

Letters

LAA headquarters: Sydney? Canberra?

ONE REALISES that the LAA President must perforce 'toe a party line' but it might be worthwhile to continue the very important debate on the location of Head Office, if only for the discussions that must take place during the 1980s.

It was certainly the feeling in the ACT — justified or not — that the debate on the office location was not as widespread or public as perhaps it could have been and if one refers to the main print forum of the LAA, *Incite*, then there was a distinct lack of full publicity on the purchase of the property in Sydney until the event had been well concluded.

Turning to the investment argument, it would be most interesting indeed to cost the economics of the Sydney property including the legal ramifications, costs of repairs and renovations, etc, with the current market value of the property in Canberra which was sold just before the property boom in the ACT and, in particular, in the suburb of Kingston where the property was located.

The UCLS (ACT Group) submitted a document to the Working Party indicating the economic benefits of location in Canberra, and these remain as valid as ever in our opinion.

The Canberra Times in a June 1981 issue indicated the recent movement of the Australian Council of National Trusts from Sydney to Canberra which constitutes the fifth national organisation this year to establish or announce its intention to set up an office in the ACT. These movements brought the total to more than 130 national organisations with a federal office in Canberra.

The question is why should the LAA be so different? One would sincerely hope indeed that the purchase of the property in Sydney does not prejudice future discussion and that it be conducted for all concerned on a more public level when the debate is renewed as inevitably it must be. *Colin Steele*
President, UCLS (ACT Group)

I, too, take up my pen with reluctance to enter into correspondence, with Jim Dwyer, LAA President, (*Incite* no 10, 19 June 1981) on the subject of the location of LAA Headquarters.

My criticisms were well informed as the ACT Branch has always been closely involved with discussions on the location of the Association Headquarters.

The third member of the Office Location Working Party was Brenda Gerrie, a member of the ACT Branch and General Councillor for 1980. In both roles she brought to me as President her concern and dismay over the operations of the Working Party.

On commencement she had an open mind as to the final recommendation of the Working Party but consultation between all three members of the Working Party was less than it should have been. As time passed it became clear that Brenda would have to submit a separate minority report, which she did.

Her detailed work on the Canberra situation was not covered adequately in the final work and Brenda asked for her name to be

removed from the Report before presentation to General Council in March 1981. This final Report was, by its own admission, not thorough and as such was not a suitable basis for an important decision.

It is difficult to see how the purchase of a property in Sydney in April 1980 could be regarded as only an investment when the Report of the Working Party, due in July 1980, could have suggested moving to Canberra as soon as possible.

The purchase committed the Association at once to a stay of some years in Sydney. An association as small as the LAA does not have the financial resources to purchase a property in Canberra and still keep one in Sydney. Is the Sydney market such that return on investment is able to be made by buying and selling a property within one to two years?

The facts relating to the purchase of the Sydney property are not well known to Association members. The purchase was reported orally at General Council in July 1980. The first notification of this transaction in *Incite* appeared in vol 2, no 1, January 1981: 'Be-

cause of delays in the Registrar General's Department over the Christmas break, it has not been possible to complete the settlement of the Association's new property. Details and a photograph have therefore been held over until the next issue of this newsletter when a date for moving will also be given'. These appeared in *Incite* vol 2, no 2, February 1981.

This is sparse information for the membership at large, especially as *Incite*, the Association's newsletter, appears fortnightly. Information supplied to General Councillors has been scarce and I respectfully suggest that the Executive Minutes are not the best method for the membership to be informed about any matter.

My letter was not written lightly but after consideration, and after consultation with the ACT Branch Council. It highlighted a matter of serious concern to this Branch not only about the matter itself but also the manner in which it was undertaken. The views expressed in that letter still stand.

Averill M.B. Edwards
President ACT Branch



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