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ECOSO EXCHANGE NEWSLETTER

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Theme of This Ecoso

Ecoso Exchange has already given considerable space to ideas that are being presented in the 1990 Women's Charter (see Ecoso 2/8 and 2/9).

At the risk of over doing it, this issue of the newsletter reprints two sections from the Charter, one on Women and the Rural Environment and the other on Women and Sport.

To some readers there may seem little connection between the two. But there is ! Both these issues are very much neglected by the community movements and the women's movement.

To add to ideas on rural issues Ecoso has reprinted some material on how a community movement in Melbourne helped people living in rural areas.

In addition cuttings from rural Ecoso subscribers are reprinted (one a prime example of sexism and jingoism) and an article about the Very Fast Train and its social impact on the people living in Gippsland.

Ideas on children and adventure playgrounds are included in this newsletter to place the extract on Women and Sport in the context of how children are conditioned by their recreational opportunities.

The other main material is the transcript of Winsome McCaughey's Tribute to Maurie Crow at the memorial gathering held on May 8th 1988.

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Community and Local Government

Maurie Crow died on April 4th 1988 and on May 8th that year the North Melbourne Association and other organisations with which Maurie had been associated held a "Tribute to Maurie" in the North Melbourne Town Hall.

Cr Winsome McCaughey was one of the speakers. Winsome has lived in North Melbourne for about seventeen years. She was Lord Mayor of Melbourne last year.

This transcript is included in this Ecoso not only to mark the third year since Maurie's death but mainly because of the many valuable lessons on community development which Winsome was able to give in presenting her Tribute.

Winsome McCaughey's Tribute to Maurie Crow
1915 to 1988

I have been asked today to speak about Maurie's contribution to community and local government.

In the seventeen years that I've known them, I have worked and learnt from Ruth and Maurie through the North Melbourne Association which they helped to found, through Community Child Care which Ruth was a founding member of and through numerous other bodies, coalitions, and campaigns. All these have given me some insight not only into the outcome of their contributions to our community, local government and to society but also some understanding of the way in which these contributions have been made, that is the processes by which they have worked.

Maurie was a great believer in the importance of processes. He was a man of many capacities and in the few minutes that I've had allocated to me this afternoon I'd like to touch on six of these important capacities which he used in making this contribution and from which I believe we can all learn a great deal as we go into the future.

Firstly, Maurie had a great capacity for life. He had a deeply grounded love of and respect for both his fellow human beings and the earth from which we all come and to which we must all return. He really enjoyed being with people. He enjoyed the challenge of applying his quite formidable intellect to the social issues and environmental problems of the day, always in cooperation with others.

This early commitment to people and place generated for Maurie a set of values and principles which underpinned the literally hundreds of local and national campaigns and struggles that he was involved in throughout his life.

Such values as equity, social justice, participation, cooperation, diversity and unity. He taught them to us by practising them. He recognised that the personal is political, long before the feminists discovered it. In every aspect in every relationship of his life, from his marriage of fifty years to his beloved Ruth, through his involvement in the unions, his party, local community groups, national campaigns. He practised equality and cooperation and democratic decision making in its fullest sense.

Secondly, Maurie had a great capacity to engage others, to enable them to bring out the best in themselves. Throughout his life he refused to slip into that malaise of modern society, the labelling and categorising of others into factions, splits and divisions, even though as we all know he was a victim of it himself in his earlier years. Maurie always believed the best about other people. He believed in their essential goodness and intelligence.

He believed that if people would just sit down together and reach some common agreement on values and get sufficient information, then together they could not only find a way forward, a common purpose, but in the process they would change themselves and their relationships with other people with whom in the past they may not have agreed. He also happened to believe that the solutions they arrived at through working in a participatory manner would be both much better ones and ones that would be more capable of being implemented because people were committed to them.

The third capacity is closely linked to the second. His capacity to find and forge the broadest possible base for unity around the important issues of the day.

His capacity to work with people from every sector and background and to weave us all into his and Ruth's extraordinary networks for social change. Just look at us all here today, from every conceivable social and political background and most of us would have worked with Ruth and Maurie at some stage.

