, tennis centre, gymnastics pavilion, and four indoor sports halls. The proposed Another feature was that the game's village would house all 15 000 competitors and team officials in one location.

IOC President Samaranch announced on 23 September in Monte Carlo (in Australia it was 4.20 am Eastern Standard Time), that Sydney would be the host city for the Olympic Games in 2000. Istanbul, Berlin and Manchester were eliminated in the first three rounds of voting; in the final round IOC members voted forty-five to forty-three in favour of

Sydney over Beijing. Hundreds of thousands of Sydney-siders who had partied all-night in anticipation of the announcement continued their celebration through the dawn and throughout the day. The announcement was well received throughout the nation and it can be expected that Sydney will stage an impressive Olympic Games. The challenge is there to all Australians to make it worthy of Australia and in keeping with the philosophy of the Olympic Movement.

Conclusions

A consistent theme of all the proposals and bids put forward by Australian cities was that hosting the Games would be beneficial to the economic, political and social life of the particular Australian city. It would also boost and advertise the city on the international stage. An evaluation of the proposals by Australian cities to host the Olympic Games indicates that they were spontaneous and speculative responses to the euphoria associated with Australia's involvement in the Olympic movement.

Melbourne was the first Australian city to put forward a full-scale bid to the IOC. Its bid to host the 1956 Games was the only successful one by a southern hemisphere city for a summer Olympic Games in the first century of the modern Olympics. Following the financial success of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, there has been far greater competition from many cities to host the Games. It became clear that a bid, by a city and a country, might succeed only after several unsuccessful attempts. The Brisbane and Melbourne bids for the 1992 and 1996 Olympics respectively paved the way for Sydney's successful bid. The expression attributed to Baron de Coubertin, and certainly an epitome of the Olympic movement, 'It's not the winning but the taking part', is appropriate for all the past Australian proposals and bids. The awarding of the XXVII Olympiad to Sydney is a just and timely reward for past proposals and bids.

Late in his life, Pierre de Coubertin was asked to comment on the significance of the Olympic Games. Towards the end of a speech

broadcast from Berlin in 1935, entitled 'The Philosophic Foundation of Modern Olympism', he stated:

To ask the peoples of the world to love one another is merely a form of childishness. To ask them to respect one another is not in the least utopian (sic), but in order to respect one another it is first necessary to know one another. Universal history such as may be taught henceforward, with due regard to its exact secular and geographic proportions, is the only genuine foundation for a genuine peace.⁶⁰

Throughout his lifetime, the Baron remained adamant that the Olympic Games should be held in different cities every four years. The wisdom of this has been questioned in later decades. Some have argued in favour of a permanent site in Greece, others have favoured the establishment of a 'neutral Olympic City'.⁶¹ I feel the Olympic philosophy is more consistent with the concept that the Games should be held in different cities every four years.

Although some believe that an open bid system is beneficial to the Olympic movement, the suggestion that the Games 'rotate' around the five continents has merit and is worthy of consideration by the the IOC.

NOTES

1. *Referee*, 21 Feb. 1906.
2. Prime Minister, Cabinet Document 1912/431, 'Deputation re representation at forthcoming Olympic Games, Stockholm', pp. 1, 4. See also Harry Gordon, *Australia and the Olympic Games*, UQP, St Lucia, 1994, pp. 72, 449.
3. Letter from Coombes to Prime Minister Andrew Fisher, 1 Apr. 1912, External Affairs, 1912/09457, cited in Gordon, *Australia and the Olympic Games*, p. 73.
4. Although it was suggested in a memorandum that the 'High Commissioner be asked to urge the claims of Australia in this connection and that Mr Marks should be associated with him in there presentations', the hand written entry of 17 May 1912 read: 'Cabinet decision not to entertain proposal'. (Rime Minister, External Affairs, 1912/0945).
5. *Referee*, 19 Feb. 1906.
6. 'The Sixth Olympiad -movement in Perth', *Referee*, June 1912

