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MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

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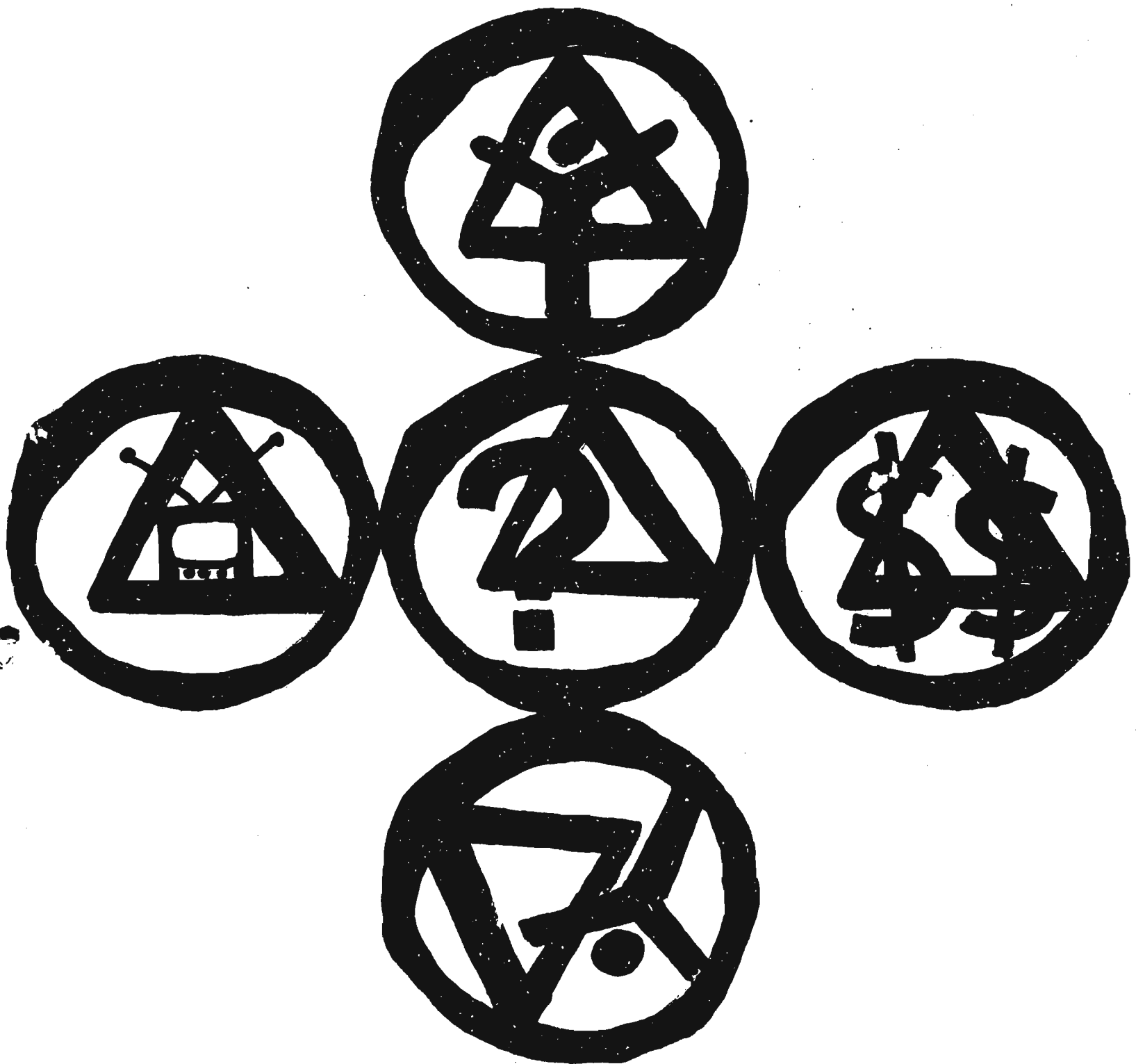
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# HABITAT AND ALL THAT

Planning, Politics, People, Participation, Profit, Property,  
Paternalism, Paradisism, Privatism, Possessions, Pollution.



*"... the limited natural and human resources are not only inequitably distributed but are also recklessly squandered with outrageous pollutions and destruction of the natural environment. As for the social environment, life and thinking become dominated by material possessions and this creates a barrier making it increasingly difficult for neighbours, work mates and even members of the same family to relate to each other" from Ecoso Guidelines.*

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(Incorporating "Irregular" No. 64).

Other publications welcome to use material if source is acknowledged.

In this issue we continue discussion around the World Habitat Conference by commenting on a number of report-back seminars that have been held in Australia. We have also included some material from the first Down to Earth Festival that was held at Cotter River, Canberra, in December 1976, and a number of short reports on various documents that have been sent to Ecoso Exchange.

To help readers follow through on some of the material referred to we have included a reference section as the last item.

Although the material in this issue of Ecoso Exchange has been gleaned from a variety of sources there is one main theme that is reiterated throughout its pages. .... it is becoming increasingly clear that the solutions to most problems will come primarily through political action rather than technology or planning ..... this is clearly stated by Enrique Penalosa, Margaret Bowman, John Hancock and Jack Munday. There are three sections in this issue.

#### Habitat Report Back

1. Enrique Penalosa's Warning and Message
2. Margaret Bowman's Message and Warning
3. Housing Recommendations Supported
4. A.I.U.S. Seminar.
5. Interview with Jack Munday.

#### Down to Earth Festival

6. Jim Cairns. "The Theory of the Alternative".
7. Maurie Crow "Recipe for Fusing Social Change and Alternate Life Style".
8. Bob Pringle. "Alternative Work Values".

#### Reports Reviews. References.

9. Access to Housing
10. South Melbourne Conservation Study
11. Knox Project and the Community Child Care Newsletter
12. Citizens Participation: lecture by Prof. J. Hancock
13. Urban Policy and Political Parties
14. References used in this issue of Ecoso Exchange.

#### A. Report Back on Habitat.

Vancouver Plan for Action: The United Nations Conference on Human Settlement 1976.

The recommendations of the Habitat Conference have been published in a booklet called Vancouver Plan for Action. It is available from the United Nations Association, 134 Flinders Street, Melbourne, or from the Habitat Task Force, Box 1890, Canberra City, 2601.

