Sydney Olympic Park
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Significant changes to skyline, ANZ Stadium and Athletic Centre.
The 10th anniversary of the opening ceremony of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, 15 September 2010, provided more than a chance for a celebration of ‘the best Olympic Games ever’.

It also provided an opportunity to compare the Sydney Olympic Park of 2000 with the precinct a decade later.

The changes have been gradual but taken together have resulted in today’s vastly different Sydney Olympic Park, particularly around the town centre area.

In fact, the Park has changed so much that some interstate volunteers visiting the Park for the first time since the Games got lost amongst the new parks and commercial developments.

The changes across the town centre fall into several categories.

Changes to existing venues in the aftermath of the Games

This is most clearly seen in the alterations to the Olympic Stadium (now ANZ Stadium) and the Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre, as temporary additions to increase spectator seating for the Games were removed.

In particular, the ‘wings’ at each end of the Stadium were removed, reducing the seating capacity to a still impressive 83,500 for a rectangular field and 81,500 for an oval field.

This also allowed for the construction of awnings over the North and South stands, which means that now most of this seating is under cover.

A similar reduction in capacity was made to the Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre, removing temporary seating for 7,000 and leaving permanent seating for up to 10,000 spectators, all of which have clear line of sight to the main competition or diving pools.
Australia Towers site before and after construction.
The addition of new commercial and residential developments

Keystones of these changes are the three Commonwealth Bank of Australia buildings on Dawn Fraser Avenue, which provide a workplace for over 4,000 staff. This development accelerated the growth of the town centre, providing new retail space and a spur to future development.

This has been complemented by the new commercial developments on Murray Rose Avenue, the Pullman Hotel on Olympic Boulevard and the Formule1 Hotel on Edwin Flack Avenue, all of which have added to the dynamism of the town centre.

This has been further enhanced by the construction of Australia Towers, the first of the Park’s residential developments, located on Australia Avenue. When completed, Australia Towers will comprise 685 apartments in a mix of one, two and three bedroom apartments located conveniently close to the town centre and the train station.
Changes to the common areas

A key change to the public areas is the completion of Jacaranda Square, the Park’s ‘town square’. Jacaranda Square, together with improvements and upgrades to other public spaces such as Discobolous Park and The Overflow (now Cathy Freeman Park) have delivered a significantly improved experience for the Park’s users, be they residents, workers or visitors.

The development of the Park’s common areas continues with new open space being created as part of new development adjacent to the Brickpit area.

Beyond the Park’s town centre, significant changes have occurred, with the development of new play spaces and public space in response to the overwhelming demand for space in Bicentennial Park.

The major development has been the creation of a new public park adjacent to the Parramatta River, Blaxland Riverside Park. This 19 hectare area has seen the creation of landscaped terraces, paved areas, parking for hundreds of cars and the opening of a popular cafe/restaurant by the river.
While developments at Wentworth Common and Wilson Park may not be as visible as changes to the Park’s major event venues, they too form part of the constantly changing mosaic that makes up Sydney Olympic Park.

The changes will continue, with major new developments scheduled to commence throughout the Park’s town centre in the next 12 months, while Blaxland Riverside Park is currently in the midst of a major development which will deliver a $7 million regional playground for the people of Sydney.

Sydney Olympic Park has played host to the world’s major events, and will continue to be the nation’s premier events precinct; however, it will continue to change and adapt to meet the needs of the people of Sydney for decades to come.