

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

OPTIONS FOR A FUTURE INQUIRY

TOURISM AND SPORT IN THE ACT

A Discussion Paper

by the

STANDING COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND ACT PROMOTION

Background

The staging of sporting events within the ACT has the potential to attract not only large numbers of games participants but also many interested spectators to the Territory. In this regard, estimates have determined that a third of all people who visit the ACT do so for sporting fixtures.

The Committee acknowledges that while there are a large number of sports played in the ACT there is only small corporate base which leads to problems in attracting suitable sponsorship. This factor should be considered in any examination of sport in the ACT.

The ACT offers many ideal tourism venues which participants and spectators could take advantage of during their stay in Canberra.

The Committee is of the view that the integration of sporting events with tourism will maximise the returns of any such events to the ACT.

Unfortunately, time constraints have not allowed the Committee to pursue this issue in any detail. As an alternative, the Committee sought to determine those areas where maximum benefit could be gained by the ACT. The areas that the Committee considers warrant further investigation are outlined below. In so doing the Committee hopes that these issues will be addressed in the new Assembly.

Meeting with the 2000 Committee

On 28 October 1994 the Committee met with members from the 2000 Committee to discuss sport and tourism in the ACT.

Present at the meeting from the 2000 Committee were:

- . Mr Tony Naar Executive Director, ACTSPORT
- . Ms Sue Baker-Finch Chair, ACT Sport and Recreation
 Council,
- . Ms Robyn Calder Executive Officer, ACT 2000
 Committee

The Committee found the meeting to be very useful and are grateful to those who attended for the information they provided on sport in the ACT.

At the meeting the Committee was given a short overview of the 2000 Committee Report and were briefed on the role that the Project 2000 will play in the lead up to the Sydney Olympics.

The Committee considers that the work of Project 2000 will ensure that the ACT will play a significant part in the progress towards and the staging of the Sydney Olympics that will bring substantial gain to the ACT.

Options for a future inquiry

It is apparent that sporting events have the potential to provide economic gain to the Canberra community. The formula used to test the economic benefits of all events provides that for every dollar invested in events, the Territory can expect a return of between \$7 to \$20. Value for money in staging sporting, cultural and other events must be a key consideration.

It is also apparent that the staging of sporting events may also assist in the promotion of the ACT both in Australia and overseas through television coverage of national and world sporting meets which may persuade viewers to visit Canberra as tourists.

Based on the discussions held, the Committee determined that the following areas need further investigation to enhance the integration of tourism and sport in the ACT.

Overall co-ordination of events in the ACT

The ACT has a unit within the Tourism Commission which has played an important role in attracting events to the Territory. The 2000 Committee has also played an important role in this area and will continue to do so through Project 2000.

The Committee notes that most States in Australia now have an 'Events Body'. The role of such a body is to assist in attracting national and world events that will be of benefit to the particular State.

The Committee considers that the concept of an Events Body has merit and that the ACT would benefit significantly if such a body was established in Canberra.

As such, the Committee considers that the feasibility of establishing such a body needs further investigation. Any inquiry would need to have regard to the work already being done in this area and could examine what an Events body actually does, what structures the ACT currently has and what type of body would be most suitable for the Territory. The existence of similar bodies in other States obviously provide models for further investigation.

Mass participation and elite events

A distinction can be drawn between those events that entail mass participation as opposed to those events which are designed for selected participants and can be termed elite events.

For example, the Masters Games, which the ACT will host in 1997, is a mass event which will bring between 8,000 - 10,000 participants to the Territory.

The Committee considers that the Territory could also bid for such events as the 'Golden Oldies' Rugby Tournament which would also bring into the ACT a similar number of participants as the Masters Games.

The Commonwealth Games can also be considered within the ambit of mass participation games. Attracting the Commonwealth Games to the ACT has already been given much consideration.

The Committee is of the view that the feasibility of attracting the Games to the ACT needs further investigation. Any inquiry into the Commonwealth Games for the ACT should have regard to the following:

- . the future of the Commonwealth Games in the long term given the continuing changes to the Commonwealth;
- . the success or otherwise of the Commonwealth Games held recently in Victoria, Canada. The Committee is aware that Victoria, Canada is roughly the same size with the same population as the ACT. As such it provides an ideal model for attempting to determine the success or otherwise of staging the Games in Canberra;
- . the capability of existing facilities to accommodate the Games in Canberra;
- . the need for additional infrastructure to meet Games requirements; and
- . the possible revenue to the ACT and the outlays envisaged.

The ACT has been successful in attracting mature age events to the ACT. The Territory has also been very successful in attracting junior sporting events. Focusing on age groups for mass participation events also provides potential for the successful integration of sport and tourism.

Niche marketing

A particular way of securing events for the ACT is to aim at attracting those meets that are not already catered for by the other States.

This emphasis on niche marketing requires the identification of those competitions that offer a different sort of sporting event.

For example, it has been suggested to the Committee that a velodrome athletics track would be an ideal venue for indoor winter track and field meets. As such events are not

provided for over the winter months, the ACT may have the potential to successfully corner this market. However, the Committee notes the infrastructure expense in staging such events and accepts that the benefits would need to justify the costs.

The Committee was informed that two areas which are currently not being met nationally are schools events, such as volley ball and basketball, and soccer competitions.

The Committee considers that the inquiry could seek to identify those events that have not been catered for by the other States with the view towards attracting them to the ACT.

The integration of sports science, medicine and education

The Australian Institute of Sport at Bruce is a world class sporting institute. The Institute in itself is now a tourism attraction and within two years will have its own visitors centre. Furthermore, there is the possibility that a Centre focusing on sports science, medicine and education may be developed at the University of Canberra.

By using the AIS, the ACT has the potential to corner a particular area of the sports market that has not already been developed.

With or without the proposed Centre, the AIS provides a unique opportunity for the ACT to establish itself as venue for forums, workshops and conferences in the areas of sports science, medicine and education.

The potential of focusing on this aspect of sport, the ways to go about organising such events and the likely gains such events will bring to the Territory should be further investigated before moves are made in this area. The Committee proposes that such potential could be examined in the next parliament.

Using our overseas connections

The focus on Asia as an essential part of Australia's future has been given increasing emphasis over past years. Sport and tourism must be a part of that focus. Investigations into the potential for Asian type games/events being held in Canberra needs further examination and something the Committee considers it could take on as a future inquiry.

Also the ACT, as the nation's capital, is host to embassies from countries all over the world. These embassies provide an avenue for promoting the ACT overseas and/or interacting with other countries to attract sporting events and visitors to the Territory. The Committee considers that potential exists for the ACT to make use of this unique opportunity.

Sporting and other facilities within the ACT

While the desire to attract sporting events and to gain the greatest advantage from them is commendable, such action should be preceded by the question as to whether existing facilities are sufficient to cater for the demands generated.

The Committee considers that a comprehensive inquiry is needed to assess the capacity of the current sporting facilities in the ACT having regard to the type of events the Territory would like to see staged here and the likely attendance numbers of both participants and spectators. Recommendations for the upgrading of existing of current facilities and/or the development of new facilities could then be made.

Conclusion

Since self-government in 1989 much has been done to develop facilities and to promote sport in the ACT.

The Committee has presented a number of options for the Committee on Tourism and ACT Promotion, if one is formed in the next Assembly. The members of the current Committee hope that the new Committee will look seriously at gaining the maximum benefit from the integration of tourism and sporting events for the ACT with particular reference to the areas the Committee has raised in this paper.