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MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

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(Incorporating "IRREGULAR NO 53")THIS ISSUE:-

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1. IS HAMER MAKING IT HAPPEN ALL WRONG?

The Hamer government was swept back to office under the slogan "Hamer makes it happen!". Question is whether Hamer is allowing his henchmen to make it happen all wrong!

Hamer was recently reported to have said that "the dangers of uncontrolled development in capital cities should not be underestimated - they were among the most critical facing Australia". ("Age" 25/6/1973).

As a generalisation, fair enough, but what are these dangers?. The main danger in the writers opinion is urban designs that give rise to the uncontrolled wasteful squander of precious resources including fossil fuels. Indiscriminate random scattering of urban components into 7 or 8 corridors as in the M.M.B.W. scene, for example, makes the car and truck mandatory for most trips and tends to destroy community focus as participatory enjoyment. It is also a most wasteful design lengthening all trips. One step worse in the same direction is satellites way beyond the present Melbourne regional boundaries but the Government now seems set on this course!!

When Hamer was in London, Housing Minister Dickie announced that the Housing Commission had purchased land at Pakenham which would be sold at near cost to homebuilders to hold down the price of land. He explained on T.V. that the Commission would also buy land in the north and west and would "jump" the high price belt of land on Melbourne's fringes. He even suggested this would be a virtue creating a sort of green belt.

This casual top-of-the-head planning whimsy would superimpose on Melbourne's proposed "green wedges" scheme and "green belts" scheme as well between Melbourne and its "satellites"! Such a scheme is false economy. It is disastrous ecology.

Mr. Dickie is reported to have given more details on July 6th. Melbourne is to have a "Zone B" between 30 to 50 miles out and Pakenham, Cranbourne, Berwick, Gisborne, Woodend, Kyneton, Melton, Bacchus Marsh, Ballan, Kilmore, Broadford and Whittlesea have been earmarked for development. (Herald 6/7/73).

What crazy planning is this? Every commuter across "the belt" would have miles and miles of extra and quite unnecessary travelling every working day. Dickie seems determined to keep Melbourne seated near the very top of the ladder of the world's sprawliest urban capitals. Add

Add to this, Hamer's call for "many more growth centres on the Albury-Wodonga style". (Age 25/6/1973). If these are to be scattered north, south, east and west around Melbourne like Dickie's dormitory satellites, we will be maximising the scattering of our economic components; maximising our internal ~~addres~~ of communication; maximising the car and truck as moes of communication; maximising the sprawly car-dependent life-style whether in the Melbourne region or in Victoria's new cities and between them, maximising the consumption of energy; maximising the use of fossil-fuel resources; maximising pollution.

Its no use, Hamer, tongue-in-cheek, talking nobly about more national parks or conserving the green areas near the cities, as if these alone are the main answer to the ecological and social problems of the 1970's. Its no good Hamer theorising about helping the community to conserve if the Government designs an urban set-up which will have the opposite effect. Hamer talked so nobly last September - "The very consideration for the future is how far the community is prepared to go given a lead from the Government and how much material advance it is prepared to forgo to preserve and conserve the world we live in. The quality of living, and the endeavour to preserve the very ability of man to live, must become the increasing concern of all peoples and all Governments". (Budget speech "Hansard" 12/9/72, p174).

If Hamer really meant that, he would have long ago instituted a scientific assessment of the relative total energy requirements of a Gippsland corridor served with rapid transit and structured around lively local human-scale centres as against the M.M.B.W. spokes and/or satellites and as against separate-city decentralisation as he has been requested to do. He would long ago have ordered a Sociological survey as to the advantages of a directionalised structure participatory style corridor form of decentralisation. But all this could have pointed to very firm policies against the exponential growth of the automobile industry and oil industry for home consumption. It would have required a very firm policies to control the planlessness of private land development.

Is Hamer Equal to the Task?

(Esco what? With one industry going flat out to promote overseas tourism, another Minister threatening to put up fares still further on public transport, another Minister scattering the urban components with satellites, what hope has a Premier to pay attention to Ecoso guidelines and namely "a comprehensive multi-directional all-level and participatory effort to achieve global ecological equilibrium"?)

2. DIALOGUE ON STRATEGIC GOALS FOR M.C.C.

International Planning Collaborative("Interplan") has produced its first popular style broadsheet consisting of "Tentative Goals, Objectives and Policies" for the strategic plan for the municipality of the Melbourne City Council". This comes after 4 expensively produced scarce reports on early stages in the 15-stage planning process.

