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Getting a head start: the 2032 Olympic Movement through the preferred candidature bid involving Brisbane, Australia

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ABSTRACT

The Olympic bidding process prior to 2024 was altered in 2019 to provide greater transparency and reduce unnecessary work related to the preparation for each bid, of which there can only be one host. This paper analyses the process of the 2032 Olympics through the notion of a preferred candidate in Brisbane, Australia. Through a document analysis of five official documents and submissions in the lead up to the IOC announcement of the preferred bid in February 2021, this paper elucidates how the Olympic Movement is shaped and refined to offer a more nuanced perspective of how such a preferred bid could be advantageous in terms of more inclusive legacy outcomes to the IOC, as well as the destination.

Introduction

The Olympics are the epitome of success across many sports (Arnold and Sarkar 2015). Numerous sports feature a range of competitors seeking to win Olympic glory and having the honour of representing one's country on the podium. As such, while there are significant costs and resources needed to host any edition of the Olympic Games, some countries continue to put up compelling bids to become a host country, region, or city, and thereby enjoy the prestige of being part of a few select nations to be part of the Olympics journey (Poast 2007). Amidst this backdrop, Olympic host bidding processes have come under increasing scrutiny, where allegations of nepotism and vote buying cast light on the transparency and fairness in awarding successful bids (Dodds 2016; Mason, Thibault, and Misener 2006).

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) then sought to broke with tradition for the bidding process in 2017 when they decided that rather than having only one winner for each round, they radically awarded two quality bids in the form of Paris and Los Angeles to host the 2024 and 2028 Summer Olympics respectively (Grohmann 2017). Subsequently, the bid process was tweaked so that they would work with a preferred candidate, which Brisbane, Australia was selected to be the frontrunner to host the 2032 edition of the

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Summer Olympics (Westcott and De la Fuente 2021). This was the first time a preferred candidate option has been utilized, and if the city (and region) demonstrates its ability via a comprehensive report by the end of 2021, it would be awarded the hosting rights, and thereby have the longest lead time of any host city to prepare for the Games. However, very little is known about the effect of a preferred candidate in the context of the Olympic movement, since this is the first time it has been introduced. Given the novelty of this approach, the research question of interest is:

> What advantages accrue to a preferred candidate in terms of shaping the Olympic movement, especially in an Asia Pacific context?

Mega-event planning, the Olympic bidding process and the 2032 games

Mega-events refer to large-scale occurrences of any event that requires considerable planning and preparation to ensure that desired goals are met (Muller 2015a). Due to the sheer scale and complexity of mega-events such as the Olympics, there is a heightened level of coordination and inter-relatedness required of stakeholders working across different roles and functions concurrently (Gaffney 2013). Correspondingly, mega-event planning is akin to managing a large-scale project with numerous moving parts. As such, mega-event planning starts by conceptualising the event and its different aspects in a documented form to provide some tangible, written narrative so as to get the different stakeholders on board with the essence of what the event entails (Kassens-Noor 2016). To a mega-event like the Olympics, this first comprehensive document arguably exists in the form of an Olympic bid (Hautbois, Parent, and Seguin 2012; Hiller 2000; Strittmatter 2016).

An Olympic bid therefore epitomises the utopia outcomes desired by organisers and what the mega-event will mean for its communities (Kassens-Noor and Lauermann 2017; MacAloon 2016). For this reason, numerous studies have examined Olympic bids to investigate the legitimacy of such bids towards the city's long term outcomes, how stakeholder groups have supported or resisted the hosting of the Games, and wider political agenda associated with hosting intentions (Carey, Mason and Misener 2011; Law 2004; Swart and Bob 2004). Likewise, there is also a body of literature surrounding how successful bids have been awarded (see for instance Haugen 2005; Maennig and Vierhaus 2017; Persson 2002), and others who have painted a more nuanced picture explaining plausible reasons for the lack of success (Bandyopadhyay 2014; Leopkey, Salisbury, and Tinaz 2021). All the same, an Olympic bid is an important milestone in terms of urban and sporting affairs, because it then sets the scene for subsequent actions and plans to be developed or abandoned (Alberts 2009; Oliver 2011; van Dijk and Weitkamp 2014). As such, there is significant campaigning to get all stakeholders on board to endorse a destination's Olympic bid. Some organisers allude to the city's track record of hosting successful sporting or other mega-events, and thereby galvanising the community to throw their support behind the bid (see for instance Hu and Henry 2016; Mackay 2012; Schnitzer et al. 2019).

