Human settlement

Women in Australian suburbia
by Ruth Crow

"... We cannot go on like this!"
- a challenge for International Habitat Year. (p.1)

Mobile privatism or convivial community
by Maurie Crow

Notes on Strategy:
- Two stereotypes (p.9)
- Ring Freeway no halo (p.12)
- Inner areas no doughnut (p.19)

OFFICIAL SYMBOLISM—

INTERNATIONAL HABITAT YEAR

COMMENT—

The world Shelter Man

... but not ... but ... and also
divided by without women
freeways speculation and children

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"We cannot go on like this!"

(A special contribution on Women in Australian suburbia to stimulate policy in conjunction with United Nations Habitat (Human Settlement) Conference in Vancouver this year).

By Ruth Crow.

"We cannot go on as we are today." This is the warning given by Enrique Penalosa, Secretary General of the United Nations World Conference on Human Settlement (Habitat) which is being held this year in Vancouver.

These words are also the cry of anguish of women trapped in Australian suburbs. There is plenty of evidence to prove this claim.

For example the 1975 report prepared by the Y.W.C.A. "Leisure.. An Inappropriate Concept for Women", which reported "Women daily are confined to the company of their children, becoming socially isolated and going for long periods of time with no adult company other than her husband. In such circumstances women lack all the conditions of a stimulating environment which are essential for satisfactory personal development".

In Australia, the family and its present limited capacity to care for its very young children, is imposing critical strains on the mother who must care for her children alone in a house or flat. As the world famous anthropologist has said "We now expect a tiny family unit to achieve what no other society has ever expected of the family. In effect we call upon the family to achieve alone what the whole clan used to do". (Margaret Mead.)

The editorial comment of "Community Child Care Newsletter (October 1975) states ... "the work conditions of the women who stay home are unacceptable by any standards. She is usually isolated in the home, on call 24 hours a day, economically dependent and has no means of transport".

The suburban twins .. Sexism and Consumerism.

The women's liberation movement has identified the sexist nature of oppression of women and this is enabling many women to struggle independently for their own identity and liberation.

This new understanding of women's oppression is resulting in collectives around health centre, half way houses, women's co-op's, information centres, neighbourhood houses for children and many other new types of community facilities which were quite unthinkable in the 1960's. (Some of these were assisted greatly by the spotlight of the United Nations International Womens* Year-1975).

Such initiatives have provided urgent help and have at the same time contributed to the confidence and self esteem of those involved with pioneering these innovations and equally importantly have helped to create community where none previously existed.

But the problems in our suburbs are much deeper than loneliness, isolation, lack of stimulation, and insufficient support services for health and child care. The increase in child bashing, suicide and drug abuse are the symptoms of the break down of human relationships in Australia where consumerism is the inseparable twin of sexist oppression.

The word "Consumerism" has been coined to describe the phenomem of conspicuous waste being made possible through sophisticated advertising and modern technology. The housewife in the suburbs is the main target.

In this period of capitalism, where, in "advanced" countries like Australia the basic needs are met for the vast majority, new markets have to be produced if the economy is to continue to grow ... and as we know, capitalism can exist only as a growth economy.
Consumerism flourishes in our suburbs because the privatism of suburban living assists the market to try to foist on to everyone a lifestyle which expects each family to own privately the goods and services which were supplied in the past and can be supplied now, much more effectively by the community or for community use. At the same time women become more vulnerable to sexual oppression as they substitute possession of things for relationships with people and identify themselves with the sexist advertising which is an integral part of consumerism. (Footnote 1).

This puts an especially heavy burden on women who are expected more and more not only to keep up with the Joneses but to go one better; and who are being subjected continually to programming to give them an appetite for more and more goods and services which are presented to them as if such things can compensate for the loss of opportunity to satisfy the human yearning for social relationships unfettered by competition.

There are those, like Hugh Stretton (author of "Ideas for Australian Cities") who claim that "isolation in the home is not happening" and that "there are some unhappy and inactive people in every kind of housing, but 'suburban apathy and isolation' predominate only in atypical circumstances (Those that attract the most researchers)." (Footnote 2).

Neil Guerin (Deputy Engineer in Chief of the Victorian Country Roads Board) makes a similar claim and says that varied and interesting things can be carried out in spacious private surroundings and that people trade distance for size of home to make this possible. (Footnote 3). Even if these claims were true and if there were no "hostile stereotypes of house and garden life" and only "some unhappy and inactive people" as Stretton suggests, there is another vitally important factor that must be considered. Guerin implies its existence but does not identify it. The "distance" he talks about in the current circumstances he assumes can be covered only by more and more use of motorised vehicles. Some of the problems associated with such mobile privatism are dealt with more fully in the other main article in this issue of Ecoso Exchange. Here we need to emphasise two facts.

1) In our car dependent suburbs the family turns in on itself... the car and car type recreation and car type holiday tighten the bonds of family togetherness long after it is necessary for such relationships to exist... if they ever need have. The private space of the car becomes an extension of the private space of the home and no matter how many people congregate socially in the home or through the use of the car, social life tends to become very much private social life.

The aged, children and women are trapped in the suburbs where community life is declining and the women bear the increased burden of the "invisible work" needed to provide for the compensatory private social life centred on car and home. (Footnote 4).

2) The new type social problems that are recognised quite commonly are inseparably linked with the problem of the squandering of the world's natural resources.

The sprawling suburbs which depend on cars, roads and petrol are using an ecologically extravagant form of transport and added to this, the suburban lifestyle demands a proliferation of consumer articles many of which are extravagant ecologically. Those who eulogise the suburbs seem to overlook two facts.

a) that our human habitat is not merely a conglomeration of suburban homes, but that our urban setting is a combination of many different land uses including transport,

b) that our Australian standard of living is at the expense of the low standard of living of the vast majority of people who inhabit the world.
Damage from "growth economies" can be gauged by the picturesque proportions given by Ivan Illich in "Celebration of Awareness" where he states...
"During the late 1960's it has become evident that less than 10 percent of the human race consumes more than 50 percent of the world's resources and produces 90 percent of the physical pollution which threatens to extinguish the biosphere". (Footnote 5).

Our spacious homes and gardens, the unprecedented range of our domestic equipment and household luxuries, our fast cars and vast roadway systems are possible only because we are part of this 10 percent.

Common Concern to Humanise the Urban Environment.

Rosemary Brown, the Canadian feminist socialist emphasised the interdependence of the ecology movement and the women's liberation movement when she warned...
"The women's liberation movement is a final and last ditch stand to stop the mad rush mankind is on to destroy it. As feminists we cannot separate our struggle for our own liberation .. whatever that may mean... the right to realise our full potential ... we cannot separate that from the wanton waste of our resources; we cannot separate that from the minds of things that humanists and environmentalists around the world are doing". (Footnote 6).

In Australia ecology and urban issues are becoming matters of concern for women's liberationists, and concurrently with these new developments some of the conservation organisations which previously have directed their main attention to the natural environment are grappling now with some of the problems of the built environment. (Footnote 7)

These new breadths to the visions of these historically important movements of the 1970's coincide with the opportunities that are being provided by the World Habitat Conference. The conditions are becoming ripe for a dynamic political movement to develop around the common concern of humanising our urban environment.

1976 has been chosen by the United Nations as the Habitat Year (or Human Settlement Year). There will be an International Conference in Vancouver and a program of activities throughout Australia.

Will the spotlight of the Habitat Conference result in greater cross fertilisation of ideas and action between urban action activists, conservationists and women?

"The main purpose of the Conference is to serve as a practical means to exchange information about solutions to problems of human settlement against a broad background of environmental concern". (From A.C.F. Newsletter Feb. 1976).

As with previous International Years (Women, Environment, Population etc.) there will be a number of forums and exhibitions held in Australia in conjunction with the International Conference.

Unlike the fanfare of publicity that accompanied the various activities of International Women's Year 1975, so far there has been only very low key publicity about Habitat Year. But there is still time to use whatever occasions there are to make sure that some of the most significant urban problems in Australia are brought to the fore.

Almost 80 percent of Australians live in large cities. Australia is thus the most suburbanised country in the whole world. (There are some larger suburban areas in other countries, but in no other country is there such a high proportion of the population living in large suburbanised cities. Thus the problems of women in the suburbs is a problem that particularly applies to Australia. The Habitat Conference must not be allowed to pass without this peculiarity of Australia being made a central issue, not only so attention can be directed to solving the problems here but also to prevent similar problems developing in other countries where there are pressures for them to develop along similar lines.
The general "tone" of the Habitat World Conference and its associated activities in Australia has already been set and the following quotes from an official United Nations Habitat newsletter show that a number of matters as regards women in suburbia that have been raised in this article fall well within the scope of the conference objectives. (Note - the underline of the quotes is ours ... Ecoso Exchange).

