Look and image

The branding of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games

Energy and irreverence

Energy and irreverence were two themes that first captivated the SOCOG Creative Services team that coordinated the branding package for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

Images of Sydney's energy inspired the look of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games

Established by SOCOG in 1996, this team contracted and then worked with graphic designers (such as local design group, Bang Design, which contributed significantly to the initial concepts for thematics/ambience for the Games) and colour forecasters to develop a branding package that would be functional, distinctive and memorable.

Creative Services, with their wider team of contractors, drafted ideas and arranged pictorial collages that expressed unique qualities of Sydney, Australia and Olympism.

Due to the increasing tasks of licensing, publishing and design, Creative Services divided into three separate departments – Trafficking, Publishing and Image.

The Trafficking Department was responsible for overseeing sponsorship and licensing. It ensured that all official merchandise made appropriate use of Olympic images and logos. Licensees submitted merchandise proposals (some four million of them!) to the Trafficking Department's staff of ten, who reviewed proposals within ten working days.

The Publishing Department was responsible for all official publishing (in accordance with the Image Department guidelines).

The Image Department (sometimes known as the Look and Image Department) formed an exclusive partnership with Melbourne design group, FHA Image Design (now called FutureBrand FHA), which revised and developed the elements of the existing branding package.
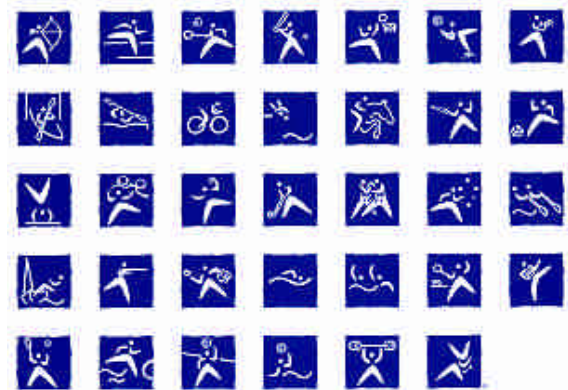

The Sydney 2000 emblem

Up to that time, the only branding elements to have been created were the emblem (sometimes known as 'Millennium Man', collaboratively developed by SOCOG with FHA), mascots (developed by Matthew Hatton of Warner Bros. – which featured representations of lesser known Australian animals), and sports pictograms (developed by Saunders Design).

FHA Image Design

FHA expanded the branding package by developing the colour palette, motif, typefaces, vignettes and other graphic designs. Together, these set a distinctive look and feel and unified most visual elements of the Games.

A pictogram for archery, with information for use

The range of sports pictograms

Sydney 2000 Olympic Games typefaces

The Olympic mascots, exemplifying the Olympic attributes of 'higher, faster, stronger'

In addition to designing the Olympic branding package, FHA Image Design also developed the Sydney 2000 Torc h Relay logo and the branding package for the Sydney 2000 Paralympic Games.

The colour palette

Like the continent itself, our colour palette is a celebration of contrasts. Start with the deep blue water of Sydney Harbour. Add the colours of the coast and the intense hues of the outback. Look beyond the ancient landscape to contemporary Sydney life. The vibrancy of beachgoers at Bondi. The playful iridescence of Mardi Gras revellers. The colours of a sophisticated, global city at the threshold of a new mill ennium.

– Sydney 2000 Olympic Games image guidelines

The principal colour for the 2000 Olympics was Sydney Blue. This colour was used in the main Olympic Fluid Energy graphic (see next section).

Of all the colours, Sydney Blue expresses the essence of Sy dney, with its expanse of blue water and sky. The colour palette also contains eleven harmonious colours chosen to complement the strength of Sydney Blue. It has been selected with care and consideration to ensure best results can be achieved in a variety of combinations.

– Sydney 2000 Olympic Games image guidelines

The colour palette for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games

Blue is also a colour which particularly suits television broadcasts – and design optimised for television was always an importa nt consideration, given the size of the Games television audience.