To give readers a taste of the material, excerpts giving Interplan's" goals and objectives, followed by what these might spell out in one aspect of life namely, employment, are given here in the two pages which follow.

Space does not permit us to give the "Interplan" material on other aspects e.g. transport, entertainment, housing, public services or environment, nor on the machinery "policies" which follow each of the 4 alternatives. Readers interested may be able to obtain a full copy of the report by applying to "Interplan Pty.Ltd. of Marland House, 562 Bourke Street, Melbourne, Phone 67-8482".

The whole planning process is supposed to be an exercise in public participation. Some of the residents associations have weighed-in with value judgements on some issues but the still relatively scarce Interplan "Goals and Objectives" material has not reached very far even into the strata of the younger professionals, some of whom are making efforts to produce for their Associations an independent citizens plan for presentation to the citizens and, later, to Interplan.

Examining Interplan's 4 options, one cannot help but feel he is in an exclusive city clubby chattering with stockbrokers, big city realtors, economists of the market-research variety and other city businessmen. Perhaps the predominate M.C.C. atmosphere is not unlike a club of this character so that Interplan's options are really shrewdly cast at the level of mentality of the smart businessman-about-the town 60-and-over set, with a few concessions to the younger jet-set thrown in. The nearest to a human approach is Interplan's Alternative No.3 "Specialised Growth" but this tends to be orientated on The Grand Event, the Impressive Function and The Important Person concept of specialization.

For all that, Interplan's economic model alternatives are, we judged, competent. Of course different economic policies will, as Interplan charts, give rise to different pressures and different social patterns and vice versa. Each alternative has a series of consequential social effects which seem basically correct and which are often ignored by those with intense dedication to social patterns who fail to concede the consequences. For example, the stop-the-city-growing is popular and seems superficially self-evident to be of benefit to those now living near the city who want to bring up families there and who want a mixed community and mixed interesting Carlton-type activities to continue.

But the consequence would force up land prices still further until only the childless rich could afford to live here and the competition for exclusive Toorak Road type shops and business premises could put an end to the shoe-string Carlton-type enterprises, and freeway networks would be further encouraged to maximise the mobility to gain access to suburban located former C.B.D. functions.

Yet overall, Interplan's alternatives are basically economic models concerned with economic size and with social implications seen as a consequence of the economic model. The Town & Country Planning Association is circulating a report which proposes instead, 4 social models. They have called these (1) an elite city with maximum attractions for overseas jetsetting visitors (2) conversion to a "modern" city (declining numbers of people) (3) mixed social community (a maximum peopled city) and (4) near-socialist community planning (outside the accepted economic framework). The report recommends mixed social community as a goal.

The quality of community type of approach of the T.C.P.A. report seems a distinct advance over the tentative quantity of economic-growth approach of Interplan.

Seems a bit like the City Fathers being catered for are living in the expand-at-all-costs, Ford-is-right atmosphere of the 1920's. The Interplanners are in the brave-new-world's post war atmosphere of the 1940's, the Residents Association have caught up with the humanised sociological concerns of the 1960's. But now when and where are we to make the breakthrough to the ecological-participatory imperatives of the 1970's? In the meantime, many of the pensioners, the migrants and the homeless men in the M.C.C. area are living in the atmosphere of the 1930's.

(Ecoso what? The Interplanners, the Residents Associations and the T.C.P.A. all need to take a bigger stride to the understanding that participatory activities must fill the vacuum left by cutting out the over-consumption of consumerism and that the city's central core and inner areas must be very much concerned with the innovative creativity necessary to inspire participatory patterns throughout the entire metropolis).

3. A COLLATION FROM MATERIAL SENT BY READERS.

(a) Railways....The Fight is On.

An English magazine, "The Ecologist" March 1973, features article by Irene Coates. Her opening paragraphs state her challenge....

At the very time when ecologists and environmentalists have woken up to the virtues of the railways, the Government is once more flexing its muscles and telling us that they are too expensive to run..... Both the social costs of roads and the benefits of rail are seriously under-estimated. A rational transport policy is urgently needed and if one were drawn up a strong case could be made for an enlarged railway network.

The report is illustrated with photographs and with tables. Here is one example.

Energy Requirements for Inter-City Passenger and Freight Transport

Table 1.