I was also reminded of this weaving together of people at our last full meeting of the Melbourne City Council. Every councillor joined together to observe a minutes silence in memory of Maurie's contribution to our locality. Evidence of this capacity is there in scores of groups, organisations, coalitions, campaigns, reports and documents that Maurie both helped to initiate and then carried through to their resolution.

We have campaigns such as the Australia-wide group that formed the Radical Ecology Conference and what came out of that in the mid 1970's. In the late 70's the Conservation Council of Victoria and the groups that formed around "Seeds for Change", again the Conservation Council and the Board of Works with Nunawading Council - a "Case Study of Energy Conservation". You could just go on and on. At the local level the enormous contribution that Maurie made to our Strategy Plan, both the one that Peter was responsible for in 1973 and the one that occurred in 1985.

Maurie's fourth great interesting capacity was that of creating community. It was a continual thing throughout his life. He was forever exploring new ways in which people who lived and worked near one another could develop more creative, supportive and convivial ways of relating to one another and of planning their own futures together.

Maurie's fifth great capacity was his ability to think laterally, to see the relationships between things, to put issues into context for all of us.

'Think globally, act locally' is a maxim we are all familiar with. When you describe Ruth and Maurie's activities you really have to find a new formula. That's 'think globally and locally and act globally and locally' would be more appropriate to their life's contributions. Lateral thinking occurred for Maurie on many fronts.

He taught us to make the links between neighbourhood issues and between the global ones recognising that the debate and activities on both levels should feed and inform the other. He also helped us to make the links between different kinds of issues, in books such as "Seeds for Change" and all those other reports that we know about.

In fact, the Amendment 453 struggle, the struggle to amend Melbourne's Planning Scheme so as to ensure that there will be much greater density of residential dwellings and higher levels of employment returned and consolidated to the city, is a classic example of the way in which Maurie could envisage and hold in his mind the links between neighbourhood and the metropolitan plan, the links between energy, between employment, between the environment and between social services.

The sixth last capacity, and there are many more, is that of his capacity to think and plan ahead.

As well as laterally he always thought about the future. He believed in people being empowered to shape their own future together and always in the public interest. The starting point for this planning process for Maurie was to always set your objectives.

He taught us to engage in value planning and to resist trend planning. You establish your values, you conceive your vision and then you systematically develop the overall strategy and detailed action plans which could implement these.

As I say, Amendment 453, the last battle and in some ways the culminating battle that we've had with Maurie's living presence with us is a classic example not only of thinking laterally but of thinking into the future.

His vision as to what the City of Melbourne might look like if we could contain its growth to its present perimeters, consolidate it on that and make it a richer and more convivial place as a result.

I'm sure those of us who are here today have not just come in memory of the tributes that he has made in the past, or just to show our support to Ruth, although those are two very important aspects. What Maurie would want us to be here today to do, and the best tribute that we could pay him, is to commit ourselves to working for his vision of the future.

Women in Rural Areas
(Reprinted from the 1990 Women's Charter)

Approximately 13 % of Victorian women live in non-metropolitan areas.

These women are affected by the same issue as affect those living in the Melbourne suburbs but there are some differences.

Firstly, women living in rural areas have fewer choices about social, educational and community opportunities than women in the cities. This in its turn means that women have greater responsibility for domestic and community caring and therefore have less time to devote to their own personal development. In any case, a choice of facilities for such personal development is much less available than in city areas.

Despite this lack of choices, or perhaps because of it, women in the country seem to be able to form very strong neighbourhood networks. Thus a sharing and caring community is a feature of rural life.

Nevertheless, this lack of choices means that in general, women in rural areas face a much earlier break-up of the family through teenagers needing to leave home for tertiary study or for employment.

The early break-up of family ties can be particularly difficult for women because of the limited opportunities for them to develop other interests during this transition period.

In addition, women in the country are still carrying the burden placed on them through the myth of the bronzed man in the "out-back" with his devoted self-sacrificing wife. In the section of this Charter on the Media there is a quote which illustrates how farm advertisements promote this image and how women are thus "deprived of any credit for their contribution to the family farm". Such denigration is not confined to advertisements.

In recent years the changes in farm methods and changes in transport have resulted in some larger country towns growing rapidly while other smaller ones are dying.

