

Legislative planning plays essential role in smooth operation of Olympics



Andrew Hiller

One of the more inconspicuous aspects of planning for an Olympic Games is the legislation needed to enact security measures and response plans for emergency or unpredictable situations. While lessons can be learnt from previous Olympic Games events, each country and every Olympiad has its own unique requirements and in catering for this, special legislation will need to be enacted for The Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

Barrister-at-law and senior law lecturer at the University of Queensland, **Andrew Hiller**, R.F.D. looks back at some previous Olympic Games events, particularly the Atlanta Olympics in 1996, as well as at some violent incidents within Australia which emphasise the importance of ensuring that effective legislation is in place. Mr Hiller has addressed police training courses including those at Queensland Police College, Chelmer and the Queensland Police Academy, Oxley. He has visited police training establishments in Australia and overseas including the Australian Police Staff College at Manly, NSW, the Police Staff College at Bramshill in England, and the Scottish Police College, Tulliallan Castle.

Mr Hiller is a major in the Australian Army Reserve. He served for several years at Headquarters, First Military District, Brisbane, and has participated in various joint exercises involving Defence Force Aid to the Civil Power.

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"Just as heroic as the feats of the athletes in this Olympics was the way all those involved in the Atlanta Games pressed on in the face of adversity. Just two weeks ago today a pipe-bomb exploded in Centennial Olympic Park. It was a terrorist act aimed not only at the innocent people there, but the very spirit of the Olympics. This was brutal evidence that no nation is immune from terrorism, and an urgent reminder that we must do everything we can to fight the terrorists".¹

Olympic Games or Games means the Games of the XXVII Olympiad in Sydney in the year 2000.²

Security and bomb blast at Atlanta

The explosion of the pipe-bomb in Atlanta's Centennial Olympic Park during the Atlanta Olympic festivities on 27th July, 1996, has demonstrated the ever present need for vigilance and for the best possible security plan backed up by adequate resources for the next major Olympic event, the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

It should be noted that it appears from initial reports that the toll of injuries arising from the above bomb blast would have been much worse but for the presence of some State and Federal security agents, whose attention having been drawn to an unattended knapsack which was seen to contain wires and a pipe, acted to move people out of the immediate area before the bomb exploded.³

This in turn provides justification, if needed, for the immense security resources dedicated to the Atlanta Olympics Games referred to hereunder. It is also appropriate to refer, in the context of the importance of Olympic security, to the terrorist attack on Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games in 1972, which led to the death of several athletes and others, and thereafter to increased security at all Olympic venues.

It has been reported that over 25,000 personnel were involved in security aspects of the Atlanta Olympic Games. They included police from State, City and Federal agencies within the United States as well as from Australia and elsewhere acting as volunteers; over 10,000 soldiers, many from National Guard units or reservists on annual training, but also some active duty units, including chemical warfare specialists; private security and others. In addition, Army special operations units, bomb disposal teams, medical strike teams and other specialist elements in various parts of the United States were placed on alert, in case they were required to assist local authorities in dealing with terrorist or other incidents.

It was also reported that special training courses were provided to various law enforcement officers, including transit police, on responding to various types of emergencies, including chemical threats, noting the nerve gas released the previous year on the Tokyo subway, as well as on more conventional bomb threats and hostage situations.⁴

Some violent acts against overseas VIPs in Australia

In an Australian context, reference must be made to the bomb explosion which caused three



A man is escorted from the crowd by security officers at the Atlanta Olympic Games. "It has been reported that over 25,000 personnel were involved in security aspects of the Atlanta Olympic Games".

fatal injuries around the entrance to the Sydney Hilton Hotel during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meeting on 13th February, 1978. That was a particularly significant occasion in terms of deployment of security resources, as it led to the call out of major elements of the Australian Defence Force by the then Governor-General Sir Zelman Cowen, to assist in protecting the visiting Heads of Government and others in connection with their visit to Bowral⁵. This call out in turn has been followed by the development of guidelines, procedures and training exercises for Defence Force Aid to the Civil Power, which can be used to assist police in the event of a terrorist attack, as on the occasion of major international events, such as the Olympic Games.

