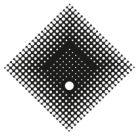
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BUMPER WINTER-SRING ISSUE

1. Jay and CUE -
   2 Alternatives to Car-is-King City.
2. The "Me" Generation, Consumerism and Age-ism -
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Supplementary Reading

4. The Energy Question and Unions
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   Report to Melbourne Trades Hall Council - J.Dick
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READERS COMMENTS ON ANY OF ABOVE ITEMS WELCOME

1. JAY and CUE - 2 Alternatives to Car-is-King City -

- Comments on Christopher Jay (AIUS) and "Seeds for Change"

Whys and Wherefores of Publication

Two significant documents have been written projecting strategies for Australian cities which depart dramatically from the prevailing car-is-king type city planning.

1. "Towards Urban Strategies for Australia" by Christopher Jay, Australian Institute of Urban Studies (AIUS) Publication No.75 (P.O. Box 809 Canberra City ACT 2601 $7.50) appeared in August 1978.
Mr Jay, Business Editor of the Australian Financial Review was engaged by AIUS as co-ordinator-writer. A series of "search conferences" and discussions were held by State divisions of the AIUS in 1978 attended by Mr Jay who was assisted by a small group of senior AIUS people called a "Reference Group" which prepared an "overview" of major questions for Mr Jay.
The Jay report is to be debated by the National meeting of the AIUS in Canberra on 26th, and 27th. October 1978.

2. "Seeds for Change" by the Conservation of Urban Energy (CUE) authors group, published jointly by the Conservation Council of Victoria and Patchwork Press (303 Victoria St. West Melbourne 3003, $7) is expected to appear in book form shortly.
So a full description of the alternative low-energy model for a restructured Melbourne is not yet available. However, over the last twelve months, there have been a number of submissions, papers, articles and abstracts, and workshops by the CUE group which give sufficient description of some aspects of their particular model to make a broad comparison with the AIUS report possible. These include:

a) "Victorian Energy Future" in "Scienee & Technology" Vol.6 No.1 p.4
b) "From Mobility to Community - Restructuring our Cities" in "Chain Reaction" Vol.3 No.1 1977 p.18
c) "Planning for a Low-Energy More Sociable Future" Paper to Melb. Transport Planning Seminar, Swinburne College of Tech. 2/11/77 p5
d) "A New Direction" Papers Energy Conservation in the Built Envir. EHCD Seminar Sydney March '78 p.33
e) "The Role of Government in Energy Conservation - An Urban Strategy for a Low Energy Melbourne" RMIT Workshop Oct 1977.
f) "A model for a low-energy Melbourne" -notes from the CUE group's 2-day Seminar in Melb. "Victoria's Energy Future" July '78
g) "Energy and the City" at "Energy & People" Conference - Society for Social Responsibility in Science Canberra Sept. '78

f)"Creatively Confronting the Energy Crisis" at the "Energy & U" Seminar Melb. Sept. '78.

The CUE authors say of themselves that they have taken a multi-disciplinary group approach.

As it happens, then, there have been two searching examinations of urban strategies taking place simultaneously, but drawing their material from different quarters in different ways. Although Mr Jay has brought his own individual crativity to bear on the material at his disposal, the nature of that material was heavily drawn from public and private decision-makers. Listed, for example, as consultants are Town Planning Chairmen, Land Commissioners, Housing Commissioners, Transport Directors, Investment Companies, Real Estate Institutes, Industrial Economists, Building Developers, leading academics of various faculties, and senior officers of various departments

The CUE group's effort, on the other hand, whilst clearly based on analysis of various government, academic and industry reports, especially on the energy side, draw some of their resources from the conservation movement, various social movements and urban groups.

It is instructive, therefore, to identify the broad areas where these two approaches run parallel as well as pointing to some of the elements of significant difference.

This article will pay more attention to the Jay document than to CUE's book which may be reviewed after "Seeds for Change" appears. The intention of this article is not to sound final judgement, but to open up some preliminary aspects.

Readers are invited to contribute comments to subsequent issues of "Ecos Exchange" on any of the wideranging topics opened up by either of the two documents

Parallel Perspectives

(Notes: (1) Page numbers -shown in brackets- all refer to the Jay report (2) "Jay" = the above-mentioned AIUS report; "CUE" = attitudes to be gathered from CUE sources such as those listed above)

1. Liquid fuel vulnerability

Jay and CUE both recognise the highly vulnerable position that Australia is in regarding liquid fuel (19), (32).

