

ECOSO EXCHANGE NEWSLETTER

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New Opportunities for Ecoso Exchange

This is the fourteenth and last issue of Ecoso Exchange Newsletter, but it is not the last of the EXCHANGE part of Ecoso. In future those who re-subscribe will be subscribing to Ecoso Exchange (the word newsletter is now dropped off).

Ecoso Exchange will be used to develop the Crow Collection as a Living Library.

Subscribers will receive :-

- * reprints of some of the documents in the Collection,
- * information on seminars, exhibitions and other projects which will be popularising the ideas in the Crow Collection,
- * information on how the Collection is being used,
- * information on current campaigns of other organisations.

The very nature of providing such information means that there needs to be some flexibility. A newsletter published at regular intervals is no longer the most suitable way of keeping in touch with each other.

The change in name from Ecoso Exchange Newsletter to Ecoso Exchange emphasises the new opportunities provided by the acquisition of Crow Collection by the Victoria University of Technology (Footscray Campus).

To keep up with inflation and also because the new responsibilities will be more costly the subscription to Ecoso Exchange will be \$20.00. This sum is not related to any particular period or any particular number of publications. Each subscriber will receive \$20.00 worth of information and when that sum is used up another subscription will be requested.

As the name implies subscription to Ecoso Exchange could be a two way process. The Crow Collection needs additional material to fill the gaps and to keep it up to date. Therefore subscribers can develop the exchange side of the relationship by :-

- * donating documents (such donations can be in lieu of the ..subscription).
- * donating subscriptions to publications (in lieu of subscription)
- * putting Ecoso Exchange on mailing list so that leaflets and other information can be publicised through the Crow Collection.
- * browsing through the Collection to help find out what are the most suitable publications to be republished.
- * Helping to index some of the sets of documents and in the process learning about what is in the Collection.
- * Popularising the existence of the Crow Collection.
- * Popularising the existence of Ecoso Exchange
- * Considering how the Crow Collection can be used for research ..projects.

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Launching of the Crow Collection

Towards the end of October three events were held at the Victoria University of Technology (Footscray Campus) to launch the Crow Collectionthe Library Launch which was held on October 19th, the all day Seminar and the Celebratory Dinner both of which were held on October 20th.

The Library Launch - The Collection as a Teaching Tool

The guest speaker at the Library Launch was Morag Loh. She pointed out that people who use the Collection will find out that many of our rights have emerged from humble beginnings, from campaigns mounted by ordinary people :-

"This is important because today many young people have a profound sense of pessimism. They feel powerless to influence events which impinge on their lives. This archive will indicate to at least some of them that it is possible for community groups with commitment and over time, to improve the quality of their lives, to influence events and to provide a vision of the future."

She described the Collection as a teaching tool in the sense that it indicates how people can set about organising around given issues :-

"It is about processes. There are unique and very instructive documents here - guides to action. Some of the processes evolved by Ruth and Maurie, although simple are effective. For instance they maintained that every program or plan should begin with a value statement. By which principles were the participants proceeding? For whom? To what ends?"

"The guides to action show optimism and faith in citizens' abilities coupled with realism and advice about not expecting too much.....the spirit of joy and common sense permeated most of Ruth and Maurie's work."

The Seminar Launch - Planning for the Twenty-First Century

The launching seminar was an opportunity for students to present their ideas on a sustainable future.

One interesting word used by one of the participants to describe this event was that it was "very supportive". This particularly applied to the help given to the students to prepare their papers, the way the seminar was organised around small group discussions and the involvement of quite a number of people in the preliminary planning of the gathering.

Three Seminar Publications are still available. These are :-

1. Ecoso Papers which were prepared especially for the seminar and cost \$5.00 (plus \$2.00 post). It includes information about the Crow Collection and Ecoso Exchange but its most useful section (about 80 A4 pages) is the following seven reports on sustainability :-

"Social Organisation and Ecological Sustainability" by Assoc. Prof. Peter Newman, Western Australia.

"But What is Sustainability" by Prof Ted Trainer, New South Wales.

"Bringing the Point Home" by Deborah White, South Australia (one of the authors of "Seeds for Change")

"Sustainable Development: How Do We Get There ?" by Professor Ian Lowe, Queensland.

"A Sustainable Economy" by Geoff Lacey, Victoria.

"Sustainable Development : A Case for Doing More With Less" by Phillip Toyne, Australian Conservation Foundation.