These changes in the country make families more and more dependent on car transport and thus there is a strong campaign for better country roads. Women are strongly supporting this. Good roads are necessary for them to shop, safe roads are important for the safety of school buses and in general roads are recognised as essential for communicating with friends and neighbours and for generally enriching social life.

With the general increase in poverty and the rise in rents there is an increasing number of people on social security benefits seeking cheap rental accommodation in these "dying towns". Thus their population may now

be increasing but they are already "dead" from the point of view of commercial and effectively functioning social facilities. Some of the small towns do not have enough purchasing population to support a local milk bar let alone any range of shops or basic social services.

With the feminisation of poverty a proportion of these newcomers to the townships are women from the metropolis or from larger country towns. To date this situation has largely gone unnoticed.

Compared with the metropolitan area, country towns have for many years had a high proportion of single parents living on public housing estates and here, also, a large proportion were newcomers to the country town and thus likely to lack family support networks.

Traditionally, women in the country have been in the forefront of campaigning for better human services, helping to pioneer such unique and appropriate facilities as Bush Nursing Hospitals and Women's Rest rooms. The changes which are taking place in the rural areas means that new types of services are now needed to meet the new types of social environment in the countryside. The involvement of women in the planning and administration of these services is essential; but in order for this to be possible, support systems for women are the first step in enabling them to participate.

Some Questions on Women in Rural Areas

1. What are some of the main social and physical needs of women in rural areas and how can these be more effectively met ?
2. How are women living in rural areas affected by changes in the economy ?
3. How can people living in the country use metropolitan-based services more effectively ?

Support for Country Families The North Melbourne Cosy Cottage Project

Since the publication of the Charter several women living in the country have commented on the need for more support services for country families using metropolitan services. It is timely to reproduce a report on the North Melbourne Cosy Cottage.

This project was only meant to be a five year experiment. The Cottage closed about six years ago. Nevertheless the facts are worth recording.

The Cosy Cottage was a small single fronted terrace house which was within easy walking distance of some of the main metropolitan hospitals, close to the main neighbourhood shopping centre and to trams and buses.

for five years it was a "home away from home" for families from the country who needed to stay in Melbourne so that a member of the family could attend one of the hospitals in Melbourne.

The project was a joint effort by local organisations and some unions with offices in North Melbourne.

The following information is from one of the reports to the Cottage Project Collective. As the Cottage is now closed the report is written in the past tense, otherwise it is unaltered.

Coalition of Unions and Community Organisations on a Local Project

In 1978 the Food Preservers Union (FPU) purchased property, including a small cottage, which they intended to redevelop for their offices.

Until they were ready for the redevelopment, rather than leave the cottage empty, the FPU offered it to the North Melbourne Association for five or six years.

The North Melbourne Association called a meeting inviting community organisations and unions with offices in the neighbourhood (the Miscellaneous Workers Union, the Locomotive and Firemen's Union as well as the FPU) and social workers from nearby hospitals.

It was decided to establish a "Cosy Cottage" which would provide accommodation for families coming to Melbourne for hospital treatment.

All social workers in hospitals in country towns with a population of over 10,000 were circularised about the project and their opinions sought on the idea of such accommodation near the main hospitals (the main Victorian public hospitals are (were) close to North Melbourne).

The cottage was renovated and furnished, mainly by voluntary labor (about thirty people were involved). Rewiring, plastering and painting were carried out by paid tradesmen, but the overall cost of renovations and furnishing were less than \$2,000. This money was lent to the project by the Food Preservers Union.

The renovations included painting every room, installing electricity, a new boundary fence, damp proofing a wall, installing a gas stove and water heater, mending sash cords..... and many, many small repair jobs to make the cottage comfortable.

Household furniture had to be acquired including blankets, T.V., fridge, washing machine, vacuum cleaner, carpets, beds and bedding, cooking utensils and crockery etc. most of which were donated.

The repairs and renovation took about three months and the first family to use the cottage arrived in August, 1978.

The rent of \$30.00 per week more than covered maintenance expenses. No Government funding was received, the Cottage Project was entirely on a voluntary basis.