2. Relevance of urban planning

Jay and CUE both regard urban planning to reduce energy use as one essential ingredient in meeting the liquid fuel energy challenge. "To guard against the possibility of physical restrictions on fuel supplies, Australia needs cities which could function...without reliance on the motor vehicle." (32)

3. Congruity of social and energy planning.

Jay and CUE would both agree that "As it happens, the requirements for guarding against shortage of liquid fuels dovetail with townplanning policies which are desirable anyway." (32). CUE puts it somewhat stronger: lower-energy usage with a higher quality of life are possible.

4. Land-use/transport co-ordination

Jay and CUE seem to be identical in their attitude "that there has been inadequate implementation of co-ordinated land-use and transport studies. Transport planners in particular tend to take existing densities and locations of activity areas as given, without taking into account the dynamic effects of their own plans, nor the implications of possible alternative location-policies on transport needs" (33). CUE expresses the same basic thought by saying that the problem to be solved is "access" to urban centres, more conveniently clustered and located, not simply "mobility".

5. Freeways incompatible with urban centres

Jay and CUE both deplore the dispersal effects of the car which encourages universal low density (28), and both recognise the functions of urban centres as incompatible with freeway systems designed to serve them "...dense nodes of activity simply have to be served by public transport" (37). But Jay tends to concentrate his fire on radial freeways and the CBD. His argument that a "car

occupies many times the cubic space that its occupants do..." and therefore "..the city has to be torn down to accommodate the car parks" (36) would seem to apply to urban growth centres of any size within the suburbs as well as the CBD.

6. Strategic location of higher density

Jay and CUE both argue that higher residential densities are desirable and should be located strategically to support public transport routes (41)(47)(52) and "system centres" at nodes in the suburbs "should be linked with each other and with the central CBD with higher speed transport corridors" (72);and full utilisation of land that has been "skipped over" in the outward sprawl (69-70)

7. Buildings provide thermal comfort

Jay as well as CUE argue,in relation to heating and cooling buildings,for using the building itself as the provider of thermal comfort "by utilising the often benign weather conditions to even out the unfavourable times in the weather" (60);and point to the advantages of terrace form of housing rather than the detached form for medium to high density accommodation (64).

Some Apparent Divergence of Views.

The points of apparent consonance between Jay and CUE listed above,create tremendous scope for the emergence of "new broom" urban policies.

The areas of apparent divergence,however,between Jay and CUE are also instructive. Elucidation of the following points of issue could lead to even better policies:

1. Oil from coal

Although Jay treats liquid fuel as the big energy problem,he does not deal with the recurring proposals of the Commonwealth government and the governments of the three eastern States to encourage foreign capital to establish coal-to-oil plants. If he had penetrated this subject,as CUE seems to have done,he would hardly have been able to write: "Coal and hydro electric resources are sufficient for electricity supply for generations." (30)

CUE contends that the rate of production of coal would actually start to decline in only two to three decades,if the enormous quantities of coal required to supply a complete substitute for transport oil,in addition to growth in electricity generation,were allowed to escalate according to official predictions of growth.

2. Pendulum city

If these energy limits had been appreciated by Jay,he would hardly have advanced the concept of a "fail-safe" city in which "over a few decades,city transport systems could swing from general reliance on individual,private cars to mass usage of public transport in the event of fuel shortage and back again "(our emphasis) (32).

The big city is surely not to be conceived like a pendulum swinging now to public transport,now back to the car,then back to public transport,if for no other reason than Jay himself has outlined (see items 4 and 5 above) concerning the land-use implications of transport and vica versa.

CUE would regard the swing to public transport,presumably,to require an all-out effort. Having achieved a lower-energy city CUE would regard it as immoral to deliberatly waste energy by allowing a swing back to a car-based city. It would deprive energy-hungry third world countries of a reasonable share,if not our own future generations.

3. Three-dimensional planning

CUE seems to regard the task of restructuring the city to a low energy state as an all-out effort,that requires more than the two-dimensional planning of "co-ordinated land-use and transport studies" (32). CUE holds that "social arrangements" are a third dimension of planning that should be integrated with land-use and transport planning. And by this they mean every possible social policy,not just "management" techniques advocated by Jay.

