



(U) Letter from Oz

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Run Date: 05/09/2005

NSA'ers work around the globe. Here's a view of life in Canberra.
(U//FOUO)

(U//FOUO) G'day from down under! I am writing from Canberra, the capital of Australia, and the home of the Defence Signals Directorate (DSD), our Australian SIGINT partner. NSA is represented at DSD by Special U.S. Liaison Officer, Canberra, Ed Post, 8 SUSLOC staff personnel, and 12 integrees, working as analysts, mathematicians, engineers, and computer scientists. We're a mix of field rats and first-time field personnel, singles and families, all having a go in the land of Oz.

(U) Canberra's name is thought to mean "meeting place" and is derived from the Aboriginal Kamberra. Canberra is a planned city of 320,000 people, designed in 1911 by U.S. architect Walter Burley Griffin, where concentric circular streets, planted with more than 10 million trees and shrubs, are set on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin. Canberra's contrast of nature and suburban living has earned it the nickname "the bush capital," and many city attractions, such as Parliament House, the Australian War Memorial, museums and galleries are within walking distance of each other.



(U) Parliament buildings in Canberra

(U) Canberra is a sports-lovers paradise. Biking, walking and riding trails wind through the city and its bushland, while Lake Burley Griffin is the place for sailing, rowing and sailboarding. A number of professional teams call Canberra home, to include the Brumbies Rugby Union team, the Raiders Rugby League team (who knew there was more than one kind of rugby!), and the Canberra Capitals basketball team, led by WNBA MVP Lauren Jackson of the Seattle Storm, playing in her "off" season.



(U) Sheep grazing on a dry lakebed near Canberra. (Reuters)

(U) We have found Australia to be family friendly. The Canberra schools are good, and we've become used to seeing children in school uniforms, even those who attend public schools. Our children have snorkelled at the Great Barrier Reef, hiked through Cradle Mountain National Park, ridden horses along the beach, and seen shows at the Sydney Opera House.

(U//FOUO) After almost 3 years in Canberra my family and I feel very much at home; that doesn't mean, however, that we are not occasionally homesick. I miss fresh bagels and stores that stay

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open past 5:30 pm, and cannot appreciate Tim Tams*, Vegemite+, or beetroot slices on hamburgers. I do, however, admire the lattes, wines, DSD's biweekly happy hour, short commutes, and the more relaxed pace of life we have enjoyed in Australia. So, this weekend we'll put snags on the barbie, open a few stubbies, watch cricket on the telly, and continue to enjoy our fair dinkum Aussie adventure. Cheers!



(U) Notes:

*(U) Tim Tams are a cross between a chocolate bar and a cookie, and were named after a horse that ran in the 1958 Kentucky Derby. The standard pack contains 11 Tim Tams, one for each player in a cricket team.

+ (U) Vegemite is a black gooey substance made from malt extract, invented in the 1920's.

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DERIVED FROM: NSA/CSSM 1-52, DATED 08 JAN 2007 DECLASSIFY ON: 20320108