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Ecoso exchange newsletter 2/4; June 1989

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ECOSO EXCHANGE NEWSLETTER

2/4, June 1989

Theme and Contents of This Newsletter

The articles on page 3 and 4 of the last Ecoso (2/3) have resulted in some discussions amongst Ecoso readers about work-based, work-related and community-child-care. The theme of this Ecoso Exchange is to present some ideas on these issues with the aim of ensuring :-

1. That the initiatives that are being taken by trade unionists are linked with community movements.
2. Strengthening local governments role in providing social services.

Background Information

New Federal Government child care funding arrangements were announced in last year's Budget. These provided incentives (mainly tax deductions) to encourage industry to invest in the provision of child care for their employees. Thus 1,000 of the 4,000 new centre based child care places will be earmarked for a "co-operative venture " with industry.

The Choices

These "co-operative ventures" could be for work-based care, or a combination of work based and community care, that is work related-care. This is the question Ecoso tries to answer in this June Newsletter.

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Contributed by Ruth Crow. (campaigner for child care for 50 years).
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Contributed by Una Voce, based on Melbourne City Council Reports.

About Ecoso Exchange

For information about Ecoso Exchange and D.A.T.E. write to Ruth Crow, E.2/5 89 O'Shanassy Street, North Melbourne 3051 or phone (03) 328.2345.

D.A.T.E. (Documents Available Through Ecoso) have been listed as part of the articles. There is no special D.A.T.E. list in this Ecoso Newsletter.

Ecoso Guidelines are available from Ruth Crow (see address above). Ecoso information is much better understood if guidelines are used when reading.

Linking the Workplace the Community and Local Government

The experiences of the workers at the Ascot Vale ICI Zipper factory in the early 1970s have many lessons on how to link the workplace and the community and to improve government subsidised services.

Two newspaper articles about the ICI child care project are re-published in this Ecoso (pages 3 & 4). Please read the articles first and then read this.

Thelma Prior Remembers

- 1) The child care program continued for several years.
- 2) To start the scheme Thelma, as Ironworkers Union shop-steward, called a meeting of workers (men and women) and invited the carers of children to come (for example grandmothers or others who minded the children).
- 3) At this first meeting they decided to find out what was available in the neighbourhood.
 - a. They met the council social worker to discuss local services.
 - b. They found out about a youth centre which could provide a holiday play-days program.
 - c. They visited the municipal children's library.
 - d. They discussed with one of the church ministers the possibility of using a church hall near the factory for child care.
 - e. They discussed with the school principal the possibility of using the school in the holidays.
 - f. They discovered that a nearby "bottle-oh" would give them a good price for "empties".
 - g. They interviewed the local paper.
- 5) Men and women workers were involved in planning the scheme and in raising finance (raffles, selling bottles and papers etc).
- 6) The short term results were :-
 - a. Workers did not have to take unpaid time-off in school vacations.
 - b. Greater co-operation between workers regardless of their diverse cultural backgrounds and differences in language.
 - c. The women at the work bench were safer knowing their children were safe, (worry makes for accidents).
 - d. Families increased their knowledge about community facilities.
 - e. Links were developed between the factory and local services.
- 7) The permanent results were :-
 - a. Local children's services which more effectively serve the needs of parents in the work force were provided more extensively by the municipal council (these are still going today).
 - b. The importance of work-related-child-care linked with community-based services was popularised in community organisations and in unions, this was linked with need for federal funding.
 - c. Municipal services were brought into the factory, for example the municipal library introduced a scheme of taking books and paintings to the factory and holding discussions at lunch time.
- 8) The project was discontinued when the number of employees needing child care was reduced and the factory moved to a different suburb.

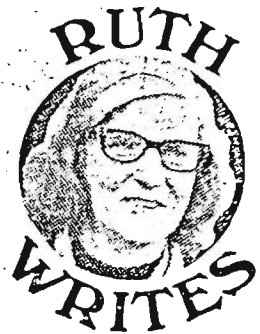
A CHILDREN'S CENTRE

N. Advertiser July 1st 1971

.... a lovely dream

Working mothers at the I.C.I. zipper factory at Ascot Vale had a discussion on the Northern Advertiser articles about the care of children while mothers are in employment.

Mrs. Thelma Prior, who has been the Ironworkers' Union shop steward for 21 years at this factory, thought ADVERTISER readers could be interested in these ideas discussed by these mothers. Here is what she reports:



Northern Advertiser, July 1, 1971

June comes from England and now lives at Debnays. She said it would be lovely to have child care centres open for the hours which really suited working mothers.

Her young child attends the Hopetoun kindergarten for three hours each day, but half a day is not long enough for the mother who has to work, and she has to arrange minding for the rest of the day for the child.

Linda also lives at Debnays. She comes from Austria and at present pays \$10 a week to have her young child minded at a private minding centre.

For a short while her son did attend one of the Government subsidised day nurseries. Linda thought that this day nursery was good, clean, efficient, but too institutionalised.

She explained this by saying 'There should have been more laughter there'.

Linda thinks that \$10 is a lot to pay for day care and would like some government subsidy for children's centres, but she did not want such government financial assistance to result in cold institutions instead of friendly places.

She realises that no proprietor could run a child minding nursery for less than \$10 a week, but with fares and child minding fees being so high it is difficult for the working mother to make ends meet.

Lil's family is grown up, but she has not forgotten the struggle she had when she combined being a mother, a housewife and a wage worker.