It is also relevant to note various incidents involving violence against overseas VIPs, often resident diplomats in Australia, within the last 20 years. They include the murder of the Consul-General for Turkey in Sydney in 1980, the bomb attack on the Israeli Consulate in Sydney soon afterwards, and the kidnapping with violence of Colonel Singh, the military, naval and air adviser to the Indian High Commission in Canberra in 1977.⁶ A car bomb attack, involving a substantial quantity of explosives took place under the building occupied by the Consulate-General for Turkey in Melbourne in 1986⁷.

More recently, in 1988, various diplomatic vehicles belonging to the United States Embassy in Canberra or to members of the embassy staff were reported to have been damaged by firebombs and a note described as a threatening letter addressed to the Ambassador, was sent to

the United States Embassy about that time. This led to criminal proceedings before the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory, pursuant to the Crimes Act 1914 (Cth.) and the Crimes (Internationally Protected Persons) Act 1976 (Cth). Chief Justice Miles held that it was consonant with the aims and objectives of the Crimes (Internationally Protected Persons) Act 1976, that written threats upon diplomatic personnel should be able to be intercepted before they reach the person to whom the threat is directed, without freeing the person making the threat from criminal liability.⁸

Some security considerations for the Sydney 2000 Games

The Sydney 2000 Olympic Games may be expected to attract various visiting Heads of State and Heads of Government, with members of their families and other internationally protected persons, such as ambassadors and other diplomatic staff, also accompanied by members of their families, as well as the Governor-General and other VIPs classified as internationally protected persons. This classification provides a clear legal basis for Commonwealth interest in their security and protection pursuant to the Crimes (Internationally Protected Persons) Act 1976, and thus for Commonwealth assistance, including personnel as deemed necessary, to aid authorities, particularly in NSW to protect the VIPs. There is also a strong case generally for calling on substantial financial assistance from the Commonwealth for the implementation of security measures in connection with the Sydney 2000 Games and the protection of persons and property thereat.

The Atlanta Olympic park bombing also demonstrates the need to extend security outside the Olympic Village and competition venues as far as practicable. Entertainment centres, particularly those associated with the Cultural Olympiad to be organised by the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG), or otherwise associated with the Olympic Games, particularly at events to be attended by visiting VIPs, will need security surveillance. Hotels occupied by visiting Heads of State or other important VIPs and their transportation, as well as major rail junctions, ferry terminals and rail and other transport to Olympic venues will need to be considered by security planners. It may be appropriate to ask for vigilance from the public with respect to suspicious articles, such as unattended bags at railway stations, or on public transport, including trains, ferries and buses, especially on routes to the above locations.

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Protective Security refines plans

Newly appointed Director of the Attorney-General's Protective Security Coordination Centre, John Lynch, said recently that security preparations for the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games were providing a focus for the centre in which to review, test and refine national protective security arrangements and plan for the future.

"The Federal Government's interest in developing more cohesive, effectively coordinated and relevant protective security arrangements led to the PSCCs elevation to a division last year," Mr Lynch said.

"This wasn't a decision taken in isolation. While the trigger was the Government's decision on the 1995 Review into High Office Holders' Security, there had been a growing recognition that protective security needed to be able to respond flexibly and effectively to changing trends in politically motivated violence."

The PSCC had been undergoing restructure since attaining divisional status and an important aspect of its operations under the new arrangements was the need to be a cohesive, professional team providing consistent high-level security services and advice to senior office holders and stakeholders, Mr Lynch said.

This would include the integration of smaller units working on specific projects, such as preparing for the Olympics. The PSCC's Olympic Coordination Unit, managed by Lindsay Hansch, is tasked with coordinating the Commonwealth's security interests and responsibilities in the Olympic Games.

"There are substantial challenges for the PSCC in coordinating the Commonwealth's position on security issues and ensuring its interests are fully observed and protected in its relationship with NSW Olympic authorities," Mr Lynch said.