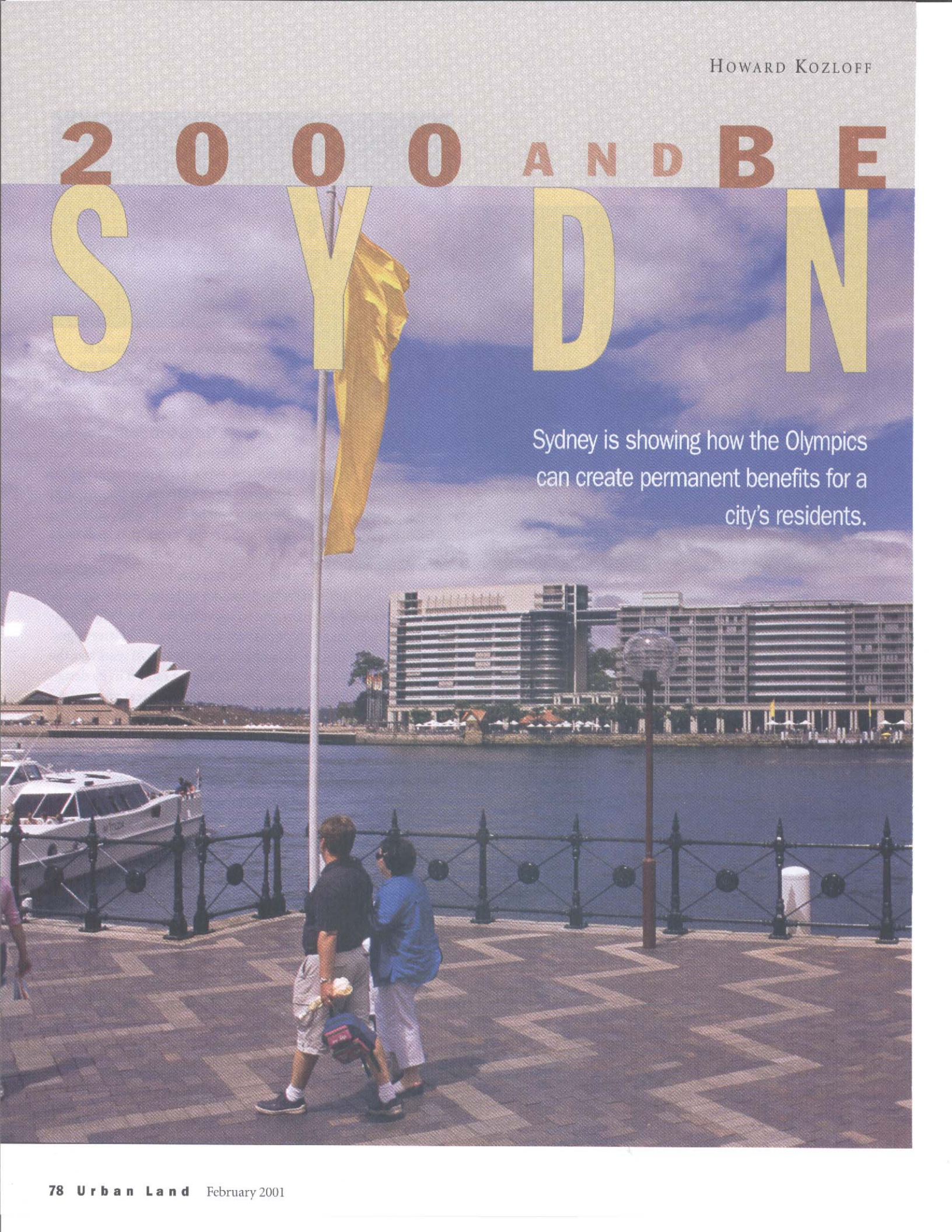


2000 AND BE SYDNEY

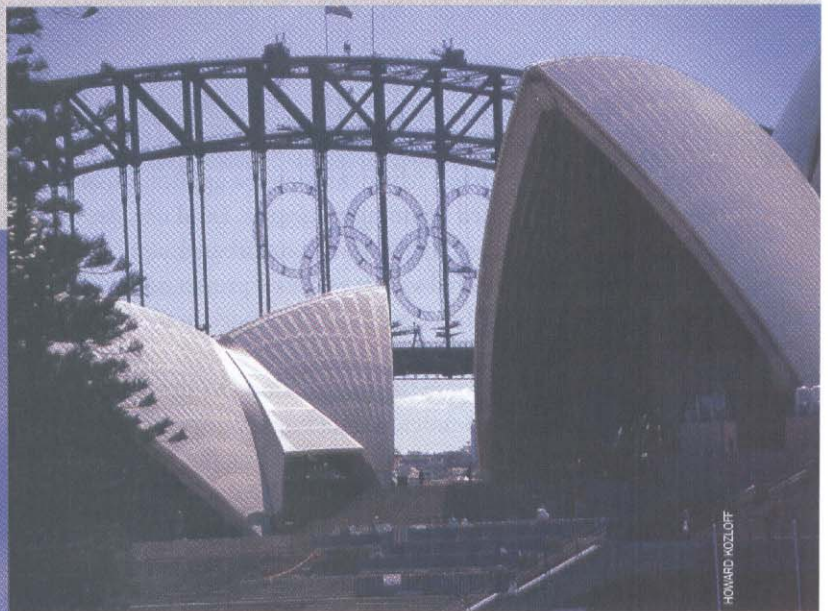
Sydney is showing how the Olympics can create permanent benefits for a city's residents.



Y O N D E Y



Circular Quay, one of Sydney's busiest transportation hubs, received numerous upgrades to prepare for the Olympics, including new paving, signage, and benches. A new luxury condominium complex known as Opera Quays, complete with ground-floor retail, restaurants, and cafés, is near the Opera House.



The 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, last September not only thrust the city into the international limelight but showcased for the world the myriad benefits that can result from sound planning, organization, and foresight and, most notable, an understanding of the value of the public domain, in both physical and social terms. (See "Meeting the Challenge," page 114, July 2000 *Urban Land*.) The focus was mainly on Sydney Olympic Park, located at Homebush Bay, a former industrial site about ten miles west of the city center. However, in what became an outpouring of energy by all levels of government, businesses, and citizens, the entire city became a public park, neatly framed by water all around.

In the decade leading up to the Olympic games, new development occurred throughout Sydney, part of early efforts to improve the city by Lord Mayor Frank Sartor's administration. The image of the city was examined, critiqued, and then reworked from all angles. The scope of citywide improvements was broad, including highways and neighborhoods as well as street furniture and lightposts. There seemed to be an understanding between the public and private sectors of the value—financial and social—of good urban planning and design; what resulted was a series of projects that were tied