	B.T.U's per passenger km (1)	B.T.U's per ton-km (1)
Rail	1,000	420
Auto/Truck	2,800	1,400
Aircraft	6,000	23,000

Here is the concluding paragraph of the article :-

"All transport is a cost. It is vitally important that this fact is recognised. If we indulge in economic competition between modes we waste our investment both by under-using one infrastructure and over-using another. To cream off train passengers and freight into buses and lorries is doubly expensive. And by the time the economic competition has been started between rail, road and inland waterway it seems obvious that there will be only one runner in the race; roads, thus defeating even this questionable aim, Is this what the Government wishes to ensure? A walkover for the favourite having hobbled the only likely challenger? It may well be a Pyrrhic victory, ending with more and more vehicles chasing less and less oil and less and less space. However tempting it is to sit back and say "I told you so" when it happens, we need to take a more responsible course and fight for the sake of this small and vulnerable island".

(Ecoso what? Messrs. Hamer, Hunt, Meager, Dickie, Uren, Jones, Cass, O'Connor, please note "energy requirements" of rail, auto and plane).

(b) Electrochemical Cars.

Political Questions More Urgent than Technical Ones.

A lengthy article in Search (Journal of the Australian New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science) May 1973, has the title of "Electrochemical Transportation". The article is written by J.O'M. Bockris from the Institute for Solar and Electrochemical Energy Conversion at the Flinders University of South Australia.

One of the last sections of his report is sub-titled "Political Aspects of Electric Cars". Here are a couple of paragraphs from this section.

"The only political counterweight which could overcome the combined weight of the Companies" (Editors note... in earlier paragraph he listed these Companies as oil, automotive and steel, which he states make up more than half of all industrial capital) "is the Public. But we have seen, in the case of the Vietnam war, that a government can pursue a politically unpopular course for several years without difficulty and still be re-elected. The public does not connect with the government until it fears for the short term future.

.....

"Smog, stink, smarting eyes might bring the popularist movement which could stir to action congressmen who would vote, for example, for increased tax on gasoline to finance independent massive research (outside the influence of the oil-automotive, steel complex, i.e. university and institute research) on electrochemical power sources.

"These political questions are at present more urgent than technical ones. The solution of the latter depends on research drives in massive quantities and that is only possible by Congressional action. The Highway Fund in the U.S.A... arising from gasoline taxes... continues to provide the country with splendid highways. A small fraction of it could supply all the research money needed for development of non-polluting power sources, but battery companies are tiny; their lobbying power is negligible".

.....

"The development of an electorchemical transportation system would include above all an increased building rate of fission and breeder reactors, research into fission, and electricity from solar energy, the building of a network of energy stations... About \$50 billion is spent per year in automotive gasoline. The building of a new supply system from the energy sources to the station is likely to cost, at least, say 1% of this over 10 years, \$0.5 billion per year for 10 years".

In this article Mr. Brokis wrote about how the oil, automotive and steel complex will act in every way to delay conversion to electrochemically powered transportation... "The tactics of such prevention will include carrying out much research (for not to do so would court harrassing bills in the Congress) but it will be ensured that such research will not lead to progress, and any progress will be made by the efforts of small manufacturers with a strong profit motive."

(Ecoso what? How long is "the public" going to allow vested interested to decide the "popular" mode of transport?)

(c) Engineering in the Service of Man: entitled "Challenges to Engineering".

An article in the April/May (1973) issue of the Journal of the Institute of Engineers, Australia, is based on Professor Herzog's Retiring Chairman's Address to the Annual General Meeting of the Newcastle Division of the I.E.A.

In his opening remarks he stated that he intended to speak on the theme of "Engineering in the Service of Man"... "I intend to review briefly the impact of technology on our civilisation and consider some of the grave problems arising from the exponential growth of population and of industrial production".

In his summary Pro. Herzog wrote -

"Three things within our reach offer promise for managing our future successfully.

"Firstly, energy will remain a key factor in sustaining civilisation...

"Secondly, developments in electronics are providing us with powerful cybernetic aids and complex computers..

"The third and most important must be within ourselves. We must be prepared to change our value system. We need a system in which value is also given to the preservation of resources, to the preservation of the environment and to a social system in which man can live with dignity. In short we should be willing to change to a system that is optimised to the real benefit of man..