Spokespeople for the Habitat Conference.

"Challenging a Dream".

... "Most of our people and leaders have looked to industry as the main solution to the problems of poverty and backwardness, as the instrument which would enable us to satisfy popular needs and desires. Although it is a hard and bitter thing to challenge a dream, it is our duty to recognise that this promise is not being fulfilled ... we know that the rich countries are faced with mounting problems of social, economic and environmental deterioration that go far beyond current cyclical disruption".

(Enrique Penalosa, Secretary General of United Nations Habitat Conference).

"No Urban Models".

"While cities in the more developed lands, by triumphant innovations in sanitary engineering, overcame some of the worst environmental horrors ... filth, and epidemics and waterborne disease ... our twentieth century rapacity for goods and energy have overloaded these triumphs with mountains of garbage and the heavy pall of emissions from the internal combustion engine ... the streets are no longer open sewers, but cars block them ... we have not as yet any really satisfactory urban models even among the rich lands which have the resources to produce them".

(Hon. B. Danson, Minister of State Urban Affairs, Canada ... the host country for the Habitat Conference).

"Mobilise Public Opinion".

"The Conference will plan to set in motion a world wide discussion on at least some of the questions related to Habitat which are of a "human" nature and some of which are of great urgency. Public opinion must be mobilised in order to generate the political will without which it is impossible to take the decisions which are called for."

(J.G. Van Putten, Chairman of the Non Government Organisations Conference on Habitat which will be held in association with the U.N. Habitat Forum).

It is encouraging to read such fine words. We must make sure that a Conference with such a broad concept of the urban and world problems is allowed to become merely another international event which we read about in the papers. So far the activities around the Habitat Conference in Australia have not reached very much further than the Federal Government's initiative in 1975 which included plans for: 3 films, a photographic exhibition, the possible distribution of a "school kit", a proposed student architectural competition, and the compilation of a national report (although it is stated that contributions for the report "have been made by all levels of government, universities, social groups, citizens action groups, professional associations, etc." This has not been with any wide popular public knowledge).

The task that is waiting to be done is to use the Habitat Year in the same way as many of the women's groups used International Women's Year. That is to help people not only to become aware of the issues but to be able to see how they, themselves can be active in changing the urban settlement to a more human habitat. This is essentially a political responsibility.

Inspiring "Political Will".

J.G. Van Putten (Chairman of the N.G.O. Committee for Habitat... we have already quoted from his statement... see above) has recognised the importance...
of the "political will". Basing our actions on the theories advanced in this analysis of women in suburbanised Australia, two main political efforts can be identified... these are:

1) By demanding that production meets real human needs. For as Enrique Penalosa states in the United Nations circular. "The more one looks at the Habitat Conference the clearer it becomes that this is an opportunity to re-evaluate every element of our economic and social organisation, and especially to go beyond the macro economic aspects to review that basic unfilled needs and desires of the masses of humanity".

2) By planning our urban areas so that transport energies are saved and opportunities for people to participate are maximised. The United Nations circular lists under "issues to be discussed at the Habitat Conference" the following two vital points.

   a) "Consideration of transport systems which reduce the dependence on private cars" and "land viewed as a resource rather than a commodity; with special attention paid to its control and use for public benefit".

   b) ... "Use of land as a resource in equitable ways so as to avoid personal gain at the expense of the community at large".

Thus the Habitat Conference circular has presented the value judgements around which we can develop the planning principles for political action: to reduce the use of cars; to design new urban areas and restructure existing areas on a human scale; and to develop mixed participatory communities around strong urban cores served by public transport. The other main articles in this Ecoso Exchange deals with these proposals in more detail. (Footnote 8).

A Vision to Inspire Political Will.

Women have a significant role to play in bringing in these social changes. Not only because they suffer most from the inhuman and anti-social nature of our existing cities, but also because in the struggle for their own liberation, they are not hampered by methods of organisation which have become entrenched by tradition as in long-established organisations.

In a recently published study "Women and Planning: Planners' Attitude", an examination is made of how our Australian urban environments are created to suit the activities of men, yet are used predominantly by women and children. (Footnote 9).

Similarly, in "Cities for Sale", Dr. Leonie Sandercock's review of town planning in three major Australian cities, there is only one woman who is referred to as making a significant contribution to town planning since 1900.

It is no wonder that to date women have played no part in what has been recognised as town planning. The history of town planning in Australia is a story of how good ideas and good intentions come to so little. (Footnote 10). The meagre planning that has been attempted in Australia has been frustrated at every level by private ownership of land, by the influence of speculators and profiteers and by the deification of economic growth and political power. The piecemeal approach of remedying each problem separately has helped to conserve the establishment and to discourage social innovation. On the other hand women have been active directly on many matters that affect the home environment... education, child care, recreation, libraries... but because these have been separated out from each other and from the general problems of society it has been only too easy for such campaigns to be "things in themselves" and for them to help strengthen conservative forces.

Under these conditions women are continually being "put down" as the technical and administrative functions are mainly the monopoly of men. Such belittling of the movement of people around urban issues, and such belittling of the efforts of women in local organisations, will continue until such time as there is a generally accepted vision of the worth of alternative urban settlement that would really meet our human needs for a life where human relationships are more important than the possession of goods.

... /6
No doubt it will take some time before such an overall vision can be popularised; especially because to date we have not begun to consciously try to find ways of presenting such a different type of urban life in a popularly acceptable way as the occasion rises.

Campaigns on urban issues tend to remain at the prototype stage ... anti-freeway protests without a mention of what sort of a life we could envisage if the car was not allowed to dominate our urban areas; anti power station campaigns without in some way advocating a new life style of participatory activities which would reduce the dependence on the use of fossil fuel; housing policies which merely look at the economics of housing and ignore the human needs of those who will make the buildings their homes; child care, as if the child's needs are paramount and there are not parent's needs; education, health and so on as if these are needs quite separate and apart from general community needs; and in most cases on all of these issues very little consideration as to whether the siting of these facilities will lead to clustering of human activity or not.

We must strive to become quite precise in presenting alternative ideas so that the future will not produce the anachronisms of the present which are expressed in the prevailing ideas, for example, that all dwellings are for nuclear families; that cars are the most prized form of transport; that the bigger the school, university, hospital or supermarket the better; that community and neighbourhood are no longer of significance; that there is no suburban isolation but only "unhappy and inactive people".

Alternatives are already beginning to take practical form as more and more people are taking the future into their own hands and setting up community base child care, community schools, community health centres, food co-ops and other small do it yourself community efforts. But these efforts will remain frail and easily co-opted into the conservative, and male dominated stream of establishment institutions unless there is developed an overall political movement with an over all vision into which these human small scale efforts can be dovetailed.

It is not easy to find the starting points to inspire the "political will" to bring in these social changes. But just as in the Women's Liberation movement, the recognition of the nature of sexist oppression resulted in the Women's Liberation movement becoming a force for social change, so also the identification of the main features of the ecological crisis will result in a united and determined movement for social change.

As Enrique Penolosa has warned "We cannot go on as we are today". This applies to Australia (particularly to women in Australia) and to all other countries of the world. It is time we ended the political paternalism that has for so long dominated the very nature of the lives we live in our Australian cities and which has selfishly ignored the plight of the large majority of those who inhabit the Earth.
FOOTNOTES.

1. See article by Dr. Alan Roberts in "Radical Ecologist No.1" -
December 1974.
He states that "consumerist satisfactions are pale substitutes for
the avenues of self fulfilment forcibly excluded from his/her life."

2. This quote is from an article by Hugh Stretton entitled "Ownership
In this article Hugh Stretton advocates "domestic production".
For a suggested alternative that incorporates better the advantages
of suburbia that Stretton lauds and which at the same time aims at
overcoming disadvantages of isolation and privation see the other
article in this issue of Ecoso Exchange under the heading "The
Ideal in New Growth Areas", Principles.... page 23
(it is to be hoped that in a future issue of Ecoso Exchange
a fuller examination of Stretton's views are presented. Despite
the criticisms made in this issue Stretton's has made some very
positive proposals for improving life for women and children in our
Australian cities).

3. Neil Guerin made a statement like this at a meeting on Habitat which
was called by the Australian Conservation Foundation to discuss
"How can the population be involved in the progress of decision
making on human settlement issues." Feb.14th. this year. Mr.
Guerin is attending the Habitat Conference.