The Vancouver Plan for Action is a set of 64 recommendations addressed to Governments suggesting concrete ways in which people might be assured of the basic requirements of human habitat....

The Vancouver Plan for Action has been given political endorsement by 132 countries but Australia abstained from giving this endorsement. Why Australia abstained from voting is stated in this issue of Ecoso Exchange in the section reporting the contribution of the Hon. Kevin Newman, (Minister for Environment, Housing and Community Development) to the A.I.U.S. Seminar. 134 countries participated at the Habitat Conference at ministerial level.

Enrique Penolosa's Warnings and Message.

A Predominantly Urban Planet

The Habitat Conference recognised that in the near future the world will be a predominantly urban planet and as Enrique Penolosa (the United Nations Secretary General for Habitat) so lucidly warned:

"The present style of life of western countries is not going to last very long..... amongst other things there are not enough resources in our planet to sustain this style of life, secondly the whole planet is not going to allow it. First of all, you, the industrialised countries, have less and less population in relative terms, because, if the rest of the world is growing at a faster rate relatively speaking, you have less and less people., so the rest of the world is not going to permit the continuance of this style of life. What we are talking about a new international economics, we are talking about this".

Penalosa made this statement at the Australian Institute of Urban Studies Seminar in October last year. The main article in this issue of Ecoso Exchange is a report on the document "Habitat and the Challenge of the Cities", at which Penalosa gave the opening address. Further extracts from his contributions to this seminar will be given in the later article; but in addition to the above warning we now include a message from Penalosa on the political significance of the sixty four recommendations.

Call for Political Endorsement of Vancouver Plan for Action:

"I think the importance of these Recommendations for National Action does not lie in how innovative they are because you can find much better presentations in the text books in the universities and in the libraries. The importance of the recommendations was the political endorsement that for the first time in history they received from 132 governments. Nothing in these recommendations is new; the importance is the political endorsement and the repercussions that this political endorsement can have at the national level".

2 Margaret Bowman's Message and Warning.

Hope and Challenge, not Despair and Downslay.

At a Town and Country Planning Association Public Meeting Dr. Margaret Bowman prefaced her talk by explaining that she was not a planner but a political scientist. Her main impression of the Official Habitat Forum was that we are now living in a world where the English speaking countries are in a minority; and secondly the way of communicating at world conferences is no longer to rely mainly on the spoken and written word: visual material was used to present reports in a variety of ways, she said.

As regards the Non Government Organisation Forum (NGO), she was mainly impressed by the fact that there the message was not one of doomday and despair but of hope and challenge. Solutions to problems were being sought through political means rather than merely looking to technical solutions, and there was a growing recognition that to date settlements had been the result of decisions on other issues rather than about the human needs of communities.

She listed four main matters of concern at the N.G.O. Conference.

These were -

- i. Community Control of Land.
- ii. The Interaction between rural and urban areas.
- iii. Opposition to Nuclear Energy.
- iv. Self help rather than bureaucratic control.

Dealing more fully with each of the four points Dr. Bowman explained.

- i. That the need for community control over land use is one of the 64 recommendations of the official Habitat Conference (the Government Conference). The recommendation points out that private ownership of land contributes to social injustice and if unchecked it may become a major obstacle in planning and implementing development schemes.

~~Sections on Housing~~  
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## Report Back on Habitat

- ii. That there is a need to develop a deeper understanding of the interaction and interdependence of city and rural areas and the need for better balanced communities with social mix. Dr. Bowman emphasised that populations in many parts of the world lack the provision of elements of vital importance for health and survival, especially clean and safe water, clean air and food. She called for support for the United Nations Water Conference which is to be held in Argentina in March this year (1977).
- iii. The opposition to nuclear energy and the need for alternate forms of power such as solar and wind energy was one of the most strongly supported recommendations from the Habitat Forum (the conference of non government organisations).  
She quoted Margaret Mead and Barbara Ward who both supported the idea of keeping our options open by conserving energy and altering our habits rather than jeopardising the future by using nuclear energy. She also quoted figures from Buckmaster Fuller to illustrate how the industrial countries are squandering the world's energy. He said that the amount of energy used, on the average, by each U.S.A. citizen was the equivalent to the energy that would have been provided each day by 153 slaves in Roman times.
- iv. Margaret Bowman warned that the fourth main issue had the possibility of being self-defeating but that the support for this issue was very compelling. This issue is that there should be self help rather than bureaucracies doing the job for people. People are demanding materials to actually build their own structures: demanding the dignity of deciding their own lives. Such a demand may seem optimistic and romantic and there is in it a tendency towards anarchism but overall this demand was one based on enthusiastic hope.

### Australian Government Not Committed.

Dr. Bowman warned that the Australian Government was in no way committed now or in the future to the Vancouver Plan for Action. (See later in Ecoso Exchange in report on A.I.U.S. Seminar).

## 3. Habitat Recommendations on Housing Supported

### Habitat Report Back Meetings in Melbourne.

The United Nations Association has held a number of Habitat Report Back meetings in Melbourne suburbs.

One such meeting was held at the Collingwood Town Hall last August, at which the main theme for the meeting was the Vancouver Plan for Action recommendations on Housing.

The meeting was addressed by delegates who had attended the Habitat Conference and Forum, by municipal councillors, church people, architects and members of the Tenants Union.

The meeting endorsed the Vancouver Plan for Action recommendations on Housing and sent letters to the Federal and State Governments stating this support.

Other public meetings in the United Nations Association series on Habitat Report Back include "Public Recreation and Community Involvement"; "Transport and Communication", and "Use of Resources".

## 4. A.I.U.S. Seminar

### Habitat and the Challenge of the Cities.

The Australian Institute of Urban Studies held a seminar in Canberra during October at which two documents were discussed.

These were the Vancouver Plan for Action and the A.I.U.S. Task Force Report Project 57, entitled "The Challenge of the Cities". A full record of the proceedings of the symposium has been published under the title "Habitat and the Challenge of the Cities" (see last page of Ecoso Exchange on how to obtain copies of these reports).

The Opening Address to the Seminar was given by the United Nations Secretary General for Habitat, Sr. Enrique Penalosa. He challenged....  
"Problems are not everywhere the same or of the same gravity, but looking at a global perspective there is no denying a crisis of the most fundamental kind". He pointed to four facts...

