

> MELBOURNE / STOCKHOLM 1956 VENUES



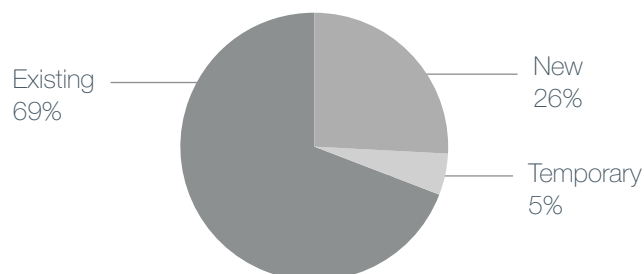
OVERVIEW

Sixteen competition venues were used for the Olympic Games Melbourne / Stockholm 1956.

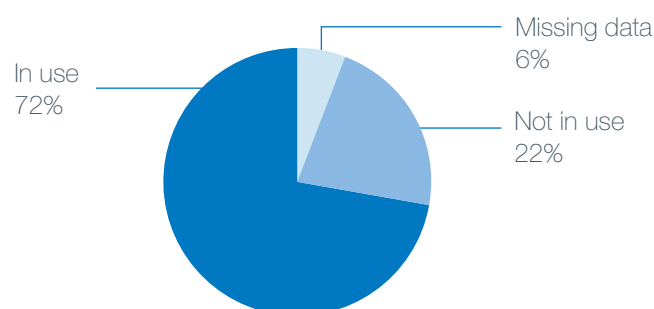
Three of them were in Stockholm, which hosted the equestrian competition due to Australian quarantine regulations at the time. Eleven of the venues were existing, one was temporary and four were new, two of which are no longer in use and one of which has been repurposed. Ten of the venues have been confirmed as being in use, with data unavailable as to the current status of the Royal Australian Air Force Station. The Australian city's remaining Olympic venues perform a variety of functions, from exhibition spaces and concert venues to iconic sporting stadiums and facilities used by sports clubs.

Stockholm's Olympic Stadium hosted the Opening and Closing Ceremonies for the equestrian events (held in June 1956), and the Melbourne Cricket Ground performed the same function at the Games proper. The Melbourne Olympic Village was built for the Games, while Stockholm had two Olympic Villages, both of which were existing. All three remain in use.

VENUE CLASSIFICATION



CURRENT USE (PERMANENT VENUES)





MELBOURNE / STOCKHOLM 1956 VENUES AT A GLANCE

Venue name at Games time	Venue classification at Games time	Use at Games time	Current status
West Melbourne Stadium	Existing	Artistic gymnastics, boxing	In use
Main Stadium or Melbourne Cricket Ground	Existing	Athletics, hockey, football, Opening and Closing Ceremonies	In use
Exhibition Building	Existing	Basketball, weightlifting, wrestling, modern pentathlon (fencing)	In use
Oaklands Hunt Club	Existing	Modern pentathlon (equestrian)	In use
Port Phillip Bay	Existing	Sailing	In use
St Kilda Town Hall	Existing	Fencing	In use
The Merritt Rifle Range or Williamstown Rifle Range	Existing	Shooting, modern pentathlon (shooting)	Not in use (demolished)

MELBOURNE / STOCKHOLM 1956 VENUES AT A GLANCE (CONTINUED)

Venue name at Games time	Venue classification at Games time	Use at Games time	Current status
Melbourne Olympic Swimming and Diving Stadium	New build	Swimming, diving, water polo, modern pentathlon (swimming)	In use
Royal Australian Air Force Station	New build	Shooting	In use
Melbourne Olympic Park Stadium	New build	Hockey, football	In use
Melbourne Olympic Park Velodrome	New build	Cycling (track)	In use
Melbourne Olympic Village	New build	Athlete accommodation	In use
Broadmeadows	Temporary	Cycling (road)	In use
Venues outside Melbourne			
Lake Wendouree (Ballarat)	Existing	Rowing, canoe sprint	In use
Stockholm venues			
Stockholm Olympic Stadium	Existing	Dressage, jumping, eventing	In use
Faboda Natural Reserve, Lilljansskogen (Stockholm)	Existing	Eventing	In use
Ulriksdal Race Track, Kapplöpningsbana (Stockholm)	Existing	Eventing	Not in use (demolished)
Stockholm Olympic Village (Karlberg Castle, Stockholm)	Existing	Athlete accommodation	In use
Stockholm Olympic Village (Näsby Castle, Stockholm)	Existing	Athlete accommodation	In use