She says there has been little change in the provisions made for child care in 30 years, but the number of mothers now at work was much higher.

Until a few years ago most factory workers were young girls; there has been a big increase in married women in the factories, but little help for their families to be cared for.

Workmate

Inga, a German workmate, thought that a mother should make sure than her child was given the best possible care.

She was concerned that there was so little choice for mothers.

She felt that if there were more adequate provision of child care centres, more mothers could choose whether to go to work.

Mrs. Prior explained that a big proportion of the women at the ICI zipper factory are from southern European countries.

She had not talked with them about the Advertiser articles because they could not read them.

Mrs. Prior discussed their problem saying:

"As the shop steward at the one factory for so many years I hear about all sorts of family problems, and we try to help each other with these.

"Many migrants have very real difficulty getting their children minded. Most migrant mothers are very motherly and are deeply concerned that their children are properly looked after while they are working.

"They are often forced to make quite complicated arrangements, but these sometimes break down, and new ways have to be found for minding the youngsters.

"For example, as there are so few day nurseries, many migrant children are minded by neighbors.

"Sometimes by neighbors who come from a different coun-

try from that of the migrant themselves.

"Thus these little children are torn between three different ways of living — the ways of their own family, their minding family and the Australian community as a whole.

"Other migrants arrange so that mum and dad are on shifts which alternate so that one or the other is at home with the children.

"This is OK for a short time, but all sorts of problems arise from this strain on family life if this is continued for any length of time.

Wages

"Most people think that a shop steward is

only concerned with wages and with hours of employment and with some of the job conditions. This is far from the truth as far as my experience is concerned," Mrs. Prior said.

"Working in ICI with so many girls, there is hardly a day that we do not have some problem to solve. We all help each other as best we know how, but as shop steward I hear about more family problems than most of the others.

"The problem of how to arrange for the care of little children is a recurring problem and it is raised more often today than ever before," she added.

This article was written during the campaign for federal funding for child care.

In Victoria this campaign was spearheaded by Action for Adequate Child Care (AACC) which was established by a number of trade unions and community organisations in 1970 (see extracts from AACC documents on page 5 in this Eccso Newsletter).

Late in 1972 the Gorton Government passed the Federal Child Care Act enabling child care to be funded.

With federal aid a new type of child care organisations developed: Community Child Care (Victoria).

Action for Adequate Child Care ceased to exist in 1974 when Community Child Care was firmly established.

The articles referred to by Thelma were supplied by AACC.

(Note :- The Northern Advertiser was started in the 1930s as a one-man, commercial, weekly paper. In the late 60s on the retirement of its elderly owner, it was bought by the Age Suburban Network. The Age found it unprofitable after about 5 years and it ceased to exist.

Ruth Crow, using the pen-name Ruth Writes, contributed a weekly column in the Advertiser for most of the sixties and until the paper ceased publication.

Cuttings of social comment, urban planning, etc articles by Ruth Writes are available through O.A.T.E.)

This article is about some of the innovative child care in the early 1970s. The passing of the Federal Government's Child Care Act in 1972 resulted in a great variety of initiatives by the community and at the work-place. In Victoria the excitement of these co-operative ventures has been captured in the report "Doing it Together" (A study of Children's Neighbourhood Centres) by Sophie Inwald (1978). Available through D.A.T.E.

4 Northern Advertiser, Feb. 21, 1974

Playmates and workmates

Northern Advertiser 21/2/74

While the mothers worked at the factory bench the children played in the factory canteen.

This was the scheme during part of the school holiday programme which was recently organised by women employed at Fibremakers (I.C.I.) zipper factory in Ascot Vale.

School holidays are always a problem for those in the work-force whose children have reached school age. For several weeks the employees discussed with the management various schemes for a vacation programme.

Early in November last year some of the mothers who work at Fibremakers told the shop steward, Mrs. Prior, that they were worried about what to do to care for their children in the school vacation. "We discussed all sorts of ideas, and started to try to get the use of the school or a hall and we asked for the firm to give us some financial assistance," she said.

Mrs. Prior, who has been snop-steward for the Ironworkers Union for more than 20 years, began to investigate the problem.

She found that there were 53 children, from babies to teenagers, whose mothers are employed in this factory.

"We decided that some action would have to be taken to provide vacation care for children of primary school age, as this age group seemed to be the one that most needed such a scheme," she said.

Out of all the investigations and discussions a very appropriate arrangement was made.

The Management allowed the children to be brought to the factory and to play in the canteen for the first couple of hours of each day.

"In the canteen the children could play table tennis, or read books or draw or play games just as they would if they were at home," Mrs. Prior said.

A little after nine o'clock each day the kiddies went by taxi to the National Fitness Play Days at Buckley Park.

The enrolment of the children in the care of the children in the taxi was undertaken by Sister Higgins, who is the factory nurse.

Sister Higgins also called for the children by taxi and kept in touch during the day with the play day staff.

During the last week of vacation some children were cared for by Mr. Goldsworthy of the Ascot Vale Opportunity Club.

"A couple of women employees were rostered

to be with the kiddies in the canteen from seven o'clock until the children left for the play days.

The mothers then went back to the bench, but knocked off at 3.30 p.m. to be with the girls and boys for another hour until work stopped," Mrs. Prior said.

Mrs. Prior was enthusiastic about the scheme, and she pointed out several features that ensured that it was so successful.