2000 AND

into Sydney's existing urban fabric through the application of intelligent and broad-based planning principles. Land use, density, transportation and pedestrian networks, and urban design, among other issues, were considered so that each new project not only was enhanced by its surroundings, but also contributed to the city's image and efficiency.

From 1990 to 2000, more than \$45 billion (A\$80 billion) was spent on new housing, commercial buildings, transportation projects, and other public infrastructure, including the \$600 million (A\$1 billion) renovation and expansion of Sydney International Airport. Public domain and transportation upgrades in the city of Sydney and its environs began before Sydney's bid to host the games was accepted, and they were implemented throughout the games and afterward.

A broad range of organizations and agencies must coordinate their efforts and standards when any large-scale project is undertaken. Development in Sydney before the Olympics was no exception, and the list became even longer as Olympic organizations became part of the building process. While the primary bodies governing the Olympics effort were the New South Wales government, the city of Sydney, and the national government, a wide range of public agencies assumed major responsibilities. The State Tran-

sit Authority, Roads and Traffic Authority, and the State Rail Authority, for example, were among those that were instrumental in making the Olympics a success. Working together with these and other agencies were the Olympics-specific organizations, which included the Olympic Coordination Authority (OCA), the Sydney Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games, and the Olympic Roads and Transport Authority.

