

# Greenpeace Olympic Environmental Guidelines

## A Guide to Sustainable Events

September 2000

### INTRODUCTION

Sydney's Green Games came about in response to the growing environmental problems facing the world. Eight years on from Sydney's winning "green" Olympic bid issues such as climate change, ozone depletion, the production and disposal of toxic waste, dwindling natural resources and the destruction of our natural environment are more serious than ever. There is growing awareness internationally that to ignore environmental issues is to do so at our own peril.

After playing a key role in monitoring Sydney's environmental progress for its 2000 Olympics, Greenpeace has worked with a range of experts in many issue areas to draft a new and updated set of environmental guidelines — "Greenpeace's Olympic Environmental Guidelines: A Guide to Sustainable Events" - to ensure Sydney's Green Games are not a once-only effort.

These new guidelines address the key environmental issues the Olympic movement and its corporate sponsors need to adhere to if the environment is really to be the third pillar of Olympism, as stated by International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Juan Antonio Samaranch in 1986.

Designed as standard for future Olympic hosts and bidding nations, these guidelines set a benchmark and challenge for other sporting and non-sporting event organisers interested in a low-impact environmental approach.

Greenpeace calls on the IOC to establish these guidelines as a formal set of rules (for example by enshrining them in the Olympic Charter and within future cities' bid criteria) to ensure that all future Olympic events remain a driving force for the use of solutions to global environmental problems. These guidelines should be non-negotiable and need to be backed up by national law in the countries that host the Olympics, including the provision of strong penalties for non-compliance.

Transparency and independent monitoring is a critical component of any set of environmental guidelines. Full, comprehensive and publicly accountable auditing of all environmental data is essential to ensure credibility and accuracy.

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## GREENPEACE AND THE GREEN GAMES

In 1992, Greenpeace saw an opportunity to promote viable environmental solutions when the Sydney Bid Company for the 2000 Olympic Games held an anonymous design contest for its proposed Athletes' Village. Five winners were selected and Greenpeace's eco-design was among them.

This was the beginning of Sydney's Green Games concept, unique among Olympic cities because organisers committed to specific Environmental Guidelines before winning the bid and before construction began. The Guidelines were developed with the help of Greenpeace and other environmental groups and were submitted as an official part of Sydney's bid to the IOC to host the 2000 Summer Games.

## IOC: CARRYING THE ENVIRONMENTAL TORCH

The IOC has the responsibility to ensure the Olympic Games have a minimum impact on the environment and leave a positive legacy for those hosting the Games. It has an opportunity to do this in a way that fulfils the ideals of the environment as the third pillar of Olympism by making the Games a showcase for environmental solutions.

There is a fundamental question the IOC needs to address — are the Olympics, which move from country to country every four years, environmentally sustainable? Having a limited number of venues with fixed facilities and infrastructure might be a better option to reduce environmental impact in the future. Raising and addressing this question will, Greenpeace believes, be a crucial part of the IOC's future environmental commitment.

Greenpeace's analysis of the Sydney Games highlighted the absence of involvement at a detailed level by the IOC and its failure to intervene to ensure that the Games' Environmental Guidelines were not breached. The IOC must increase its capacity to advise, direct and pressure bidding and host cities to ensure that their environmental commitments are met.

The Greenpeace Guidelines set a minimum requirement for future Olympic Games. Host cities should be required to enter into community consultation to develop detailed guidelines for each Olympics based on the important environmental issues specific to each. These guidelines must also apply to corporate sponsors, partners, suppliers and other supporting agencies and partners to ensure consistency throughout the event.

## GUIDING ENVIRONMENTAL PRINCIPLES

If followed carefully, the principles below will ensure that future Olympic Games and other major events have minimal environmental impact.

- 1. Environmental sustainability.** It is vital to ensure that current exploitation of ecosystem resources, including extraction of raw materials, consumption of energy, manufacture and use of chemicals and disposal of wastes, does not compromise the viability of future generations and their access to natural resources and ecosystem services. A truly sustainable project ensures that:
  - Substances such as fossil fuels do not systematically increase in the ecosphere
  - Synthetic substances do not systematically increase in the ecosphere
  - The bases for productivity and diversity of life are not systematically depleted
  - Resources are used fairly and efficiently in order to meet human need.
- 2. Precautionary principle.** This should be the overarching guide to decision making even in the absence of certainty regarding the potential impacts of all processes, materials and systems for hosting Olympic Games and other events. In practical terms, the implementation of the precautionary principle implies that:
  - Action must be taken to avoid harm, or the threat of harm, before it occurs, even when firm evidence of cause and effect relationships is unavailable.
  - Since all processes, materials and systems have environmental impacts they must be regulated accordingly until sufficient evidence becomes available that there is no potential risk to ecosystems or human health
  - High quality scientific information should form a central component of mechanisms for early detection of environmental threats.
  - A progressive, ever-improving approach which reduces environmental impacts should be adopted by all Olympic host cities or events.
- 3. A preventative approach.** It is cheaper and more effective to prevent environmental damage than to attempt to manage it. Prevention requires thinking through the development process to prevent environmental impacts. Early planning is critical to a successful integrated environmental approach.
- 4. Integrated and holistic approach.** Establish an approach centred around all potential environmental impacts from the start. This approach recognises that most of our environmental problems - for example, climate change, toxic pollution, loss of biodiversity - are caused by the way and rate at which we produce and consume resources. Adopt an integrated approach to environmental resource use and consumption addressing the full life cycle of the project including all material, water and energy flows, and the economic impact.