"Firstly, we all talked about it for weeks before and we worked out how to make the best possible use of already existing services, such as the factory canteen, the play days in the park, and the opportunity club.

"Secondly, we were able to choose the people we thought would be the best to look after the children in the canteen period and, really, this was the secret of the success of the whole scheme. The people we chose fitted the job like a glove".

Mrs. Prior gave more details about the way the scheme was staffed.

"Two of our workmates made a very special contribution, Soula, a young Greek mother, and Mrs. Broome, an older woman who has quite a number of grandchildren of her own. Right from the start the other workmates trusted their fellow workers," she said.

"As we have quite a few Greeks at the factory, it was very important to have Soula on the roster in



the canteen, as the other Greek women had confidence in her as a person to look after their youngsters."

Mrs. Prior described Mrs. Broome, as the grandmother figure that every young family needs to have nearby.

"The kiddies really responded to her. We have made a permanent record of this warm friendship. We taped the kiddies' chatter and their songs, and all through it you can hear how Mrs. Broome and the kiddies enjoy each other."

When talking to Mrs. Prior about this holiday care programme, it is impossible not to be infected by her enthusiasm for such a co-operative venture.

"It was not only the children who enjoyed the vacation programme, but each day as Con, Marina, Sammy, Nicky, Samantha, Karen, Michelle and the other children came to the factory, we all felt interested to know what they would be doing at the play days, and when they came back after being in the park it was marvellous to hear about what they had been doing.

"I think most of us felt part of a big group of playmates and workmates", she said.

NORTHSIDE HARDWARE CO.
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PAINT...
ASK US
FOR A
BETTER
PRICE

By 1974 Community Child Care had been established. Federal funding was just beginning to be provided.

Action for Adequate Child Care (1970 to 1973)
An Organisation initiated by a Number of of Trade Unions

Extracts from CHILD CARE CHARTER
1970

And Extract from Action for Adequate Child Care Newsletter "Comment"

- ✓
1. Child Care facilities be established in every Municipality adequate to the density of population of children up to school leaving age.
 2. The establishment of Child Care Centres in each Municipality adequate to the needs of working mothers and one-parent families are an urgent necessity.
 3. The rigid separation between Kindergarten and Day Care Centres should be removed to allow for the care of children at all stages of growth.
 4. The facilities of Child Care Centres should be available at such times as to allow for the children of shift workers to be accommodated.
 5. Training Centres be established to provide the qualified staff needed to enable Child Care facilities to cater for children of all ages. Such training should be available to suitable irrespective of age or sex, with special encouragement to migrants.

* * * * *

11. Commonwealth Government subsidies be provided to stimulate the establishment and maintenance of Adequate Child Care facilities.
12. Commonwealth Government subsidies for the provision of adequate after-school and Holiday Care of children not catered for by Child Care Centres.
13. Centrally placed Child Care Centres operating on a day-to-day basis be provided to cater for children of parents with special and emergency needs.
14. Provision be made at Commonwealth level for the encouragement of the implementation of the products of such research and development in Adequate Child Care as may be evolved throughout the world.

Extract from "Child Care Comment". A.A.C.C.
Newsletter, Dec. '70. (Quotes from dailies).

The membership of Action for Adequate child Care (see also page 3) included trade unionists, municipal councillors, social workers and social research workers.

It produced a regular newsletter, "Child Care Comment" which was fairly widely distributed through the workplaces and community organisations.

Its campaign for federal funding for child care was guided by the ideas worked out in 1970 for the "Child Care Charter".

On this page there is an extract from one of the earliest "Comments" and some points from the Child Care Charter.

Please note Kenneth Davidson's warning.
Campaigns for child care at the work place are very likely to result in fulfilling his prophesy.

For example it is logical to management to provide very special conditions including child care for highly qualified research staff but there is not the same economic gain to provide for a cleaner's child as the cleaner can more easily be replaced.

The principle of universality is more likely to be practised when the workplace movement is linked with the community movement and elected representatives in local government are responsible for public funds.

Note: K. Davidson's warning.

Income Redistribution From Rich to Poor.
("The Australian", 7/11/70)

In an article by Kenneth Davidson on child care ... "There are plenty of precedents in the last 20 years of Liberal Party Government in which policies put forward as essentially social welfare measures, have in fact, been not too subtle methods of redistributing income from the poor to the rich."

More Economic to Provide for Rich.
("The Australian", 7/11/70)

From the same article by Kenneth Davidson... "On purely economic grounds there is probably a case for the provision of creches going to women who are highly paid and therefore contribute most to the economy, and depending on which way Mr Gorton's vague policy pronouncement is given this is exactly what could happen."

Child Care for Financially Secure.
("The Australian", 13/11/70)

"These (child care centres) should not only be in areas where necessity forces young mothers to work, whether their children have adequate care or not. Other regions where more financially secure mothers would gladly accept work if assured about child care must not be forgotten."

Information Paper No.1

(1975)

CHILD-CARE - AN EXPEDIENCY OR A HUMAN RIGHT? Contributed by Ruth Crow

Historically the provision of child-care has been justified as a means of solving pressing social and economic problems of particular groups (of particular families or particular needs of industry). For example, to rescue children from squalor; to provide a workforce in wartime; to enable welfare or low income families to be self-supporting; to retain special skills in the workforce (e.g. nurses, teachers, university staff). Thus child-care has been provided in a piecemeal way as an expediency.