- i. The huge size of cities (with projections for some of 20..40 million inhabitants).
- ii. Cities are being built for cars not human beings
- iii. Pollution of air and water
- iv. "And most damaging of all we are building cities we don't want to live in. All over the world people with financial ability are moving from the cities to surrounding suburbs, bankrupting municipal administrations and furthering the segregation of the people by economic class".

He warned that already in the third world a quarter to a third of the urban population lack even water and sewage connections. He emphasised that the solution to most problems would come primarily through political action rather than innovations of technology and planning and expressed his gratification that this point was stressed at the conference and in the Vancouver Declaration of Principles.

He gave two reasons why he is certain that this basic orientation is correct and most of his speech elaborated these two reasons. They were:

- i. ... most countries of the world have a disjointed social structure which permits a European life style for an elite while the poor are without the basic benefits that human settlement can offer.
- ii. It is necessary to understand the limits of the technological revolution. We are not at the end of our inventive capacities but technological innovation does not necessarily deliver the social benefits ... the damaging effects of technology are an unavoidable consequence of progress.

To illustrate this second point he referred to the discussion on nuclear power he noted that although this was not really discussed at the official government conference of Habitat it was the main subject at the Habitat Forum of non government organisations.

In a very brief speech Penalosa managed to introduce two of the most controversial issues of Habitat Year ..... "how to achieve greater popular participation at the most basic community level in decisions and programs affecting local conditions", and on land tenure .... "Now we are becoming more aware that land, while not scarce, has different values and different capacities, and that the treatment of land as a commodity of the market, bought, sold and held as speculative investment, is no longer serving community needs". Finally on the relationship between the developing world and the great powers, Penalosa said:

"For years the nations of the developing world have looked for guidance to one of the two great power centres. But, this is no longer the case. We no longer see in either of these powers a model which holds for us any real parallel or possibility. We are looking for new ideas which are more in keeping with our hopes, capacities and opportunities not to copy, like school children, as we have had a tendency to do in the past, but to watch and study".

#### What Discussion Followed This Inspiring Key Note Address?

Before presenting you with extracts from the commentaries and discussion which followed Sr. Penalosa's speech it would be useful to give some facts about the participants at the seminar.

Report Back on Habitat

Those attending the seminar included the Hon K.E. Newman, M.P. (Minister for Environment, Housing and Community Development); the Hon. Geof Hayes (Minister for Planning and Housing in Victoria); The Hon. Paul Landa (Minister for Planning and Environment in N.S.W.); Mr. Tom Uren, (Federal Deputy Leader of the Opposition and former Minister of Urban and Regional Development); Mr. Vic Jennings (Chairman of Jennings Industry and also a member of the Advisory Committee on Habitat which was appointed by the Whitlam Labour Government). M. Peter Barrington (Director of the Hammerson Group of Companies and President of the Building Owners and Managers Association of N.S.W., and Vice President of the A.I.U.S.)

There are two appendices in the report. One is a statement by Peter Barrington entitled 'What Went Wrong, Why and What Can be Done for Recovery?' This is mainly a report on the depressed state of the commercial building sector.

The second appendix is a list of those who spoke at the Symposium and a description of their responsibilities in the planning field.

There are about fifty people listed and four of the names appear to be the names of women (there may have been more than four women present). There did not appear to be anyone connected with Trade Unions other than the Labour Party politicians, (Mr. Uren and Mr. Landa). In the main the participants were academics, administrators, professional planners, politicians, or company directors.

However the list does not seem to include one or two speakers. For example Mr. John Byrne of Adelaide seems to have been omitted.

This omission has been noted because what Mr. Byrne had to say has been chosen by Ecoso Exchange for pride of place in this article. He effectively summed up the tenor of the commentaries and the discussion which followed Penolosa's speech. The commentaries were given by Geof Hayes and Paul Landa and then there was general discussion.

Trivial Discussion with an Over-Concern for Physical Planning. John Bryne of Adelaide.

Mr. Bryne said: "May I say that in view of the Secretary-General's (Enrique Penolosa) remarks I keep feeling that much of our discussion is rather trivial. I would like to observe also that in Vancouver, in the middle of a debate on how to protect a whole series of endangered species in the environment, one gentleman from the third world said - 'Let us not forget that man in many countries is an endangered species.' I keep feeling that we are forgetting that".

Mr. Bryne went on to applaud the Secretary General for pointing out that we are too much concerned with physical planning and asked the pertinent question- "How do we get the best out of our resources in view of the fact that the world has limited resources?"

Mr. Bryne was one of the very few people at the Symposium who even indicated concern about urban problems of other countries and the problems of limited world resources. A few others gave lip service to a recognition of "pockets of poverty" in Australia and mainly referred to under-developed countries to give a back-hand compliment to Australia. (It appears from the contributions to discussion that Mr. Bryne may have attended the Habitat Conference or Forum in Vancouver).

A Terrible Paradox. (Hon. K. Newman, Minister for E.H. & CD).

Immediately following Penolosa's address Hon. K.E. Newman, Federal Minister for Environment, Housing and Community Development was invited to give his commentary.

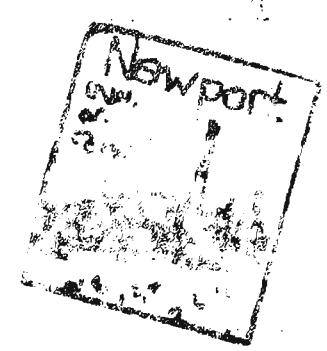
He said "What I would like to do is just make a short statement and then put myself in the firing line".

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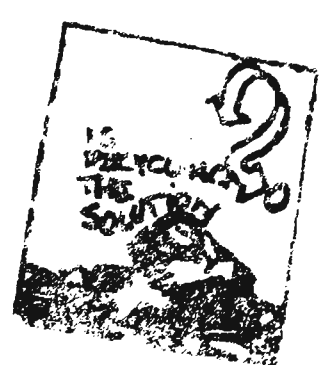


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Back on Habitat.

His statement mainly consisted of two ideas. Firstly that there is "a beautiful logic" in the amalgam of environment, housing and community development which "will take a grip and start producing programs) and secondly that the policies of the last government were open-ended and extravagant.

