Melbourne is making a concerted bid to obtain the centenary 1996 Olympic Games. While much of its bid is occupied with explanations of the city's ability to meet the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) requirements, it is underpinned by a common theme that the city possesses a unique quality of "Friendliness". This attribute originated in and characterised the 1956 Olympic Games. Victorian Premier Cain sums up the nature of "Friendliness in his claim that Melbourne is an Olympic City. The "Friendly Games" of 1956 are remembered as a spectacular success. My government and the people of Victoria are committed to not just repeating that success but to surpassing it in 1996... Melbourne is a safe, relaxed city of innate but understated charm and good taste. It is politically and financially stable, and as was proved by the 1956 "Friendly Games" has a warm and welcoming environment.\footnote{1}

It is not made clear whether this attribute was innate and activated by the Games or whether the Games actually constituted it. Its character remains metaphorical, in the sense that it gives meaning to a variety of disparate and otherwise unconnected conditions.\footnote{2}

The metaphor contains a number of definite characteristics. First, it is an attribute that is the birthright of the people of Melbourne, Victoria and Australia. It represents unity, harmony and commitment to the "theology" of advancement and development. Its highest form of expression is achieved in the Olympic Games, from which it draws renewed
strength, and to which it grants its unique qualities. Thus "Friendliness" and the "Friendly Games" are historical categories that appear for particular purposes in specific historical conditions. There they can be "fitted out with new paternities and form new alliances" while remaining a given condition of life. On the 25th anniversary of the Friendly Games, Malcolm Fraser saw them as a celebration of Australians' innate commitment to healthy competition. Five years later, Bob Hawke found them representing the nation's natural capacity for cooperation. While the detail varies, the celebratory capacity of the metaphor remains a crucial part of the explanations of post-war and contemporary life where events give the appearance of unfolding according to their own logic. Such is the centrality of the metaphor that the 1996 Games are promised to be "the Friendly Games revisited".

How do you question the self-evident? Popular memory, contemporary accounts and visual imagery all seem to depict the Games as a period of unprecedented enthusiasm, fun, sense of community and general well-being. Prime Minister Menzies recalled a "green and pleasant memory" of the greatest emotional power. I am not denying the existence of friendliness among athletes, spectators and the people of Melbourne and Australia. Nor am I denying that the "Friendly Games" may be an appropriate epithet for what took place in Melbourne. Rather, I shall attempt to locate the construction and meaning of the metaphor. Subsequent writing has treated the Games as a fleeting and "momentary" phenomenon. Yet, at the same time, it is portrayed as a symbolic marker in a post-war landscape where the attributes of "Friendliness"-unity, harmony and development are identical with those of
the emergent "Australian Way of Life". This most frequently occurs in the (mistaken) elision of the introduction of Television to coincide with the Games. The Games' perfunctory treatment by historians does not diminish their capacity to stand as a functionalist mirror for the period as a whole. Sport in general, and most writing about sport, has been absorbed within the dominant value-system. Sport had become, by the end of the nineteenth century, "a central part of the usage of Australianness" and loaded with a set of cultural assumptions. Thus the 1956 Games have been seen as a self-evident part of national development, not requiring explanation.

This lack of analysis and explanation indicates the place of sport in the dominant discourse. Academic failure to challenge this can in part be explained by the wide variations in sport and by its seeming lack of seriousness as a worthy subject. Indeed Ian Turner's pioneering work had to be cloaked in humour. At another level, the Olympics have resisted analysis by their size and complexity, which cover a variety of disciplines. But as MacAlloon has observed.

The modern social sciences and the Olympic Games were born in the same historical era; it is hardly surprising that their root problematics are identical... Olympic history illuminates the origin of modern social science. Analysis of sport becomes an act of provocation for three reasons. First, such analysis immediately questions the relationship of sport to the "order of the society it has come to represent". Secondly, it leads to questions about the way in which sport is an activity "where values, difficult if not impossible to realise in the normal course of existence, are indeed capable of realisation". Finally, these challenges to
commonsense draw attention to the "reproduction of the sport-power relation (that) is systematically concealed in the routine operation of that relation".11

*****

The "Friendly Games" have become an object "orphaned from their unique spatial and temporal context" in which the specificities of place and people have been removed.12 The challenge to the universality of "Friendliness" can be established in two ways. First, even a cursory reading of evidence indicates that the metaphor is "biased and partial", that it omits and distorts more than its meaning.13 A brief example illustrates this process. Four days before the opening of the Games, IOC Chancellor Otto Mayer confessed that he had "a broken heart".14 As the IOC's chief executive officer, Mayer had been involved in the Melbourne Games from the initial application. At the time of his lament he had succeeded in securing safe passage for the Hungarian team from its country which was in the throes of Russian invasion. He had also succeeded in minimising an international boycott in protest at the Russian invasion and the Western occupation of the Suez Canal.15 Unfortunately, Switzerland, his native country which housed IOC headquarters, did boycott.

Edgar Tanner, who had also been involved in the Games from their inception as a member of the Olympic Organising Committee (OOC) used the Swiss withdrawal to call for the removal of Olympic headquarters from that country and Mayer's retirement. A long-simmering feud between the two had boiled over earlier in the year when Tanner had made hysterical
allegations that Mayer was plotting to prevent the Duke of Edinburgh from playing a significant role in the Opening Ceremony. This problem was a figment of Tanner's imagination and quickly resolved by calmer heads.\(^\text{16}\) Tanner was a jingoistic malcontent who had alienated his Olympic colleagues without exception; Mayer was a crusty Eurocentric with aristocratic pretensions. But their personal abuse indicates a far more fundamental conflict, which was the absolute opposite of "Friendliness".\(^\text{17}\)

Tanner had initially directed his abuse at IOC President Avery Brundage, whom he called a "monumentally misinformed bore and a clown... misguided old humbug... voluble old fusspot". Mayer immediately sprung to his President's and the IOC's defence. Both Mayer and Brundage were furious with Tanner personally, but saw his outburst reflecting a more fundamental flaw in the Australian character. In private correspondence Mayer attributed it to an impertinence typical of any youthful society. Brundage speculated that "hitting below the belt" was the norm in "such a crude, uncouth, ill-mannered country". Their public statement located these characteristics in the long-term mismanagement of the Games preparations.

The IOC was kind enough early to permit violation of its rules in order to save the Games for Melbourne. They should have been moved elsewhere because of local confusion, deficiencies, neglect, squabbles, procrastination, opportunism, and wretched petty jealousies. Because of this Australians seem to think they can violate all Olympic rules and do things as they please.\(^\text{18}\)

Clearly "Friendliness" is one of a variety of possible metaphors applicable to the Games as a measure of national capacity and
character. The construction and predominance of "Friendliness" must be seen in the full span of the Games' history.

Secondly, theoretical insights into the relation of sport to society and its role in the production and reproduction of dominant meanings suggest a path of enquiry. The task, as Giddens has observed, is to provide "conceptions of the nature of human social activity and of the human agent which can be placed in the service of empirical work". Sport is uniquely placed for this task. Its almost universal pervasiveness makes it an area of interest throughout society. Beneath a surface appearance of simplicity and playfulness it contains a seriousness of purpose that provides "public occasions for discourse on some of the basic themes of social life". These themes of fairness and just reward for effort are often those that "cannot normally be experienced very easily in the normal course of events".

Viewed in this way, sport possesses an ideological function. It is part of a social relation which is internally related to the mode of production, politics and culture... (and) possesses economic, political, cultural and ideological aspects, the relevant importance of which, varies with the character of social conditions pertaining at a given time.

This perception of the ideological role of sport is drawn from Raymond Williams' work on the concept of hegemony. Briefly, this attributes an equal significance to the cultural as to the economic and political in the construction of an "historical bloc" which gives validity to a social formation. Hegemony is a lived cultural practice which is never absolute, but "always a matter of the degree of equilibrium that obtains..."
between state and civil society. Viewed from an historical perspective, sport plays a vital constitutive role, one to which Williams himself unfortunately paid little attention, in the totality of social relationships. While sport and all popular culture express a degree of critical penetration of the power structure, its actions have been more likely to provide the occasion for its legitimation and reproduction through its assistance in accommodating different social classes and groups. This is achieved by providing a seemingly natural representation of the dominant culture, in which sport allows a social order (to be) communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored. The playing fields and tracks, terraces and private boxes, and now the lounge chair before the television constitute, in Gramsci's words, a significant part of "the territory on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position."

This process most commonly occurs when participation and excellence in sport is linked to the underlying motives and ideals that provide the power relations of society. John Hargreaves calls this process the "sport-power relationship" which occurs in the interspaces of civil society. Here sport exists in close relation with the state, power is "refurbished and elaborated" by the institutionalisation and articulation of language and meaning. This process is not absolute or merely one of imposition. Power relations are expansive, with room for gains to be achieved while subordination is maintained. As the association "between sport and the wielding of power" has frequently been denied, distorted and misconceived, it is necessary to examine the specific forms taken, while bearing in mind the necessity to ultimately demonstrate this empirically.
The clearest representation has occurred in the readiness with which sport has come to represent the nation and the state. Sport, often using personnel with both sport and state functions, has been a crucial site of mediation, reform and regulation in the process of class domination. This is always a shifting, contested process. But sport has increasingly become incorporated into the dominant culture where it becomes "simultaneously a discourse on the state of the nation, its virtues and its interests." A succession of prominent Australian politicians have associated themselves with sporting triumphs and used its language to explain their political victories, justify the failures of the team or supporters, and berate their opponents. In its most incorporated form, sport dissolves into a representation of a classless "way of life."28

The hegemonic process requires effective moral leadership and the consent of all classes to achieve unity and the "commonsense" of a particular way of ordering social relations. It is a complex, lived experience. Inter and intra-class alliances and conflict are as much apart of the process as is the achievement of unity. All sport involves the agency of individuals, from the most personal decisions to "conscious goal directed activity" which launch much larger-scale projects which have "sought to render their initiators authors of their collective mode of existence as a whole, in a conscious programme aimed at creating or remodelling whole social structures."29

An enormous amount of ink has been spilt over the issues of the relative autonomy of sport and other cultural formations, and that of agents' autonomy within structures. For the purposes of advancing the problem of where the 1956 Olympics stand in the post-war hegemony, I have followed Ingham and Hardy's attempt at synthesis of the points of view
that accord neither relative autonomy to sport or final determination to
the mode of production. Ingham and Hardy find a common ground in the two
views. They argue that sport can embody the coincidence of critical
consciousness and public agency that seek to reconcile alternative
possibilities with existing structural limitations. The degree of overlap
and interpenetration between each makes up the course of empirical
enquiry. Thus, social structures are constituted by human agency which is
at the same time the medium of their construction. More
specifically, while the logic of capitalism is ever present, attention
must be paid to the ways in which the logic of capitalist relations is
experienced, understood, and acted upon by individuals and collectivities
in specific historical periods. 30

Finally, the process of incorporation and the role of sport has been the
subject of considerable theoretical debate. The successful achievement of
hegemony occurs when

a group's (or fractions of groups) values and practices have become
dominant, then the agenda is set with respect to what is culturally
realistic/unrealistic, reasonable/unreasonable or
normal/abnormal. Thus limits are placed on people's capacity to
conceive of alternatives to existing patterns of dominance and
subordination. 31

The specific nature of this achievement requires an assessment of the
extent of incorporation, the strategic mode of incorporation and the mode
of compliance with the ascribed meaning. 32 The power of incorporation
is its apparent achievement without the exercise of the normal
restraints producing a consensus. Time is temporarily collapsed, not only
from the usual worldly concerns, but also from the uncertainties of the
lived experience of the past and those of the anticipated future. This occurs most powerfully through performance and ritual that involve all participants. In a highly condensed and emotive form, social relationships and forms of knowledge are presented for reflection, enactment and acceptance. The absorption of sport ritual (and the formulation of new ones) justify and uphold dominant values and ideas. In the most cogent formulations, the collective representation of individuality makes evident through sport what was "problematic, if not impossible, to construct within the dominant social relations".

Successful incorporation contains a strong subjunctive element that translates the meanings of the sporting activity beyond the specificity of its enactment. The exemplification of unity and consensus is posed as the undeniable inevitability for all classes. In reality this means the strengthening of dominant groups and the fragmentation of the working class. The latter occurs through the strength of appearance of the autonomy of sport and the place of the working class as consumers which "facilitates the displacement of economic and political struggle to this region, and enables consumer culture to stimulate production and confer legitimacy on the system".

Incorporation represents the point of "discrepancy" between dominant ideological models of experiencing society and the way society is concretely experienced by people in different class positions. Sport is a particularly potent way of bridging the gap. For the dominant class, sport is a metaphor for an idealised capitalism operating along bourgeois values. For the subordinate class, sport represents the way life should be. This implies a condemnation of a society that does not work for them. But the successful demonstration of prized values and practices
that are otherwise not normally experienced makes sport potentially the site of class accommodation. Real progress and gains are made at the price of giving control of forms and cultural practices to the dominant. The successful merging of public and private through sport further legitimates existing forms of production and social relations. \(^{37}\)

This cannot occur without both the agency and acceptance of the subordinate. Although the advantage must be continuously pressed and renegotiated, it is most successful where "anchored in consensus—spontaneous or constructed". This consensus must in turn be presented as the result of "conjoint articulations" where the reality of the capacity of the subordinate agency, and the antagonistic class-relations that make them subordinate, are "concealed and harmonized under the tutelage of the dominant framework". \(^{38}\)

Sport as a cultural practice is complex. It contains the potential to produce class accommodation of a magnitude not approached by other cultural practices. Yet its pervasiveness and innate qualities make it risky and uncertain. As a result, the hegemonic process is as likely to be marked by crises as it is by its achievement of dominant practices and meanings.

****

It is the purpose of this study to locate the 1956 Olympics in post-war Australian culture and evaluate how the sporting formulation of "Friendliness" continues to "articulate specific lived preoccupations of different classes within Australia". \(^{39}\) Prior to the opening of the
Games, Mayer pleaded "There is a book on the Melbourne Olympics!!". This plea indicates the need to reveal the full range of empirical material, including that which was distorted or hidden. This study is an attempt to accomplish that task and reveal the full scope of the Games in the broader cultural and political context. But such writing alone is merely explanation by "plausibility". It is necessary to establish a "problematic" to allow the interrogation of evidence from a theoretical standpoint and provide an explanation of why some questions rather than others are asked.

The fundamental problematic for this period has been posed by Tim Rowse in his investigation of the pervasiveness of liberalism and the process of "self-declassification". He asks "What could it mean in class terms to understand oneself as a post-war Australian?" His own findings isolate the hegemony of "consensual values" and the defusion of class conflict through a definition of the national character that epistemologically denies the existence of the concept of class. The result was, as Alomes has observed, the emergence of a hegemonic definition of Australia that celebrated an equality in affluence that demanded a fixed and static reality and denied the possibility of alternatives. Yet both fail to separate their gloomy conclusions from the hegemonic process of which they are so critical. They fail to observe the process of the "divorce of people from their contexts, of events from their history, of objects from their making". They ignore the agency of the subordinate class inherent in the hegemonic process and the historically specific actions of living people that made the "protean influence of liberal concepts and ideas" acceptable as "commonsense". Rowse ignored the Games entirely. Alomes has recognised their significance but only as a celebration of a shallow social nationalism.
Thus the problematic must seek to encompass the "possibility of curvature in the field of enquiry" that takes into account both human agency and structural constraints.

The field of questions informing this study is:

1. Under what circumstances were the Olympic Games brought to Melbourne? What were the intentions of the agents who undertook this action? What social practices and power-relations were intended?

2. How were these ideological themes culturally materialised and how were particular meanings ascribed to practices associated with both the planning and staging of the Games?

3. How did the process of incorporation occur? How did the dominant meaning of the total Olympic process come to be enclosed within the metaphor "Friendliness"? What role did "Friendliness" play in the legitimisation of the broader social relations and the mode of production? Specifically, what part did it play in the accommodation of classes within the "commonsense" of "The Australian Way of Life"? 45

This problematic demands that the Games be examined in their totality. Each phase was experienced by different agents and in varying degrees. The final incorporation may be the sum of the whole process, but each phase contributed to the totality. Within the limits of space available I have chosen to place greatest emphasis on the period from the award of the Games in 1949 until early 1956 when most facilities were nearing completion. As a result, the origins of the Games and their eventual incorporation will be treated in a less developed fashion. I have made this decision for two reasons. First, this period is characterised by hegemonic crises rather than
incorporation. Accordingly, this is the period when sport-power relations are clearest, and accompanied by the greatest efforts by the dominant to obscure, distort or hide that relationship. Secondly, the specific terms of the process of incorporation through the "Friendliness" metaphor can only be explained in terms of the crises that preceded it.46
BRINGING THE GAMES TO MELBOURNE 1946-1949

I think we should be busying ourselves trying to get the Games for Melbourne. We can organise them later.

Sir James Disney
Lord Mayor of Melbourne
23 October 1948

On the evening of 21 June 1946, 11 male amateur athletic officials gathered to reconvene the Victorian Olympic Council (VOC). After reading the minutes of the last meeting held seven years previously, delegates found that they possessed funds of £6 7s 0d. It is not surprising, then, that "scenes of hilarity" greeted C.R. Aitken's motion "to make immediate application for the Olympic Games to be held in Melbourne". This atmosphere of farce has become the accepted genesis of Melbourne's bid. It has been used to explain the subsequent struggles for control of the Games, which were attributed to a puerile, but ultimately
harmless, capacity to make "noise with little real expectation of success". Yet the fact that the motion was unanimously accepted and acted upon immediately, indicates that Aitken was talking and acting within bounds understood as essentially realistic.

Australia was a respected member of the Olympic movement. It had been represented on the IOC since 1905, and competed at each of the modern Games. As with most nations, this representation had been ad hoc and individual at the earliest Games. A formal national team was first organised for the 1912 Games and Australia's place with Greece, USA and Great Britain as the only nations with unbroken representation had become accepted lore. The revival of the Olympic Games by De Coubertin had drawn on and paid homage to an idealised version of Arnold's Rugby and produced a secularised form of "muscular Christianity" overlaid with classical references. These amateur and Olympic values had played a crucial role in legitimising, through sport, a much broader set of values based on assumptions of fairness and reward for effort. This ideological character of Olympic sport requires closer examination. MacAlloon has indicated that De Coubertin was ultimately motivated by his concerns for the modern industrial world. He feared a moral and physical "dessication" that would ultimately lead to its self-destruction. In this way, the Olympic movement can be
seen as supporting the needs of capital. It seeks to save its youth, and thus its future, by providing a model of reform through active participation. In this, it shares a common origin and outlook with a variety of reform movements, that can be labelled as Progressive. Progressivism is a difficult and chameleon-like concept. It draws its terms of reference from the capitalism of which it is a critic. It is at once part of and separate from a system it sees in the throes of self-destruction, yet seeks to save from this end. The contradictory nature of the basic tenet of Progressivism means that the common feature that binds the various Progressive groups is a commitment to action and intervention. Roe argues that this commitment, based on "principles in logical opposition to each other" was its strength. The task of Progressivism was to find a method to blend together the varying opposites - "liberation and order, democracy and elitism, change and continuity, welfare and asceticism, worship of both technology and nature". The Australian Olympic movement contained a substantial progressive influence. It was one of a number of reform movements that drew on US and European influences. These were associated with youth and "child-saving", sport and National Fitness and efficiency. The critical nature of all such Progressive impulses led to their marginalisation prior to their absorption by the dominant class or the State.