4. The term "invisible work" was coined by Barbara Ehrenreich and
Deidre English in an article entitled "The Manufacture of Housework"
This article is an analysis of the structure of women's daily
lives which shows that housework has not declined but has been
refined within the new conceptions of the home.
They say "housework is invisible work ... no one notices it until
it is not done ... we notice the unmade bed, not the polished floor".

5. "Celebration of Awareness" published as a Penguin Education Special
in 1971 is a series of articles by Ivan Illich. The quotation is from
the last article in the book "A Constitution for Cultural Revolution"
which was first published by the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

6. From a speech by Rosemary Brown on Monday Conference in 1975, when
she was visiting Australia from Canada.
Rosemary Brown is a Feminist, Socialist and long time community
activist. She has sat in the Canadian Legislature.
Her Monday Conference speech was printed in Vashti's Voice, October 1975.

7. The Australian Conservation Foundation and the Conservation Council of
Victoria as well as a number of similar other organisations have sub-
committees to consider urban issues and their publications reflect
this concern. For example the A.C.F. magazine "Habitat", the
Women's Liberation Movement in Melbourne has formed an Ecology Group.
Some of the literature from Women's Liberation reflects this interest
in urban and ecological matters.

8. In addition to the ideas in this issue of Ecoso Exchange there is
also an article by Ruth and Maurie Crow on "Melbourne the Social and
Ecological Choices", in the Australian Left Review, No.49 (March 1976).

9. "Women and Planning; Planners Attitude" was commissioned by the Federal
Government in 1975. Some of the matters adversely affecting women
that are exposed in this study are:-

1) The growing tendency to centralise numerous services such as
health centres, sports complexes, shops and commercial facilities,
into larger and more geographically distant units.

2) The low value placed on a housewife's time ... the hours she spends
domestic and child chaffeurng trips are not seen as inefficiencies
as her time does not count.
3) The lack of either local employment opportunities or good public transport penalise women trying to hold down a job and raise a family.

B. MOBILE PRIVATISM OR CONVIVIAL COMMUNITY?

Notes on Strategy:
1. Two Stereotypes
2. Ring Freeways No Halo
3. Inner Areas No Doughnut

1. Two Stereotypes

From the standpoint of ecological concern for fossil-fuel conservation there are two basic strategies open to a city-centre such as Melbourne and the city-region within which it lies:

A. The Car City
or "City of Mobile Privatism"

Continuation of present trends:-
* Car/truck as predominant mode of transport.
* Redevelopment dismantling denser inner areas and 12-storey city building.
* Alienated lifestyles based on privatism and consumerism

B. The Tracked City
or "Convivial Community City"

Reversal of present trends:-
* Public transport as predominant mode.
* Redevelopment displacing lower-density buildings around railstations in suburbs and "loop" stations in the CBD.
* People-oriented lifestyles based on co-operative involvement.

Purpose for stereotypes.

The purpose of this first item is not to argue out the ecological implications assumed in the above thumb-nail description (which has been done before by "Ecoso Exchange", and will be done again). Nor is the purpose to develop any pretension of a comprehensive description of the features or virtues of a convivial community as against a city of mobile privatism.

The purpose is to expand enough of the general features of each alternative city to be in a better position to assess, against such a framework of models or stereotypes, the significance of two topical issues for Melbourne (i) the Study for an outer-ring freeway around Melbourne commissioned by the Board of Works (See item 2 below) and (ii) the Mixed Use Area Study of the Melbourne City Council Planning Department and related studies done for the South Melbourne and St.Kilda Councils, on the vexed question of whether a "mixed" use is desirable and if there is to be a mixture where, what sort of mixture, at what density, and why (See item 3 below).

We proceed, therefore, to present some of the interrelated features of ideal stereotypes of each alternative city, whilst acknowledging that the pure idea could not be achieved in practice, no matter what measures taken either by a capitalist government or a socialist one, especially in the short term, if for no other reason than that restructuring of the present built-up area of Melbourne towards either stereotype is, of its very nature, a long term exercise.

But the long term perspectives are indispensable, otherwise no short term measures can be sufficiently consistent to set the direction...
towards the goal, and the goal can never then be reached, particularly to the extent that it is against the trend.

A. Car City Stereotype.

A dignified journey by car for each trip and a dignified access by car to every possible destination is one of the prime planning objectives. This enables a private choice of a maximum range of directions and locations, but is part of and accentuates high-energy lifestyles.

The whole city region would, ideally, be covered with a freeway grid with an approximately equal distribution of people-intensive places (such as factories, offices, shops, schools, hotels, etc.) within each suburban square of the grid enabling an even flow of traffic and thus maximum use of freeway road space with minimum congestion.

Under this stereotype it would be better to reduce the size and activities in the Central Business District, and not to build up mixed clustered facilities in district growth centres or even local growth centres for the same reason: concentration of traffic-attracting facilities invites congestion.

The proximity of residential areas to access somewhere on the freeway network would be more important than proximity of residential areas to workplaces, shops, etc. Buildings should be sufficiently separated to enable ample off-street parking at ground level, or, if this is impractical (as in the CBD and inner areas or even some extensively built-up suburban centres), buildings should be redeveloped gradually to enable sufficient floors of parking within buildings to serve those buildings.

Consistent with the direction towards this stereotype is opposition to the underground "loop" in Melbourne's CBD; opposition to the Strategy Plan as recommended by Interplan to the City of Melbourne insofar as that Plan aims to maximise use of the railways by concentrating all future office towers within a short walk of the "loop" stations. Consistent with this direction is support for amendments to the Strategy Plan by the "mixed Use Areas Study" of the Planning Department of the City Council because they will enable the "sprawl" of office towers into the mixed use areas away from the "loop" railstations where twice as many cars are needed as for an equal area of office floorspace in the CBD (See item 3 below).

Consistent is the indiscriminate sprawl of office towers into the middle suburbs: a new feature altogether for Melbourne (for those looking for detail follow proposed amendments 35 and 45 of the Planning Scheme for Melbourne). Consistent is the earlier sprawl of factories into the far outer suburbs away from tram termini or railheads, although conveniently accessible by truck and car. Consistent is the persistent neglect of public transport for four decades, and still continuing.

Consistent also with the direction towards the car city are attempts to replace public transport systems servicing the CBD by the freeway network, which in the early phases is very destructive, and in the later phases counterproductive. Destructive, because, apart from despoliation of the recreational open spaces of creek valleys, acquisition of buildings for road space, and expanded off-street parking needs, freeways require demolition of the old moderately-dense inner area building stock to be replaced by more floorspace in bigger buildings (often over-spacious which means less intensive use offsetting the higher building density). But this requires bigger set-backs for parking at ground level and/or in building basements.

Similar parking pressures plus location decisions by company directors instead of planners have resulted in office towers in the CBD causing demolition of scores of 12-storey buildings mainly in the centre of the CBD instead of demolition of 1-storey, 2-storey or 3-storey buildings near the "loop" stations.
The longer-term effects of attempts to service the CBD by a freeway network are counter-productive because, as the freeway system gradually nears completion, the outer less-congested parts of the system attract location of businesses and residents draining the centre of the potential growth planned.

This car way of life imposed on people by the current market pressures and trend planning infrastructures that match the market, lead to lifestyles of privatism. People live in the private world of their private home, equipped with privately-owned facilities and entertainment; if they travel, it is privately in a private vehicle; when they reach their destination the privatism often continues even within a crowd, for no-one knows anyone else well enough, and even if they did there is nothing common to be done.

B. Tracked City Stereotype

A dignified access to the widest range of people-intensive activities, including non-commercial activities, and the deliberate deployment of public transport and design of location of facilities for this purpose is one of the prime planning objectives. This provides the objective possibilities for development of a more co-operative convivial and low-energy lifestyle, whilst preserving the possibility of privacy.

The whole city region would be urbanised as much as possible by encouragement of lively centres of clustered facilities on a compact human scale which would provide maximum attraction for all people-intensive activities (including labor-intensive light industry, offices, secondary and tertiary education, shops, and indoor cultural and recreational pursuits) higher-density residential accommodation immediately fringing such centres.

Centres would be local; or of district size supplementing a number of local centres; or the CBD itself supplementing a number of district centres. The car would be banned from such centres, and, except for separated delivery facilities, so would the truck. This would enable a tight compactness enabling easy pedestrian access to every part of each centre, thus permitting the highest possible degree of practical variety and hence attractiveness.

