Hallmark events

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Abstract
The modern Olympic Games have always been an international event: a celebration of sporting competition between athletes from many nations. In an era marked by the quickening pace of global integration of the world's economic and cultural systems, the Olympics can also be thought of as a globalised 'hallmark event'. Certainly, the Games have economic, cultural and political dimensions that mirror the various processes of globalisation. The impacts of the Games on its host city are similar to the impacts of globalisation processes. In this chapter we discuss the analogies between the Olympics, as a hallmark event, and the local impacts of economic globalisation. We position the Olympics business - not the sporting aspects, but the bidding and development processes - as an example of economic globalisation. By extension, the responses of localities and local authorities to the impacts of globalisation might be expected to be the same as for an Olympic event. Lessons on how a local community can best capitalise on an Olympic event might be derived, therefore, from examining the broader case of economic globalisation and its impact upon localities. We begin by sketching the major impacts of economic globalisation upon localities, with particular attention to the institutional changes that are commonly associated with localities' efforts to adjust to global economic integration.

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In this chapter we discuss the analogies between the Olympics, as a hallmark event, and the local impacts of economic globalisation. We position the Olympics business — not the sporting aspects, but the bidding and development processes — as an example of economic globalisation. By extension, the responses of localities and local authorities to the impacts of globalisation might be expected to be the same as for an Olympic event. Lessons on how a local community can best capitalise on an Olympic event might be derived, therefore, from examining the broader case of economic globalisation and its impact upon localities. We begin by sketching the major impacts of economic globalisation upon localities, with particular attention to the institutional changes that are commonly associated with localities' efforts to adjust to global economic integration.

**ECONOMIC GLOBALISATION: PLACE-COMPETITION, PLACE-MARKETING AND PLACING THE OLYMPICS**

Debates about the nature and extent of economic globalisation and the emergence of a truly globalised economy are rife. However
much authors debate the issues, most agree that advances in transportation, communications and production technology, the removal or reduction of international trade quotas and tariffs, and the deregulation of financial flows have fundamentally transformed global economic relations. It is largely conceded that economic activity has been increasingly globalised.3

Communications technology combined with financial deregulation has enabled the emergence of an international financial system of trading in a range of financial ‘products’. Transnational corporations (TNCs) — major corporations whose trade and production operations span international boundaries — have transformed the organisational form of capitalist firms and forged links around the globe in their quest to minimise the costs of production and the profitability of trade.4 Though the dominance of truly transnational corporations has been questioned,5 complex flows of information, financing, raw materials, manufactured goods, services, skilled labour and management expertise between them and their affiliates are an important source of global connections between places. TNCs have been forerunners in creating globally organised manufacturing and service industries. In any case, communications technology enables even small firms to have a global reach, to disaggregate the production process and locate its elements at varied ‘least cost’ locations beyond the boundaries of the national economy in which parent firms are based. Production processes and capital flows are held together in complex global networks in an economic environment where nationally based regulations (such as limits on foreign direct investment) are much reduced.6

Technological advances have thus opened up the potential of an enormous array of locations to global capital investment. Capital mobility between nations and regions has been escalated by the drive to exploit this potential and facilitated by the increased permeability of national borders to international investment.7

The rhetoric of a 'borderless world'8 in which capital is 'hypermobile' has been a powerful force in compelling nations, regions and even individual cities to accept a logic of global competition to attract international investment.9 The global imperative of competition has been a dominant force shaping national economic policies.10 While the case for 'borderless world' may have been overstated,11 the realities and the rhetoric of global competition have undoubtedly increased place competition at a range of scales. With potential investors willing to differentiate between investment locations on the basis of the local investment environment, nations, regions and cities compete with each other to offer a combination of favourable conditions that will entice investment into their jurisdictions. A location's investment environment is constituted by a host of physical conditions
(for example, infrastructure and telecommunications networks, the availability of development sites, and the quality of the local environment and lifestyle), institutional conditions (for example, the suitability of local labour, local regulatory regimes such as planning regulations, and the availability of investment incentives such as tax breaks) and symbolic elements (for example, the image and aesthetics of a place).

The effects of global competition and capital mobility (and the powerful rhetoric that accompanies it) have resulted in national, regional and local governments becoming increasingly concerned with promoting local economic development within their own boundaries in competition with neighbouring states, cities and regions. Localities attempt to create a combination of investment conditions that will out-compete rival locations in the quest for investment. Many are also involved in active place-marketing to promote their places as investment locations that are cheaper, have the most flexible labour force, are more efficient, more productive, less impeded by regulatory red tape and, therefore, more profitable than other places.

