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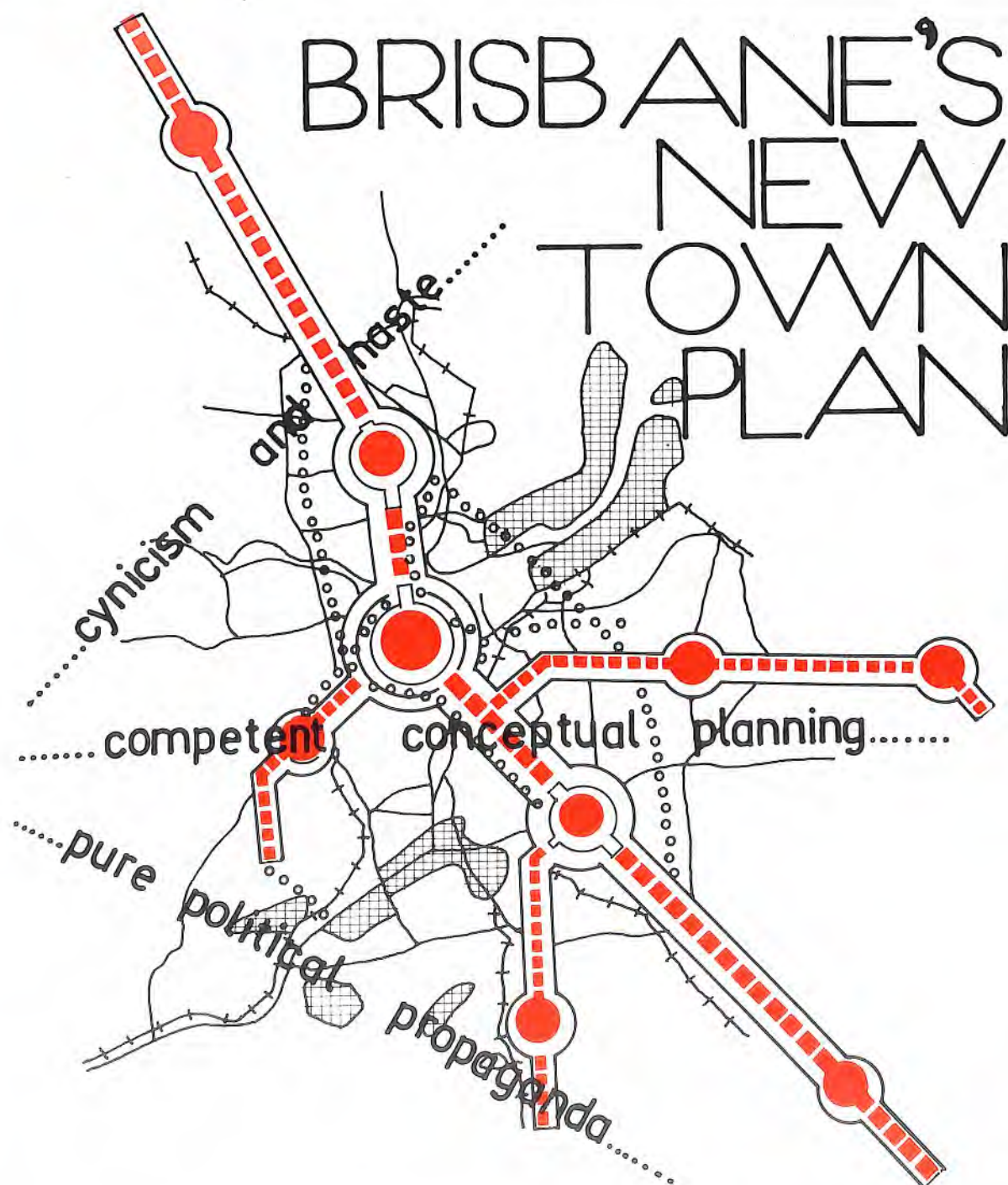
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## The coastal heritage

MANY recent *Community* articles have had to do with coastal areas and the pressures upon them. As wholesale operations, woodchipping and sandmining by multi-nationals are seen as major threats to amenity, but the total picture is much more complex.

Metropolitan influence is equally massive but more subtle. One aspect is technological, namely the location of power stations, steelworks, oil refineries and chemical works — from the Pilbara, to Hallett's Cove, Redcliffs, Westernport, Jervis Bay, Botany Bay, the Boyne basin — all around the map, in fact.

Another aspect is all too human. In many places, coastal weekend territory has evolved into suburbs. The traffic now streams through them on the one highway to newer territory beyond, with crowded caravan parks and levelled dunes. It does not stop there either. Melbourne people buy land on the New South Wales South Coast; both Melbourne and Sydney buy coastal blocks in Queensland. In time the metropolitan tentacles could strangle the entire east coast.

A coast is a narrow, finite strip, into which the bloated metropolis tries to squeeze itself on weekends and holidays. Arguing for public management to arrest undesirable developments, Dr Peter Fisher's article in this issue attempts to assign objective values to coastal landscapes. He implies that the very perpetuation of the Australian beach tradition could degrade our coasts irretrievably by sheer weight of numbers.

Moreover, as he points out, recreational 'connoisseurship' is being expressed by the increasing numbers of people who 'demand' pristine environments — bushland and waterways reached only by muscle-power. He asks, perhaps rhetorically, whether posterity will have wider choice of recreation to make up for degradation; the answer is surely that recreational resources are finite.

It is high time that the coast was treated as a single entity for 'linear' planning, and not as disparate chunks of land subject to the fragmented plans of local councils or the remote, ad hoc decisions of industrial, mining, and forestry interests.

Claire Wagner

## The Letter and the Spirit: Brisbane's Town Plan

BRISBANE'S new town plan went on public exhibition on February 28, and controversy has raged in the northern capital ever since. Nominally the product of five years' preparation (since the last plan in 1969) plus a further twelve months extension granted by the State Government, the town plan for the 1,200 square kilometre city was in fact put together only in the last few months before its exhibition.

The City Council started recruiting professional planners for the job at the beginning of 1974. It employed many of them on indefinite probation and then dismissed the director of town planning after the exhibited plan was completed.

In a feature article in the *Courier-Mail* the director subsequently described the internal administration of the Brisbane City Council as 'reminiscent of a bizarre mixture of Alice in Wonderland and the days of the mad Roman Emperors'. Three other members of a sadly demoralised Town Planning Branch have resigned and others are trying to escape.

The net result is an extremely interesting and as yet unresolved situation, but in many ways Brisbane's new town plan is a potentially promising document.

It reflects considerable credit on the Queensland Government in that the plan represents an attempt to comply with the well-conceived amendments to the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act which it introduced in 1971.

Department of Regional and Town Planning, University of Queensland

These amendments require the City Council to produce, amongst other things, a statement of intent setting out the aims and objectives of the plan and the means by which it is intended to achieve them. They also require a systematic survey of the physical, demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the city, including its traffic and communications pattern, and an assessment of the economic implications of the provisions of the plan.

On the face of it, therefore, the City Council was obliged to produce a comprehensive plan. What it did produce reflects a great deal of credit on the dedication and initiative of the handful of professional planners who did what they could in the limited time available.

They produced a structure plan based on a multi-nodal concept which, if implemented, could fundamentally change the future form of the city. They also proposed a concept of future urban zoning coupled with compliance with detailed development which could substantially reduce developmental lead times and minimise soaring land prices.

Another innovation provides for a community services contribution in the case of vertical subdivision into multi-storey apartments, thus logically extending the well-established obligation upon developers to contribute to open space when raw land is initially subdivided.

The plan also provides for the declaration of special environmental areas; it acknowledges the need to generate an environmental consciousness (while providing for formal environmental impact statements if the need arises); and, reflecting a change of emphasis which could significantly improve the public relations of town planning, it stresses the desirability of promotional as distinct from restrictive 'statutory' planning.

### Hasty preparation

Inevitably, however, the plan also displays all too many tell-tale indications of hasty and arbitrary preparation. (Some of the planning staff worked through the night on the zoning maps in the final week). It seems that the City Council sees the scraping together of a plan in time to meet the Government's February 28 deadline as the end of an unwelcome legal commitment rather than the beginning of a new era of enterprising planning. Critics see Brisbane's planning history repeating itself, notwithstanding increasingly vocal resentment at Council's authoritarian stance and its disdain both for professional planning and for public participation.

Meanwhile the State Government itself is in an interesting and somewhat invidious position. With very limited professional staff of its own, it is confronted with the massive job of evaluating what purports to be a comprehensive plan submitted in compliance with the detailed requirements spelt out in its own legislation.

While town planning in Queensland is

regarded as a local authority function, the Minister for Local Government must, under the Act, assume ultimate responsibility for the plan. He has the power to appoint a public inquiry. Not least, the Minister must consider and determine the thousands of objections which have been lodged since the plan went on public exhibition.

Objections have been lodged by the Royal Australian Planning Institute and other professional organisations. The objection submitted by the University's Town and Regional Planning Department attracted considerable publicity. It was signed by all members of the academic staff. Extracts may serve to illustrate the range and tenor of the controversy which the plan has generated.

### Professional objections

Amongst other things the Department objected to the exhibited plan:

- because the presentation of the various elements was such as to render the total plan almost incomprehensible and its implications virtually impossible to evaluate;
- because, contrary to the requirements of section 4(4) (a) (v) of the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act, the plan contained no economic assessment of its provisions;
- because, given the circumstances of its adoption unseen by the aldermen, of its questionable validity as a document purporting to express the intentions of the democratically elected representatives of the City of Brisbane;
- because of grave doubts as to the bonafides of Council's attitude to professional planning and its capacity to implement the plan as evidenced by the circumstances in which the plan was produced and also the extent to which the zoning maps were riddled with errors and inaccuracies;
- because, particularly in the light of its long-established policy of non-disclosure, there were no grounds for confidence in the exercise by Council of the various discretions it proposed to reserve to itself under the plan;
- because the plan contained no provision for, or any recognition of, the desirability of citizen participation in the planning proposal stages;
- because of the absence of any discernible expression of rational and coherent philosophy, and the dangerous mixture of elements of competent conceptual planning and pure political propaganda in the Statement of Intent;
- because of the absence of any proposals whatsoever in respect of the central city;
- because the plan contained no specific statement of philosophy in respect of transport and communications, particularly public transport;
- because the plan evaded any clear and unequivocal statement of Council's intentions in respect of public open space as distinct from enclosed and — for all practical purposes — private open space

to which public access would be restricted.