4. Micro-planning as basis for macro-planning

CUE accordingly places considerable importance on what it calls "micro-planning" of supportive neighbourhood houses and the community-oriented "micro-trip" to an urban mixed-use "local focus", which would also emphasise community-involving activities highly dependent on micro planning. This fine-mesh planning aimed at "creating community" of a "stay-local" variety would not be inconsistent with Jay's macro-planning strategies which are confined rather to the plane of the more traditional planning spheres.

5. Sprawl contained by selective growth centres

Jay's "system centres" are thus to be, apparently, "major regional centres" around either existing transport nodes (e.g. Parramatta), or newly created ones (e.g. Campbelltown) (69), and do not include smaller centres equivalent to CUE's "local foci". But local foci would not be inconsistent with Jay's objectives but would re-enforce them, because Jay argues for a "structured approach..." "...to provide many of the central area services without having whole outer suburban populations trekking in for 30 miles or more" (71).

However, the strong impression is left that system centres, for Jay, should ideally be established "on the edges of existing settlement, where the pattern of residential development peters out into a straggle of bungalows with open farm-space visible just beyond"...."where the imagination can say...'Here is the site for a system centre !'" (73).

Jay, therefore, still contemplates outward urban growth. "Of all people, the official planners should be best placed to deal with the visualisation problem, that sinking feeling that you are committing yourself for scores of millions of dollars, while all around you are undeveloped paddocks." (73)

"Imagination" or "visualisation", however, can equally project a different model, such as CUE has, in fact, done. CUE envisages a hierarchy of new growth centres within the perimeters of the present built-up parts of the metropolitan region (local foci, and district centres), which would not only make less trips necessary, but, by containing the outward sprawl would shorten the average trip. CUE argues that the area required for such projects would constitute only a tiny fraction of the total built-up area, leaving the existing residential areas virtually undisturbed.

Yet the distance between Jay and CUE on this particular aspect is probably not so great as at first appears. This is so because Jay also regards the "middle distance suburbs...as candidates for selective densification and townhouse development" (68), which, in a loose fashion, could be made to "fit" the CUE model, especially as Jay also argues for "high density strips along transport corridors" (48), and is firmly opposed to any more car-based regional shopping centres (74)

*****

There are other points of difference between Jay and CUE. For instance, the CUE approach can hardly be conceived as applauding Jay's advocacy of "capital intensive...high technology..." big industrial plants based on the aluminium industry (19), nor the promotion of international jetsetting to the Gold Coast (23). Still, there is enough above to raise a useful range of issues for further clarification:

Should we "go" for:

1. Oil from coal, or not ?
2. A pendulum city, swinging to public transport, and back?
3. Planning of "social arrangements" at all levels to be integrated as a third dimension along with land-use/transport planning?
4. Micro-planning, including neighbourhood houses and local foci, or only regional or "district" growth centres?
5. New outward thrusts around "system centres", or containment of further regional expansion by growth centres confined to the built-up parts of the region?

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2. THE "ME" GENERATION, CONSUMERISM AND AGE-ISM

..Challenge of International Year of the Child (IYC) 1979

Government Misses the "most important" Right

1979 is the International Year of the Child. Activities have been launched by the Victorian Government with the release of a "Newsletter No.1" of "Coomooroo" (aboriginal for "seeds") with messages from the Governor of Victoria and Jona M.P., Assistant Minister of Health and Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

"Coomooroo" carries a summary of the U.N. Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

Two points of the summary read that the child has a right:

> " To learn to be a useful member of society and to develop individual abilities."
>
> " To be brought up in a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood."

These selected words are actual phrases taken from clauses in the Declaration, but the significant thing is not so much what has been selected, but what has been omitted.

To be "useful" by developing "individual abilities", relates to getting a living, and could be entirely a matter of self-interest and self-advancement. Left like that, the concept is entirely consistent with an acquisitive capitalist style market oriented morality that has come to be equated with the image of the Victorian Government.

And to be brought up in a "spirit of peace and universal brotherhood" - left like that .. could be entirely a passive matter on the part of the child with no consciousness of responsibility to do anything about it, except to develop a lofty sentiment, reminiscent of the way in which governments often treat migrants and aborigines - with fine words but dubious deeds.

Fortunately, at no time have the various versions of the Childrens Charter which were adopted or expanded to become internationally acceptable Declarations, been so shallow.