Families at the Cottage

For the first eighteen months (from August, 1978, to March, 1980) the Cottage was used by more than forty families. It was only vacant for a few days between bookings. Most of the families stayed at the Cottage for about a fortnight and none of the families stayed less than five days.

Most of those who occupied the Cottage had children in the family and in most cases the reason for visiting Melbourne was to get treatment for a child. In all but three of the cases the person receiving treatment could attend as an out-patient, and thus, because of the Cottage the patient was able to live in a home like atmosphere.

On two occasions children staying at the Cottage attended school. Most families had the father staying with the family and several families had grandmother. Some families used the Cottage on several different occasions. For example, families needing a week's treatment every month.

The families came from more than twenty different districts, including Edenhope, Merbein, Swan Hill, Corryong, Morwell, Winchelsea, Nagambie, Tamworth, Deniliquin, Benalla, Kyabram, Yea, Shepparton,

Wodonga, Northern New South Wales, Wangaratta, Fiji, Burnie (Tasmania), Horsham, Ballarat, Portland, Stanhope and several others.

Most families first heard about the Cosy Cottage through the Children's Hospital; but some bookings were directly from country hospitals or through the Red Cross.

On several occasions families which were not able to be accommodated at the Cottage were able to stay at private homes. The Cottage Project Committee also arranged private board for apprentices attending short courses at the Printing School in North Melbourne.

From its opening the Cottage was well cared for by its users. Only on one occasion was there any need to clean up after a family. Some families improved the Cottage or left small household gifts.

Why the Cottage Project is Significant

The most important results cannot be reported by facts. For example, how can we measure the benefits to the families from the country of the community support for the project? Or;- how important is it for young patients to have both mum and dad (and sisters and brothers) in a home-like situation during treatment? (OR, for that matter, how important is it for mum and dad?)

Why are some people in North and West Melbourne so committed to making the Cottage project run smoothly?

The answers to such questions were elusive, yet these very factors were what made the project dynamic.

Although the Cottage Project cannot be directly compared to schemes such as foster care and emergency care, some of the principles underlying the way the scheme was organised were worth examining by those involved in foster care and emergency care (note :-foster care and emergency care were being organised in North Melbourne when the report was first written).

Some Principles underlying Organisation of the Cottage

1. Initiation of project by a group of people drawn from a wide cross section of the population (social welfare, residents, child care, unions, health workers).
2. Devolution of responsibility for various aspects of the project so that people had specific areas for which they were responsible.
3. Using various ways of informally informing the users of the Cottage that there was community support for the project and that there were people to act as neighbours if needed.
4. The provision of unobtrusive guardianship by people living and working nearby; for example, the role played by the milk bar proprietor where the key was left and the people at the Miscellaneous Union Office where the rent was paid and the occasional visit by a project committee member.
5. Information about the Cottage was written in a style which attempted to be neighbourly, yet not overbearingly so. The information indicated that there was a network of friends in the district near the Cottage.
6. When families arrived at the Cottage they usually found that there was some attempt to personalise the welcome (even though it was not possible to have a person present). Sometimes this was by a personal letter of welcome, a vase of flowers or appropriate toys being left in readiness.
7. The privacy of the families was given high regard and the neighbourliness had to be tempered with avoiding intrusion.
8. After a project was opened it was more difficult to find ways of continuing the involvement of supporters, but even when there were no urgent practical tasks to be undertaken an occasional report on progress helped to keep interest alive.

9. The Cottage Project was vitaly dependent on voluntary help for its initiation and for its continuation. While it was possible for this prototype of a service to be the responsibility of voluntary workers it should not be expected that this type of enthusiasm can initiate and maintain the range of support services so urgently needed.

It should be noted that when the project was first mooted several experienced people warned us that such schemes were doomed to failure as the premises would be vandalised. While it is possible to measure the cost of vandalism, it is not possible to measure its antidote. There was absolutely no vandalism to the Cosy Cottage nor to the Cosy Cottage mural... see later in this Ecoso Newsletter and wrapper.

Goodwill Is Not Enough

To establish and maintain the Cosy Cottage was a rewarding experience to those who were involved: their enthusiasm was fanned by the knowledge that they were pioneering a new type of service.