Amplifying its specific objections, the Department went on to argue that it was 'unacceptable in a democratic community that any such plan should appear to be determined by any one man and a coterie of unidentified non-elected advisers and not represent the considered opinion of the community's democratically elected representatives'.

On the question of the economic implications of the plan, the Department submitted that there was nothing to indicate whether Council had contemplated them. Proposed acquisitions for the purpose of open space and communication corridors, for example, while intimidating from the point of view of the property-owners concerned, were nevertheless meaningless and misleading if they were not supported by evidence of financial capacity to implement them.

Referring to the obligations upon private developers, it was strongly argued that, in any given circumstances, the performance standards and developmental conditions should be predetermined, publicly promulgated and predictable; and that, in order to avoid any suspicion of secrecy or preferential dispensation, there should be full disclosure of all development transactions by way of an annual statement of account itemising the nature and extent of developers' contributions.

In respect of professional staffing the Department claimed that, given Council's attitude to the recruitment and retention of professional planning staff in the past, its unexplained dismissal of the director of town planning on completion of the exhibited plan and the probationary status upon which other professional staff had been retained, it was impossible to have any confidence in Council's willingness and capacity to implement the plan on a professional basis.

### Participation

As for public participation, the Department asserted that Council had shown scant regard for expressions of community opinion on planning matters in the past and that, in any case, public inspection of the exhibited plan was, for all practical purposes, participation after the event. Better and more responsive planning would be achieved, and needless friction and misconceptions avoided, if provision were made for citizen participation in the formative stages of the planning process.

In the case of the central city, the Department took the view that the absence of any planning proposals could only be ascribed to a 'grave dereliction of responsibility or a deliberate policy of non-planning' which would prejudice the prospects of urban renewal and the attraction of new investment as well as the security of existing public and private investment.

Summing up, the Department argued that 'pervading virtually every aspect of the plan there is clear evidence of

cynicism and haste in preparing a collection of maps and documents which constitute token compliance with the letter, but not the spirit, of the City of Brisbane Town Planning Act. Given the time available to Council since 1971, this haste represents what can only be described as culpable neglect and wilful disdain for the public interest.

'We believe, in fact, that the grounds for objection to the exhibited plan are so numerous and so fundamental as to constitute a damning indictment of Council's willingness and ability to measure up to the planning responsibilities conferred upon it.

'... In the circumstances, we believe that public confidence in planning has been so shaken that, in view of Council's manifest default, the Minister should exercise his prerogative forthwith and temporarily assume responsibility for the administration of town planning in the City of Brisbane and the preparation of a thoroughly competent and professional new town plan.'

So much, then, for Brisbane's town plan as exhibited. The ultimate outcome remains to be seen. It is likely to be reflected in the Brisbane City Council elections in 1976.

### Benefits

One lasting benefit, however, could well be that public awareness of urban planning in Brisbane and public pressures to participate in the planning process have been stimulated as never before in the city's history.

As a contribution to the on-going public debate, this Department is staging a carefully simulated Public Inquiry into the Town Plan at the University on August 1 and 2 which members of civic and professional organisations and the community generally will be invited to attend.

*Members of the Department of Regional and Town Planning: Professor L. B. Keeble, R. A. Brown, P. D. Day, M. T. Fagence, V. Plawinski, P. N. Smith, C. A. Taylor, C. J. Taylor, B. M. Trevena. These people have between them 150 years experience of planning practice, with academic experience in Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Europe, United Kingdom and Ireland.*



# PUBLIC PLANNING FOR COASTS?

Peter Fisher

COASTS are very special — as wilderness, as recreational amenities. They are also prized for certain forms of agriculture and economic activity. It is the conspicuous conflict between these different uses, and their wide geographic dispersion that have led to the advocacy of a collective approach to coastal management.

What features distinguish coasts from other regions? In physical terms, it is their line geometry: an interfacing of land and water. Here the sea is the active ingredient, which links the various coastal regions into a close-knit system, with a more or less common climate, vegetation and soil type. It is also the medium through which a balance is struck between shoreline quality at different points.

Most places where land meets water are highly prized for recreation. But coasts — with the diversity of their ecological systems, their conspicuous climatology, their rich sweeping views, their wealth of opportunities for leisure, and the age-old fascination of the sea — are inimitable.

## Coasts as common property

Environmental resources conform to the economist's notion of *common property resources*: those valuable attributes of the natural world which can only be imperfectly reduced to individual ownership. Coastal foreshores and in-shore waters are common property resources: they have complex ecological systems, are rich in environmental intangibles, and rarely enter the exchange market. This also applies to coastal lands.

The usual way of limiting resources and making sure they are used most productively, is through the exchange between buyers and sellers in established markets. For coasts, as common property resources, this mechanism is clearly not operative, (even though there is some regulation through accessibility costs). Accordingly, to avoid misuse or over-use, coasts should be publicly managed.

## Congestion and pollution

Common property resources are susceptible to congestion, when an additional user imposes costs on others. These



spillover costs downgrade the resource, but not immediately. Each place has an ultimate carrying capacity, beyond which irrevocable damage is done but the user's *perception* of capacity is conditioned by notions of crowding. In terms of use, the ultimate capacity is quite elastic.

Congestion is to be distinguished from pollution. With congestion, all use a facility in much the same way, and each is damaging its quality for others and himself to the same extent (like a motorist who crowds other motorists on an arterial road). Polluters, on the other hand, abuse the facility, whilst others are adversely affected by the pollution. (The same motorist generates vehicular emissions, which impinge on local residents). Coastal systems are afflicted by both, sometimes in a way that defies this simple distinction. Further, congestion/pollution is exacerbated when an urban population bears upon a narrow recreational coastline.

## Land use conflicts

Viewing coasts as common property resources can help resolve planning conflicts. Coastline erosion is a natural process essential for the maintenance of the sand on beaches. However, its rate is sometimes distorted through human intervention in protective works such as sea walls. But these can degrade the beach, by cutting off the sand supply, and causing the removal of sand by storm wave back-reflection. In some cases this can permanently damage the clay base of the beach, weakening the beach as a buffer for the foreshore. There is an implicit conflict of interest between private-residential need and public-recreational need. As the beach system is a common property resource, management aims to minimise its degradation.

## Elitist and popular recreation

The more valuable the land is as a wilderness, then generally the richer the recreational experience it offers. This is especially true of the growing numbers seeking solitude and primeval settings.

While the essentially elitist character of this purist group eases the pressure on wilderness, there are signs that the connoisseur's attitude to recreation is beginning to filter down to the general

population. Increasing pressures on pristine surroundings can be expected. If this leads to damage, an area's attractiveness will be severely undermined, and pressures will leapfrog to untrodden areas, especially along narrow coastal strips. If the damage is irreversible, wilderness intangibles are lost forever.

But a policy which rations the resource has important welfare implications. If we restrict access to maintain recreational value for future generations, how should we reckon its present value? Perhaps it may be more opportune to allow it to be used for some more popular forms of recreation, now. This may result in damage which would disqualify it for future generations searching for pristine environments, but will these have a far wider choice of recreational outlets?

## Other coastal land uses

In Australia, sizable portions of the coast are given over to agriculture, much of it for grazing. With the exception of certain intensive forms (such as piggeries), agriculture conflicts least with wilderness and recreational uses. Further, grasslands are often a feature of natural environments. Farmlands can be an attractive part of coastal scene. This has been recognised by Californian authorities, who have purchased farmlands fronting their coastline, and leased them back to farmers on a long term basis.

Residential and industrial uses are much more likely to blight the landscape, interfere with farming, and generally degrade the coast. The construction of street grids and clearance of vegetation for residential development mar views of the sea and necessitate a costly infrastructure (with sewerage essential, if the inshore waters are to escape pollution). Industrial activity, depending on its nature, can be equally harmful. The provision of jobs for local communities needs to be taken into account. The needs and location of industries that depend on the sea should be assessed, and this also applies to power stations.

## Resolution of conflicts

Ideally, full consideration of the benefits and costs of alternative uses is necessary to provide a basis for choosing

between alternative combinations of activities. Unfortunately, there are significant problems here, not the least being the assigning of values to land that is not generally subject to the hammer of the market.

But these questions cannot be fully addressed until we decide upon the status of lands beyond the foreshore. Perhaps the most radical would be to define the land of the 'viewshed' — the land in view from existing coastal highways, and/or lands with a sea view — as a common property resource. A practical outcome would be the designation of the immediate coastal strip as National Park. Whilst this seems perfectly laudable and equitable, there are some localities where it would be extremely costly and would do little to improve the existing environment. There are sometimes private activities in the viewshed, instrumental to economic, social and recreational well-being, such as the fishing industry restaurants, shops, etc. Many seafront towns, economically dependent on the sea, would need to be excluded. There are also parts of the coast, such as that fronting cities, where the original ecological system is in large part dismantled. In the face of increasingly tight budgets, the considerable cost of acquiring and removing houses from viewsheds to re-create an ecological system, would need to be closely weighted against the worth of other projects.

## 'Viewsheds' as national parks

Nevertheless there does seem to be much merit in designating coastal viewsheds National Parks in regions where the natural system has yet to be disturbed or the existing use is agricultural. Such policies would arrest the visually destructive retirement/second home development, like that afflicting the northern New South Wales coast or the southern slope of Mount Martha on Port Phillip Bay in Victoria.

The old physical planning approach, embodying the one-off master plan, is fundamentally unable to grapple with the management problems raised here. Its venerable quest for certainty, sharpness and one-to-one causal relationships, does not match the real world. Instead we need a conceptual framework to define problems, inject objectivity and consistency, incorporate adaptive procedures into planning. Meanwhile — in the face of scarce information — planners have to cope with a system of ever-increasing complexity. To minimise the possibility of damaging decisions and premature foreclosing of options, strategies employing simple rules of thumb based upon sound economic principles and a concern for social equity, are urgently required.