The original two simple clauses in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (commonly known as the "Declaration of Geneva") adopted by the League of Nations in 1924, read:

> "IV. The Child must be put in a position to earn a livelihood and must be protected against exploitation."
>
> " V. The Child must be brought up in the consciousness that its talents must be devoted to the service of its fellow-men"

This clause was slightly amended in 1950 by the United Nations, so that the relevant passage of the "livelihood" idea became:

> "V. The Child....must receive a training which will enable it, at the right time, to earn a livelihood and must be protected against every form of exploitation."
>
> "VI. The Child must be brought up in the consciousness that its talents must be devoted to the service of its fellow men".

(See "The Right of the Child" by Edward Fuller, Gollanz Ltd. 1951 at pp. 72-74.).

In 1959 the Declaration was expanded to ten clauses by the United Nations, and the relevant concepts of the above-quoted 1924 and 1950 versions now applying read as follows:

"Principle 7. The child....shall be given an education which will promote his general culture, and enable him on the basis of equal opportunity, to DEVELOP HIS ABILITIES, HIS

INDIVIDUAL judgement and his sense of moral and social responsibility and to become a USEFUL MEMBER OF SOCIETY..."

Principle 10. The child....shall be BROUGHT UP IN A SPIRIT of understanding,tolerance,friendship amongst peoples, PEACE AND UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD and in full consciousness that his energy and talents should be devoted to the service of his fellow men."

(1973 UNICEF publication "Declaration of the Rights of the Child",U,N. Office of Public Information obtainable UNICEF Committee of Victoria,49 Elizabeth St.,Melbourne)

Note: In the above quotations the underlined words are our emphasis; the words in capitals are those selected for the Summary in "Coomooroo".

Now,it can be observed that the firstly enumerated clause or principle in each version deals with the right of the child to be "put in a position" (1924) or "trained" (1950) to "earn a livelihood";and this becomes "an education...,to develop his abilities.... to become a useful member of society" (1959).Note, however,that the earlier straight-out simple job-training objective has been strengthened in 1959 by a right that education should,in addition,promote "general culture" and also a "sense of moral and social responsibility"

It is revealing that "Coomooroo" has selected the "useful" side of Principle 7,and has not only omitted the concept that the usefulness should not simply be for the benefit of the individual,but should also be directed towards moral and social responsibility,but has even omitted promotion of general culture as an aim,thus stripping the whole idea back to its original job-training connotation.

This bias of "Coomooroo" becomes even more glaring in the secondly enumerated clause (the last clause in all cases) of each version of the Declaration. In the 1924 and 1950 versions, the wording is exactly identical that the child "must be brought up in the consciousness that its talents must be devoted to the service of its fellow men";and the 1959 version simply re-enforces,without altering,the concept by adding: "full consciousness" and devoting "energy" as well as "talents"

"Coomooroo" has thus altogether overlooked the active kernel of the original concept,retained throughout all versions over 25 years,and picked out only a few of the latest newly-added words about a spirit of peace and universal brotherhood.

As it happens,it is also historically significant that the last clause should be so mutilated. Eglantyne Jebb,the out-standing international pioneer on behalf of children,and who formulated the 1923 Childrens Charter which became the 1924 "Declaration" "often" said that the last clause was "the most important clause" (Fuller,ibid. p.153)

With this we agree. And our following comments will be focused on this clause as conveying a 1980's potential even more relevant for the period ahead than it was when first penned in 1923.

(We will overlook,here,the unconscious "age-ism" implicit in describing a child as "it";or the now unacceptable sexism implicit in projecting the child as a "he" growing up to live among "fellow-men".Such phrases were universally acceptable at the time they were written;but the last clause of the Declaration nevertheless has genuine content which we wish to extract without the diversion of the old-fashioned phraseology. However,in our following comments we will change "fellow-men" to "humanity" by which we will mean "fellow adults and fellow children")

Along with Jebb,then,we consider the most valuable "right" - to which priority should be given - is the implementation of the idea of socialising children to acknowledge their responsibility to devote their efforts and talents to serving humanity,and,specifically,what this involves in this day and age.

The magnitude of this problem is indicated by this quotation from an article by Eva Cox entitled "Beware the Call of Nature" delivered as a paper to the Women and Labor Conference 1978:

> "The cumulative experience of the last centuries have produced children who are adapted to an acquisitive, individualistic society. The last decades since the second world war have produced young adults who are, perhaps, even too self indulgent for capitalism....Many have grown up into highly privatised individuals who are family centred and have little concern for the world around them."