To the IOC, Summer Olympics venues are rotated across continents so that the Games feature in different regions, allowing for the wider reach and sporting legacies to demonstrate its impact around the globe (Kidd 2013). In this space, there remain several candidate cities vying for the ultimate prize to be able to host the edition of the Olympic Games once

the bidding window is open. Prior to 2019, each city's bid goes through a few rounds of voting, before the winner is announced as the location that has gathered the most votes among the IOC's national delegations. As such, jostling to be the outright winner from among competing Olympic bids has been mired in controversy. Political factions and allegations of vote-buying and nepotism have surfaced, because the stakes for winning are often tied to election promises and attempts to take the destination to the world stage (Rivenburgh 2002; Strohmayer 2013). Amidst this backdrop, there has been a decrease in willing destinations to enter a bid because numerous past editions have reportedly exceeded the budget, leaving cities in significant debt (Contreras and Corvalan 2014; Scherer 2011).

However, that all changed in 2019 when the IOC moved to alter the bidding process to reduce the costs and times associated with its past approaches, and instead offer a more streamlined mechanism to fast-track quality bids (Morgan 2019). Widely known as Agenda 2020, the importance of the revised bidding process aimed to streamline the timeframes and resources required to host the Games and reduce unnecessary wastage when numerous destinations put together their competitive bids knowing that there was only going to be one outright winner (dos Santos et al. 2021). Correspondingly, Agenda 2020 was devoted to sustainability and legacy outcomes, and aimed at allowing destinations to pre-test and self-evaluate their readiness to host the Games (Brynildsen and Parent 2021). This then led to the announcement of the 2024 and 2028 bids to Paris and Los Angeles, before what is now known as the 'preferential bid' was granted to Brisbane in its 2032 bid. In other words, the Olympic movement has changed from what is a pitched approach by competing bids to more of a mentored approach when the IOC has shortlisted cities as hosts. Such a managed process perhaps offers more guidance and collaborative outcomes to better align the Olympic movement with the interests of a host city. Brisbane 2032 therefore offers a unique context to examine how the Olympic movement is shaped in a preferential candidate landscape as compared to previous Asia Pacific host cities.

The Olympic Movement within previous Asia Pacific host cities

The Asia Pacific region has played hosts to several of the Olympic games, and more importantly the impending Tokyo 2020 Summer games. Table 1 denotes where the Olympic games (Summer, Winter and Youth editions) have featured within the Asia Pacific continent.

Table 1. Olympic Games hosted in Asia Pacific.

Year	Summer Olympics City and Country
1956	Melbourne, Australia (co-hosted with Stockholm, Sweden)
1964	Tokyo, Japan
1988	Seoul, South Korea
2000	Sydney, Australia
2008	Beijing, China
2020 (postponed to 2021)	Tokyo, Japan
Year	Winter Olympics City and Country
1972	Sapporo, Japan
1998	Nagano, Japan
2018	Pyeongchang, South Korea
2022	Beijing, China
Year	Youth Olympics City and Country
2010	Singapore
2014	Nanjing, China

These 12 editions of the Games offer destinations an opportunity to showcase the Olympic movement across their landscapes and communities and have received scholarly attention to unpack unique nuances associated with each context. Nevertheless, there have been several attempts to analyse the opening ceremony of the Olympics, where this is often the first public display of how the destination illustrates its hospitality and creating a welcoming presence to the world (Davison 1997; Housel 2007; Larson and Rivenburgh 1991). Such opening ceremonies are also akin to a (re)presentation of sporting diplomacy, by extending a country's soft power approach to others, and utilizing the Games as a tool for peace and economic prosperity, among other agenda (Chen, Colapinto, and Luo 2012; Lee and Yoon 2017). The Olympic peace movement is arguably best epitomized by a unified Korean peninsula contingent at the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics, where North and South Korean athletes competed under one banner as a powerful symbolic gesture (Min and Choi 2019).