*Dr Peter Fisher is a city planner, recently returned from a visiting faculty position at the Department of City and Regional Planning, University of California, Berkeley.*

# Conference Reviewed

'OUR Valley — our future' was the theme of the Latrobe Valley Seminar held at Morwell Technical School on June 21. It was convened by the Town and Country Planning Board of Victoria in conjunction with the Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education.

As 'a client and colony of metropolis' the Latrobe Valley is typical of many Australian regions: an economic monoculture, whose natural wealth, bright young people, and here even the water are drained off by the capital city (which the participants saw as the one and only centralist bogey; Canberra was matter-of-factly accepted as the place where the cash came from).

But things are changing. The Valley's huge brown coal fields are to be expanded, but the local influence of the State Electricity Commission, the main employer for 50 years, is expected to decline as its operations become more automated and less reliant on local labour. However, tertiary industries, particularly public administration, are growing, and tourism, in a region which includes the Gippsland Lakes, is also seen as a developing industry. 'Getting a factory' as a sole means to 'decentralisation' was disparaged by most of the official speakers, but it apparently persists in local folklore, here as elsewhere. Nonetheless, it was generally agreed that a 'mini-Melbourne' was the last thing people wanted.

What do these changes mean for the local people? Dr Ian Puffin, of the Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education, described a 'transfer of initiative'. The 'godfather SEC' is consciously withdrawing from that role, so that the Valley's future would be less dependent on decision-makers in Melbourne than on the locals, thrown suddenly on to their own civic resources after years of dependence.

Overcoming the apathy traditionally perpetuated in small towns by dominant metropolitan bureaucracy was seen as a main task; this would also involve the towns of the Valley overcoming their parochialism in a regional approach to planning and development.

Mr Vern Warren, planning policy director for the Town and Country

Planning Board told the audience 'If you expect Melbourne bureaucrats like me to plan for you, you'll wait a long time'. The Victorian Minister for Planning, the Hon. A. J. Hunt, was also unequivocal in emphasising that it was over to the locals to determine their future environment.

The Seminar followed closely upon the Victorian Government's Statement of Planning Policy No. 9 (Central Gippsland: Brown coal deposits in the context of overall resources). This document's main concern is the conservation and exploitation of brown coal, but it contains several clauses related to public participation and the interests of local communities. It may be paradoxical that the large-scale technology which made the region subservient in the first place, is now confronting the people with the responsibilities of freedom.

The Seminar also coincided with the publication of Dr Puffin's *Life in the Latrobe Valley*, a sociological report to the Town and Country Planning Board, the Department of State Development and Decentralisation, the SEC and the Cities Commission, whose representatives supervised the study (though not its content). This document is admirable not only for its scope and thoroughness, but also for its close identification with the people of the region.

As an exercise in participation the Seminar itself set quite a good example. Of the 500 attending, about a third were 'Melbourne bureaucrats' and the rest were locals. Essay and poster competitions were held among the secondary students of the region, and the prizes were presented at the Seminar by the Minister for Fuel and Power, the Hon. J. C. M. Balfour. But as elsewhere, women were in a distinct minority on the several platforms — two out of 35-odd, none at the main sessions. The reasons might be sought in Dr Puffin's report.

In the group discussions there was a sense of impending self-discovery — with small-town Australia in search of itself. Here, the Latrobe Valley's experience would be no less relevant to other developing regions and growth centres, all of which need to emancipate themselves from the metropolis.

C.W.

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# PARTICIPATION IN GEELONG

John Schwartzkoff

A RECENT study of Geelong's transport recommends the replacement of a conventional freeway-based transport plan with one which is much more flexible and adaptable. This has been done on the basis of a substantial program of engineering and economic studies, undertaken with the active participation of the people of Geelong.

The program was commissioned by the Geelong Regional Planning Authority late in 1973, and funded jointly by the Authority, the Cities Commission and the Country Roads Board of Victoria. It was completed early this year.

The need for the studies arose from conflict which followed the announcement of the recommendations of an earlier transportation study made between 1971 and 1973, which included a central freeway running through Geelong north to south, to be completed by 1991. It was argued that this freeway, running close to the city centre, would kill two birds with one stone: it would attract much internal traffic off the existing road network, and would cater for the rapidly growing recreational traffic from Melbourne to Victoria's western surf beaches and scenic areas.

Clearly, the direct impact on the town would have been considerable. It has been calculated that 700 dwellings would have had to be demolished. The freeway would have changed the face of some of Geelong's picturesque suburbs, and created a major barrier through socially integrated areas. It offered a degree of accessibility to the centre which in the long term could have had a dramatic impact on land use. It offered a level of service such that traffic conditions in a quarter of a century would approximate the present excellent standard.

The original study had been conducted along conventional lines, and the consultants had frankly stated that little attention had been paid to impact on future planning alternatives, social and environmental effects, or economic consequences. In making the recommendations public, the Regional Planning Authority declared that no decision would be made on implementation until a comprehensive social and environmental impact study had been made.

## Impact study

The impact study was to determine social, environmental and planning implications, and also assess two alternatives which the consultants had rejected. The alternatives included one based on the existing road network with a few small-scale improvements to the arterial system, already committed; the other offered a higher level of service, based on a north-south route to the west of the city through green fields, with some widening and re-engineering of existing streets.

The Regional Planning Authority insisted that the social/environmental study should be carried out in a way which gave residents extensive opportunities to form and express their views. Apart from drawing on expressed opinions, the study had also to measure local attitudes and values in a formal way.

The team set up a shop-front office, near the centre of town and on the proposed freeway route, in a building which was ultimately to be demolished for road widening. Members of the team lived here for extended periods, so that residents were able to telephone or call at all times with inquiries, comments and criticisms. As a result, the site office was a hive of activity throughout most of the study period.

## Methods

The team began a program of community contact, which ran parallel with a thorough-going review of the engineering recommendations and traffic calculations associated with the freeway plan and the two alternatives.

The team organised an initial two-day 'search conference', which about thirty residents attended. They were selected by a sampling procedure which mixed them in terms of age, sex, place of residence and social background. The conference pursued issues relating to Geelong's past, present and future, local views of community and place, and local hopes and aspirations. Discussions gradually moved from these broad issues to those more narrowly related to the road plans and their impact on the life of the town.

The conference was the key to the success of both the community par-

ticipation and the formal evaluation. There were few important issues which were not raised and examined in some detail during the search conference. The study team learned a local 'language' which was of use in drafting questionnaires and in focusing on key issues. It also brought forward a nucleus of interested citizens to whom the team could refer for local opinion in the early stages.

A Citizens' Liaison Committee was set up, with the formal status of a specialist committee of the Regional Planning Authority. This group consisted of fifteen people, who were elected at five separate area ('electorate') meetings held on the same evening. It was to act as a representative panel to review the consultants' work in progress, and to provide contacts between the people and the consultants and the Authority.

The Committee met regularly with the study team and the Authority. Its members took their responsibilities very seriously and kept the project manager under continuing pressure for information on the study and its findings. The Committee also channelled opinion from a variety of local organisations. The study team referred in advance material for public distribution to the Committee, and obtained its help in organising press and radio publicity.

## Reaching the less articulate

The most significant feature of the project was in fact its program of community involvement, together with the formal assessment of impacts, attitudes and values. From the beginning the team tried to avoid being trapped by the most available and most articulate residents; they tried to respect the interests, attitudes and values of the many who, here as elsewhere, are not readily drawn into the planning process.

Two surveys were made to quantify attitudes in relation to the road plans. The first involved a questionnaire to all residents aged fifteen and over in 300 households selected at random throughout the city. The second was a mail survey, which was followed up with interviews with non-respondents; this went to 1 100 households likely to be



affected by one or other of the three alternatives.

The approaches to traffic engineering and physical planning were largely shaped by discussions within the team, and also by actually staying in the town and learning its ways. About two-thirds of the way through the study period it was clear that a broad consensus was forming around a scheme favouring a peripheral freeway with some improvements to arterial roads, details of which depended on the technical analysis.

## Exhibition

Preliminary recommendations were set out for local consideration in discussion papers, a press supplement and a public exhibition held during March and April 1975.

The recommendations involved reservation of a route for an outer freeway to the west, together with a number of immediate projects to relieve bottlenecks in the arterial system. To ensure that the existing network will be used to maximum capacity before further road works are undertaken, several traffic control and management schemes were proposed, with progressive community consultation as they are implemented.

Within Old Geelong, long-term arterial improvements were to be implemented as and when they became clearly necessary, within the context of a general transport plan. The consultants pointed to the opportunities provided by Geelong's status as a growth centre, for taking pressure off the congested bayside area where traffic problems were likely to become acute. Here, land use planning could be used to re-shape patterns of traffic within the existing town.

## The next steps

These proposals are not to be defended only in technical terms, but also because they reflect local values. The team found that Geelong's citizens were strongly attached to their town, valued its 'provincial' scale and pace of life, but also placed a high value on the personal mobility afforded by widespread car ownership and the present easy traffic conditions.

While a north-south freeway was unacceptable, little general support was

found for local planning which would significantly downgrade the role of the private car in the foreseeable future. The consultants attempted to suggest how the existing city can adapt at least cost to the changing and uncertain demands made on it; they have proposed not an ideal or costless solution, but one which accords with the way Geelong people see their town.

As far as it is possible to tell at present, the people seem to agree. Public reaction to the preliminary recommendations has been on the whole very positive, and only changes in detail seem likely before a final report and recommendation is made to the Regional Planning Authority.

The director of the Authority, Mr Colin Atkins, believes that the outcome will fully vindicate the innovative transportation study, adding 'The study sorted out some basic issues for us, and highlighted a number of others on which more detailed work remains necessary. The Authority now has to push ahead with its program of seeking a real citizen contribution to planning in transportation and other fields'.