For older industrial regions and cities, the global shift towards the services sector has required them to undertake substantive material changes, as well as a repositioning of their place image, so as to attract new forms of investment. For such cities, the global imperative has tended to produce three related forms of restructuring. First is a physical restructuring of the fabric of the city in which the material legacy of older industry is removed. The emerging landscape must be able to accommodate the anticipated new economic base in activities such as tourism or service industries. Second is a symbolic restructuring in which the location's identity is repackaged. Post-industrial imagery and consumption-based economic activities are often utilised to create a new, more marketable place-image. Third is a restructuring of local or regional governance in which government roles are reoriented towards the entrepreneurial facilitation of economic development and cooperation with the business sector, and a broad range of non-government, often private, organisations are incorporated into government decision-making and policy formulation. A variety of new institutions, such as development corporations, may be formed, forging partnerships between government and private sector interests. Such entrepreneurial governance is part of a broad political shift within industrialised economies towards neoliberalism, a political philosophy favouring limited state intervention and espousing the logic of the market.

These three reconstructions are, of course, interrelated. For the marketing of a place to be efficacious, the symbolic reconstruction of
an industrial place has a co-requisite of physical reconstruction. An image transformation is unsustainable without a corresponding redevelopment of the city's industrial urban fabric. To guide all of this, a more entrepreneurial approach to urban governance is often employed which seeks to remove obstacles (physical, symbolic or institutional) to redevelopment. These interrelated shifts have been identified as occurring within Australian cities like Newcastle and Wollongong.\textsuperscript{17} The processes of place competition and the restructurings they promote have distinct similarities to the processes of bidding for and hosting the Olympic hallmark event. The redevelopment of Homebush, in Sydney's west, as the venue for the year 2000 Olympics could be cited as another example in which the material site and place-image have been restructured under the guidance of newly formed, entrepreneurial-driven forms of governance.

GOVERNING THE LOCAL IN A GLOBALISED CONTEXT

Regions, cities and even localities are increasingly focused upon developing internationally competitive investment environments for investors who possess global reach; indeed, the investment package that constitutes the Olympics cannot be surpassed in these terms. The American geographer David Harvey\textsuperscript{18} argued that, in contemporary times, the primary 'task of urban governance is, in short, to lure highly mobile and flexible production, financial and consumption flows into its space'. In the competition to outdo rivals in the global marketplace, the practices of entrepreneurial elected and non-elected governing authorities have resulted in at least four problematic outcomes: subsidising private sector interests at the cost of public concerns;\textsuperscript{19} the dilution of local planning powers;\textsuperscript{20} the limitation of public participation in the development process;\textsuperscript{21} and the homogenisation of community opinion.\textsuperscript{22}

We will now outline the problematic dimensions of these outcomes before considering them in the light of Sydney's Olympic preparation. Entrepreneurial forms often have a focus on assisting private sector development that often results in a public subsidising of private development projects. One common example is state provision of infrastructure previously provided by the private sector, such as site preparation for commercial development or transport infrastructure.\textsuperscript{23} Another contrasting example is the increased privatisation in the provision of user-pays infrastructure, such as tollways.\textsuperscript{24} This is associated with a discourse of privatisation in which private industry construction and management is presumed more efficient than the public sector equivalent.\textsuperscript{25} Urban researchers have found, however, that the balance of capital risk in part- or fully privatised public service provision tends to be borne still by the public purse,\textsuperscript{26} while
private exposure to risk and to absorbing non-profitable elements of development is decreased. Such public subsidisation of private interests has the effect of reallocating government expenditure from other areas, particularly from social welfare expenditure.

Internationally, entrepreneurial urban governance has been found to involve the relaxation of local planning requirements in order to 'fast-track' urban development. In innumerable instances, special planning agencies have been instituted to hasten particular developments deemed to be of significant status. This is the case too for developments necessary to host major urban spectacles or hallmark events that can be used as vehicles for economic growth and urban redevelopment. In Australia, as elsewhere, state and local planning systems have been streamlined to become enablers rather than regulators of development. In 1998, for instance, the state government of New South Wales introduced major reforms to its development approval system through amendments to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. The reforms introduced private certifiers and assessors for building and development applications, and will further centralise planning control of larger developments, regardless of their location, to the central planning authority within state government. This privatisation and centralisation of planning control is posited as a response to 'persistent calls for streamlining and fast-tracking'.