Public transport would be deliberately deployed to accentuate the availability of all urban centres both from residential areas, and between one centre and another. All local public transport would be a shuttle-type funelling to the local and/or district centre; all local and district centres would be around rail stations; all district centres and the CBD connected by express services.

Though optional, encouragement would be given to cluster-type dwelling places, with private indoor and outdoor quarters but also providing shared common spaces for children’s playspaces, laundry, workshops, gardens etc. The closer to the local or district centre, the higher the residential density would be encouraged to enable walking and cycling to replace cars and local transport of a public variety.

There is not very much of current history that can be quoted to illustrate what is consistent with taking a direction towards this convivial community stereotype, because corporations, governments, instrumentalities, local authorities, marketing mechanisms and mass media are all geared to the trends connected with mobile privatism. Much of what there is is in the form of popular defensive protestation against excessive manifestations such as anti-freeway movements, pro public transport campaigns, anti-redevelopment groups, conservation movements, and personal alternative lifestyle trends.

Consistent, however, with the tracked city, on the official side, is the underground loop and lesser but miserly public transport improvements; the Strategy Plan's idea of utilising the loop to
give maximum access to the CBD by confining the highest-density functions within the perimeter of the loop and encouraging a surrounding mixture of uses, but with residential uses predominating.

Consistent, but by no means sufficient, is the Cluster Titles Act and the few, as yet inadequate experimental cluster-housing estates, before and after the Act.

The tracked city would require redevelopment around some suburban railstations, but the minor destruction required would be of a completely different order to the massive destruction of demolition for freeways and of inner suburb terraces and CBD 12-storey offices mentioned. There is much railway reserve and roadspace immediately around many suburban stations, and typical adjacent uses are low density shops and low density houses.

The city of convivial community is of a design that provides the objective conditions for a genuine choice between privacy and community, and some acceptable balance between different degrees of these two conditions is something all people need, although that balance may differ from person to person. From the choice of indoor/outdoor privacy or designed neighbourly sharing at home, the public transport emphasis would be designed so that the local destination at which one stops, or through which one travels, could itself provide a reasonable range of different types of purposeful desired activity so that, at the destination, there would be the choice of privacy or of involvement in a group capable of being convivial because of more stable association.

Complementary v. Competitive Centres

It can be seen that the car city is a disurbanising trend. It scatters potential CBD and inner area activities to the outer suburbs, so that the scene becomes a confrontation debate of "CBD interests" versus "suburban growth-centre interests". But the trend goes further than this in disurbanising. In the outer suburbs themselves, it tends to scatter growth into randomly-located individual buildings, with separation of drive-in shopping from drive-in hotels from drive-in theatres, and (lately) from high-rise offices. And it differentiates one suburb from another more and more in the sense that it facilitates age-segregated, status-segregated, occupation-segregated, socio-economic differences that heighten the effects of privatism.

The tracked city, by way of contrast, contemplates a distinctly urban trend. It proposes local and district centres where they are now non-existent, or inadequate, but not at the expense of the CBD. The more people that are attracted to activities - especially non-participatory activities - in the local or district centre, from the private home or the private car-tripping, the greater the quantity of truly urban life can emerge that is now non-existent. The more this can happen, the more of a base there would be from which to feed the central CBD activities.

So, with the convivial community city there is no problem of "centralism versus decentralisation to the suburbs". It postulates more, more varied, and more sustained human people-involving activities in all centres, local, district and central.

2. Ring Freeway No Halo

"Surely you must agree that an outer ring freeway is better than a radial freeway system?". This, we anticipate, will be a refrain of car-city advocates for the period ahead.
There is to be a $336,000 study by Pak-Poy and Associates ordered by the Board of Works for a "ring-road" between 15 and 35 kilometres around Melbourne's CBD. If approved, it would be like a halo around Melbourne, fitting the built up areas, but in most places not too tightly. The concept is said to be favored by the Premier Mr Hamer (See "The Age" 28/4/76 and Figure 1 reproduced from "The Herald" 17/4/76).

Those with the source material who wish to study the new proposed route will see that it appears to be the joining up into a complete ring of the outermost planned circumferential segments of the old 1969 M.T.C freeways F3, F5, and F35 - or pretty close to it. It has been released under the name of a "ring road", but we are assuming here that the intention is that the road will be a freeway.

Now the 64-dollar question (or maybe we should say the 640,000,000 dollar question?), is this: would the ring freeway really be an angelic halo of glory for Melbourne - a welcome alternative to radial freeways - or a crown of thorns that would give the daddy of all headacres to the next generations?

The answer, of course, depends on your value judgement: whether you believe the direction should be set for mobile privatism or convivial community.

If you are for the tracked city of convivial community, then the ring freeway is no halo: it is thorns. The choice between a radial freeway system and a circumferential freeway with inward spokes and outwards spurs is a choice between two evils - two versions of mobile privatism - not a choice between that and convivial community.

To demonstrate this we will backtrack to Melbourne 1969 and to Boston 20 years earlier.

Original MTC Network Grid

The original Melbourne Transportation Committee's plan of 1969 had two features:

1. It was a grid of square segments overlying Melbourne's entire built-up area.
2. To the extent that it was a "demand" plan (including the objective of trying to accommodate estimated "demand" parking in the CBD) it was also:
   (a) a radial system (those sections of the grid that came towards the CBD all had a higher planned capacity - i.e., the 8-lane freeways, and those expected to carry 100,000 vehicles a day or more were radial).
   (b) it was coupled with an inner ring freeway tight around the CBD. See Figure 4: the CBD is in the segment we have marked "1".)

Premier Hamer, just prior to the 1973 State elections, in March 1973 shrewdly confirmed the Government's decision to scrap the inner freeway ring, and added the policy of slashing the freeway network from 494 km. to 328 km. (all of which couldn't be built in a few years anyway). There emerged a policy of theoretical opposition to "radial freeways", although as two segments (Tullamarine and South Eastern) and a semi-freeway (Kingsway) existed, and as three freeways (Lower Yarra leading to Westgate Bridge, Eastern Freeway and Mulgrave) and one semi-freeway (Hoddle Street) were proceeding - later pressures for joining the bits and pieces were inevitable.

In 1973 the Government won further points for its credibility by promising not only a new freeway study to replace the emasculated 1969 plan, but also that the transportation planning would be subject to public participation. To give it its due, it did at least stick to the underground loop against heavy road lobby pressure, and it appears to be trying to back the overall strategy of the Strategy Plan, mentioned above (although showing signs of retreating on this).
But, to date, — three years later — there has been no overall transportation planning exposed to public scrutiny, let alone public participation. The outer-ring freeway study, apparently has terms of reference already fixed, because according to Board of Works Chairman Mr Croxford it "would investigate all facets of the proposed link and could recommend changes to the planned route ("Age" 28/4/76). This does not sound anything like the expected planning for Melbourne region transport planning as a whole including public transport.

Now examine Figure 1. Note that the outer ring intersects the existing and planned freeways and/or major highways, which, read clockwise are:

1. Princes Highway - Lower Yarra Freeway
2. Western Highway (a)
3. Western Freeway (a)
4. Calder Highway - Keilor By-Pass (b)
5. Tullamarine Freeway (b)
6. Hume Freeway
7. Greensborough Freeway
8. Eastern Freeway
9. Maroondah Highway
10. Healesville Freeway
11. Burwood Freeway
12. Mulgrave Freeway - South Eastern Freeway
13. Princes Highway - Dandenong Road
14. Dingley Freeway (c)
15. Mornington Peninsula Freeway (c)
16. Nepean Highway

(Note: several of the above routes converge within the "ring" and are marked (a) (a), (b) (b), (c) (c) above of which only (c) (c), between the planned Dingley Freeway and Mornington Peninsula Freeway enclose any considerable area — but this area is part of a green "wedge" in the planning scheme).

So there will be 14 areas enclosed between these converging freeways/highways and the outer ring, like 14 uneven slices of cake. Major arterial crossroads, such as South Road, North Road, Springvale Road, Doncaster Road Manningham Road and Bell Street, if made into semi-freeways could add another 10 or 12 pieces of cake by cutting one of the northern slices into 2 pieces and the south eastern slices into 2, 3 or 4 pieces.

This could give an effective grid, although not of squares so much as of oblongs and triangles forming a network overlying the built up areas, and those to be developed in the urban corridors/satellites ranging from about 25 pieces (freeways only) or 36 pieces (counting existing double-way highways such as Dandenong Road, Burwood Road, Maroondah Highway, Springvale Road, Manningham Road and Bell Street, or roads with reservations wide enough for such treatment such as South Road, North Road - Wellington Road).

