

# Melbourne 201

## THE CHOICES: URBAN ODYSSEY OR CHAOS

Second of three articles by Robin Boyd, architect and Melburnian, in which he examines his native city. Today, he looks ahead to the turn of the century and predicts, in fantasy and fact, just what the future might hold for the citizens of a great metropolis. Tomorrow, he stresses the need to use professionals in planning urban living.

WHAT will Melbourne be like at the beginning of the 21st century?

One can imagine a television sketch in a genuine Australian Frost Report, when we get round to covering that show, depicting the city in the year 2001 with all its futuristic tendencies developed by 32 more years of growth. Here are some of the main items:

Another mile and a half of freeway have been built while the human population has doubled and the car population quadrupled. About 1975 every street became as jammed as Sydney Road, Brunswick, was in 1969. Then in 1985 all cars became finally immobilised. Now they are double parked in every street and each is used by its owner in a different, imaginative way: good old Aussie improvisation triumphing as always. Some are used as a TV room, some as a home for the family's senior citizen.

Mobility has been maintained by a steady increase in the number of trains, some streets having four or six lines down the middle. A newly invented metal used for the wheels is so hard that it maintains the octagonal shape, with the corners still as sharp in the evening as when they pull out of the sheds in the morning.

Increased parking space has been achieved by blumenising the Bay beaches as far as Rosebud. (It was found impractical to carry this process further, the cost of sinking foundations through the build-up of soft drink cans and broken stubbies being prohibitive.)

Two more test holes for the underground railway have been sunk. Imported magazines have not been available since 1984, and all imported books are getting very scarce. So are tomatoes, since the Drug Squad tomato plant, just to be on the safe side.

The fly population, which in 1969 was far more healthily developed than in Sydney and almost as impressive as Caldera's, continued to be encouraged until, by the turn of the century, not just in summer but all year round.

Moreover, there are by this time so many cars that they have to be serviced overseas that they form the company of flycatchers, 15ft or so above the ground, restraining all insects from escape.

A circle of three miles radius centred on the GPO now contains nothing but dark brown brick flats, three storeys high, above an open expanse of concrete at ground level occupied by cars and plumber's pipes, and a Japanese garden of stones 3ft wide on the street front.

Maybe it is impossible for us now to think of telling parodies of what will happen to our cities by the end of the century. The truth may be more outrageous than anything we can turn out. On the other hand, it may be to be far less exciting than we are inclined to think.

You will have heard the startling forecast frequently made by town planners and traffic engineers who are warning to impress people with the urgency of their problem: the forecast or threat that between now and the year 2001 the whole world will be built as many buildings again as it has already: throughout the history of mankind.

Imagine what that means in the centre of one's own city. Even in Australian cities not 150 years old there is hardly a plot of land in the busier areas that has not already been wrecked and replaced.

If we accept the forecast literally, the centre of Melbourne will have to be about three times more densely built over by 2001 than it is now. The population will be about five million, as will Sydney's (but which will be as well the traffic unquestionably will be the worst single problem in everyday living).

Yet despite all that, it is just possible that the change will be so very breathtaking to us, even if we could accurately picture them now.



The 'Paris end' of Collins Street . . . as Petty sees it.

They certainly will not carry present tendencies through to logical conclusions, as suggested previously in parody, but still there may be particularly bold or unpredictable. Melbourne, and most other Australian cities (though Sydney seems the least likely), will find a way of muddling through into the 21st century without making any dramatic or vital new decisions.

We may continue to starve the central city area of modern transit facilities and of adequate parking, and of residents, leaving it a daytime place, rather unlovely and certainly unloved, almost dead at night.

We may fail at our rather half-hearted attempts to control the outward growth of suburbs, so that the amorphous mass will drift on into the forests as well as farmlands, up the river valleys as well as over the featureless plains, always pushing a flexible, nominal green belt ahead of it.

