
NOTE: The "Ecoso What?" footnote at the end of some items is the Editor's attempt to orientate the writer, reviewer and the reader to the 4-point Ecoso guidelines of those who subscribe to the proposed newly formulated objectives of Ecoso Exchange as set out on the coloured page.

Explanation of our transitional format

This is still mainly the old-style Irregular, but with one or two differences.

1. It is no longer stated that the articles are not for publication or re-publication. It is hoped that some will be re-published.
2. The circulation list has been enlarged.
3. Ecoso What? has been included (see above) and name has been tentatively changed to indicate emphasis on new perspectives.

This issue:

1. Federal Labor at Urban Cross Roads.
2. The Built Environment as a Continuing Process.
3. A Belated Justification for Freeways.
4. "Objections in Principle" to the M.M.B.W. Plan.

1. FEDERAL LABOR AT THE URBAN CROSSROADS.

The massive pressure of the freeway lobby is being brought to bear on the new Federal Ministers Uren (Urban and Regional Development) Jones (Transport) and Whitlam (Prime)

An article "Labor's Conflicting Transport Theories" by Peter Samuel in "The Bulletin" 16/12/72 at pp 26-28 faithfully reproduces arguments of apologists of freeway networks.

1. The C.B.D. should remain static or decline.
2. Functions of the C.B.D. should be scattered to the suburbs.
3. The random trips so generated should be served by freeways.
4. In these circumstances buses on freeways are best public transport value for money.
5. Therefore the underground loop is useless and even C.B.D. orientated transport needs no improvement except new rolling stock and maybe an extra track here and there.

This theme, over and over again has come from Nick Clark, John Loder, John Bayly, John Paterson and in partial form from the highway engineers of the M.T.C., the C.R.B. and the M.M.B.W. (except instead of "should" they usually say "will" to disarm the non-expert from arguing.)

Peter Samuel gives some details from a "leaked" copy of the Bureau of Transport Economics Report which was the one "leaked" to Whitlam shortly before the elections. (Whitlam accused McMahon of suppressing it). He (Samuel) uses the report as a new peg on which to hang the freeway arguments, cunningly interspersing the above arguments in between bits and pieces from the report, so the reader gets befuddled as to whether he is reading the report, or Samuel, and it all sounds very wise. Uren and Jones we are told "have both shown signs in their speech-making of falling for the simplistic anti-road pro-railway thinking...." Whitlam, we are told, made an election promise to support underground schemes in Sydney and Melbourne; but "that is a promise he may be trying to forget in office" and it is stated that "the Melbourne loopline is probably the greatest white elephant since the Ord River."

Samuel shrewdly points up the apparent basic contradictions of the new Labor Ministers. The trouble is they support points (1) and (2). (i.e. scattering the C.B.D. functions to the suburbs) and yet reject point (5) (i.e. they support public transport) overlooking the connecting logic of points (3) and (4).

Why worry? you might ask. What can one expect from the Bulletin, from the conservatives, from the old-fashioned

extreme right or from the highway engineers? The trouble is that the Labor Ministers seems to be falling for the line and succumbing to the pressure without intending to.

The freeway lobby tactics seem to be (a) knock out the underground loop and then (b) use that as an argument for no expansion of the railway services on the basis of an acknowledgment that the C.B.D. won't expand which leaves (c) a freeway network the victor in the field.

Even charity becomes part of the tactic. Free off-peak transport for the "Yophs" (Young, Old, Pupils, Handicapped, Sick) is pushed on the grounds, according to Samuel, that "the costs of running trains and buses between the peak hours is virtually nil. And if the transport authorities will not reduce their charges accordingly, then it makes plenty of sense for the Commonwealth to subsidise them, to provide free travel off-peak." The 'comes the crunch. "the irony however is that this may have the effect of smoothing out the peaks in travel and make unnecessary many of the projects for expansion that Mr. Whitlam has championed". What does this mean? Unless it means to make the railways "pay" in the narrowest of traditional accounting terms and as the prime function of this service (see also "Irregular's" analysis of C. Clark and N. Clark's basic theories on these subjects "Irregular No. 35 and 39".

The ominous indication of lack of understanding of where they are being lead comes from statements by Uren reported by Ron Holdsworth in the "Age" 11/1/73. For those who may have missed the article we reproduce relevant excerpts which you can check against points (1) to (5) made above. Unfortunately Uren's remarks can be made to "fit" the freeway lobby 5 point assumptions.

"... Mr. Uren also criticised the building of the underground rail loop and Melbourne City Council's preparation of a strategy plan for the development of the central business district the Golden Mile. "The underground, he said, would only encourage further development of the central business district ... something he wants to discourage."