SPORTING TRADITIONS

7. *Referee*, 21 Aug. 1912.
8. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 June 1912
9. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 June 1912
10. *Referee*, 5 June 1912. I have been unable to ascertain whether Marks made this suggestion o the IOC Resident in Stockholm.
11. *Referee*, 9 Nov. 1921. Coombes stated that 'even if a meeting did fall due in 1930, the question of venue is one for the representatives of forty nations to decide'.
12. *Referee*, 9 Nov. 1921.
13. Shane Cahill, "'Friendly Games'": The Melbourne Olympic Games in Australia Culture 1946-1956', unpub. MA thesis, University of Melbourne, 1989, p. 15.
14. *Age*, Melbourne, June 24.1946; Graham Lomas, *The Will to Win: The Story of Sir Frank Beaurepaire*, Heinemann, Toronto, 1966, p. 150.
15. Beaurepaire had been reported as stating in February 1946 that Melbourne should have a sporting stadium with 'all facilities for holding Olympic Games in Australia' (*Age*, 7 Feb. 1946).
16. *Lomas, The Will to Win*.
17. *Age*, 18 June 1947.
18. *The Official Report of The Organising Committee for the Games of the XVI Olympiad, Melburne* 1956, W M Houston, Government Printer, Melbourne, 1958 p. 29; *Argus*, 24 Jan. 1948.
19. *Melbourne Olympic Games Invitation*, G W Green and Sons Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 1948; *Official Report ... of the XVI Olympiad*, p. 29; *Argus*, 3 Mar. 1948; the city of Buenos Aires was named specifically in the *Age*, 3 Mar. 1948.
20. *Age*, 28 Sept. 1948.
21. *Argus*, 6 Apr. 1948.
22. *Argus*, 28 Oct. 1948
23. *Argus*, 28 Oct. 1948.
24. Shane Cahill, 'Friendly Games', p. 30; Lomas, *The Will to Win*, p. 154.
25. Avery Brundage Collection, Box 119, Microform, University of Western Ontario.
26. *Official Report of the XVI Olympiad*, p. 30.
27. *Shane Cahill, Olympic Spirit*, Australian Gallery of Sport, Melbourne, 1986, p. 21.
28. Cahill, 'Friendly Games'; *Argus*, 12 Apr. 1955, reported that when Brundage went to the MCG 'he saw five men trying to do the work of 100'. At the end of his tour, Brundage was quoted as stating that 'I can tell you that more than ever the world thinks that a mistake has been made'.
29. *Argus*, 12 Apr. 1955.

30. For further elaboration on these aspects associated with the bid for the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games refer to Ian Jobling, 'Olympic Games - Melbourne, 1956', *Historical Dictionary of the Modern Olympics*, in John Findling and Kimberly Pelle, Greenwood Publishing Group, Westport (forthcoming).
31. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 May 1965.
32. *Sun-Herald* 25 April 1965.
33. *Mirror*, Sydney, 20 May 1965.
34. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 May 1965.
35. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 May 1965.
36. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 May 1965.
37. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 June 1965.
38. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 Oct. 1965.
39. New South Wales Olympic Council, *Olympic News*, (cited by Syd Grange) March, 1971.
40. *National Times*, 22-7 March 1971
41. *Australian*, 20 July 1994.
42. Journalists, Adrian Bradley and Christine Fogg have stated that the inter-departmental report is not expected to be released from the State Archives of New South Wales until the year 2009.
43. *Commonwealth Record*, 15-21 Sept. 1980, p. 1446.
44. *National Times*, 1-7 Feb. 1981.
45. *National Times*, 1-7 Feb. 1981.
46. *Commonwealth Record*, 2-8 March 1989, p. 222.
47. *Bulletin*, 10 Mar. 1981.
48. *Bulktin*, 10 Mar. 1981.
49. Brisbane Olympic Project Office - Document Summarising Brisbane's Olympic Plan for 1992. Some of the major features used in the argument that the Brisbane Olympic Plan was best included: No sporting venue is more than thirty minutes travelling time from the athlete's village, downtown or media centre (compare Los Angeles, 1984); the Games will be held in a neutral 'zone of peace' offering security to all visitors and athletes; one Olympic village will accommodate all athletes and officials;no sport (such as yachting, canoeing or rowing) will be held away from the centre of Olympic activity; provision of a modern high quality international airport.
50. Olympic Project Office, Document Summarising Brisbane's Olympic Plan for 1992, p. 34.
51. *Weekend Australian*, 27-8 Oct. 1984. Barcelona hosted the 1992 Olympics, but Samaranch did not retire as IOC President.
52. *Courier Mail*, 24 Oct. 1986.

SPORTING TRADITIONS

53. As a member of the Lord Mayor of Brisbane's 1996 Olympic Bid Committee, I became most interested in these bids. Space does not allow for elaboration of the 'official' and informal presentation of material related to these bids by three Australian cities (four, if one includes an initial 'interest' shown by Perth). The ramifications of these bids on the Olympic movement in Australia in general, and the subsequent structure and administration of the Australian Olympic Committee, is worthy of further consideration and is the topic of a separate paper I am researching currently. In my opinion recent events associated with the calling of an inquiry into the public accountability of the Australian Olympic Committee and accusations of 'sabotage' of the 1996 Melbourne bid stem from the internal selection processes and the outcome of that contest between Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney.
54. *Daily Telegraph, as depicted in the Sunday Mail*, Brisbane, 20 Nov. 1988.
55. *Courier Mail*, 18 Nov. 1988.
56. Including personal communication with the author.
57. *Weekend Australian*, 18-19 Nov. 1989.
58. *Courier Mail*, 17 Nov. 1990.
59. Australian Olympic Committee, Annual Report -1990.
60. Pierre de Coubertin, *The Olympic Idea: Discourses and Essays*, Carl Diem Institute, Cologne, p. 130.
61. *John Lucas, Future of the Olympic Games*, Human Kinetics Books, Champaign, 1992.