But the practice of Olympism led to the direct challenge of
a most fundamental tenet of the dominant discourse—the British Empire. Olympic competition quickly showed how a variety of "foreigners" had either surpassed the British race at their own games, or were accused of perverting them by cheating. As a result, participation in the Olympics which had seemed natural from its British origins and from its reinforcement of dominant sporting values became problematic. Olympic "intellectuals" urged continued participation as a way to further define and strengthen distinctive Australian and Imperial characteristics. To this end they attempted to field composite Empire teams, encouraged Dominion participation in British teams, and at all times encouraged Empire loyalty over Olympic. The impulse to form an Empire sport movement foundered because of the success of the Olympics and the pervasiveness of cricket as the major sport in the Empire. The eventual creation of the British Empire Games (BEG) in 1930 allowed a display of British sporting virtues in a pseudo-Olympic carnival.

Australians participated in both Olympics and BEG. After due deference had been paid to Empire with the staging of the BEG in Sydney in 1938, Australian officials were able to consider the possibility of staging the Olympics. The 1938 BEG led to speculation in Sydney. But such ambitions were more deeply rooted in the Olympic movement itself. As each team had embarked on its long voyage, athletes and officials
speculated on the day when the position would be reversed and Australia play host to the world. In the 1930's Olympic officials, including President Baillet-Latour and Vice-President Sigfrid Edstrom visited Australia. They were impressed by the state of amateurism and offered encouragement to any attempts to bring the Games to Australia. The National Championships organised in that decade were viewed by many participants as preparations for the ultimate international festival.\(^{13}\)

World War 2 temporarily put an end to this speculation, yet in other ways provided a catalyst for its realisation. The Olympic movement barely survived the war. The taint of the 1936 Berlin Games and the rise of the Cold War led many, including some Australian officials, to call for the abolition of the Games because of their incitement of nationalist rivalries.\(^{14}\) But the award of the 1948 Games to London in recognition of its wartime heroism rekindled the Olympic ideal. This ideal sustained former Olympian Wilfrid Kent Hughes and prominent official Edgar Tanner while they were in prisoner-of-war camps. It was claimed that a group of Victorian athletes made a pact on embarkation for service that those who survived the war would "work to have the Olympic Games held in Australia".\(^{15}\)

So, after the "fun" had subsided, Aitken's colleagues of the VOC recognised the seriousness in proposing to have the
Olympics in Australia. His detailed proposal consisted of a series of mutually balanced priorities. A few months earlier, senior US IOC delegate Avery Brundage had considered the nature of the Games in the post-war world. Few people, he claimed, realised the magnitude of the Games, "the greatest of all international events". Aitken spoke on a far more modest scale. He argued that the award of the 1948 Games to London marked a "reversion to the spirit" of the Games after the excesses of 1936. If war-torn London could face up to a task of this magnitude, then Melbourne should not think that its difficulties of material shortages and a building back-log would be insurmountable. He proposed that the Games could be staged "without the expenditure of too extravagant a sum". First, Olympic park should be developed as a "home for amateur athletes to international standards" with permanent seating for 30,000 and temporary seating for another 70,000. Facilities for other sports could be provided in renovated halls and major developments for swimming and cycling in the city's parks. Secondly, athletes could be housed in military camps which would be vacated by 1956, or in a major housing development that could be "passed over to the homeless immediately after the Games". Finally, the "privilege" of holding the Games would result in "stimulating the apparently dormant minds of our governmental and civic leaders" to undertake long-proposed slum abolition, construction of hotels and an underground railway.
Aitken's proposal presented a picture of sport in Melbourne immediately recognisable to his fellow amateur officials. Olympic Park had been designated as the home of amateur athletics in 1912. In the intervening years it had been the scene of memorable and successful amateur activities, but had been starved of government funds and allowed to deteriorate to a state of dereliction. Its management had permitted it to be used for speedway and rodeo, bogus sports that were anathema to Corinthian amateurs. The sad condition of Olympic Park symbolised the amateur Progressives' complaint—they did most for the least desire of financial reward and were humiliated while professional sport flourished. It seemed to them that only by bringing the Olympics to Melbourne could they shame the authorities into providing them with their due. S.M. Keon, a prominent amateur had raised this argument in the Victorian Parliament late in 1945. Aitken's housing proposal echoed familiar Progressive demands, while a general boost to the city would be a bonus, but was definitely not their highest priority.18

Aitken's condensation of sport's constitutive capacity took a distinct form, in which Progressive concerns took priority over (while providing a stimulus for) more general capitalist development. Brundage's observations on the capacity for the Games to become the greatest event in the post-war world was based on the profits produced by big
spending on the Los Angeles in 1932. Each perspective is a different side of the same coin, each aimed to use sport to strengthen capitalism. Each proposed a different priority, indicating a different relationship of sport to power, and thus the role sport plays in the hegemonic process.19

It is necessary at this point to undertake a detailed empirical examination of the implementation of Aitken's proposal to explain how it became the object of competing factions.20 While Aitken sought to retain the original ensemble with its Progressive priority, others attempted to reverse that order and place business priorities first. Each faction claimed initial authorship of the bid, and the business faction in particular selectively represented its achievements and obscured those of others.21

*****

Following this epochal decision at the first post-war meeting of the VOC, Secretary Edgar Tanner notified the Australian Olympic Federation (AOF) of Melbourne's intentions. This body formally acknowledged the bid at its conference in July 1946 and sought details from acting IOC President Edstrom.22 In the meanwhile the VOC amateurs canvassed their proposal amongst their interstate colleagues and began informal discussions with the Lord Mayor, Sir
Raymond Connelly, who enthusiastically took up the proposal and enlisted the support of Premier John Cain and Governor, Sir Winston Dugan. The IOC response did not reach Melbourne until 12 November 1946. No copy of Edstrom's reply survives, but it seems that the IOC did not have formal rules of application. At that very moment it was trying to fend off the demands of a number of US cities who were virtually claiming the right to stage the Games merely on the basis of their seemingly boundless resources. The reply stated that the invitation must come from a city.

This information had profound implications. Although the initiative had come from the amateur sportsmen, they would not necessarily control the mechanism to achieve the Games. Connelly had already made his involvement conditional on VOC support for his campaign of "Food Parcels for British Athletes" for the London Games. He now exercised his authority and began to shift the focus to the Town Hall. He met privately with fellow councillor Sir Frank Beaurepaire and probably Sir Keith Murdoch. It is at this point that Beaurepaire begins to play a crucial role. The amateurs were, by their own admission, not public figures. Beaurepaire on the other hand was well-known. He had risen from humble origins and successfully developed a business career that constantly referred to his sporting past. He had consolidated his companies under the Olympic banner after returning from the US in 1932. On the trip he acted as an
official at the Los Angeles Games and investigated the tyre and rubber industries. Business commitments had reduced his direct involvement in sport, but he remained an often-consulted and much-quoted authority on swimming and the Olympics. He was also well-known as a public benefactor and reformer in the Progressive-mould through his sponsorship of municipal pools in the inner suburbs and his role with Murdoch in the Herald "Learn To Swim Campaign". Thus, his commitment to amateurism, Olympism and Progressive causes, combined with his business and political acumen, seemed to make him the ideal person to head the bid and unite all interests. To this end, the amateurs were required to nominate Beaurepaire to the newly created position of VOC President. The appointment was presented to them as a non-negotiable condition of the City’s continued support of the bid. But the amateurs were aware that they retained rights of representation to the AOF, which, if the bid was successful, would be responsible for the appointment of the body that would organise the Games. But despite these small areas of concern, it seemed that the bid had moved quickly and relatively smoothly to the point where it had effective leadership and representation. It could now get down to the business of preparing a detailed proposal.

In practice, Beaurepaire did the opposite. He ceased attending VOC meetings and began unofficially to assemble a team from business and the media to form an Invitation
Committee (IC). He did this in such secrecy that the amateurs believed they were "not consulted in any way on the formation of the Committee nor the ambit of its deliberations". How can this behaviour be explained? Beaurepaire was a successful and publicly respected sportsman, politician and businessman. Privately, he was depressed, lonely and untrusting. His personal style was increasingly abrupt and theatrically autocratic. Control of the Olympic bid became his sustaining obsession. He sought to achieve this by placing his own stamp on the bid. This required the removal of the amateur authorship and replacement with his own. Secondly, the meaning of the Games and the ensemble of their parts began to shift towards a pattern more in keeping with Beaurepaire's own emerging view of the place of Olympic sport in Australian society. Connelly had already begun to draw public attention to the tourist potential of the Games and his belief that Melbourne could recover £1m costs while gaining an enormous publicity coup.

Beaurepaire drew his inspiration from the 1932 Los Angeles Games. He had participated as an official and presumably was familiar with their organisation. He claimed that they were presented in such a way that there was no taint of commercialism and the Olympic ideals of amateurism were strictly observed. He believed that this example could be repeated in Melbourne, which would receive benefits in the
form of sports facilities and a boost to business and community spirit. He was adamant that this could only be achieved through a specific form of organisation. In October 1947 he produced a "rather sketchy survey" that nonetheless contained the fundamental principles that were to guide him from that point. He advised the Lord Mayor that it is necessary for you to form a committee of well-known men to act as an Advisory Control Board. In this regard it should be understood that neither the Australian Olympic Council (sic) nor the Victorian Olympic Council functions in this matter as such. The City makes the approach and having this in mind I therefore suggest that we should have not only yourself, but several leading citizens in the industrial, commercial, political, sporting and other groups of this State.34

The shift to a business priority shows a remarkable similarity to the Los Angeles organisation. That bid grew out of a business "booster" group, the Community Development Association (CDA). This body sought to "sell" Los Angeles and hit upon the Olympics as the method to shed its backwater image. The CDA obtained representation on the US Olympic Committee to push its case. It proceeded to do so successfully before the IOC in 1923 by guaranteeing the provision of an unrivalled stadium to support its claims.
that its youth and isolation should not be cause for disqualification. This stadium had been built by the CDA, which leased it to the City and private sporting and entertainment bodies. In 1927 the CDA organised the Xth Olympiad Association to plan and run the Games.  

Beaurepaire was proposing a fundamentally different ensemble from Aitken's, and his model informed the development of Melbourne's bid. After a delay caused by State elections, the bid was cabled to the IOC in January 1948 and formally confirmed by letter under the Mayoral seal a month later. The AOF offered its full support and cooperation to the Lord Mayor. No details of proposals were sent, but press reports continued to assume that the Main Stadium would be at Olympic Park and Beaurepaire was listed as the VOC's representative on the "Melbourne Invitation Committee".  

The official announcement of the bid indicated the distinct shift in priorities. Connelly declared that the Games would lift Melbourne from "its present doldrums" and a "transformation of civic thought" would make Melbourne a world-minded city.  

This task was to be undertaken by the legally constituted Executive Committee of the IC. Following Beaurepaire's model, it had an executive officer and an office at the Town Hall. Beaurepaire, in his VOC capacity, was the sole athletic representative. As it was believed that a decision would be made at the IOC meeting in London in July 1948, it was necessary to prepare formal application...
material. This was undertaken by the Publication, Finance and Information Sub-Committees. The major achievement was the production of a deluxe propaganda volume which was bound in merino fleece. The volume gave clear indication of the distance already moved from the original bid. The VOG was approached along with the leaders of Melbourne industry and finance to contribute £100 to its production. Secondly, its subscribers were reminded that "it requires little imagination to realize the immense value that the holding of these Games in Melbourne would represent from a civic point of view". Melbourne's "natural charms as an eminently suitable place to conduct such a colossal venture" were being sold, following the example of Los Angeles, as a commodity in itself.

Melbourne's case was developed on two levels. The first consisted of a series of pragmatic arguments. Australia had always competed at the Games and now deserved its chance. Further, the Games had never been to the southern hemisphere, and so the Olympic ideal of the representation of all continents remained unfulfilled. Australians had always to travel long distances and compete out of season, so this should not prevent others from having to do the same. And by 1956, air travel would have reduced travel times substantially. The second level was the imagery of consensus and purpose presented in the application.
volume. This claimed the support and "active interest of all athletic organisations, government and the people", which would ensure the Games would be presented in an "atmosphere of democratic co-operation and unanimity". The consensus and its achievement was portrayed not as something that had to be built, but as a pre-existent state in a naturally harmonious society. Australia was portrayed as "this new nation in this old land". It combined the virtues of Arcadia with a youthfulness making it "strong, and lusty, vigorous and inventive". The other part of the ideological revitalisation was "the process of transforming space into place" whereby capital sought to present Australia in a new relation to the metropolitan centres and neighbouring regions. The war had forced Australians to look at the world in a new way. They were told that "old conceptions of time and distance have been discarded". The war had brought the world to Australia and Australia had to become "air-minded". Qantas responded to the challenge by offering "a new concept of global geography from the Australian viewpoint". Australia was portrayed as central rather than peripheral to its world, which was increasingly that of Asia and the Pacific. The Olympics would demonstrate this to the world: "Our city will be the focal point of the eyes of the entire world, so gaining greater standing than ever before". This act of cultural mapping aimed to transform the space of Australia into a historically constituted place.
The IC seized the chance to put itself "on the map" at the London Games by combining the pragmatic and ideological aspects of its bid. The IOC had unexpectedly postponed its decision on 1956 until its meeting in Rome the following May.46 Thus the Melbourne deputation of Beaurepaire and Connelly (assisted by High Commissioner Beasley and agent-general Martin) were able to lobby informally since they did not have to present a formal case. Beaurepaire and Connelly spent three months in London and Europe where Melbourne was "sold at high pressure".47 During this time they made many valuable contacts and further refined the details of Melbourne's case.

But more was achieved by a single gesture. Six official dinners were scheduled for the London Games. Although British athletes had been awarded category A rations for the Games, no provision had been made for the dinners. The Australian IC provided all food and wines for the Lord Mayor of London's dinner for 300. The Lord Mayor reminded the diners that they were really the guests of the City of Melbourne.48 The gesture may not seem particularly significant in itself, other than as an act of generosity. But it had a deeper significance. Australia had contributed to the "Food for Britain" campaign, and Melbourne's Olympic bid had been conditional on its support for British athletes preparing for 1948. British officials claimed this food changed their athletes from their "half-starved" condition
and allowed them to "field a team worthy of the highest British traditions". Arcadian Australia had been able to airlift its plentiful food to its European colleagues. This point was not lost on IOC President Edstrom. Under the claim "Don't Sell Great Britain Short", he informed IOC members that "the interest, loyalty and support of the Dominions of the British Empire has been one of the bright spots in Great Britain's national life". Melbourne's successful provision of food contrasted starkly with the actions of its rival cities Buenos Aires and Detroit. Britain and Argentina were at loggerheads over British investments. Argentina's President Peron had conducted negotiations with typical flair and bombast. The provision of Argentine beef to Britain was one of the bargaining points he employed. Accordingly, his sudden offer to slaughter a herd of pampas cattle to feed all Olympic athletes was treated with derision by Britain. Similarly, a Europe reliant on Marshall Plan aid had an ambivalent attitude to US largesse. A number of unofficial US offers to feed all athletes had not materialised. US complaints about their food and accommodation seemed galling in light of the 15,000 chocolate bars they brought in amongst their food and the fresh baked bread flown in daily from the US.

Thus Melbourne's relatively modest gesture proved to be highly effective in its own right, while showing the real or imagined attitudes of its rivals in the worst light.
manager" Tanner believed that "sufficient was said...to encourage hopes" and that Edstrom had acknowledged Melbourne to be an "ideal venue" which only had to show it possessed the necessary organisational capacities. The promised "atmosphere of democratic cooperation and unanimity" seemed to be in evidence in the Melbourne delegation, its publication and its actions.

In reality the assembly of priority, and thus power, had shifted from the amateurs. But at the time control of the Melbourne bid seemed to be with the addition of business rather than the exclusion of the amateurs. Beaurepaire, as had been anticipated, capably personified the full spectrum of sport, business and Progressivism. The Invitation Book indicated that Olympic Park was to be the Main Stadium (and little notice seems to have been paid to the qualifier "tentative" that was attached to this arrangement).
The activities of the delegation of "Three big minded Australians" in London raised Australian awareness of the Olympic bid. Press reports of the magnitude of the Games and the quality of the performances renewed calls for a new stadium in Melbourne. *The Sporting Globe* asked, "Why shouldn't the Empire's greatest sports attending people have a centrally situated, modern, all-sport and all purpose arena?" A few critics claimed it would be a "white-elephant" and a financial burden without the support of professional sport and income from gambling. But the majority of opinion supported the development of Olympic Park, "the derelict, eyesore headquarters of amateur sport". Attention was drawn to the plight of school athletes, who were forbidden access to cricket grounds (subsidised by football profits) because, according to the Secretary of the Ground Managers' Association, they interfered with wicket preparation and made a mess with papers and orange peel. This selectivity of access to public space was taken up swimming coach Harry Hay, a 1920 Olympian. He reported the claims of famed US coach Bob Kipputh that the natural ability, self-reliance and adaptability of Australian swimmers was being held back by the lack of proper facilities that would enable regular world-standard competition. Hay said:

I am going to join the chorus, demanding a stadium for Melbourne if you get the 1956 Olympic Games. But why wait for the Games? Not only Melbourne but every capital
in Australia must have a stadium and a pool. It's a national necessity from a social service point of view and it is the duty of every State government to supply these needs... from a purely sporting angle we cannot expect overseas champions to come to Australia except in isolated instances, unless we have the stadiums in which they can compete.  

Furthermore the visit to Australia of Jamaican sprinter Herb McKenley in 1948 showed that amateur sport could generate huge public interest and "sell out" gates.

The London IOC meeting produced a new level of confidence. Beaurepaire claimed to have "practically sold Melbourne". Hugh Weir, who with Sir Harold Luxton, was Australia's IOC representative, claimed "I know the mind of the IOC and they want to give Australia their turn at staging the Games". This optimism was well-founded. Edstrom listed Melbourne first in his summary for IOC members of the applicants for 1956. The list almost matches the final result, so it is appropriate to look in detail at Edstrom's beliefs:

The City of Melbourne has sent to me... a wonderful application for the Games 1956. It is signed by the Lord Mayor of Melbourne and supported by special letters from the Governor and Premier of Victoria. The application contains information about the City of Melbourne from a sporting point of view and shows an
excellent drawing of the coming stadium to be built in connection with the Games.61. As it became clear that success was a distinct possibility, the IC believed it essential that "the Victorian and Australian people get the picture squarely in their minds and go after things that have to be done".62. As a result, the Games became a national issue. The Commonwealth Government took up the bid. Arthur Calwell's Department of Immigration recognised the "full value of international sport as a medium of publicity to Australia", particularly its immigration campaign. Calwell promised to raise the question of funding at Cabinet level.62 The growing national awareness of the bid made the Games a focus on national character and capacity. In part this was seen as a test—would the nation have the will and capacity to take on such a huge task, or would it be a case of a small and young country becoming "frightened by a big proposition"? The terms of the challenge were the capacity to organise, plan and actually build the stadia, Village and hotels. The new Lord mayor, Sir James Disney clearly linked the bid to overall production and development when he claimed "it will stand to our everlasting disgrace if we are still cramped and cramped by shortages in 1956".64

The US was the most frequently cited model. It combined a buoyant economy with the provision of full facilities and coaching to make it the "most proficient sporting nation in
the world”. Yachtsman Jock Sturrock attributed US sporting superiority to a thoroughness in all aspects of life. K.G. Luke returned from the US with the belief that unless Australia abandoned its British amateurism and followed the US pattern of treating sport as an aspect of the economy, it might as well give up trying to compete with the US. Beaurepaire believed that only a comprehensive ten-year plan would combat US supremacy. 65

Thus the Games bid became a national issue and a measure of the nation itself. There seemed to be a unanimity of purpose and recognition of the opportunity to “put Australia bigger on the world map”. When Disney claimed “It can be done; it must be done; and believe me it WILL be done”, it seemed he was speaking as much descriptively of an effort already underway, rather than prescriptively of one still to occur. 66

In the period following his return from London, Beaurepaire prepared a paper for the IC that was to be regarded as "strictly Confidential Not For Publication". He reported that IOC delegates had indicated their general support for the idea of the Games in the Southern Hemisphere. An Empire bloc was formed and Lady Mountbatten was able to secure the Indian vote within 48 hours of the request being made. Beaurepaire made two concluding points. First, he announced that the State government had formed a
Sub-Committee of Premier Hollway, Country Party leader McDonald and Wifrid Kent Hughes. It was to confer with the IC and take responsibility for stadia "and other tasks of a Governmental nature". This marks a formal removal of any expectation that the amateurs may had of controlling the location of the stadium, which was the raison d'être for their bid. Secondly, Beaurepaire reasserted his own authority by virtue of his unique understanding of the Games:

it is difficult for anyone who has not seen the Olympic Games to visualise their immensity and what they mean to the city and country in which they are held.