"What Sort of City ? Needed : An Alternative for Urban Living" by Maurie Crow (written in 1987 about 4 months before his death).

2. Sets of Ecoso Newsletters (2/1 to 2/13) were on sale.

3. Seminar Papers included summaries of reports by the student speakers from the three campuses of the Victoria University of Technology (Royal Melb. Institute, Footscray Institute and Western Institute) and also from University High School. These were free to participants but cost \$2.00 if posted.

Here is the list of titles of the papers :-

- * Responsive Administration; Western Regional Council for Social Development.
- * Conflict and Development of Neighbourhoods
- * Responsive Administration - Inter-Country Adoptions
- * A Tale of Two Pencils - Youth Versus Bureacracy (see note below)
- * The Footscray Fight Back Foundation - An Urban Social movement
- * Responsive Administration. Local Government in Time of Fiscal Constraint
- * Poverty and Education.
- * Who Owns Knowledge ? How Do We Raise Healthy Children to Help Create a Healthy Society.
- * The Changed Role of the Administrator (presented by students from Denmark)
- * The Role of local Government in Housing : Theoretical Perspectives of the Policy Development Process in the City of Nunawading
- * Multi-Function Polis - Benefits and Disadvantages
- * Stony Creek (Sunshine - Footscray) An Environmental Assessment
- * Sustainable Building Stock
- * The Restructuring of Tramways
- * Planning With Aboriginal Australia; An Explanation of the Role of Planners in the Empowerment of the Aboriginal Community.

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"A Tale of Two Pencils - Youth versus Bureaucracy" was prepared by secondary school students. It was based on a survey young people have undertaken in North Melbourne. Hats off to the North Melbourne Youth Group for researching local needs, for the interesting way they presented their material both in written form and the seminar presentation ! Their team effort was one of the inspiring highlights of the day.
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The Celebratory Dinner - A re-union of Activists

At the celebratory dinner there were many unexpected re-unions especially amongst those who had worked together on child care, on the Melbourne City Strategy plan and other urban issues during the 1970s.

The guest speaker was Ann Morrow and her speech was prepared collectively with France Floyd. In the 1970s Frances, Ann, Ruth Crow and Winsome McCaughey were the kernal of a group which prepared the basic documents for Community Child Care. For example the Child Care Handbook, the Ripple Newsletters and numerous information papers. These documents are a much prized part of the Crow Collection. All four were at the Celebratory Dinner.

Four Documents From the Collection

In her speech at the celebratory dinner Ruth Crow described four documents from the Crow Collection.

1. The Miller family 1932 Budget which Ruth explained was not just a balance sheet about how the "family pulled together" when there was no adult bread-winner. It is also about the position of her mother in the family and the indignity of economic dependence on teenagers.

2. "Town Planning - Co-ordination or Chaos ?" A report of the Seminar Proceedings of the Australian Resources and Living Standards Convention which was held in Melbourne in 1967.

This seminar was an early effort at bringing together unionists academics and urban activists. It was organised by a committee of representatives some of whom were at the Dinner.

Ruth pointed out that in helping to organise this seminar Maurie Crow initiated moves to produce the monthly newsletter "Irregular" which was the for-runner of the Ecoso Exchange Newsletter.

3. The third document was the minutes of a meeting of Action for Adequate Child Care in 1972.

The meeting was chaired by Carolyn Hogg (now a Minister in the State Government), addressed by Winsome McCaughey (now a Councillor for Melbourne City Council) and Joan Kirner (now Premier of Victoria) was in the audience. The attendance list included the names of a number of people at the Celebratory Dinner including Sheila Byard who has been one of the key people in arranging for the Crow Collection to be housed at FIT.

One of the results of this 1972 meeting was the establishment of Community Child Care.

There was some hilarity when Ruth displayed a 1972 article on the child care campaign which was published in the Melbourne Herald. It described Winsome McCaughey as a "good looking, eager and intent girl" !!

4. "Unfinished Business" was the fourth report displayed. This was prepared for the North Melbourne Association by Maurie Crow in 1986. It was his final report on the Melbourne City Council Strategy Plan.

The celebratory dinner was attended by a number of MCC councillors and some council officers, several planners who had worked on preparing the Stratgy Plan and members of the North Melbourne Association.

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The Crow Collection Trust
How To Make a Library Live

The words a "living library" have been used to describe our expectation for the Crow Collection. But how are we going to do this ?