The final Sydney colour palette was made up of the following 12 labelled colours: Sydney Blue, Sydney Cyan, Sydney Red, Sydney Yellow, Sydney Aqua, Sydney Lime, Sydney Purp le, Sydney Rubine, Sydney Orange, Sydney Indigo, Sydney Silver and White.

The inspiration for these colours came from a diverse range of sources: from flora to festivals, wildlife to kids on the beach, deserts and coral reefs to technology and the modern architecture of Sydney city.

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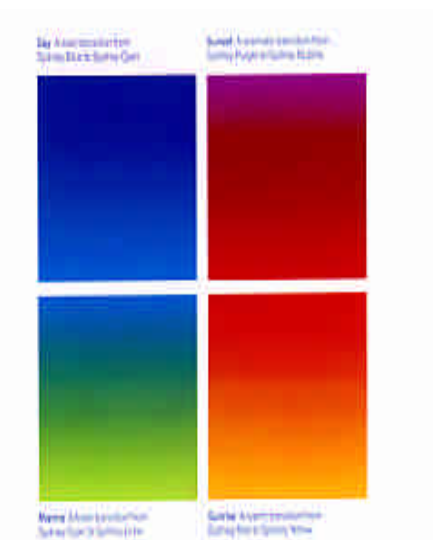
– Sydney 2000 Olympic Games image guidelines

Once Sydney Blue was selected as the principal colour, the idea to use the waters of Sydney Harbour in a graphic form also emerged. Combining the concepts of energy and water, a series of water-based graphics were sketched out in the design process and this lead to the creation of a central graphic element that would tie the visual language of the Sydney Games together.

It is an integral branding element that can be used to link other visual elements, such as the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games emblem, sporting pictograms and mascot… It provides an opportunity for SOCOG and the Olympic sponsors to align themselves

visually with the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games. This creates a strong, cohesive communication that expresses the distinctive spirit of the host city to Australia and the world.

– Sydney 2000 Olympic Games image guidelines

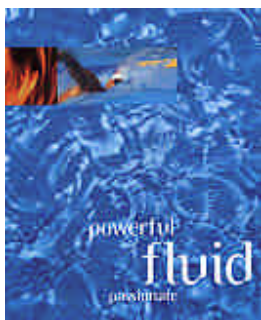Sydney 2000 Olympic Games vignette palette

An application of the vignette palette

Fluid Energy Graphic

The patterns in the Fluid Energy Graphic are similar to the affect on water when something is thrown into it: kinetic energy is created and concentric rings emanate out from a central point across the water surface. An expanding wave grows, catching other energy waves in its wake. This visual metaphor also describes how the Olympic spirit set off a chain reaction in the Australian public, and the way that energy moves through water or the body of an athlete.

They are symbolic of the passion demanded for Olympic competition and the streamlined, fluid movement of the athletic body in action.

– Sydney 2000 Olympic Games image guidelines

A page from the kit expressing elements of the inspiration for Fluid Energy

The Fluid Energy Graphic

Perhaps the most powerful and literal interpretation of the Fluid Energy Graphic is as a reflection of the Olympic rings in the deep blue hues of Sydney Harbour.

Inspired by the vitality of the Australian environment and its people. Elegant, swirling shapes and concentric forms suggest the vibrant waters of Sydney Harbour, at the heart of the Host City. These graphic elements echo the Olympic spirit's ancient power. Australian landscape forms and the energy of fire are also apparent. Areas of the graphic suggest flickering flames, or the 'heat haze' effect often experienced in rural and urban areas of Australia on hot days. They are symbolic of the passion demanded for Olympic competition and the streamlined, fluid movement of the athletic body in action.

– Sydney 2000 Olympic Games image guidelines

A one-colour single vignette – solid background and a vignette of the Fluid Energy Graphic

The circular forms are reminiscent of beautiful, expressive and usually hot geographic locations such as the Wilpena Pound volcanic hills in the Flinders Ranges, the reef keys of the Great Barrier Reef, the unique r olling shapes of Kata Tjuta (The Olgas) and even the multicoloured hills of Coober Pedy.