He based this assertion on the example of Los Angeles. There the stadium had become a valuable asset and it and the Games generated a profit. He concluded:

What Los Angeles and other great cities have done and are doing, Melbourne can and I believe will do better.

The Opportunity Is At Hand: Let Us Grasp It".67

Beaurepaire grasped his opportunity in a spectacular fashion. He had rarely attended VOC meetings but did so on 13 December. Here he produced a sensational report. He announced that the Main Stadium would be developed at the Royal Agricultural Society's (RAS) Showgrounds, and foreshadowed that he would produce full plans at the next meeting. Upon the completion of his presentation, Beaurepaire left for a previous engagement. The chair was taken by Bill Uren, who had retained his position of VOC Chairman after the position of
President had been created for Beaurepaire. The amateurs, in a state of shock and increasing anger, demanded that the Lord Mayor and Premier acquaint them with the detailed of the proposed scheme. They reminded them that the VOC had initiated the bid and had put in 12 months work before approaching Connelly. The amateurs reaffirmed their belief that if Melbourne did succeed, the AOF would assume responsibility for the conduct of the Games. 68

When Beaurepaire's announcement was made public, several days later with illustrations of a spectacular development at the Showgrounds, the amateurs' worst fears were realised. The Olympic proposal was designed to dovetail with the RAS' 20 year plan for expansion, which could now be achieved in less than half that time. But no provision for either costing or funding the scheme had been made. Hollway claimed that while final responsibility for finance rested with the Melbourne City Council (MCCouncil), he believed that the Commonwealth would assist, "realising the national importance of the Games". He added that after the Games, athletic carnivals could be held on the same nights as trotting. For a person renowned for his grasp of detail, this was a remarkably tactless (or provocative) suggestion. For the Progressive amateurs, gambling was not a sport, but a seducer of youth and anathema to their ideals. Not surprisingly, Aitken expressed his "disgust". He explained that he had "anticipated the onslaught of vested and other
interests"—but had difficulty comprehending the degree of cynicism in Beaurepaire's proposal. The amateurs would have no guarantee of use of the RAS facilities after the Games, yet would be expected to conduct them with the "Precision and success that the Melbourne public expect of us". Given that the Invitation book situated the Main Stadium at Olympic Park, the amateurs, Uren claimed, had no option but to withdraw their request to the AOF to stage the Games. 69

The public brawling that followed made a mockery of the proclamations of unity of purpose behind the leadership of great men. Disney had already tried to hedge earlier difficulties on the proposed timing of the Games with the declaration that "I think we should be busying ourselves with trying to get the Games for Melbourne. We can organise them later". 70 This theory was now expanded. Beaurepaire explained that after the IOC had accepted Melbourne, "minor differences can be sorted out". Hollway claimed that things had to be rushed because "If we wanted to get every detail down in black and white we would never get our application before the IOC on time". The Olympic Park proposal, Beaurepaire explained, had only been "tentative" for the purposes of "oversea publicity". 71 This explanation conveniently ignored the fact that it was the apparent finality of the Olympic park proposal, with its unequivocal benefit for amateur athletics, that had so impressed Edstrom and put Melbourne ahead of its rivals.
The image of national unity and hegemony came under threat as the intra-class dispute escalated. Hollway expressed amazement and disgust at the amateurs' threat to withdraw their request to hold the Games. He retaliated by threatening to withdraw State Government support, claiming there were "too many knockers in this country whenever any great enterprise is mentioned." 72 Hec De Lacy, a prominent, if somewhat flamboyant sporting commentator, viewed the dispute as having a meaning beyond bricks and mortar. It concerned a unity of purpose involving all the people:

That whole-hearted effort is not available yet, because, as a people, we are given to thinking "near enough" hits the target. It doesn't and it won't. We are apt to forget our lag in promotional and educational development, that vital background we must acquire before we can adequately comprehend an Olympic project… The world has been our host for many years. We can come out of the venture like kings or like beggars. We can win or lose according to the effort we make as a community—not after Christmas, nor a year hence, but from today till 1956. Let's get down to it. 73

The IC closed ranks and accused the amateurs of ingratitude when they were being given what they needed rather than the "white elephant" they were dreaming of. But Disney
recognised that serious damage had been done: Melbourne had been 6 to 4 on, but the dissension and resultant publicity had lengthened the odds to 40 to 1.  

The period from Beaurepaire's return to Australia until his announcement is shrouded in secrecy. Beaurepaire's actions from this time were confidential. He makes no mention of the episode in his chronological account of his Olympic involvement, itself a confidential document. The Official Report skirts over this and other conflicts as matters not worthy of note. As a result, there have been few subsequent comments on the dispute. On the eve of the Games Osmar white attributed it to an innate "Australian way of doing things". Behind the veil of secrecy, it is apparent that power and control of resources and meaning motivated all participants. Secrecy and intrigue were fundamental parts of a power struggle to stage the Games and are as important as the subsequent celebratory elements.

The idea of incorporating the Games into the RAS development plans had been made public several times before Beaurepaire's announcement. The RAS annual report, presented in February 1948, expressed willingness to provide facilities if the Games bid succeeded. The inference was that the RAS would develop its own facilities, largely through the revenue generated from night-trotting. In August the Showgrounds were again mentioned, this time on the initiative of prominent
businessman -A.W. Coles, who spoke of the "tremendous possibilities" of development there. The issue was portrayed as a contest between the Showgrounds and Olympic Park. Speculation was silenced by Premier Hollway's declaration that neither site would be developed until the housing shortage had been overcome. A distinct, if subtle shift had occurred. It was clear that a "strong move" was developing for the Showgrounds. Connelly claimed that critics who said the Games stadium would become a "White Elephant" were incorrect. He argued that the stadium could be used for "trotting, football and many things". Thus the possibility existed for the Games to provide the means for developing a multi-purpose stadium to incorporate a variety of sports. This raised the possibility of the Games being used to fund the RAS development, and thus subsidise professional sport. Beaurepaire subsequently claimed that he had already decided in London that structural difficulties had ruled out Olympic Park. It is necessary now to examine how the transformation was completed.

Hollway was frequently absent through illness and later as a result of his trip to London for the Commonwealth conference. His colleague on the Sub-committee formed to make decisions on stadia was Kent Hughes. As Minister for Transport he was embroiled in a dispute with the unions over a draconian Essential Services Act. This left Acting Premier and Country Party (CP) leader J.G.B. McDonald as the
effective power on the IC's Stadia Sub-Committee. The real power in the Country Party remained in the hands of Albert Dunstan. He had dominated Victorian politics for nearly 20 years with his string-pulling and ability to extract benefits for rural electorates through his minority and coalition governments. The RAS was seen by the CP as a body representing the whole state, and thus an ideal venue for the Games. But more fundamentally it would allow it to become the recipient of scarce funds, labour and materials that it had been unable to obtain for its development program. The RAS proposals would not have gained credence without direct and sympathetic access to the IC. With the replacement of Connelly as Lord Mayor by Disney (a fellow car salesman, but a character of little stature) the real power fell to Beaurepaire alone. Beaurepaire had married into the McKay family, which had strong rural connections through its agricultural machinery and publishing interests. His brother-in-law, C.N. McKay, was RAS President.

Beaurepaire's knowledge of the details of the Los Angeles development would have included awareness of its agricultural basis. In sprawling Los Angeles the Exposition Park site of the stadium was under the control of the 6th Agricultural District which was "a public corporation sponsored by the State to promote agricultural activities". Reiss has observed that while the CDA "boosters" wanted a site for the Olympics, their more immediate aim was
to build an edifice to hold a range of sporting, entertainment and commercial activities. This aim was achieved by raising a bond on the name of the city to finance construction. The stadium was leased back to the State for certain times, while the CDA was free to operate it commercially at other times. Thus the public funded a private facility. In Los Angeles the main beneficiary was the wealthy and private University of Southern California football team. In a similar scheme in Melbourne, public funding would allow the RAS to expand its shows and develop lucrative night trotting. 81

Beaurepaire’s arguments that a feasibility study had shown Olympic Park to be unsuitable, and his attempts to persuade the public that the RAS would meet all amateur needs, were submerged beneath disputes of a more fundamental nature. Far from being a smooth, ordered and natural relationship, sport and Australian culture was revealed to be a contest for control of resources, power and meaning. The amateurs' threat to withdraw the nomination indicated the gravity of the position. So too did the recognition that Melbourne's isolation could not prevent news leaking to the IOC and eager US rivals. Although the issue was presented in terms of a perverse, but ultimately benign Australian way of doing things, it was clear the damage would have to be repaired on two levels to prevent the bid from foundering.
First, the factional breach about the actual site required resolution. A conference was called at Parliament House for 2 February 1949. Hollway, Beaurepaire and the amateurs were present. Uren argued that the amateurs held no malice towards the RAS aspirations nor any desire to embarrass the Lord Mayor or Premier. But, he added, the bid had originated with the amateurs and its rationale was the provision of a permanent, amateur-controlled home. Tanner drew the conference's attention to IOC regulations that would grant control of the Games organisation exclusively to the AOF, but reluctantly offered that body's full support if the RAS was ultimately accepted. George Moir sounded a more menacing note. Moir was a modest but fiercely independent man who believed that the Games could accommodate the needs of all factions and set about curbing the excesses of both his fellow amateurs and the business leaders of the IC. He bluntly reminded Beaurepaire that many people had made a name out of sport, but that did not give them an automatic right to speak on behalf of amateur sport. The issue, he continued, could have been averted if the VOC had been consulted on the RAS decision. Beaurepaire brushed aside these arguments as "splitting straws". He admitted it had been a "tactical error" to have not consulted the amateurs, but pressure of time had prevented this. The prime consideration was to get the Games. He defended the RAS proposal on the basis of its cheapness, centrality and practicability. But he further widened the breach by claiming
that the RAS proposal was superior, not only for athletics, but for "primary and secondary activities". Hollway indicated that where his government was concerned, he did "not care where the Games are held, but it does want to get back the money expended on the Games". To ensure that this would occur, he continued to support the RAS proposal, although he emphasised that it was not for the purposes of night trotting and would be available for the amateurs. No detailed financial plans had been made and he agreed with Beaurepaire that "it was unnecessary to go into detailed questions" until the Games had been awarded to Melbourne. The details could be worked out in the early 1950's when the housing and building position would be more favourable. 82

Despite the amateurs' belief that they had been betrayed, a compromise of sorts was worked out. They backed down from their threat to withdraw their Olympic recommendation to the AOF. Connelly came out for the RAS and detailed (though still uncosted) plans of the proposal were airmailed for the IOC's perusal in Rome. Each faction agreed to reduce their public criticism of the other in the interest of getting the Games, while privately seeking support for their respective positions. Beaurepaire tried to reassure the amateurs that they would control the RAS stadium and that the grounds would not be used for "any ultra-professional sports such as dog racing, motor bikes, etc". At the same time
he was ensuring, in the the strictest confidence, that Edstrom's personal business representative who was in Australia was receiving "good Showgrounds material" that emphasised the benefit to rural and all Victorians. The amateurs bided their time, but refused to shift from their premise that public money should be spent on public and not private land. Olympic Park was public, the Showgrounds were not. 83

Secondly, Beaurepaire took control of preparations for Rome and developed material in keeping with his own views. These were based on the presentation of a picture of unanimity of support from "all classes of the community". Although he was willing to tell consular representatives that the site issue was finalised, this issue was more usually subsumed under more general statements of an innate national unity of which sport was a natural part. As public awareness of the proximity of the IOC vote increased, Beaurepaire relentlessly and skilfully used every opportunity to present the Olympic bid as part of a broader ideological representation of Australia. When it was discovered that senior IOC member Prince Axel of Denmark was visiting on business, Beaurepaire decided "to go to work on him". After meetings with the Governor General and assorted Olympic officials, followed by an introduction to Australian wines, Axel was happy to allow the use of his press comments saying "what a nice country Australia is, what a good country for the Games". 84 A
similar reception awaited Olympic champion Fanny Blankers-Koen who was to be "properly questioned" on arrival for an exhibition tour. She obliged by saying that she was impressed by the sincerity of public support and the enthusiastic welcome. But she was required to agree with further prepared statements that

the fact that travel had been pleasant and they are showing just as good form as they showed back home, that having to go "out of season"... has not affected them, that they have enjoyed every moment of their visit etc

After winning in front of 25,000 spectators on a makeshift track at the MCG, a bemused Blankers-Koen was presented with a two-pound steak by Beaurepaire. As she struggled with the meal, her husband and coach obliged by saying he was willing to settle here, so impressed was he by the people, country and climate. But he added that the abundance of natural talent would never be brought to fruition without adequate facilities and coaching. 85

Beaurepaire refined the arguments about the possibility of Northern athletes competing in the southern season and stressed the belief that by 1956 Melbourne would be less than two days jet-flying time from the Northern Hemisphere. These developments ensured Australia's right to stage the Games as part of De Coubertin's philosophy. 86
After US President Truman and Congress had officially
endorsed Detroit, Prime Minister Chifley lent official support to Melbourne. His grant of £1000, which was earmarked specifically for the Rome delegation, typically astute, as Chifley was reluctant to set a precedent for blanket Commonwealth support for a proposal that still remained uncosted.  

But the main effort was channelled into a supplementary Invitation book showing the RAS plans and a film that Beaurepaire wanted to be screened for IOC delegates immediately prior to the vote being taken. The film, *Olympic Invitation* was produced locally with some assistance from the Commonwealth Department of Information. It provides the most concise and effective representation of Beaurepaire's ideological position. His role in its production was substantial. He insisted on the inclusion of his own "Learn to Swim" campaign. Scrutinising the draft script, he justified his alterations, suggesting to the author(s) that you are particularly careful to avoid the use of the word "workers," which has such unpleasant connotations, concentrating rather on as many repetitions as possible of "Australians" and "Melburnians".

Beaurepaire was correct in recognising that the film be designed to "impress the people who go to vote". But it must equally be recognised that his is a particular account, made
in a specific way, and that the representations contained within it about reality "are constitutively connected to the struggle, the forms of compliance, and the forms of resistance associated with changing patterns of inequality, domination, and subordination in the social development of any society". 89

Beaurepaire had no hesitation in appropriating the Olympic title for his business enterprises, notwithstanding the IOC's hostility to any commercial use of the word. He believed that his sporting achievements allowed him exemption from rules binding lesser mortals. Reiss has observed that the "boosters" who developed the Los Angeles stadium were confident and competent men, "people who believed they knew what was in the best interests of the community, especially when the "public interest" coincides with their own". 90 Personal ambition drove Beaurepaire. He desired recognition and believed in his exclusive right to portray, enact and reproduce the development of Olympic sport and its place in Australian society. Olympic Invitation shows a society in organic harmony. Melburnians are an "outdoor sport loving people" who are "well dressed" and shop in "gracious thoroughfares". These people live in comfortable suburban homes whose gardens are among the world's finest. They quickly escape from a vaguely portrayed world of work to the pleasures of beach, sport or dining. Such is the unity of purpose, that it is Melbourne's "sporting enthusiasm" which
is behind the Invitation and which "inspires the Stadia plan. The line drawing of the RAS stadia emerges from the 100 000 crowd at the Melbourne Cup. The crowd and leaders are one unite people, Melburnians and Australians. 91

As the success of the bid was presented as a victory of "great men" (with a separate contest between them for unique credit) it is necessary to examine the full range of structures within which the delegation succeeded. Prior to the departure of the IC delegation, the committee received some promising reports concerning the efficacy of their propaganda. The Press attache of the Department of Information reported from Los Angeles that informed opinion was that that city's bid would fail in favour of Melbourne's. Similarly, Brundage and the Detroit delegation acknowledged the strength of Melbourne's "spirited bid". As it was expected that only 30 to 40 of the eligible delegates would attend, the lobbying done in 1948 would prove especially valuable. It also reduced the impact of the inability of Weir to attend. The earlier lobbying had virtually guaranteed a base bloc of Empire support, which could counter a Spanish language vote for Buenos Aires (itself not certain because of local rivalries.) 92

The IOC also made several semi-official indications of its intentions. Edstrom proposed a reduction in the scale of the Games "so that smaller nations may be able to organize
future Games”. British member Lord Aberdare said that the 1956, 1960 and 1964 Games would be held in North and South America and Oceania so that more people would have a chance to see them. But he added that the rotation would not necessarily follow the order given. He would only admit that Detroit seemed to be the best equipped candidate from its part of the world, while Melbourne was also well equipped and the sole contender from its region.\textsuperscript{93}

Greater clarity can be given to the IOC’s intention by what is known of its views of Melbourne’s rivals. Detroit had been applying for the Games, either in its own right or to replace candidates who had been unable to hold them, since 1939. Despite its persistence and the apparent soundness of its proposals, its chances did not appear great. Elements in the USOC along with the press and various "booster" groups seemed to believe that US post-war affluence guaranteed the Games almost as a right. Detroit was not the worst offender, but suffered from the queue of contenders who had lined up despite the fact that it was the endorsed US candidate. Prince Axel had expressed the feelings of the IOC with a subtlety apparently lost on the US mind when he observed that "The Americans are fortunate, but that is not a decisive argument". The IOC was also at pains to stress the rights of small nations and of cities that possessed an environment that suited the Olympic ideal. Lord Burghley referred to Detroit as a "centre d'affaire"—no doubt a
euphemism for its sprawling, industrial nature and problems of racial conflict.  

Buenos Aires seemed to be similar in many ways to Melbourne. Like Australia, Argentina had a long and honourable Olympic record. The Games had never been held on the South American continent. Although one of the world's great cities, it shared the common "settler society" desire of wishing to prove itself the equal of the metropolitan centres. And Argentina could be considered a "small" country in terms of its youth and minor power status under British economic domination. But while Buenos Aires pushed its case as a cosmopolitan city with excellent existing athletic facilities and an unrivalled reputation for hospitality, it was a source of great concern within the IOC. Athletics had become politicised along with all other aspects of life in the "Justicialist" philosophy of the Peronist revolution. An Argentinian Delfo Cabrera won the Marathon in 1948. He became a national hero and was lauded by Peron himself. This political reaction was not unique to Argentina but subsequent events led the IOC to doubt the independence of the Argentine Olympic Committee. Cabrera was an active Peronist and claimed Peron had made his victory possible. Peron was in fact enthusiastic about sport and had placed special emphasis on it. But much of this enthusiasm was directed to the control of the Peronist youth organisations dedicated to producing "strong youth" for the
"fatherland". When Cabrera was promoted in his fire brigade job and his wife and daughter given a house by Evita Peron's social assistance organisation, severe doubts about state subsidised professionalism surfaced and became the subject of an IOC enquiry. Buenos Aires did not produce lavish propaganda, and it is likely that it was merely exploring the idea for a more serious bid at a later date. 95.