Pressure for child-care as an expediency will continue to dominate until such time as there is a generally accepted vision of children's centres that are based on the community.

But, by the words "based on the community" it is not enough to see parents or children or the community as they are now. What is required is a fusion of the deepest personal needs of all groups of people with the broader social ideals.

Indeed, this process around child-care can play a most important role in creating community where none now exists, or where only a poor pale partial substitute for community exists.

In other words, what we should be thinking about when we talk about community-based child-care is how to fuse personal need and social aspiration in such a style that the process creates conditions for community involvement which overcomes our alienation from each other by providing the opportunity to develop a sense of belonging.

So long as the provision of child-care is motivated by parochial or sectional interests the facilities that are available will tend to paternalistically separate out and segregate children from the community and intensify the stratification of the population into groups according to income, occupation, age, ethnicity and so on. At the same time such facilities intensify the isolation and segregation of those adults who are directly caring for the children (the majority of such 'caring' people are women under today's conditions).

What can be done to counter the inevitable trend towards creating services for children over which those who are the main consumers have such little control?

THE VISION OF CCC.

To illustrate the development towards a human rights approach, it is timely to recall one of the first statements by Community Child Care (in the preface of the 1972 handbook).

"Child-care facilities must not be developed as 'dumping depots' or fortresses for forgotten children. We already have quite enough institutions separating the age, sex and socio-economic groups off from one another.

To avoid institutionalization and the authoritarian attitudes that go with this, we believe that it is essential that child-care facilities develop as small co-operatively run neighbourhood groups firmly rooted in their communities. They can be places which provide full day care for working mums, occasional care, emergency care for families in crisis, special services for the disadvantaged or handicapped child, and afterschool and holiday care for school aged children.

As well they can offer companionship and a sense of usefulness to those who need to be needed and have something to give (e.g. the old and lonely)."

Thus, the significance of COMMUNITY-BASED CHILD-CARE was the touchstone for CCC from its inception.

WORKPLACE CENTRES

It is from within this context that moves for child-minding at work places can be seen as developments towards provision of child-care as an expediency.

Neighbourhood or community-based centres mean that:

- . children have an opportunity to grow up with other families of the neighbourhood and develop community links.
- . the child does not have to change centres as mother changes jobs.
- . the child does not have to travel long distances to the centre,
- . there is little likelihood of the provision of care being a controlling factor over the lives of the parents,
- . there is opportunity for comprehensive facilities to be provided (family day care, before and after school activities);
- . the parents will feel free to participate in the running of the centre.

- Child-care based on the workforce contributes to;
- . providing female labour at the least possible cost
 - . forcing the child to become a commuter and traveling long distances;
 - . making women more vulnerable and socially dependent on the workplace;
 - . reducing the opportunity of changing jobs
 - . making it more difficult to struggle for better working conditions;
 - . making it more difficult to participate in improving conditions of the centre.

In most cases the service can be terminated whenever the sponsoring industry so desires (i.e. when women are no longer needed in the workforce).

Child-care services which are based on piecemeal planning to meet an expediency can be closed without much protest when the providers of the service think that the facilities are no longer justified. The following warning from America should be heeded:

"Child-care centres during the Depression and World War II were established to meet the needs of the government and not the needs of children, parents, teachers whose lives were affected by them. When the government no longer needed to provide jobs for teachers on relief work, or to employ women in defence work, it closed down the centres. Although many women struggled to keep the centres open, their movement was not organized or powerful enough to change government policy." (from an article entitled 'Public Child Care. Our Hidden History' by Judy Kleinberg published in 'The Day Care Book, 1974.)

Those who were involved with war time child care in Australia could make a similar statement. During the early 1940's a number of all day care centres were financed by the Federal Department of Labour and National Service. The story of their establishment and demise fit exactly the U.S. statement.

The object of CCC is 'community-based child-care'. The significance of the word 'based' is demonstrated by the following examples of how child-care can be provided through co-operation and effort that bridges the gap between the work place and the community.

In the school vacation during 1974 and again in 1975, school age children of workers at the I.C.I. Zipper Factory in Ascot Vale

For more information about I.C.I. see pages 2, 3, 4, of this Newsletter.

History of Children's Services in Victoria

The following brief historical survey is presented "to give a feel" for how we can build on what has been provided in the past.

It is a one-sided view ... looking from "below up"; that is looking at services from the user's point of view. The intention is to give the "essence" of the facility when it was first established. Despite great variations in each one of the groupings, some of the original features still shape the relationships between users and providers.

It is based on personal experience in using Free kindergartens and Infant Welfare Centres; using and providing Day Nurseries in the 1940s, providing and Child Care Centres in the 1970s; visiting creches in the 1940s, and being involved in campaigns for children's services for the past 50 years.

Creche, kindergarten, day nursery, preschool centre, preschool playgroup, nursery school, family club, child care centre all aptly describe a particular type of facility to those people who are initiated into the ways of providing services for children in Australia. But, for the vast majority of people the words have no precise meaning and are thus interchangeable. People don't care what the centre is called so long as it serves what they know are the needs of their own family.

However, to place children's services in their historical setting it is essential to define the titles used in Victoria.

Defining the titles of services.

Creche = institutional style child minding (custodial care).

Kindergarten = an educational centre where the child's needs paramount. The title Preschool Centre is now interchangeable.

Infant Welfare Centre = a centre for "keeping the well baby well".

Day Nursery = a centre which provided minding and an educational program (ie. combined facilities which were provided separately by creche and kindergarten).

