

New HQ symbolises AFP's coming of age

A secure building with an open-plan work arrangement provides the best of both worlds.

The AFP's new headquarters in Canberra is helping members to share their experiences and workload in an environmentally friendly setting that puts a focus on operational activity.

The organisation is also streamlining its business practices and ensuring that technological advances are quickly and aptly applied. The move to the Edmund Barton Building has coincided with major organisational changes which has the potential to significantly assist in the enhancement of operational outcomes.

Two years after the relocation to Canberra's parliamentary precinct was confirmed, nearly 2000 members from across the capital have moved into the Edmund Barton Building.

Staff from several sites moved during May and June to their new location in the completely refurbished heritage-listed building.

Chief Operating Officer Andrew Wood, who had overall responsibility for the relocation to the new headquarters, said the move took place with minimal disruption to business.

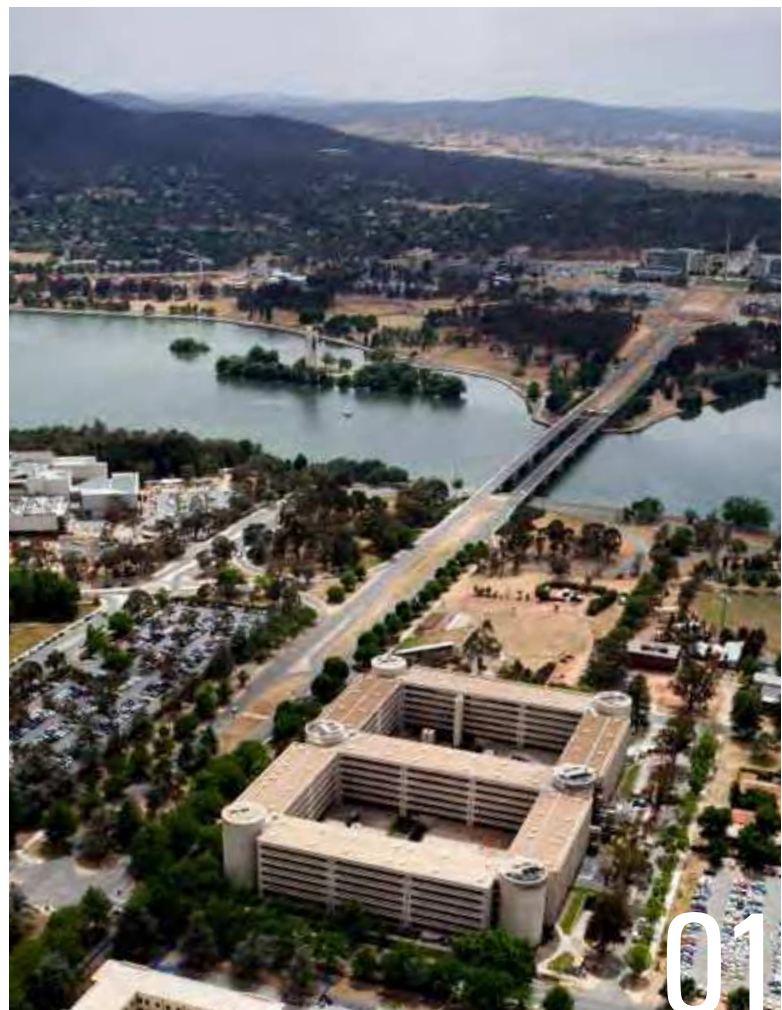
"The consolidation of 2000 staff into one building assists the AFP in realising its vision of bringing together its staff from across

Canberra into a single Headquarters facility," Mr Wood said.

"Co-location has major benefits to the organisation, from enhanced communication and collaboration to also saving costs."

The Edmund Barton Building was designed by leading architect Harry Seidler and constructed between 1969 and 1974. It is recognised as "a highly acclaimed example of the late 20th century international style of architecture" in the Australian Heritage Database.

01: Aerial view of the Edmund Barton Building.





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The five-storey building has strong horizontal lines and is constructed in a figure-eight pattern. Its seven wings are accessed from six service cores. These are the only parts of the building on the ground level, which helps to create a feeling of light and space.

The building's technical and design achievement and creative excellence are important features which justify the heritage listing.

Since the AFP committed to the new site in 2008, the building has been entirely refurbished and completely fitted out. The design principles behind both refurbishment and fit-out focus on flexibility, dynamism and collaboration.

"The theme of collaboration was a driving factor in the design of the fit-out and the refurbishment," Mr Wood said.

"This has shaped the interior design of the building, including its open plan design, the type of furniture and where it is placed in the building."

The modular design of the workspaces provides exceptional flexibility, allowing expansion and contraction of various areas as required, an attribute which should provide for the organisation's changing needs into the future.

Large break out areas and tea points are designed to encourage conversation as they are located near thoroughfares and meeting rooms. Most of the meeting rooms and offices are, in general, located at the ends of the building's wings, leaving interior spaces free from high walls. This has helped to create open and airy work spaces. There are no barriers between teams, which combined with the communal meeting areas and attractive breakout spaces, promotes a more natural flow of information than has previously occurred.

To meet ad hoc needs for privacy, high-pressure deadlines and to allow staff to work on short-term sensitive projects, a number of small rooms have been provided on every floor,

each equipped with a workstation including computer and telephone.

Various sized meeting rooms are provided throughout the building as well as informal meeting areas. Printers and photocopiers are located within utility rooms provided on each wing, with the aim of providing a healthier working environment.

"The AFP has targeted best environmental practice in the fit-out and systems in the building," Mr Wood said.

"Rain-water tanks have been installed to harvest rain-water for use in toilets and landscape watering. A key feature of the building and one of the attractions when the building was identified as the preferred headquarters option was the availability of natural light."

In addition to these measures, double-glazing has been applied to all windows in the building to improve energy efficiency and a new chilled beam environmental air conditioning system has been



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installed. Highly energy efficient T5 fluorescent lighting has been installed with movement detectors.

Security needs have also been incorporated into the fit-out, with improved access for investigators and other staff to seek and receive certain classified or sensitive information, either at their desks or in the secure areas provided for more highly-classified material. The top secret areas also have spaces for secure conversation, allowing an enhanced sharing of information when there is a need to know.

The location in the parliamentary precinct of Canberra also has advantages over the previous site of the AFP's headquarters in Civic.

Staff have reported the benefits of being able to walk to meet with staff from neighbouring departments and

agencies. The premium location is also being enjoyed by staff exercising during their lunch breaks.

Staff members have settled into their new building which is expected to meet the AFP's needs for at least the next 15 years.

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01 - 04: Interior and exterior features of the new AFP Headquarters.

05: The Sir Edmund Barton statue.