Thus Melbourne arrived at Rome with very strong prospects. These were brought about by a combination of the strength of its own case, the weaknesses of its rivals and the strong personal support of Edstrom. When the vote was taken, Melbourne won by one vote, 21 to 20 from Buenos Aires. Given the closeness of the vote it is essential to look at the activities of the delegation in Rome. Beaurepaire was clearly the driving force. He formed the delegation into a team which had reduced their arguments to short and concise statements. He claimed to have personally persuaded "Iron Curtain" delegates to switch their vote to Melbourne despite instructions to the contrary from their national committees. Most importantly, he ensured that all delegates received Melbourne's literature and saw its film. His advertising manager and biographer, Lomas, observes that

We see in these moves how shrewdly Sir Frank employed his campaigning experience to evolve and apply a comprehensive plan of attack. The keen flair for publicity, the knack of timing every action
opportune, the gift of salesmanship, which had done so much for the industries he had founded, were exercised to the full in this bid for the Games, without forgetting the need for well-judged team-work. 96

Observers recognised that a vote could be swung at the last moment on political and trade as well as sporting grounds. Melbourne, whether by luck, IOC indulgence or its own lobbying, was uniquely placed to put its position. Its delegation spoke last. It had been immediately preceded by Brundage speaking for a group of US cities applying for the summer and winter Olympics. His hastily scribbled notes indicate the farcical nature of these bids. Earlier delegations from Buenos Aires, Mexico City and Detroit had made more formal presentations. Each Melbourne delegate presented a variation on a carefully rehearsed series of arguments. The pragmatic arguments of Australia's unbroken participation and consequent deservedness were supported by assertions of its unanimity of support for the bid, its national love of sport and capacity for organisation (as evidenced in wartime) and the firm plans for stadia, accommodation and improved air travel.

Avery Brundage's copy of the delegation's presentation gives a clear indication of the effect of the arguments and possibly of his own voting intentions. He noted each of the unambiguously clear statements of government support, public
enthusiasm and unanimity and guarantee that facilities had been approved and funded. No notations occur on the Detroit submission. After the delegation completed its presentation, IOC members were shown Melbourne's film. "Any waverers must have still had in their minds crisp impressions of Melbourne and its plans for a commodious new stadium, plus an athletes village." 

Melbourne led each of the three preliminary rounds as the minor candidates were eliminated. When Prince Axel kissed the final vote of the fourth round, Melbourne had achieved victory by 21 votes to Buenos Aires' 20. Bustos Moron from Argentina congratulated his Australian colleague Sir Harold Luxton and expressed his hope that Buenos Aires would be successful in 1960. Luxton responded by thanking the IOC for its confidence in Melbourne and assured them that everything would be done to ensure the Games were a dazzling success. The Melbourne delegation went off to celebrate, while that of Detroit complained that the Games had become "an international auction, with the site chosen being the highest bidder" with Melbourne offering to pay the complete expenses of all IOC members.

Detroit's allegations were unfounded, but they did point to the fact that Melbourne had sold a particular image of itself and the place of sport in its society. The original Progressive impulse of Aitken was echoed by Edstrom's welcome in Rome when he explained
The aim of the Olympic Movement is to bring out a better human race, superior, not only physically, but also as regards nobleness of mind, and to contribute to a better understanding and friendship among the people. This is necessary, especially for youth, to counter-balance the bad influences of industrialism.

In Melbourne the Games were being greeted as the property of "Business and civic leaders" who were eagerly eyeing "the incalculable commercial possibilities". The voices of the amateurs were all but drowned out when they reminded business that the site issue was not yet resolved.¹

This reaction is indicative of the shift that had occurred in the ensemble of components making up the Olympic bid. They had now become the "biggest thing that has ever happened to Melbourne and Australia". The boost to business was now the perceived object of the bid and the Games a vehicle to achieve it. Benefits to amateur athletics would be subsidiary. This marks an almost complete reversal from Aitken's original position. Here the Olympics were to mark a long overdue recognition of the needs of amateur athletics, which was to be achieved through the contributions of the state and business. Benefits would inevitably flow to the latter two, but they would be of secondary importance.

Both positions were contained within the intellectual origins of the Olympics, and are a matter of priority rather
than fundamental disagreement, no matter how personally bitter the intra-class disputes became. The factions shifted frequently, and the deception and secrecy makes it difficult to attribute absolute meaning to all actors at all times. But the effect of the dispute over control of the ensemble of components of the bid, and thus the meaning of the Games, was clear. Olympic sport had become represented in terms of national characteristics and the capacity to achieve large-scale undertakings. Both factions had presented their case in terms of their ability to achieve a national unity in their purpose. But their disputes in which accusations of "vested interests" and "knockers" flew, indicated the ideological nature of their assertions of natural innate unity of purpose.

The victory at Rome was achieved by a presentation that assured the IOC of a unity of purpose in general terms, and specifically on the Main Stadium site that was in reality undecided. Beaurepaire successfully welded a presentation of the pragmatic arguments based on Australia's unbroken Olympic participation with the picture of a classless, unified community already behind the Games. By a combination of assertion and pleading, the delegation convinced the IOC of what it wanted to hear—that Melbourne could successfully stage the Games in a way that combined the Olympic amateur ideals in a successful business format.
"THE BATTLE OF THE SITES"
CRISES OF LEGITIMATION 1949-1955

The sordid manoeuverings of the Olympic Games site and the money attached to it lifts a little of the veil on corrupt practices of capitalism. What has come into the open about the Olympic Games is nothing compared to the conflict of business interests which is going on all the time.

"Hermes" (Fred Lester)
Guardian 5 February 1953.

The period following the award of the Games was marked by such a level of public brawling that it became known as the "Battle of the Sites". In this it reflected and contributed to the turmoil which Harvey argues is the characteristic of the "urban pathology and restless incoherence" of capitalist allocation of space and resources. The "Battle" was indeed pathological as it seemed that changing of sites became an end in itself. These disputes dramatised the sport-power relationship and
destroyed the pretence that sport was a natural activity removed from realities of other aspects of life. This dramatisation occurred during a period of great complexity in Victorian politics. Governments were made up of Byzantine cross and intra-party factions; relations with the Commonwealth were strained in a period of economic instability; and continuing shortages of materials, labour and housing made any allocation of resources the subject of fierce contest by well-organised pressure groups.

The result of the disputes was crises in 1953 and 1955. The failure of the Games' management threatened to destroy the hegemonic intentions of the promoters and, by the focus it provided on the national economy and political system, threatened to destroy the "diffuse mass loyalty" to the system as a whole. The crises overlapped with, and formed a significant part of a broader national self-examination and quest for unity. The Olympic crises removed these debates from the control of the intellectuals of the dominant class and located them in the public arena, where the population at large played a definite role in their resolution. The complexity of the factions, the changing sites and shifts in hegemonic balance make it necessary to chart the period chronologically and plot the peaks and troughs that steadily lead to the crises.

*****
The award of the 1956 Games to Melbourne had been greeted with almost unanimous enthusiasm, apart from a few unionists and radical clergy. Optimists claimed that faction-fighting over the main stadium site would cease. Nothing could have been further from the case as AOF Secretary Tanner immediately challenged the right of the Government to determine the site. Premier Hoddle petulantly threatened to withdraw all government support if the "diehards" continued to claim they could run the Games. As Beauraipaire was still overseas and the OOC still in the process of formation, no ultimate authority existed to prevent the wrangling over the Games from escalating into the "most sensational battle in Australia's sporting history." The object of the battle was the right to exercise "authority" over the Games. The ferocity of the conflict was such that The Sporting Globe appealed to Opposition Leader Menzies to act as an independent arbiter to bring about a consensus and ensure the success of the Games.

The OOC was formed in October 1949. In an effort to prevent a repetition of the conflict between business and amateurs that had characterised the IC, the AOF attempted to assert its control over the Games by achieving a majority on the OOC. After a bitter struggle it limited IC representation to one, with Beauraipaire (nominally a VOC representative) as figure-head Chairman and believed it had a 7-6 majority. However, this majority relied on "diehard" support. This was not a realistic assessment as the "diehards" immediately indicated their intention to seize control of the OOC (and thus power to decide the site) when they attempted to have Beauraipaire, Disney and Weir removed. It was alleged they had been
professionals and thus ineligible. Although this bid was treated with contempt, the "diehards" continued their threats to scuttle the Games if their original proposal was not adhered to. They rejected the RAS proposal in favour of the MCG as the main stadium with a redeveloped OP as a subsidiary venue. Beaurepaire was powerless to stop the "diehards" and was forced to call another conference to resolve the site question, and in doing so contradicted the picture of finality and unity presented at Rome. 

At the conference of the Sites Sub-Committee held in December 1949, the RAS emerged as the only serious contender. It had a detailed, albeit uncosted plan, and claimed the support of "all classes of country and city people". The MCG Trustees, on the other hand, could give no more than a general indication of support accompanied by far more specific misgivings about financial commitments and possible damage to the wicket area. When the conference reconvened in January 1950, the "diehards" renewed their attack. They claimed negotiations had taken place from which they had been excluded and as a result sought to have the OOC expanded with more Victorian amateurs to ensure their control. They again failed. The result of the wrangling and threats to forgo the Games was a fear that the IOC may demand forfeiture. The possibility of loss of the Games from two fronts led to the realisation that popular support could not be assumed as the "public have become heartily sick of the incessant squabbling and muddling."

In the face of the "diehards'" intransigence and the absence of effective leadership from Beaurepaire, a new coalition was forged to fill
the vacuum. A group of moderates was formed by AOF President Alderson, Weir and George Moir, a Victorian amateur not affiliated with the "diehards." This moderate alliance grudgingly accepted the RAS proposal as fait accompli and believed that the "diehards" had "taken leave of their senses" by continuing to court national humiliation in their adherence to misguided principles. Weir was adamant that if stability was not restored he would be forced to recommend that the IOC withdraw its offer to Melbourne.12

In a display of patrician indifference the final rejection from the MCC club did not come until April, by which time Sir Harold Luxton was en route to the IOC meeting in Copenhagen. The reasons given for the rejection were that contractual obligations to football and cricket and the necessary structural work made the proposal "impracticable." But the more fundamental reason was that given at the start of negotiations by Sir Harry Lawson for the Trustees. He had unerringly pinpointed the plight of the IOC when he observed "We do not come to you as supplicants asking you to select the MOG".13

Luxton had to attend the Copenhagen meeting without knowing a final decision on the site and was forced to rely on airmail information and his own mastery of euphemism to assuage IOC doubts. His initial task was to convince the IOC to allow the Games to be staged in November–December, rather than in September as tacitly agreed in Rome, even though Northern hemisphere athletes would be inconvenienced. This extension of time, he argued, would give six clear years for construction, which was an important consideration in view of
the shortages left by Australia's war effort and migration program. He guilefully attempted to explain the faction-fighting over the sites as evidence of intense public interest, which was marred only by an overenthusiasm by partisans which "caused a wrong impression in the minds of other people". He assured delegates that there were no problems with housing or finance and that the "organisation will build itself as required." 14

Despite his skillful presentation, Luxton did not escape unscathed. He had directly signalled Australia's economic difficulties and their possible impact on the Games. This was in contrast to the picture presented in Rome. Melbourne was moving onto the defensive. At the same time the IOC felt it was already granting favours by allowing the agreement on the timing of the Games to be changed. More ominous was the interest being taken by US delegate Avery Brundage, soon to assume IOC Presidency. He had corresponded with Luxton about the timing issue and revealed that he had been receiving disturbing press reports on housing problems and Australian attitudes to Japanese readmission to the IOC. The initial claims of consensus were giving way to the Games becoming a focus for doubts about the national capacity. 15

*****

Throughout the months of indecision, the RAS had continued to express its belief that it would be able to go ahead with its redevelopment, irrespective of the Games being held at the Showgrounds. Its redevelopment program had been premised on the
availability of materials and Commonwealth financial support for the Games. Neither now appeared likely. The defence program and enormous economic changes introduced by the new Menzies government brought inflation and fluctuations in reserves. As the site problem drifted into crisis, the RAS faced increased difficulty in extracting funds from a tight-pressed public sector. 16

In June 1950 these economic constraints became inextricably linked to the central issue of Victorian politics when John Cain’s Labor Party agreed to support a minority CP Ministry led by J.G.B. McDonald. Cain was a master of compromise and had inherited a tradition of “secret alliances (and) backroom deals”. He was equally single-minded in pursuing his modest reforms. To this end, his support of McDonald was conditional on a 15 point pact. The crucial point was the resolution of the housing crisis:

The speeding up of home building and the supply of building materials, and an immediate start on slum clearance and adequate housing for the aged.

Cain was in opposition when the Games were awarded, and his reaction had been ambivalent:

The 1956 Olympic Games will be a good thing for the city, but will undoubtedly delay the housing programme. I can’t see how we can hold the Games without interfering with housing and other important State projects. 17

In his role as MCG Trustee, Cain had also made clear his desire to have the Games staged there in preference to the Showgrounds. 18
This combination of circumstances encouraged the "diehards" to renew their attack on the RAS proposal, which despite having again received OCC approval, still remained unfunded. Their first move was to oust Beaurepaire from Presidency of the VOC, and thus make his position on the OCC untenable. They achieved this swiftly and ruthlessly, and Kent Hughes assumed the Presidency. Secondly, they sought a postal vote of AOF members seeking approval of their proposal to have four more Victorians added to the OC in their continued efforts to control it. Although they failed by only one vote it seemed that the accusations that they were implacable malcontents were warranted. They had alienated business, AOF and IOC delegates on the OCC; their threats to forgo the Games smacked of unpatriotic behaviour; and their attacks on McDonald as a "know nothing" figure of scorn only provoked him to threaten withdrawal of all government support.

But despite their belligerence and isolation, the "diehards" position was not hopeless. They had managed to have inserted into OCC policies that the MCG, Carlton or St Kilda Cricket Grounds be listed as fallback sites if the RAS was unavailable. The rapidly worsening economic position was making a properly costed RAS development increasingly untenable. Secondly, the support of the AOF moderates for the business inspired RAS proposal was fragile. They had supported it only because they recognised it had "the support of all the influential people", and feared that the "diehards" would cause the Games to be removed if they had not acted. But they equally recognised the problems of material shortages, the possibility of war and the likelihood of public resentment at the use of scarce building materials when the MCG was idle. They
believed that the RAS proposal could go ahead only if a clear statement was made by State and Commonwealth Governments that the housing program would not be jeopardised. Moir in particular was unimpressed by "knights .. trying to overawe us with their money" and found Beaurepaire again trying to take control personally. 22 But the moderates could not abandon their business allies while they had not secured their object of obtaining a firm guarantee of government funding.

In this impasse the OOC became unworkable. Tanner and Uren leaked OOC business to the press and attacked anyone whom they believed stood in their way-governments, IOC delegates and "all the big shots". The failure of the business "big shots" to control them or make any progress forced the moderates to reassess their support. The OOC had become a farce. Beaurepaire was increasingly secretive and refused to reply to questions on finance, preferring to pass over them with a "flourish of his hands". Disney could merely "parrot" his plaintiff request "Why don't we get on with the job". 23 Moir recognised that the threat of war, rearmament and growing economic difficulties were making the RAS development increasingly implausible when comparatively small buildings were already "standing as stark skeletons" because of material shortages and a house-hungry public was demanding answers. The Games, he observed, had become "an objective not easy to reach". 24

Beaurepaire's resignation from the OC on 20 January 1951 was described as a "bombshell". Ill-health was the stated reason, and a genuine contributing factor, as was his growing alienation from public life and matching distrust of his colleagues. All factions were finding him
increasingly autocratic and difficult to work with. His failure to negotiate a financial arrangement with the State Government had led him into dispute with his brother-in-law and RAS President, C.N. McKay. But while Moir regarded his chairmanship a complete failure and his resignation "a heaven sent blessing", Beaurepaire was privately moving back to a position closer to the amateurs. His gift of the Beaurepaire sports facility to the University of Melbourne dates from this period.  

*****

Beaurepaire's demise graphically illustrates the degree to which the factional fighting had destroyed the images of unity portrayed in Rome. What was left was an unrivalled national image of muddling and pettiness in the place of the confident assertions of the Games as a great enterprise. Public support for the Games, which had been confidently claimed and asserted in 1949, could no longer be assumed. The capitalist paradigm of organisation by business leadership had been found wanting, threatening loyalty to the system as a whole.  

The AOF moderates were faced with two immediate problems. The first was to locate a suitable Chairman. They were adamant that the "diehards" would not gain control. Weir regarded the idea of Tanner assuming leadership as "too silly for words", while Moir believed that Uren might have to be removed from Melbourne in his employment as a public servant "until preparations...are firmly established". At the same time no "Big
Man" stepped forward to take on a job that had lost much of its allure. Kent Hughes was a more complex figure. While respected for his talent and war record, his abrasiveness, extreme political views and personal hostility to Menzies all stood against him. Edmund Herring and Arthur Coles had been mentioned, but Weir's confession that he did not have "a clue just at the moment" summed up the position of the OOC as a whole. As a result, Sir Harold Luxton, who was in failing health, reluctantly assumed the chairmanship. 27

The second problem was that finance for the RAS remained "just as obscure now as it ever was". This problem was exacerbated by the fact that the OOC was required to report to the IOC in Vienna in May 1951. Luxton was unable to attend because of ill-health, and Weir was attempting to use the excuse of pressure of work and the unsettled world situation to explain his absence. But as the IOC was already demanding answers to recently surfaced problems with Australia's quarantine laws, it became a matter of urgency that a comprehensive plan be personally presented. 28 Thus a compromise was worked out whereby only the Main Stadium would be located at the Showgrounds. In this truncated scheme, the £3-4 million, 60 000 seat facility would be jointly financed by the RAS and State Government. Again this decision was seen as the end "finally and irrevocably" to the factionalism. RAS Chairman McKay portrayed the development as the beginning of a shift from the current economic difficulties. He optimistically claimed:

The remedy for our shortages is unquestionably in our own hands... Our job is to go ahead and see that what is done is a credit to this country of Australia". 29
This optimism was quite misplaced. The "diehards" bitterly complained of the betrayal of future generations to the interests of trotting. More significantly, McDonald, no doubt with Cain at his shoulder, refused to be bound to any financial arrangement and indicated that the bulk of finance would have to come from the Commonwealth. On 6 April McDonald's vacillation ceased when he announced that the government may be forced to withdraw "financial and moral" support for the Games. It is clear that his hand was forced by Cain when he cited the "desperate shortage of building materials for homes, hospitals and state development" as the reasons for his action. He announced a meeting of himself, Cain and Hollway, but as all were expressing strong misgivings, the general feeling was that the only possible decision was that Melbourne would forgo the Games.

Why did Cain act as he did at this juncture? There is no doubt that the OOC recognised that the allocation of scarce materials was the "crux of the problem". In the resolution of this problem, Cain and the "diehards" mutually supported each other. Cain's well-known support for the MOG encouraged the "diehards", while their continued hostility to the RAS proposal strengthened Cain's stand and gave him further sway over McDonald on the housing point of the pact.