Child Care Centre = a centre which has the potential of a more flexible arrangement for meeting needs of children and parents.

Time Line.

Describing each of the above services and using the same sub-head.

Creches :- Established in the 1890s depression when women were needed for the newly developing secondary industries.

The Facility provided care for children from babyhood to school age with considerable emphasis on cleanliness.

Located near the clothing, confectionary, biscuits, boots and shoes factories.

Control by patronising, very wealthy people (with men predominating); Government Funding not considered as creches based on English "poor house" charity model endowed by rich.

Aim of saving children from poverty and neglect and assisting families to be more self provident (with hidden aim of providing a cheap workforce).

No user involvement, parents (mothers) treated as different human species.

Two Very Significant Publications

The bookshelves of all who are involved in children's services need to have these two books :-
"Caring for Australian Children" by Deborah Brennan and Carol O'Donnell published by Allan and Unwin 1986.
"The disenchantment of the home" (Modernizing the Australian Family 1880 to 1940) by Kerreen Reiger, published by Oxford (Melbourne) 1985. (Both are available through D.A.T.E.).

Free Kindergartens :- Established in second and third decade of the twentieth century when there was considerable consciousness about preparing a "land fit for heroes" (and heroines !?).

The Facility provided very high standard of learning opportunities for children aged from about three to four years for about 3 hours per days.

Located in the residential areas of the poorer inner suburbs.

Control by compassionate middle-class philanthropists.

Government Funding beginning of recognition of the need for state government funding to help under-privileged families. Government funds paid directly to Free Kindergarten Union and shared by kindergartens.

Aim of rescuing the preschool child (3 and 4 year olds) from "deprived" home environments and improving the parenting skills.

User involvement limited to parent (mother) education programs.

Infant Welfare Centres :- Established in early 1920s.

Located in the hubs (shopping centres) of poorer suburbs to train mothers of babies and toddlers in home hygiene.

The Facility provided regular health checks on the baby and toddler.

Control by charity committee of women, influenced by hierarchical systems of medical profession.

Government Funding by State Government through Local Government; beginning of municipal responsibility for children's services.

Aim of "keeping the well baby well" by preventing infectious disease.

User Involvement limited to parents (mothers) receiving advice.

Day Nurseries :- Established in the early 1940s (for a temporary wartime period).

The Facility provided all day care for children from about two years to school age.

Located in residential suburbs near public transport.

Control by women user and providers.

Government Funding from Federal Government (funding ceased in 1946).

Aim to demonstrate the need for all day care so that women could work for war effort, and to campaign for a new type of facility which combined all day care with the learning opportunities provided by kindergartens.

User Involvement very open for parents (mainly mothers) to be involved in management decisions and in campaigns for government funding.

Child Care Centres :- Established in the mid 1970s when women's liberation campaigned for child care and the number of women in the paid work force was increasing.

The Facility provides flexible arrangements for child care and learning opportunities for young children and in some cases for school age children.

Located mostly in residential areas, with a few on campuses.

Control by users and providers through collectives (ideally), in some instances including men and women.

Government Funding from Federal Government with some assistance from State and Local Government in some instances.

Aim to help women have a fuller life whether in the paid workforce or not.

Useful Compromises

A network of neighbourhood children's centres serving the needs of both parents and children is the ideal. In the practise compromises need to be made. Here are two examples :-

Child Care Compromises No 1 Local Government and Work-Related child Care Melbourne City Council Child Care Resolution 1988

36th Order of the Day:

Resolved, on the motion of Councillor Clark seconded by Councillor Cumberland - That the recommendations contained in the report by the General Manager - Community Services dated 15th September, 1988, in relation to work related child care be amended to read -

9.1 that Council adopt a policy on work related child care that -

9.1.1 it is the responsibility of local government to play a key role in the planning and co-ordination of family and children's services and to ensure that an adequate level of child care services are delivered to children of families who live in the municipality;

9.1.2 notwithstanding the Council's responsibilities to its residents, the City of Melbourne will endeavour to assist those non-residents who work in the municipality and who do not have access to child care in their local municipality, to find a child care place in the Melbourne municipality;

9.1.3 where the Federal or State Governments are prepared to commit capital and recurrent funds to establish and operate new centres in which employers also contribute funding to secure a number of places for their employees, the City of Melbourne will co-operate with such proposals provided that -

(a) the proposed service is established in an area which has been identified through a planning process as having a sufficiently high priority of need to be eligible for Commonwealth Children's Services Programme Funding. No preference or priority advantage shall be accorded to a service because of its association with a particular employer;

(b) the service is open to and easily accessible by users from the general community;

(c) the service is operated for the benefit of the general community and opportunities are provided to persons resident in the community and to parents of children using the service to participate in the planning and operation of the service;

(d) the service is operated by an independent non-profit organisation/committee, made up of parents and community representatives which is not dominated or controlled by members of particular interest or employment groups;

(e) the service allows past employees of sponsoring employers to retain a specified work related child care at the child care centre until a community placement is available;

(f) the services are developed within Council's planning framework;

(g) the service is integrated to provide care and education and is co-ordinated with other children's services in the municipality;

(h) the service is resourced and supported by Council's resource and advisory staff.

9.1.4 Council does not support publicly subsidised child care facilities that are located at a particular work place or elsewhere within the municipality where access is exclusive to the people who work in a particular organisation or organisations; and

9.2 that the Council approve the promotion of the policy on work related child care by the administration and negotiations with relevant employers to develop work related child care proposals.

