

Australian Identity, the Press and Major International Sporting Events

PhD thesis launch by
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Now sit up straight
and I'll tell you all
about the Games



Patriotism gone mad — a Canadian waves an Australian flag at the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games.

Australian-staged Games Included in the Thesis:

- ◆ **1956 Olympic Games (Melbourne)**
- ◆ **1962 British Empire and Commonwealth Games (Perth)**
- ◆ **1982 Commonwealth Games (Brisbane)**
- ◆ **2000 Olympic Games (Sydney)**

Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*, October 6, 1982, p.8

Sampling Frames



November 22 - December 10, 1956



November 22 - December 3, 1962



September 30 - October 11, 1982



September 15 - October 2, 2000

1956 Melbourne Olympic Games: Australia's growing self-confidence



National Library of Australia

nla.pic-vn3107016-v

Source: National Library of Australia
<http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-vn3107016>

*Betty's gold medal put
lumps in our throats*

Source: *The Herald* (Melbourne), November 26, 1956, p.16

Australia's Hour
of Games Glory

Source: *The Age* (Melbourne), November 27, 1956, p.11

**PRETTY BETTY WINS OUR
GOLD MEDAL**

Source: *The Herald* (Melbourne), November 26, 1956, p.1

1962 Perth Commonwealth Games: Australia leads the Commonwealth



Source: *The Herald* (Melbourne), November 21, 1962, p.36

MODERN DAVID BEATS GOLIATH

Source: *The West Australian* (Perth), November 28, 1962, p.27

- ◆ Australia's confidence grew after its record result at the 1956 Olympic Games (13 gold medals and third on the medal tally).
- ◆ Expectations increased for the 1962 Commonwealth Games where Australia ultimately beat England (38 gold medals to 29) and finished first on the medal tally.
- ◆ Australia's "golden era" in the 1950s and 1960s made the Olympic and Commonwealth Games an important part of Australia's sporting identity.

1982 Brisbane Commonwealth Games: Australia's gold medal frenzy

Gold sends
crowd wild

Source: *The Herald* (Melbourne), October 4, 1982,
p.1

The ecstasy of winning

Source: *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), October 5, 1982, p.2

More gold – we're set

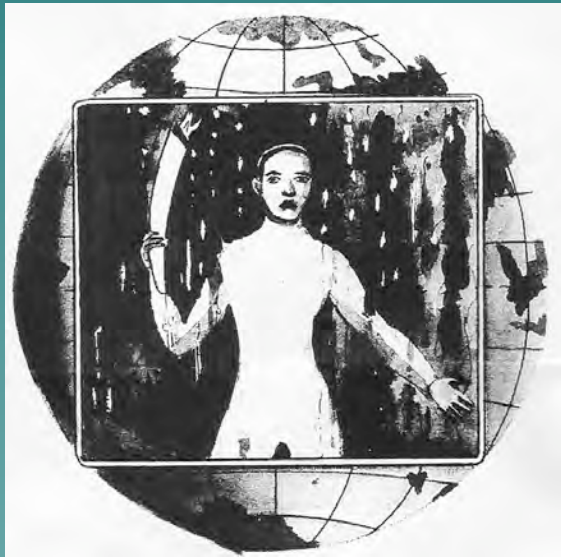
Source: *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), October 8, 1982, p.1



Source: *Official Pictorial History of the
XII Commonwealth Games, 1982*, p.27

2000 Sydney Olympic Games: Introducing “new Australia”

New face of Australia welcomes the world



The opening ceremony of the Sydney Olympic Games presented Australia as a new, multicultural nation.

Australia's newspapers carried this theme throughout their coverage of the Games.

Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 19, 2000, p.8

Overnight we came of age as a nation

Source: *Herald Sun* (Melbourne), September 17, 2000, p.5

From invisible to partly recognised: Indigenous Australian athletes 1956-1962

History Made By Aboriginal Bantamweight

Source: *The West Australian* (Perth), December 1, 1962, p.28



Source: *The Herald* (Melbourne), December 1, 1962, p.48

- ◆ No Indigenous Australian athletes competed at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games.
- ◆ Three Aboriginal boxers were included in the Australian team at the 1962 Perth Commonwealth Games.
- ◆ Bantamweight boxer Jeff Dynevor made headlines after winning a gold medal in 1962.
- ◆ However, another Aboriginal gold medallist in the high jump, Percy Hobson, was not recognised as an Aboriginal athlete.