*Mr John Schwartzkoff is senior social planner with John Paterson Urban Systems Pty Ltd, Melbourne, and project manager for the Geelong Freeway Impact Study.*

## FREMANTLE MEETS THE MEDIA

Glen Stickland

LAST year the WA Institute of Technology established a field unit at Fremantle for students of social work training in community development. Among other things they studied the use of various media in a real-life situation.

Video equipment has been quite a potent force in helping groups with various kinds of social action, and producing considerable change. Videotape from the Fremantle Video Centre has hastened community development, specifically with groups of residents in State Housing Commission flats.

It has in fact proved invaluable in helping them to get together, and to get things done. One achievement was permission from the Housing Commission to build an adventure playground; another was securing a Commission flat for a meeting place.

To begin with, a student from the unit brought some residents down to the Fre-Video Centre. The residents then took the equipment to their block of flats. After playing about with it for a couple of weeks they decided they could do something with it to help get the playground and flat.

So they first taped a section showing the lack of facilities. Subsequently the Housing Commission allowed the playground to be built. Residents then taped a sequence showing the construction, and then one showing the completed playground.

These tapes were used in a petition to the Commission, in which they asked for the flat; they were shown to the general manager, chairman, and other senior officers. The result: a meeting place.

## Confidence

A TDT report on the building of the playground also helped, and the previous experience with video certainly helped develop the residents' self-confidence in expressing themselves on television.

The tapes have also been used for teaching. I have used them to demonstrate to students just what community development is. During these sessions the residents who made the tapes are usually present. They are also used in field settings.

## Newspaper and radio

We have found newspaper publicity to be quite effective, particularly if we provide suitable photographs. It is helpful if a group writes its own press releases; reporters like a ready-made story, and residents get the kind of publicity they want. Personal contact with local reporters is very useful.

Radio has also been used, particularly when community surveys are going on. Spot announcements have been made on commercial stations. Here too, it is helpful if prior contact is made on a personal level, or at least by a brief letter.

I believe that the residents' introduction to the media, along with other efforts, has helped local people to do things for themselves, giving them greater control over their own lives, and adding to their dignity, feelings of self-worth, and identification with their community.

*Glen Stickland is lecturer in social work, WA Institute of Technology, and supervisor of the Institute's community work student unit at Fremantle.*





## Anne Latreille: An Urban Conscience

THE suburban sprawl of Melbourne makes much of the city a mystery to its inhabitants, let alone non-Melburnians. Anne Latreille (pronounced Le Trail) since August 1973 has been trying to reverse the process and unlock the secrets. Her column 'Living in Melbourne', which appears every Wednesday in *The Age*, is a unique attempt in Australian journalism to paint a continuing picture of urban growth and regeneration in the volatile Victorian capital.

There may not be anything momentous about discovering that Port Melbourne residents want their council to retain horse-drawn rubbish carts, that Rockbeare Park Conservation Group and Northcote Council are seeking Australian Government assistance to acquire 57 acres of almost untouched land within five miles of the city centre for use as a park; that Melbourne City Council approves a proposal to convert a row of neglected bluestone warehouses in King Street into a non-residential hotel; that Caulfield's 1975 draft planning report proposes high-density residential development in two zones near the racecourse and the Nepean Highway, despite its current status as the municipality with most flats in the State; that Kerferd Road Pier in South Melbourne, built in 1881, has been restored by the Melbourne Harbour Trust and handed over to South Melbourne Council for public recreation purposes.

But Anne believes that the regular accumulation of such information not only gives her readers a dynamic kaleidoscope of Melbourne, but even awakens long-dormant feelings of identification and pride in their city.

Anne began the column in August 1973 and it has appeared continually on the women's pages since. Being on the women's pages has its good and bad points, she says. 'But many women are involved in action groups which I write about, and their numbers are increasing. Besides, it doesn't deter men from reading my column. If it encourages more women to become actively involved in urban affairs then it's succeeding.'

Many of the items appearing in 'Living in Melbourne' are big news in suburban and local newspapers. But Anne achieved a notable scoop late in 1973 when she broke the story of the Melbourne Family Care Organisation placing Emerald Hill on the open market. After protracted negotiations between the unusually wealthy welfare body, the Victorian Government and the Department of Urban and Regional Development, the latter agreed to provide \$3.5 million to the Victorian Government to purchase the 2.1 hectares of historic townscape.

Anne has been with *The Age* since 1968 apart from a year spent freelancing in London in 1971-2. Born and raised on her father's 700-acre farm at Riddell, near Gisborne (it's down to 200 acres today, as the land there is increasingly chopped up into 10 and 20-acre blocks) she is very much an urban dweller.

Anne married Peter Latreille, an architect, in 1969. They live in a South Yarra cottage which Anne believes was built in the 1850s. 'I couldn't have done the column without Peter,' Anne admits. 'Before we got married I wasn't interested in architecture, urban issues or the environment at all.'

While in London she was attracted to a column written by Simon Jenkins for the *Evening Standard*, entitled 'Living in London.' When she got back to Melbourne Anne had little difficulty in persuading *The Age* women's editor about the merits of a similar column for Melbourne.

'Living in Melbourne' so impressed the United States Information Service that its Melbourne centre last year offered to arrange a grant from the State Department for Anne to spend a month in the USA under the international visitors' scheme. She covered large areas of the country, talked about historical preservation more earnestly than she had ever done before. She was especially impressed with historic building controls applied in New York City, and believes Melbourne and Australia's other capitals can learn much from their experience.

David Bornstein

## Environment's achievements

A FOURTEEN page booklet 'Activity Summary', a progress report by the former Minister for Environment, Dr Moss Cass, is now available from the Department of Environment free of charge.

The Minister's foreword says that during 1974 the Australian Government demonstrated a decisive commitment to the cause of environmental protection, adding, 'The Australian Parliament approved the first major items of environmental legislation ever placed before it. Large increases in funds were made available to the Department of Environment for research, grants to the States, and new initiatives. And consequently, an historic set of programs was set in train concerning the quality of the nation's air, water and land.'

The booklet outlines the purpose of the Environmental Protection (Impact of Proposals) Act and explains the environmental impact statement technique which enables public participation in decision-making. It also deals with other legislation — the States Grants (Nature Conservation) Act, the States Grants (Water Resources Assessment) Act and the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act.

Other legislation now being prepared is discussed, as are the various environmental programs such as that dealing with air pollution monitoring, mineral development, water quality assessment, environmental awareness programs, national water policy, wildlife studies including kangaroos, and grants to conservation groups.

This booklet, along with information on other matters may be obtained from: The Secretary, Department of Environment PO Box 1937 Canberra City ACT 2601.

## Local Government Supplement

THE Department of Urban and Regional Development has a few spare copies of the Local Government Supplement which was published in the *Australian Financial Review* on Monday, June 9. If you want to obtain a copy of this interesting feature please write to The Director of Publications and Media Relations, Department of Urban and Regional Development, PO Box 1890, Canberra City, ACT 2601.

# MELBOURNE DISCOVERED



IN A week-long workshop, beginning May 19, about 80 secondary students from all parts of Melbourne explored their city — in drawing, photography, poetry, prose, drama and television. Some of their work is featured here.

The workshop was organised by the Department of Urban and Regional Development in conjunction with the 'Urbanism' team of the Social Education Materials Project of the Curriculum Development Centre in Melbourne. It was held at the State College of Victoria in the inner suburb of Carlton around the general theme 'You and your city'.

Initially the students were briefed very informally on urban issues, from the points of view of city councillors, social workers and planners. Then they got to work.

A wide range of media was provided to give the fullest opportunities for self-expression. Some of the students worked with an ABC crew to make what may have been the first access television program by young people in Melbourne. Most of them learned how very little they really knew about their city, and the element of surprise and discovery comes out in much of what they produced.

Those interested in information on the organisation of similar projects in other cities should write to Jon Womersley, Department of Urban and Regional Development, Box 1890 Canberra City 2601.

1 Students arriving to register

2 Students acting a play about a family trying to choose between city and country





#### ALL THE TRENDY PEOPLE

All the trendy people  
living in Fitzroy  
Everything is really cool  
Life is just a joy

Doing up the houses  
Looking at them, they gloat  
Thinking they're original  
But they're all in the same boat

If they really understood  
The hypocrites they are  
They wouldn't really shout so loud  
So loud, so clear, so far.

But their arguments are hollow  
They have said nothing of value so far  
They're living a life of foolishness  
They don't know who they are.

Leigh Parkhill  
Diamond Creek Technical School

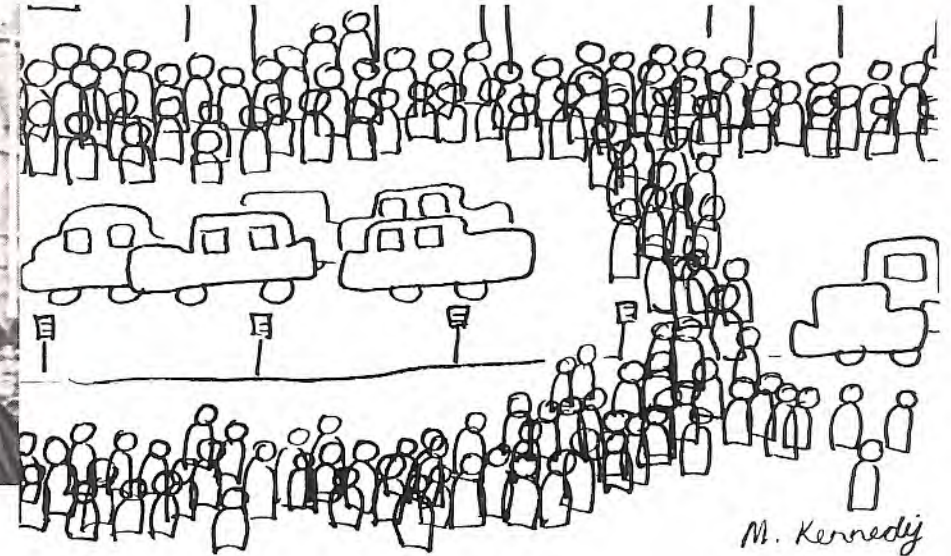


The clock above the church chimed Five  
Faces appeared from shops and alleys  
Faces from cars and offices  
Faces in their thousands  
Faces all the same.