One common strategy of entrepreneurial urban governance is to remove 'obstacles' to development. Public scrutiny and participation in development appraisal are often positioned as obstacles by prospective investors. Many city administrations, in their attempts to respond to the rhetoric of global competition and produce a globally competitive investment environment, have instituted attempts to limit public participation in planning and development processes, or to restrict the stages at which participation is accommodated. New methods of participation are being trialed which allow intensive community consultation about broad policy dimensions but for strictly limited periods and under controlled conditions. Recent research on various forms of public participation in local government planning in Sydney revealed that many local governments were making sincere and legitimate attempts to meet statutory requirements on public participation, and some were attempting to expand and improve participation. However, the state government reforms may well further confine the public input into the latter stages of the development process. The reforms follow a series of state government initiatives over the last decade which have attempted to rein-in both public participation and local planning powers.

Tensions between the agendas of state and local government become apparent. State governments' pursuit of globally competitive
investment environments, including hallmark events, can be somewhat removed from the impacts of these pursuits on specific localities. Local governments are more directly concerned with place-specific impacts and with representing local communities' concerns for their own locality and for their rights as local citizens. Ironically, the importance of local governance is highlighted, rather than obliterated, by processes of globalisation, as it is at this scale of governance that democratic principles of representativeness, public involvement and accountability regarding development and planning are the most accessible.

Contemporary large-scale development projects, such as those associated with hallmark events, have often involved the silencing of divergent voices opposing development or aspects of it. Public reception of development and investment projects is an important component of the investment environment. Governing bodies wish to present their locations as having a homogenised, unified voice in support of investment, rather than fragmented voices expressing resistance to development. Even opposition to specific components of a development may be branded as contrary to legitimate 'public interest' and as endangering the ability of a location to attract global investment. Place-competition, inspired by global capital mobility and the deployment of its rhetoric in the discourses of governance, has worrying implications for local accountability.

THE OLYMPICS LOCALLY

The processes of place-competition and place-marketing are partially brought into play by capital mobility and are partially a product of the powerful discourse of a globalised world. Local differentiation is reduced by the multiplicity of locations all marketing themselves — often in identical ways — and offering similar incentives in order to capture investment. Such tactics leave localities vulnerable to exploitation by global capital. What are the lessons then that can be learned from a comparison of the local impacts of these processes of economic globalisation and the process of bidding for and developing Sydney's Olympics event? The parallels between them are striking.

Place-competition and place-marketing are not unlike the process of bidding to host an Olympics event which witnesses cities competing in a place-marketing exercise that seeks to capture the enormous potential investment and economic benefits of hosting such a global hallmark event. Hosting an Olympic Games represents the opportunity to attract enormous investment and consumption spending, both during and after the Games. It can also generate significant ongoing local development, particularly in the tourism and retail sectors. The Atlanta Games in 1996, for instance, drew US$4 billion
into the Atlanta state economy between 1991 and 1996. The exposure a city receives globally on hosting such an event can result in positive image projections that differentiate that city in the minds of investors and tourists. A locality's capture of the jewel in the crown of hallmark events becomes a mechanism for driving material and symbolic transformations of place and, as we will explore in relation to Sydney's development of the Olympic site, has profound implications for governance at a local and regional scale.

The Olympics are a significant global event and place-competition. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has purposefully enhanced and encouraged a bidding process for the Olympic Games. In a critical analysis of Manchester's failed bid to host the 1996 and 2000 Olympic Games, British geographers concluded that the IOC was purposefully fostering a sense of competition:

Bidding for the Olympics means submitting to the competitive rules laid down by the IOC ... The IOC takes steps to ensure that a vigorous — and ever more elaborate — competition is fostered amongst the bidding cities.

Heightening the competitive process has enabled better leverage of subsidies for the Games from the potential hosts. Indeed, the allegations of corruption in the bidding process that emerged in early 1999 suggest that other corrupt 'incentives' have also been leveraged by increased competition. Host cities must pledge higher levels of financial support, servicing and infrastructure provision than they have had to in the past. These subsidies are often paid from public funds — although the Atlanta Games was largely a privatised affair — and this has direct implications for public spending in other portfolios such as education and social welfare, both areas in which Australian public spending has been cut in recent years. Crucially, hosts have had to trade more concessions to the IOC in terms of television broadcasting rights and merchandising, both important sources of spin-off consumption spending for Games' hosts. They have also had to bestow expensive 'gifts' upon IOC members and offer higher levels of subsidy to visiting athletes — the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG) will pay the return transportation costs of all teams through the private sponsorship of Team Millennium Olympic Partner Airlines. The Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) president John Coates talked of having to 'play the rules': of supplying subsidies, of lavish hosting, and 'leveraging' the voting system.

