



COMBINED PENSIONERS AND SUPERANNUANTS ASSOCIATION OF NEW SOUTH WALES INC.

Founded 1931.

Representing pensioners, superannuants and low-income retirees.

Consumer Protection Awards – 2002, 2003

20 August 2004

Our Ref: GLC.003

The Committee Manager
Standing C'tee on Public Works
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney 2000

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Inquiry into the Joint Use and Co-location of Public Buildings

The Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW Inc (CPSA) is a non-profit, non-party political membership based association representing the interests of pensioners of all ages, superannuants and low-income retirees. It has around 150 branches and affiliates with a combined membership of over 12,500 throughout NSW. Although it is based in NSW CPSA represents its membership and broader constituency at both state and federal levels.

CPSA takes an interest in issues to do with public buildings because a large number of our members and constituents are older people and people with disabilities and likely to use these facilities. Your Inquiry into the joint use and co-location of public buildings is therefore important to us. We fully endorse all aspects of the Inquiry's objectives of examining design, regulatory arrangements, and cost implications of the joint use and co-location of public buildings. We ask the Inquiry to focus on public buildings

provided at all levels of government – local, state and federal, as well as commercial/government partnership public building arrangements.

We are concerned that too often facilities used by our members and branches are disappearing, changing use, becoming too expensive or requiring exorbitant user insurance fees (i.e. public liability). The government's responsibility in community provision of public buildings is too often forfeited in favour of narrow rational economics. Public buildings are also left to run down, especially in the more needy neighbourhoods in cities and regional NSW. There is thus a need for more government audits of existing and proposed public buildings in respect to joint use and co-location. Inadequate standards in the provision of public buildings need also to be acknowledged by State and local government authorities (LGA) and adequate funds set aside to remedy this situation. Both the State and Local Government (LG) are accountable under social impact arrangements to ensure alternative and upgraded facilities are considered at all levels of development and redevelopment ((ref. *NSW Social Justice Directions Booklet* 1998 (Premiers Dept.) and *NSW LG Act Amended 1993* (Dept. of Local Government) respectively)).

The joint use and co-location of facilities should be a pillar of sound policy in State and LG statutes. All levels of government (Federal, State and local) should be required in any funding arrangements and grants agreements to meet joint use and co-location requirements where public buildings are at issue.

CPSA sees many advantages in co-location that are basic and proven successful over many years, including:

- Efficiencies of staffing and service provision
- Savings in initial building cost and on-going running costs (i.e. energy use)
- Engendered cooperation among user groups and management
- Greater accommodation of community and commercial groups
- Expanding the choice and diversity of facilities
- Public buildings can be more substantial in construction
- Energy savings

CPSA believes past experiences of governments in maintaining best practice in public buildings is critical for joint use and co-location of public buildings. We draw your Inquiry's attention for example to the work of past federal governments policies in this area (ref. *Australian Government Social Welfare Commission 1973* and *Australian Assistance Plan legislation 1972*). We understand other States have legislated for joint use and co-location of facilities ((ref. *Victorian Department of Infrastructure Facility Planning 2000* and *Queensland South East Region Planning 1998* (Queensland Government)).

All levels of government need to work cooperatively on the question of joint use and co-location of public buildings. This is required to ensure all people are not paying a price for government (all levels) inefficiencies and failures to provide a minimum standard of public buildings.

CPSA hopes all items in this submission will be taken into account by the Inquiry. If further information is required please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Ray Rauscher
Assistant State Secretary