" 'The money would have been better spent on updating existing rail services, buying new rolling stock. Seventy per cent of Victorian Railway stock predate 1928' he said. "

" 'Better rapid public transport is a high priority on the Labor Government's priority list. We can only get it if we get a better balanced transport load; stop the peak hour rushes into the central business district' ". ("Age" 11/1/73)

Are the Freeway Lobby and the Federal Ministers then right? Is there no solution but this?

If this is right then the M.M.B.W. radial spoke corridor regional pattern is right too. If the car-on-the-freeway is the logical solution where trips are dispersed randomly around the whole metropolitan area" (Samuel) and this trend is accentuated by deliberate random dispersal of C.B.D. functions to the outer suburbs, then the shape of the metropolitan area must be conglomerated around the C.B.D. or distances would tend to become too attenuated for cars to traverse.

But there is another solution which relies on a more careful analysis of what is good and what is bad for continued growth within the C.B.D. and relies on using the most modern transport technology, and relies on a regional plan that ties all elements together in a pattern of urban living which is the reverse of the above five points.

That solution is briefly -

1. The C.B.D. should grow to give maximum (public transport) access to top educational, cultural and recreational functions to the maximum number of citizens and the C.B.D. redevelopment should be planned to afford protection and growth for small-man and moderately sized commercial and retail and voluntary concerns which could not survive in the suburbs.

2. Staple retail commodities and staple commercial services of the big corporations (except their head offices) should be directed to the suburbs, but not at random.
3. To avoid generation of random trips all future Melbourne's growth should be directed into one long urban corridor (Gippsland seems the best direction) serviced by rapid transit so that all people and later many goods could be carried by rail, and the car and truck would become less and less necessary; and the present freeway network should be reviewed and most of it could possibly be scrapped.
4. Buses on roads should not compete with electric or rapid transit services, but short, frequent shuttle bus services to stations should be supplied.
5. The underground loop (the costs of which are infinitesimal compared to the freeway net work) should be completed to improve the amenity of the C.B.D. traveller and the present suburban electrical train system given maximum assistance by cheap feeder buses to the stations, free parking at stations and cheaper fares as well as better more frequent rail carriages. The Yophs could have free transport too.

The beauty of this public transport orientated policy is that it is simultaneously a new form of decentralisation without the uncertainties and growing pains of decentralised separate cities.

Are the Labor Ministers, right at the outset of their careers going to fall victim of the oil corporations and the car corporations and use Federal money to force upon the States energy-wasteful transportation systems and life-styles based on consumerism?

It might have been better to have the Liberals in office with their no-money-for-big-cities policy, rather than money spent in the wrong direction?

Fortunately it just could be possible for Mr. Uren, by a few more sophisticated developments of thought about the subject, to "fit" most of his points into the second set of assumptions ..

If he adds ...

1. By commercial I mean, not the small-man commerce, but the commerce of the big corporations which supply "staple" goods and services.

2. By criticism of the strategy plan I mean only criticism of such features of that plan that may come up with the growth of such commerce of staples; at the same time I support growth of small-man or medium-sized commercial and/or voluntary efforts of all types in the C.B.D. (because that is the function of the C.B.D.).

3. The way in which staple commerce concerns are decentralised to the suburbs should not be random but along the Gippsland corridor from Dandenong onwards.

4. By "rapid transit" is meant, say 150 m.p.h. in the Gippsland corridor, not say 50 m.p.h. average speed on our present electric system.

5. I might have made mistakes about the underground loop because a Gippsland corridor served by rapid transit could pour more citizens into the C.B.D. who simply could not come by car and therefore I might have made a mistake about the possibility of the C.B.D. growing, not realising the potential for further growth of attractive features if coupled with rapid transit upon which is bestowed a favoured position in relation to the car, by utilising rapid transit, in an elongated urban corridor.

Mr. Whitlam, Mr. Jones, Mr. Uren ... its up to you!
 If Whitlam says the Government stands against the tyranny of the car, your test of matching action to words has come already!
 By all the signs you are beginning to succumb to the advice of the freeway school as freely as if they were experts ensconced in your departments!?

(Ecoso What?: Radial corridors leading to random car trips on freeways are wickedly wasteful of energy and non-renewable resources compared to a Gippsland corridor. It is sociologically wicked throwing the family and the citizens even more firmly at the mercy and the tyranny of the car).

.....

2. THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AS A CONTINUING PROCESS

The Royal Australian Institute of Architects awards for the year 1972 set a new precedent in three directions:-

1. The recognition of architecture as a continuing process.
2. The recognition that laymen can contribute to the "built environment.
3. The recognition of teamwork.