The launching was a prototype of the sort of projects needed.... a first step. But what now ?

We are already taking the second step. The Crow Collection Trust has been formed and we have nearly finalised preparing a constitution so that the Trust can be incorporated as an association.

The members of the Trust Committee of Management are -
Peter Durkin, Peter Gibbon, Sheila Byard, Robert Taylor, Julius Roe, Rosemary Ward, Ruth Crow, John Dick, Annabel McCooke and Morag Loh.

Statement of Purposes of the Crow Collection Trust (from the draft of the constitution).

- (1) To enhance the comprehensiveness and accessibility of the Crow Collection and encourage involvement of organisations and individuals in practical tasks associated with such popularisation.
- (2) To seek donations and grants for the purpose of establishing a Trust Fund to carry out the above point (1).
- (3) To make decisions on Trust Fund money.
- (4) To assist the library of the Victoria University of Technology (Footscray Campus) to purchase or acquire appropriate subscriptions and monographs which will enhance the comprehensiveness of the Collection.
- (5) To subsidise newsletters, research projects, exhibitions, seminars and other projects which will enhance the comprehensiveness and accessibility of the Collection.
- (6) To involve voluntary helpers in carrying out point (5) above.
- (7) To invite organisations (including government departments and municipal councils) and individuals to use the Collection for research projects.
- (8) Acquire, improve, manage and otherwise deal with any property calculated to directly or indirectly further the objects of the Trust.
- (9) To ensure that Trust Funds are used for educational purposes.

Application for Membership of Crow Collection Trust (draft)

The two main clauses in the constitution state :-

- (1) A person who recognises that one of the values of the documents in the Crow Collection is that they include material about promoting a more efficient, dignified life-style which uses less energy and preserves the world as a pleasant and habitable place and who is prepared to help promote such ideas through making the documents as accessible as possible to the public. (Note :- This summarises part of the Ecoso Guidelines).

(2) A person who recognises that one of the values of the Crow Collection is the working papers prepared and/or collected by Ruth and Maurie Crow and who is prepared to promote projects around the use of this material by community organisations and educational institutions.

Membership of the Trust and Supporters of the Trust.

The Relationship Between Ecoso Subscribers and the Trust

Most Ecoso subscribers would fulfil such membership requirement and thus could become members of the Trust. But in the interest of having an efficient working arrangement it is planned to have a small Trust membership and a very large support group. The Ecoso Exchange subscribers will become the support group.

Only a small membership is required for an organisation to be eligible for incorporation. Thus it is proposed that the initial members of the Trust include those listed above (see page 5) as members of the Committee of Management and a few others who have special skills in establishing such organisations.

However membership of the Trust is open to all those who support its purposes and if you would like to be directly involved in this pioneering venture please volunteer by phoning either Sheila Byard (03) 688.4446 or Ruth Crow (03) 380.1876.

Why a Trust is Necessary

As soon as the Trust has been incorporated it will make submissions to several charitable funds seeking funding for specific projects.

The article in this Ecoso on Possible Projects for the Crow Collection Trust puts forward some ideas on how some of the documents can be updated and republished so that they can be effectively used.

To make a living library from the documents any project about updating and republishing would also need to include work on collecting together and indexing other documents on similar issues, involving people in helping to work out how to relate the material to current needs and of course popularising the use of the results of the project.

Exactly how to do this has yet to be worked out... that is the first task for the Trust in 1991.

How You Can Help

At this stage the one way Ecoso supporters can assist the Crow Collection is through sending as large a subscription as possible to Ecoso Exchange.

It would also be helpful if you could think about how the Crow Collection can be more accessible to you and the people you are working/studying with. Have you any ideas on the type of project for which we could seek subsidies from Charitable Foundations and/or do you know of any particular funding organisations that may be able to help with a particular Crow Collection project.

And, of course, it would also be a help if you could tell your friends and workmates about the Crow Collection and that they can be involved in the support group and kept informed about the Collection through contributing to Ecoso Exchange with both/either cash/documents.

Making the Crow Collection a Living Library is easy to say (and write) but to put it into practise needs your help !

Possible Projects for the Crow Collection Trust

The Crow Collection has quite a few documents which are now out of print.

One of the responsibilities of the Trust for the Crow Collection will be to consider how to updating and republish some of the documents.

The republishing of the documents needs to be directed towards helping to envisage the future, rather than harking back to the past.