Work-Related Policy of Melbourne City Council, Sept. 1988
D.A.T.E. documents include the full set of reports from the MCC Consultation on Children's Services, recent reports on the new arrangements for federal funding.

Child Care Compromises

Community-related Policy of Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, 1987

In 1987 the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) appointed an Inner Melbourne Task Group to consider the campus and its relationship with the surrounding community. Cr Winsome McCaughey, currently Lord Mayor of Melbourne and one of the founders of Community child Care, chaired the Task Group. The recommendations have been accepted and the West Melbourne Centre is now being established but to date the experiential elements have not been included, however the Centre is managed by a committee which includes community representatives. The full report from the Task Group is available through D.A.T.E.

Recommendation 25

That RMIT recognise and actively encourage students and staff to interact with community organisations and assist them with community initiated projects within a high standard educational framework.

4.3 RMIT and Children

The Task Force considers that RMIT has a key role to play in facilitating student and staff access to child-care services. The Task Force also believes that there are a number of very creative roles which RMIT could play in extending children's cultural experiences, and their knowledge and understanding of science and technology.

4.3.1 Children's Services

The Task Force considers that RMIT has a responsibility to assist students and staff to find adequate child care to enable them to study and work, and also to participate in the cultural and social life of RMIT.

The Task Force does not consider it essential or even necessarily desirable that regular child-care be located on the main campus. Rather, the opportunity exists to link staff and students to the facilities in their own neighbourhood and/or to community-based facilities on the way to RMIT, particularly those in the inner urban area. However, the Task Force also recognises that there may be a requirement for temporary occasional care to be provided on the campus for special occasions e.g. for attendance at meetings, and conferences.

4.3.2 Campus Office of Children's Services

Recommendation 26

That RMIT establish a Campus Office of Children's Services as part of the RMIT Exchange, as a means of assisting students and staff to find and make satisfactory child-care arrangements within community-based services, preferably in the neighbourhood in which they live but also in community-based services in the inner urban area.

The Campus Office of Children's Services should be managed by RMIT, in co-operation with other TAFE and CAE colleges in the inner urban area with representation from the Melbourne City Council and from relevant local community organisations.

The role of the Campus Office in relation to child care would include:

— linking students and staff to community-based child care

facilities in their own neighbourhoods, or to facilities on their way to RMIT;

— organising occasional care on a temporary basis on the RMIT campus for special functions, such as meetings and conferences;

— advocating for an adequate level of community-based children's services at a price that people can afford.

The Office of Children's Services could have other roles regarding opening up RMIT's resources to children and extending their cultural opportunities.

4.3.3 Multi-Campus Community-Based Child Care

At the time this report was being prepared, extensive negotiations were underway between RMIT, other TAFE colleges located in the northern end of the CAD, the West Melbourne Primary School, the State Ministry of Education, the Melbourne City Council and the Federal Office of Child Care, concerning the establishment of an integrated, community-based child care centre for the use of students, staff and local residents of North and West Melbourne, preferably in the now under-utilised King Street Primary School (West Melbourne).

It is envisaged that this child-care centre would incorporate not only regular full/part/day care for children under school age, but also before and after school care, and holiday care for young school age children.

The Task Force strongly supports this proposal for an integrated, community-based, multi-campus child care centre.

Recommendation 27

That RMIT endorse the concept of the integrated, multi-campus and community-based child care centre, currently being proposed for the West Melbourne primary school; and that RMIT co-operate with the other tertiary institutions, the local community groups and the relevant local state and federal authorities to implement the proposal.

4.3.4 Experi-Learn Centre

The Task Force recognises the potential for creating an RMIT 'Experi-Learn Centre', in which the programs and activities which are central to RMIT's curricula and research can be made accessible to children of all ages through simple models and demonstrations, and 'hands-on' learning opportunities. A number of public institutions in the inner city areas, notably the National Museum, the Zoo and the National Gallery, are beginning to

provide the kinds of learning opportunities for children which engage and inform children about that institution's core activities.

There is great scope for RMIT to develop a children's learning centre which serves not only inner urban children but those from across the whole of Victoria. It would be most desirable if this facility could be co-located with the integrated children's centre the West Melbourne Primary School (See Appendix 1 for further details).

Recommendation 28

That RMIT encourage the opening up of some of the learning facilities of the institution to children and that it establish an 'Experi-Learn Centre' as a means of providing 'hands-on' learning experiences for children in scientific and technological areas.

4.3.5 Extending Children's Cultural Opportunities

The city has insufficient cultural resources for children and young people, particularly for family activities involving pre-school and primary school aged children.

If RMIT is to succeed in its stated goal of 'fostering social interaction and cultural and recreational activity' then it needs to consider a range of ways in which the RMIT cultural facilities can be used for presenting programs for children e.g. plays, music and films.

A number of other major cultural organisations are already directing some of their resources to providing programs for children for example, the Alexander Theatre, The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's Friday Family Concerts and the State Film Centre's Children's Film Screenings. The RMIT Glasshouse Theatre lends itself well to a Children's Theatre Workshop and/or a season of children's plays.

These kinds of programs could be presented as part of or as an extension to RMIT's mainstream educational program and students could then be directly involved with children. This process would help students to become more aware of the needs and abilities of children. It would also provide opportunities for teenage children in particular to become interested in the courses provided in higher education, so helping them to bridge the gap between school and tertiary education.