1982 Aboriginal land rights protests: a challenge to Australia's policies and its role as Games host

ABORIGINAL STREET PROTEST MARCH ORDERLY BUT . . .

Clashes during Games still a possibility

Source: *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), September 30, 1982, p.9



THE National Aboriginal Conference Chairman, Mr Steve Mam, was prominent in yesterday's march, holding a picture of the Premier, Mr Bjelke-Petersen, being carried ashore in the Torres Strait Islands.

Picture: BOB BARNES.

100 arrested after protest

Source: *The West Australian* (Perth), October 5, 1982, p.1

The black shadow over the Games

What the Qld Government plans — and what the Aborigines want

Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 30, 1982, p.9

Aboriginal athlete Cathy Freeman: the face of Australia at the 2000 Olympic Games

**Pride
of the
land**

Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 26, 2000, p.1

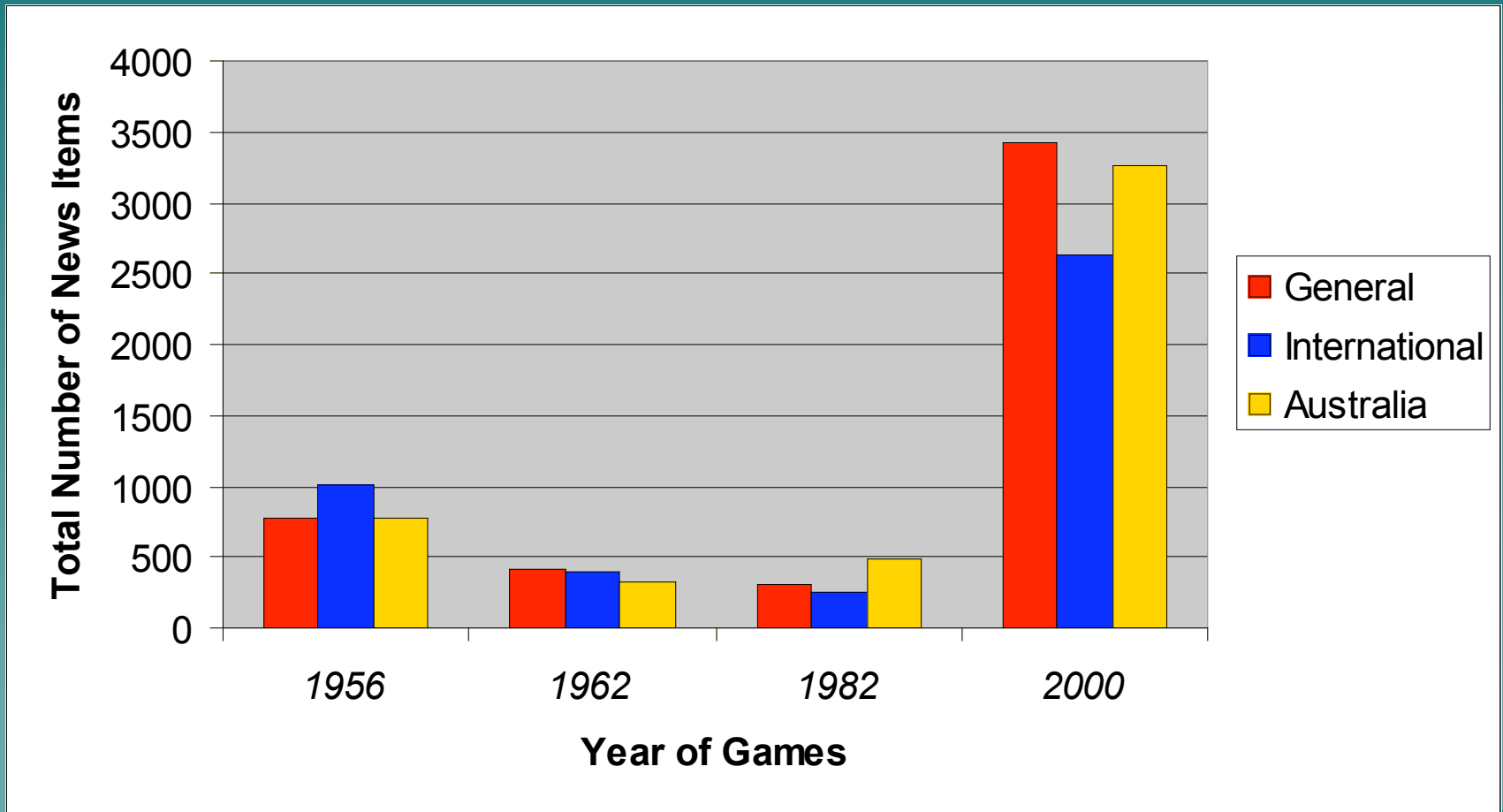
**Freeman a
symbol of
Aussie unity**

Source: *The Australian*, September 27, 2000, p.34



Source: *The Australian*, September 26, 2000, p.1

Comparison of the newspapers'* combined allocation of general, international and Australian-related Games items



* The total figures are derived from a study of four newspapers covering each Games.

Countries with the greatest amount of coverage in Australia's newspapers

Games	Top 5 Countries* Covered/Total Number of Items						
<i>1956 Olympics</i>	Australia	USA	USSR	Hungary	Great Britain	Denmark*	Iceland*
	771	281	166	177	72	7	2
<i>1962 Commonwealth</i>	Australia	England	New Zealand	Canada	Kenya		
	338	134	65	54	28		
<i>1982 Commonwealth</i>	Australia	England	Canada	Scotland	New Zealand		
	485	68	49	31	26		
<i>2000 Olympics</i>	Australia	USA	Netherlands	Russia	France	Denmark*	Iceland*
	3253	691	174	128	124	18	0

* Denmark and Iceland did not rank in the top 10 countries covered in 1956 or 2000, but they are included here for interest.

The “fallen athlete”



LEFT—Ambulance officers assist Peter Edeh, of Nigeria, who broke down while competing in the 5000 m and 10000 m.

Source: *The Age* (Melbourne), November 28, 1956, p.14



Source: *The West Australian* (Perth), December 1, 1962, p.1

