The book
"Feiko Bouman Architecture"
was launched on 29th May 2007
by Ted Mack
who made the following observations:

"I was pleased to be asked by Feiko to launch this book for two main reasons. Firstly, I consider it an honour because of the outstanding quality of his work and secondly, it brings back a host of personal memories of one of the most exciting periods of my life.

Feiko did some ten relatively major works as well as a host of other minor designs at North Sydney in the 1980s. While virtually all of this was completed on time and on budget and with enormous public approval, nevertheless we were both subject to a relentless personal attack for several years. That's typical of local government for you. However there is no question that Feiko's architecture was an important factor in my political success. But life is full of ironies. In the early 90s I was effectively expelled from the Institute of Architects for successfully defending the work of an architect who had always refused to join the Institute. Feiko typically had always taken the Groucho Marx defence – he wouldn't want to belong to any club that would accept him as a member.

For some seven years we had an architect-client relationship although most of the time it seemed to me more like co-conspirators against the forces of evil on the Council. I suppose it only worked so well because of our well-known reluctance to seek to get our own way all the time – but maybe there were other reasons.

The book itself is very Feiko. Brilliant but cryptic. It sets out an amazing number of buildings and designs for such a small architectural practice. It is the small practice that is, I believe, one of the secrets to the quality of the work. This has enabled Feiko to personally control much of the detailed design and construction that is often an architectural "no man's land". The small office has also meant the close collaboration with a number of extremely competent people.

The book is also breathtaking in the quality and consistency of the design. Feiko has a rare ability in that his work is generally appreciated by a very wide audience – other architects, developers, councils, the public, National Party types, inner-city "boomers", cricket followers and even Paddy McGuinness.

His work is not modernist or even post-modern; it is reminiscent of Art Nouveau and the work of Gaudi, Aubrey Beardsley and Toulouse-Lautrec. All flowing curves, colour and movement. It stands as criticism to the elitist approach of much of modern architecture and current architectural fashions which usually win awards but which the public, quite rightly, dislikes and ignores. Elitism always takes the view that anything popular must be bad.

The book devotes some 20 percent of its volume to the Stockman's Hall of Fame in Longreach – and so it should. Indeed many, if not most, of the other projects in this book probably owe their existence to Feiko's winning of the competition for the Stockman's Hall of Fame in 1979-80. I can certainly say that was the case for all of North Sydney Council works. There is no question the Stockman's Hall is Feiko's masterwork so far. Except for the Sydney Opera House, no other building in Australia has had such an impact on those who have seen it. In retrospect, I find it almost incredible that in the 1980s while he was completing dozens of major and minor works in North Sydney he was also supervising the construction of the buildings in Longreach, yet hardly ever mentioned it.

It is an irony that Feiko's two best-known projects – the Stockman's Hall of Fame and arguably North Sydney Oval are superb monuments to the history and

culture of outback Australia and to cricket. Yet they were given form by a self-styled stolen generation child transported to Australia in the 1950s to whom these cultures were double-dutch. It's true that while Feiko quickly adapted to Sydney surf culture, he frankly looks even more ridiculous than John Howard in an outback Akubra and I've been trying to interest him in cricket for 25 years with little success. ... ... "