For a diagram showing the "freeways only" grid with about 25 segments see Figure 2. For what we have called a grid of freeways and "semi-freeways" with about 36 segments, see Figure 3. By a "semi-freeway" we mean the upgrading of divided highways (whether existing planned or potential) by making access even more limited than at present so far as cross roads are concerned. Where the road width is sufficient some main arterials which cross divided highways could be grade-separated either under or over the highway, thus minimising the number of traffic lights and converting the highway into a statue not greatly short of a freeway.

By comparison to figures 2 and 3, the MTC grid had about 38 segments (See Figure 4)
OUTER RING ROAD: This would provide an outer link between major centres of population and commerce including Dandenong, Ringwood, Greensborough, Broadmeadows and Keilor.

A study is now being carried out into the effects and advantages of such a road.

LOWER YARRA CROSSING — F9 EXTENSION: This will become the southern by-pass of the city centre of National Route 1.

It will lead from the Lower Yarra Crossing to Kingsway, providing the final link between Geelong and the south-eastern suburbs.

MULGRAVE FREEWAY: The work now in progress from Springvale Rd. to Porter Rd., Mount Waverley, will cost about $40 million.

Extension to Warrigal Rd. will improve the freeway's effectiveness and studies are under way on a possible road connection to the South-Eastern Freeway at Tooronga.

EASTERN FREEWAY: The extension of the Eastern Freeway along the eastern corridor reservation will improve access to the eastern suburbs and reduce traffic on residential streets.

GREENSBOROUGH FREEWAY: North from Watsonia, this will provide a by-pass of the Greensborough shopping centre and access to the residential areas around Diamond Creek.

HUME HIGHWAY: There is no solution yet for traffic from the metropolis, especially the eastern suburbs, feeding onto the Hume, the main interstate road link.

The CRB says at present this flow is creating environmental and traffic problems in the northern and inner suburbs.

CALDER FREEWAY: This provides free movement for traffic headed towards Bendigo. The Kenor by-pass will remove this traffic from the commercial centre.

TULLAMARINE FREEWAY: Work at Essendon airport will complete the freeway link from Flemington Rd. to Tullamarine airport.

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WHAT'S PLANNED AND WHY

Figure 1

Freeways, Planned Freeways, and Investigations, widenings etc.

Country Roads Board Map

(Reproduced by "The Herald" 17/4/76)
Figure 2: Freeways—plans and probabilities

- Freeways
  - Existing
  - Under construction
  - Planned
- Pressure on for probable links
  - Network of about 25 segments

Figure 3: Freeways and semi-freeways (upgraded divided highways)

- Freeways—planned
- Freeways—probable
- Divided highways (existing and possible, upgradable to semi-freeways)
  - Network of about 36 segments
Assessment of the Effect of the "Ring"

The built-up areas:

The new scheme would give an effect, functionally, not unlike that of the 1969 grid scheme.

The ring "road", which would be a freeway of enormous length, coupled with the completion of freeways outside or within the grid which are planned, under construction or already existing, would give much the same effect, overall, as the original 1969 grid. The shapes of the grid pieces would be somewhat different and some would be larger - especially in some of the middle suburbs.

The adaptation of existing divided highways to a semi-freeway status, even without the expensive and politically difficult task of upgrading some arterials to the same purpose, could greatly reduce the discrepancy between the two schemes, especially in the outer suburbs beyond the tram termini.

The areas outside the "ring".

Enormous stimulus would be given to development along the route of the ring road itself, and outwards into the urban corridors/satellites lying beyond the perimeter of the ring.

This proposition would especially apply if the ring freeway were to be built first before those that cut across it, and if it were to be a super highway with so many lanes as to be normally immune from congestion. The uninterrupted and superior travel for cars and trucks for such an enormous

![Figure 4: 1969 Freeway Plan (Metropolitan Transportation Plan) Network of About 38 Segments]
length would attract both businesses and residents seeking to avoid the street congestion and lack of convenient car access and parking typical of the parts of built-up Melbourne designed more than 20 years ago. New urban growth would then tend to take on a circumferential direction with spurs jutting outwards to corridor/satellite urban developments.

The overall effects on:

- public transport
growth and travel patterns.

A super ring road would build up circumferential and centrifugal travel and growth patterns that would:

(a) scatter the urban growth outwards in the quickest and most efficient way imaginable.
(b) further break down the radially-organised growth and travel patterns based on railed public transport.
(c) give the least favourable conditions for establishing new public transport travel along the new circumferential route.
(d) cancel out the feeble attempts to revive public transport generally, not only by reviving a watered down equivalent of the old grid freeway system within the "ring", but by conferring a virtual monopoly for private transport along the route of the ring and outward from it.

It would be a mistake to regard the main function of such an outer ring to be a by-passing one for "through" traffic, although this would account for some proportion of its uses. According to the MTC 1969 Report, the daily trips "external" to the Melbourne region (i.e. with either one end of the trip or both ends of the trip outside the region) for 1964 were only 85,905 as against 2,618,559 for trips starting and finishing within the region i.e. only about 1/30th of the total trips. (See tables 4-2, 4-8 and 4-11 MTC Report Vol.3), and any marked change in proportions since that date would be unlikely. (By way of a parallel in official thinking, the inner area freeways, despite abandonment of the inner freeway "ring", are not regarded as serving only by-pass routes around the CBD, although they could be made to do so by denying on/off ramps except within several miles of the CBD).

It would be equally a mistake to regard the main function of the ring freeway as connecting existing outer centres of Dandenong, Ringwood, Greensborough, Broadmeadows and Keilor, although this also would be a part of its function.

Its main function would be a developmental one, re-directing growth circumferentially on a car/truck basis, and then serving the growth it has helped create—just as the suburban electric trains did in an earlier era, with the community spending the transport money and the land developers making the profits. (Shared this time by the oil and car corporations).

Incidentally, a considerable proportion of the route would appear to be across the "green wedges" between the urban corridors of the regional plan; and to this extent would extenuate travel distances, giving less potential variety than an equal distance through all-urban areas, at the same time wasting unnecessary fossil-fuel.

The Boston lesson.

It is often said that Australia's car-based cities repeat the history of their American counterparts although 15 years or so later. It is instructive therefore to study the effects of the first limited access circumferential highway ever constructed around any major metropolitan city in the world. This was Boston, Massachusetts, USA. The history of "Route 128" as it is called is analysed in the book "Access for All" by K.H. Schaefter and Elliot Solar (Penguin 1975).

Boston which had had an earlier streetcar and transit system, like Melbourne, constructed a ring freeway in the 1950's. By 1960 Boston's population was 2.5 million, comparable with Melbourne today.
and the distance of Melbourne's proposed ring freeway from its CBD - between 15 to 35 kilometres is also comparable to Boston where the average distance of Route 128 was about 20 kilometres from downtown.

A few excerpts from the authors can tell the story:

"It was built not only as a by-pass around the metropolitan areas, but also to supply and stimulate quick and easy access to Boston's far-flung suburbs, something a net of Boston-centred transit lines could never accomplish" (p.90).

"While limited-access highways are very efficient as private car and truck roadways, they are severely deficient as local bus transit roadways. Local bus transit must get to the traveller's origin and destination, and these are never on the limited-access highways, but by definition on another local street. Thus, for public bus transit, arterial roadways, which have abutting origins and destinations, are superior to limited-access roadways. Route 128's design not only provided a positive means to turn the Boston suburban region over to the automobile, but it also created an effective barrier to the development of circumferential local bus transit" (p.91 - our emphasis).

"Route 128 more than met its planner's and designer's expectations, it attracted traffic and centred all developments in suburban Boston around the automobile" (P.91 - our emphasis)

After describing the multi-purpose use of Route 128 the authors add: "In recent years more and more traffic comes from local residents who have found that the road enables them to accept new jobs 30 and 50 miles away in and outside the metropolitan area, without changing residence." !! (p.91)

As if this is not crazy enough, we read later that "In the Boston area the 1969-71 recession, which hit the suburban industries particularly hard, brought with it a marked increase in rush-hour travel along Boston's circumferential highway. Since employment did not increase, the explanation seems to be longer work trips. Longer work trips usually make it more difficult to find car pools especially if one works in suburbia." (p.106)

The age-segregated suburbs, and the insecurity and alienation arising partly from the resulting most uneven distribution of mobility that humans in post-feudal society have ever allowed to be imposed upon themselves is dealt with in the chapter "The Social Crisis" (Chap. 7 pp 103-120) makes frightening reading but there is not space here to deal with it. (It is hoped to do this in later issues.

