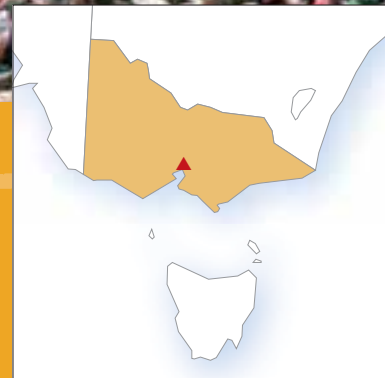


Rugby



Date of inscription: 26 December 2005

Melbourne Cricket Ground, Victoria

Few people ever forget their first visit to the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the MCG, or 'the G', as it is also known. As one steps into the vast stadium the magnetic atmosphere, left by the thrills and excitement of thousands of games and events, is almost tangible.

Widely recognised as the home of Australian sport, the MCG has contributed to Australia's cultural history through strong social links for the sporting community, its key role in the development and history of Australia's two most popular spectator sports, cricket and Australian Rules Football, and its special association with sportsmen and women who have excelled there.

It is one of Australia's most significant sporting stadiums, dating back to September 1853, when Lieutenant-Governor La Trobe made a grant of the 'Police Paddock' to the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC).

The association of the MCG with the MCC, the Melbourne Football Club, cricket and Australian Rules football, has extended over more than 150 years.

The MCC hosted the inaugural Victoria versus New South Wales first-class cricket match at the MCG in March 1856. The first appearance by an English cricket team on Australian soil occurred when HH Stephenson's XI played Victoria, beginning at the MCG on New Year's Day 1862. Tom Wills, secretary of the MCC and Victorian cricket captain, led an Aboriginal team against an MCC team at the MCG before 11 000 spectators in December 1866.

The first test match between Australia and England began at the MCG on 15 March 1877, with Australian batsman Charles Bannerman scoring the first century in test cricket in Australia's first innings.

Sir Donald Bradman, Australia's greatest cricketer and generally regarded as the best player of all time, had a truly remarkable record at the MCG. In the 11 tests he played there he scored nine test centuries in 17 innings, averaging 128 runs-per-innings. He also made 19 centuries in domestic first-class cricket at the MCG.

The MCG also witnessed the birth of Australian Rules Football when cricketer, Tom Wills, conceived the game with the aim of keeping cricketers fit during the winter season. In the mid-19th century Wills, who at the age of 24 was both Victorian cricket and Melbourne Football Club captain, was the most influential sportsman of his time.

The MCG is the home ground of the Melbourne Football Club. Ron Barassi played for this club from 1953 to 1964, and is widely regarded as the club's greatest player. He was inducted into the AFL Hall of Fame in 1996 and elevated to the status of 'Legend' of the game.

As well as international and domestic cricket and Australian Rules football, the MCG was the centrepiece of the 1956 Olympic Games, the first Olympics held in the southern hemisphere. The Melbourne Olympics were held during a period of extreme international tension yet became known as the 'Friendly Games' and left an enduring legacy not only for Melbourne and Australia but for the Olympic movement as well. At the Melbourne Olympics, thousands of spectators cheered legendary sprinter, Betty Cuthbert, as she won three gold medals at the MCG.

The MCG has assumed an identity beyond that of a sporting venue. Its importance to the community lies in experiencing the place through the events it hosts.

The MCG embodies Australia's love of sport and its inclusion in the National Heritage List ensures its unique values will be protected for the future.