

Does Jordaan's stadium faux pas reveal a secret agenda?

THE HUMAN Sciences Research Council (HSRC) has just published a book titled *Development and Dreams*, the output of research into the urban legacy of the 2010 Fifa World Cup.

It states that in 2004 Fifa found Newlands "suitable", but once the city said it wanted to build a new stadium in Athlone, Fifa "strong-armed" the city and government to locate it in Green Point.

The city had "no demonstrable need for a new stadium (for the World Cup) other than that the location shows the

city to its best advantage".

Given the secrecy that surrounded the World Cup bid, should we be surprised that the owner of Newlands, Western Province Rugby Union, is dumbstruck to learn the stadium might be demolished (Cape Times, July 20)?

Danny Jordaan may have been expressing a subjective opinion about a matter he has no jurisdiction over. But his untested statements confirm that the agenda of the government, host cities and the Local Organising Committee is to put a positive, if not unrealistic, spin

on the viability of the stadiums once the 2010 roadshow has left town.

What should Cape Town do with a facility that in all likelihood will be underused, and more importantly, how will we pay for its upkeep?

In a chapter titled "Initial Dreams and Sobering Economic Perspectives" the HSRC states that sports venues are not built for the purpose of kick-starting economic development. While acknowledging the potential for harnessing the "feel-good" aspect of games, the HSRC is concerned that the

tangible benefits of 2010 – economic development, tourism, poverty alleviation and unemployment – are overstated and the future costs detrimental to the economy. This is something we are all already experiencing in the higher cost of resources that affect, for example, the provision of housing.

Football has a relatively weak spectator base in Cape Town, so it's logical that rugby could be the anchor tenant of Green Point stadium. But Western Province Rugby is correct that

it makes no financial sense to relocate from a perfectly acceptable facility it owns to an expensive leased one that the government and Fifa forced on the city.

We should not be surprised if Jordaan's off-the-cuff statements about Newlands become the official policy of the city and government and an iconic sports venue is lost to cover up their folly.

The PDF version of the HSRC's book is at www.hsrcpress.ac.za or available from from the HSRC.

**THOMAS JOHNSON
LANSDOWNE**