The ecological lesson alone is enough to draw, here, from the example of Boston. The lesson of Route 128 is there for all to see and those who insist on repeating history's mistakes must be either corrected or removed from authority before they waste too much of our precious human and natural resources. The Route 128 experience, if repeated with the lesson unheeded by Melbourne's ring freeway proposal, would foist mobile privatism onto the next generation more firmly than ever, making the ultimate inevitable restructuring of land use/transport design and lifestyles, an agonising process at the end of an agonising social crisis.

3. Inner Areas No Doughnut.

Rise and fall of "doughnut" policy

Twenty years ago, before the North Melbourne Association tried to save the "Happy Valley" shops from Housing Commission demolition, before the Carlton Association saved the Lee Street block from demolition, and before the Fitzroy Resident's Association partially saved the Brook's Crescent block from demolition, there was an unchallenged prevailing policy regarding the inner areas, popularly presented as the "doughnut" policy.
The argument was that the buildings of the inner areas around the City were mostly obsolete, sub-standard, decayed, ready to fall down or be pulled down, leaving Melbourne like a doughnut with nothing of worth (except the City of course), in the centre. Associated with this, were ideas that the people living there were also decayed, delinquent, or in some way deviant, resulting from their depressing surroundings.

The remedy almost universally acclaimed by politicians of all brands, planners, community workers, such as there were, the Housing Commission and the Bolte Government seemed obvious: clear all these hundreds of acres of slums away, rebuild with smart new flats, attract back white-collar and professional workers (misnamed "the middle class") and fill in the centre of the doughnut with solid citizens living in solid accommodation.

But that was 20 years ago. The activities of the associations mentioned and others began to change public opinion, and opinion within the Liberal Party. The Hamer Government commenced on the same "doughnut" tack, but quickly reversed direction when it saw how unpopular it was becoming, and began to make speeches and pass legislation in the direction of "preservation" (albeit without much "sinews" to make it happen). The Housing Commission however was eventually brought into line, and the new situation was potentially stabilised in 1974 by the Melbourne City Council "Strategy Plan", prepared by the consultants "Interplan", which lay emphasis on rehabilitation and restoration rather than demolition and redevelopment, public transport for commuting to work rather than freeways and escalating off-street parking; a full range of housing that all socio-economic groups could afford rather than prices and rents so high that dwellings would become attainable only by the filthy rich; and a city centre accessible to the maximum number of people (not the maximum number of cars), and hence not exclusive and prestigious with boutiques, nightclubs and luxury-class hotels for the elite only, but with a full spectrum of attractions --- varied, compact and accessible.

Resurrection of "doughnut" thinking.

That was two years ago, and it could have been hoped that the obsolete, the old-fashioned, the inappropriate and unpopular habits of thought and planning of 20 years ago would not try for a revival, particularly in the face of ecological imperatives that are becoming clearer year by year.

It was not to be. The doughnut theory has raised its sepulchral head, backed strongly by speculative redevelopers in the fringe areas, anguished at missed opportunities for high-rise towers, and no doubt cheered on by the car, oil and freeway interests.

The "Mixed Use Area Study" (called here "MAS" for short), produced within the City Council by the Planning Department is now to be recommended to the City Council. The Minister of Planning and the Cabinet, the Labor Party, professional institutes of planners and architects and the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce and all resident associations affected have all said that MAS does not conform to the Strategy Plan; and they are right.

The Minister for Planning has given a direction to the Town & Country Planning Board (Victoria's senior planning authority) to prepare a Statement of Planning Policy for the whole of the inner areas. The government apparently retreated from the initial impression that this was to be a threat to replace the City Council as planning authority, unless it proceeded with the original strategy. As soon as this retreat was sensed, the support of MAS made it clear that they would defy the government.

Premier Hamer interviewed Mayor Walker on April 6th, and the outcome, as reported by the press stated: "The Lord Mayor Cr. Walker assured the Premier Mr Hamer that an alternative scheme which would have altered the aims of the Strategy Plan had no chance of adoption by council" ("The Herald" 6/4/76).
Two days later, however, in a closed City Council meeting, the Mayor said he had been misreported, and the Town Clerk and City Planner and others, proceeded with the by-then familiar pretense that MAS was in conformity with the overall strategy, and that the Government had misinterpreted MAS.

It is not the purpose, here, to examine the evidence and argument produced by the City Planning Department in favor of MAS, nor that produced by its critics against it beyond the statement of the broad situation which follows. For those interested in the full range of argument, reference should be made to the Mixed Use Area Study available for $5 — if it is still in print — from the 11th floor Bank of NSW cnr. Swanston St. and Collins St. Melbourne including the introductory comments of City Planner Mr J. Williams. Also to a document "A Defence of the Strategy Plan" price $2, published by the Town & Country Planning Assoc. c/o The Environment Centre 324 Williams St. Phone 329,5377. The keen student might also refer to an earlier TCPA document of November 1975 "Reports on MCC Mixed Use Areas Study", $5 from the same source.

The Strategy Plan's overall strategy is (1) confine all high-intensity employments within a short walking distance of the "loop" stations (2) To do this, permit only small scale offices (plot-ratio 1.5:1) in the "mixed use" areas on the City's immediate fringe, but (3) allow more residential than non-residential uses in these areas (up to 250 habitable rooms per acre, which could be in addition to the 1.5:1 plot ration). MAS, on the contrary, proposes higher densities in these areas of which the highest at 4.45 or 5:1 plot ratios, would enable city-size buildings in mixed use areas where it is estimated that twice as many cars would be used per area of floorspace than if the same floorspace were to be located within the loop area.

The differences at stake are big enough - coupled with other policies - to tip the balance between whether the direction is set for entrenchment of the car-city, or a fight for a tracked-city. Assuming maximum development, MAS would mean 16,000 extra cars at peak hour, and massive redevelopment in the mixed use areas for the 40,000 jobs which would otherwise have been in the CBD served by public transport.

The whole tenor of MAS is redevelopment, thus tacitly, but not openly, reviving the outworn "doughnut" approach.

Mr Croxford, Board of Works Chairman, has used the word "doughnut" too quite recently, in such a careless context that (unless he has been misreported or not fully reported) it could be equally alarming, although there is some ambiguity in his statement. Releasing figures which showed that construction of "multi-unit dwellings" (meaning flats, units and townhouses) in the 10 inner suburbs had declined from 28.6% of the Melbourne region total in 1972 to 10.5% in 1976, Mr Croxford said the Golden Mile will not continue as the centre for metropolitan social and economic activities unless Melbourne's residential growth pattern is arrested. (Incidentally, see item 1. above for this method of pitting CBD interests against the suburbs). Mr Croxford added, so it is reported, that "residential development in Melbourne is likely to take on a "doughnut" form unless conflicts which had encouraged a swing away from development in the inner suburbs to the outer fringes were resolved." (The "Age" 7/5/76)

If by "development", and overcoming "doughnuts" he means "redevelopment by the traditional way of demolition and new building, indiscriminately throughout the inner areas; and if by "conflicts", he means resistance by resident associations to high-rise developments such as the Housing Commission flats, or flats, units or townhouses quite out of scale or keeping with the character of the residential or mixed-use areas of Melbourne, Port Melbourne, South Melbourne, Richmond Collingwood, Fitzroy or...
Williamstown, then Mr Croxford will surely be inviting conflict rather than resolving it.

On the other hand, it is the policy of the Strategy Plan, supported by the resident associations to increase the residential population especially in the mixed use areas of St. Kilda Rd, Jolimont, Victoria Parade, South Carlton and North and West Melbourne. This needs to be achieved, however, in a highly selective and sophisticated style:

(1) By carefully selecting areas where new high density residential estates could be constructed without destruction of the older residential areas. Examples are:
   a) the Flagstaff Gardens project suggested by Interplan (between Flagstaff Gardens and the railway)
   b) extension of this project by decking the railway tracks to the south of the project
   c) similar project on decking over railyards to the east of the proposed Tivoli Gardens project.
   d) the "Haymarket 431 Area" suggested by the North Melb. Association (between Elizaeth St, and Peel St to the north of Victoria Market; and in Flemington Rd, opposite to the Dental Hospital, Melbourne Hospital and Veterinary College)

(2) By permitting extension or expansion towards the rear of existing buildings without altering the streetscape.

(3) By re-converting buildings that were originally dwellings but now used for storage, offices or light industry back to residential accommodation.