While there are noble intentions to showcase the Olympic movement in the Asia Pacific (and elsewhere), the previous and upcoming hosts as identified in Table 1 also encountered problems of their own. For instance, violence broke out between Hungarian and Russian water polo players at the Melbourne 1956 Olympics due to the political landscapes that were happening between the two countries (Rinehart 1996). Likewise, the iconic status of the Olympics can be shadowed by wider geo-political agenda, as witnessed in terms of protests against China's human rights records at the 2008 Olympics (Brownell 2012; Gao 2010). Likewise, the 2018 Pyeongchang edition of the Games was also the spark for the ban on Russia competing under its flag for two years at the Olympics due to the number of athletes failing doping tests (Altukhov and Nauright 2018). On a broader scale, the exorbitant costs of hosting the Olympics have also led to some stakeholders showing resistance to potential bids from their countries (Bason and Grix 2018). Evidently, the Olympic movement, while aspirational and noble, has its detractors because of the landscape in which the costly bids are compiled without necessarily having clear legacy outcomes (Searle 2002; Tomlinson 2014).

There are also important parallels to be drawn between the Brisbane 2032 bid and the Sydney 2000 Olympics. Sydney was the first edition of the Games in the new millennium and ushered a new era for the Olympic movement in terms of establishing fresh priorities and guidelines to sustainability and legacies (Briese 2001; Chalkley and Essex 1999; Garcia 2004; Lenskyj 1998; McManus 2004). Yet, these aspirations were not without their setbacks and challenges, especially when endeavouring to reconcile and converge racial and ethnic fault lines prior to the Games (Elder, Pratt, and Ellis 2006). The complexity of the Sydney 2000 bid was at that time there was yet to be a clear, explicit notion of what being Australian was in terms of a national identity, and so the intent of the Games was to showcase and celebrate the diversity, and more pertinently to align the nation with First Nations, or Indigenous persons in light of its troubled past (Berry 2013; Magdalinski 2000). In addition, the Sydney 2000 bid was one of the earliest Games edition that featured the two-stage applicant city/candidate system and led to the professionalisation of the bid consulting sector emerging from the organising committee (Cashman and Harris 2012). This meant that with prior knowledge, the Sydney 2000 bid was a frontrunner in comparison to other potential candidate cities because of its role and influence on shaping the future of the Olympic priorities entering the new millennium (Frawley and Toohey 2009).

The context of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic bid

This backdrop of the Olympic movement then turns the attention to the new bidding process that shortlists candidature cities into a preferential bid. In the case of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic bid, the IOC announced that the city will be the preferred bid in February 2021, even though there were other competitors such as Indonesia, India, Qatar, and a North/South Korea joint bid (Mark 2021). This caught many of the other cities unaware, with some surprised at the timing of the announcement when the Tokyo Olympics was still battling the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the seeds for the Brisbane 2032 bid were already sown when historical records point to an unsuccessful Olympic bid in 1992 (Nancarrow 2012). Then, the relative success of the Sydney 2000 Games provided a valuable blueprint to build on a sporting model that is primed on minimizing excessive capital infrastructure, but rather on redevelopment of existing available sporting facilities (Rowe 2012). As such the Brisbane 2032 Olympic bid gathered momentum and led to widespread governmental support to lobby for the Games to return to Australian shores (Holmes 2020).

The inception of the Brisbane 2032 bid fits into the wider Olympic movement evolutions that seek to create a more sustainable, and inclusive landscape for sport. Some of these wider Olympic initiatives include the Agenda 2020, launched in 2014 that consists of 40 recommendations in an attempt to future-proof the Olympic movement and protecting the integrity and values of sport in society (Thorpe and Wheaton 2019). Then, Agenda 2020 + 5 was subsequently launched to leverage on digital capabilities, sustainable development, and resilience in light of the COVID-19 pandemic (Nicoliello 2021). These objectives then lend a valuable vantage point to examine the Brisbane 2032 proposal planned entirely under this new bidding system, and extract points of difference to elucidate how a preferred candidate option may be a more sustainable form of hosting for future editions of the Games, building on the work of Schnitzer and Haizinger (2019).