By the end of the century, the young men who are now at university or in the bottom rung of the business executive ladder will be in charge of municipal, State and Federal governments, of investment 'managers', of the Housing Commission: of town

planning, transport boards, tourist and beach, fire control, and fly control, and everything else that conditions our urban environment.

Those then middle-aged men might permit one or two more women to join them at the top, but what other changes are they likely to direct? Their temperamental inclinations are already set and sealed and will change only in detail, not in direction.

Despite their clear dissatisfaction with the way the present middle-aged are running things, there is no indication or evidence that they are likely to reverse the Australian pattern of putting sports cars before freeways, private pools before public parks, personal pressure-pants and insect repellants before civic hygiene — in short, pampered, non-cussed individualism first and bold, communal ventures last.

Therefore the details of Melbourne, along with our other cities, may change in extraordinary, revolutionary ways, while the broad pattern may remain very familiar to the greybeards of 2001.

Few people will want to see the central city die outright, so a little public assistance will be given. A little medication in the form of a few more miles of freeway along the Yarra bank just before traffic actually jams to a standstill. A token satellite town with a small symbolic cultural precinct and discotheque. A little landscaping around roadsides when the outlook gets too depressing; and this will be undoubtedly hip or camp landscaping: not rockeries planted with aniseed and squirted with water as now, but

perhaps made up of twisted wire and saltbush.

Then the new bosses will rediscover the value of repressive measures that nothing from the public purse.

Staggered office and shopping hours will be used to force occupation of places of work, and for violence or threats of violence to secure wage increases. Any praise for acts that are considered offences against the law will be punished by up to one year in prison.

Similar sentences are provided for activities, speeches, or publications aimed at the establishment of communism, fascism, or anarchism as well as those intended to bring about a change in the printed matter propagating such ideas will be seized by a judge. Those who sell or distribute such material (including newspapers) will be liable to imprisonment ranging from six months to two years.

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## Turks angered by bill to curb rights

From SAM COHEN in Istanbul

THERE is a political storm in store for Turkey over a bill the Government presented to Parliament late last month.

It prescribes stiff penalties for all forms of extremist activity and is regarded by the opposition and intellectuals as a repressive measure "causing division on the Government, led by the Prime Minister, Mr. Süleyman Demirel, intends to pass the measure through Parliament early this month.

Called the "Law for the prevention of acts against the constitutional order," the bill provides prison sentences of up to five years for speeches, articles, pictures, or cartoons threatening or undermining the entity of the Turkish nation. "Provoking of classes and groups against each other," causing division on the basis of religion, race, language, and region, and "mocking one particular class or group of the nation."

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## ATTACK

The Government says the bill is intended to curb the mounting activities of communists, fascists, and anarchist propagandists. "Freedom of expression cannot be without limits," the Minister of Justice, Mr. Dincer said. "We have prepared this bill against those who are exploiting the constitutional freedoms."

Both left and right-wing extremists have been spreading in Turkey recently. Marxist ideas are propagated in books and newspapers and book stores now offer a large selection of works from Mao to Guevara.

By contrast, right-wing publications have been advocating a return to a theocratic system, while one political party has set up fascist commando groups.

The bill has come under strong attack, primarily from the extremists, but also from a large section of moderate intellectuals who fear that it becomes law it will seriously restrict and threaten the freedom of expression. Independent journalists, university professors, and writers have formed the Opposition leaders and spokesmen in condemning the proposed legislation.

Professor Kuball, Professor of Constitution at the Istanbul University, said: "This unconstitutional bill, if accepted, will provoke terror of the kind that is seen in communist or fascist countries." A group of jurists in Ankara has issued a statement pointing out that the bill would "establish a police State."

The main Opposition group, the left-centre Republican People's Party, led by Mr. Süleyman Demirel, is leading Turkey towards a dark future.

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## petty's comment



"We've got to stop meeting this way."

Mr Süleyman Demirel