The much prized bronze medal for 1972 was awarded to Kevin Borland for five buildings, built over the last ten years at Preshil School. In making the award it was stated: "These buildings are a delightful expression of team work between user, client and architects." (Kevin Borland also won an award of merit for a house).

This year for the first time the R.A.I.A. presented the Robin Boyd Environmental Award to laymen who had made a contribution to the built environment. The first bronze medal "Robin Boyd Award" was given to David Yencken and John Ridge of Merchant Builders for their work since 1965 which has gained for them a unique place among innovative developers. In making the award it was stated "Merchant Builders' approach is an excellent example of team work".

Anne Polis of "Melbourne Times" newspaper was given a "Robin Boyd Award" of Merit because "with the help of a team of unpaid enthusiasts "Melbourne Times" has developed into a hard hitting, responsible weekly".

The R.A.I.A. also recognised the work of Ruth and Maurie Crow by giving them a Robin Boyd Award of Merit for "their consistently valuable and perceptive contributions as laymen to the literature of town planning". In making the award it was stated "In an era of depersonalisation and individual frustration with planning issues, this couple have acted responsibly and consistently in tackling large problems, informing an involved public and voicing minority opinions for the greater good."

The part Ruth and Maurie had played in publishing and distributing "Irregular" and "Plan for Melbourne" were cited as samples of their contribution to town planning.

The presentation of the 1972 Architectural Awards was one of many examples of how the R.A.I.A. has had the boldness and imagination to throw down the barriers of their own profession. In May, 1972 the R.A.I.A. turned over the whole of a national convention to an inter-disciplinary assault on urban problems. (See Irregular No. 47 "The Sunbury Convention" P. 3). If merit were to be justly ranked, the architects as a profession deserve recognition as the top profession of the 1970's. Few other professional associations are making such conscious efforts to bridge the gap between themselves and the public.

The architects were able to recognise that laymen are attempting to make their own contributions to the built environment precisely because more and more of them are becoming involved with a wide cross-section of the community. "Irregular" itself is partly the result of this cross-fertilisation of ideas between those who have specialist skills and the amateurs. It is of significance that the winner of the main award Kevin Borland was one of the small group of people who helped to initiate "Irregular"

.....

3. A BELATED JUSTIFICATION FOR FREEWAYS

(This article was sent to "Irregular" at the end of 1972 before the press statements referred to in the feature article of this

issue of "Irregular". In effect it supplements the first article.)

Is the M.M.B.W. out of step with the Prime Minister and with the Premier of Victoria?

The announcements by the Federal Ministers Uren and Jones in December that the Federal Government would adopt a policy of stopping spending on suburban freeways and upgrade public transport was supported by Victorian Premier Hamer in a press statement on December 13th.

It would seem that the M.M.B.W. was unaware of this situation when the latest issue of "Living City" was published.

"Living City" Number 12 arrived early in January, 1973. The main article quotes Dewitt C. Greer, Texas Highway engineer, with approval "The United States doesn't have superb highways because she is rich. America is rich because she had the vision to build such highways".

"Living City" published twice yearly by the Metropolitan Board of Works is a glossy pictorial magazine. It is well produced and circulates fairly widely. It is used in many schools as source material for projects. The latest issue is illustrated with maps from the 1969 Transportation Study.

The feature article "Freeways the Why and the Wherefore" appears to separate out "transport planning" as a thing in itself quite apart from other planning considerations such as land use.

Here are two examples ...

1. It is pointed out that "the heaviest traffic is intra urban" as if this is some unchangeable, natural law, whereas in fact the zoning of land for industrial and commercial use in 1954 in outer and middle suburbs has helped to determine traffic patterns and even more so the overall shape of Melbourne also increases this trend, and the trend will be even more entrenched if the M.M.B.W. plan of seven spokes is adopted.

2. The article states "the proponents of public transport overlook the fact that the population of these cities (London, Paris, and New York) is many times more concentrated than Melbourne. That is so. But overall density is not the only factor. Density along rail-lines and around interchanges can be decisive. Prof. Blunden (first and only Professor of Traffic Engineering in Australia) had a useful answer to this when he spoke from the Melbourne Town Hall platform on December 11. He emphasised that land-use and traffic must be planned together and that it is necessary to make some restraints, that will restrict the use of cars, as for example the zoning of land for industry, housing and commerce so that the need for car travel is minimised and the use of public transport is maximised. Surely now that the M.M.B.W. is planning for an increase in the population of Melbourne of about two million it is timely to consider whether the future growth should continue to allow the car to dominate the lives of nearly all Melbourne citizens, or whether the increased population could be better served by the zoning of land to minimise the use of the car for work and shopping trips. (See Irregular No. 48 October, 1972 for details of how the proposed Gippsland corridor could do this.)