RESTRICTURING HOMEBUSH

The preparation of the sporting venues at Homebush, and of the adjacent Showground pavilions, has involved a large-scale rehabilitation of
what was abused and disused land (see Figure 2.1). This piece of western Sydney has been undergoing a profound physical and symbolic restructuring. The prior land uses of the Homebush Bay area can fairly be described as noxious industrial. The area was dominated by an industrial complex of chemical manufacturers, brickworks and abattoirs. The Olympic Village will be sited over what were a landfill garbage tip and an Australian Navy ammunition dump. The area was, and still is, badly contaminated by industrial, chemical and household wastes. The Minister for the Olympics announced that more than A$137 million will be spent on rehabilitating polluted sites in the area. There are concerns, however, that the rehabilitation will not be adequate. Indeed, it is unlikely that the Homebush Bay water body itself will recover ecologically for many decades. The long-term environmental impacts of the operations of such firms as Union Carbide, ICI and Berger Paints, which were located in the Rhodes industrial estate, are now becoming painfully clear to the NSW government, which is funding the rehabilitation. Nonetheless, it is difficult to imagine how the physical problems in Homebush Bay could have even begun to be addressed had it not been for the preparation for the Olympic hallmark event.

Other physical restructurings to western Sydney include the provision of new sporting, showground and transport infrastructure (Figure 2.1). Likewise, it is highly unlikely that, in different circumstances, western Sydney could ever have had facilities of the range and quality that will be the legacy of the Games. This legacy is one of the major long-term local benefits that results from the hosting of such an event. Harvesting other forms of direct social benefits for the immediate local community (such as improved housing) from the impetus of the Games has proved much more difficult.

The Olympics site preparation has also initiated a symbolic restructuring of the Homebush area. There is little doubt that Homebush will become associated with both the 2000 Olympics and other smaller hallmark events such as sporting finals, and the annual Easter shows. The benefits anticipated from such investment in sports and event-related tourism are typically optimistic and have tended to gloss over significant differences between the local elites and those others in the locality who are less likely to benefit. Nevertheless, the symbolic transition to become a site of hallmark events marks a positive shift from its previous identity as a noxious industrial and dumping area. As a result of the associated image-shift, office development has been attracted into the area, including the national headquarters of TNCs such as Daewoo, and firms like Quality Semi-conductor of Australia and Akai. The recognition gained by the site has clearly raised its profile in the view of international investors. An important part of this symbolic restructuring is the representation of Homebush
Figure 2.1
Past, present and proposed land uses, Homebush Bay, New South Wales
as a 'clean and green' venue. The incorporation of environmentally sound building products, and the use of solar power and energy-conscious design in the Olympic Village are well intended to foster this image. The success of symbolic restructuring at Homebush will undoubtedly affect the broader image of Sydney internationally as a potential growth centre with the capacity and capability to host perhaps the most significant global hallmark event.

In terms of institutional restructuring, the process of staging the Sydney Games and providing the facilities has seen the creation of two new state government agencies, SOCOG and the Olympic Coordination Authority (OCA). SOCOG is composed of both government officials and corporate leaders. In recent times, a number of ex-politicians have also been included. Total costs to the NSW state government for the Games were estimated in early 1999 at A$2.3 billion, which is one billion more than was anticipated during the bidding process. Sydney 2000 sponsor partnerships have been established with international and national private interests, named the Team Millennium Olympic Partners. This will ensure considerable privatisation of some aspects of the Games with over A$828 million pledged in sponsorship from Team Millennium and TOP sponsors including Coca-Cola, IBM, McDonald's, Kodak, News Limited, Fairfax, Panasonic, BHP and Pacific Dunlop.

The Atlanta Games were to have been run with no public subsidy, but significant public subsidy was necessary for the less profitable aspects such as security, access and infrastructure provision. This public subsidising of a supposedly 'private-funded' event mirrored the public/private partnerships in other forms of global development. Lessons from the Atlanta Games revealed that extensive private funding resulted in removing discussion of the opportunity costs of policy priorities from the public realm. Limiting the funding role of the public sector, or at least the pretence, relinquished opportunities for democratically accountable decision-making processes and reduced public means of directing the financial resources of the Games towards public priority areas.

