



SYDNEY 2000 – CHALLENGES AND REWARDS

Andrew Penman

Director, Centre for Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

In less than three years the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games will take place. These Games are expected to attract the largest gathering of people ever in Sydney: estimates of the number range from 600,000 to 6 million.

We know that 14,200 of these will be youthful athletes, and it is expected that, apart from sports-related or other injuries, they will have minimal impact on public health services. The rest, visitors (some in an unfamiliar place and faced with an unfamiliar language) and locals, will form a global village enjoying one of the greatest shows on earth. This group is more likely to use health services.

A commercial bonanza in the food industry has been predicted. Although this heralds no fears for the established operators who will practise under the watchful eye of the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games, of potential concern is the host of small operators, who are often in the market for only a season. A major outbreak of food-borne illness would make the Sydney Games memorable for the wrong reasons.

So while the stage is being set for the nation's biggest event, the public health strategy for the Games will harness the work of hundreds of people backstage to ensure it is safe as well as enjoyable.

Sydney will be on a world stage, and as for every successful performance, success will depend on those backstage as much as those under lights.

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Infectious Diseases

Correspondence

Please address all correspondence and potential contributions to:

*The Editor,
NSW Public Health Bulletin,
Public Health Division,
NSW Health Department
Locked Bag No 961,
North Sydney NSW 2059
Telephone: (02) 9391 9956
Facsimile: (02) 9391 9232*