However, the period for relying on goodwill passes very quickly. While it was quite possible to set up a prototype project with very little finance, it was not possible to make such projects universal unless there were appropriate funds available.

Those people who are employed in family-based services will need to be paid adequate wages. This entails a two-pronged effort... firstly to ensure that the government funding is adequate and secondly to ensure that all those who work to establish and maintain services are appropriately paid for their work. In both these campaigns the union movement can play a significant role.

Projects such as the Cosy Cottage provided new ways for some trade unions and community organisations to work together on local issues. In the process each movement was learning from the other, forming the basis for new types of organisations to be developed.

(D.A.T.E (Documents Available Through Ecoso has the complete records of the Cottage Project).

The Cosy Cottage Mural (See reproduction on wrapper)

The Cosy Cottage had a blank wall facing onto a car park. In 1983 the peace groups in North Melbourne decided that the wall was very appropriately sited for a mural.

A mural project group was formed with the result that community artist Kaye Hopwood sketched the design, one of the paint firms donated \$200 worth of paint and a mural-painting-street-party was held to carry out the project. There was music, information stalls and plenty of fun.

The wall was divided into foot square areas to enable everyone to participate in the actual painting.

The mural depicted the sun shining on a group of children of different nationalities dancing around the world. In the sun's rays the following slogan was written "Children are our most endangered species, give them a peaceful world and a nuclear free future".

The mural is now non-existence because the site has been redeveloped. A coloured photo of the mural was made into a greeting card on which were listed the twenty-two organisations that helped with its production.

The mural has been reproduced on the wrapper of this newsletter, but, of course, a black and white photocopy is a poor substitute for the original colour photo, so use your imagination, please.

Recreation ... Women and Girls

In this Ecoso we reprint the section on Women and Sport from the 1990 Women's Charter.

It is appropriate to set the scene for reading about women's recreation by first browsing through this material on children's recreation which was printed by Ecoso Exchange Newsletter, Spring 1977.

When its "Freedom for Kids" Does "Kids" Mean Boys ?

"Adventure Playgrounds" by Arvid Bengtsson, published by Granada, 1972, is described on the flyleaf as being a book "that describes many attempts which have recently been made to create places where children can fruitfully use their time and where they have freedom to develop self confidence and retain their resilience...Adventure Playgrounds are perhaps the most revolutionary experiment we know for absorbing the interest and releasing the energies of young people."

The wide ranging text is complimented by over 500 photographs, drawings and plans for playgrounds in Great Britain, Switzerland, West Germany, Denmark, Sweden United States and Japan.

The book is hailed as one of the best books ever written about planning for play. It certainly is one of the most delightful books for browsing. The illustrations are full of action and really capture children while they are absorbed in their games.

Now, there is a rather interesting fact about this book. Most of the sketches show both girls and boys sharing adventurous tasks of building cubbies, lighting fires, climbing high structures, digging holes and wielding large paint brushes and so on. On the otherhand, a close look at the photographs show that almost invariably the exciting jobs of constructing the bridges, the towers, and swings and so on are mainly the preserve of the boys.

In "Spare Rib", a Women's Liberation magazine, published in Britain in 1977, there is an article by Clare Cherrington who "looks at the politics that define what happens when girls and boys come out to play".

This informative article states "Adventure playgrounds boomed in the urban crisis of the late 1960s. Authorities wanted to keep the boys out of street crime; the scores of new play-workers, radicals amongst them, wanted to build local communities and let the kids enjoy some freedom. 'Kids' still meant boys'.

Great Expectations

As it is only possible to quote a few small extracts from the "Spare Rib" article the following paragraphs from a section called "Great Expectation" have been chosen :-

"On almost all playgrounds girls stop coming at adolescence, except to discos. Said one teenager cornered outside the gate :- 'The boys don't want girls on the adventure playgrounds; they just want slags (an easy lay). We don't go down there any more.' The play-leader admitted, 'Girls are our first real failure on the playgrounds. The boys can do anything they like, pick up a hammer and build....'

"Many women workers admit that adventure playgrounds do not challenge the years of conditioning at home and at school and the boys aggressive scorn discourages most girls from trying to break out of these repressive patterns. The eight year old girl's protest that 'I can't do what I want to do !' soon changes to 'I don't want to do anything !' Is there an answer to this ?

