

M.C.P. (M.I.T.)

110a Carrington Road,  
Randwick, N.S.W.

April 12th, 1960.

E.G. Whitlam, M.P.,  
Deputy Leader of the Federal Opposition,  
Commonwealth Parliament Offices,  
5 Martin Place,  
SYDNEY, N.S.W.

Dear Mr Whitlam,

If you are to succeed in convincing the electorate of the necessity for more public or social investment as opposed to speculative and trivial private investment, then it seems to me that you need to be able to explain in some detail just how increased public investment could raise real standards of living.

You may agree that investment in the building of new communities, including housing, schools, roads, sewers, public transport, community centres and so on, is the most direct way of increasing the quality of life through public investment.

I draw your attention to the fact that the present Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement is due to expire in 1961. The present Government may try to kill the Agreement entirely; at best, it may renew it on its present miserable terms.

A positive policy, on the other hand, would radically redraw the present Agreement, both quantitatively and qualitatively. A positive policy would take away the present narrow and exclusive emphasis on mere isolated houses, and place the emphasis on the quality of the neighborhoods, the environments in which people live and work and play. American National Housing Policy is already more enlightened on this issue than is Australian practice. At least the U.S. has adopted a detailed and positive housing policy, which has been written into housing and planning legislation since 1951. This policy reads in part that the welfare of the nation requires "a decent home and a suitable living environment" for every American family.

Federal aid for housing in the U.S. is broadly

conditional upon serious and effective community planning at both the neighborhood and the city levels. This is in the interest not only of the pleasantness of the physical environment, but also, and perhaps more crucially, in the interest of sensible economic planning. For example, what use is a cheap Housing Commission house if the tenants have to spend five to eight pounds a week in transport costs to their places of work? This is merely one of a myriad examples of economic lop-sidedness which has resulted from housing being considered alone, without any attempt at integration with the real social costs of metropolitan development.

In the hope that you may be interested to know more about these complex fields of housing and urban development, I am sending you herewith a copy of a paper delivered recently to a meeting of the Sydney Division of the Australian Planning Institute. It is entitled "Recent U.S. Experience in Urban Renewal and its relevance to Australian opportunities for comprehensive city-building".

If this letter and the enclosed paper arouse your interest in any way, I would be delighted to meet with you briefly in Sydney at your convenience to try to pin down more precisely the important political issues which I feel to be involved.

I am a professional city-planner and am ready at any time to contribute to the forging of positive policies in the fields of housing and planning, policies which the A.L.P. could use at the next election. I have spoken with Ted Wheelwright of the University of Sydney on this subject of policy research and discussion on behalf of the A.L.P. and he advised me to get in touch with you. I would be most appreciative of your reactions to my sincere, but possibly inept, attempt to make myself useful in policy matters.

Yours faithfully,

George Clarke

Enclosure

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