Moving quickly, eyes ahead  
Determinedly homeward bound  
Racing past the sidewalk stands  
Marched each and every man

The noisy rumble of a silent crowd  
Pressing on their way  
An empty mind behind each face  
And every mind the same.

Sue Potter  
Moorabbin High School

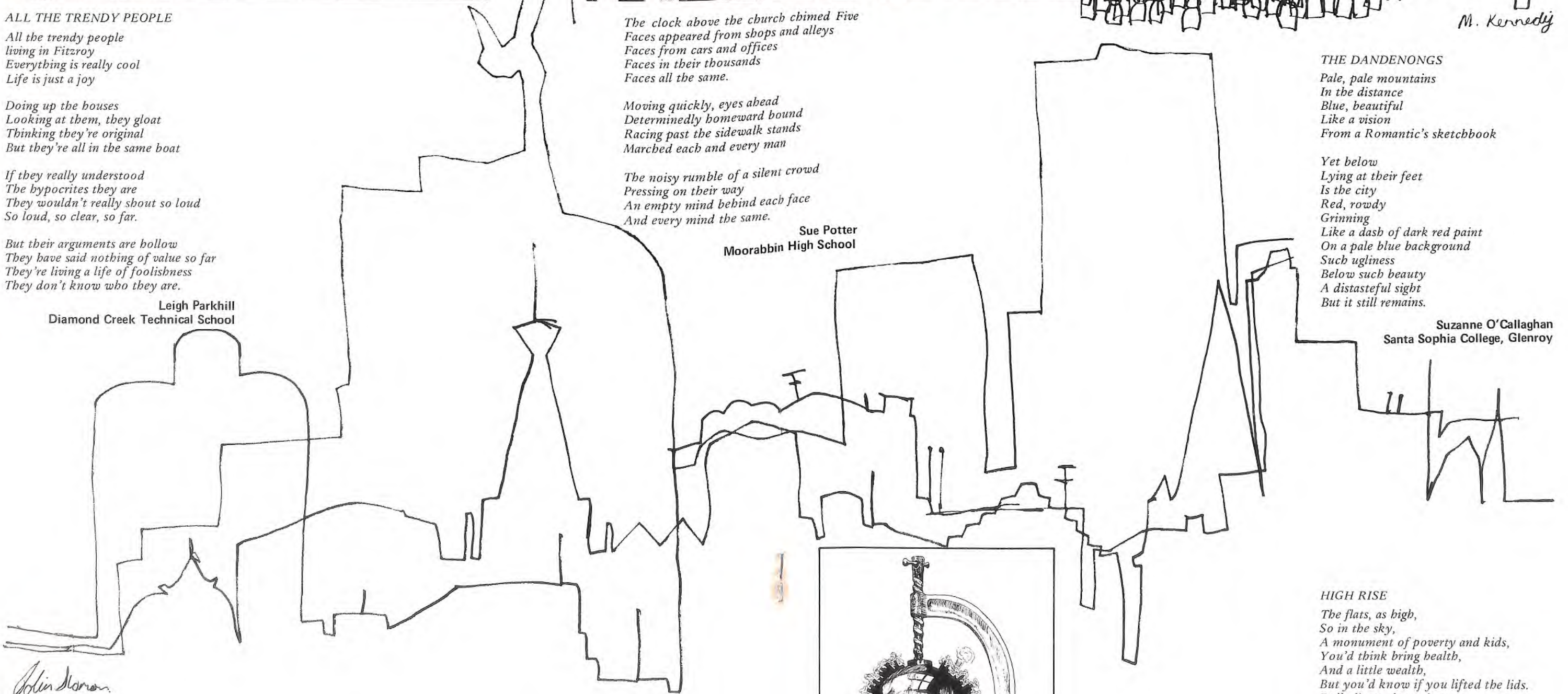


#### THE DANDENONGS

Pale, pale mountains  
In the distance  
Blue, beautiful  
Like a vision  
From a Romantic's sketchbook

Yet below  
Lying at their feet  
Is the city  
Red, rowdy  
Grinning  
Like a dash of dark red paint  
On a pale blue background  
Such ugliness  
Below such beauty  
A distasteful sight  
But it still remains.

Suzanne O'Callaghan  
Santa Sophia College, Glenroy



The world in an urban vise,  
as seen by one participant

#### HIGH RISE

The flats, as high,  
So in the sky,  
A monument of poverty and kids,  
You'd think bring health,  
And a little wealth,  
But you'd know if you lifted the lids.  
Dull, dingy, decrepit rooms,  
Some live in night and day,  
Lock their doors,  
Cuddle up to the walls,  
Well, I wouldn't live there anyway.

Brett McNaughton  
Richmond High School



## WAGGA WAGGA'S GRAPEVINES

Doug Stewart

IN the traditional small town, local gossip went through a system of grapevines, especially at those old corner shops which sold just about everything, before they were swept away by motorised shopping at distant supermarkets. Everyone used them, and knew their fellow-shoppers to talk to.

Today, things are changing in country towns. The small ones are getting smaller, losing their population to cities or the bigger country towns, which are getting bigger. And in these growing centres the old grapevines and old-boy networks are disappearing, and have to be replaced by new kinds of information networks.

Wagga Wagga is a good example of a country town which is growing and changing. One change has been in the time it takes for a newcomer to be accepted. Not so long ago it took twenty years; now it is more like five. This means that newcomers are now in a better position than before to participate in local affairs and contribute to local decision making.

### Community development

Wagga Wagga's grapevines — message systems, channels of communication — are being studied at the Riverina College of Advanced Education (itself a relative newcomer to the town, established in 1972). The study is seen as a contribution to community development as conceived

by the UN: 'Community development relies upon local communities as units of action which combine outside assistance with self-determination and effort, and which seeks to stimulate local initiative and leadership as the primary instrument of change'.

The study covers the effectiveness of mass communications, citizen movements such as progress associations, desired goals, appropriate programs, and the whole process of getting information from government to governed (and vice versa).

Wagga Wagga is an interesting place for such a study. Open government was an important issue in the recent City Council elections, when a number of candidates who adopted this platform were elected. A move to introduce it in May was defeated very narrowly, and it seems only a matter of time before it is established.

The Council's committees include a Community Development Committee, with four aldermen and five representatives of community groups with full voting rights. The city has six active citizens' groups recognised by Council as authoritative spokesmen.

### Two-way information

As part of a course on 'Communication and community' students are looking at how the citizens' groups pass two-way information through the town. They are also looking at local newspapers, radio and television.

As part of their practical work the students take up various local issues and try to convey their views through the

available channels. This helps them improve their own skills in communication, and we hope that it will also help the other people develop theirs, in the context of social change.

We have already found that the corner shop grapevine has moved to the library and the social worker's office. Of course, much depends on the individuals running these offices. Wagga Wagga's librarian sees his library as 'out-reaching', and is using finance from the RED scheme to compile a community directory — most useful to newcomers.

We all know that many civic and social problems are problems of communication, when people know what is wrong but don't know how to go about setting it right. The students are *not* making a detached academic study of how people and groups relate to one another. (The course also includes a study of information networks within the College itself). By becoming involved in local issues they identify with local people.

Our guiding principle is taken from J. D. Barber's *Citizen Politics*, 'The sense of obligation to take part has to be backed up by the sense that one can make good things happen by taking part. Otherwise frustration and disillusionment sap interest in playing political games'.

*Mr Doug Stewart is senior lecturer in communication, Riverina College of Advanced Education, Wagga Wagga NSW.*

Communication students in class at the Riverina College of Advanced Education (Mr Stewart standing at left).



# Who wants a social worker? Not I, said the Alderman

Sue Vardon

*This article is based on a paper read at the Local Government Study Group Conference, held in Sydney on March 16.*

MOST aldermen, when first confronted with the idea, argue that social workers are expendable. They may say that employing one is not an appropriate use of the ratepayers' money and not the preserve of local government; that it is a State or Federal responsibility; it is not needed in their area, which is free of problems; the Health Commission 'does it'; there are too many people 'doing it'; or else 'We didn't have any problems until the social worker came'.

I maintain that a community social worker is an essential officer for a local council. A social worker can bring more power to local government, can link the various welfare services for the residents, and can provide essential sociological information for planning and development decisions.

### Main tasks

The tasks a social worker in local government undertakes include the following:

- Contacting local groups and individuals, helping them use the most appropriate resources, and leading them through the welfare maze.
- Promoting co-operation between State, Federal and voluntary agencies.
- Researching needs of all kinds, interpreting the results, making rec-

ommendations for action, while involving residents at all stages.

—Advising Council on matters of social development, and working with other officers on this.

—Promoting a sense of community, which has often been lost.

—Undertaking some casework if no other agency exists, and developing resources — marriage, guidance, citizens' advice bureaux — if they do not exist and are shown to be needed.

While State and Federal Governments ignore the role of local government in health, education and welfare, it is important to force the balance of power back to local decision makers. Further, the proliferation of grants, government programs and voluntary initiatives is fragmenting planning for the quality of life. This is particularly obvious in social welfare.

### Grantsmanship

Unlike health services, where money is channelled through the one agent, namely the State Government, money for other welfare services — child care, house-keeping, welfare officers, old people's housing, social planning, youth programs, low-cost housing, recreation — comes from everywhere, with little regard for overlap, and often with no knowledge of a community's need.

*The area with the people who know the most, gets the most.* Unless there is an agency responsible for fitting all the programs into the plan which holds residents' needs paramount, we will face a scandalous skew of services to the most vocal, and a waste of resources.

The local council is the only agent that I can see with the necessary co-ordinating power. It is accountable to local people, and its only weakness is the irrational behaviour and thinking of the few aldermen who can put welfare programs in jeopardy.