The three-way conference failed to occur as Hollway refused to be distracted from the forthcoming Federal elections by a "carnival which was five years away". The brinkmanship continued as McDonald promised the government would not produce finance, "not even a quid" at the cost of the housing program. Cain was no less blunt when he stated his belief that "the Games should not be held under present circumstances".
These moves indicated that the Games were no longer seen as a boost to state development but were now regarded as a burden on the national economy. *The New York Times* noted the intense anguish produced by what it regarded as Australia's "policy of despair". All factions desperately attempted to prevent the forfeiture that would make Australia the "laughing stock of the world". Kent Hughes proposed the quaint notion of amateurs building the stadium on the weekends, but as surveys indicated that public opinion was increasingly hostile to the Games and resigned to their loss, the issue had moved beyond bricks and mortar. The issue now was whether incompetence was endemic and "an insidious form of "it can't be done" inherent; or whether Australians were able to honour their promises and refuse to shirk large undertakings. The dramatisation was beginning to take on forms that that moved beyond criticism of the organisation of the Games, to more fundamental criticism of the organisation of sport and the state. LH McBrien, secretary of the VFL demanded a Ministry of Sport to replace existing ad hoc arrangements. He argued that in the era of the 40 hour week it was essential that people be educated in leisure so as to "put the Australian Brand on our men and women". This would not be possible if the "inglorious show made of organising the Games were to continue and the world were to judge Australia adversely." The growing awareness of the political nature of Olympic sport endangered the broader hegemonic role of sport which rested on assumptions of its natural, apolitical and benign nature. MacAloon has argued that the Games provide the opportunity for nations to tell
stories of themselves and to judge other nations against their own achievements. While this process is most pronounced within the host nation, other nations also judge the host. MacAlloon restricts his analysis to the actual conduct of the Games. I would argue that the style and scale of the presentation are as significant as the performances themselves and that it is during the preparation of the facilities that much of the observation occurs. It certainly occurred in the years leading up to the 1936 Berlin Games; and Australian commentators drew constant reference to the efforts of London and Helsinki in the face of adversity. This process occurred as successive appearances before the IOC alerted the world to the mismanagement in Australia. If, as MacAlloon argues, each Games have their own unique character, then what became known as the "Friendly Games" emerged from a background of unhappy incompetence.

The urgency of the situation had forced Weir to overcome his reluctance to travel to Vienna in May for the IOC meeting. Despite McDonald's rejection and the failure of the Commonwealth to provide finance, he managed to survive relatively unscathed. But he only achieved this by moving into a new level of duplicity. The IOC was preoccupied with Cold War issues which deflected some attention. But Weir was required to use the same ambiguities and half truths as Luxton had a year earlier. To the IOC demand that the majority of events be held at or near the Main Stadium, he replied "there is every possibility of this objective being achieved". Weir claimed that the RAS proposal "has finally been agreed", carefully avoiding mention of the refusal of any level of government to fund it, and the willingness of the leaders of the three
major parties in Victoria to forgo the Games. His report concluded with a plea for the revised timing of November-December on the grounds that the Olympic ideal "should far transcend the problems and wishes of individual nations and competitors".40

Thus while being less than frank, and appearing for the second time with no firm plans, Melbourne was appealing for special consideration on the basis of adherence to the highest Olympic ideals. It is little wonder that as the position in Melbourne further deteriorated, that the IOC would no longer so willingly accept general reports, and that hostility to Melbourne from Northern Hemisphere nations and US cities anxious to stage the Games grew.

*****

On his return, Weir warned that he had won a reprieve only until the next IOC meeting, due to be held in Oslo in January 1952.41 The position in Melbourne appeared hopelessly deadlocked. The amateurs controlled the OOC, while the original business choice of site, the Showgrounds remained in place. But neither group had access to finance to change or implement existing plans. The RAS grimly pressed on alone in its efforts to convince Treasury of the soundness of its case. McKay was thus aghast to find that the Commonwealth did not have a copy of its proposal, immediately alerting him to the possibility of treachery within the OOC. In October Menzies finally announced that the Commonwealth was unable to provide finance.42
The OCC pleaded for the matter to be kept separate from politics, but this was impossible as the IOC immediately sought clarification of Menzies' action. The efforts of the competing factions for scarce funds dramatically highlighted the fluctuating and fragile nature of Menzies' and Fadden's war economy. Critics challenged him to divert some of the temporary surplus from the Korean War "Wool Boom" or to allocate a portion of the sales tax on sporting goods to finance the Games. But the more likely outcome, it was feared, was international humiliation and admission of incompetence in economic management and a serious deficiency of character. This led McKay to observe:

The policy of despair in Australia is too evident, not only in connection with the Olympics. We should adopt a positive policy of action. Too much time has been spent in Australia on explaining why things cannot be done. That is dreadful.

As the Games preparations became locked into the national economic constraints, McDonald's observation that "if we are not allowed to work, then we should not be allowed to play" had to be heeded. The only possible solution was to return to the MOG as potentially the cheapest site available. The OCC's architects and engineers believed the necessary conversions could be achieved cheaply, would conform to IOC standards and would not harm the "sacred centre". The Trustees admitted that they had been incorrect in the technical claims of their earlier refusal, but required time for further engineering and financial investigation before making a decision.

Despite the national importance of the matter, negotiations did not
proceed smoothly. The OOC behaved with a remarkable lack of tact when they claimed that the urgency of the situation meant that the interests of football and cricket would have to give way as they were "of little account when considering the international significance of the Games".\footnote{47} For their part, the MCG Trustees and the MCCClub took an inordinate amount of time to reach a decision. Despite the attempts of Cain and Calwell to get support for the OOC, the MCCClub carried its deliberations on into 1952. This put new IOC delegate Lewis Luxton under intolerable pressure, as he had to report to the IOC in Oslo in January. In another display of indifference, the decision that "it would not be in the interests" of the MCCClub, its clients the VFL or the Victorian Cricket Association (VCA) or "the public" to stage the Games, was made immediately prior to Luxton's report.\footnote{48}

The MCCClub's rebuff had three immediate effects. First, public alienation seemed complete. The Argus observed

A great sporting public, which rejoiced with the amateurs when the Olympic victory was announced in Melbourne's favour, has now soured on the project. The continual mention of the word Olympic sends them scurrying in the other direction. They don't care if the Olympic Games are never held again anywhere.\footnote{49}

Secondly, US cities, still smarting from their loss in 1949, believed the time was ripe to make definite proposals to replace Melbourne, and stepped up their pressure on the IOC to intervene.\footnote{50} Thirdly, the search for scapegoats began. Kent Hughes spoke bitterly of the "arch-priests of cricket (who) apparently do not know how to play the Game". While this observation was specifically correct, after three years
of brawling, the whole capitalist paradigm, rather than a part, was coming into disrepute as a result of the empty rhetoric, self-aggrandisement and failure to do any real work on the part of the "little potterers" who were responsible for the Games' organisation.51

For the first time the IOC was fully aware of the position in Melbourne, which was that two sites had been rejected, and the MCClub had twice rebuffed the OOC. Not surprisingly, Luxton's attempt to pacify the committee with an assurance that "Menzies would cooperate fully in making the necessary financial commitments" was swept aside. Even Edstrom admitted that Melbourne was a source of grave concern. Luxton suffered the humiliation of having to seek a three-month extension on his report so that it could be presented on 15 May in Helsinki. If the report was not satisfactory, the Committee would re-allocate the Games.52

*****

The import of Luxton's reprieve was clear. The onus of proof was now on the OOC to prove why it should not have the Games removed. To many the matter seemed to be already over. Senior IOC member Baron Von Frankell claimed Melbourne had only a 1% chance of retaining the Games. Brundage advised the competing US cities to get together and choose a single candidate. Fellow US IOC representative and veteran of the 1932 Los Angeles Games organisation, William Garland offered that city as an "emergency landing field" for the Games. He claimed it possessed all necessary facilities and, in contrast to Melbourne, "a group of men who
knew how to handle the show". Given the comprehensiveness of their failure it is difficult to disagree with the assessment that "Australia's Olympic experts have become famous for their muddling". Similarly, the conference called for 19 March 1952 must have seemed unlikely to succeed where all previous efforts had failed.

In this context, the results of the conference were remarkable for the way in which the site problem was resolved and the speed with which legitimation of the paradigm of business leadership restored. The all-party conference recommended that the Main Stadium be developed at the Carlton Recreation Ground in Princes Park. Carlton was one of the alternative sites suggested by the "diehards" during their dispute with the RAS and although there was strong support for it from the MCCouncil, from within the ALP by Carlton MLA W Barry and possibly from the VFL, its selection by the OOC must be explained in broader terms. It was selected only because the MCClub had twice rebuffed the OOC. Secondly, it was financed on the understanding that its construction would reflect the prevailing "austerity and shortage of manpower and materials". Accordingly, the Commonwealth agreed to pay half the construction costs of £1,350,000 with the State government and MCCouncil sharing the balance. A State Savings Bank guarantee of £1,000,000 was arranged to cover staging costs, with an agreement to share losses and profits accordingly. It is important to note that the funding was to cover the costs of construction of the Main Stadium, pool and velodrome, and to provide for administration and promotion. This information was conveyed to IOC Chancellor Otto Mayer who declared his satisfaction that "The whole matter can be considered decided".
This optimism was shared in Australia. The speedy reversal of the earlier defeatism was brought about by the new focus of power in the OCC. Although Kent Hughes remained as Chairman, the real power was vested in Arthur Coles as head of a Control Committee (CC). This body was vested with exclusive authority to "act in all matters deemed necessary for the proper conduct of the 1956 Olympic Games". Coles was recognised as the "Big Man" needed to override factionalism while providing the necessary leadership to restore legitimacy to the capitalist paradigm of organisation. His career as a founding member of a widely recognised and respected retail chain, vigorous political maverick and successful founder of Trans Australia Airways gave him ideal credentials.  

Coles was portrayed as a larger than life self-made millionaire who would be "Boss". The Melbourne Herald commented that "we can now expect that the Games will be conducted with vigour and imagination". In this enthusiasm and relief it was largely overlooked that Coles and the CC still remained answerable to the OCC.

Coles' dynamic personality complemented a broader groundswell of support for Carlton. The CC included K.G. Luke, Vice President of the VFL. Other members were closely associated with Carlton Football Club. The public immediately identified an Olympic stadium at Carlton as an alternative to the MCG for the staging of the lucrative VFL Finals matches. The Lord Mayor and Carlton member O.J. Nilsen referred to it as "the peoples' ground". He claimed Melbourne had outgrown the MCG as its sole stadium, and that Carlton would provide a badly needed alternative. The MCG had been restricted to a capacity of 85,000 by the Health Commission. The 1951 Grand Final had seen an angry crowd of
"squatters" break down gates, invade the oval and break into the Members' Reserve in an effort to see the game. In this context the concept of a peoples' ground struck a responsive chord. The VFL officially denied that it was considering shifting the finals to Carlton. However, its expansionist policy and resentment at the high rentals for the MCG Finals led to a popular belief of a shift to Carlton. This was reinforced by the fact that the VFL's agreement with the MCG expired in 1956. The VFL's official policy was that it viewed as a matter of "urgency" the need to secure long-term leases "particularly of the MCG and possibly the Carlton Ground if available at the end of the Olympic Games."

This impression that the Carlton decision was a victory for the ordinary person as well as the amateurs was reinforced by Coles' rhetoric. He presented a picture of consensus where before there had been confusion and appealed to Australians to "just be our natural friendly selves". But although he acknowledged the "spirit of the people of Melbourne", his consensual model was overlaid by a definite hierarchical structure. He claimed that he had the support of everyone from the Prime Minister "right down the line to the man in the street". The organisational failure had left the people a free-floating agent as public opinion became alienated. Coles proposed to recapture public support and relocate the people in an ordered, subsidiary role. In Coles' mind, the "man in the street" would not be required until much closer to the Games, when the people would be responsible for hospitality and accommodation.

Coles' appointment coincided with a period of intense national
pessimism and self-doubt. The economy was constrained by import restrictions, spending cuts and a national housing shortage. Coles' dynamic leadership changed the Games from a dramatic illustration of shattered national confidence to an illustration of how to use "courage and decisiveness" to overcome the economic "blizzards".64 This shift is reflected in Coles' successful refutation of the arguments of the housing lobby. Fr. G. Kennedy Tucker of the Brotherhood of St Laurence had opposed the Games from the time of their award. He now argued that the housing problem was no closer to resolution, as evidenced by the continued existence of Camp Pell and Watsonia as emergency shelters. He argued that to graciously forgo the Games would be an act of national maturity rather than an admission of failure or loss of face. Tucker organised a letter campaign in the Press, gained support within the union movement and arranged for letters from individuals suffering from inadequate housing to be sent directly to Brundage. He issued a direct challenge to the OOC in his claim that the bulk of the population no longer approved of the Games. Kent Hughes, who was a personal friend of Tucker's, fired off an angry response in which he asserted that the Games were a valid contribution to the physical and moral well-being of the nation's youth. But it was Coles' actions that spoke louder.65

Tucker and his colleagues claimed that it would be impossible to get the nation "geared up" to make the Games a success and still overcome the "National emergency" in housing.66 Coles answered these sceptics by proposing the Games as the vehicle by which the nation would overcome the problems besetting it:
The 1956 Olympic Games may become the turning point from our present state of inertia toward a period of high endeavour and progress.⁶⁷

Coles acted swiftly and decisively. Although Luxton presented the formal OOC report to the IOC meeting at Helsinki in July 1952, Coles also addressed the delegates. It was believed that it was his persuasiveness that led the Committee to accept the new guarantee of finances and sites. He managed also to deflect attention from the rather flimsy plans to house athletes at the University and from the potentially explosive quarantine ban on overseas horses.⁶⁸ Coles, Luke and P. Nette, a salaried OOC official toured the US after Helsinki to inspect stadia. They were warmly received, and buoyed by this and the Helsinki success, they believed they had overcome the earlier difficulties.⁶⁹

On his return to Melbourne, Coles’ energetic approach led to approving calls for him to be given “near dictatorial powers” and for all to “submit to discipline in the national interest”.⁷⁰ The CC sought to win union support and move its sympathies away from the housing lobby by appointing Trades Hall Council (THC) President Cameron to the Committee. In rapid succession the CC began preliminary work at Carlton, the pool and velodrome sites; opened negotiations with the Housing Commission in an effort to solve the Village problem and answer the housing lobby in one action; and considered such diverse topics as the licensing laws, press requirements and tourism. Only the equestrian events remained a problem as a result of the Commonwealth’s continued refusal to lift its stringent quarantine ban.⁷¹ 115 entries had been submitted
from all parts of the world for the design of the new stadium, and when
the winning design was unveiled, it seemed that Kent Hughes' assertion
that all would be "smooth sailing" was justified. Coles had succeeded
where his predecessors had failed. He had presented a successful case to
the IOC with a definite site and financial guarantee; he had formed an
active and workable committee structure and he had restored confidence
on local and international levels. His work had retrieved the Games from
their position as a symbol of national failure and restored the
expectation that they would mark an unprecedented step towards national
maturity and achievement.

*****
Despite these impressive achievements, Coles' position was not secure. In the space of five months in 1953, the Carlton scheme was abandoned; the CC destroyed; the pool site shifted; and Coles himself driven from the Olympic movement. Confidence gained in the Coles period gave way to a crisis of such magnitude and so fundamental to the continuation of dominant values that it can truly be seen as a crisis of legitimation. 72

The path to the crisis is complex. Coles' condition for heading the CC was that it was to be in an honorary capacity, subject to his "having a more or less free hand". To this freedom he brought an unswerving single-mindedness. He applied himself to the position absolutely, and was joined by his wife and daughter on the staff of the CC. But this was the extent of his power base, and ultimately his power was illusory. The fragility of his position became evident as opposition mounted from a number of sources. The most significant was from the parent body, the OOC. The amateurs still retained a preference for the MCG scheme, which would include the restoration of Olympic Park. As with Beaurepaire before him, Coles' business methods did not automatically translate to sports administration. The amateurs had shown before that they resented "bigshots" who made play of refusing remuneration and spending their own money for the cause. Thus as Coles' CC restored stability, it indicated to the amateurs his eventual dispensability rather than the impregnability of his "one man band". 73 Coles' isolation was exacerbated by the fact that his greatest potential ally, the VFL remained wary of giving full and public support for Carlton by announcing its intentions to play its Finals there, although this was
commonly accepted to be its intention. As the Commonwealth was the major contributor to the Olympics, Coles was ultimately answerable to Menzies. Coles had been responsible for the vote that caused the destruction of the Menzies Government in 1941, so he could not be guaranteed of unswerving support or gratitude from that quarter.  

But ultimately it was Coles' own actions that drew his opponents together. The Carlton scheme was clearly designed as a compromise and a reflection of economic adversity. Kent Hughes' observations indicate this origin. He anticipated Carlton having a 70,000 capacity with plenty of standing room for the "thousands who want to drop in for a few hours, perhaps after work."  

In contrast to this modest vision, Coles was planning "something bigger than the MCG" with a minimum capacity of over 100,000. The cost of the winning design, even after substantial modifications, was $1,100,000. This was nearly the entire budget for all facilities. Coles believed that the politicians' claims of economic problems were exaggerated, and the Games successfully staged would prove a wise investment.  

These shifts and conflicts of groups and personalities must be seen against the backdrop of Cain's continued machinations. Cain withdrew from his arrangement with McDonald in July 1952, claiming that the housing crisis, the key point of their pact, remained unresolved. As the Games and the housing crisis were inextricably linked, speculation mounted that Cain would intervene to bring the Main Stadium back to the MCG. A rushed development proposal by the MCG Trustees, ostensibly in the "public interest," but more probably to retain the VFL Finals, added further fuel to the speculation.
When in December 1952 Cain became the first Victorian Labor Premier to achieve an absolute majority, it was inevitable that the related Olympic and housing issues would be the first item on the agenda of the new government.178 1953 was greeted with measured optimism after the economic instability of 1951 and 1952. Although the budget deficit had been reduced by import restrictions and inflation brought under control, the position was regarded still as "perilous". Despite Fadden's promises of increased Commonwealth grants, there was considerable merit in Cain's claims that inherited and immediate problems were of such magnitude that a "complete shutdown of state public works" was likely. Although Cain was a skillful manipulator of the Commonwealth-State financial relationship, the millions of pounds of equipment laying idle at Yallourn because of insufficient funds for its installation was stark reminder of the seriousness of the position.179

Cain acted on 15 January 1953. Although it was not strictly within his jurisdiction, he ordered work at Carlton to cease. Cain was variously accused of "defeatism" or using the Games as a pawn in a cynical attempt to extract more funds from the Commonwealth. But Cain steadfastly adhered to his point that the State government was committed only to £312,500 and that the Carlton scheme was now out of control. Coles' offer to pay for the £3000 fence at Carlton out of his own pocket (this was the extent of works undertaken) was further evidence to Cain that the scheme was no longer observing it budget.180

Cain's publicly known ambivalence towards the Games increased the
likelihood that his action could precipitate their loss, either by the OOC being forced to admit defeat or by the IOC demanding forfeit. It was recognised that if this occurred, it would be tantamount to admission that Australia could not balance its responsibilities to provide adequate housing and other services with the opportunity to stage an international festival that would gain it benefits that "far transcended anything connected with the actual events". It is not surprising that it was feared that Australia would be seen as a nation of "hillbillies". The technology of the radio telephone added a new dimension to the conflict, as Brundage was now able to make known directly his views and communicate the offers of the growing number of US cities anxious to take the Games. As a result, Brundage brushed aside the euphemisms that had been employed during previous crises. When Lord Mayor Brens attempted to start a public subscription to raise funds, Brundage testily replied that Melbourne had had three years for that sort of thing. Cain's off-the-cuff remark that "the Games will be held somewhere", which was meant to refer to one or other of the sites in Melbourne, was interpreted by Brundage to mean another city.