One of the most significant aspects of Sydney's preparation for the Olympics was the overhaul of the public domain. The objective was to visually stimulate pedestrians as they traversed the city, while providing identifiable, accessible, and comfortable amenities. The city identified 12 public areas in and around the central business district (CBD) that were to receive significant upgrades, including parks, retail areas, transportation hubs, and neighborhoods. All of the areas received new stone paving and street furniture. Wider footpaths (sidewalks), street safety cameras, decorative and safety lighting, landscaping, disabled access, traffic management plans, and "smart poles" were added as needed. Smart poles—each of which can include traf-



One of the major civic gathering spaces in Sydney, Martin Place, received upgraded paving, light posts, and planters. During the Olympics, a large screen was erected there, covering the competitions and offering highlights 24 hours a day. Smart poles (shown at top) were erected throughout Sydney along city streets and plazas to reduce visual clutter—traffic signals, street signs, parking signs, safety video cameras, electronic information, decorative banners, and street lighting all can fit on a single pole.

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B E Y O N D

fic signals, street signs, parking signs, safety video cameras, electronic messages, decorative banners, special effects lighting, and street lighting, thereby reducing the number of posts needed—were erected along streets and plazas throughout the city to reduce visual and physical clutter.

While Olympic Park itself cost about \$1.8 billion (A\$3 billion)—the \$415 million (A\$690 million) Olympic Stadium being the crown jewel—the cost of major transportation projects amounted to more than \$2 billion (A\$3.6 billion) worth of investment.

Among these projects were the \$330 million (A\$560 million) expansion of the Harbour Tunnel, the more than \$1.3 billion (A\$2.2 billion) program to upgrade motorways, and the \$420 million (A\$700 million) airport rail link, including general improvements to the city light-rail line.

During the Olympic development period, Sydney, in cooperation with the state of New South Wales, adopted a comprehensive transportation strategy to deal with the throngs of athletes, media, and spectators. Highway and road networks, public transportation, parking, and pedestrian networks were considered as an interdependent whole. Public transportation was considered the key component; it was believed that transportation networks would run smoothly if public transportation was used to its utmost potential.

Sydney's Central Station was designated the hub of Olympic traffic; trains ran to Olympic Park every five minutes, with a 95 percent on-time departure and arrival rate. City trains, which ran 24 hours, were free for Olympic ticket holders, athletes, and media. Local residents, if they had not left town during the Olympics (as many did), often made the decision to use public transportation as well. Furthermore, many streets in the central business district were closed, thereby making vehicular travel within the city difficult. Traffic on the roads and arteries leading to and from Sydney ran smoothly, facilitated by some changes in the central business district's road patterns. In addition, Olympic lanes were established for special permit holders, operating as 24-hour clearways, mean-

ing no vehicles were allowed to park in the curbside lanes at any time. Parking at Olympic Park was deliberately limited as well, encouraging spectators to use public transportation.

As a result, getting around in Sydney during the Olympic games was considered relatively painless. Traffic at peak hours of Olympic activity often coincided with rush hour, which, in theory, should have resulted in interminable delays; in reality, public transportation was used so effectively traffic conditions during the Olympics were no worse than usual. Everyday congestion in post-Olympic Sydney is now worse than that during the Olympics, as regional residents have gotten back in their cars to travel to work.