It must be acknowledged that the Brisbane 2032 bid is not without its critics. Other potential bids contended that they should at least be given an adequate opportunity to present their case before the IOC committee, prior to any potential decision to 'shortlist' candidates (Matthey 2021). In addition, the role of John Coates, President of the Australian Olympic Committee and Vice-Chairman of the IOC who was instrumental in establishing the new bid process may raise concerns as to conflict of interests (Panja 2021). These complexities exist in other mega-events as well (such as the FIFA World Cup), though there is yet to be absolute clarity as to how the Olympic movement should proceed to ensure that full objectivity can be ascertained.

Method

Content analysis was used as the method of choice in this research. In this paper, content analysis refers to the use of official documents put together by government agencies and other steering committees that acted as advisory groups in the lead up to the preferred bid announcement in February 2021. The use of content analysis for the Olympics provides a credible and tangible means of assessing strategic intent to the Olympic Movement and has been employed elsewhere in prior studies (Lauermann 2016a). However, other scholars

have often adopted content analysis through the framing of media messages such as in newspaper reports (see for instance Kim, Choi, and Kaplanidou 2015; Zeng, Go, and Kolmer 2011). In contrast, this paper focuses on unpacking the Olympic Movement through bid documentation, which offers a new perspective for content analysis, as evidenced in prior studies (Chu 2016; Kozlowska 2014; Leopkey, Salisbury, and Tinaz 2021; Schnitzer and Haizinger 2019). Then, following the selection process of related documents employed by Schnitzer and Haizinger (2019), the following material formed the basis upon which the analysis was conducted:

1. Council of Mayors South East Queensland – 2032 SEQ Olympic and Paralympic Games Feasibility Study (February 2019)
2. Premier of Queensland Official Visit to Switzerland (September 2019)
3. Queensland Government 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games Value Proposition Assessment Executive Summary (February 2020)
4. IOC Feasibility Assessment – Olympic Games Brisbane (February 2021)
5. Committee for Brisbane–Brisbane 2033: Our Olympics and Paralympics Legacies (March 2021)

Importantly, these five documents lent independent stakeholder perceptions and evaluations of the Brisbane 2032 bid, thereby offering a triangulation approach to content analysis, and a mechanism to reduce subjectivity, bias and enhance overall validity and reliability of the project, as suggested by other scholars (Bason and Grix 2018). Collectively, these five documents provide a rich base of contents to examine the intricacies of the Olympic Movement within a preferred candidature bid and offers a starting point to address the research questions of interest.

Findings and discussion

The findings are structured based on the work of Schnitzer and Haizinger (2019), where the relevant documents are evaluated against the Olympic Movement into six broad categories:

- Shape the bidding process as an invitation
- Evaluate bid cities by assessing key opportunities and risks
- Reduce the cost of bidding
- Include sustainability in all aspects of the Olympic Games
- Reduce the cost and reinforce the flexibility of Olympic Games management
- Maximize synergies with Olympic Movement stakeholders

The intention is to map the Brisbane 2032 relevant documents to the Olympic Movement in these categories, so as to excavate what areas are prioritized, and other areas of improvement. The summarized findings of the six above-mentioned categories from analysing the documents are presented in Table 2. These will then be separately discussed in the subsequent sections

Table 2. Brisbane Olympics 2032 relevant bid documents mapped against the Olympic Agenda 2020.