The planning and development of the Games have been highly centralised. As with most hallmark events, the final nature of development deadlines and the high price of any public failures to meet those deadlines have meant that the scope for any widespread public involvement has been limited. The non-negotiable nature of the deadlines for Olympic preparations pose the very real threat that public consultation and participation, for which there is provision in the planning and development phases, could be tokenistic and superficial. This raises the question of whether local dispossession results from the process of hosting a global hallmark event.
OLYMPIC DISPOSSESSION?

Much like globalisation-inspired place-competition, hosting an Olympics can involve changes in how cities are governed. Hosting an Olympics can permanently impact on the geographic and planning framework of the host city. As with other forms of entrepreneurial public/private sector development partnerships, the Olympics bidding and hosting process threatens to stifle local community input and to discourage public dissent. This is a serious concern given that the positive and negative impacts of the Olympics will be felt most keenly by local communities long after the Games have been held. With place-competition, discouraging dissent is driven by the perceived need to present a united welcoming voice to prospective global investors. With the Games' preparation, it is driven by the immovable deadlines and the unsubstantiated notion of regional and national 'public good' being served by the Games. Greenpeace was portrayed as 'unpatriotic' for bringing public attention to the toxic substances in the soil at the old Union Carbide site.

Master planning for developing the Games' sites was carried out by the OCA, under State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) No. 38, Olympic Games, which produced site development guidelines. The NSW Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning acts as the consent authority for all developments. As with all 'designated' or significant developments in New South Wales, most of the Olympics projects have been exempt from the requirement for preparation of Environmental Impact Statements (EIS). Six major consulting or advisory panels were set up to liaise between SOCOG, stakeholders and experts on various aspects of the Games. These panels involve representatives from community organisations such as the NSW Council of Social Services and the Public Interest Advocacy Centre. The panels have been the major sources of public consultation and input and could have had the potential to be mechanisms for demonstrating best practice in public consultation, scrutiny, participation and accountability. However, in their assessment of public participation in the Games for Green Games Watch, Albany Consulting concluded that the Environment Advisory Panel (EAP) had been ineffectual 'in drawing into the Olympics preparation process the range of expertise that was available' and had instead been a marketing or public relations exercise. The EAP was disbanded and its replacement body has lacked the weight even to demand briefings from government agencies involved in Olympics preparation. It has subsequently lost credibility with community and environment organisations.

In planning and executing the Games' preparation, a minimal role has been granted to local government. Representatives from the...
Local Government Association (rather than specific local councils) are present on only the Environment and Social Impacts advisory committees. The NSW Local Government Association's president has publicly stated his opinion that:

> The avenues for local government involvement have been tokenistic at best. Local government has not been given any real say in the decision-making process; in many instances it has been blatantly excluded.

Local government, the most accessible avenue for local public representation, has been largely locked out of the significant decision-making stages. Even those whose jurisdictions will encompass Olympic sites have received little information on key issues like anticipated transport flows, which are crucial to the formulation of local transport plans. The mayor of Mosman City Council complained about the 'apparent lack of commitment to putting in place mechanisms for an effective ongoing two-way flow of information between SOCOG and local government'. Similarly, the executive officer of the Inner Metropolitan Regional Organisation of Councils (IMROO) stated that local government officers were frustrated by the lack of detail that Olympic authorities were providing about developments, and he noted the refusals to supply documentary materials. SOCOG has delayed the dissemination of the results of prior research on the impacts upon local communities hosting previous Olympic Games, leaving councils to undertake their own reviews of the local impacts of previous Olympic Games.

Only in the latter stages of development, rather than in the planning stages, was a Local Government Liaison Committee formed. It is comprised of representatives from the five councils surrounding Homebush Bay (Auburn, Concord, Parramatta, Ryde and Strathfield). In late 1998, SOCOG, the OCA and the Olympic Roads and Transport Authority (ORTA) were in consultation with Waverley Council where the beach volleyball competition will be held. Though such consultation is commendable, it also represents involvement at what Albany Consulting has termed the 'therapy end' of developments, assisting with the 'big-sell' rather than influencing policy formulation phases. SOCOG sees its main public participation initiatives as being the affordable ticketing strategy and the Volunteers 2000 program. Indeed, this latter program is planned to involve 50,000 specialist and general volunteers, each of whom was being offered 'the chance to be part of the Australian team which will stage the biggest sporting event in history'. Direct involvement or attendance at hallmark events has been found to be one of the best ways to ensure long-term public support. This involvement also cultivates a widespread sense of possession of the event. However, the
provision of 'crowd atmosphere' for the international telecast, and other free labours, are all at the 'easier end' of public involvement.