The RMIT Information Exchange referred to elsewhere in this report would have an important role to play in promoting such children's programs.

The 1940's Wartime Child Care Centres An Expediency which Closed at end of War

Lesson from Italy Strike for Council Nurseries and Against Work Place Care

What was this most bitter labour conflict in recent years about? On 1st February 1974, the Bolognese Engineering Workers' Union (FLM) sent a registered letter to the Ducati management in which they laid down their requirements for the new labour contract. The Union demanded massive increases in salary (unskilled workers at Ducati earned the absolute national minimum) — and new rules for promotion into higher-earnings brackets. To guarantee the 42 hour week for all workers, the FLM demanded the introduction of a fourth shift. In the social policy sector, the Union demanded a freeze on prices in the factory canteen and payment of the employer's contribution for public transport and nurseries.

The Directors wanted nothing to do with the last point. They emphatically refused to discuss any of the other demands until the employer's contribution was struck off the list. They justified their stubbornness by pointing to the firm's own nursery on the factory site. This, they said, was completely adequate for the care of workers' children. Why should they contribute further to the building and upkeep of the Council's nurseries?

The workers saw things quite differently. They did not dispute the fact that Ducati ran a nursery, but they did have grave doubts about its adequacy — with good reason. The factory nursery was situated in an inadequate, and unhealthy site. It had no qualified staff to look after the children properly, since the management put female workers who were no longer of use in the production-process to work there. The result was that the Ducati nursery became a loveless child-parking site, in which toddlers risked falling from high staircases or breathing harmful industrial fumes. 'If the overworked supervisors did not know what to do, they simply tied the children to the beds,' reported one mother who works at Ducati. A colleague of hers added, 'I was worried all day whether something might happen to my child. Things could not continue like that, even if the management stuck stubbornly to its senseless position.'

The Ducati employees fought all the more vehemently because their demands did not involve the firm in any additional expenditure. The Union wanted Ducati to pay exactly the same amount of money into the social fund as it spent on the firm's nursery — and not a lira more. The only difference was that the money would be used to help finance the local nurseries which really would conform to the most modern standards in equipment and personnel, and had been planned long before by the City Council and approved by the appropriate commissions.

Cp. Telegraph
Sydney Road
Brunswick

May 1944

Dear Mr. Spow

On behalf of my workmates and myself I would like to express our appreciation of the splendid work done by you and your helpers during the school holidays. If it had not been for the Centre there would have been a row out of six machines idle in our section, which, taken over the few days we had have meant a considerable loss in ^{WGR} production.

Thanking you mine and all yours sincerely,

G. Suggan
S. Johns on
K. Cardline
L. Koskelainen

Federal Funding in the 1940s A Wartime Expediency

A letter written in 1944 about the Brunswick Children's Centre school holiday program. The Brunswick Centre provided full day care for about eighty children from babies to five year olds, plus a school centre for over 100 children who received a hot midday meal, and who were cared for after school and in vacations.

The centre ceased to exist when the need for war production ceased. (See article on "Child Care an Expediency or Human Right" on page 6 in this EcoSo Newsletter. D.A.T.E. has some documents from this rather unique project.

Factory Workers Strike Against Child Care at Workplace

In extract from the book "Red Bologna" by Max Jaggi et al 1977. Bologna has been a communist municipality since the end of the Second World War.



History of Infant Welfare Services in Victoria contributed by Una Voce

Today 50% of some Victorian municipal council revenue is from State and Federal funds for community services. Seventy years ago almost the entire municipal budget was raised from rates on property.

This history of Infant Welfare Services in Victoria is based on the Melbourne City Council's (MCC) Health Officer's reports during the first quarter of this century and also on memories of the writer (Una Voce).

Information from Documents

From MCC documents the following five facts emerge :-

- 1) The Municipal Council in Victoria began to be concerned about services to people as well as services to property.
- 2) The need to combat infectious diseases resulted in new types of services.
- 3) The State Government began to contribute to municipal finances.
- 4) An existing municipal service (sanitary inspectors) was extended into a new type of service ("Baby Health Centres").
- 5) Municipal Councils throughout Victoria began to combine through the Baby Health Centres Association.

The Melbourne City Council (MCC) established its first Infant Welfare Centre in 1918. This was a pioneering effort. It was the first such centre in Australia. Before that the municipal council had only been concerned with health (mainly the prevention of infectious disease) through their responsibility for gutters, garbage and gardens.

Infant Mortality and Infectious disease

The MCC reports at the turn of the century show the ever-present tragedy of infant deaths. The infant death rate in 1898 for the Melbourne Municipality was 188 per 1000 almost 1 in 5. This was gradually reduced to 100 deaths per 1000 in 1910 and 72 per 1000 in 1919.

In addition to these facts are the statistics for infectious diseases. In 1919, 25 children under one year died of diarrhoea, 22 died from diphtheria. There were 298 cases of this disease, 84 cases of scarlet fever and 100 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis. 1919 was the year of the scourge of pneumonic influenza epidemic when there were 8,678 reported cases of the disease in the Melbourne Municipality.

From Sanitary Inspection to Baby Health Centres

At the beginning of this century the MCC employed sanitary inspectors whose responsibilities included inspecting condemned houses, dwellings where there was infectious disease, private hospitals, noxious trades, smoke nuisances, vermin infestation and premises selling food. About thirty private hospitals were on the inspection list. Most were very small (two or three bed) private, maternity hospitals. The ownership of these hospitals seemed to change frequently.