	Council of Mayors South East Queensland–2032 SEQ Olympic and Paralympic Games Feasibility Study	Premier of Queensland Official Visit to Switzerland	Queensland Government 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games Value Proposition Assessment Executive Summary	IOC Feasibility Assessment–Olympic Games Brisbane	Committee for Brisbane–Brisbane 2033: Our Olympics and Paralympics Legacies
Shape the bidding process as an invitation	Assumes that the Games can be hosted in the region	Occurs at a stage where the region is shaped as a favorite to host the Games	Considers the scenario that a bid will occur for the 2032 Games	Explains the circumstances leading to the invitation to bid	Treats the 2032 Games as an awarded bid
Evaluate bid cities by assessing key opportunities and risks	Considers the opportunities and risks associated with hosting the Games in the region	Acknowledges that any full bid must contain the opportunities and challenges	Focuses in its entirety on the scenario of hosting the Games in the region	Undertakes a criterion-based assessment of the opportunities and risks of hosting the 2032 Games in Brisbane. Asserts that a mid-size sponsorship market could be a potential challenge to hosting the Games	Emphasizes the capabilities of the region to host the Games
Reduce the cost of bidding	Identifies the streamlined process associated with the new bid format and timelines	Alludes to the Agenda 2020 and New Norm as frameworks to reduce operating Games' costs	Claims that the Games will be held at net zero costs to the hosts, and instead leveraging on existing infrastructure, as well as temporary facilities	Recommends the use of existing facilities, especially those in other regions to reduce/eliminate the upfront costs of construction	Promotes a cost effective public transport system that caters to event connectivity
Include sustainability in all aspects of the Olympic Games	Focuses on transport and mobilities issues as a key agenda. Other priorities include repurposing Games accommodation for affordable housing futures, and inculcating green building design and planning	Reiterates that any bid must align with the sustainability initiatives of the Games	Adheres to the sustainability mantra of the Games such as Agenda 2020 and the New Norm, including positive outcomes from hosting the Commonwealth Games 2018. Emphasizes food security, housing affordability, and job creation as sustainable outcomes	Augments economic (jobs, tourism growth and trade exports), socio-cultural (housing, health and wellbeing, and event activation), and environmental positive impacts (becoming a benchmark for future Olympics)	Amplifies the importance of alignment to First Nations' cultures. Promotes the prospect of the first carbon neutral Games
Reduce the cost and reinforce the flexibility of Olympic Games management	Estimates the direct financial costs at A$400 million (approximately USD$300 million) to host the Games. Explores options for temporary venues that can be collapsed and reused elsewhere. Investigates the use of ridersharing/shared mobility transport options. Uses of Airbnb to supplement accommodation requirements	No mention in document	Decentralizes the hosting of Games to a range of destinations, and as such facilitating a wider multiplier effect	Duplicates existing resources such as the Gold Coast Satellite Village as a potential Games Village following the practices of the Commonwealth Games 2018, as well as other regions such as the Sunshine Coast	Devotes attention to both Olympic and Paralympic access to existing Games infrastructure
Maximize synergies with Olympic Movement stakeholders	Collaborates with other sporting associations and venues to utilize infrastructure. Integrates media providers' requirements at a centralized media centre. Consolidates energy guidelines through a Games Energy Council	No mention in document	Dialogues with various stakeholders on an ongoing basis to rally support for the Games	Fosters dialogues with Airbnb to create additional accommodation inventory. Expands capacity needed for public transport and connectivity to the Games venues	Works across a diverse range of stakeholders in a quadruple helix model

Shape the bidding process as an invitation

With the exception of the IOC feasibility assessment (Document 4), the remaining four documents made the assumption that the Games would be hosted in the Brisbane region and set out to make their own business case on how this could be brought to fruition. This was particularly evident in Documents 2 and 3, which alluded to the advantageous position that the region enjoyed in terms of the new Olympic agenda and how these could be realistically achieved in 2032. Across the five documents analyzed for the purpose of this study, there were repeated claims made about how Brisbane could offer a cost neutral Olympic Games through the IOC funding and other revenue streams. Hence, even though the Games are suggested to cost in the region of A$4.5 billion, there is widespread optimism that the 2032 edition of the Games can justify the hosting of the sporting highlight in Brisbane. Importantly, these analyses are aligned to the essence of the IOC reforms, that seek to make the hosting of the Games more affordable and sustainable in the long term. The tenet of the Brisbane 2032 bid is on upgrading of infrastructure, where few sporting stadiums will need to be constructed. The IOC Feasibility Assessment (Document 4) also highlights the strong economic stability of Brisbane and Australia as a country as a safe indicator that the Olympic Games are positioned in a region that can be delivered successfully in a sports-centric community. Collectively, these documents reveal how the new Olympic movement reforms to solicit invitations to bid can quickly collate the relevant stakeholders to mount a strong business case to host the Games, and put in place the necessary dialogues, objectives and timelines in order to deliver a centralised approach to bringing outcomes to fruition, as advocated elsewhere (Shimizu 2014). Importantly, these aspirations and stretch targets need to come under a centralized unit, which has been added to current ministerial portfolios in the Queensland Government (Hevisi 2021).

