



## Award winners show the value of good design and an excellent location

### LINO IACOMELLA



WE RECEIVED two reminders recently about impressive advances in Canberra's built environment and what people value most in property today.

The RM Hope Building in Barton beat a field of high-quality nominations from around the country to be awarded the best heritage development at the 2013 Property Council of Australia/Rider Levett Bucknall Innovation and Excellence Awards.

After years of decline, and some time slated for demolition, the RM Hope Building was redeveloped into a modern, sustainable, high-performance property for the

Office of National Assessments. The building and its improvements blend seamlessly and effectively into the Barton landscape.

The winning entry in the University of Canberra's The Lodge on the Lake Competition is also a great example of elegant and functional housing design in Canberra. Just like the RM Hope Building, the winning Lodge on the

Lake Competition entry oozes Canberra style as the design blends into its lakeside location while delivering the services required of a prime minister's lodgings.

What is common in both these examples is the emergence of good design as a primary influence, along with location, in property decision-making, from housing to high-end commercial.

Property buyers and renters today are much more likely to choose places that fit their special needs. This is partly because there is a greater diversity of properties available, but also because businesses and households have a

greater variety of uses for their accommodation today. We are living longer and we need comfort-

able spaces to spend our extra leisure and work time.

Modern workplaces need additional amenities to attract and retain staff. Contemporary homes need to cater for busy households, group households, as well as the

growing number of people who work from home.

Good design is also sustainable. Rising energy costs are influencing businesses and households when choosing accommodation. You see this in the rising environmental

standard for modern offices and the attraction of higher-density housing around public transport.

Good design will attract businesses (or homebuyers), it's sustainable and it reflects a sense of place. How Canberra is that.

**Lino Iacomella is the acting ACT executive director of the Property Council of Australia.**

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