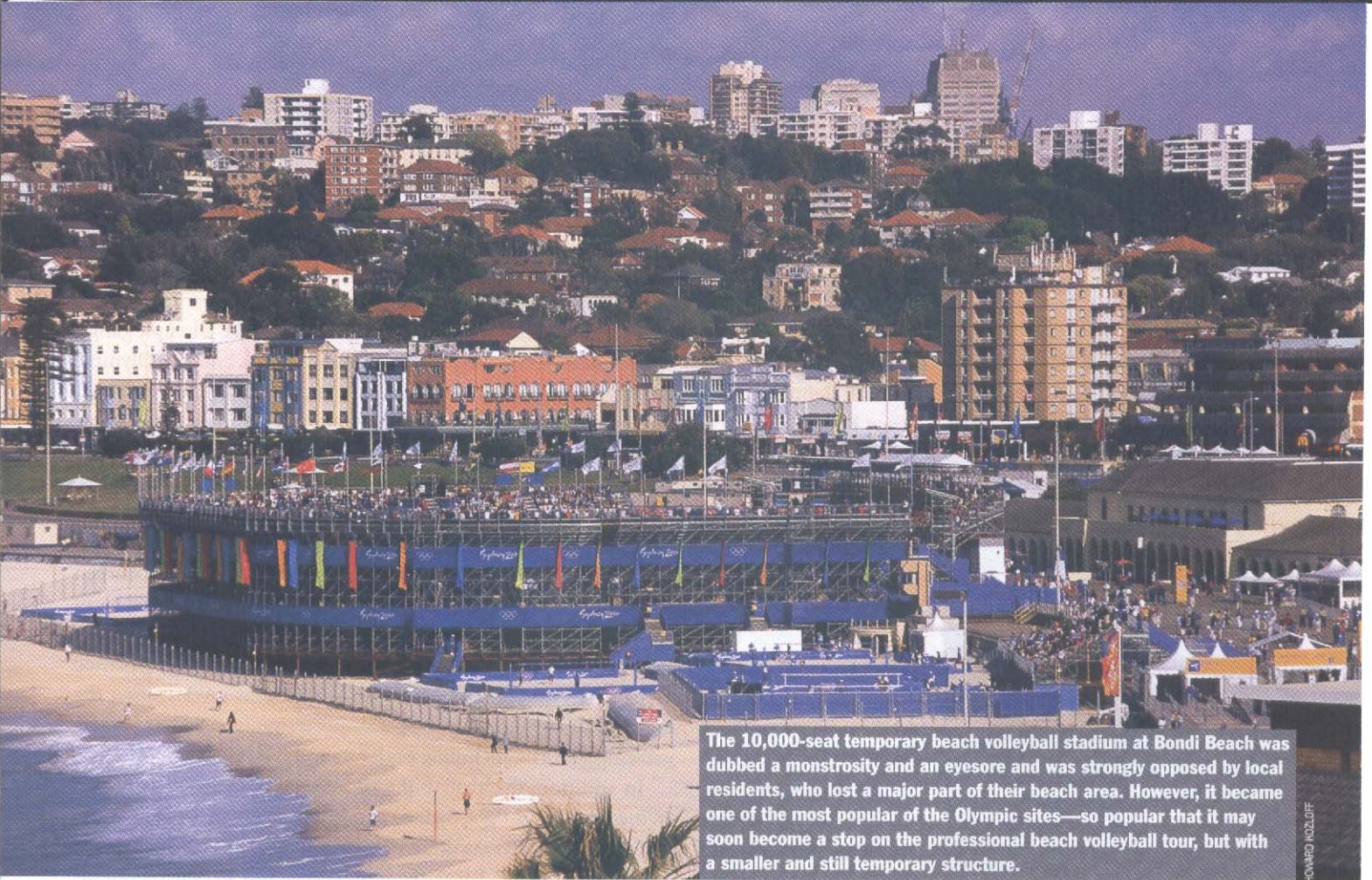
Ongoing development of viable transportation options between the city and its suburbs and beyond continues, with improved highway networks and a proposal for expanded public transportation service. Because of the obvious advantages of discouraging private vehicle use, the Roads and Traffic Authority is investigating the viability of expanding public transportation into Sydney's ever-growing suburbs, including both bus and rail service.

In addition, the availability of lodging in Sydney has grown tremendously. In 1994, Sydney had just over 11,000 beds in hotels and serviced apartments; four years later, the number had grown to almost 15,000. By 2000, the number reached 19,000, representing a more than 70 percent increase.

While the growth in accommodations is due largely to private development, the city of Sydney offered a number of incentives as encouragement. As a result, of the almost 8,000 new beds in Sydney between 1994 and 2000, more than 1,600 hotel beds and more than 600 serviced apartment beds were developed with city incentives, representing \$200 million (A\$340 million) in construction costs. The new accommodations were in both new and adaptive use buildings, and many included additional amenities, such as parking, retail, and housing.

All was not bliss, however, in pre-Olympic Sydney. Despite the innovation, foresight, and energy spent in the decade leading up to the Olympics, the process was not, as may be expected, without its share of conflicts that threatened to derail the major accomplishments being made. While most were not directly related to planning and development issues, all undermined public opinion to some extent and increased public scrutiny of all decisions. There were ticketing deals that denied Sydneysiders their promised share of Olympic tickets, frustrating local residents and somewhat deflating local anticipation of the games, and there was the threat of a transportation strike days before the Olympics began, which would have thrown the entire city into disarray. But organizers were quick to resolve those issues and others, restoring stability.