5. **Specific and measurable environmental goals.** Set specific environmental goals to fulfill these environmental guidelines at the outset of Olympic or other projects. Ensure that these goals are real, measurable and achievable and make them publicly available.
6. **Community, NGO and public involvement.** Consistent and high level consultation with community, environmental and social groups and the public is essential from the start. Establish a clear process for conflict resolution.
7. **Senior environmental management.** Place the management of environmental issues at a senior level within the overall management structure of the project. Environmental issues must be an integral part of any large-scale event. Environmental teams and input from all levels of the project is vital for success.
8. **Environmental reporting and independent auditing.** Independent auditing of environmental information on all aspects of a development project is essential to ensure credibility. Make this information available to the public.
9. **Public education and training.** Plan and budget early to provide public education materials about the environmental aspects of your project. Ensure staff, suppliers, providers, sponsors and media understand the environmental initiatives of the project and why they were undertaken.

#### ENVIRONMENTALLY-SOUND CRITERIA

Environmentally sound systems, materials, products and food necessary for an Olympic or other event should be:

- non-toxic
- energy efficient
- made using renewable materials which are regularly replenished and extracted in a manner that maintains the viability of the ecosystem and community from which they are taken
- made from non-renewable materials previously extracted but able to be reused or reprocessed.

**These materials and products are:**

- durable and reusable
- easy to dismantle, repair and rebuild
- minimally and appropriately packaged for distribution using reusable or recycled and recyclable materials.

**Above all, systems involved should be:**

- non-polluting throughout their entire life cycle
- preserve diversity in nature and culture
- support the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

**The life-cycle includes:**

- the product technology design phase
- the raw material selection and production phase
- the product manufacture and assemblage phase
- the consumer use of the product phase
- the societal management of the materials at the end of the useful life of the product.

## THE GUIDELINES

Greenpeace considers the environmental issues and guidelines listed below to be among the most important we currently face. Olympic host cities and other events should closely follow these guidelines to ensure they have addressed all the issues in which they will have an environmental impact.

### ■ ENERGY CONSUMPTION

#### Guideline 1

Take all measures to minimise energy use in the overall eco-cycle of the development project at all stages — construction, use and maintenance of the development as well as re-use, recycling and de-construction. Solar passive design, insulation, natural ventilation and energy-saving materials should be given preference. Heating, cooling, lighting and appliances are key areas where energy conservation or systems requiring no energy should be used.

#### Guideline 2

Eliminate the use of fossil fuel energy sources (coal, oil, gas) and replace them with renewable energy sources such as solar, wind, hydro, wave, geothermal and bio-energy (energy from agricultural products, hot water systems and waste on site). Any use of nuclear energy must be banned.

### ■ TRANSPORT

#### Guideline 3

Reduce the need for private transportation during the building process and during the use of the building(s) by concentrating developments in existing urban areas, using local resources and using facilities to their maximum potential.

#### Guideline 4

Establish a non-fossil fuel-based public transport infrastructure and promote individual non-polluting forms of transportation. Ensure that public education and incentives to use the system are planned from the beginning.

#### Guideline 5

Ban the use of fossil fuel-based transportation vehicles for public and official access to Olympic venues and other events.

### ■ REFRIGERATION AND AIRCONDITIONING

#### Guideline 6

Ban building processes, products and servicing systems, insulation, refrigeration and airconditioning that use potent greenhouse gases such as HFCs and

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PFCs. Natural systems such as hydrocarbons, ammonia and water- and air-based systems should be used instead.

## ■ OZONE DEPLETION

### Guideline 7

Ban building processes, products and servicing systems, insulation, refrigeration and airconditioning that use ozone depleting gases such as HCFCs, CFCs and halons. Natural systems such as hydrocarbons, ammonia and water- and air-based systems should be used instead.

## ■ TIMBER USE

### Guideline 8

Use timber from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified sources where ever possible. Maximise the use of recycled timber.

## ■ HABITAT PROTECTION

### Guideline 9

Preserve global, regional and local biodiversity. An assessment of habitat and species with special attention to endangered species and ecosystems that are subject to international conservation treaties, must be made before design and construction begin. If the development project may reduce or impact on global, regional, or local biodiversity, the project must be stopped and an alternative site found. The preservation and protection of the integrity of natural ecosystems surrounding a development including native bushland, forests and waterways is also important.