Before examining the conditions which are producing such dehumanising relationships, it is important to state that there are today many examples of people coming together and affirming the worth of human relationships and re-establishing a sense of community.

The challenge of the International Year of the Child is to recognise the historic significance of these continual humanising efforts; but in order to do this it is necessary to examine the factors which tend to dehumanise the family.

The ideal nuclear family versus the pressures of society

The "me generation", "consumerism", "sexism" and "age-ism" are words recently coined to describe some of the aberrant behaviour of today.

A brief examination of these words will help to indicate the conditions under which children are being reared today. The words apply to all age groups, but in the context of this article, the group to keep in mind is that of children.

The term the "me generation", borrowed by Eva Cox in her paper is applied to those who "expect and seek material rewards and care little for those cast out by the system - like the unemployed. On the one hand they reject duty and hard work, thus upsetting those in power; on the other hand they seek individual gratification, not social change. Even the rebels today are often rebelling also individually. Tom Wolfe in a recent article describes them as the "Me Generation", and quotes as an example the new consciousness movement which seeks change internally rather than externally, and escape from dullness in drugs, meditation and self analysis. Although there are many exceptions, there seems more acceptance of individualism and self-interest as a right, and much of the rhetoric of liberation movements echoes this."

It seems as if, although such people want liberation, they are fettered by the limitations of their own upbringing, and thus accept individualism as a poor substitute.

"Consumerism" describes the phenomenon of conspicious waste being made possible through sophisticated advertising and modern technology. The privatism of our suburbs (where most children are reared) assist the market to try to foist on to everyone a life style which expects each family to own privately the goods and services which were supplied in the past, and can be supplied today, even more effectively by the community for the community use.

It is increasingly being realised that the problems for women 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 symptoms of the breakdown in human relationships, and children are too often in the centre of the domestic tangle. Consumerism contributes to the alienation and anomie which is often dismissed as "suburban neurosis" The main child rearers (the mothers) are the ones most likely to be suffering in this way.

Within the family, the inward-turning on itself around privatised but unsatisfactory pursuits of consumerism, negate opportunities "to devote efforts and talents to the service of humanity". This is aggravated by the ties between the family and the surrounding community being weakened because the community is made up of people influenced by similar conditions

No wonder "me" becomes the focus where there is no "we" with whom to identify !

And this lack of elementary communication and practical neighbourly relationship is made all the more difficult by the growth of "age-ism". This is a similar type of oppression to "sexism". The stereotyping of people by age can be just as oppressive as sex stereotyping, and it is not merely a passing cultural fashion. The burden of age-ism is not confined to children, but children suffer the most because age-ism warps the relationship between child and child, and between the child and other generations. Its effects are not merely transitory, but can shape the attitudes of the younger generation throughout life.

Age-ism flourishes in the conditions provided for rearing children in these modern times. These conditions are beyond the control of the individual family, and thus cannot be challenged by those who are limited in their vision of humanity by the "me generation" type of consciousness.

At the risk of oversimplifying the situation, here are two examples of factors contributing to age-ism.

Firstly there are the changes in demography. The size of Australian families is typically now two children with less than three years between births. Under such conditions chilren have few opportunities, within the family, to care and share for each other. There tends to be rivalry for parental attention rather than learning to cope with frustration. There are far too few community support systems to overcome this disadvantage.

Secondly, children are too often locked into a situation where there is an over commitment to mothering. This deprives them of learning independence and self reliance. The diminishing family size and the changing technology of housework reduces the creative responsibilities of the mother. Parents deprived of feeling that they are really useful, often feel threatened by a child's growing independence, and there develops a tendency to emphasise the roles of the generations in order to maintain a dominant position in the family. The solution to this cannot be found only by consciously trying to make a better adjustment within the home.

The above two examples are mainly about the conditions within the nuclear family circle; in real life situations, the home cannot be separated out from the urban environment. For example, the design of our urban areas is inducive to the stratification of the population into age groups, and income groups. Especially is this so in the car based suburbs of the period since the second world war, where neighbourhoods housing nuclear families generally have a deficiency of young adults and elderly people.

