

## **Sport Tourism and the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games: A New Zealand Perspective.**

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### **Abstract**

The year 2000 sees the world's largest sporting event, the Olympic Games, held in the Southern Hemisphere for only the second time. Proponents of the Olympics believe them to be a recipe for urban (re)development, escalating tourist numbers, and economic growth. There is general consensus that a wide variety of Olympic impacts will occur (specifically economic, social, environmental and tourism). Recent research, however, has contested the notion that large sporting events mean tourism benefits and meaningful economic development for the host city.

The relative proximity of Sydney 2000 suggests it is unlikely the impacts of the Olympic Games will bypass New Zealand. The principal aim of this study is to investigate the wider ramifications of the Sydney Olympics from a New Zealand perspective. This has been accomplished through a comprehensive literature review and the undertaking of complementary primary research. The primary research involved a nation-wide survey of regional tourism organisations and territorial local authorities. It examined the perceived impacts and opportunities Sydney 2000 may have on New Zealand at both a national and regional level. Other opportunities from Sydney 2000 available to New Zealand were also investigated. In addition the survey considered the relevance of sport to regional tourism development in New Zealand.

Findings from the study indicated New Zealand should expect a wide range of benefits from the Sydney Olympics. These include tourism, sporting and commercial opportunities. The main beneficiary will be the New Zealand tourism industry. A wide range of initiatives have been undertaken at a national level, although the overall extent to which Olympic opportunities have been pursued on a regional scale has been limited.

Sport and tourism have become increasingly important to both the New Zealand lifestyle and the nation's economy. The integration of sport and tourism has transpired at a national level, and is slowly being realised at a regional level with sport becoming increasingly important to both local economies and tourism industries. Most regions throughout New Zealand have man-made sports resources to attract sporting events. These facilities alongside New Zealand's natural sports resources indicate the potential for sport tourism in New Zealand is substantial.