Evaluate bid cities by assessing key opportunities and risks

The five documents covered a range of opportunities and risks for the region in hosting the 2032 edition of the summer Olympics. Document 4 in particular undertook a comprehensive criterion-based assessment of the region, and ascertained that for political, economic, social and environmental reasons, Brisbane is in an extremely strong position to host the 2032 Games. This was supported elsewhere in the four other documents that emphasized Brisbane's track record in hosting mega-, and sporting events in recent times, such as the 2018 Commonwealth Games. The availability of existing infrastructure and venues provide a valuable inventory of facilities needed for the scale of the 2032 Brisbane games that can be dispersed across different regions outside of the capital city in Queensland. These venues tap into the already entrenched sporting landscapes that the state enjoys. Such a dispersed model of the competition ensured that athletes, spectators, and other stakeholders could reach out to different communities over the course of the event, thereby extending the multiplier effect. As such, the Olympic Movement goes beyond just the journey of the Olympic torch prior to the Games, but also manifests into sporting legacies that extend to different levels of professional, or grassroot competitions. As compared to previous editions of the Olympic Games, the 2032 Brisbane bid appears to be the most diverse across its network of proposed venues, and ably served by new transportation hubs such as the new runways in Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast (which is slated to host a few

events) as well as current public transport developments such as the Cross River Rail and the Brisbane Metro. Other opportunities that have emerged in the past few months include the potential for Brisbane to launch into electric air taxis, thereby supporting the 2032 Games with additional options for transport and Games connectivity (Moore 2021). This ensures that the Olympic Movement can be activated over a wider spread of communities and demonstrate favourable impacts to address the criticisms levels at urban-centric Olympic hosts of previous years (Baade and Matheson 2016; Kavetsos and Szymanski 2009; Wood and Meng 2020).

Reduce the cost of bidding

As Olympic hosting costs continue to confront any bidders for the Games, the documents paint a comprehensive perspective of how the 2032 edition could reduce its financial costs that put additional pressures on governments and other stakeholders. In this space, Document 1 reminds a key stakeholder group – Mayors, of how the streamlined Olympic bid has already reduced the perceived costs of hosting the 2032 Games. There are also projections in document 3 that the Games will be at net zero costs to the region, by emphasizing that at least 80% of the Games venues are already established. Document 5 further contends that there are current public transport enhancements being made and so offer the anticipated scale and connectivity required to Games venues. Nevertheless, these documents are forecast figures based on prices at 2020 levels, with any rise in raw material costs such as sand or cement needed for the games make need to be factored in as the budget draws closer to the 2032 Games. It should also be emphasized that cost reduction/management can be a geopolitical tool for governments, especially when there could be at least another three election cycles before the 2032 Games arrive. This can be an important and yet convoluted landscape in a sporting, and high profile environment where national and state governments do not agree based on their political ideologies and differences (Snape 2021).

Include sustainability in all aspects of the Olympic games

Sustainability was a common feature across the documents. While sustainability has been undertaken by several of the other previous editions of the Games (such as the use of public transport mechanisms), the Brisbane 2032 bid instead focuses on under-investigated aspects of socio-cultural sustainability. For instance, the Value Proposition Assessment (Document 4) identifies the importance of sustainable food to be part of the catering experience at the Games. This refers to the sourcing of locally or regionally produced food, which has three main benefits – One, ensuring that the food is fresh; Two, costs are kept low as food travels over shorter distances; Three, ensuring that food quality can be maintained with the strict food regulations in the country. Such efforts build on an emerging body of work surrounding the Olympics, and addresses growing user expectations for sustainable food ecosystems (Hori et al. 2020). Sustainable food for the Olympics also has a ripple effect on economic and environmental legacies, as they create jobs and support a more conscious form of agriculture, which are also at the heart of the IOC's directive for the Games to deliver on its sustainable sourcing goals, published in April 2019.