In the book "Access for All" (by K.H.Schaeffer and Elliot Sclar, - Penguin 1975) there is this description of the car based suburb:

"The absence of the aged cheats the child of exposure to how other people live, the absence of young adults makes the neighbourhood teenagers unusually cocksure of themselves. These teens see only adults to whom they do not relate, and youngsters over whom they can lord. If young adults are present, a natural pecking order develops. Here, for each child or teenager there is someone just a bit older and more mature, a natural big brother or sister" (p.109).

Children suffer from other disadvantages in our car dominated suburbs, and the examples given merely indicate the social nature of the problem.

Fusing deepest personal needs with broad social issues

Recent popular campaigns have drawn attention to the effect of pollution, the disruption of community by freeway construction, the lack of areas of neighbourhood focus and the economic burden of car ownership... the community pays the toll for our car based transport, and children are very much part of the community who suffer the most.

But, overriding all these considerations of the social,

physical and economic aspects of the private transport system, the petrol driven vehicle is an extravagant waste of the world's limited resources. At the 1975 International Womens Year Congress, the Canadian delegate, Rosemary Brown, aptly pointed to the relationship between our ecological responsibilities and our responsibilities for humanity.

"We cannot separate the right to realise our full potential from the wanton waste of our resources; we cannot separate that from the kinds of things humanists and environmentalists around the world are doing."

Similarly, we cannot separate out the right for children to "be brought up in the consciousness that their efforts and talents must be devoted to the service of humanity", from the mainstream of concern for the world's ecological balance

In the Community Child Care Resource Book (Greenhouse, 1975) it is stated:

> "Where changes are needed, the most positive force for change usually stems from those who need it most..and in this case it is the parents."

This is typical of the new and developing understanding of the need for community action to shape the future rather than allow trends to determine our lives.

<u>The anti-dote to the me-generation, consumerism, sexism and age-ism is the provision of opportunities for re-creating community where at present little exists</u>.

Many groups of people are becoming quite precise in presenting alternatives trying to ensure that the future will not reproduce the anachronisms of the present which are expressed in the prevailing ideas that cars are the most prized form of transport, that community and neighbourhood are no longer significant, that the bigger the school, hospital or youth centre the better, and that there is no suburban isolation but only unhappy and poorly adjusted people.

Some alternatives are beginning to take practical form as more and more people are taking the future into their own hands by setting up community based children's centres, community schools, community health centres, food co-ops, shop-front drop-in centres, and numerous other small do-it-yourself centres, or efforts.

But such community organisations will continue to be frail and easily discouraged unless there begins to develop a vision into which these small scale human efforts can be dovetailed.

<u>International Year of the Child provides the opportunity for such an overall vision to be projected</u>.

<u>More than this, IYC can initiate a new quality into the movements for re-creating community. For too long the burden of community development has fallen on the parent age group and particularly on women. Much attention needs to be given to involving children, youth and elderly people, and adults who are not parents</u>.

It may not be easy to find the starting points to bring about such a widely based movement for social change; but the identification of the causes of age-ism is an essential first step towards achieving this end. We finish the thought with two quotations: that express the cause and the solution:

> "Without the aged and young adults as mediators in the natural battle between the generations, such conflicts become easily exaggerated. The age-segregated neighbourhood - which became a feasible urban form only when the automobile became commonplace -is a natural breeding ground for insecurity and alienation. The harassed child turns to rebellion, drugs and delinquincy and the harassed parent to alcoholism and divorce." ('Access for All" ibid. p.109)

> "What does it matter, when you come to think of it, whether the child is yours by blood or not. All the little ones of our time are collectively the children of us adults of the time and are entitled to our general care." (Thomas Hardy)

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3. FINAL CHANCE TO RESCUE STRATEGY PLAN

- Amendment to Amendment 96

There is a final chance to rescue the main strategic concepts of the Strategy Plan from the mish-mash of indeterminate and anti-Strategy Plan provisions of Amendment 96 to the Metropolitan Planning Scheme.

That chance is to adopt the constructive alternative proposed by a grouping of citizen associations submitted by way of "objection" to Amendment 96.

Objections closed on 30/8/'78 and await hearing.

The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) and the Combined City of Melbourne Associations (CCMA) - which represent 7 resident associations in the Melbourne City Council area - reached consensus on zones, density controls (plot ratios and heights), incentives for housing, encouragement of public transport, areas of "special significance" and other key issues, most of which are shown on a commonly-adopted map.