In his concluding paragraph he warned .. "If we squander our national resources, destroy our bushland, sub-divide our coast line, sell out our most valueable minerals and pollute our environment we are planning for a poor future for the next generation whether we realise it or not. If on the otherhand we use and develop our technology prudently, we can be masters of our future and not its victims".

(Ecoso what? Prof. Herzog has given a timely warning on the critical global problems of resources depletion, overpopulation and pollution. It is refreshing to find engineers are beginning to think ecologically - their calling typically inclines them to growth concepts).

(d) Living in Harmony with Nature.

"The big problem is that there are lots of people who understand that we should live in harmony with nature and I think some politicians realise this too. But its not surprising that science policy should be formed by the Government in co-operation with industry but now industry is the one that really forms policy and everything is directed towards profit making.

"What we need is a system where people have more influence. We need to create a human politics, a politics of ideas. Everything should be much more on a personal level".

This quotation is from an article in the "New Scientist", February 24, 1972. It is a quote from Bjorn Gillberg, a young Swedish scientist who has made a name for himself by encouraging rigorous scrutiny of industrial products. Because of his activities of taking science to the street the funds for his research work were withdrawn in 1970. In 1971 he threatened to leave Sweden "to prove that Sweden is not the country I want it to be".

(Ecoso what? Bjorn Gillberg is calling for a new kind of involvement of people, all people in the decision-making apparatus. Like the problems he is tackling, Gillberg may be ignored, but can the movement he has helped to initiate be ignored?)

(e) Borland on B.H.P. - "A Vibrant, Interacting Populous City"

"Borland on B.H.P." is the title of an article in April 1973 "Architect" (Published by the Victorian Chapter of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects).

"Why is it not possible for the particular terrain of Melbourne, particularly Collins and Bourke Streets, to be used to provide pedestrian crossings over roads and through buildings. Take for example the National Mutual site and the Collins Street/William Street corner.

"It would have been possible for pedestrians to cross this road at ground level at the National Mutual and to enter about first floor opposite the present building under construction by Civil and Civic. The same applies to buildings on the William/Bourke Street intersection. "What a contribution to the city these buildings could have been and how dull they now make this corner in what I can remember as a vibrant interacting populous part of the city with old Menzies as the hub pub.

"Buildings must have attributes other than the bureaucratic ideals of standardisation, regimentation, and centralised control. In the B.H.P. building, from the moment you step into the large inhumanly scaled, technologically orientated foyer, until you traverse vertically the whole building, the impression is one of one large dehumanised Freudian Procrustean Bed. (Croesus was the Greek innkeeper who stretched or cut the legs of his clientele to make them fit a standardised bed).

"The pity of B.H.P. House with its rather scholarly pre-occupation with structural technology, is that the viewer experiences rejection, the feeling that he is incidental to and not an integral part of a building within the city".

(Ecoso what? It is appropriate to again quote from an article about Professor Charles Robertson, Professor of Architecture, Melbourne University, (Age March 8) when he said that his personal ambition is not to design a great building but to provide a built environment that will contribute to people's happiness. But when will those who finance the buildings begin to accept these values?)

(f) It's Chairman Ron!

A feature article in the Weekend Magazine Section of the Melbourne Herald (June 30, 1973) was about Jack Munday. The reporter fondly called him "Chairman Jack".

Is Chairman Ron, Jack Munday's Adelaide counterpart? Ron J. Giles is the Secretary of the S.A. Branch of the Plumbers Union; he is a council member of the Town and Country Planning Assocn., a member of P.Gg., and chairman of "Save the Paddocks Committee". In a report published in April 1973 Ron Giles wrote about the campaign to develop 300 acres of land along the lines suggested by a citizens committee for the Adelaide "Paddocks". "...While it might well be presumptuous for the uninitiated to project themselves as competent planners, the general discussion (on urban design) is not confined to the discipline nor should it be. Since the planning exercise is conducted for the purpose of accommodating people, it is quite fitting for people, if they have something to say, to say it.

"The Committee is of the view that encouragement should be given to urban dwellers to become more socially responsive. If the adoption of different design standards to those of the "quarter acre lot" were assessed to be capable of achieving improved social response, those standards would clearly be preferable to the perpetuation of "quarter acre aloofness". If the price of proper social response is by design standards encouraging common land use, those standards should be employed".