In 1913 Mrs A. Kemp was appointed the first woman sanitary inspector, she visited the cottage hospitals and the vermin infected dwellings, and the homes where there were infectious disease cases. She thus had an insight into the conditions under which children were born and the homes to which some of them were being brought.

"Maternal and Infant Visitations"

The next year a second woman sanitary inspector was appointed and Mrs Kemp was relieved of other work to concentrate on what were called "Maternal and Infant Visitations". She visited 2,090 homes in 1916.

She advocated the establishment of clinics stating that such a service would "impart child rearing and caring assistance to the mothers and that such measures could reduce infantile mortality".

By 1919 three Baby Health Centres had been opened in the Melbourne Municipality and a fourth one was added in 1921.

The Council appointed Dr Vera Santlebury as "Visiting Officer for Health Centres" and in 1920 the Council helped initiate the Victorian Baby Health Centres Association.

By 1921 the Melbourne City Council had prevailed on the State Government to back the Baby Health Centre movement. The Government granted 125 pounds to each health centre each year.

This contribution from the State Government to Councils for Baby Health Centres was probably the first grant from the State Government to Local Government for welfare services.

Before 1921, almost the entire revenue of the councils was from rates on property with a small additional amount coming from surplus profits of such semi-government instrumentalities as the Tramways Board.

The slogan "Keeping the Well Baby Well" became the watch word for the Baby Health Centre movement. The aim inspired considerable missionary-type zeal. Around each of the Baby Health Centres there were committees of people (mainly women) who were involved in the day to day running of the centres.

From Memory

Three Factors About Women Pioneers of Municipal Human Services

My memories and hindsight illustrate how three other factors were operating in the campaign for Infant Welfare Centres each of which resulted in women pioneering municipal involvement in human services.

- 1) Shortage of employment opportunities for women doctors.
- 2) The missionary zeal of middle class housewives to "improve life" for the "under-privileged people" through prevention of disease.
- 3) Increasing availability of domestic labour saving devices reduced time spent on housework, giving some women more time for interests beyond the home.

1. Employment Opportunities for Women Doctors.

In my childhood women doctors in private practice were a topic of drawing room conversation and in the conservative atmosphere of my home they seemed to be socially unacceptable.

Doctors associated with Infant Welfare were in a different category, their names were held up as examples of people to emulate.

The Melbourne City Council reports are a testimony to the pioneering contribution some women doctors made to the new forms of public health.

Dr Scantlebury Brown, Dr Hilda Bull, Dr Jean McNamara and Dr Hilda Kincaid were employed by the Melbourne City Council during the 1920s. They established not only the Infant Welfare Centres, but also council immunisation schemes and much much more.

In various ways these women doctors, who had so recently entered the male dominated medical profession, were outspoken champions of radical social concerns; for example on child endowment, on the need for school milk, on the value of preschool education and for slum abolition.

2. Missionary Zeal to Improve Life for Under-privileged People.

In Victoria the first "Baby Health Centres" were mainly for children from very poor families. They were administered by committees of fairly well-off people (not the very wealthy).

Around each Health Centre there was quite a large band of voluntary helpers (mainly middle class/middle income women) who visited the homes and talked with the mothers. This was a different form of "charity" from money raising philanthropy.

The involvement in establishing Infant Welfare Centres helped both the "providers" and the "users"; to develop ideas about prevention of disease.

This concern for the health of women and children provided opportunities for some women to take a greater interest in the newly developing League of Nations and international organisations such as "Save the Children's Funds" which were established in the 1920s.

3. Labour Saving Devices Reduced Housework

The women who were attracted to help at Baby Health Centres were mainly housewives who could afford the new labour saving devices and who had had an opportunity of secondary education. Despite their better education and greater freedom from domestic work these women had a limited choice on how to spend the new found time and on how to use their educational skills.

Married women had few opportunities to enter the work-force, for example, they were debarred from government employment (teaching, nursing, the public service). Involvement around the Infant Welfare Services was an attractive social activity for many such women.

The Social/Political Atmosphere of the Period

My hindsight may help to give a picture of the social/political atmosphere of the period, and to suggest a fourth factor.

My childhood years were spent in a large Victorian country town where my middle class parents were pillars of the church and very much involved in the Nationalist Party (one of the fore-runners of the Liberal Party which was in power for most of my childhood).

At election time my mother would canvass "the slums" for support for the local Nationalist Party candidate. She would entertain us at teatime with dramatic stories of the squalor and degradation that she had seen.

Mixed up in my memories are compassionate but patronising anecdotes about my mother's charitable visits on behalf of the "Baby Health Centre Committee and her political canvassing for the Nationalist Party.

I remember how she cultivated certain women from "the slums". No doubt, this was partly in the hope of influencing them politically.

A New Public Health Service and A New Attitude to Health

In the 1920s the women (whatever their motivation) who pioneered the Infant Welfare Centres changed the nature of local government by establishing a new public health service and a new attitude to health.

In April 1989 the Commission for the Future held a national seminar to discuss "An Ecology of Health". The keynote speaker was Dr Ilona Kickbusch from the World Health Organisation, she proposed a New Public Health aimed at developing a "Sustainable Healthy Future by 2020" (A New Attitude to Health!). Papers of the seminar are available from the Commission for the Future 03.663. 3281 and from D.A.T.E.
