Speaker: MISS B. McDERMOTT (Hon. Secretary)

Subject: Antarctica from the Air.

Miss McDermott will show slides taken on the Qantas flight to Antarctica on 18th February, 1979.

She writes:

When the Qantas 747B, “City of Wollongong,” lifted off from Sydney International Airport for the 12 hour 2000 kilometre (1240 miles) flight to Antarctica, the cabin was abuzz with excitement. Despite the risk of seeing nothing but cloud, people were still eager. Some inexplicable magnet draws people to the diamond white wilderness with no sign of green. It is an immensity of ice which smothers land as large as Australia and Europe put together.

As the pilot brought the jumbo down to 1200 feet we watched breathless the grandeur of this cold terrain, an endless icescape of buried continent where explorer Douglas Mawson led his small Australian Expedition ashore in January, 1912.

The idea for this unique 12 hour flight came from Mr. Dick Smith, a young Sydney businessman with the self-attached label of “electronic nut.”

I was one of the fortunate 300 flight passengers able to make this flight with the added bonus of perfect visibility on 18th February, 1979, the day the Jumbo “City of Wollongong” was officially christened.