Other conflicts directly involved Olympic venues, such as the 10,000-seat temporary beach volleyball stadium at Bondi Beach, which was strongly opposed by Bondi Beach residents from the outset. Organizers determined that beach volleyball should be on



The 10,000-seat temporary beach volleyball stadium at Bondi Beach was dubbed a monstrosity and an eyesore and was strongly opposed by local residents, who lost a major part of their beach area. However, it became one of the most popular of the Olympic sites—so popular that it may soon become a stop on the professional beach volleyball tour, but with a smaller and still temporary structure.

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the beach, and that Bondi Beach, being arguably the most famous of all of Sydney's beaches, should play host. Local residents opposed the size and location of the facility, claiming it would disrupt their lifestyle, hold their beach captive, and cause ecological harm.

In the end, however, peace was made and the stadium was constructed, becoming one of the most popular of all the Olympic sites. "The stadium, as originally proposed, was a monstrosity and an eyesore," says David Miles, a long-time Bondi Beach resident. "But the stadium made Bondi part of the excitement of the Olympics, and the intangible benefits far outweighed the temporary presence of the structure." In fact, Bondi Beach may soon become a stop on the professional beach volleyball tour, with a smaller, but still temporary, venue.

As conflicts were resolved and opening day drew nearer, the various organizations responsible for preparing Sydney for the main event found themselves in an enviable, and altogether uncommon, situation. A majority of the venues, including the 110,000-seat Stadium Australia, were completed ahead of schedule, thereby allowing more attention to subsequent details. But most important—and perhaps best exemplifying the benefits of planning and organization—some venues were able to host a series of test events. Stadium Australia, for example, played host to the National Rugby League's grand finals, allowing operators the rare opportunity to troubleshoot. Event personnel developed a better understanding of their tasks and responsibilities through real-time experience.

In the time leading up to and during the Olympics, the entire city was energized. Municipal employees were asked to work odd hours to limit conflicts with Olympic-related traffic, and some

47,000 unpaid volunteers spent long hours answering questions; shuttling athletes, media, and fans; and doing whatever other tasks were required. Schools and universities rearranged their holiday schedules to coincide with the Olympics so that students and faculty could both free themselves of the burden of commuting during the Olympics and enjoy the party.

