

Ideas Exchange Project An Over-View

1. **THE GERM OF THE IDEA..** At the 1995 Spring meeting of the Committee of Management of the Crow Collection Association it was proposed that an essay competition should be held. The theme of "What Sort of Society Do You Want Australia to Be ?" was chosen. (1) In January, 1996, at the Association's Gardens Gathering, ideas about an Ideas Exchange Project were canvassed. The popular proposal was that the project should not be competitive...that participants should be invited to respond to the question through any type of media.
2. **FUNDING.** Letters, requesting funding, were sent to several Unions and to the SEARCH Foundation. \$500 was received from each of the following :- SEARCH Foundation, the Clerks' Division of Australian Services Union and the Victorian Branch of the Manufacturing Workers Union.. a total of \$1500.
3. **THE LAUNCH OF THE PROJECT.** Prof. Alistair Davidson (Monash University, Politics Dept.) was invited to speak at the 1996 AGM of the Crow Collection Association and to launch the Project. This was held in March and attended by over 50 people.
4. **POPULARISING THE PROJECT.** 1000 copies of the first leaflet (proposing various ways of contributing) were printed. The first mail out was mainly directed at schools in the Western Region. Before the end of February letters, an invitation to the launch and the leaflet were sent to two teachers (the conveners of English and the conveners of Social Studies/Australian Studies) in each of over 70 schools (state and private). The project was popularised through Ecoso Newsletter. (2) The first press release resulted in at least one article in a local newspaper, and a broadcast on 3CR. 1500 copies of an illustrated leaflet were distributed in June and July. Other publicity included a leaflet about resource material on citizenship in the Crow Collection, a second press release (referring to the involvement of young people) and short talks at several organisations. A number of community organisations advertised the Exchange Day in their newsletters. ✓
5. **DEVOLVING RESPONSIBILITIES.** A small Pilot meeting was held in early May and in early June a well attended Steering Meeting was held. A second Steering Meeting was held late in July. The main tasks were designing the leaflet and the ideas certificate, selecting the discussion topics, recommending forum speakers and their topics, suggesting entertainment groups/individuals etc.
6. **ROSTERING THE EXCHANGE DAY.** By the end of May 48 Crow Collection supporters had agreed to carry out specific rostered tasks at the Exchange Day, On the Day, 3 were unable to help and sent apologies in good time. The roster worked very smoothly.
7. **PARTICIPATION IN THE EXCHANGE DAY.** About 140 people attended, most for the full day, but a fair proportion for part of the day (4), 14 people were involved in the Steering Committee meetings. ✓

18 people prepared in some specific way, for example by written or artistic contributions. The Exchange Day program included 3 solo performances and 2 group performances (5). 65 essays were received from Point Gellibrand Girls Secondary College. (6)

7. THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE EXCHANGE DAY More than 20 of the participants came from beyond the metropolis. About 17 were students from Gippsland TAFE and about 6 from other country towns. 5 of the written contributions came from people living in rural areas. There was a range of adult ages. There were probably no or very few teenage participants despite efforts to involve secondary students.

8. ASSISTANCE FROM VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY. Rent free seminar facilities and the provision of catering services were provided by the Victoria University. (7)

9. OTHER SOURCES OF ASSISTANCE. Considerable use was made of photostating facilities at the Union of Australian Women. (8) Several Crow Collection supporters provided car transport for visits to schools and community organisations..

10. ASSESSING THE EXCHANGE DAY. There is no criteria for assessing the value of the project but judging by post-Exchange Day comments the participants appreciated the opportunity for networking and seeking new ideas (9). Request have been made for repeating this type of event and also for the continuation of participation through some sort of organisation.

11. WHAT NEXT ? The Exchange Day was a climax in the on-going project on "What Sort of Society Do We Want Australia To Be ?" .A useful assessment can only be made through an opportunity to discuss the Ideas Exchange Project by those who are closely involved in it. A crucial element is an assessment of the future role of the Crow Collection Association.

12. THE CROW COLLECTION ASSOCIATION. The Crow Collection Association was initiated at the Launch of the Crow Collection in October 1990. Since then a number of changes have occurred. Thus the time has come for a thorough look at how best to continue. (10)

Financial Statement
4/9/96

Receipts	\$	Expenditure	\$
Donation Search	500	postage	480
" Clerks Union	500	stationery	194
" Metal Union	500	photostat	140
" Ideas Day	300	phone	60
		printing certificate	80
		printing leaflets	700
		Dusp	100
		Balance	46
<u>Total</u>	<u>1800</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>\$1800</u>

The Ideas Exchange Project ... An Overview.

END NOTES.

A useful supplement to this report are the leaflets, circulars, written contributions and other document. These have been filed and a list of contents has been made. These files are available in the Crow Collection Room at Footscray Campus of the VUT.

1. The question "what Sort of Society Do You Want Australia to be?" was asked in the Senate Inquiry Discussion Paper, 1995.
2. See Ecoso Newsletters 37.38.39. 40. (in Crow Collection)
3. It is not possible to know other results of press release.
4. 125 people signed attendance sheet, quite a few were not recorded.
5. The enterainment included a recitation about Kooris, by Jenny Lane; Peter Jones, the magician; folk singer, Margaret Magalloti; a play, especially written and performed by City of Voices; and the Latin American band, Sentimiento Andino.
6. These essays were the result of a lesson presented by Audrey Davies and Ruth Crow to students at Point Gellibrand College.
7. The use of such facilities was made possible by Department of Urban and Social Policy at the Footscray Campus. Special thanks to Moira Simcock (DUSP)
8. This was a congenial and efficient arrangement, thanks to Thelma Prior.
9. Letters, greeting cards and phone calls have used such expressions as "It was fabulous", "a very high quality event",; " it did bring magic into our lives"; " it was the result of excellent thought and planning". The only expressed regrets were from those who wanted it to last longer.
10. Changes since 1990 which affect the Crow Collection supporters include :-
 - a) the Footscray Instititue is now a multi-campussed University
 - b) the University has acquired a number of new Library Collections some of which complement the Crow Collection,
 - c) the escalation in changes in information technology,
 - d) the development of new types of community involving organisations (and the revival of some long-existing ones such as the TCPA) in answer to some of the new social issues arising from privatisation and economic rationalism.
 - e) the amalgamation of unions and changes in industrial relations.
 - f) a less centralised ~~with~~ left political movement..