Despite accusations that Brundage was solely motivated by anti-Australianism and a desire to have the Games shifted to the US, it was impossible to deny the veracity of his criticisms. Nor was it possible to avoid a renewed bout of national self-reflection. The comprehensiveness of the mismanagement of the OOC under a number of leaders meant that the object of this reflection was failure and ineptitude. In what marked a significant shift to the hegemonic balance, the people were seen as holding the only remaining solution. The
people assumed a central role as the possessors of an ill-defined but assumed goodwill and capacity both to build the material edifices and rebuild the national consensus which the OOC seemed to have a pathological incapacity to achieve. 84

While leader writers and the OOC looked to the people, their support could not be guaranteed. The housing lobby renewed its campaign to forgo the Games as "a more Christian" policy. It now concentrated its attentions on Brundage directly, who eagerly and quickly contacted the OOC to seek explanations to the allegations that the public were bitterly opposed to the Games. While the OOC publicly denied these allegations and attempted to portray the campaign as the work of "cranks", Luxton admitted privately that, for the public, "the whole thing smells in the nostrils". 85

Thus it appeared that as a result of their seemingly unique penchant for feuding and mismanagement, the OOC had pushed themselves into a corner from which escape was not possible. To take no action would mean inevitable forfeit as the OOC would be left with no Main Stadium. But any action involving the necessary change of site was likely to force the hand of the IOC in light of the results of previous site changes. Finally, it seemed that a move from Carlton would be inevitable, and this could trigger the resignation of Coles. As the IOC had faith in Coles alone, rather than the OOC or the nation, whose "name...did not stand very high" in their minds, his resignation would be irrefutable evidence of Melbourne's incapacity to be an Olympic host.
The conference of Olympic representatives and all levels of government convened on Australia Day 1953. The intention of the conference was to resolve the interrelated site and finance issues in such a way that the IOC would not demand forfeiture and "the support of a jaded public" could be restored and harnessed. However, the conference quickly became a forum for the unresolved factional brawling that had become the Melbourne Olympics sole characteristic. Although the sessions were held in camera, the inconclusive tone of the daily public announcements seemed to prove "finally Melbourne's unfitness to hold the Games". Cain and Menzies both refused to shift from their original financial commitments. Cain claimed it would be a "public scandal" to commit further funds to a new stadium when his government was unable to fulfill existing contracts to carry out major public works for the well-being of the community. Menzies loftily observed that "the Commonwealth did not get the Games", and while it was a major, if reluctant contributor, he was no more going to provide a blank cheque than was Cain. Coles sought to explain the escalation of costs at Carlton. He claimed that the original estimates had been tentative and he had proceeded on the basis of a personal guarantee and signed telegram from Menzies that "the funds would be available". Menzies challenged the authenticity of this claim, but when Coles obtained corroboration from McDonald and State and Commonwealth Treasury officials, Menzies recalled the telegram, adding only that it had caused a "monumental brawl" in his department.

It is not clear whether Coles had been misled or betrayed by Menzies, but the refusal of further funds meant the end of the Carlton scheme. Although he was not officially excluded from taking further
part in the conference, Coles was told bluntly by Cain to desist from his "flamboyant (sic) talk", and as a result "went into smoke". The result of the first stage of the conference was that the crisis had deepened. This was confirmed by Brundage's delivery of a "slap in the face" in the form of an open letter. He repeated Melbourne's natural disadvantages; contrasted Helsinki's faultless organisation with Melbourne's 'four years of chaos'; and concluded with a direct plea:

I urge and beseech you that if there is the slightest doubt in your mind that the Games cannot be staged properly, so that they will be a credit to Australia and the Olympic movement, give them up now and let us select a new site before it is too late. Four years have been wasted and we cannot wait any longer.  

Brundage's concerns were recognised as entirely valid. While the public was considering the possibility that the failure of their leaders would lead to the national humiliation of having to apologise to the world "for having made idiots of ourselves", the Olympic leaders finally accepted that only total unity could avert disaster. All factions in Melbourne closed ranks behind Luxton. Only Weir, the senior delegate to the IOC remained to be convinced. Brundage had been contacting him in Sydney directly, demanding answers to the press clippings and letters from the housing lobby, all of which pointed to Melbourne's inability to stage the Games. Although Weir tended to express his ultimate responsibility to the IOC with an infuriating pedantry, few could disagree with his refusal to be "a party to any patched-up agreement" on the MOG in light of the unreliability of earlier apparently final arrangements.
Accordingly, arrangements were hastily made to have Weir brought from Sydney to convince him of the necessity and viability of the MCG arrangement. Weir was not optimistic about Melbourne's chances of retaining the Games. He reminded the delegates of the "fast talking" that had been necessary at IOC meetings to gloss over Melbourne's earlier changes of sites. As a result, he feared that the IOC would reject the proposal, not on the quality of the MCG, but because it would not tolerate yet another change. The only remaining hope was that it may be too late for the IOC to change, as a Northern hemisphere host would have only 2½ years preparation time. As Menzies and Cain remained unshakeable in their commitment to the MCG, Weir recommended that only a unanimous vote of support for that site would prevent the matter from being put to a full IOC vote. After four years of willful obstructionism, in which three sites had come and gone and the MCG refused the Olympics as many times, the conference meekly accepted Cain's ultimatum without the need for a vote to be taken. 94

Not surprisingly, the unanimity of the decision to locate the Main Stadium at the MCG was seen as the beginning of the a process of reconstruction. It was feared that the Olympic crisis had affected Australia's international reputation in areas far broader than sport alone. Kent Hughes warned that "it takes a long time to build up a good name but it takes longer still to get rid of a bad one." 95 But the hope that the belated show of unanimity would absolve the OOC from responsibility for the damage already caused or the backlog created as a result, proved to be naively optimistic. Unlike earlier resolutions to site problems, general or partial promises were no longer
acceptable. Brundage failed to share the sense of relief that prevailed in Melbourne and demanded immediate clarification on the still unresolved questions of the pool, Village, quarantine and Coles' status within the OOC.96

Brundage had been invited by Cain to inspect the MCG, but he deferred his decision pending a full report from Weir and Luxton. On 8 February Weir sought, and was granted leave of absence from the OOC. Business and travel difficulties were the reasons cited, but Brundage and most others interpreted Weir's actions as a vote of no confidence in the MCG, the OOC or both. Weir was both pompous and petulant, and frequently given to moody threats of resignation. But he did take his responsibility to the IOC with the utmost seriousness. It may be that his action was a goad to the OOC to resolve its outstanding problems, rather than continue in its aimless drift, which would require him to advise removal of the Games.97 The immediate result of Weir's action was that Brundage declined Cain's offer to visit and hinted that Melbourne's fate would finally be resolved at the IOC meeting in Mexico in May 1953.98

In the period immediately following the decision to locate the Main Stadium at the MCG, the atmosphere in Melbourne contained a confusing mixture of elements. The delegation to the Mexico meeting began preparing its case. The resilient Coles ignored allegations that he was intending to scuttle the Games, and joined the delegation on the basis of his membership of the ad hoc committee formed to negotiate with the MCCLub.99 The OOC continued to keep a brave face and insisted that all was well. Luxton gained some breathing space by sending the MCG plans to
Lausanne rather than direct to Brundage. Despite these moves, the unresolved problems were becoming more serious. Local residents objected to the "nuisance" of the pool at Fawkner Park, the Chief Quarantine Officer remained adamant that there would be no removal of the ban and the Loan Council refused to finance a Village. Meanwhile Brundage continued to receive his Australian mail and was being pursued by US cities anxious to stage the Games themselves.

Privately, Kent Hughes admitted to despair at the false optimism. When Lord Mayor Brens refused to break an engagement for the Folies Bergères to discuss the Village problem, Kent Hughes could only reflect "different points of view, I suppose." This inertia can be explained by the absence of a plausible response to Brundage's demands. Luxton vainly attempted to blame a hostile press and sought to explain Melbourne's method of organising the Games as a reflection of the national character, which was not as "organised or regimented" as the European. Thus when Brundage wrote to Weir and Luxton saying that if he came to Melbourne it would only be to recommend that Melbourne "withdrew gracefully", for the first time no assertive, or even evasive reply was received. The Australian IOC delegates could merely acknowledge receipt of the letter. The position seemed hopeless—to invite Brundage would mean a demand to forgo the Games; to refuse to do so was tantamount to admission of the truth of his claims.

The source of this inability to even make a pretense of response was the impasse on the Village. Brundage claimed that he was not against Melbourne or Australia. He challenged the IOC to overcome the pervasive
national self doubt by obtaining the "gilt-edged" guarantee of finance from the Commonwealth that had always been promised, but never produced.\(^7\) Kent Hughes issued a desperate appeal—"No Housing No Games" in which he begged the Commonwealth and State governments to put aside their own interests "on behalf of the youth of Australia." The only response to his appeal was a renewed call from the housing lobby to accept Brundage's offer to withdraw.\(^8\)

The provision of a Village had been an integral part of Aitken's original proposal, in which it was earmarked to be used for public housing at the conclusion of the Games. The specificity of Aitken's proposal was lost in the contest to determine the site of the Main Stadium. A plan for accommodation was included in the RAS proposal accepted at Rome, but the "diehards" subsequently revealed that it was only temporary shelter to be used later as stables. Other proposals to use the University, unspecified army barracks or to develop a site in North Carlton had all been peripheral to disputes over the Main Stadium.\(^9\) Coles admitted that "our Olympic Village is up in the air. Melbourne has no plans to house the athletes in 1956". For the third time Brundage declined to visit when Coles informed him that there was nothing to show him other than a long range, but still incomplete plan and a flight over the "world's finest cricket ground". Desperate attempts to mollify Brundage included proposals to import prefabricated buildings and ocean liners for temporary accommodation, but these only reinforced Brundage's belief that Australians were capable only of procrastination and muddling.\(^10\)
A glimmer of hope seemed to be that eight years after the war, the Albert Park Barracks could be released. Coles, Calwell and Brens put this proposal to Menzies, who remained unmoved. When challenged in Parliament on this refusal by S.M. Keon, who was both a fanatical Cold Warrior and enthusiastic amateur athlete, Menzies argued that the Commonwealth's generosity had already brought what he believed to be "some finality" to the Games preparation. But this involvement of the state could not be extended to endanger the higher priority of defence:

greatly as we value having the Olympic Games in Australia and foolish as we would regard it if something prevented them from being held here, we are not prepared to give the Olympic Games priority over the defence effort of this country in a time of international tension when the defence effort may, for all we know, need to be intensified in the next few years. 11

Menzies' rejection seemed to be the last act in the "old men's squabbles" that had perverted the original Olympic initiative. Brundage believed that finally this "could be the end of the matter". 12

In a remarkable display of persistence and principle, Coles again seized the initiative. Cain and Menzies had put aside party differences to destroy the Carlton scheme. But now their intransigence over a possible solution to the Village issue was threatening to force Brundage to take the action from which he was still hesitating. Cain informally sounded out Menzies about the possibility that the Commonwealth contribute 50% to the costs of a Village. Menzies curtly responded that as Victoria constructed nearly 3000 houses per year under the existing Commonwealth-State Housing scheme, the 600 required for the Village could
easily be included within this total. Cain argued that under no circumstances could the Games interfere with the housing program. The commitment of 600 houses on one site would severely disrupt planning for the State as a whole. Melbourne was given a ten day reprieve in which to come up with a solution. In desperation the OCC was attempting to gain further time by seeking permission to present it in Mexico rather than sending it to Lausanne for prior perusal. Coles acted immediately. He proposed the simple scheme whereby the Commonwealth advanced the necessary £2 million, which would be deducted from Victoria's entitlements in later years. Both Cain and Menzies saved face. Cain could claim that no disruption to the housing program had occurred and that the Games had actually increased the amount of house-building. Menzies could argue that the only extra cost incurred by the Commonwealth would be the interest lost on the advance. And the OCC was able to emerge from its inertia and somewhat overconfidently boast that "we can run the Games on our ear."

Despite this renewed optimism, the task in Mexico would not be an easy one. European delegates were openly hostile, especially as they were becoming more cognisant with the implications of the quarantine ban. French delegate and IOC Vice President Massard summed up this hostility when he declared Melbourne to be "thousands of miles from anywhere" and predicted that the Games would not be the "brilliant' show as required, but a second-rate affair with few spectators and most of the world's top athletes absent. These comments smacked of jealousy whereas the criticisms of IOC Chancellor Mayer were both balanced and damning. Mayer claimed Melbourne's mismanagement had taught the IOC a
lesson "and that we were too hasty in awarding the 1956 Games in the first place". As a result all future candidates would be required to submit detailed and fully costed plans.\textsuperscript{14}

However, a number of issues indicated that Melbourne might still retain the Games, if only by default. Mayer claimed not to be anti-Melbourne per se, but rather that the IOC required some firm assurances. If these were given, it was "fairly certain" that Melbourne would retain the Games.\textsuperscript{15}

The quarantine ban began to appear less damaging after the US equestrian team publicly supported Australia's rights to protect its livestock industry, while the omission of boxing from the 1912 Games because the sport was illegal in host nation Sweden, was identified as precedent for presenting less than a complete program.\textsuperscript{15}

The public, which had become exasperated with the endless wrangling, responded to calls that responsibility for the Games lay in their hands. This occurred in a number of ways. First, Australia's young athletes and swimmers were the focus of unprecedented public attention and admiration. The national championships, at which world records tumbled and flamboyant coaches caught the public eye, were seen as portents for future success in 1956:

\begin{quote}
It will be a very sad thing for Australia if we miss the 1956 Olympic Games. We would miss the chance of seeing the wonderful young champions in action against the world's best in our own country.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

Secondly, the Games were no longer an abstraction or the obscure interest of a few past champions, elderly officials or "Booster" businessmen. They
had become part of the Australian people and their sporting landscape. To suggest their abandonment would be as ludicrous as to suggest that the economy could no longer sustain the Davis Cup, Test cricket, VFL football or the Melbourne Cup.\textsuperscript{17} However, critical analysis of the nature of the relationship of sport to the broader culture was limited. The Communist Party of Australia (CPA) began to draw attention to the Games in its industrial and election campaigns. It sought to show Menzies' image as a sport lover as a sham, and the failure of the Games' organisation as a clear indication of the "inability of capitalism to serve the people".\textsuperscript{18} These were the opinions of a minority. As Ian Turner has observed, Australians would have voted against free beer if it was associated with communism. But it seems equally clear that if dominant values and practices led to mismanagement of sport, the other inviolable aspect of male Australian life, then people were willing to consider options not to the taste of the dominant class.\textsuperscript{19} Most frequently this dissatisfaction was deflected in a misguided, though understandable hostility towards Brundage, who seemed to embody the growing US absorption of Australia.\textsuperscript{20} But the sense of failure and betrayal brought about by the OOC's muddling had entered the public consciousness. This ensured that it would be necessary to include the public in the resolution of the crisis. GV Portus in his contribution to the collection of self-analysis, Taking Stock, listed the question "Will Melbourne lose the Olympic Games?" as one of the fundamental issues in Australia.\textsuperscript{21}

The first step to the restoration of legitimacy was the acceptance of the new Main Stadium and Village proposals by the IOC. Careful
preparations were necessary for the Mexico meeting. Once again, Lord
Burghley was approached to secure the support of British Commonwealth
nations. Lushton worked to portray Melbourne in the best possible light.
He warned Brundage against taking credence of the views of crank letter
writers, whom he described as sharing the views of the "Red Dean of
Canterbury", when in reality, Gallup Polls showed 80% approval for the
Games. 22

At Mexico Coles took control of the delegation as he had a year
earlier in Helsinki. He presented the quarantine problems openly and
directly. As a result the IOC regarded the failure to have the ban lifted
as a "black mark" and ruled that all future candidates would be required
to complete a detailed questionnaire. But it did not see it as warranting
removal of the Games. It accepted Melbourne's new stadium proposals
with the "utmost confidence". However, it was only a partial endorsement of the
OOC. The IOC Executive was more concerned to prevent the matter going to
a full Committee vote. It was believed that this would lead to a vote
against Melbourne and the Executive did not wish to have a precedent set
for overturning a full IOC decision. 23

When the decision became known in Melbourne, the now familiar
expressions of relief were accompanied by far more specific demands of
the OOC. There had never been any doubt about the ability of amateur
officials to stage the Games. With the resolution of the finance and
stadium problems, the remaining issue was the ability of the OOC to retain
"the support of the whole community...to carry the Games through to a
successful conclusion". 24
The result of Coles' efforts was the opportunity to remake a consensus based on the "moral support" of the whole community. Although he had appeared "red-faced and tight lipped" when MCCouncil had snubbed him by failing to include him as a representative for Mexico, he quickly recovered and organised to pay his own way.\(^{25}\) His credibility with the IOC played a significant role in reinforcing the Executive's belief that they were justified in allowing Melbourne to retain the Games despite the wishes of the majority of delegates. But at the moment some stability had been achieved, albeit largely by default, and the opportunity for progress was possible, the seeds were being sown for a further bout of self-destructiveness.

Coles was the subject of a whispering campaign within the OCC, designed to discredit him and force his resignation. His son had been killed in an accident during the January Conference, and this tragedy was used as the means to undermine him. Immediately prior to his departure for Mexico, Alderson received a "Personal and Confidential" letter from Kent Hughes. Kent Hughes claimed that the strain caused by the tragedy had led Coles to "the verge of a nervous breakdown" making it unwise for him to accompany the delegation. Kent Hughes' reasons for this belief are a mixture of fact and speculation. He was critical of Coles for his habit of dealing directly with Brundage, rather than first consulting the OCC. There is some merit in this criticism, but it should be remembered that it was Brundage who had initiated the direct communication demanding firm answers rather than the prevarication offered by Kent Hughes. The other reason was more speculative and possibly mischievous in its intent. Kent Hughes claimed

Arthur would never do such a thing normally, but in his present
state of mind he might even try to dish the Games in a moment of aberration.26

It is clear that Coles did not "dish" the Games in Mexico and that it was his own integrity in continuing to speak for the Games after he had been so ruthlessly discarded that allowed Melbourne to retain its tenuous grip on them. He had had his chance to jeopardise that grip by resigning when the Carlton scheme was destroyed and chose not to. Coles' willingness to speak bluntly at home and before the IOC caused him to be accused of the offence of which he alone was innocent. It was the "diehards" who had threatened to recommend that Melbourne withdraw its offer to stage the Games. The unwillingness of government leaders to provide finance led the IOC to consider the necessity of removing them. The ineptitude of the OOC almost forced the IOC to remove the Games despite the reluctance of its leaders to do so. Coles alone acted for the success of the Games as his sole motivation.27

The issue that led to the final confrontation with Coles was relatively minor. Resident objections required the pool to be shifted from Fawkner Park. Coles argued that as a matter of principle, the plan presented in Mexico should be implemented intact. He demanded this in recognition of the spirit of generosity shown by the IOC and argued that any change would recall the earlier switches that seemed to automatically follow approval of a plan.28

In the subsequent struggle, it is possible to believe that Coles was using a matter of principle to make a dignified exit. Given his treatment this would be understandable. But the issue was more fundamentally about
power. Although the CC had lost its raison d'être with the destruction of the Carlton scheme, it still legally controlled all financial authority in the OOC. As the amateurs wished to reassert control of the OOC, the CC and Coles both had to be destroyed as Coles did not rise to the bait and "gracefully retire". 29

Behind a smokescreen calling for "more heads and hands in making a real community festival", Coles' fate was sealed. He was accused of being the source of the pool difficulties by his attempts to have boxing located there. Coles' personality traits were portrayed as defects rather than evidence of dynamism. He was portrayed as a nepotistic autocrat who treated Legge as his "office boy", while his daughter, who was employed as a typist, "babbles about what father is going to do at social parties". 30

On 15 May 1953 the OOC exercised its authority and stripped the CC of its power and title. Coles' lack of a power base was summed up by Nette's notation on the CC Minutes—it was as if "it had never existed". Coles offered to remain if the State government wished him to do so, but as there was no response he had no option but to resign. 31 The OOC greeted his resignation with relief and Kent Hughes attempted to circumvent criticism claiming that "the Games will go on, no matter who comes and goes on the administration side". 32

Despite the comprehensiveness of Coles' destruction, the OOC was left with blood on its hands. It found it difficult to avoid the charge that Coles' crime had been his ability to get things done—"mostly things
beyond the capacity of the people trying to write him off. The transparency of the plot against Coles produced widespread public revulsion. It appeared to be the final act in a cruel allegory to which the public has been a helpless onlooker. There is regret everywhere that Coles' public spirited services have been lost.  