Another feature of the Brisbane 2032 bid documents is focused on sustainable housing. This aspect of sustainability is largely attributed to the London 2012 Olympics that designed and undertook urban redevelopment to support affordable housing options post-Games, among other initiatives (Humphry 2020; Smith 2014; Watt 2018). Affordability is also at the heart of the Olympic Movement and is exemplified by the IOC's US$500 million sponsorship deal partnering with Airbnb for the next decade to provide a wider supply of accommodation pre-, and during the Games (Persio 2019). This alleviates the pressure on hotels and other service apartments due to the short supply and likely price hikes during the competition to cater to athletes, spectators, and other stakeholders. On the Value Proposition Assessment (Document 3) and the Feasibility Study (Document 1), there is the explicit mention that the partnership in Airbnb is actively being considered for the Brisbane 2032 Games, to complement the existing supply of accommodation types in and around the venues and the regions in which the Games will be hosted.

The significance of affordable housing is a key issue to Brisbane's growth masterplan as it continues to be perceived as one of Australia's most liveable cities (CUR 2018; Lynch 2015). After all, affordable housing is defined as the ability of individuals or groups to be able to have access to a dwelling within their standards of living (Abelson 2009). Therefore, the Olympic Movement in the Brisbane 2032 blueprint extends to vulnerable and marginalized groups in society that has a post-Games sustainable living legacy, offering fresh perspectives of how to address issues such as homelessness, as raised in the Committee for Brisbane Legacies paper (Document 5).

The Brisbane 2032 bid documents also embrace cultural sustainability in terms of advocating how the Olympic Games, and sport in broader terms, becomes a vehicle in the spirit of reconciliation the country, region, and city to its Indigenous and First Nations roots. The Value Proposition Assessment (Document 3), Feasibility Study (Document 1). The Committee for Brisbane Legacies paper (Document 5) goes further to present aspirational goals that the Brisbane 2032 Games will be the platform to celebrate how Indigenous and First Nations' knowledge is embedded into everyday lives, including appearing on wayfinding elements to educate residents and spectators on the rich heritage of the regions.

Scholarly literature on the Olympics and Indigenous matters have revealed very little insights, with arguably O'Bonsawin (2010) asserting the resistance to the Games at the 2010 Vancouver Games because of the contested land rights where the event was held. The fractious relationship with Indigenous sustainability again surfaced at the Sydney 2000 Olympics but was identified as a Games that brought Indigenous and non-Indigenous persons closer, where athletes such as Cathy Freeman winning her 200 m gold medal became a pivotal moment for Indigenous relationships in Australia (Gardiner 2003). The Indigenous movement gained momentum and was arguably the limelight of the successful 2018 Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast (see O'Shea, Maxwell, and Stronach 2020), paving the way for the 2032 Brisbane Olympic bid to also take this element of cultural sustainability into the next decade and beyond. These objectives are built upon an ongoing narrative of reconciliation, where since the 2018 Commonwealth Games, a range of government initiatives have sought to further recognise and partner First Nations in terms of driving further momentum and outcomes to showcase Indigenous identities. Related to the Olympics, Indigenous business forums have been run to galvanize operators supporting the Games under the campaign 'Yarning2032', as well as the appointment of a First Nations person to the organizing committee for the 2032 Games (Farmer 2021; Linden 2021).

