

# LEX LOCI'S TRAVELS

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*An irregular one-pager from The Public Land Consultancy*

## Lex goes for Gold At the Melbourne Olympics



**In what sport could our Lex win gold?**

**As he gets around Victoria's public lands there are a few spots where he can still hear echoes of the 1956 Olympic Games.**

At Ballarat's Lake Wendouree he can hear the shouts of coxswains urging on their eights, at the MCG, the starter's instruction 'on your marks!' At the Exhibition Building the groans of the weightlifters, and at the St Kilda Town Hall the clash of sabres and cries of *en garde!*

Around the streets of Broadmeadows he hears the grunts of road cyclists, and on Beach Road Brighton the panting of marathon runners.

**At the Olympic Pool (now a Collingwood training facility) he hears shouts in Hungarian and Russian, for it was here that those nations' enmity led to the pool's waters being tainted with blood.**

Some venues have now disappeared – sold off or demolished. The Williamstown Rifle Range (pentathlon) is now a housing estate, and the privately-owned Oaklands Hunt Club (equestrian) is heading in the same direction.

The West Melbourne Stadium (gymnastics) is privately owned. Here the infamous John Wren rigged boxing matches, before it was

transformed into Festival Hall. For Lex, the echoes here bring him Liberace, the Beatles, and Shirley Bassey.

**The Melbourne Olympics happened with surprisingly little hoo-ha. The entire event cost a piddling \$127 million, compared to Tokyo's \$15 billion.**

But what really grabs Lex's attention is the simplicity of [Olympic era legislation](#): the *Olympic Games Act 1955* was only 4 pages long. A couple more Acts were needed on the sidelines: the *Melbourne Cricket Ground (Guarantee) Act 1954* was only 2 pages long, and the *Firearms (Olympic Games) Act 1955* was a mere page-and-a-half!



Four decades later, the *Australian Grands Prix Act 1994* had 52 sections requiring 55 pages. If Melbourne were to host another Olympics, we would turn to the *Major Events Act 2009* which runs to 600 sections and is 200 pages long.

**Back to the question! In what sport might our Lex win gold? How about the sport of diving head-first into obscure legislation?**

**Perhaps not. Let's face it, even post-covid, it wouldn't attract too many spectators. ♦**

**See you there! Lex Loci**



*The 1956 Olympics were held in Wurundjeri, Boonwurrung and Wadawurrung country*