In this rabid justification for freeways the need for public transport for the young, the old, the poor and the sick is recommended as "essential" to the welfare of the city... there is even a case ... that public transport should be wholly or partly free."

Then follows some high sounding phrases about concern for the Y.O.P.S., but this pontification becomes very hollow when the arguments are more closely examined. (See Irregular No. 45 for an article which examines Mr. Nicholas Clark's theories on free transport for Y.O.P.H.S. (Young, Old, Poor, Handicapped and Sick)).

These following two examples will illustrate the super-

ficiality of the economics used in the article to justify the contention that there is "no economically feasible alternative to freeways".

1. "Freeways demonstrate surprising economic advantages .. the man-mile cost factor could be well below that of public transport." It would be interesting to see what is debited as cost of man-mile factor. Mr. Max Lorkin, an Amalgamated Metal Union Councillor spoke on this subject from the floor of the meeting in the Town Hall on December 11th. He pointed out that the R.A.C.V. figures for the cost of a car to one person for the forty years of life from 18 to 40 is estimated to be \$40,000-00. This is the cost to the car owner, ... Is this cost in the equation suggested above? Or is the man-mile cost only the cost of the freeway lanes?

2. "Fewer commercial vehicles and drivers are needed to move a given volume of goods in a given time." This is probably true if we are only able to compare freeway haulage with the conventional roadway for cartage of goods, but here again zoning to reduce cartage and zoning to allow industry to make more effective use of public transport need also to be considered before judgement is made.

The "Living City" article gives lip service to the pollution problem stating - "Many laymen, rightly concerned with pollution of the air by cars and pollution of the environment by traffic-packed roads, demand an upgrading of public transport." But there is no further consideration of pollution only a eulogy of how "Melbourne motorists .. are passionately wedded to cars".

The foreword to the article states "Objection to them (freeways) is voiced in clubs and pubs and set forth in letters to editors."

This is typical of the over simplification of the whole subject. The writer of the article is no more aware of the organisations that are being developed against freeways, (not only in Melbourne and Sydney, but also in Britain, Japan and the U.S.A.) than he is aware of the new knowledge about the problem of conserving energy and of interfering as little as possible with ecological balance.

"Laymen" are not only concerned about "pollution of cars and pollution of the environment by traffic packed roads" but about the whole life-style that comes as a package deal with the car in the consumer based society in which we live. Such people are not hood-winked by high sounding phrases from those who may not be laymen in a particular narrow field, but whose narrow expertise blinds them to all important issues of our times.

The future of our city is no longer being debated in "clubs and pubs and set forth in letters to the editors", a new stage is being reached and a feature of life is the increasing number and variety of organisations that are being initiated around such key urban issues as freeways.

(Ecoso What? : Not needed. The contributor supplied it unasked in the last two paragraphs;)

.....;

4. "OBJECTIONS IN PRINCIPLE" TO THE M.M.B.W. PLAN

Objections to amendment 3 and 21 of the M.M.B.W. Planning Scheme for the Future Growth of Melbourne were heard during November and December, 1972. These are "Objections in Principle". The hearings were open to the public but very few people attended other than those delivering arguments in support of their own objection.

The Board has now completed the hearing of "objections in principle" and will hear objections to particular parts of the Plan when it resumes sitting in February.

Irregular No. 49, October, 1972 was mainly devoted to an examination of six objections to the M.M.B.W. Plan. These were by the R.A.C.V., V.C.O.S.S., R.A.I.A., R.A.P.I. T.C.P.A. and Ruth and Maurie Crowl.

The following quotes from the hearings of objection are only intended to whet the reader's appetite. Anyone interested in studying the whole documents or the notes taken during the hearing can arrange to do so by 'phoning "Ecoso" 30 23 45.

R.A.C.V. (Royal Automobile Club of Victoria) "need for adequate provision for the development of viable district communities in the growth corridors"... Concern that "the roads proposed within the inner suburbs will cause severe environmental damage unless proper consideration is given to the sensitive combination of accessibility and environment."

The R.A.I.A. (Royal Australian Institute of Architects) and the R.A.P.I. (Royal Australian Planning Institute). Criticism of the plan because "there are no proposals for comprehensive future planning of inner, middle and outer areas of the existing metropolis." And that "there is no comprehensive planning strategy concerned with social planning", nor is there a definition "of the population densities to be achieved within the several components of existing new urban areas."