Unless local government keeps the reins on social welfare and health planning it will find itself powerless in a field where millions are being spent on community programs. One of the reins is knowledge. The way to gain it is to appoint an officer whose task it is to sift information, find out what is happening and advise Council.

The State and Federal Governments do not keep local government informed of all their planning decisions, and yet they expect local government support. A social worker's advice allows a council to take initiatives and design programs which suit the needs of the area, rather than sit back powerless making occasional jabs at decision-makers.

### Co-ordinating services

Council social workers have an advantage over other welfare agencies, in that their field of operation is not restricted. They are not responsible just for poor people or old people or children; their knowledge must include all services for all residents. In a field with an extraordinary proliferation of helping agencies, and yet many gaps, a Council

social worker can advise residents on the most direct route to help.

A Council social worker can call local welfare agents together to work out programs for the particular community. This person links agencies who might be working on similar issues but unaware of the parallel work. This co-ordination will be undertaken by the Regional Councils for Social Development, but it remains important that someone takes the initiative at local level.

### Social planning

Advising council on social aspects of planning is the greatest role for social workers, and one which is grossly undeveloped. We can establish that our society has high rates of depression and other social problems, but we continue to plan and develop a system which perpetuates them.

We can identify the problems of high-rise housing, and yet it continues to be built; we can identify the social imbalances of new suburbs, but continue to develop detached housing for young couples where children will never know a relationship with an elderly person; we continue to plan without leaving adequate land aside for future development; we know the influence of the complete lack of shops, transport, community centres on inadequate social patterns, yet no one is responsible for providing these services when estates are newly developed.

### Expendability and finance

I must agree with those who argue for expandability of social workers when they say that local government cannot afford this extra responsibility. Some councils can, but if every council (in New South Wales) is to appoint them, the State subsidy of \$2750 a year must be increased, preferably to 100 per cent of the salary. And the Local Government Act should be altered to include a reference to social work, and an effort made to increase the numbers of trained people.

*Ms Sue Vardon is a community social worker who has worked with councils in New South Wales.*

## FREMANTLE'S FIRST

FREMANTLE'S social worker, Miss Helen Cattalini, recently won the Australian-Italian friendship award for her work in promoting understanding between Italians and West Australians. This work, among Fremantle's Italian migrants, was (and is) done outside office hours in addition to her duties as Fremantle City Council's social worker.

Fremantle's City Manager, Mr Stan Parks, is very proud that Helen Cattalini is the first qualified social worker to be employed by a West Australian local authority. Among other projects she has set up and now operates a women's night shelter within the City of Fremantle. ☉





1

# THE GRAND HOUSES OF BRISBANE

Peter Forrest

IN the 1930s *The Queenslander*, a newspaper now extinct, published a series of articles on Brisbane's older homes. The articles, written by F. E. Lord, described the residences of wealthy men. These houses were not necessarily typical or relevant to the mainstream of development of the 'Brisbane' or 'Queensland' house, but they are interesting, and we can learn a lot from Lord's documentation.

The series dealt with 161 houses built in the period 1842 (abolition of transportation to Moreton Bay) to 1893 (the Great Flood). This half century span was perhaps the most important in Australia's history — bridging the gap between the paternalistic convict era and the attainment of nationhood. It was a half century of technological advance which liberated builders from the physical constraints which had previously kept Australia in a strait-jacket of Neo-Georgian conformity.

The wealthy Brisbane builders responded to this liberated environment by choosing one of three basic design traditions. The first option was to build a 'transplanted English/Scottish manor house'. These houses, which now appear quaint and ridiculous in the Queensland context, were replicas of what was really an English vernacular tradition. A second alternative was to build in the 'low set

verandahed style'. This style was essentially a developed colonial style — a larger-scaled and more sophisticated version of the Anglo-Indian/Neo-Georgian buildings constructed in Sydney earlier.

I suggest that the main planning and construction elements of what was to become the 'North Australian vernacular house' evolved from this style. The third choice, and an almost unanimous one in the 1880s and early 1890s was the 'reduced castle'. This group has little uniformity other than consistent largeness of scale and pretension to grandeur.

A number of social and environmental themes emerge from Lord's articles on these houses. All the houses were given English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh or French names and they were built, almost without exception, by Anglicans and other Protestants. The clients were from professional, pastoral or mercantile occupation groups. Most of the houses were built of brick or stone, materials which otherwise had fallen out of favor since the 1860s.

Plans were quite intricate — a reflection of the need for better circulation after the introduction of the plumbing and lighting services which new technology made possible. Intricate layout was matched by intricate ornamentation. Mass production satisfied the Victorian craving for an abundance of decoration with copies of standard details. Catalogues and manuals translated revived classical designs in the Antipodes, and thus Australian architecture became (and remained) hybrid.

This desire for lavish ornament coincided with a recognition of the need for sun control in a sub-tropical climate. The result was a pleasing and practical interplay of light and shade on verandahs and main walls. More ornamentation was achieved in the treatment of fences, gates and gardens. An attempt was nearly always made to create a formal garden, but occasionally the native Eucalypts were allowed to compete with exotica. Elaborate steps, with vases, were a feature.

Perhaps the most notable fact to emerge from Lord's articles is the geographic dispersion of these 'grand houses' which was determined by Brisbane's hilly topography and fragmentation of the town by the river. The houses were scattered between Wynnum and Indooroopilly, Yeronga and Kedron and Sandgate. The wealthy sought elevated sites, above flood level, with secure views, cooling breezes and convenient to the transport routes running along the ridges.

Such sites were readily available but were spread right across the city, and so Brisbane never saw the development of enclaves of the rich. But in contrast to this geographic spread, a notable social circumstance is of cohesion of the social and commercial backgrounds of the owners. The same names recur, and the very small group of owners and visitors to these houses were all inter-related by a network of business, social and family

connections. This cohesion has perhaps been a principal factor in the surprising number of houses which have survived. Most of the buildings dealt with by Lord are still with us — much hemmed in by discordant later development, and perhaps neglected or abused by conversion into flats and boarding houses. Nonetheless, most of these 'grand houses' continue to exist as built evidence of the history of the townscape of Brisbane.

*Peter Forrest is the honorary secretary of the National Trust of Queensland and a member of the Interim Committee on the National Estate.*

1 Bardon House was built in 1853 in the 'English/Scottish Manor House' tradition. This is a nostalgic building reflecting contemporary English taste.

2 'Moorlands' dominates a superb site overlooking the Brisbane River. The pretension to grandeur typifies the 'reduced castle' style.

3 Houses in the 'low-set verandahed' style were built in Brisbane from the 1850s onwards. This example, 'Windemere' at Ascot was completed in 1885.



2



3



# The Cheapest Garbo & the Nearest Swamp

Sheila Swain

*This article is based on a paper read at the Local Government Study Group Conference held in Sydney on March 16.*

'WASTE disposal' and 'waste collection' are so closely intertwined that it is reasonable to think in terms of waste management.

For too long, waste disposal has been seen as a local issue, best dealt with at the local level by local citizens concerned with keeping their suburb neat and clean. But the environmental crisis has propelled the waste management problem to the front of the world stage. The role of local aldermen has been widened to include far more than the problem of removing a container from the doorstep and depositing it in a hole on the cheapest land going.

The US Environment Protection Agency has laid down a frightening list of criteria for waste management: Costs — operating and maintenance, capital (initial investment); environmental factors — water pollution, air pollution, other health factors, aesthetic considerations; resource conservation — energy, materials, land; institutional factors — political feasibility, legislative constraints, administrative simplicity. This is a far cry from 'Who is the cheapest garbo, and where is the nearest swamp we can fill in?' — the approach of earlier days, and sadly in some areas even today.

The rapid rise in world population, and the fact that one-third live in settlements of more than 20 000 people, mean that not only has the size of the waste problem changed, but so has its nature. In a widely scattered population, the disposal of each individual's daily half-pound of excrement is a completely different one from that of a city where we pool our wastes and try to dispose of them in one job lot. When we consider also the development of the packaging industry, the magnitude of the waste problem assumes frightening proportions.

The average Australian pays \$700 a year directly and indirectly for packaging; one dollar in twenty of the national income goes in packaging, and this does not include the cost of getting rid of it. And we have the hidden costs of the damage that new packaging materials do to the environment.

## Multi-community approach

No man is an island, and no shire or municipality can disregard the effects of its policies on neighbouring areas. A land fill in one area may lead to water pollution in another; incineration can cause air pollution elsewhere. If waste is transported farther away, the traffic aggravates noise pollution and wear and tear on the roads.

There needs to be close consultation between local government areas if these problems are to be minimised. What form might this take? The US Environmental Protection Agency has considered a number of approaches, two of which I find interesting.

One is the establishment of an independent, multi-jurisdictional authority, on which the EPA comments 'Although there are potential advantages, there is a danger that it can become remote from government or public control. Separated from the municipal bureaucracy, protected by a board of directors, the authority can, and in some cases, does become self-seeking'.

The second is the 'multi-community co-operative', a regional system. The purpose is to achieve economies of scale through better utilisation of capital. 'It centralises waste processing and disposal, reduces the number of small, inefficient, environmentally unsound systems operating in the area, and offers options in solid waste handling not otherwise available to member communities'.

'This approach enables one political jurisdiction to take the lead while contractually bound, supporting authorities indicate to the financial community that the service will be used and sufficient revenues generated . . . The process of organising the communities for co-operative action is time-consuming. When the problems can be surmounted, however, the multi-community approach should encourage more efficient, better quality systems'.

If such a system incorporated a resource recovery element, the financial advantages would be considerable. The main problem as I see it is political. Local councils, with notable exceptions are not renowned for their willingness to attempt to solve mutual problems in a co-operative manner. On the other hand the multi-community approach allows a

much higher degree of citizen participation than our present system. If a ratepayer doesn't care where his garbage is going, at least he is concerned if the other fellow's is to be deposited near his backyard. Further, I am convinced that more and more people are becoming involved in the overall problem of environmental insult by waste disposal.

While it took centuries for western man to develop the habit of putting out the tin instead of tossing his rubbish into the street, in this period of mass communication and social awareness, it might not be too long for the habit to develop of sorting materials into different containers.