Important features that cannot be illustrated on a map include the "goals, objectives and policies" of the Strategy Plan. Both the TCPA and CCMA cases insist on incorporation into the Ordinance of the full set of these principled, comprehensive and integrated concepts of the Strategy.

Introducing a new area of concern is an objection submitted by the Conservation Council of Victoria (CCV). Prepared by the Conservation of Urban Energy group ("CUE" group), on energy grounds. This endeavours to show how much more energy would be required by development according to Amendment 96 than for the Strategy Plan. (See below).

The TCPA and the CCMA supported the CCV energy arguments; and the CCV case recommended adoption of the TCPA and CCMA proposals.

So there is a wide spectrum of citizen organisations that have combined in a bid to rescue the Strategy Plan at the 11th. hour.

Following trenchant criticism at the business-oriented seminar to discuss Amendment 96, some tip that it will be withdrawn for re-drafting by the Melbourne City Council. Others tip that it will be adopted by the Board of Wroks much as it is, and forewarded to the Town & Country Planning Board for recommendation to the Minister, and from there to Cabinet, after vetting by the State Co-ordination Council.

Whatever the future passage of Amendment 96, however, - whether it be up, down, or sideways - the case of the citizens organisations should be heeded by those concerned in decision-making as a practical working alternative.

The touchstone of sincerity for those who really desire to rescue the Strategy must be judged by their attitude to the citizens' counterplan which is just that: a rescue operation.

History of Audacious Misrepresentation.

Five years, 1973-1978, have been frittered away while a narrow group of speculative real estate investment interests and compliant city planners have made attempt after attempt to emasculate the original Strategy Plan recommended by the consultants Interplan Pty. Ltd. in December 1973.

There was the "Mixed Use Area Study" (first version) of September 1975, the second version of February 1976, the third version of October 1976, and eventually Amendment 96 of January 1978 (after various "windscreen surveys", reports by real estate agents, and behind-the-scenes conciliation with Board of Works officers to abort the TCPB "Statement of Planning Policy No.1" arising from the brief interlude of intervention by the Minister of Planning.)

Yet each of the above attempts has simply been a variation on one theme: how to permit higher office densities in the "mixed use" fringe areas of the Central Business District (CBD) and abandon any effective incentives for a high residential component in these areas.

Each of these sorry attempts has cut clean across the central Strategic concept which was:

* Keep big offices clustered within the CBD so that high intensity employment can be served by the loop railway stations.
* Keep the "mixed use areas" immediately adjoining the CBD mixed, but with small offices only, and with the residential component predominating in the mix.
* Keep the residential sub-areas much as they are in scale and character by rehabilitation of housing and "infill" techniques and encourage a full range of housing types for all income groups.

The effect of failure to stick to this intent would be:

* More cars attempting to commute to the inner areas, demanding more freeways, more parking, and more and more neglect of public transport.
* More re-development to accommodate the access and parking of cars.
* Rising rates and rents as land values are driven still higher on the basis of expectation of office potential, making it virtually impossible to house any but the highest income groups in these areas.

(For details and earlier "Ecoso" critiques see:

No.3 Dialogue on Strategic Goals for MCC July '73. pp2-4)
No.10 A Strategy for the Centres of Capital Cities Aug.'75, p.1-13
No.12 Inner Areas No Doughnut May.'76 pp.19-29
No.15 "Melbourne Times" article on report by Renata Howe to "Melbourne Do or Die" seminar -supplementary reading Autumn'77

(Other useful reading:

"A Response by the Committee for Urban Action" on the "Position Statement " of the MMBW entitled :"Melbourne's Inner Area" Mar.'78

Article "The No.96 Saga" by Lewis Sayer. "Polis" Vol.5 No.2 at pp.52-55, includes comments on land-value arguments by developers - not dealt with here.)

Time and again, as each new tricky version was released by the City Planning department, none of the authorities which should act as watchdogs for the public took the lead in rescuing the strategies they should have been committed to.

It took long, arduous, complicated, spare-time dedication for analysing, organising and counter-proposing by literally scores of citizens in various associations to do the sort of job which should have been done by the Ministry of Planning, the Town and Country Planning Board, the Board of Works, and the City Councillors themselves (amongst whom were some notable exceptions).