Questions to Mr. Newman mainly centred on the Australian Government's policy to the Vancouver Plan for Action. (It is interesting to note that the women present seemed to be the most persistent questioners).

After a number of questions had been asked the Hon. Newman said...

"Well I hope I have made the position clear on the 64 recommendations. I mean that it is a terrible paradox that the thing begins with the Declaration of Principles, which makes it very difficult because we did not endorse the Principles".

Mr. Newman was asked, "I was curious to know why some of the recommendations here have a note on them showing that Australia abstained from voting. Were they in fact minor matters?"

He answered.... "It would be quite incomprehensible for me to get up and say that I endorse all the recommendations. I've sounded warning notes that some of the recommendations seem to be unpalatable to me and I stress the word seem".

One of the questioners asked Mr. Newman .... "I understand the Australian Commissioner General made a formal explanation of the rejection by Australia of the Declaration of Principles and explained that it was due to one particular clause concerned with racism. Is the Minister now stating that the totality of the Declaration of Principles was rejected by Australia".

Mr. Newman gave the categorical answer: "We did not endorse the Statement of Principles, full stop; and the High Commissioner made it very clear in his speech".

Australia Has Not Endorsed the Vancouver Plan for Action

132 of the 134 countries which were represented by government delegates at the Vancouver Conference have endorsed the Plan for Action.

However, the words "Australia Abstained from Voting" are at the end of two paragraphs.

Both of these paragraphs referred to the occupation of land and the uprooting of native populations.

It would seem from Minister Newman's answers that these may not be the only unpalatable paragraphs.

Jesting and Gesturing on Participation. (Bruce Juddery of Canberra).

An extract from a contribution to discussion by Bruce Juddery (Journalist in Canberra Times and Staff Writer for the A.I.U.S. Report "The Challenge of the Cities".)

".... What we are talking about is participation of relevant groups; and I rather pride myself on defining relevant groups as any body either individual body or corporate body that's got the capacity to foul up the situation at some later stage in the proceedings. In other words if you're thinking about putting up a power station, you start worrying at the first cock crow who could possibly foul up this magnificent concept of ours.... I agree with the Report that there are some things which trade unions should not legitimately do; but they do it all the same, so you've got to take this sort of thing into account. You have to identify the people who at some stage in the procedure have the power to or the potential power to foul you up, and these are the people who have got to participate, who have got to be given the idea they've won something even if they haven't won everything"(!!)

He added "I'm arguing for a form of tokenism but you've got to go a little bit further than that; you've got to give them a bit of power from time to time".

Mr. Juddery gave a cynical account of the dangers of tokenism in participation. He said "A shire clerk in Western Australia told us at great length about his exercise in participation. He had it worked out to a tee. All the notables are called in the day before the rate notices are voted on by the council and they are filled up with grog and given a spiel on what its all about. They go out and say 'This is great we have got to be able to carry this', if it is a great increase; or 'Beauty there is no increase. Admittedly we are not getting our new storm water drains, but we can't afford it'. And everything goes through the Council next day splendidly and there's no argument".(!!)

As stated above, Mr. Juddery was the staff writer for the A.I.U.S. Study "Challenge of the Cities". In thanking him for his effort, Mr. J.E.Knox (Chairman of the A.I.U.S. Task Force and Director of Transport in Western Australia) said that the choice of Mr. Juddery was "an inspired choice as writer, who used his incisive knowledge of politicians and his solid academic background to play a most effective role of devil's advocate".

Is he determined to keep his title or are his true opinions expressed in the jests? Fortunately he was rebuked by one of his listeners; Prof. Oeser remarked on his cynicism and said "collectively we have vast resources of experience of both work and social conditions".

How to Bring Councils to Heel - or Quick Court Action Gives Teeth to Decision Making.

(Mr. George Moore of Sydney).

Mr. George Moore (Managing Director of Wallis Moore Pty. Ltd.) has, as he himself stated "had considerable experience as a member of Mr. Barnett's Appeal Tribunal (Note: Mr. Barnett was former Under-secretary for Local Government, Government of N.S.W. thus presumably Mr. Moore was talking about the N.S.W. planning appeals machinery).

He made the following contribution to the discussion on participation and planning decision making.

"The only recourse I have found and used, and you can only use it at the moment in the local government sphere is the ability to take a declaratory writ out in the Supreme Court. Now that is returnable very quickly and its the only way I have found to bring councils to heel so that you can get your decision and you can proceed with your development. I would very much like to see something written into any action we take, that where the decision has been made the applicant has recourse very quickly to the court to get a declaratory writ for performance by this responsible authority so that you can proceed with your development".

Another speaker concerned with decision making was Mr. Doug Murphy (Financial Consultant of Brisbane) who had a clear proposition for helping the Australian Institute of Urban Studies "get across to decision makers". He said "We want to enlarge our Division to incorporate members of the Government, members of the local city council, members of the Co-ordinator General's Department in a real life but somewhat elitist, not-open-to-the-public, organisation to get this message across: that we are there to do the work which is a tremendous benefit to the politician" .... and he further expanded his ideas ... "we should look to being an ongoing board of advice, or a pool of professional skills and advice".

Women and Children Not Entirely Neglected! (Mr. Norman Fisher of Canberra).

Mr. Norman Fisher (First Assistant Secretary, Department of Environment, Housing and Community Development) Member of Australian Delegation to Habitat raised a number of very significant points, in particular he recognised that planning on the macro scale was specifically discriminatory towards women... "... within cities the focus is beginning to move down the scale. This is one particular aspect that we need to be addressing ourselves to professionally in Australia in the next ten years; the problems of cities at smaller scale than the macro approach.... The macro scale in which this task was approached (i.e. by the A.I.U.S. Task Force Report) very much reflects the fact that we are elitist. We are men, we are trained by and large professionally to look at problems in the broad. The consumers of our work by and large aren't represented in the report, that is the people who actually enjoy or suffer

## THE 4 "ECOSO"\* GUIDELINES

### OUTRAGEOUS MODERN TRENDS.

Today we are living in a world increasingly manipulated by advertisements and propaganda for a culture of consuming rather than using, of receiving or following rather than participating.