## Why not composting?

I have not dealt with technical aspects — shredding, baling, incineration, pyrolysis, composting etc. — but I am puzzled by many comments that I have read about the economic feasibility of the most environmentally sound of these techniques, namely composting.

Composting plants are being closed down in most countries, with two notable exceptions in Germany, where vigneron are legally obliged to buy the compost, with excellent results. I cannot understand why the cost of the total operation (waste disposal plus by-product) should be attributed to the by-product alone. Further, subsidising fertilisers is not an unknown practice in Australia.

Do you believe that residents are entitled to a say in the final resting place and treatment of their garbage? Do you believe that residents in other areas should have any say in what is received into their area and how it is dealt with? If citizens are not concerned, why has the location of Sydney's noxious liquid waste depot not been made public?

Further, is it possible to improve collection methods, to help alleviate the disposal problem? Can local bodies help change attitudes to generate less household waste?

I have been told that all I do these days is think rubbish and talk rubbish. But I hope readers will be able to salvage some worthwhile ideas from this, and recycle them to our mutual advantage.

*Alderman Sheila Swain is an economist, and an alderman of Hunters Hill Council, Sydney.*

## Conference Notes

HOW much is the physical and social structure of a community to blame for the problems within it — and how dependent is the social structure on the physical? A partial answer to this may be found in a conference on Women's Health in a Changing Society, to be held at the University of Queensland from August 25 to 29. It is sponsored by the Australian Department of Health and the National Advisory Committee for International Women's Year. Among other topics the conference will cover problems of women's isolation — physical, social, ethnic, and economic, and including suburban neurosis.

Further details can be obtained from The Conference Director, Mrs Patricia Bollard, Department of Health, PO Box 100, Woden, ACT 2006.

From isolation to transport: who makes the decisions and who should make them? This will be one of the topics discussed at the Conference on 'Metropolitan Transport — the Way Ahead', to be held in Melbourne from November 17 to 19. Other subjects to be covered include 'Mobility versus the other needs of society', transport service levels for other sections of the community, and organisational and institutional issues.

The conference is co-sponsored by the Royal Australian Planning Institute and the Economic Society of Australia. The aim: to bring together those involved in, and those affected by, the planning of transport. Requests for further information should be addressed to The Secretary, Conference on Metropolitan Transport, The Institution of Engineers, Australia, 157 Gloucester Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.

'Making Federalism Work: Towards a more efficient, equitable and responsive federal system' is the title of a public conference to be held at the Australian National University from August 27 to 29.

The Conference is being organised by the Australian National University's Centre for Research on Federal Financial Relations, in conjunction with the University's Centre for Continuing Education, and is part of the Centre's program to generate discussion on the problems of federal finance. The Conference will open with an address on 'The New Federalism', a review of Labor's programs and policies, while the final paper will be given by the Premier of New South Wales on 'Making Federalism Work'.

Enrolments are limited to a maximum of 250. Further information from: The Conference Officer, 'Making Federalism Work', Centre for Continuing Education, Australian National University, PO Box 4, Canberra, ACT 2601.

From specific topics to urban information in general — the growth of literature on this subject has been massive and widespread. It is interesting to note on the international scene, therefore, that the Paris Region and the Greater London Council are jointly sponsoring the First International Colloquium on Urban Documentation, to be held in Paris from October 22 to 24.

Discussions will cover all aspects of the Urban information problem including the use of computer and microform techniques, the utilisation of audio — visual media, and the dissemination of information through current awareness services. The colloquium will be in English and French with simultaneous translations.

Further details are available from: Don Kennington, Head of Information Services, G.L.C. Intelligence Unit, Room 512 B, County Hall, London SE1. 7 PB. U.K. (01-633-7149).

## LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION IN RURAL AUSTRALIA

THE Australian Conservation Foundation and the Department of Urban and Regional Development are sponsoring a national conference to discuss techniques, problems, progress and prospects of amenity and habitat conservation in rural areas with particular reference to the rural-urban fringe. Date: 15-17 August, 1975. Place: Australian Academy of Science, Canberra, ACT. Further information: Australian Conservation Foundation 206 Clarendon Street East Melbourne Victoria 3002

## Gleanings

### Mothers for sewerage

FOR once the initiative on urban services has been taken by those most immediately concerned. A petition from Bridport mothers has been presented to Scottsdale Council, Tasmania, in a move to have sewerage connected. The petition was reported in the *North-Eastern Advertiser* on May 22:

'All of us have young children who appear to be suffering far too frequently from stomach upsets, bouts of diarrhoea, infections etc. We feel that sizable proportions of the proposed householders' sewerage connection fees could be paid in what we would save in doctors' and chemists' bills once the sewerage system had been completed'.

The petition was received by the Council, but did not provoke discussion. It was felt that every effort was being made . . .

'Cowra should have a women's centre' is the recommendation of the Cowra Municipal Council's International Women's Year Committee. The Committee has announced that Cowra needs facilities for advice, counsel or referral, for the problems of everyday life where legal assistance is not needed.

It is proposed that the centre would incorporate a family planning clinic, facilities for street stalls, and a short-period child-minding service. Another proposal for Cowra's International Women's Year is for a seminar on the advancement of the status of women.

*Cowra Guardian 27 May 1975*

Cr Rosemary Shuns, of Wyong Shire Council, is planning a women's refuge or 'crisis centre' for Wyong, if a need is proven. At present Wyong has no place where women can find free or urgent accommodation in an emergency.

Cr Shuns believes that emergencies could have many causes — assault by husbands, or other men, being thrown out of home, or being victims of a natural disaster such as a flood or tornado. She emphasised that the plan was not a Council project, but simply put forward by a small band of dedicated women trying to help other women if needed.

*Wyong Advocate 30 April 1975*

Wagga Wagga's historic gasworks building will be the foundation of the city's new community centre. The complex will provide club rooms, a workshop, a kiln room and facilities for exhibitions of local crafts.

*Daily Advertiser 21 May 1975*

Lighthouse Beach is planning a sewerage system that could double as a tourist attraction. The scheme provides for effluent ponds in a picturesque setting, with grassed embankments and surrounding trees.

*Port Macquarie News 19 May 1975*

The dog on the tucker box will stay where it is, five miles from Gundagai. It was feared that the dog might be neglected after the construction of a Hume Highway bypass. But tradition, and possible legal difficulty proved the strongest arguments, and Council rejected the proposal for a referendum on the dog's future.

*Gundagai Independent 15 May 1975*

The problem of rabbits in exclusive suburbs faces Queanbeyan Council. Rabbits use newly-established lawns to feed and dig burrows. Eradication is difficult in residential areas; ripping, trapping, snaring and poisoning are out of the question. All known burrows have been gassed and filled in. The only other solution is fencing, to barricade the intruders out.

*Queanbeyan Age 2 May 1975*

Jackie French





# Rural Retreats:

## a Country Party perspective

Ralph J. Hunt

THROUGHOUT the greater part of man's history he has lived close to the soil, and his needs have been 'closely interwoven with the rhythms of the land, the seasons and nature'.

This is how the Australian Conservation Foundation's publication, *Residential conservation*, describes the background to 'rural retreating'.

Increasing numbers of people, dissatisfied with the metropolitan environment, are seeking to return to 'the bush', if only for short periods. The trend for people to buy rural retreats, hobby farms and wilderness plots is also indicative of an affluent society, where a significant percentage can afford the choice.

Claire Wagner's excellent paper points out that this is producing an ever-widening suburbanisation of rural land, and that this presents a new issue to Australian planners. She adds that Australia is probably less equipped to deal with the situation than countries like the United Kingdom and the United States. One certainly wonders whether our planners sufficiently recognise that land is a living and finite resource, even in Australia, where there is a long-held myth that the largest island continent is one great expanding frontier.

Land speculators, ever-vigilant and two jumps ahead of our planning authorities, are having a field day because our land use strategies have not been refined to cope with the increasing interest in multiple use of bushland and farmland. They are forcing up values, rates and charges, inhibiting primary production, and in some cases causing hardship to genuine farmers and retreaters.

This development could well accelerate at a time when more and more struggling farmers, making less than the basic wage from their capital investments, are seeking a way out from their unprofitable enterprises.

The author observes that planners tend to regard metropolitan hinterlands as a reservoir to serve urban expansion. As a consequence no effort has been made to set aside prime land for agricultural and horticultural purposes. In Sydney urban land prices and rates have forced farmers out of business, when Sydney ought to have a much larger source of horticultural and agricultural production within its own region.

### Lack of co-ordination

In some cases development has taken place to suit the dictates of local government, amateur enthusiasts, speculators and investors — those who have cashed in. There has been no worthwhile attempt to undertake a joint Federal/State land use survey, or to develop a national land use data bank, inventory, and land use strategy.

I firmly believe that until such a concept is endorsed in Australia we will continue to have Lake Pedder and Fraser Island controversies, and remain incapable of dealing with the problems of rural retreating and land speculation.

Australia must develop a proper land use strategy. Much land use data is already known, but jealously stored in the basements of various departments. There is a very wide range of disciplines and functional authorities interested and involved in land use among the State governments. For instance in New South Wales one finds that the Premier's Department, the Departments of Lands, Mines, Local Government, Public Works Conservation and bodies concerned with a water resources, forestry and fisheries — all have at least some responsibility for land use, and hence information which is not being centrally pooled as it should be, if a comprehensive strategy is to be developed.

In the Federal area a similar situation has developed, where there is no data bank, but presumably information is jealously guarded in the vaults of the Departments of Urban and Regional Development, Environment, Minerals and Energy, Transport, Agriculture, Northern Territory, and so on. Too often these information resources are used to advantage one department over another.

Once a decision was made to establish a data bank, much of this information could be pooled for public use, for planning and decision-making. This is not only necessary to assist long-term land use plans, including decisions on rural retreats, but also for regional development and the preservation of a range of economic activities along with natural features and ecological systems.

The socio-economic impact of rural retreating on farming communities cannot be emphasised too strongly. We are indebted to the author for calling for more research.