(Ecoso what? Jack Munday in N.S.W., Norm Gallagher in Victoria, and Ron Giles in S.A., have introduced a new dimension to the unions. They are adding what Jack Munday calls a "social ingredient" to the campaigns of the Trade Unionists?.

MELBOURNE

MAXIMUM CENTRALIZED GROWTH

Maximum concentration of economic growth is likely to take place by encouraging a maximum possible concentration of metropolitan growth in the City of Melbourne.

- A. To encourage maximum increase in values of all privately-owned property within the City of Melbourne.
- B. To maintain enhanced values of all privately owned property for the foreseeable future.

The objectives are to:

1. encourage development of office space,
2. encourage retail activities to the extent that they are necessary to enhance total land values and
3. encourage industry only to the extent that it enhances total land values.

These objectives permit the economic market pressures to have a free play with the only controls being those that direct the investment toward creating a more pleasant working environment such as pedestrian arcades or mini-parks as part of the office development.

About 2½ times as many people would be employed in the city, in line with other major metropolitan central areas which have highly centralised public transport systems, equivalent metropolitan population and are of national or State significance.

Office space, which affords a high economic return, would triple its present level in the C.B.D. There would

be strong economic pressure to replace other types of activity in areas near the C.B.D. with offices and retail. Offices space would increase six times their present level in these areas.

The increased development in the C.B.D. would use about 60% of the maximum volume permitted by existing zoning.

Shopping would continue to increase to provide for the new workers. However stores and showrooms selling larger items would tend to move out of the innermost areas, because they could not afford the high rents.

Manufacturing and wholesaling could not afford the high rents in the C.B.D. and would therefore expand into areas presently zoned for their use that are presently in housing. Some industry activity would need to locate in areas around the harbour and rail yards.

MELBOURNE

PROPORTIONAL GROWTH

Proportional growth is likely to take place by the City of Melbourne maintaining the same magnitude of activity within its boundaries for the future as it has now in proportion to the Melbourne metropolitan area.

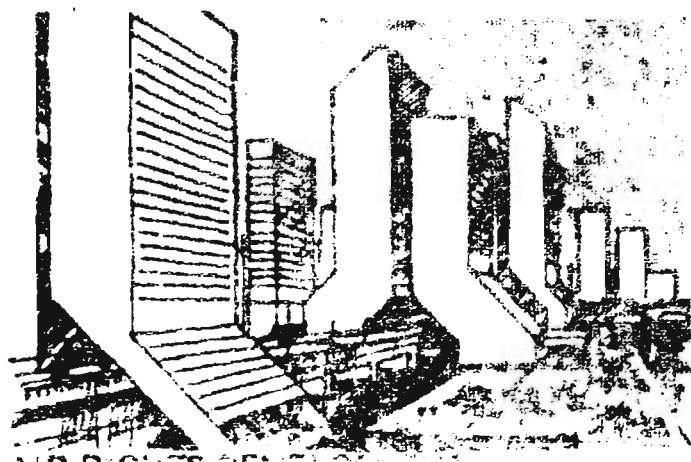
- A. To encourage growth or change in the City of Melbourne in keeping with metropolitan growth or change so that its status or position in the future metropolitan region will be maintained.

The objective is to maintain the present levels of employment or activity in such work types as office, manufacturing, retailing and wholesaling to today's (1973) percentage of these activities in the Melbourne Metropolitan Region.

Employment would double to about 480,000, the number of office workers increasing by 85 per cent to 215,000. They would need 1½ times more floor space, mainly in the C.B.D. Retailers would expand their floor space by about two-thirds and an additional 10,000 people would work in shops. Retailing in the City, outside the C.B.D., would grow even faster, as showrooms and stores selling large items would be encouraged to maintain their present high level of activity. This level of retailing is much greater than the

existing trends and therefore requires major incentives. Manufacturing and wholesaling would reverse their downward trend by maintaining its present proportion of activity in the metropolitan area. Major incentives would be required in order to make this possible.

The additional activities in the C.B.D., especially retailing or offices, would require that the City be developed to half the maximum volume permitted by existing zoning. However, these activities would force use of lower economic value like industry, into other areas of the City. To accommodate all industry and wholesaling, it will be necessary to use all land now zoned for industry, as well as an additional 100 acres of Harbour Trust lands or rail yards.



MELBOURNE

SPECIALIZED GROWTH

Specialized growth is likely to take place by encouraging the growth to those activities that the City can provide most advantageously within the metropolitan area due to its accessibility, compactness and variety.