We who live in western advanced countries have little choice other than to buy goods designed with built-in obsolescence. Thus a large proportion of hard work goes to fashioning materials which are misused or not fully used, so the more that is produced the more there is wasted. These same superior industrial powers force this same pattern of consumerism on the people of the Third World. Under these conditions the limited natural and human resources are not only inequitably distributed but are also recklessly squandered with outrageous pollutions and destructions of the natural environment. As for the social environment, life and thinking become dominated by material possessions and this creates a barrier making it increasingly difficult for neighbours, work mates and even members of the same family to relate to each other.

There is a more efficient way of living which does more for the dignity of man using less energy and preserving the world as a pleasant and habitable place.

### GUIDELINES TO REVERSE TRENDS

1. A value-judgement in favour of regeneration and promotion of community participation meaning that it is humanising and enriching for people to relate to each other through one form or another of voluntary participatory activity, both on the job and off the job, exercising a measure of control in the course of such activity.
2. A consequent recognition of necessity for change in life-style and behaviour patterns that sees the quality of life as an alternative to consumerism understood as mass production and consumption of wasteful and unsatisfying consumer goods and services based on compulsion or manipulation.
3. Accordingly a policy of restricting the use of energy and non-renewable resources per head and hence a planned design of community including population size where man can better relate to man and nature in order to reduce wasteful goods and services at the same time guaranteeing an adequate minimum subsistence to all, and using modern technology to this end.
4. The recognition that such objectives cannot be achieved either on the basis of partial linear one-level ecological remedies or with authoritarian or manipulative control of production or affairs but require a comprehensive multi-directional all-level and participatory effort to achieve global ecological equilibrium.

\* "Eco" is for ecological, "so" is for sociological and "exchange" is to indicate that there is no manipulation



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from the process. There is no reference to women, at least Habitat got that right. There is no reference by and large to the people who suffer from the faults of planning in their homes and local neighbourhoods. It is at the local neighbourhood level that we should be paying attention to the process, as well as getting the macro processes right....."

In the Vancouver Plan for Action there is a statement on women in the section on "New Forms of participation". It states:

"recognition of the changing role of women in society and encouragement of their full participation in development".

And again in the section of the Plan for Action on "Neighbourhood Planning":

....."The special interests of children and their parents, the elderly and the handicapped come into focus at the neighbourhood level" and, thirdly in the section on "Participation" the report states....."seeking the participation of women in the conception of shelter, infrastructure and in the provision of transportation and access to community services".

Need for Action-orientated Proposals

Professor R. Gates of Queensland.

Professor Gates was the chairperson of the Australian Institute of Urban Studies last year.

Commenting on Penalosa's warning to the rich and self-satisfied countries, Prof. Gates said.....

"His eloquence and commitment clearly evoked in the audience a response from the heart, but it evoked little in the way of action-orientated proposals".

And later he summed up his own attitude in the following words.....

"We owe ourselves and we owe the world something better than uncoordinated decision making. We owe ourselves and the world a conscious and careful formation of goals at the local and state levels, at the national level, and at the international level. And we owe ourselves purposeful community action towards achieving those goals".

As the Professor has referred to what he terms "purposeful community action" it is useful to refer back to an earlier report from the A.I.U.S. to appreciate what he could mean by these words. In the proceedings of the 1973 Annual Conference of A.I.U.S. Professor Gates was an outspoken champion of urban action groups. He is reported as saying.....

"I hope I may be permitted one final word in relation to urban action groups. I don't agree with what the Chairman (Peter F. Barrington was the Chairperson that year ...editors note) said earlier this morning, which amounted, I think, to hoping that we will be able to create conditions in which urban action groups won't arise because they will not be necessary. I hope we will always have action groups. They are one of the most effective means of expression of individual people's views and interest, and an important part of a healthy democratic system. But on the other hand, I would certainly not wish to see them institutionalised by being given, for example, formal representation within the Institute, because I fear this would emasculate them". (Our emphasis... editors note).

\* \* \* \* \*

The A.I.U.S. was founded about ten years ago. It has published a number of reports which have been prepared by Task Force Groups, and has held a variety of seminars and conferences.<sup>1</sup>

As will be seen from the above extracts from the most recent A.I.U.S. seminar the Institute attracts members who are diverse in their experience and perspectives. Mr. Bob Hawke is one of the Victorian Councillors of the Institute, but it does not seem as if he or any other trade unionist has as yet played a significant role in the activities of the Institute.

Interview with Jack Munday

Jack Munday seems to have endeared himself to other Australian delegates at the Vancouver Forum. At the Habitat Report back meetings in Melbourne he has been referred to affectionately as "our own Jack Munday was there"; or "Jack Munday put Australia on the map"; or "there was tremendous interest in the green ban movement", or "Jack Munday was out-spoken about the dangers of uranium mining".

The information in this Ecoso Exchange article is from an interview reported in 'Chain Reaction'. At this interview Mr. Munday was not reporting directly on his Habitat experiences, he was mainly speaking about the environment and in particular about uranium mining.

We have selected from the article some ideas Mr. Munday expressed about urban and rural settlements

("Chain Reaction" is published by Friends of the Earth. Information about this magazine is given in the Reference section of this issue of Ecoso Exchange .... the last page).

Habitable Cities and Social Responsibility for Labour

One of the questions Jack Munday answered was what he thought about people moving out of our cities and trying to lead a low energy consumption life style in rural areas. Jack replied ....

"I think this is very good by way of example, but whether we like it or not, we've had an industrial revolution, we've now got very highly industrialised societies, we've got a world in which in 1950 only 20% of the people lived in cities, now it is 40% and by the turn of the century it will be 50%.... this raises the whole question not only of technology, though that's to the fore front, but also the work ethic, the question of work itself, and I believe this to be the most neglected area of workers organisations' thinking .... the question of the social responsibility of labour, which labour we should be performing, in the interest of present society, and also in the interest of future society.

"I believe that up to now workers organisations and political parties ... of the left as well, socialists, communists, social democrats of various hues throughout the world ... have all been very neglectful of what to do with labour .....

"Now about going back to the land I come down in between, I think we have got to make our cities habitable. I don't think its possible for everybody to return to the land and abandon the cities ... that's an extreme position. Now we can't all go back to Nimbin.

"Whether we like it or not we've got Melbourne with 3 million people sprawling for miles and we've got the same in Sydney.