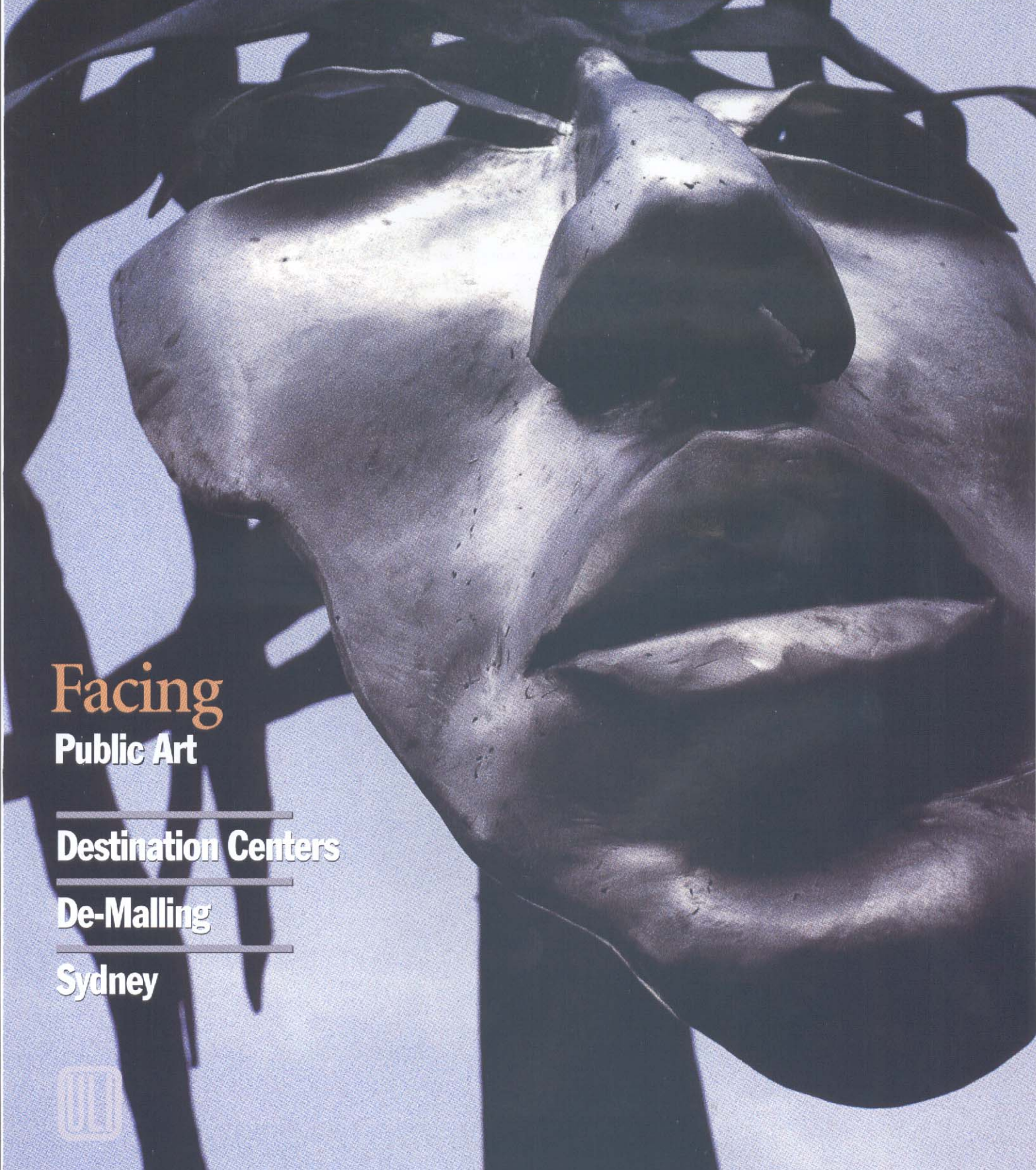
The Olympics were important not only as a tool for urban redevelopment and overall investment in the city, but also as a model for future growth. Having an estimated 400,000 visitors per day in the city center gave an indication, albeit brief, of what the future may be like as the population grows. New South Wales's 1996 population of 3.9 million is projected to grow to 4.3 million by 2016—a 20-year growth forecast equal to the daily influx of Olympic visitors to the heart of the city.

Sydney's greatest achievement in hosting the 2000 Olympic games was the creation of a successful model of Olympic development, and the processes followed by Sydney organizers to achieve it should serve as a template for future Olympics planning. A host city's Olympic legacy should ensure that the benefits to the permanent residents of a city continue long after the closing ceremonies. Future Olympics host cities need to look beyond the fiscal profits to understand the positive results that can come from considering the city as a whole. As Sydney has shown, the Olympics can be a component of a more far-reaching comprehensive plan. ■

HOWARD KOZLOFF IS CURRENTLY IN SYDNEY STUDYING THE OLYMPIC PLANNING PROCESS AS A FRANK KNOX TRAVELING FELLOW FROM HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

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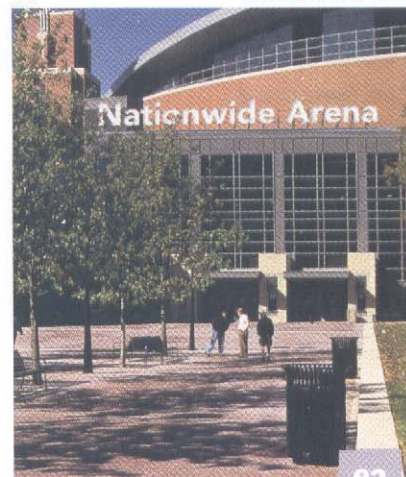
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Sydney is showing how the Olympics can create permanent benefits for a city's residents.

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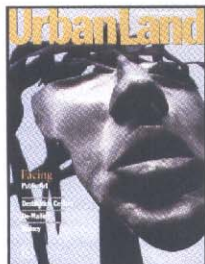
STEVE WRIGHT

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ON THE COVER:

"Steela," DC Unite Sculpture Park, 7th and E Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Sculptor: Robert T. Cole, www.studlocole.com

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