"In London some of the women play-leaders have formed a group called 'Women Workers in Adventure Playgrounds'.... which has set itself the task of re-examining the widely held ideal of 'free play'.

"The Ideal of Free Play

"The ideal of free play lies at the very heart of adventure playground philosophy..... no one ever questions the fact that this effective jungle law stops the girls from enjoying freedom."

The write goes on to ask"But after all, what is free play ? What kids really like is what grown-ups do and a lot of this free play is straight imitation... like building which is the mainstay of adventure playgrounds. With equal dedication, the kids imitate their parents relationships :- 'Round here you don't ever see the mums talking to the dads' says a teenage girl. The basic pattern is not freedom. Besides, through this limitation of their activities the boys are trapped in aggressiveness and the girls in passivity..... "

A Place of Their Own

In Melbourne forty school children were invited to write or draw their ideas about designing an adventure playground. A surprisingly large number of girls wanted a place of their own without boys.

The children also revealed considerable insights into the need for adult supervision. Here are two quotes from twelve year olds to illustrate this :-

"If you are to have an adventure playground you would need to have a couple of people, no matter who they are or what they get, to lead the others and show them what to do and to start the craze.

"But if you do not have the leaders and so on, you might as well forget your plans for the hammers would be stolen, the nails would be stolen, and the wood would just rot. One way to have an ensured success is to tell the children of your plans and tell them to go home and get materials, then start them off. And that would be that. Almost any child would think it a dream to make a playground for themselves by themselves."

And the second quote :-

"There needs to be someone who can provide suggestions for things to do when we don't know what to do someone to know where to find things and someone to talk to."

Referring again to the article in Spare Rib

"Only on a tiny minority of playgrounds can girls get any privacy; only on these playgrounds do they do much on their own, for ironically, to let the girls have their own space is anathema to most play-workers."

(There are quite a few documents on children's recreation in the D.A.T.E. - Documents Available Through Ecoso - collection.)

Have you renewed your subscription to Ecoso Exchange for the series 2/9... to...2/14 ? If not please send \$10 to Ruth Crow, 2.5, 89 O'Shanassy St. North Melbourne. 3051 (03.328.2345)

Do you want to purchase a copy of "The Women's Charter" ? It costs \$5 plus \$2 postage and is available from the UAW, Ross House, 247 Flinders Lane Melbourne 3000 (03. 654.7409) or from International Bookshop, Melbourne.

Do you want a copy of "Need and Greed", articles compiled by the Very Fast Train (VFT) Awareness Group, cost \$4 (postage included) Box 497 Morwell 3840 (051. 69 1665) or from International Bookshop Melbourne.

Women and Sport
(Reprinted from the 1990 Women's Charter)

The women's movement is more often than not silent on issues of women and sport yet sport is an integral part of our society with a great amount of power and prestige attached to it.

For many people sport provides a means to a fuller and healthier life. It is a focus on national pride and at local level it can play an important role in developing community spirit, providing opportunities for socialising and forming networks.

At a personal level sport builds confidence and the ability to overcome setbacks and disappointments, to challenge and conquer oneself, to fulfil dreams and to earn respect from others (and to give others respect) when set goals have been achieved.

However, the way sport is currently organised in our society affects both men and women detrimentally.

Sport is ideally placed to reinforce the dominant ideology of male superiority. It is obvious who runs the fastest, who jumps the highest, who throws the furthest; and from these measurable facts lies power for legitimating the commonly held belief about women's physical frailty.

Similarly to women in all walks of life, women in sport suffer from discrimination, lack of recognition, devaluation of achievement and the trivialisation of their performance.

Since last century, men's sporting organisations have been among the strongest local government lobbies with the result that there has been lavish funding for men's sporting facilities in our parks and reserves. During the same period resources for women's sport have been very inadequate.

The participation by women in sport on public courts, arenas and in pools is a comparatively recent development. For example, until the end of the 1920s the public baths were open for women only for one hour a day and the rest of the day was for men only, there were very few public basketball (netball courts) and hockey fields, the main sports for women.