"So I think the real challenge to urban environmentalists is to make cities places in which there is a new spirit, in which there is a new attitude to work, a new attitude to which technology we should be using.

"At the same time I believe those who have gone back to the land can by example teach those of us who remain in the city a lot".

In his answer to another question Jack raised the problems of consumerism .... "Seeing that we've got workers in the industrial countries with the expectations of consumerism, the second car, the chandelier, the thicker carpet, the goody-goodies and all the built in obsolescence that exists in our society, part of the problem is an ideological thing of breaking with that, and from what is called standard of living, and thinking instead of the quality of living. But you'll appreciate that workers are brain washed from childhood into believing that this is the norm, and what I'm saying is that if you're going to take these workers from that position to a position we are talking about, it's a huge task.

"And I think it can only be done by a hell of a lot of discussion and convincing the workers, that the planet cannot go on this way, that we can't go on destroying resources at the rate we are".

Later on he states ... "I think we've got to try to connect up the workplace and where the worker lives. For too long there has been this slicing off.

"The worker hits the factory of a morning, performs certain work for a number of hours, then he goes out and ignores the fact that the environment in cities is being destroyed, that the transportation systems are terrible.

"So there must be this intervention in issues beyond what we call economic ... all of us have to find a way to bring more and more of the working class into the environment movement".

And a warning from Jack ....

"I think the non renewable resources crisis ... also I believe there is a food crisis and a water crisis ... these are not just going to effect the poor two thirds of the world, but they are going to affect the richer third as well ...

..."You might think I am talking a bit much about the workers' movement; but I think it is the key, because if you've got these great terrible multi-national industrial complexes, its not going to change ... I can't see capitalism having that much soul to change in time ....

..... "this notion that too many socialists have had about conquering nature, that's a terribly arrogant notion and has to be scotched forever ....

"Since we've built up these giant complexes, well then, unless you get the workers there to change their thinking, how can you ever effect change? Because its playing right into the hands of the owners who will go on making the products they shouldn't be making anyway, unless we get a large section of the workers to rethink their position anyway".



B . Down To Earth Festival

Con. Test of Social Change and Alternate Life Style

In December last year the first Down to Earth Festival attracted thousands of people. It is estimated that four thousand people camped at Cotter River (near Canberra) for the five days and a similar number of people visited the Festival daily.

It was decided to hold another festival in about a year's time and in the meantime to set up a Down to Earth Trust and to popularise the ideas of the festival through a charter.

A number of publications will be reporting back on the first Down to Earth Festival, and in particular the Learning Exchange will be producing a special supplement .... see the Reference section of this issue of Ecoso Exchange (last page) for further information about how to obtain the Learning Exchange.

6. "The Theory of the Alternative".

One of the main forums at the Festival was introduced by Jim Cairns who spoke on "The Theory of the Alternative". His talk has been published in booklet form (see reference section of this issue of Ecoso Exchange).

Jim emphasised that "human nature is good, not bad" but that we have carried on too long with the assumption that human nature is bad.

He spoke out against the "prevailing and insatiable demands made on resources which cannot be replaced" and called for radical change.

"There is urgent need now for new values and priorities" he stressed.

He suggested radical change can be seen as involving four stages....

- i. Cultural preparation or consciousness raising.  
No change can take place until the area in which it can take place has been created.
- ii. Building up radical groups or alternative enclaves of all kinds based on the real needs of people.
- iii. The development of a community for change, of a peoples' liberation movement, with the capacity to challenge the structure of authority.
- iv. The radical group or alternative enclaves take over as self governing communities and replace the bureaucracy and machinery of the centralised, nation-State.

The Festival attracted a very wide cross section of people concerned about the environment and the threat to natural resources, community health, community schools, gay liberation and alternate technology.

The highlight of the Down to Earth Festival was the anti-uranium demonstration which was initiated by members of Friends of the Earth at a forum on aboriginal land rights and uranium mining.

A large proportion of Festival participants went to Canberra to protest first at the Civic Centre and then outside the Mining Industry House. They were joined by Canberra supporters and the demonstration was regarded as being one of the biggest and best protests ever to be held in the Capital.

7. Using Social Change and Alternate Life Style.

(Maurie Crow).

In preparation for the Down to Earth Festival a number of gatherings were held in the main cities of Australia and there were several pre-festival publications. Maurice Crow wrote a short article for one such publication which was produced in Melbourne.

We print Maurice's article in Ecoso Exchange as a contribution to the continuing debate on the relationship between the need to change the structures of society and the need to change our own personal values.

Here is the article.

"SCAL" stands for "social change and alternative lifestyles", and is not an abbreviation for "scallywags". For the movement of people that SCAL hopes to attract to become serious and successful, and not fade away into inconsequence, it is important that just as much emphasis be given to "social change" as is given to "alternative lifestyles" - and vice versa. Both elements are vital.

In my view, "social change" to be meaningful, must inevitably mean displacing the present competitive and inherently aggressive and authoritarian a-moral system of production for profit with a cooperative democratic self-managing and moral system of production for use. In other words, the basic structure of production, and the administrative and ideas-systems that go along with it must be changed.

But such a structural change in the organisation of production and the various instruments of government is pointless if the people making the changes allow it to finish up without being a change in lifestyles, which means a change in values. If it is to continue to provide a growth-at-all costs economy, in which a person's entitlement to a quantity of consumer goods remains the yardstick of success rather than relationship with people, then the process will only have gone half-way.

"Alternative lifestyles" are, in effect, quite important words that sum up an earnest desire for more human values that can help us to rid ourselves of the alienating aspects which society, as at present organised, imposes upon us all. However, alternative lifestyles, if conceived as being confined to the self efforts of individuals, families or even communes, taken alone, would, in my view, be equally ineffectual. Such stalwart pioneering efforts to adapt technology to ecologically-tolerable and non-alienating forms of subsistence and human fulfilment are bound to bear fruit by showing just what is capable of being universally applied. Seen in that way they can be priceless components of social change. But if they are seen as a substitute for general social change, they will be self-defeating, because they will remain misunderstood and rejected by a majority that will continue dominant precisely because the new "values" are not brought to bear to change the old "structure" which continues to perpetuate the old values. Two last thoughts:

1. One quarter of Victoria's people, production and expenditure of energy, are spread throughout the provincial cities and countryside. The other three quarters live and work in the Melbourne region. Yes, we need to give attention to the one-quarter, in its own right. Yes, we need to see and encourage the interaction between the one quarter and the three quarters. But above all, let us not fail to concentrate on the Melbourne three quarters.