They stated the "The Institutes do not consider it acceptable that the Melbourne Metropolitan Region should be permitted to grow indefinitely without alternate growth options," and objected to "the lack of transportation strategy in the planning policies" and stated that "the policy contains assumptions about house/life styles. No evidence is presented about their desirability and no alternative options are advocated."

They also criticised "lack of policies for encouraging growth to the western side of the metropolitan region" and stated that the "Institutes do not accept the premise that planning should be for an option to extend metropolitan growth to a non-finite level".

Lower Yarra Crossing Authority were represented by Mr. Gobbo Q.C. and three representatives of the planning firm of Pak Poy and Associates. They all emphasised the need for accelerated development in the western sector because without this it will not be possible for "the amortization of the capital cost of the bridge to be achieved in not more than forty years .. the rate at which the bridge is paid for and the amount of toll that is required to pay for the bridge will depend very largely on the rate of development of the area west of Melbourne."

Victorian Council of Social Service - "The M.M.B.W. is in a position of obligation to provide some social services. It has power to provide sewerage etc. and more recently to zone for conservation, why not powers to provide for social amenities?"

Randall Champion - "Put infra-structure (i.e. water sewerage social services etc.) in first as was done with the Railways and he also said "Relate land zoning to density of activity" and "make provision for diversity of urban living".

Land Development Conference - "We are concerned about inadequate supply of land. This is the primary part of our objection, decisions on reserved living zones are held up while the M.M.B.W. hears objectors like those of V.C.S.S." They expressed concern that the 20000 acres (announced by the M.M.B.W. as being about to be released last August 23) had not yet been released. (Lend Lease also made a similar objection).
(Editor's Note: This 20000 acres has since been released subject to water and sewerage.)

Bissett Johnson: "Planning control should be by density not by block size." Mr. Bissett Johnson advocated hamlets with houses clustered together and land left free for farming "Block sizes will ruin the countryside, once agriculture has been given up it will never be brought back again."

Mr. Axelrod complains: "everyone thinks they have a special right to the Dandenongs, some think it is a beautiful area, but I live in this landscape zone and I can't do what I want with my own land".

Dandenong Valley Authority: "Conservation zones are a good form of planning we would hate to see them changed".

Mr. Gartside: (Melton) "The Plan has white or black choice of living; need for variety" He advocated hamlets and also gave a detailed report on how this could be done. He particularly stressed the need for hamlets, townships or villages to have their own independent identity. This could be achieved by leaving a gap of several miles or by some special landscape feature he suggested.

Objections to M.M.B.W. Plan

Key to Map (See Map on back of colored 1 loose page)

- I. One corridor only, eastwards into Gippsland. Town and Country Planning Association; Margot Nicholls; Ruth and Maurie Crow (partly supported by Randell Champion). The T.C.P.A. and the Crows based corridor on rapid transit.
2. Delete Lilydale Corridor. Yarra Valley Conservation League, Randell Champion, Alistair Knox (Natural Development Association) and the three who advocate one corridor into Gippsland.
3. Develop to the west. Strongly by the Lower Yarra Crossing Authority, and slightly by Victorian Council of Social Service, the Royal Australian Planning Institute and the Royal Australian Institute of Architects and by Randell Champion (R. C. supported this on the grounds that there is little of conservation interest in the west.)
4. The existing inner, middle and outer suburbs must be also included in the plan, particularly for improvement of social amenities. R.A.I.A.; R.A.P.I.; V.C.S.S.; R and M. Crow.
5. Reduce controls on landscape and conservation zones (a number of individual objectors most of whom had land in the area so zoned)
6. Compensation for land owners in landscape and conservation zones. The Land Development Conference of Victoria and a number of individual objectors, mostly those who objected on grounds pt 5.
7. Beautify the Maribynong River, restrict development in this valley. Maribynong Valley Association (part of National Parks Assc.)
8. Beautify the Werribee River and restrict development in this area. Werribee Conservation Association.
9. Point Cook is an area of considerable ecological importance, do not allow urban development here. Werribee Conservation Association.
10. Decentralise Borough of Wonthaggi (partly by R.A.I.A, R.A.P.I. and several individual objectors.)
- II. Hamlets and cluster housing should be developed in new areas. Bissett Johnson; Gartside; Randell Champion.
12. Beautify the Yarra Valley and restrict development. Yarra Valley Conservation League; Randell Champion and Alistair Knox.

The map illustrating these twelve points is on the colored insert. On one side of the colored insert is the statement, "Outrageous Modern Trends." This is the draft guide lines for Ecoso Exchange.