In the mid-1930s, when thousands of teenaged women worked in the textile and clothing industries, the Workers Sports Federation and the Clothing Trade Union organised "girls" basketball teams for hundreds of young factory workers. This was typical of the popularisation of women's sport during this period.

Until the 1950s, team members usually walked or travelled as a group on public transport to the sports field or stadium and it was the usual practice to spend time watching the other teams play ... making a day or night of the matches. This all helped to give a sense of belonging to a group and of sharing common interests.

As compared to the past, sport today is much more individualistic, the participants travelling by private car, arriving at the venue for their own allotted time and then leaving. This lack of social life is contributing to the decline of team spirit, that is a sense of representing a locality or work place.

This individualisation of sport is helping to prejudice some women against it. As the social aspect of sport is diminishing there is a fertile field for those who reject the physical and aggressive side of competitive sport regarding it as being anti-intellectual, uncultured and undesirable.

In her contribution to the Women's Summit (October 1989) Pam Matthews emphasised the need to the need to overcome such prejudices :-
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"Women have fought and struggled to be accepted on equal terms with men emotionally and intellectually. I believe it is now time for women to start asserting themselves physically. For too long women have willingly accepted the role of being physically inferior, delighting in being weak, defenceless and dependent. To be weak is not a virtue, it is a disability."

Some Questions on Women and Sport

1. Why is women's sport on the fringe of the male sports world ?
2. What would be the effect on men and women if the paternalism of the traditional men's and women's sports organisations was reduced ?
3. What assets do women's organisation have to help sports women to improve their position in relation to the male sports world, the media, other community organisations and local government ?
4. Is women's physical weakness culturally determined ?

Social Consequences
and Community Issues

by Rose Reed

TAKE some time out to think about the energies of so many people and the time it takes to build communities. It is not just the physical infrastructure which makes up a community, but the efforts of local people which create the environment to which people contribute and become attached.

Many people have chosen to remain in, or come to rural areas because of their distinctive qualities - each very different from the other, and from the metropolises. It is the local people who work to create facilities and services to meet community need.

Major projects, like the VFT and associated developments, invariably bring about dislocation and disruption, and as a consequence, create personal, family and community stress which cannot be easily quantified.

Many people in communities along the proposed VFT routes are seriously questioning what benefits would be gained for them and their communities (aside from the benefits accruing to a small privileged group of land developers).

The Gippsland region has experienced many changes - booms and busts - associated with major developments, particularly in the power industry (coal and oil). There is a wealth of experience and literature detailing social impacts.

Developments have led to widespread changes in communities. People in this region have experienced the trauma of relocation for coal winning and power line establishment. The battles for adequate compensation for land acquisition were long and bitter. To some extent, those battles continue today where services and facilities are still 'catching up' to the changes, now some 10 years on.

During and post construction periods there were inflated land and house prices, causing considerable social dislocation of

low income earners, and the emergence of large caravan park populations. Many social and community services in health, education and welfare were strained beyond capacity in attempting to cope with the increased demands.

Unlike single development proposals, the VFT would have consequences across the whole of the south-eastern corner of Australia, with indications of major developments in several areas. The locations of these are as yet unidentified and their magnitude is unknown.

Touted benefits to local areas remain vague, unsubstantiated, and even 'cargo-cultish'. This makes local assessment of consequences almost impossible with the information available.

What kinds of jobs, and who would fill them are unknown.

Everything seems to rest on what kinds of developments would be associated with the corridor (inside and outside). Again, there are no clear proposals or answers to the development questions for local communities to discuss and consider. Further, to suggest the development of a rail line would significantly ease the pressure on the metropolises by decentralization seems nonsensical. Victorians can see that the development of dual carriage freeways radiating from Melbourne to regional centres have not substantially altered the pattern of urban sprawl.

Any proposed changes to rural communities must be evaluated on the basis of their capacity to enhance the character of localities. It is neither fair nor just that the way of life in established communities be substantially altered without the input of the people involved. ●

Rose Reed is the Convenor of the Latrobe Valley Community Forum. A resident of the Latrobe Valley since 1981, Rose is a Psychologist and has worked extensively in the Human Services area.



THE V.F.T.
The Very Fast Train.

A Report "Need or Greed" is now available from the VFT Awareness Groups Coalition.
Here is one article from this significant report.
More info Box 497 Morwell 3840.