A recurring use of African, Caribbean and South Asian athletes to illustrate dramatic failure and ironic victory.

It was all a breeze

By BRETT FREE

At 7 a.m. yesterday a starter's pistol rang out across a calm Moreton Bay and 19 men waddled down The Esplanade at Manly.

For them it was the start of a 30 km road walk, six laps of a 5 km loop course that wound along the seaside to well past the Manly Boat Harbor and back to the starting line.

For spectators, it was a more than two-hour wait to see who could walk this funny way the fastest.

The pace was surprisingly fast for what one ordinarily would expect of a walk, and it was only seconds before 19 bobbing heads disappeared around the corner at Darling Point, 150 m from the start.

After one lap and 20 min 46 sec, Australia's Willi Sawall, a pre-race favorite, led, but was closely followed by the eventual winner, Steven Barry, of Wales.

Sawall had an injured hip and looked uncomfortable. In fact, he tried so hard to compensate for the weakness he strained a groin muscle and that was the end of an Australia

modal. A light sweat glistened on his shoulders.

Half way... It was 8 a.m. and the sun was pouring out heat through a clear, light blue sky. Steve Barry rounded in 1 hr 4 min. 40 sec. Sweat trickled off his body as though he had just been caught in a sudden summer shower.

Barry powered along, leading to the 20 km mark, and was greeted with applause. He was walking at a speed people would find hard to maintain after a jog half that distance.

At 9.10 a.m., Barry was walking more strongly than ever. A huge smile lit his face and his arms raised in jubilation and triumph as he crossed the finish line after 2 hr 10 min. 16 sec.

The Canadians Jobin and Leblanc finished with the silver and bronze in 2:12.24 and 2:14.56.

The smiling Welshman was crowned with a symbolic wreath made of camellia leaves. It fitted perfectly.

Barry, 32, a plasterer from Cardiff, said he would celebrate his win. "I'll get plastered," he said.



ABOVE: Sweat pours off the face of India's competitor Chand Ram who retired from the race after the 20 km mark. LEFT: Ram was escorted to the medical tent for a quick check-up. Later, his team official offered him a cup of tea but he declined.