### Guideline 10

Protect all wild species and populations in development areas. In addition, identify opportunities to preserve or extend pockets of biodiversity, particularly if these link to or are important for the conservation of ecological corridors.

## ■ AIR, WATER AND SOIL POLLUTION

### Guideline 11

Planners should know the history of the land and the specific hazards present before design and construction begin. If building on contaminated land, the area must first be restored to the highest possible environmental standard before development begins. Full public participation must be required in all aspects of the remediation of all lands to be used for Olympic or other venues. Following remediation the safety of the site must be verified by independent environmental auditors, with full disclosure of all documentation and validation information to the public.

### Guideline 12

Ban the burial of hazardous wastes as part of any Olympic development or construction. Avoid incineration of waste and any toxic materials should

be treated on-site using appropriate non-incineration destruction technologies. This is essential to avoid the unnecessary exposure of communities or future generations to potential environmental impacts.

### Guideline 13

There should be no pollutant emissions to the air, water and soil during construction or the eco-lifecycle of the building or venue. Long-term environmental and societal costs of producing building materials must be factored in to the sustainability goals of the project.

### Guideline 14

Use only environmentally-safe building materials and products that minimise pollution of the environment (air, soil, water, ground water) throughout their entire lifecycle (production, use and disposal). Ban polyvinyl chloride-based (PVC) and other organochlorine materials and use more environmentally acceptable materials.

### Guideline 15

Ban persistent, bioaccumulative and/or toxic substances and materials which incorporate them in Olympic construction or merchandising. Ban persistent organic pollutants (POPs) such as organochlorine-based chemicals. Other examples of persistent, bioaccumulative and/or toxic substances that should be excluded from use include: organotins, phthalates, artificial musks, cadmium, lead, chromium, brominated or chlorinated flame retardants. Ban any material that exhibits or is suspected of exhibiting endocrine disrupting properties.

### Guideline 16

Landscape programs should minimise impacts on the natural environment. Chemical pest controls should be banned.

### Guideline 17

Avoid products that pollute the environment when they are eliminated as waste in the demolition process.

## ■ WATER CONSERVATION

### Guideline 18

Use sustainably managed water management techniques, practices and products to avoid the exploitation of new water sources. Water conservation, selection of native plants and recycling options should be used wherever possible.

### Guideline 19

Restore natural water cycles in the development area, minimise run-off and stormwater by establishing systems that retain, re-use and recycle water on-site.

## ■ INDOOR AIR QUALITY

### Guideline 20

Provide a healthy indoor environment providing comfort, health and well being. All possible measures should be taken to ensure that materials such as paints, carpets, glues, varnishes and building systems do not emit toxic substances and gasses into the interior atmosphere. Only materials that do not contain or emit persistent, bioaccumulative and/or toxic substances should be chosen for indoor fittings, and construction materials.

#### **Guideline 22**

Provide users of venues and accommodation with natural conditions (natural light, ventilation, views) and ensure they have some control over internal environmental conditions.

### ■ CONSUMPTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

#### **Guideline 23**

Minimise consumption and over-use of natural resources and use recycled materials and resources at all stages of construction and use.

### ■ WASTE AVOIDANCE AND MINIMISATION

#### **Guidelines 24**

Apply an integrated waste management program based on waste avoidance and minimisation.

#### **Guideline 25**

Establish a 100 per cent closed-loop recycling system for packaging, temporary structures and other short-life products, and ban all non-recyclable and non-compostable materials.

#### **Guideline 26**

Use systems to minimise waste generation to the fullest extent. All waste systems must be fully integrated and have the elimination of waste as their main aim.

#### **Guideline 27**

Incineration should not be used for the elimination of waste.

#### **Guideline 28**

Elimination of construction waste must be a primary consideration of Olympic and other venue design and building.

### ■ GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS (GMOS)

#### **Guideline 29**

Products and/or derivatives, particularly food, and other agricultural products that have been derived from genetic modification must not be used where this has involved irreversible releases of genetically

engineered organisms into the environment.

### ■ QUALITY OF LIFE

#### **Guideline 30**

Protect open spaces in development projects to enhance urban areas, improve the microclimate of cities, and reduce air pollution.

#### **Guideline 31**

Improve the landscape around and in the planned development by planting native trees and providing green areas and parks.

#### **Guideline 32**

Design and implement attractive and convenient urban areas in which people will want to live and work.

### ■ CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

#### **Guideline 33**

Preserve the rich architectural, historical and cultural heritage of the areas used for Olympic or other events. Symbolic relationships with appropriate history, the environment and spiritual principles are to be sought and expressed.

### ■ TRANSPARENCY AND MONITORING OF THE GUIDELINES

#### **Guideline 34**

Full, comprehensive and publicly accountable independent auditing of all environmental data for all aspects of the Olympics must be mandatory.

#### *Acknowledgement:*

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