Workable and acceptable alternative urban lifestyles and workable and acceptable alternative social big-city structures must be found - and the key here undoubtedly includes the concept of a system of human-scale sub-systems within the metropolitan conglomerate.

2. In finding these urban solutions, a central tactical guideline must surely be to reduce the amount of urban energy used in industry and in transport, as well as the energy used up by consumerist habits of individuals who have been manipulated into buying for style or status rather than use. This effort, however must be made to coincide with and complement the effort to re-establish unalienated human relationships by establishing collective and convivial low-energy urban pursuits.

#### 8. Alternative Work Values.

(Bob Pringle).

One of the most lively debates at the Down to Earth Festival was on Alternative Work Values and the following paragraphs are from a paper by Bob Pringle which was distributed at this forum.

Here are the extracts.....

He made an appeal for us to establish "REAL Demands".... "I believe the interest of society and the working people would be better served if the trade union movement were to adopt a social conscience and join with interested groups to bring this about, and at the same time to campaign effectively for a 35 hour week or less based on sharing socially useful and necessary work and permanency with a guaranteed annual wage so that work can be distributed as equally as possible ... those who believe this is utopian will be interested to know that

rostered pick-up centres and guaranteed annual income exists with waterside workers, sections of the mining industry, ships painters and dockers, shipwrights, metal tradesmen and iron workers or the waterfront some sections of the building industry in America and Canada .....

He suggested that workers should not "go cap in hand asking for work at any cost ... a rostered system would provide a day to day knowledge of the exact number of people seeking work industry by industry so that flexible hours could be negotiated on a share-work basis as production slackened off or increased".

He deplored squandering resources: "If we accept that the major question facing the whole human race is whether or not we can survive into the twenty first century, we must question whether we can continue to consume at an ever-increasing rate the finite energy and resources of this world; whether we can continue mindlessly to pollute the air, sea and waterways; and whether we can continue to distribute the available food in the present inefficient and wasteful way".

Bob went on to examine whether the present productivity is beneficial to society or whether the increase is destructive. For example he asks:

"Is it not also a form of mass insanity for a multitude of individuals to project themselves from Point A to Point B and back again each day in a ton of metal; plastic and rubber when they can collectively make the same journey using less resources?"

He concluded his paper "I believe that economic theory should either begin to cater for the needs of the people or be cast aside ... the people should not be made to bend or (as is the case with 2.5 million on the poverty line and 264,000 registered unemployed) to be cast aside for the whims and fancies of economic theories.

"I don't believe that society simply needs more work. I believe what we need is to share meaningful jobs so that every individual can live a dignified existence".

Bob included a table showing how productivity per person has increased since 1963 and a table showing average hours worked per week, including overtime.

Although Bob Fringle's trade union mate Jack Munday was not at the Festival his ideas, as expressed in Chain Reaction, were read by some participants.

One of the features of the Festival was the group of members of Friends of the Earth. About sixty of these young people cycled through Gippsland to Eden and then to Canberra. On the way they protested against wood chipping in the forests. The Friends of the Earth were the main initiators of the anti-uranium demonstration and forum, and they were also active in providing working models of alternate sources of power from the sun and wind.

#### C. Reports, Reviews, References.

##### 9. "Access to Housing".

The third Interim Report to the Australian Housing Research Council, prepared by the Centre for Urban Research and Action, November 1976. This report deals with four areas in Melbourne where there has been displacement (mainly for road widening). The second part of the report consists of a survey of 317 households who had recently moved ... attempting to gain some perspective on the extent and effect of forced moving and the difficulties experienced by households of finding adequate accommodation. The final report (not yet available) will draw the information together and spell out the implication for housing policies.

10. South Melbourne Conservation (Social Impact). Study by Yuncken and Freeman Architects Pty Ltd., for the South Melbourne Council with sponsorship from the Interim Committee of the National Estates, June 1976. This study is the result of extensive questionnaire survey, census and rate research for the conservation areas in this suburb. It sets out to identify the degree to which the Conservation proposals should be applied and the social groups likely to be adversely affected and in need of Council support.

11. The Knox Project". The first annual assessment of the Knox Early Childhood Development Complex, prepared by Yoland Wadsworth. February 1976. This valuable report comes out at a very important time as the Health Department is apparently poised on the threshold of developing more Early Childhood Development Complexes across municipalities in Victoria. A very useful summary of the report has been published in the Community Child Care Newsletter No.7, December 1976. In this review of the report the Department of Health is challenged in the following way .... "The Department of Health has at long last enabled some real human needs research to be carried out. Will it act on it? Or will it fail to comprehend the consequences of such an imaginative report, which implies so clearly that people must be the initiators and managers of services and support systems which meet their needs, if their needs are to be met effectively and if local people with resources are to be used fully?"

12. Citizens Participation.... How to Plan a City for People" a public lecture by Prof. John L. Hancock, Fullbright Professor of Urban Planning, University of Washington, July 1976. The lecture given by Prof. Hancock for the Town and Country Planning Board as part of the U.S.A. Bi-centenary celebrations. Despite this sponsorship Professor Hancock made some very hard hitting criticisms of planning in the United States. For example outlining the history of planning in U.S.A. he said: "So that planners emphasise the large physical scale, not the community scale, and when you emphasise only that scale, it is a virtual certainty that many communities will be destroyed". And in a paragraph on citizens participation he said: "Citizens participation is very closely tied with the civil rights movement because as far as the black communities, racial minority groups, the poor and others are concerned, their neighbourhoods are always the most vulnerable to the planning process." He then described how USA Freeway Interstate No.70 "took out the black neighbourhoods in St. Louis, it took out the Italian neighbourhoods in Kansas City, it took out the Eastern European neighbourhoods in Denver, and so on. It took out the most vulnerable social territories, the lowest income. It did not take out the high income communities or the politically well organised communities".