Source: *The Courier Mail* (Brisbane), October 8, 1982, p.22

The “antihero” and the “disadvantaged”



Eric Moussambani, cheered by regular swimmers, shows off his new fast-skin suit yesterday.

Photo: Narelle Autio

Watch out Thorpedo, the accidental hero is suited up and ready to swim

Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 21, 2000, p.23

Equatorial Guinean swimmer Eric Moussambani’s story fit two criteria in Australia’s unconventional reporting of African, Caribbean and South Asian athletes.

The story behind Eric the Flounder is not so funny

HOW sad that the world is hailing Eric Moussambani — aka Eric the Flounder — hero of the Sydney Olympics.

For me, the sight of the swimmer from Equatorial Guinea half drowning as he floundered through his 100m free-style heat was a tragedy.

You could cry for Africa, seeing that. And sigh for the Games and the distorting cheap-shot publicity it both feeds off and feeds.

Yes, I know I’m on my own here. I saw the crowd cheering as Moussambani splashed and gasped through his heat in 1 minute 52.72 seconds, or more than twice the time Holland’s Pieter van de Hoogenband took to win the final.

And I’ve read the newspaper reports from around the globe venerating this battler from a sliver of West Africa.

They have told how the 22-year-old student comes from a country so poor it has only two pools, the longest of which is just 20 metres. How he dreamed of competing in Sydney and would train in rivers infested with crocodiles.



Eric Moussambani: Games officials are now thinking his swim wasn’t such a good idea.

Source: *Herald Sun* (Melbourne), September 28, 2000, p.20

The “exotic other”

Smile and a shiver



PRETTY INDIAN sprinter Mary Leela Rao shivers in the cold at Olympic Village today — but she can still smile.

Source: *The Herald* (Melbourne), November 30, 1956, p.1

The “exotic other” was a construct used in Australia’s Games reports to signify unfamiliar nations and cultures, therefore creating a binary of “self” and “other”, or “us” and “them”.



Source: *The West Australian* (Perth), November 23, 1962, p.29

The “entertainer”



IMPROMPTU SING-SONG

• Three of the five members of the Liberian team discarded their Olympic uniforms in favour of more colourful dress for a sing-song outside their hut at the Olympic Village.

Taking part in the impromptu concert are (left to right): Joseph Nerman, Emanuel Pota and Edward Martin. Liberia was represented at the Games for the first time in Melbourne.

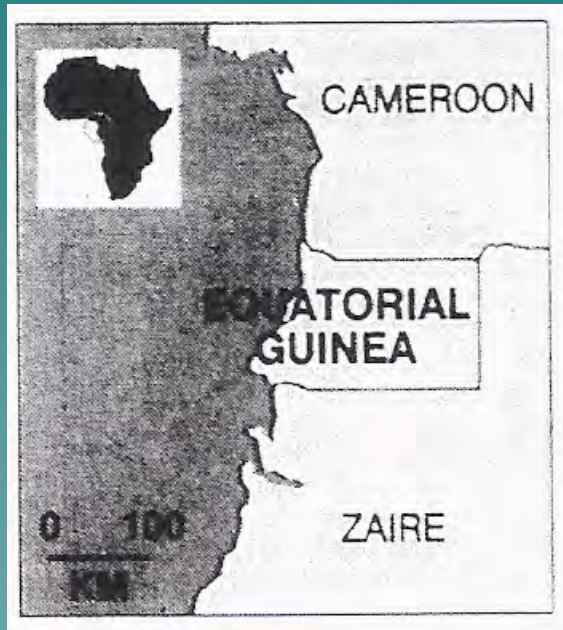
Source: *The West Australian* (Perth), December 7, 1956, p.34

HE'S CLASSIC — ON PIANO AND TRACK



Source: *The Herald* (Melbourne), November 22, 1956, p.7

Mapping the “exotic other”



- ◆ In 2000 Australia’s newspapers attempted to educate their readers about “exotic” nations participating in the Sydney Olympics.
- ◆ Note the incorrect placement and naming of Zaire (Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2000). The country that is directly south of Equatorial Guinea is Gabon.

Source: *Herald Sun* (Melbourne), September 28, 2000, p.20

The Games in Australia: promoting a one-eyed nation or a new multicultural nation?



Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*, October 2, 2000, p.10