It seems that future planning will involve acceptance of larger populations in inland regions. Care must therefore be taken to ensure that our inland river systems are not polluted, and that natural landscapes are not destroyed by inexperienced newcomers of urban origin, ravaging and defacing our bushlands and countryside.

In any program to meet the needs of rural retreaters, especially adjacent to existing cities and regional growth centres, it is essential to involve local people, farmers and agronomists in local planning. The paper points to the success achieved in New York State by adopting this policy. Careful planning based on local knowledge should be able to minimise the disruptive effects of rural retreating on country life.

### Urban-rural conflicts

There has always been a degree of antagonism between country and city populations, and even between rural town and country dwellers, although the latter is less true than it was say twenty years ago. This is probably due to the rural recessions which have brought the communities closer together, because of their interlocking fortunes and misfortunes.

But genuine farmers could have every reason to redevelop deep-seated antagonisms if rural retreating goes on unplanned and unco-ordinated — and involving the shooting of stock and wildlife, the dumping of rubbish and unwanted cats and dogs, leaving gates open, cutting fences, and starting bushfires. In too many cases hobby farms have become the sanctuaries of noxious weeds and animals, causing serious problems to neighbouring farmers.

Rural retreating has obvious attractions for both city and country communities. Among the advantages: Rural retreating is another form of leisure and pleasure for those tired of metropolitan life; it is a way of turning inland at least a percentage of our population, away from the overcrowded eastern coast; it is a means towards a meaningful plan to achieve decentralisation.

The author's suggestion that rural retreaters might live in ecologically planned cluster developments, or in traditional self-sufficiency in remoter places, is worthy of research and application. In whatever context we place rural retreating — economic, primary production, local government, leisure, decentralisation — there are serious implications for sensible long-term planning.

As rural retreating will increase, it is essential that research, discussion and planning should begin now. They should be done against the background of the three principles enunciated in the paper: 1) Speculators must be curbed, possibly through differential rating based on the use or non-use of land; 2) zoning must be devised to keep the best agricultural land in production; 3) owners of dispersed rural retreats must pay the full cost of urban services or else do without them.

Special emphasis should be given to the last point. If people opt for rural retreats for leisure and pleasure, they should be encouraged to love it in its natural state, and live without the modern comforts of the metropolitan life from which, after all, they wish to escape.

This has led me to support the 'residential sanctuary' concept, or the residential conservation zone advocated by Neil Douglas in the above-mentioned ACF publication; an approach designed to protect bushland suffering the pressures from metropolitan Melbourne.

The *Rural retreats* paper also gives food for thought and discussion. There is clearly an urgent need to examine its implications for planning.

*The Hon. Ralph J. Hunt MP, is Country Party Member for Gwydir, NSW, and the Opposition's shadow Minister for Environment.*

## A word from our sponsors

A round-up of recent press releases from the Departments of Urban and Regional Development and of Environment and their Ministers.

### Press Releases

First meeting of Habitat Committee: Announcement by Minister for Environment, Dr Moss Cass, and Minister for Urban and Regional Development, Tom Uren, of the first meeting of the National Advisory Committee for Habitat — the UN Conference on Human Settlements. 12 May 1975

Woodchip Report tabled in Parliament: Statement by Minister for Environment, Dr Moss Cass and Minister for Agriculture, Senator Ken Wriedt on the tabling of a joint departmental working group report on the export hardwood woodchip industry. 13 May 1975

Urban Land Council for Western Australia: Statement by the Minister for Urban and Regional Development, Tom Uren on the allocation of up to \$8 million for acquisition of land. 15 May 1975

No takeover of National Parks: Statement by Minister for Environment, Dr Moss Cass rejecting allegations concerning a complete takeover of all national park and wildlife functions in the Northern Territory. 23 May 1975

Port Augusta to be included in the National Sewerage Program: Joint statement by the Minister for Urban and Regional Development, Tom Uren and the South Australian Minister of Works, Mr Des. Corcoran. 25 May 1975

Environment Commercials on radio: Announcement by Minister for Environment, Dr Moss Cass, on the launching of an intensive radio campaign aimed at increasing public awareness of environmental issues. 25 May 1975

Maddick Report Tabled: Statement by the Minister for Urban and Regional Development, Tom Uren, on the report on 'Education and Training of Local Government Administration in Australia' by Professor Henry Maddick. 28 May 1975

'A Land Use Plan for the ACT': Joint Ministerial Press Release by Tom Uren, Minister for Urban and Regional Development and Mr Gordon Bryant, Minister for the Australian Capital Territory, on the release of a publication on planning principles and guidelines for Canberra. 28 May 1975

National Sewerage Program Support Activities: Joint press release by the Minister for Urban and Regional Development, Tom Uren and the NSW Minister for Public Works and Ports, the Hon. Leon Punch. 30 May 1975

Soils funds rejected: Statement by Minister for Environment, Dr Moss Cass on the New South Wales Government's rejection of \$625 000 in soil conservation funds from the Australian Government. 1 June 1975

RED Grants for the Blue Mountains: Joint press statement by Mr C. R. Cameron, Minister for Labor and Immigration, and Tom Uren, Minister for Urban and regional development on the allocation of \$187 000 for road reconstruction and road and traffic projects. 4 June 1975

Ranger environmental inquiry: Announcement by Minister for Environment, Dr Moss Cass, on the membership of the Commission to conduct a public environmental inquiry into development of uranium deposits in the Northern Territory. 4 June 1975

World Environment Day: Statement by Minister for Environment, Dr Moss Cass on the achievements of the Australian Government in environmental protection since the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment three years ago. 5 June 1975

Abolition of the Cities Commission: Statement by the Minister for Urban and Regional Development, Tom Uren. 8 June 1975

Supplementary National Estate Grants: Joint statement by the Minister for Urban and Regional Development, Tom Uren and the South Australian Minister for Environment and Conservation, Mr Glen Broomhill. 11 June 1975

Appointments to Australian Housing Corporation. 16 June 1975

Claire Wagner: *Rural retreats; urban investment in rural land for residential purposes*. Urban Paper series, Department of Urban and Regional Development. Available from Australian Government Publishing Service, price \$2.



# FAMILIARITY BREEDS CONTENTMENT

Peter F. Smith

*Excerpts from an article in Built Environment 1974. The author makes the important point that familiar townscapes are no less important than historic buildings or architectural merit in enhancing local identity.*

TO qualify for preservation, a building should have architectural quality besides the merit of having merely survived a century or two. This immediately poses the question what is architectural quality?

... There is value in ... 'historical character.' The mere patina of age gives buildings and places an importance quite detached from architectural merit. Each summer, countless travellers converge on Europe's older towns, hungry for history. In Carcassonne, Toledo, Rothenburg, Siena or Assisi time has stood still. Here is discovered the effective therapy for 'culture shock': the unacceptable pace of change.

The psychological reasons are complex, but may be summarised as:

1. Testimony to the fact that change, with its attendant uncertainties and anxieties, can be resisted ... there are places which symbolise stability simply because they have survived:

2. The human mind is disposed to idealise the past ... the 'golden-age' syndrome ... All cultures have their Garden of Eden. This is related to buildings since they have the capacity to trigger this 'once-upon-a-time' mythology.

3. The correlate to 'once-upon-a-time' is 'lived happily ever after'. Historical buildings bring the two together. Survival over past centuries implies a probability of survival in the future.

4. Lastly, in the historical context, old buildings have immense importance within a wider urban milieu which is subject to redevelopment. Towns really come to life when they succeed in

bringing together opposites into a creative relationship ... The result is a new reality in which the elements are raised to a new level beyond their individual merit. To adapt a bit of T. S. Eliot, time present and time past make magic for time future.

## Familiar townscapes

What of the large tracts of urbanism which can boast neither significant age nor architectural merit? ... The history of urban redevelopment betrays a total disregard for the significance of the familiar ... In making his dire predictions in 1941 about the fate of Liverpool 8, Lord Haw Haw could never have envisaged how the mantle of the Luftwaffe would be inherited by the City Council.

The familiar ... environment is perhaps the most effective symbol of experience. However profound an event, the memory fades with time. Nevertheless, an experience can retain its sharpness through the medium of the environment which provided the context to that experience ... however undistinguished the architecture.

In making decisions about the fate of familiar buildings, it must be realised that all buildings have value simply because they are there. When planners roll away so many acres of familiar townscape, they disembodiment a host of small histories.

## The past in the future

A respect for architectural heritage looks both backwards and forwards.

The historic city ... built up to a central ... climax. In north Europe it was solely the cathedral; in many Italian towns the cathedral and town hall were often given equal prominence. This meant that the place had coherence, however labyrinthine the streets.

Secondly, the historic city exemplifies the principles of differentiation ... Since the Second World War, because of

the scale of the problem, and because they knew no better, many authorities adopted the principle of zoning in their development plans.

The principle of zoning is deleterious. Apart from its ... monotony, it also commits large areas of a town to single use, which places a major portion of the urban 'organism' in jeopardy if that use declines.

Thirdly the principle of uniqueness was of great significance to bygone urban designers ... The city was, for its inhabitants, 'a unique and only place', the centre of the universe. Many aspects of modern life combine to erode urban uniqueness, but most effective is the conspiracy between architects and planners to make everywhere look the same.

However sophisticated urban man becomes there is a deep-rooted need within him to belong to his unique and only place, and not be another ... shackled-up in 'Anywhere 1974'.

## Europe's heritage and developers

The idea of a European Heritage Year [in 1975] is good. But its effectiveness will depend upon the interpretation ascribed to 'inheritance'.

For example a certain developer is on the British Central Committee for European Architectural Heritage Year. He also happens to be a key figure behind the proposal to replace the 13th century Market Place at Chesterfield with the now familiar British Standard shopping precinct covering several acres.

Confronted with this apparent paradox he replied that it is our responsibility 'to create tomorrow's heritage'. If we adopt that definition, 1975 could prove a most fruitful year for developers.

*Dr Peter F. Smith is an architect with the British firm Ferguson Smith and Associates.*



Courtesy Sydney Morning Herald