(4) By converting buildings originally used for other purposes to residential accommodation e.g. old shops, hotels or even factories.

(5) By infill techniques in areas where row houses or terrace houses are the typically built form.

(6) By multi-purpose use of buildings with the greater proportion of the buildings available for residential use, especially in the mixed use areas, as envisaged by Interplan, but only for such redevelopments as would not disrupt the streetscape or community.

Incidentally, it should not be assumed that simply because there are more "multi-units" built by way of redevelopment in the inner areas, that that would necessarily mean an increase in population. Terrace housing provides, surprisingly, a moderately higher residential density, often equal to, or greater than, the modern "multi-units" that replace them. Moreover, students and lower income families that traditionally reside in the older building stock, do so at a lower occupancy rate than the more affluent who shift into multi-units with more space per person. If Mr Croxford is aware of this factor, it did not rate a mention in his published remarks.

To give Mr Croxford the benefit of all doubts, he might have had in mind the above-mentioned selective and sophisticated methods of increasing residential floorspace (as distinct from the number of new units), and he might have meant redevelopment in St. Kilda, Northcote or Prahan further from the city and with less terrace building stock. If so, it would be helpful if the Board of Works, (and the Town & Country Planning Board, for that matter) were to say so now, to enable them to enlist the support of communities living and working all around the City, instead of inviting their hostility.

The above explanatory introduction was necessary to appreciate the notes that this item wants to contribute to what was described above as the vexed question of whether a "mixed use" is desirable around an urban centre, and if it is to be a mixture, what sort of mixture at what density and why - and, of course, how all this measures up with a car-city stereotype or a tracked-city stereotype.
The Ideal in New Growth Areas

The ideal most consistent with the convivial community stereotype of the tracked city would be: -

Principle 1: Some residences in the centre.

To encourage high density residential accommodation mixed with the non-residential mixed uses envisaged for all urban centres-local, district or CBD - sufficient for who elect to live in such style, and subsidised, if necessary, to bring it within reasonable reach of people so electing. The purpose is to keep more people in the centre at what would otherwise tend to be "dead" periods - after the shops and offices are closed, or at weekends, i.e. at the very time when people have the most leisure to meet and relate to each other and when the urban centres should be vital.

The ideal would be to have such accommodation in upper storeys rather than taking up the prime ground floor and lower floor space better occupied by community and/or higher intensive commercial uses, such as shops.

Principle 2: All enterprises and ventures in the centre.

To encompass within such a centre - whether local, district, or CBD - all small-scale business enterprises as well as non-commercial ventures in amongst the bigger enterprises and government offices, and not, therefore in small-scale premises.

The purpose is the double one of, firstly, giving frail profit-making enterprises, and frail non-profit-making ventures the greatest possibility of survival by making room for them amongst the established enterprises and ventures; and, secondly, creating thereby a greater practical range of variety, including participatory activities, which would contribute to making such centres more attractive.

Principle 3: High-density residences near the centre.

To enforce in areas fringing the planned bounds of such a centre - of whatever size - the highest density residential use gradually reducing in density the further the distance from the centre, with areas of the current typical suburban detached house at the furthest distance.

The purpose is to provide that the greatest possible number of people are within easy walking/cycling distance of the centre. This ideal could also provide a genuine choice of a range of accommodation lifestyles, not now available, because the practical choice for most is a 3-bedroom nuclear-family detached house, enjoying at best a semi-privacy from immediate neighbours, or a flat with no outdoor privacy; and neither of these limited choices are available with the option of neighbourly sharing, for which indoor or outdoor spaces are simply not provided.

Principle 4: Crafts, hobbies and home industries.

To permit and encourage, especially in the form of collectives, crafts, hobbies and "home industries", and other activities of co-operative expression, in all residential areas; subject to such activities being conducted in a manner which does not harm the environment nor create nuisance.

The purpose is to provide, on the domestic scene, as much opportunity as possible for neighbourly co-operative effort for which spaces have never really been available, despite the often unused and unwanted front garden and backyards. The shared use by nearby neighbours of well-equipped workshops for mechanics, dressmakers, or carpenters, studios or office facilities, adventure playgrounds, laundrettes or reception room with proper regard to insulation from noise, and with garden plots and fruit trees, especially in lower density parts would not only make densities
somewhat higher by economising on unwanted or unusable private spaces, thus minimising sprawl. It would also provide an enhancement of the general standard of amenity, and economy of equipment, and, more importantly, give opportunity for a more co-operative basis, at the domestic level, and from the youngest age, thus helping to feed into the local community efforts of wider and/or more specialised groupings, which the local centres would be specially designed to cater for (as mentioned in item 2. above).

Adaptation of ideal to existing CBD and inner areas.

The above 4 principles could be applied, much as described, to new urban growth areas. In the built-up areas, however, the existing design and location of buildings, the existing lay-out of land-uses in relation to transport and existing businesses and community connections, mean that the above principles cannot be applied holus bolus, but need adaptation to meet the circumstances. Moreover, that adaptation would, of necessity have to be a longer term, phased one, although the quicker the course is set in the right direction, the less harm will be wrought by development in the wrong direction.

The exercise of application to a typical existing suburb will not be dealt with here (although, hopefully, in a later issue). Here, the exercise will deal only with some aspects of the relationship of residential to non-residential "mix", and the model will not be a socialist one, based on control by the community of its industry, commerce, culture, recreation - and the land-uses for these activities - but will have have some regard at least to the further capitalist constraints that follow from a market economy, although not to the extent of allowing the market to dictate at the expense of community benefit, for that would mean the abandonment of planning altogether, and triumph for the car-city.

Adapted principle 1: Residences in the centre.

Take, first, the mixture proposed of high-density residential accommodation as part of the CBD “mixture” of uses. That is the ideal, but, except for some tourist-type hotels and some recently built luxury flats, there is virtually no residential accommodation in the CBD.

There are, of course, extremely high land values in the CBD, which means that to propose that permanent residents live there would make rent or purchase of units extremely pricey; and, in turn, this would tend to make the off-hours CBD too exclusive and adapted too much for the elite. This would offend the concept of a centre available for everybody. The Strategy Plan makes no mention of any proposed residential accommodation in the CBD except for "international hotels". This makes some sense, for visitors on tour may well afford, for a few weeks, higher accommodation charges than they can for their permanent residence. Nevertheless, again, hotels of international standard have such high tariffs as to be beyond the pocket of most, even for a few weeks.

An alternative would be to subsidise rents in the CBD. But this would mean a very high rate of subsidy for all-year-round residents. Such subsidies could surely be more effective in helping people the CBD in off-hours in more direct ways, by making the CBD a better magnet drawing people to it by way of activities (for one example: by the "Tivoli Gardens" project suggested by Interplan).

So - for the adaptation of our first principle of people living in the centre we are driven almost to abandoning the idea altogether! (Although remember: what is judged an exception for the CBD need not be so for district or local centres)
It is therefore suggested:

* High-density accommodation for permanent residents in a few carefully selected locations as close to the CBD as possible (but this is not in the CBD, and strictly speaking is not serving to implement adapted principle 1; it is dealt logically under "adapted principle 3" regarding areas fringing the city, below.)

* Some subsidy for hostels and hotels so that visitors on holidays, or from interstate or overseas who have more modest means can afford similar convenience to the luxury tourist.

Adapted principle 2: small scale enterprises and ventures.

Leaving aside the traumas of carparking or truck delivery typical of the car-city, but which would be relieved in the tracked city, most small scale enterprises and ventures would flourish better in the highly accessible CBD than in the mixed-use areas around it, provided, of course, that there was equality of rent. However, so high have CBD land values become - a situation made worse by replacement of scores of sound 12-storey buildings in the centre of the CBD to make way for new towers - that many small enterprises and ventures cannot afford a CBD location. Instead they have shifted to the mixed use areas around the City or new ones have located in these areas instead of in the CBD.

The suggested modification of the ideal here then is:

* permit a mixture of uses including small scale enterprises only in small scale premises only in the mixed use areas.

* retain and encourage small-scale business and small-scale non-commercial ventures in the CBD by:
  
  (a) ceasing to demolish any more 12-storey buildings - the effect of which would make available at rentals progressively lower compared to new towers which should be built in future near the loop stations.

  (b) making some provision for small scale activities in new towers with lower-rent subsidies paid for by way of some development bonus.

Adapted principle 3: areas fringing the city centre.