The matter of public representation has serious implications for public support for the Games, and for all authorities whose jurisdictions encompass Olympic venues. Public faith in the integrity of planning instruments and processes, termed 'social capital', may well be put at risk by any widespread sense of disenfranchisement or dispossesssion of local citizens resulting from SOCOG's degree of openness, transparency and accountability. Reports from SOCOG indicate that polling figures on public support remain notably high (75 per cent approval in late 1997), though this is likely to differ by locality and by class and perhaps even ethnicity. Equally, it is likely to be reassessed when the distribution of costs and benefits from the Games becomes apparent rather than hypothesised. Any Olympics-derived loss of social capital would produce a long-lasting residue of public mistrust in Sydney's planning system. That will have impacts not only upon SOCOG and the NSW government, but will also threaten the social capital of local residents in the areas proximate to Olympic venues.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the problems with place-competitions for global investment flows is that the costs of participating, of playing the rules of the game, can be quite high. The same is true of bidding for and hosting an Olympic Games. In the rush to win these competitions, important democratic principles can be flouted. These considerations include public accountability and participation.

Sydney's civic leaders did not just agree to an offer to host the Olympic Games; Sydney was — as Juan Antonio Samaranch himself said — 'the winner'. Political leaders gain undoubted kudos and benefit from capturing global investments and hallmark events. But the public in any city that competes for and wins a global investment, or indeed a hallmark event, has the right to demand comprehensive assessments of the costs and benefits involved. This includes a measure of the balance and distribution of benefits, such as environmental rehabilitation and sporting legacies (in both participation and infrastructure provision). Many of these are 'real' benefits that could not have been achieved without the impetus and resources of the Games (for example, new public housing stock or rehabilitated industrial sites). The Barcelona Games in 1992 were the catalyst for US$8.1 billion in infrastructure and housing that significantly revitalised the city's seafront. However, the accounting of the chase and capture of global investment and hallmark events is too often one-sided. A limited set of benefits are postulated, and sometimes
enumerated, but the costs (especially those beyond direct government expenditure) are rarely so readily available. For example, broader assessments of the opportunity costs of spending on the bidding and hosting need to be publicly available and debated. Can these expenditures be justified in a period of shrinking health care budgets? Is it legitimate to spend these public monies when there are critical political and financial constraints upon almost all public social services provision? The distribution of the benefits and costs must also be critically assessed. The benefits may be unfairly skewed towards business and the costs towards the average taxpayer, or they may favour the rich and middle class over the less affluent. Who among us has won, and who is going to pay? The public has a democratic right to be informed about, and be able to debate, exactly what they have supposedly won.

Local authorities that are compelled to put together plans for the 2000 Olympic Games require advice from, and access to, the central planning bodies responsible for the Sydney Olympics. Both local and central authorities must not only protect existing public participation mechanisms, but they should aspire to expanding and improving public involvement. Councils in those localities where events are planned should bargain hard with SOCOG to get the best possible deals for their locality. Notions of civic duty or patriotism could prove costly. Local councils and their communities should ensure that they do not pay while other areas or private interests gain at their expense. In most cases, local governments and communities have a distinct competitive advantage and they should use it. The potential costs for SOCOG to move events to more remote venues are immense. It is rare that localities have such bargaining strength with regard to global investment and they should always seize and capitalise upon it when it occurs.

A mega-event can potentially achieve many results for a city beyond economic benefits. These could include an increase in public participation in civic affairs, an enhanced sense of community (spirit of the Games) and increased cross-cultural interactions. The hosting of the Olympic Games should have been a way of further entrenching and expanding community participation in planning in Sydney. Olympic Games preparations could enrich our planning systems, which are facing the entrepreneurialist pressure of economic globalisation. There is little doubt that the Olympics preparation has involved some important physical rehabilitation. However, the criticisms by Greenpeace and other green organisations suggest that the 'Green' in the 'Green Games' is superficial rather than structural. There is a symbolic change happening in Homebush too. The area is shifting from industrial to post-industrial. Sydney's international
exposure and image will also be enhanced. But questions remain as to whether the institutional restructuring involved will be progressive or regressive. Will Sydney's planning processes be made more transparent and accountable, and can social capital be enriched as a result of Olympics preparation?

**FURTHER READING**