Thus consideration needs to be given to :-

Firstly, how can this information be useful in planning the future ?

Secondly, who can be involved in editing and updating ?

And, Thirdly, and of course, how to pay for the project ?

Here are some documents which could be considered. Their updating could creatively involve a group of people in investigating what has happened since publication, preparing for the republishing and in popularising the results of the project.

Are you interested in any documents on this list :-

1951 "Tomorrow is a Glorious Day" (A hand book on leisure time activities for girls and boys 10 to 16 years of age). The 100 page draft was written by Ruth Crow. A considerable amount of additional work would be needed but the result could serve a very useful purpose for those who would like to help involve young people in cultural activities around the the sustainable community movements.

1967 "Town Planning - Co-ordination or Chaos" Report of the proceedings of the Australian Resources and Living Standards Convention in 1967. (See page 4 in this Ecoso). This 50 page book marks an effort to involve unions with urban planning. Its updating could involve unionist, urban activists and academics to campaign together more effectively.

1968 "Plan for Melbourne Part 1". (Principles of Planning for an Alternative) 1970 "Plan for Melbourne Part 2" (Transport, Urban Renewal and Community Services) and 1972 "Plan for Melbourne Part 3" (The Shape of the Metropolis). These publications are by Ruth and Maurie Crow. The updating of these books could involve the New Left Party and Rainbow Alliance and other organisations concerned with urban sustainability.

1973 Citizens Action Plan for North and West Melbourne (CAN Report) 120 pages prepared by 50 members of the North Melbourne Association. This republication could be combined with a republication of the NMA's "Less Energy and More Enjoyment" in North and West Melbourne (80 pages). A project on these publications could involve inner urban action groups.

1983 History of Children's Services in the Melbourne Municipality. This 40 page draft report, by Ruth Crow, is based on Council Reports from the turn of the century. It is at present only in draft form and preparing it for publication could involve organisations concerned with health promotion. This could also be a project about women and local government as the material shows the significant contribution made by women employed in Council health services, especially in the 1920s and 1930s.

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If you are interested in such republication projects please get in touch with Ruth Crow either at her home (03) 380.1876 or at FIT (03) 688.4754.
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Encouragement from Long-time Supporters.

Several people who could not come to the Launchings sent written greetings. Here are some of them :-

Professor Manning Clark (Australian National University)

"The Crow Collection is part of the life's work of a man who dedicated his great gifts to the service of humanity. I remember Maurie with affection and admiration. He was a believer in education. I am therefore very glad the Victoria University of Technology will house the Crow Collection."

Professor Leonie Sandercock (University of California, Los Angeles) who was a lecturer in Urban Studies at Footscray Institute in the late 1970s.

"Please convey my congratulations and best wishes to all concerned at Victoria University of Technology (Footscray Campus) on the great occasion of the acquisition of the Crow Library.

What a coup for Footscray ! And what a boon for students to have Ruth available each week to talk with them.

Ruth and Maurie's lives have been such models of the social mobilisation of community empowerment traditions that we try to teach our students about.

To make a confession; in the early stages of my Ph.D back in 1971/72 I was very close to dropping out of academic life altogether, it was meeting Ruth and Maurie and discussing issues with them that gave me a new determination to keep going.

Ruth is Australia's Jane Jacobs and Good luck to you all !"

(Ruth Crow's comment....Well ! That is a bit hard to live up to but with help from others we can still keep on "having a go").

Gerry Hand MHR for Melbourne (the federal member for the electorate where Ruth lives).

"I am sorry I can't be with you at the launching of the Crow Collection. Maurie was a person I admired greatly for his vision, compassion and his unyielding commitment to humanity. I look forward to viewing the Collection and thank you for sharing the life work of Maurie and yourself."

Greetings were also received from Hon Joan Kirner MLC. Premier of Victoria and from Evan Walker MLC for Melbourne and several others.

In a speech at the Melbourne Town Hall on Town Planning Day (November 7) the Premier made a brief reference to the community importance of the Crow Collection.

Encouragement was also received from Friends who came to the launching.

These included members of the North Melbourne Association, the Union of Australian Women, the Conservation Council of Victoria, some trade unions, Labour History Association and a number of other organisations.

The Lord Mayor of Melbourne, a number of councillors mainly from Melbourne City Council but also from other municipalities, several Ministers in the State Government and other elected representatives and a number of professors also gave their support by being present.