The only temporary sustenance that supporters of the Strategy Plan received in 5 years of efforts was the brief exercise by the TCPB in 1976 to prepare "Statement of Planning Policy No.11" for the Central Areas. This was a poor watered-down pale image of the Strategy Plan; and the feeble manouevre by the Minister of Planning was smartly out-manouevred by the MMBW and City of Melbourne planners who promised a reconciliation deal-- which turned out to be Am.96.

In April 1976, five organisations representing a wide cross-section of opinion (including business opinion), sent an identical letter to the Town Clerk complaining that the City Planning Department's memorandum recommending the adoption by the City Council of the Mixed Use Area Study (second version) did not adequately summarise the views of the Associations which were in opposition, and claiming that the recommendations ran counter to the strategies on which the Plan itself is based. Those 5 were:

1. The Combined City of Melbourne Associations
2. The Melbourne Chamber of Commerce
3. The Royal Australian Institute of Architects
4. The Royal Australian Planning Institute
5. The Town and Country Planning Association.

Amendment 96, in 1978 was the trickiest document of the lot. Most of the objectives of the Strategy Plan were omitted, although the Introduction to the Amendment claimed otherwise. One objective

(the mixed use area objective) was changed with no acknowledgement of the change.

By being cast in the traditional form of dozens of land-uses drawn up in columns 2 to 5 of the "Ordinance", plus a zoning map with 13 zones, meticulous examination was required how the "strategy" was (or wasn't) being implemented. The whole was further complicated by the projected "Local Development Plans" to be prepared some time in the future, under legislation which has not yet been drafted. These Local Development Plans are supposed to cater for detailed "policies" of the Strategy Plan, leaving the ordinance and and zones to cater for broader "objectives". However, both the Amendment 96 ordinance provisions, and the foreshadowed Local Development Plan legislation, provide, in the main, only machinery which will enable the planning authority to exercise discretion without the full set of guidelines as to how that discretion is to be exercised

As a face-saver, here and there, the Responsible authority" in Amendment 96 is charged with "having regard to" this or that factor; but this old familiar, meaningless clause contains no inkling of the intent of the strategic concepts which have to be "regarded".

Even more alarming are the outright provisions that run counter to the Strategy. (e.g. a discretionary permit always required for "row housing" in some zones, but never required for "detached" housing.); or loopholes for the future that run counter to the Strategy (e.g. a foreshadowed bonus system potentially favouring freestanding tower blocks in landscaped grounds or set in carparks.

The TCPA case describes how an accumulation of detailed permit decisions under the foreshadowed Local Development Plans operating under a weighted "bonus" system could defeat the broad objectives of the Strategy Plan by encouraging set-backs, site consolidation, unnecessarily ample landscaping and excessive off-street carparking.

More ominous still are the spurious "doughnut" theories propounded in documents released by the MMBW (which has to make the decision on Amendment 96), attributing decay, blight, "dysfunction", and a generally deviant function to all aspects of the inner areas which ought to be "cleaned up" by redevelopment into spanking new shapes and forms. Some of the MMBW planners seemed to have formed an unholy alliance with some of the MCC planners based on subverting the Strategy with this sort of outworn and insensitive "theoretical" nonsense

Energy Grounds

The CCV case points out that some 11,700 extra commuter cars would eventually need to be stabled in the inner areas under Amendment 96 developments. This would be some 4,800 more compared to the Strategy Plan, using some 121,000 Gj of fuel per yearthat could otherwise be conserved. This figure (which takes into account the transport energy that would otherwise be used in public transport conveyance) would bring the total from some 883,000 Gj. to 1051,000 Gj per year for commuter transport to the mixed use areas.

This is only direct transport energy for commuting to work and takes no account of other business trips, shopping trips or public hospital visits all of which could be reduced if the functions of the CBD and inner areas became more specialised. Nor does it take into account energy for roadmaking or redevelopment

On the building side of the energy question, old-type office buildings can be comfort-conditioned with 300 Mj/m^3 but new office glass towers can require up to 2000 Mj/m^3 or more. The BHP building consumes in the order of 4000 Mj/m^3. A terrace house, suitably insulated, modified and "managed" can provide winter comfort conditions with the expenditure of 20% or less of the energy consumed by a standard Melbourne detached house. Summer energy savings for cooling, apparently, can be even higher.

New inputs such as this, strengthen the general case of the Strategy Plan. Back-up rescue operations are still needed, not only from the public, but from the Government. What help is Hamer giving? Governments have fallen over less vital issues than this.