Coles himself retired quietly, claiming his position was "untenable." But he did not accept the accusations of his vanquishers, whom he believed had acted only to "get me out of the way." His single public comment reinforced the widely held view of the unjustness of his treatment:

I am not angry—just terribly sorry. I wanted to see it through—more than anything else I have tackled.

General Bridgeford, who had commanded Commonwealth Forces in Korea, was appointed Chief Executive of the OOC. His reputation for forcefulness fulfilled the OOC's desire for a "big man," while his strictly limited abilities guaranteed that he would remain the creature of the OOC. But the circumstances of Coles' resignation ensured that the new arrangements were no more than a thin facade, behind which stood the legacy of years of wrangling and absence of concrete achievement. This occurred in a dramatic way. Brundage was in the act of writing to Kent Hughes to congratulate him on Melbourne's program when he received the "rude shock" of Coles' resignation. To Brundage this was evidence that "something must be seriously wrong." He believed that a conservative businessman like Coles would not have acted as he did, unless it was a matter of the greatest seriousness.
Brundage brushed aside OOC claims that the matter was caused by press sensationalism, and that Brundage himself contributed to the problem by talking directly to the press. Instead, he reminded the OOC of its past omissions and drew its attention to the unresolved quarantine issue. To its taint of treachery from the Coles affair, Brundage added the accusation of dishonesty, claiming that the IOC had been consistently misled. It fell to Weir to attempt to explain the OOC's actions. In view of Brundage's known respect for Coles and Coles' performance at Mexico, it was a hopeless task. But Weir did not shirk the issue and repeated the claims that the death of Coles' son had affected his mental stability and lead to the "peculiar nature" of his behaviour. Weir blamed the crisis on Coles, whom he accused of "wanting to get out without a loss of face to himself". To Brundage this development confirmed that the OOC, and possibly Australians in general, possessed an inexplicable capacity for intransigence and perversity. He warned that "the IOC executive committee may be very much out of patience with the Australian handling of the Games". Weir had boldly encouraged Brundage to visit Melbourne in an attempt to reassure him that all was well. But the OOC was aware that it was holding on to the Games by default and that the legacy of years of conflict was a singular lack of achievement. Weir gloomily admitted that after four years in existence the OOC had "not yet started to dig even one hole".

*****
The series of crises made the Games preparation and organisation a national issue. This period has been omitted from subsequent publications and appears to have been successfully erased from the popular memory. In its place in the "conscription of the past" is a functionalist and triumphal image of the the unity and consensus of the "Friendly Games" in 1956. While this account has proved to be remarkably resilient, it is not accurate. The people and popular are "not expressive, pre-given identities but are subject to construction within contemporary political space". In 1953 the people occupied centre stage of the Olympics in Melbourne, three years ahead of their anticipated entry in the strictly limited role of hosts and spectators. Successful resolution of the crisis depended on the cooperation of the whole population and their willingness to pardon the OOC for its ineptitude. This was not inevitable. Popular reaction to the Games' mismanagement had changed from initial bemusement to exasperation which produced hostility to the whole project. Coles had successfully won back their support and his demise produced a fundamental shift in attitude. Misgivings were replaced by determination to retain the Games despite the antics of the OOC. The people had answered the call for their active engagement, which left them a free-floating agent. The need to call for their support for the beleaguered Games had dramatised and critically exposed the flaws of the dominant order, of which the Games were intended to be a celebration.
The significance of this shift was widely acknowledged. After initial misgivings, the Left had become a champion of the Games as a vehicle for the furtherance of world peace. The CPA recognised the centrality of the people in the Games crisis. It characterised the crisis as part of the "chaotic nature of capitalism" and sought to remove any sense that the Games were simply a "private matter" as it attempted to firmly locate sport and the Games as part of the cultural apparatus of the dominant class. From within the limitations of its position as an isolated minority it enthusiastically lambasted the "old men's squabble". It was much less successful in harnessing the disaffection into its broader critique. Despite the seeming effectiveness of the Cold War in stifling the Left and the power of liberalism in pervading all aspects of life, the Games crises dramatically illustrated the fragility of this power. The Left failed to successfully pose alternative meanings and possibilities because of its reliance on an essentially negative, populist tradition. This tradition rested on a fixed concept of working-class action restricted to remedying dominant class excesses or incompetence. Accordingly, the CPA argued that "the people's intuitive radicalism" would set things right. To this end, the Left sought to make the OOC more accountable, "instead of just paying lip service". It also attempted to broaden the base of support for its activities designed to counter the officially sanctioned
Olympic celebrations. But it largely failed to move beyond its own limited sphere.  

The shift in popular attitude was a source of grave concern for the dominant class. As the Games' mismanagement revealed the crisis tendencies of capitalism, it also cast doubts on its dominant values. The Games crises seemed to indicate that egalitarian liberalism had given rise to a society characterised by inept leadership and "citizens (who) are not excessively energetic". This general concern preoccupied post-war conservative thought, which attempted to define the "Australian Way of Life" and decide whether its predominant characteristics were benign or malignant. The Olympics became the most visible and popular metaphorical representation of the problem. As a consequence, the Games mirrored and distorted other real or imagined flaws in the national character, and in doing so threatened the legitimacy of the system as a whole. In Australia, this process occurred in the regular assessments that occurred at each crisis and its temporary resolution. The problem was compounded as the analysis began to be conducted by outsiders. The most critical was an article in July 1953 in The Saturday Evening Post. The author, Robert Sherrod had been in Australia during the war when he became fascinated with the apparently irresolvable dichotomy in the Australian character. On the one hand, he admired the "free and easy trusting Australian way". But it
seemed to have a concomitant side that was negative. In wartime Sherrod identified it in what he believed was the poor quality of Australia's war effort. In the 1950's he recognised it in the Olympic "international wrangling exhibition" which became, for him, the metaphor of Australia's development. Sherrod represented this as a "torture wheel" on which exorbitant costs (largely caused by a well-organised labour movement) held back development. The result was capital which was too "timid" to undertake major developments and a complaining, ineffectual public:

Time after dismal time, this pattern is repeated in the everyday life of the Australian.

Sherrod attributed this pattern to Australia's convict origins which produced a shallow and conceited democracy, hostile to authority and intellect and bereft of spiritual values. The result was a propensity to "lashing and thrashing" which occurred when this "streak of meanness" surfaced and destroyed the grand plans thrown up by the more positive side of the national character. 46

This analysis posed a considerable problem for the OOC, which could not be resolved by Kent Hughes' hysterical accusations of a conspiracy to "bust up the close friendship between the GI's and the Diggers". The OOC shared many of Sherrod's views on Australian life. Although they objected to having the Olympic project included as part of the malaise, preferring to see it as a positive attempt to
overcome Australia's difficulties, their own ineptitude seemed to provide irrefutable proof of his accusations.\textsuperscript{47}

The restoration of the dominant order required that the Games' success be articulated in terms of the perfect harmony between the people and organisers. There was no certainty that this connection would occur, any more than there was the Left's belief that the Games provided the potential to win a large segment of the population to a new level of criticism of capitalism. All that was certain was that the people had made an unexpected and early entry to the centre-stage. All subsequent efforts at restoration of the dominant order would have to acknowledge that.\textsuperscript{48}

Despite its deplorable record, the odds were still in favour of the OOC. It retained control of the organisation, presentation, publicity, official history and ultimately the meaning of the Games. But it did so only after enduring crises of its own making, in which it had been forced to concede ground to the people. Thus, if it were to regain a legitimacy commensurate with its power, the OOC had to develop practices capable of sustaining the precarious articulation of interests on which its power balanced. It began this process by proposing strict limitations on all Olympic matters. First, the OOC adopted an increasingly teleological perspective in which the "happy atmosphere" in which the Games would be staged was taken as given. In this
way the burden of responsibility for the success of the Games was shifted from the OOC alone to include the people in their role as hosts and spectators. Secondly, the partnership of people and organisers was removed from its historically specific origins and replaced with a distorted, ahistorical and single dimensional representation. All mention of events before 1953 was avoided, or where necessary censored on the grounds that the OOC was "telling a success story on Australia's biggest opportunity for many a long day". 49

*****

After the storm over Coles' resignation, a temporary calm settled on Olympic matters. This was confirmed by the views of US Vice President Nixon, expressed during his visit to Australia. After inspecting the MCG he predicted that the Games would be a success because Australians were the most "sports-minded public" in the world. Nixon's comments helped to quell fears that the US was implacably hostile to Melbourne's right to stage the Olympics and reinforced the naturalistic, ahistorical explanation of the role of the public in their organisation. 50 But the successful articulation of shared interests and responsibilities between the OOC and population remained short-lived.
Weir believed that the OOC finally had the Games "sewn up". But when the Commonwealth reaffirmed its quarantine ban immediately following the Mexico meeting, the European-dominated equestrian nations renewed their attack. They had been thwarted by the Executive in Mexico, but believed that this latest action of "shamefully and knowingly" deceiving the IOC warranted a re-examination of Melbourne's position. The "horsey gentlemen of Europe", led by senior IOC member, Angelo Bolanaki of Greece, relentlessly pursued Brundage. He was forced to write confidentially to Weir and Luxton reminding them of the IOC's embarrassment and Melbourne's responsibility to atone for its silence on the issue in 1949 by persuading the Commonwealth to relax its ban. Again it was Lord Burghley who came to Melbourne's assistance. He attempted to change the terms of the dispute by separating the actions of the OOC from those of the Commonwealth. He argued that the OOC had always wanted to stage the equestrian events and had made repeated pleas to the Commonwealth government both before and after Mexico. That these actions were unsuccessful, Burghley argued, should not cause the IOC to be so inflexible as to prevent De Coubertin's ideal from being taken to the furthest corner of the world. Burghley warned against the IOC being seen to be acting "in breach of faith" and causing schism in its own ranks. These arguments posed a dilemma for Brundage. He admitted Bolanaki was technically and probably morally correct, and finding "fertile ground" within
the IOC. At the same time, Brundage had personally guaranteed Melbourne and did not wish to be seen to be going back on his word or setting a precedent for transfer of the Games.\textsuperscript{53} The OOC sought to exploit Brundage's discomfort by forcing him to continue his support for Melbourne to prevent "serious consequences" for the IOC. It was forced to adopt this ploy to deflect attention from the fact that building had still not commenced. This was imperative for two reasons. Apart from the ignominy of further procrastination, it meant that the argument that it was too late to change cities had little credibility.\textsuperscript{54} Brundage was forced to admit that genuine mistakes had been made by all sides in the quarantine issue and again overcame European antagonism by deferring a decision until the IOC meeting to be held in Athens in May 1954.\textsuperscript{55}

At that meeting the consensus among IOC delegates was that Melbourne was clearly at fault, and the issue at point was whether it would be more damaging to leave the Games in Melbourne in an incomplete form or to remove them.\textsuperscript{56} Bolanaki sought to win support for the former position. He claimed that the use of English, French and Spanish in Mexico had confused delegates, who believed that they were approving an extension of time for Melbourne to obtain a relaxation of quarantine laws, rather than giving a blanket approval. Weir answered the imputations against the OOC's integrity by tabling the final refusal of the Commonwealth to lift the
quarantine ban, which, on Brundage’s urging, was accepted as evidence of the OOC’s good faith. As a result, Melbourne retained the Games and the Equestrian events were scheduled for Stockholm in June 1956.\textsuperscript{57}

Although this marked another reprieve for Melbourne, it was not achieved without a cost. The majority of the IOC remained sceptical about Melbourne’s claims, while Brundage believed he had been compromised by the OOC. Despite their differences, Brundage and his IOC colleagues shared the belief that they had given ground by compromising their rules and bowing to Melbourne for the overall good of the Olympic movement. Brundage clearly spelled out the quid pro quo:

\textquote{bear this in mind and... you will endeavour to make the Games even more of a success, in order to offset this condition of affairs.} \textsuperscript{58}

Although the Commonwealth’s stance on the quarantine issue was supported by the public as a valid preservation of national interest, the way in which it had become conflated with earlier evidence of mismanagement meant that the OOC was forced into a more defensive position. Kent Hughes alluded to the Royal Tour as evidence of consensus in the form of carnival in Australia and suggested that the same would occur in the Olympics.\textsuperscript{59} But the continuing stigma of mismanagement attached to the OOC meant that it was increasingly reliant on the support and goodwill of the
people in its duty to achieve the higher level of presentation demanded by Brundage. The meaning of the Games was established in the shifting balance in the relationship between the OOC and the IOC, and between the OOC and the people. The axis along which the relationship changed was the contest between agency won by the people and its absorption and erasure in the restoration of legitimacy. 60

****

In the second half of 1954, the Olympic organisation seemed to be running smoothly and the memory of the years of mismanagement fading. The beginning of work on Olympic Park, the MCG, pool and in particular the Village was such that the OOC confidently produced an illustrated brochure and film recording progress. 61 This confidence was expanded by two further developments. First, the administrative aspect shed its image of factionalism and incompetence, and took on an apolitical, purely technical character. Bridgeford, while no dynamic figure, provided an atmosphere of stability in which the experts could get on with the job. 62 Secondly, a Civic Committee (Civic C.) was formed. Although there was some residual resentment at the belated recognition of the City of Melbourne which was given responsibility for the provision of hospitality, the Civic C. worked effectively. Its responsibilities covered decoration of the city, provision of tourist information and
publicity and the organisation of accommodation in private homes for the influx of visitors who could not be provided for in the meagre number of world standard hotel rooms available. The Civic C. produced its own factional fighting among the business groups that constituted it. But this was largely submerged beneath the post-1953 emphasis on consensus, which stressed the primary need to win the support of all people. The Secretary, Don Chipp explained this need:

In seeking your cooperation, I am sure you share the belief of other responsible citizens that the manner in which our role of host city is conducted will determine our international status and prestige not only as a city but indeed as a nation.63

The appeal for accommodation was largely channelled through service organisations. The Civic C. organised an elaborate rating system of houses according to comfort levels. Applicants were matched with hosts on the basis of occupation and interests. This aspect of the Olympic experience was largely restricted to the affluent middle-class, including Mrs. Norm Everage, who made her first appearance as "The Olympic Hostess".64 Information booths in the city brought detailed awareness of the Games to a much broader spectrum of the population. Businesses began to associate themselves more directly with the Games, a process that culminated in saturation Olympic-related advertising in 1956.65 In many ways, the OOC seemed to have recovered from
its precarious position. Although a degree of accommodation had been conceded to the population at large, they seemed to have been safely placed as passive, if avid, consumers and spectators.

At the end of 1954 this harmony was again disrupted. In the ensuing conflict the OOC's authority was substantially reduced in light of new evidence of its mismanagement. Brundage refused to accept this as an aberration and remorselessly linked it to all earlier conflicts and omissions. As a result, the delicately balanced articulation of interests shifted further to the people, whose good-will and spirit became the central feature of the remaining preparation for the Games.

Brundage had been anxious to visit late in 1954, but had been advised that March 1955 would be a more suitable time. His concerns were to ensure that a definite start had been made at the MCG and that the accommodation problem was in hand. He was particularly concerned that there should be enough first-class hotel accommodation for IOC dignitaries. At the end of 1954 information concerning lack of progress in both these areas reinforced Brundage's exasperation with the OOC and firmed his resolve to visit whether or not an invitation was extended. The first source of concern was the outbreak of an industrial dispute at the
MCG. The terms of the dispute were beyond his comprehension and forced him to fall back on pre-existing stereotypes of Australian ineptitude and wilfulness. 68

The compromise to locate the Main Stadium at the MCG had been concluded in haste and the fine details of finance, especially the provision of contingency funds, had not been established. In October 1954, the contractor E.A. Watts refused to pay further above-award margins to workers on the new stand, who in turn imposed a black-ban on the project. Although their action was interpreted in some circles as a cynical attempt to exploit the delicately poised Olympic preparations, the issue was more complex. 69

The Arbitration Court had reduced real wages, first by ending cost of living adjustments and then by freezing margins. The fact that the contractor and the MCC Club both denied responsibility for payments indicates that the problem was not an abstract matter of economic management, but one of resources and profit. At the same time, if employers were to bow to pressure on the basis of the importance of the Olympic project it would be tantamount to admission that if money could be found for sporting projects, then funds could be found for margin increases across the board. 70

The other complicating factor was the inter-union dispute between the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners (ASC&J) and other building unions. The ASC&J had been formed as a break-away union from the Left-controlled building
union. Its leader, F. Woodhouse, was an active member of the Industrial Groups and deeply involved in the split that was devastating the Labor Party in Victoria. Poaching between the unions was always a common practice and relations in 1954/55 were highly strained. In this atmosphere, the dispute at the MCG can be told only partly in terms of the Olympic Games.  

The actual dispute had begun with a walk-off following accusations by a foreman that workers were adopting "go-slow" tactics. The problem was not solved by arbitration and the OOC sought to keep the matter quiet for fear of further adverse publicity overseas. The MCC club interviewed Pat Malone of the Builders Labourers Union (BLU) who denied that unions were hostile towards the Games, but added that no work would be done until somebody "paid the present market price of labour". The contractor claimed he required a further £25 000 to pay the margin to ensure the work was completed on schedule. As a result the MCC club was forced to admit it had "no alternative" but to find funds to pay the contractor so as to enable the margins claim to be met. The club also voted to seek reimbursement from the State government and began informal negotiations with Cain. As a result, the ban was lifted, and although only 95 out of a possible 150 workers were on the job, it seemed the problem had been resolved before it became a major issue.
But Brundage's patience had been so sorely tried that he responded to the slightest hint of trouble. Although Weir complained that he was "sick to death of the annual whispering campaign" that seemed to develop in the months preceding each IOC meeting (the next was due in Paris in May 1955), Brundage was adamant that despite the inconvenience to himself, "it would be advantageous for all concerned if I accepted one of your numerous invitations and come down under and see for myself". He likened the MCG stoppage and other industrial problems at the Village to the years of inactivity up to 1953. His despair was confirmed when he received damning allegations about his other area of concern—hotel accommodation. This was contained in a report from S.N. Mercer, secretary of the South Pacific Area Travel Association. Mercer claimed that thousands of US businessmen would boycott the Games because they would have to sleep in the streets. Again, Olympic preparations were used as a measure of national maturity. Mercer claimed that Australia's reluctance to change would lead to it becoming "a ruined country".