- A. To encourage growth in the Inner City with major emphasis on functions and activities of National, State and Regional significance.
- B. To ensure housing is available within the City of Melbourne boundaries in a range of costs and types.

The objective is to enhance the role of the City and the Central Business District in particular, as the main economic, cultural and political focus for Metropolitan Melbourne and the State of Victoria, as one of the two dominant centres in the Nation.

Both convenience and efficiency require that the senior administrative functions of both Government and Business, and the ancillary activities necessary to support them, locate in the Inner City. International and National identity is directly related to the character and attractiveness of the urban core.

The total employment in the City would almost double to 440,000 — and most of the additional workers would be employed in offices. However, retail activity would

increase and shops selling clothing, footwear and personal products would become more numerous. Retailing of heavier goods, such as cars, furniture and equipment, would tend to be forced out of the Central Business District.

Manufacturing businesses would move out of the City because of high land values and their need for expansion. Wholesale activities would move out of the C.B.D. but to lower priced areas within the City.

It is possible to accommodate all expansion of office, retail, entertainment and public institutions within land that is presently zoned for commercial or industrial use. No major expansion into residential neighbourhoods would be necessary.

MELBOURNE

MAXIMUM DECENTRALIZED GROWTH

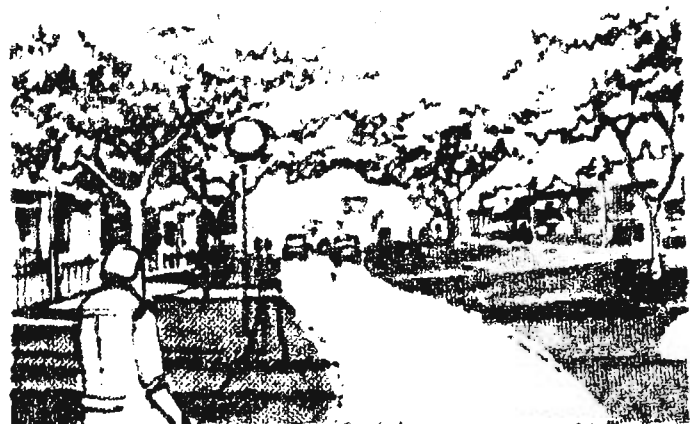
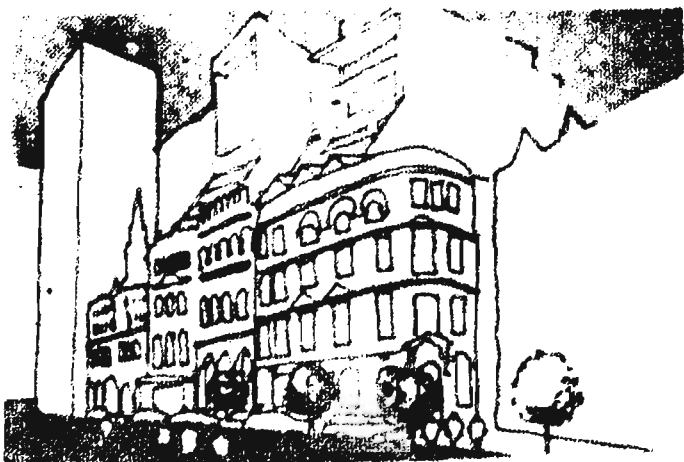
Maximum decentralized growth is likely to take place by encouraging maximum possible decentralization of new growth outside the City.

- A. To maintain the present level of business and industrial activity and the present number of dwelling units.

The objective is to discourage any increase in commercial and industrial activities in the City of Melbourne.

The City of Melbourne would need to adopt a "no-growth" set of policies to assist a maximum decentralization goal. Employment is the major function within the metropolitan area or State that is centralized in the City. Therefore, the most stern policies would have to be applied to stop further employment expansion. Such policies would initially have to be aimed at bringing about a decline in employment, to counteract the exceedingly strong assets of compactness and accessibility that presently exist.

Even with a maximum decentralization goal, the demand for a central location would continue to increase. Land prices would continue to rise, most likely at a faster rate, if the space for a particular activity remained unchanged. It would mean that those activities that could not afford the high price of land would move out. Land would also be used more intensively resulting in marginal increases in employment. Therefore, more direct methods, besides limiting construction of new buildings, would be necessary to control increases in employment.



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