Prof. Hancock answered a number of questions with some equally hard hitting answers. The lecture was well attended by public servants and many of the questioners were much more conservative in their outlook than the lecturer. For example Hancock replied to a C.R.B. questioner - "The assumption is that you have to build that highway and I am questioning that assumption". Or again "New Cities couldn't be the solution. They can perhaps be part of the solution. to me the solution is a restructuring of existing urban areas".

A final quote, this was in answer to a question as to whether urbanisation is creating a serious land shortage, "the fact is that we are not turning land into concrete, as some environmentalists say, but we are continuing to develop essentially on a speculative sprawl type of basis that is wasteful and historically it is very inequitable. This is because the people who engage in the private process do not redistribute the benefits. The benefits go back to the private sector a wasteful and inequitable process".

#### Urban Policy and Political Parties.

13. A.L.P. Policy Committee Open for Input. The Labour Party's National Urban and Regional Development and Environment Committee has launched "Operation Feedback" in an endeavour to further grass roots democracy... to evaluate Labor's gigantic involvement in improving urban life styles and its policy of "catching up" in community facilities.

At the National level the A.L.P. recently decided to open its policy making process to take into prior account the views of as many people as possible in the Australian community, with a view to placing the Party, in Government, in the best possible position to fulfil expectations, and meet the real needs of the whole community. As an initial step in implementing this decision the Committee has invited organisations to ....

- i) Feel free to write at any time to the National Secretary (P.O. Box 1, Canberra, A.C.T. 2600) expressing views on any area of activity (present or potential) of governments; and
- ii) in particular to send views as to what needs to be done (long and short terms) to enhance the quality of life in both urban and rural Australia.

Introducing "Environs" (a precis of introduction article in the first issue of "Environs".)

The first issue of "Environs" has been produced by the Liberal Federal Government's Departments of Environment, Housing and Community Development. (In December 1975 E.H.C.D. absorbed the functions from four departments .... Environment, Housing, Recreation and Urban Development.)

Through "Environs" E.H.C.D. is seeking to articulate policies and provide a forum for its wide ranging activities ... it is concerned with the way people live.

Contributions from readers are welcomed by "Environs" and organisations are invited to reprint articles without permission provided an acknowledgement is made. The publication does not necessarily reflect the views of the Commonwealth Government or the Minister of Environment, Housing and Community Development. The first issue indicates a number of features which may appear regularly.

The first issue indicates two features which may appear regularly:

- i) Recent releases. This is a calendar of statements by Government spokespeople and a list of the Minister's speeches.
- ii) Teaching and Doing. This feature will deal with theory and practice of education as it relates to the Department's work. Material which has been prepared by the Social Education Material Project (S.E.M.P.) will be popularised in this feature. (The two year project on S.E.M.P. was funded by the Labour Government).

<u>Stop Press</u>	<u>Teachers and the Environment</u>	<u>Stop Press</u>
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The 'Age' newspaper reported on January 17, 1977 that the 120,000 strong Australian Teachers Federation had adopted a major policy statement on the environment and pledged support for urban action groups.

The Federation called for the destruction of nuclear stockpiles, and agreed to fight the exploitation of uranium resources.

Reports, Reviews and References

Some of these publications have been referred to in this issue of Ecoso Exchange.

Vancouver Plan for Action. Being the recommendations of the Habitat Conference for National Action and Human Settlement.

The Challenge of the Cities. Report prepared by the Task Force of the Australian Institute of Urban Studies, subtitled "Constraints on Effective Decision Making", September 1976, Publication No. 58, (Australian Institute of Urban Studies, P.O. Box 809, Canberra, A.C.T. 2601. Price \$5.00 plus 60¢ postage).

Habitat and the Challenge of the Cities. Proceedings of a symposium on U.N. Vancouver Plan for Action and on the Task Force Report on "Challenge of the Cities", December 1976, publication No. 64, (Australian Institute of Urban Studies, P.O. Box 809, Canberra, A.C.T. 2601. \$7.50 plus 60¢ postage).

Chain Reaction, Vol. 2, No.3, 1976, (in which article by Jack Munday was published). This is a quarterly magazine published by Friends of the Earth, 51 Nicholson Street, Carlton, 3053, Ph.347 6630, \$1.00 each issue. This issue of Chain Reaction is mainly on solar energy and uranium.

The Theory of the Alternative by Jim Cairns. This booklet is obtainable from Jim Cairns, Parliament House, Canberra, and the price marked on it is 50¢. It would be helpful to include 20 or 30 cents for postage.

Down to Earth Festival. An address for obtaining the Down to Earth Charter has not yet been made known, in the meantime any person wishing to obtain more information about the Down to Earth Festival could either get in touch directly with Jim Cairns, or obtain information from Friends of the Earth or the Learning Exchange. The article in this issue of Ecoso Exchange was printed in the Pre Festival Publication called "Hope" which was edited by Robert Fensham, Arthurs Creek Road, Nuffield, 3099.

Learning Exchange. A community newspaper for information, learning and sharing. It costs 20¢ an issue and is distributed through milk bars and whole food shops, or can be obtained from the Learning Exchange Centre, 420 Waverley Road, East Malvern, Ph. 211 5413. The February issue will have a supplement on the Down to Earth Festival. Special issues last year included features on town planning, city/country, playgroups, low cost housing. Learning Exchange No. 48 ec. 76 has an index of past issues plus an index of organisations that have used the pages of Learning Exchange over the past year. Very useful reference material.

Environment News, Vol 1, No.10, of this publication contains a list of Australian Environment Publications and announces the establishment of Patchwork Books which plans to become a distributing service for environment, publications. The address of Patchwork Books is Box 73, Collingwood, 3066. Ph. 329 5377 for further particulars on Environment News or Patchwork Books.

Alternative Canberra. A magazine for people interested in changes in social structures, lifestyles, technology, and in people. One of its first tasks it set itself is the provision of information. The contact address is 5 Mulga Street, O'Connor, A.C.T., 2601, or phone 062 (Canberra) 435637. The magazine costs 40¢ a copy. Alternative Canberra No.13 has some useful material on the Down to Earth Festival including a feature article "The politics of the Alternative Society".

Inspect Newsletter.

A magazine for young people who are concerned with the environment. Inspect Newsletter No.1, Vol.6, January 1977 has some valuable information on Newport. It is available from P.O. Box 132 Carlton South, 3053, phone 329 5519, price 30¢.