Areas of the graphic suggest flickering flames or the 'heat haze' effect often experienced in rural and urban areas of Australia on hot days.
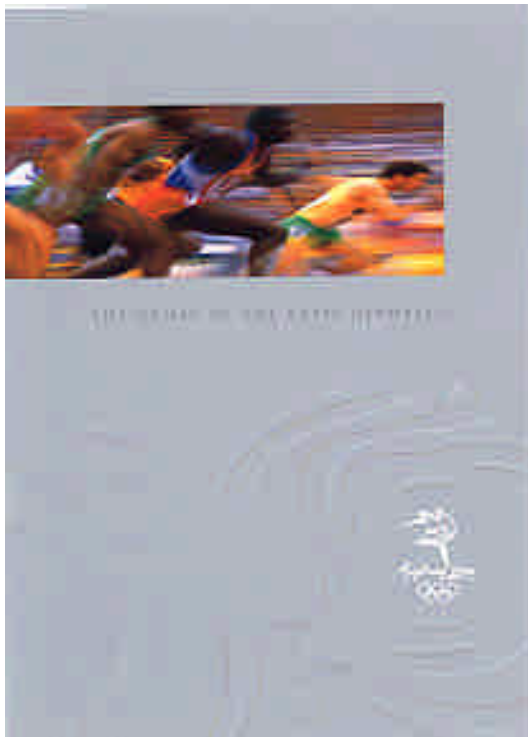
– Sydney 2000 Olympic Games image guidelines

The inspirations behind the Fluid Energy Graphic were drawn not only from Sydney Harbour but from multiple aspects of Australia's physical and cultural diversity, each a celebration of energy, colour and movement.

These graphic elements echo the Olympic spirit's ancient power. Australian landscape forms and the energy of fire are also apparent.

– Sydney 2000 Olympic Games image guidelines

Fluid Energy Graphic extended configuration in a two-colour double vignette

Beyond their simple beauty, the symbolic and literal interpretations were the real success behind the Olympic designs. The calming colours of Sydney Harbour combined with smooth patterns of water forms elicited many interpretations.

Not only did the Fluid Energy Graphic represent the energy and diversity of modern Australia, it ultimately helped bring the energy of the Olympic spir it to Australians and to the world.

Application of graphic elements in a page from the *Sydney 2000 Olympic Games image guidelines*

Sydney 2000 Olympic Games image guidelines

The *Sydney 2000 Olympic Games image guidelines* was published by SOCOG in 1998. This branding package, developed by the Image Department in the form of a large format book, was also known as the 'kit of parts' or 'the kit'.

It was comprehensive in specifying all branding details including: approvals from SOCOG quality control, trademarks, copyright, typefaces, colour palettes, sizing, positions, examples of correct and incorrect uses and overall best practice.

FHA Image Design had contributed significantly to the branding package through development of ele ments such as the colour palette, Fluid Energy Graphic and typefaces, as well as by coordinating the development and production of the package.

The kit also included design for all three-dimensional objects that would prop the venues, such as wa yfinding elements (developed by Brisbane company, Dot Dash), temporary architecture (developed by Lahz Nimmo from North Sydney), fence fabric, banners, landscaping (developed by Context from Sydney, though this was later cut due to budget restrictions), s ignage, press backdrops, the 'kiss and cry' area for gymnasts, sporting equipment, the Olympic village and the media village.

The kit advised licensees on the correct use of separate and combined branding elements, and influenced the design and production of all Olympics merchandise, advertising, marketing, uniforms and other related uses. The book ensured a smooth and consistent representation for the 2000 Olympics — the key to the overall branding success of the Sydney 2000 Games.

On Sunday 1 October 2000 , IOC President, Juan Antonio Samaranch, closed the Sydney Olympics before a live audience of 110,000, thousands of athletes, and a television audience of millions, declaring them "the best Olympic Games ever".

All images in this module were reproduced from the *Sydney 2000 Olympic Games image guidelines*, © SOCOG 1998, courtesy of the Olympic Coordinating Authority (OCA).

The Olympic symbol