The Brisbane 2032 Olympic bid also cast light on demographic changes to the Australian landscape, and possibly elsewhere in the form of an ageing society. As such, this offers a point of departure from past Olympic editions that appeared to position sporting legacies for the younger generations, to design environments that would enable children and youth to have greater access to sporting participation (Bauman, Murphy, and Matsudo 2013; Veal, Toohey, and Frawley 2012). However, sporting legacies have been foregrounded in the 2032 Olympic bid because like many other developed societies, Brisbane experiences improvements to living standards and therefore population shifts towards an ageing society (Stone 2018). For this reason, the pursuit of active ageing as a state agenda has found its way onto the 2032 Bid documents, to reframe the Olympic Movement as a catalyst for sporting participation in the elderly, as evidenced in Documents 1, 3 and 5.

Reduce the cost and reinforce the flexibility of Olympic games management

The related bid documents allude to a range of mechanisms seeking to alleviate the prohibitive costs of hosting the 2032 Games, as well as demonstrate the dexterity of the organizing committee. This is evidenced by a focus on temporary venues, an area that gained traction since London 2012, because such makeshift infrastructure is demountable and repurposed elsewhere. In addition, documents 3 and 4 reveal the intent to decentralize Games venues in 2032, and also leverage on available facilities such as secondary Games villages on the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast respectively. Document 1 also discusses the role of the sharing economy in areas such as ridesharing and short term rentals (e.g. Airbnb), that offer additional capacity requirements in transport and accommodation respectively. These are likewise aligned to the Agenda 2020 changes to support the Olympic Movement to become more cost-effective and less daunting for host destinations.

Maximize synergies with Olympic Movement stakeholders

The final aspect of the bid documents being analyzed investigates the maximization of synergies with other stakeholders. In this vein, the documents reiterate the need to have continuous dialogues with other sporting codes and associations to garner their support for the 2032 Games, and in turn, develop sporting legacies such as increasing women, youth and marginalized community participation in sport. There is also the indicative evidence to suggest a quadruple helix comprising governments, industry, residents and university scholars to foster innovative outcomes for the 2032 Games. Evidently, the success of the Games hinges on the ability of the organizing committee to canvas strong support to deliver the Olympic Movement and its corresponding outcomes.

All the same, it should be acknowledged that the findings presented in this section are projected strategies and actions seeking to realise the desired goals of the Brisbane 2032 bid and aligning these to the Olympic movement. As other scholars have argued, past Olympic bid documents do not always translate to the event, or post-event legacies. Nonetheless, the role of bid consultants – individuals or groups with significant experience in mega-event hosting and planning would be highly advantageous as they can then better inform the direction and timeliness of some of the proposed agenda items identified across relevant documents, as well as calling on the numerous stakeholders

to be involved, such as transport and accommodation providers (Lauermann 2016b; Muller 2015b).

Conclusion, limitations, and future studies

In conclusion, this research sought to examine the preferred bid accorded to the Brisbane 2032 documentation to the research question:

What advantages accrue to a preferred candidate in terms of shaping the Olympic movement, especially in an Asia Pacific context?

The research revealed several advantages of a preferred candidate to shaping the Olympic movement. First, a longer lead time allows the potential host city or region to realize desired objectives from both sporting and non-sporting fraternities. Second, the preferred candidate motion offers a more closely aligned partnership between the IOC and the organizing committee, reducing the unnecessary time and resources from other competing bids knowing that there can only be one outright winner to hosting each edition of the Games. Third, the preferred bid allows each destination to consider legacies in a more holistic manner, customizing relevant points or areas (e.g., Indigenous culture) to allow for a more inclusive and consultative approach to be part of the Olympic conversation.

The research is not without its limitations. As a conceptual piece, it will require empirical data to validate the propositions identified in the paper. Likewise, the research is framed from the perspective of a bid that still requires elaboration and structure to win the rights to host the 2032 Summer Olympics. These limitations notwithstanding, the paper charts some avenues for future studies.

Future studies could conduct cross-site analysis of different regions and their level of support to host the 2032 Games in Brisbane. Another stream of work may investigate the longitudinal attitudes when the bid is officially awarded, and then in the lead up to the actual event. Finally, some scholars could approach various communities (minority groups, Indigenous populations) to explore if, and whether hosting of the Olympics enhances their national identities of being part of the Australian social fabric.

Disclosure statement

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