This pessimism about Australia seemed totally warranted to Brundage. He was concerned that only a clear statement by himself and a positive report in Paris would allay continued IOC misgivings. But he now feared that the existence of "a hostile spirit...or indifferent spirit among the greater part of the people" would destroy the Melbourne Olympics. This
characterisation of Australians as inherently flawed was further emphasised by the way in which Weir's attempt to mollify Brundage became the catalyst for his long-promised visit to Australia. 78

Weir had attempted to locate the MCG dispute within the broader industrial context. He informed Brundage that there had been national agitation for increased margins, and the building unions were using the Main Stadium as "a lever to gain their own ends." Rather than exonerating the OCC of responsibility, this revelation only reinforced Brundage's belief in a general laxness in Australia. He remained unmoved by pleas that the hold-up was merely evidence of the "phlegmatic" character of Australians. 79 When the carpenters in the ASC&J walked off the job again in March 1955 in defiance of the Arbitration Court, the contractor repeated his claims that he could not afford to pay a margins increase and unless the dispute was solved quickly the stand would not be completed on time. 80 The revelation that work was only 17½% complete came as a shock which threatened to plunge the OCC into a new leadership crisis and the nation into another bout of self-doubt. While appeals to fair play were made to both employers and workers in the national and Olympic interest, the issue could not be divorced from the broader national economic problems. 81 The temporary stability achieved by Fadden's austerity campaigns was faltering and further measures were
required. Import restrictions of £80 million per quarter were introduced to halt the trade deficit as the country's currency reserves slumped to their lowest level since July 1952. Equally essential in the eyes of capitalist management was the reduction of real wages. Opposition to margins became the cornerstone of wages policy after the abolition of cost-of-living increases. \(^{82}\)

The MCCClub was placed in a dilemma. It realised that the only "realistic" solution to the problem was to pay the margin. But to do so, the club would be required to seek further government assistance. Cain had made it clear that he would give no more, so the Commonwealth would be put in a position of having to contradict its own economic policy. \(^{83}\) As had happened so often previously, the Games dramatised these economic issues in a clear and unmistakable fashion when another emergency conference was called in an effort to work out a solution. \(^{84}\) Although the IOC had more or less established as policy at Athens in 1954 that it was too late to re-allocate the Games, the building delays introduced the threat of a new crisis, the implications of which were potentially more damaging than the earlier fears that the IOC would demand the transfer of the Games. On the one hand, if the Games were held in uncompleted facilities, and were accordingly shoddy and second-rate, Australia's reputation would suffer "irreparable damage." On the other, the realisation was gradually emerging
that the IOC might choose for the first occasion in peacetime, to cancel the Games. The scale of humiliation caused by such a decision was beyond comprehension. As a result, the resolution of this new Olympic crisis became essential to Australia's well-being and assumed priority on the political agenda. 85

As the nation awaited Brundage's arrival, various excuses for the different elements that made up the crisis were prepared. Brundage's visit was merely part of routine IOC protocol; the whole problem was caused by irresponsible press reports; the OOC was powerless to intervene in what was clearly a union-employer dispute. 86 While the MCC' club secretly tried to negotiate a margins deal restricted to the MCG stand, it received a blunt refusal from Treasury officials for further funds. Again the profit basis of capitalism was revealed in dramatic form by sport, as critics from across the political spectrum began to question the wisdom of refusing payment. On the one hand, the Commonwealth was criticised for risking the nation's integrity and an enormous amount of publicity for a relatively modest sum. On the other, the MCC' club and E.A. Watts were criticised for the profit and long-term benefits they would receive respectively from the state subsidised improvements at the MCG. 87

The OOC was in a difficult position which was exacerbated by the abrogation of responsibility by its leadership. The
removal of Coles and the destruction of the CC meant that ultimately the MCClub and MCG Trustees shared responsibility with the OOC Construction Committee, rather than the OOC having absolute control of its own program. This arrangement called for the greatest care to ensure that the OOC could show Brundage that it could manage its own affairs. Instead, Kent Hughes pointedly avoided involvement. He refused to comment at a Press Conference called to explain the MCG impasse and went out of his way to snub Brundage. Although his visit had been long-expected and his itinerary established, Kent Hughes complained about the short notice of his arrival

as it did not enable me to make my own official engagements fit in with your stay in Australia. Nevertheless I hope we shall be able to get together. 88

Hughes had been criticised for letting Olympic matters lag behind his Ministerial duties and compulsive Cold War activities. But in this instance, his motivation was more direct. Kent Hughes was a blunt, abrasive and tough fighter who also possessed a personableness that allowed him to make as many political friends as enemies. He had met his match in Brundage, who had none of Kent Hughes personableness and all of his imperfections. Kent Hughes developed an almost obsessive desire to see Brundage behind any problem. He
refused to entertain the idea that the difficulties could be anything other than the result of the malevolence of Brundage, to whom he had attributed virtual omniscience.\textsuperscript{89}

Brundage arrived in April 1955 with pre-conceived notions of Australian mismanagement to find a leadership vacuum and no apparent direction in resolving the dispute. Its Byzantine inter-union complexities and relationship to the bewildering Labor Party split and the centrality of the margins issue in Australian politics would have required expert explanation. As it was, Brundage sought and received his own advice and drew his own conclusions. For a week he was the effective controller of the Games in Australia as he demanded, and received, treatment usually reserved for heads of state.\textsuperscript{90}

A hasty, but quite obviously temporary return-to-work was arranged to coincide with Brundage’s visit. This did not stop him from making a number of highly critical observations about the Australian character even before he had reached Melbourne. He told the NSW Olympic Council:

\begin{quote}

it sets me wondering why Australia "knocks" itself when all the other nations realize the tremendous boost they receive in the public’s eye when granted the Games. I think the Games will be held successfully, that at least is my hope.\textsuperscript{91}
\end{quote}
Brundage continued in this vein when he arrived in Melbourne. He used a mixture of resignation at the mysterious Australian ways; blunt criticism of accommodation and general negativness; and praise and flattery for Australia's contribution to the Olympic movement and amateurism. The press cast him in the role of the "good guy" who came here only to give firm but friendly advice. Brundage played up to this image by speaking quietly and joking that he did not come brandishing a six-shooter or with a knife between his teeth as some had expected. He went out of his way to give reassurance. I am not here to take the Games away from you. At this stage unless there is something vitally wrong, it is too late anyway.

After an initial inspection of sites, he held a press conference at which he was only "mildly critical". The "anti-crank screen" around him had been penetrated by a letter he had received from an "Anzac". The author claimed the black-ban would resume the moment he left and that 80% of the population did not want the Games, which would be a disaster. Brundage responded by saying it was the only letter he had received in twelve months and he would treat it with disdain because he believed the people of Australia were firmly behind the Games. He did offer some critical comments about existing facilities needing a coat of paint, but was essentially positive in his assessment that the main
structural work could be completed on time if there was more labour employed and no further stoppages. He showed great enthusiasm for the potential of the MCG to hold the largest ever Olympic crowds. To that end, he sought to impress upon union leaders the importance of the Games to Australia. He reminded the OOC also that W. Barry (whose self-assuredness had lead Brundage to believe Barry's extravagant claims about his own importance) had guaranteed in Mexico that there would be no industrial disruption.\(^94\)

Brundage completed his inspection, and while showing an irritating nit-picking propensity, his assessment seemed to be that all was sound. It was with these expectations that the press gathered for his final conference after he had returned from a meeting with Menzies in Canberra. Instead Brundage launched into an attack on the Australian capacity for management of the same tenor as that delivered by Sir Otto Niemeyer in 1930.\(^95\) To all the promises that everything would be completed on time, he demanded to know how, in the light of the inaction and dissension of the previous six years, could he be sure "Will it be done?" He acknowledged that the 1949 delegation had been "pretty smart" but that the consensus of opinion in the IOC was that the decision to award the Games to Melbourne was a mistake, and that if he were a member of the OOC he would not be proud of himself. In perhaps a last-ditch effort, he attempted to spell out again the significance of a failure by Melbourne:
It will take a long time before you live it down and it is going to hurt us too. The eyes and ears of the world are on Melbourne and will be until the Games are over. There is only one way to redeem the honour of this community and that is to make a smashing success of these Games... But it won't be done until all rivalries are submerged and obstructions eliminated, until people get together and realize their responsibilities and their opportunity to do it now... not tomorrow but today. 96

Brundage attributed his dramatic change of tone to a puzzling feeling he had while being shown over the sites. He could not immediately put a finger on it, but gradually he concluded that there had been a failure of leadership, "I think somebody let you down and let us down too". 97 Ample proof for this assertion came in the response of the OOC and press. Bridgeford, Holt and Luxton offered no comment; Kent Hughes and Tanner repeated the familiar claim that all was right and that Melbourne was further advanced than comparable cities had been. Only Uren gave any recognition to the accuracy of Brundage's accusation when he observed that Brundage could hardly be expected to say anything else when he saw only six men at work at the MCG. The press pointed to the failure of the OOC to formally meet Brundage and lamented that this snub had revealed its cringing nature in the face of fair criticism, costing Australia millions of
pounds in adverse publicity. Kent Hughes and Tanner were singled out for responsibility and their resignations demanded.

The real initiative had now passed to Brundage. Two developments remained foremost in his mind. First, he had overcome his doubts about the attitude of the people and expressed his approval for their enthusiasm and hospitality. Secondly, he was impressed that Menzies was "deeply concerned" at the Olympic problems. That their meeting had been arranged by the US Ambassador and that Menzies had been required to go to the Embassy (rather than receiving Brundage at the Lodge) is indicative of the high level of importance placed on the resolution of the problem. The capitulation of the OOC leadership forced Brundage to fill the leadership vacuum and placed Australia into a client relationship with him.

Brundage was aware of the temporary nature of his visit and urged a complete overhaul of the OOC, which had tried to bluff its way through by giving him a luncheon rather than providing him with the opportunity to address a full meeting. He believed that a committee of dynamic businessmen was needed as the IOC should not be required to manage the Games directly. He pointed to Los Angeles in 1932 as a model of its kind. Philadelphia again offered to take the Games, and as US journalist Gayle Talbot (who had witnessed the 1953
crisis first-hand) pointed out, Melbourne's lack of accommodation, facilities and managerial skill meant that it "had about as much business bidding for the Olympics...as would the Chamber of Commerce of, say, St Petersburg, Florida". Local business leaders took up Brundage's demand and urged the OOC to go back to Coles "on our bended knees and beg him to come back". But the OOC leadership bided its time and waited until Brundage's final press conference in Canberra to mount a counter-attack.

Kent Hughes repeatedly interjected during the conference, offering general assurances that all building would be completed on time. But when pressed for specific details, he could do no more than shake his head at the apparent impasse. Brundage could only attempt to reassure the conference that the IOC did not want to remove the Games, although it could have done so on many occasions.

Why did Brundage finally lose patience with Melbourne? He has been cast as something of an ogre acting out of spite to repay Melbourne for its past inaction, and misguided in his assessment, as most difficulties had been overcome. This view is inaccurate on a number of grounds, and although Brundage was abrasive, prone to pessimism and possessed of the "austere zeal of a Cotton Mather", the issue issue cannot be explained merely in terms of his personality. Brundage was fully aware of the impact of his outburst which he
fondly likened to "an atomic blast". He was aware that he had the support of the majority of the press in Australia. Although his visit caused a further round of lamentation at the apparent inability of Australians to get things done, this quickly gave way to the view that Brundage should have come years earlier and that his blunt advice was more valuable than the "Star Chamber" policies of the Olympic "disorganisers".

In the short-term he achieved his objectives. Luxton was appointed full-time "expediter" with power over expenditure. Secondly, the industrial dispute was resolved. This was a far more complex process because of the inter-union dispute between the ASC&J and the Left building unions. Immediately after Brundage's departure, the carpenters renewed their strike threat. Their leader Woodhouse denied that they were being unpatriotic, and were only demanding the rate paid by Watts and large US construction companies on other jobs. The intransigence of the employers and the OOC's continued argument about a "miserable few pounds" seemed to make a mockery of Brundage's reminders of Australia's responsibilities. Eventually it was accepted that "Industrial relationships are a key factor in our Olympics future" and a settlement thrashed out. The Arbitration Court had earlier accused the unions of blackmail in attempting to exploit the Olympics for a margins increase. So a daily site allowance to the equivalent of £1 per week was
paid instead of the 36s margin originally demanded. The ASC&J boycotted the conference and accused the "Red leadership" of the Left unions of "servile grovelling to the MCC and the Master Builders" in their efforts to break the ASC&J.\textsuperscript{12} The Left building unions had undertaken to provide a maximum amount of labour and to take no strike action without consultation with the MCC club or contractor.\textsuperscript{13} However, they made it clear that the reason for accepting this arrangement was the realisation of the union movement of the "importance of every Games job continuing with a swing". They laid the blame firmly at the feet of the organisers and demanded representation on the OOC:

> from the amount of bungling that has taken place by representatives of big business who sit on these bodies, it occurs to the workers that trade union representation would be helpful to the speedy completion of this national task. Our attitude is that the Games should be held here because of their great value in bringing together on a sporting arena the representatives of various nations.\textsuperscript{14}

These steps towards the resolution of the two main problem areas identified by Brundage were accompanied by equally significant changes to the organisation of the Games.\textsuperscript{15} First, the OOC's refusal to deal directly with Brundage was recognised as an admission of weakness and failure. Weir, who had been out of the country on business during Brundage's
visit, identified his outburst as occurring because of his displeasure with personalities rather than lack of progress. Weir was highly critical of those OOC members who tried to make excuses for themselves while blaming others, an action he described as "despicable". Although he did not name these persons, he did criticise Kent Hughes for failing to make the Chairmanship of the OOC his highest priority when it was the "biggest job in Australia at the moment". Kent Hughes privately railed against the "Brundage Typhoon" as a "blow-in" who had damaged the Olympic movement by his actions. He pleaded that "either the Olympics get rid of Mr Brundage, or Mr Brundage gets rid of the Olympics". But the contrast between Kent Hughes' petulant and conspiratorial interpretation of the visit and the more balanced response of the press and public indicates the degree to which the OOC had lost authority to speak with credibility.

Although the vacuum created by the OOC's failure was partly filled by Luxton, and later by Menzies when he accepted the ceremonial role of President of the Games, the OOC's failure had reinforced the belief of many IOC members in the inevitability of Australian incompetence. Brundage had thanked the Australian press for taking sport from the back page and putting it on the front where it belonged. There, it became locally and internationally a metaphor for the Australian nation. The continued failure of the
OOC, culminating in its capitulation to Brundage, threatened to overturn the hegemonic intentions of the Games' movers. Failure to put up a world-class Games would damage the cause of amateur sport, endanger Australia's international standing at all levels, and posed a continued threat to attempts to use the Games as a method of establishing regional autonomy and authority.  

The restoration of credibility could only come from a reorganisation of Australia's presentation of the Games. The innate good nature of the population could, as Brundage had observed, provide the unity of purpose that would ensure the successful completion of preparations to allow the presentation of the Games. But the crises and abrogation of leadership by the OOC indicated that such qualities were neither universal nor innate in Australians. This problem of the coexistence of positive and negative strands within the national character was at the heart of the conservative debate on "The Australian Way of Life". By mid 1955, in Olympic matters at least, the people of Australia represented the positive, their failed leaders the negative. The degree to which the people's initiative was retained or incorporated into an ahistorical and functional reconstitution and legitimation of the dominant discourse on Australia would determine the final meaning of the Games.

Although Tanner and Kent Hughes made no secret of their
resentment, and continued with their obfuscation, other Olympic officials took heed of Brundage's advice and got on with the task of safeguarding Australia's "honour and prestige". Brundage believed that most of the influential people he had spoken to privately agreed with him and were glad that he had spoken out publicly about the "deplorable" record of the OOC. Bridgeford attempted to restore public support for the OOC by placing responsibility for the success of the Games on all segments of society in a national effort by "the services, business, Governments, councils and the man in the street". With a full complement of labour now at work at the MCG, the Village six weeks ahead of schedule and the pool beginning to take shape, public declarations of confidence became more effusive. The sites seemed to be "humming with activity". Privately Luxton and others were able to reassure Brundage that matters were "righting themselves" and that Luxton was able to act without interference from Kent Hughes. But Brundage remained unshakeable in his conviction that it was his "small explosion", rather than an innate Australian desire to reform, that had forced some action. He pointedly advised Luxton:

It would be well, I think, if someone located a copy of the original prospectus issued by The City of Melbourne at the time the Games were awarded five years ago and read it aloud to the Organising Committee in full session.
Brundage enlisted the US Consul in Melbourne to provide regular collections of press clippings and accounts of his inspection tours of sites and meetings with Luxton and Bridgeford. Brundage, too, warned that there still would be "fireworks" at the IOC meeting in Paris, as European nations remained unconvinced of any progress in Melbourne and wanted firm details before committing the large expenditure necessary to send teams. Thus the OOC's "rare opportunity to put Australia on the map" was still in doubt with little more than a year remaining.

Although Melbourne's move into "high gear" was acknowledged, Weir still experienced difficulties in Paris. Brundage gave a frank account of his visit and detailed the years of indecision that preceded it. He conceded that "our Australian friends" were now alert to their responsibilities and opportunities, and that work was proceeding satisfactorily. But he remained concerned that all facilities would be completed on time. Weir responded by outlining the "perfect" state of progress, and gave his own personal assurance, that of Menzies and the people of Melbourne, who had flocked to buy £400 000 of tickets and made 8000 individual offers to provide accommodation. Brundage added his personal guarantees received from the Lord Mayor, Governor and Menzies that the organisation was now "a model of its kind". On this basis the Melbourne Progress Report was accepted and the Games seemed finally safe.
Although the Paris meeting was a success for the OOC, it was achieved at the price of acknowledgment of the validity of Brundage's criticisms. Weir admitted that Brundage had been received "in good part and appropriate spirit", and that Melbourne had wasted many years. Weir's admissions indicated the fragility of the organisational structure and reinforced the new rationale for legitimacy based on support from the state and the people. The remaining fifteen months before the opening of the Games saw this fragile and hastily assembled alliance placed under considerable external pressure and the subject of substantial internal shifts of power.\textsuperscript{31}

For the remainder of 1955 the arrangement seemed to work well. Substantial and visible progress was being made on all sites; public interest continued to grow with the buildings and the succession of world-class performances by the young swimmers and athletes; and US Consul Warner reported to Brundage that Bridgeford and Luxton were speaking frequently in Melbourne on the meaning of the Games.\textsuperscript{32} The influential US magazine \textit{Sports Illustrated} featured a fair and balanced account of Melbourne's progress immediately after the Paris meeting. It gave a full account of the years of wrangling, which it likened to "Balkan states in a period of unrest", but observed that the pace of construction had ended all doubts. While acknowledging the problems of Melbourne's sabbatarianism and licensing laws, the
author, Coles Phinizy, came to Melbourne's defence on a number of grounds. In particular he defended Melbourne's decision to stage the Games on a modest scale, thus preventing the Games from descending into Hollywood-style spectacle. This type of acceptance of Melbourne's belated progress allowed the stereotypes of Australian character to be turned from a defensive phlegmatic image to a more positive bluntness. Bridgeford was portrayed as the epitome of this "Fair Dinkum" outlook when he addressed visiting journalists:

The corner is turned. We can look the world in the bloody eye. Now if you gentlemen are satisfied, let's go have a drink of gin.

If Melbourne had "broken all records for getting off to a bad start in a distinctive Australian way", it seemed possible that the OOC could engineer a successful conclusion in an equally distinctive way made necessary by the unprecedented degree of involvement by the people. 33

Brundage publicly acknowledged Melbourne's satisfactory progress. 34 Kent Hughes had been writing confidentially to Terry McGovern, who was chief legal advisor to the US Olympic Committee and a friend since the 1920's. Kent Hughes complained bitterly about the "sonavovitch (sic) from Chicago" who could see no good in Melbourne. McGovern reassured him that Brundage's habit in all matters was to prophesy doom. He advised Kent Hughes on how best to approach
Brundage and arranged for favourable reports to appear in the US press. 35 As a result, the tension produced by Brundage's "explosions" began to subside. The positive publicity allowed Bridgeford to graciously admit that the OOC was "indebted to the American people". 36 The real coup came when Brundage made the, for him, unprecedented move of offering unsolicited praise completely devoid of criticism:

   All news from "down under" is good. I congratulate and compliment you on the progress the Organising Committee has made in the last 6 months".

It seemed that the teeth had been drawn from the Brundage tiger, and as he himself admitted, "there is no reason why the Games will not be a great success". 37