> THE VENUES UP CLOSE

VENUES IN USE

MAIN STADIUM OR MELBOURNE CRICKET GROUND

The stadium opened in 1853 and was used solely for cricket and Australian football for many years. In preparation for the 1956 Olympic Games, a temporary athletics track was installed and a new stand built. The athletics track was removed as soon as the Games were over.

Known locally as “The G”, Melbourne Cricket Ground remains one of the temples of world cricket. It is also a major venue for Australian rules football, hosting the season’s showpiece match, the Grand Final. The MCG staged matches at the women’s and men’s Olympic football tournaments at Sydney 2000, and the opening and closing ceremonies and track and field events at the Melbourne 2006 Commonwealth Games. A venue for concerts and international rugby and baseball matches as well, it is also the home of the Australian Sports Museum.

The venue was renovated between 2004 and 2006. The stand built for the 1956 Games was demolished, along with neighbouring stands, to make way for a new North Stand, which took the stadium’s capacity to 101,000. A new roof was also added to the stadium. The vast South Stand, which opened in 1992 and has a capacity of 45,000, was modernised in 2012.

EXHIBITION BUILDING

Built for the 1880 Melbourne International Exhibition, the venue is still used as an exhibition site, staging events in conjunction with the nearby Melbourne Museum. It is one of the last surviving 19th-century exhibition buildings in the world and was extensively restored before being declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004.

WEST MELBOURNE STADIUM

Renamed the Festival Hall after the Olympic Games, it became a major concert venue, hosting the likes of the Beatles, Frank Sinatra and Red Hot Chili Peppers. Now heritage-protected, it continues to operate as an entertainment venue.

OAKLANDS HUNT CLUB

The venue now provides boarding for horses and hosts events such as horse shows and jumping and dressage competitions.

MELBOURNE OLYMPIC SWIMMING AND DIVING STADIUM

Now known as the Holden Centre, the iconic Olympic Swimming Stadium was built in line with innovative design principles. Listed in the Victorian Heritage Register, it remains an architecturally, historically and symbolically important building to this day.

A basketball, netball and concert venue after the Games, it was extensively redeveloped in 2003 – when it was returned to its original appearance – and again in 2012/13. It is now the training and administration base of Australian rules football club Collingwood.

MELBOURNE OLYMPIC VILLAGE

A village in its own right and designed as a new suburb that would help alleviate the state of Victoria’s housing problems at the time, the Olympic Village marked a departure from the tradition of housing athletes in dorms and hotels. Here, competitors and officials stayed in semi-detached houses and flats, while female athletes had their own quarters alongside the men, having been housed separately at previous Olympic Games.

Situated in the suburb of Heidelberg West, the village area faced social problems after the Games, and many of its 841 individual housing units fell into disrepair. A 1995 urban renewal and revitalisation programme transformed many of the dilapidated houses. More recently, the 10-year Olympia Renewal Project has seen the demolition of several hundred homes in the village and their replacement with modern public housing. The project aims to renew 600 units in all by 2022. The village has its own sports centre, primary school, shopping strip and community health centre, which is home to a training organisation and a legal service.

Further regeneration will come with the Heidelberg West Olympic Park Master Plan, which will redevelop the park – a training venue at the 1956 Olympic Games – and its sporting facilities, which are used extensively by local clubs and the community. The plan also involves the creation of an Olympic memorial garden to commemorate the park's history.