Arising from the last item, it follows that, unlike the ideal, the area immediately surrounding the CBD could not be high-density residential only, because already established small scale ventures and enterprises should be left in the mixture. In many parts of the mixed use areas, the ideal of higher residential accommodation would also clash with other important social objectives, including (a) retention of sound building stock for ecological reasons of conserving energy, (b) avoidance of disruption of existing communities, and (c) avoiding the destruction of the character of the area for aesthetic and historical reasons.

Adaptation of the principle of increasing the number of residents close to the City is therefore suggested as follows:

* high-density residential in very carefully selected parts only (See for examples, as listed above, item (1) (a) to (f) on p.22). These would be of an "estate" type.

* increased residential component in the mixture in most parts of the mixed use areas, by sophisticated methods that retain existing communities, the existing character of the area and the bulk of the existing building stock. (See, for examples listed items (2) to (6) on p.22)
4 CONCEPTS FOR MIXED USE AREAS (see also opposite)

DIAGRAMS SCHEMATIC ONLY — NOT ACTUAL

1 SPRAWLY CBD

"RIBBON" MODEL

BOARD OF WORKS — PLANNING SCHEME

FEATURES

- Homogeneous zoned areas for offices, mainly in strips,
  — no height/density limit. — eg Special Use in "zone,
  Local Business zone etc. — exemplified by St Kilda Rd.
  (Contrary to criteria A and D)

- No concept of "mixed use" with small-scale offices only
  in "mix". (Contrary to criteria C)

- No concept of encouraging residential uses in or near
  the CBD (Contrary to criteria A)

- Redevelopment taken for granted as normal right
  (Contrary to criteria B)

SCOREBOARD

CRITERIA | SCORE
--- | ---
A Residents close | 
B Retains — community character, buildings | 
C Helps small-scale | 
D Helps public transport | 

2 SPRAWLY CBD

"GRADED" MODEL

M.I.C. PLANNING DEPARTMENT — MIXED USE AREA STUDY

FEATURES

- Like model 1, permits spread of offices outside of CBD
  (Contrary to criteria D)

- Controls densities, builMAX heights, with higher densities
  closer to CBD — ranging from plot ratios of 3:1 to 4:1
  (Equivalent to typical pre-war city office heights) graded down to
  2:5 in 5:1 in "outer fringes" of mixed use area
  (Still contrary to criteria D)

- Bonuses to achieve higher densities include "site control",
  "set-back", and "landscaping" — which assume to develop
  (Contrary to criteria B and C)

- "Residential use" is only one of 6 base uses and not
  necessary to pass maximum plot ratio — and is not really
  encouraged (So: criteria A left to economic chance

SCOREBOARD

CRITERIA | SCORE
--- | ---
A Residents close | 
B Retains — community character, buildings | 
C Helps small-scale | 
D Helps public transport |
CONCEPTS FOR MIXED USE AREAS (see also opposite)

3 COMPACT CBD
— "TOP-HAT" MODEL

INTERPLAN - STRATEGY PLAN (AS RECOMMENDED)
LODER a BALLY - PLANS FOR ST. KILDA RD.
(for South Melbourne and St. Kilda Councils)

FEATURES:
- High density offices in CBD
- Residential to be in "the mix"
- Small-scale offices in CBD

SCOREBOARD

CRITERIA

(a) STRAT PLAN
(b) ST. KILDA RD
(c) SOUTH MELBOURNE, KILDA

A Residents close ✓ ✓ ✓
B Retains - community character, buildings ✓ ✓ ✓
C Helps small-scale ✓ ? ?
D Helps public transport ✓ ✓ ✓

4 COMPACT CBD
— "SOUP-BOWL" MODEL

"ECCO EXCHANGE" - MODIFICATION OF STRATEGY PLAN
AND CA-N REPORT OF NORTH MELB. ASSOC.

FEATURES:
- High density offices in CBD
  Leave 15-18% offices in centre of CBD.
- In mixed use area
  Retain building stock, character of area and community
  Convert buildings rather than demolish.
  Permit expansion of premises where streetscape unaffected
- Small-scale offices only in "the mix"
  All dwellings to be used for residential purposes.
- New high-density residential accommodation on urban selected sites only.

SCOREBOARD

CRITERIA

A Residents close ✓
B Retains - community character, buildings ✓
C Helps small-scale ✓
D Helps public transport ✓
Adapted principle 4: crafts, hobbies and home industries.

There would not need to be any adaptation of this principle in new high-density estates designed to embrace it, despite the fact that there might need to be less ground space per person than in suburban examples. It could be the form, rather than the content that would be different. Thus, for example, noise-insulated basements could serve for workshops, youth clubs, theatrettes, reception rooms for parties; some private open spaces or children's play spaces could be in the elevated courts, roomy balconies or roof gardens.

Of the older building stock, terrace and rowhouse sites are often readily adaptable to creating small private courtyards at the rear thus making room for common yardspace and facilities in the core of the block.

Assessment of Four Current Concepts for Mixed Use Areas.

Finally, measured against the above four suggested principles as adopted for Melbourne's CBD and inner areas (which, combined, link back and assist the direction towards the stereotype of the convivial community city), how can current practices or proposals in Melbourne regarding the mixture of residential/non-residential uses in and near the City be assessed?

We will answer this with a sheet of 4 schematic diagrams, each with its scoresheet; and the diagrams will have concern especially for the following criteria in relation to the question we have just set, namely:

Does the option:

A. increase the number of people living close to the city

B. retain:
   (a) the existing communities?
   (b) the character of the area?
   (c) the existing building stock?

C. encourage small-scale enterprises and ventures?

D. facilitate walking/cycling/public transport access to high-intensity offices?

We sound a warning note: nothing written nor conveyed by impression in the diagrams should be taken to mean our advocacy of any more high-rise office towers in the current economic circumstances of acute over-supply of offices and undersupply of housing and community buildings; but strategic planning, is, by its very nature looking forward at least a few decades, and it is most important that it lays down just where major developments are to take place, if and when the time is ready for such developments.

The diagrams, although in severely "shorthand" form, will, it is hoped, convey the main general features of different options, with a little study. It is not intended to supply a textual expansion of the shorthand, which could rapidly expand into a book in any attempt to do a thoroughgoing comparison and contrast as between, the Planning Scheme, the Strategy Plan, the Mixed Use Areas study and other similar reports as well as our own "Ecoso" proposals, which are called this simply for identification (readers of "Ecoso Exchange", of course, might have quite different ideas, and are welcome to air them in later issues of this publication).

However, just two comments to assist anyone struggling with the shorthand.

Firstly, densities expressed by plot ratio are "tricky". It might be felt that we have too severely assessed Interplan's
recommendation for the Strategy Plan as being potentially too destructive in the mixed use areas by providing permitted densities that would encourage redevelopment. A density of 1.5:1 sounds very low for office use and even a density of 1.5:1 plus 250 habitable rooms per acre (= a plot ratio of about 2:1), giving a total of 3.5:1 (4.5:1 for St.Kilda Rd.) may sound modest.

It would be too, if the building covered the whole site. But, with traditional offstreet parking requirements and/or setbacks and/or landscaping and/or inclusion of carparking floors in the building (that do not count), the formula could well give rise to mini-towers. By way of comparison, the 12-storey Children's Hospital flats in Flemington Road, or the Jennings-type flat developments in Carlton or North Melbourne, are both said to be of a plot ratio of only about 1:1. If this is so, imaging what 3 times the density could produce!

The second comment is the query raised as to whether the office densities down St.Kilda Road, especially St.Kilda Rd (formerly "High St.") St.Kilda are not too high and whether they have not been set "as high as the traffic will bear" as a criteria, rather than being set sufficiently low to really carry out the intent of the Strategy Plan.

The recommendations for St.Kilda, although infinitely to be preferred to the Board of Works "Amendment 45" proposals (originally providing city-type plot ratios requested by the St.Kilda Council before it changed course), still provide plot ratios as high as 3.8:1 for a mixture on a big site where the residential component exceeds 50%. The impact of this has been shrewdly deflated by the authors of the report estimating that the outcome of the formula (not its theoretical maximum potential) would only give an averaged plot ratio for the whole area of about 2:1 of which half would be residential and half office. Also explanation of the reasons for the specifics of the formula, as a warning of too much traffic if higher ratios were to be adopted, which throws some doubt as to whether the authors are really concerned with encouragement of public transport.

However, our summary is that the Board of Works Planning Scheme and the Mixed Use Area Study of the Melbourne City Council Planning Department are both unacceptable, unless it is for setting the direction towards the car-city stereotype. The Strategy Plan, and still more the "Ecoso" proposals are more consistent with the tracked city stereotype.