Border Morning Mail 17/2/90

MP GOES IN TO BAT FOR CHAPPELL AS THE FIGUREHEAD

Fischer slams decision on AWDC chief

THE proposed appointment of Melbourne-based Ms Angela Munro as the new head of the Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation should be stopped, the member for Farrer, Mr Tim Fischer, demanded yesterday.

He also suggested the national growth centre needed a more dynamic figure-head like former Test cricket captain, now successful businessman, Greg Chappell or publisher-media personality Ita Buttrose.

Mr Fischer claimed that with a federal election now just weeks away, the "Westminster Convention" precluded the announcement of any key government appointments.

"This is a long-standing convention, especially at the federal level," he said. "Simply stated, it means that once the Prime Minister has obtained a dissolution of Parliament, key appointments to federal corporations are held over."

By **WALTER MURRAY** as the corporation's part-time chairwoman was made by the Federal Local Government Minister, Senator Margaret Reynolds, during a visit to Albury-Wodonga on Thursday.

She will take over as chairwoman on April 2. Her selection had been unanimously agreed to by the Federal, NSW and Victorian Governments, Senator Reynolds said.

"She brings to the position impressive credentials in planning..." she claimed. But Mr Fischer said the corporation needed Ms Munro's expertise in the social planning field "like a hole in the head".

He felt the person at the helm should be "someone well known who could give a hard edge to the promotion of Albury-Wodonga". He suggested the successful candidate should be in the mould of former Test cricket star Greg Chappell, Ms Munro had been chosen

Mail-Times
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1990
EDITORIAL

Algae: We're worried sick

We hope you're worried about the infestation of toxic blue-green algae which forced the Rural Water Commission to close Green Lake a fortnight ago. We're worried sick.

We know perhaps better than most about the dreadful problems ahead, if not for ourselves then certainly for our children and their children. But then it's our job to know, to find out, to unravel the facts.

Border Morning Mail
(Albury) 17. 3. 90

Two Articles
From the Country Papers

Thanks to Ecoso readers in Albury and Horsham we are able to reprint some rural news and, even more importantly, VIEWS. !!!!!

Please readers follow the example of these friends and post to Ecoso those little bits of information which are mostly likely to be lost in the pages of papers rarely read by people living in other areas. News from the country and from states other than Victoria would be very much appreciated.

Wimmera Mail Times
(Horsham) editorial,
9. 2. 90 and letter
16. 2. 90

Our judgment: We're in big trouble. This toxic algae, a bacteria suspected of causing birth defects, liver and brain damage, and of being a cancer catalyst, can be expected to spread through most lakes of the Wimmera-Mallee stock and domestic supply by the end of the century.

We'd be the last to apportion blame for the environmental disaster threatening every Australian warm-water lake subject to contamination from sewage, detergents and fertilisers. The excess of phosphorus in water catchments is only one of many catastrophic trademarks of the times.

★ Algae

SIR, — I was amazed to read your frenzied editorial of February 9 regarding the algae problem.

Where have you been hibernating?

Dr Paul Erlich has, on many visits to Australia in the last 15 years, endeavored to get the message through to our citizens with a warning of the pollution of our water supplies by household detergents and farm-used fertilisers.

Conservationists, whom the Editor has on many occasions denigrated as scaremongers and radicals, have also tried to get this same message through.

But, far from only governmental inactivity and silence, the press, particularly the country newspapers, have been culpable too because of their diffidence to upsetting their rural support and conservative views. Why is this the first editorial on this matter in our paper?

The ABC has had for many years excellent programs such as The Science Show on 3WV whose speakers have warned us of the problem frequently.

Now Dr David Suzuki with A Question of Survival on Wednesday nights on ABC television also shows us the error of our ways and how to remedy them. But how many Wimmera residents watch it in preference to soaps and miniseries shown at the same time on our alternative channel.

I was pleased to learn from their recent statements that some of our city fathers watch it.

Let each of us consider the problem by our actions in our homes and communities and heed the conservation warnings or we will be like many parts of the US and Europe. Short of drinkable water.

CHRISTINA CRITCHLEY,
Arnott-st,
Horsham