LAKE WENDOUREE (BALLARAT)

Located 75 miles north-west of Melbourne, Lake Wendouree is still used for training and hosts competitions in different sports, including rowing, canoeing, sailing and triathlon. Recreational sport and leisure activities such as fishing and paddling are also popular on site.

STOCKHOLM OLYMPIC STADIUM

Built for the Olympic Games Stockholm 1912, when it hosted the Opening and Closing Ceremonies and several competitions. In 1956, it hosted the Opening and Closing Ceremonies for the equestrian events, as well as all the dressage and jumping competitions.

Listed as a national heritage site and originally intended as a temporary wooden structure, this red-brick venue was built in the neoclassical style. It is still used regularly today and has been refurbished on several occasions.

Designed to accommodate 20,000 people when it opened, it now stages sporting events such as the Diamond League and the Stockholm Marathon, as well as major concerts. It is also used for cross-country skiing in the winter months, when three 430-metre tracks are laid out.

FABODA NATURAL RESERVE, LILLJANSSKOGEN (STOCKHOLM)

The cross-country stages of the eventing competition were staged at this park in the north of the city. An information panel commemorating the event stands in the middle of the park.

OLYMPIC VILLAGE (KARLBERG CASTLE, STOCKHOLM)

Formerly a royal palace, Karlberg Castle later became the Swedish Military Academy, a function it still performs today. Though the castle is closed to the public, the surrounding park is open to visitors. The 13 female competitors in the equestrian events were housed in a section of the building.

OLYMPIC VILLAGE (NÄSBY CASTLE, STOCKHOLM)

Situated 12 kilometres from Stockholm, the castle is now a hotel.

VENUES NOT IN USE

MELBOURNE OLYMPIC PARK STADIUM

In the 1960s, the venue attracted as many as 900,000 people a year for athletics meets and football matches. It hosted the 2001 IAAF Grand Prix final and the Melbourne Track Classic. The stadium was demolished in 2011 to make way for the Olympic Park Oval, a training ground used by Australian rules football team Collingwood, and a public sport and recreation facility.

MELBOURNE OLYMPIC PARK VELODROME

The venue hosted cycling events through to the mid-1960s but was later underused as it failed to meet the requirements for staging competitions. It was demolished in 1973, and a medical centre and car park were built on the site.

THE MERRITT RIFLE RANGE OR WILLIAMSTOWN RIFLE RANGE

The venue was closed in the late 1980s, and the site was redeveloped as a housing estate. The rifle range's original clubhouse still stands at the centre of the estate.

ULRIKSDAL RACE TRACK, KAPPLÖPNINGSBANA (STOCKHOLM)

The venue was a dirt course at Games time. The site is now occupied by a golf course and commercial buildings.

TEMPORARY VENUES

BROADMEADOWS

A northern suburb of Melbourne, 16 kilometres from the city centre, Broadmeadows hosted the men's cycling road race. Rectangular in shape, the 17km course included five steep sections and two fast descents, and it was completed 11 times by the riders. The race began on Pascoe Vale Road, though there are no longer any physical remnants of the event.

OTHER VENUES

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE STATION

There is no data available on the current status of this venue.

> DID YOU KNOW?

During WWII, the MCG was requisitioned for military use and occupied by the US Air Force and Marine Corps and the Royal Australian Air Force.

With its striking inverted-pyramid design, Melbourne Olympic Swimming Stadium was an early and influential landmark in the development of structuralist architecture in post-war Australia. Hailed for its brilliance and originality, it won many awards when it opened.

The Swimming Stadium, Melbourne Olympic Park Stadium, Melbourne Olympic Velodrome and the Hockey Field were all located in Melbourne Olympic Park, which was first used as a sporting and recreational area in 1860. Redeveloped for Melbourne 1956, the park now forms part of the Melbourne Sports and Entertainment Precinct, which is home to the city's major sports venues.