

VISION OF A NEW SYDNEY

IN the next few days State Cabinet will consider plans to allow people to live in the heart of Sydney — in flats above new shops and office blocks from Circular Quay to Central Railway.

Cabinet is considered certain to approve the plans and put through legislation to bring them into effect as soon as possible as part of a far-reaching scheme now being worked out to change the face and shape of Sydney.

Major elements in this scheme are:

- Flats in the city centre and above shops and offices in major suburban centres.
- The establishment of "mini-cities" within a greatly expanded Sydney metropolitan area.
- New types of suburban housing which will give Australians their first new choice in home styles in 50 years.

The prime force behind the scheme is the State Planning Authority of N.S.W., spurred on by a quickening surge of ideas from Australia's private city and regional planners and new planning developments within the University of Sydney.

The State Planning Authority began operations about five months ago as a successor to the Cumberland County Council, which had administered Sydney's development since 1948.

The SPA has been given much wider powers than the CCC in that it has to co-ordinate planning throughout the State.

TASK

But the Authority's main task at the moment is planning how the £3000 million, which will be poured into new Sydney building development from State and private sources between now and 1975, will be spent.

The SPA recognises Sydney as its most important problem because:

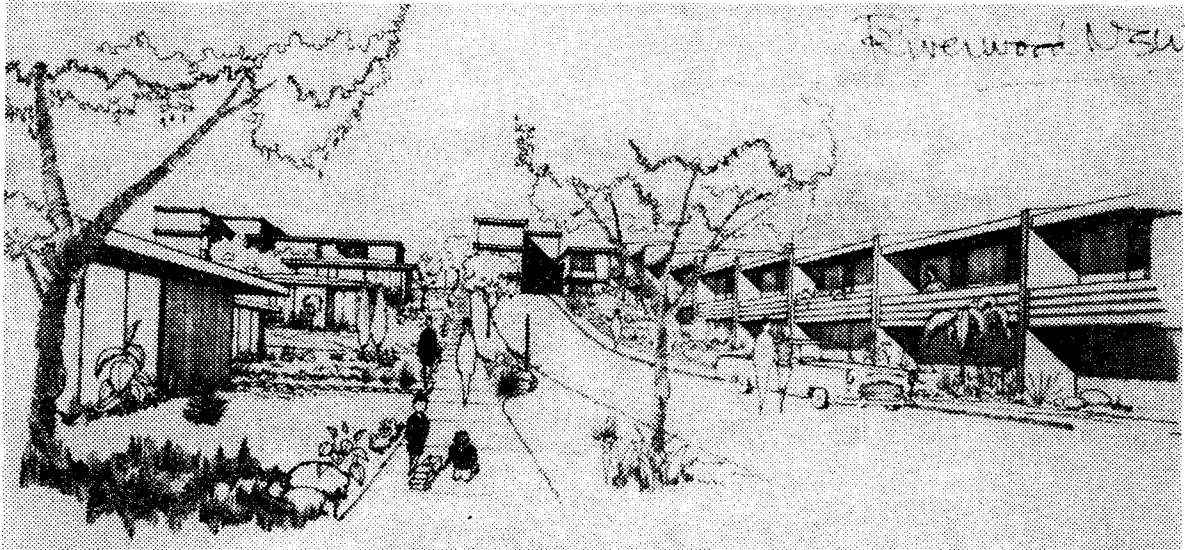
- Sydney's population is increasing at the rate of about 50,000 people a year, and by the year 2000 is expected to reach six million.
- Suburban housing land within a 30-mile radius of Sydney is fast running out. There may be little or none left after 1969.

As a city Sydney is unique in the way it sprawls across the Cumberland plain from the coast to the Blue Mountains.

It is one of the biggest cities in the world in area covered, but in population it is well down the list.

This suburban sprawl is the manifestation of the Great Australian Dream of a house on a plot of land behind a white picket fence—a dream the average Australian has held to for nearly 50 years.

"ROW" HOUSES
planned for Sydney's
"mini-cities" in the
next decade.



Dream homes of tomorrow

It is a dream that has been fostered unquestionably on Federal, State and local levels.

But, say today's planners: "The Australian system of housing might have been good in the past; now it cannot be continued. It will not give us the good life in the future, and we cannot afford it."

They point out that the public pays about 20 per cent of the cost of any new housing development in charges for light, water, etc., so the average Australian has paid dearly for his dream.

And never more than now when the prices of suburban land in Sydney are astronomical and involve first-home owners in living 30 to 50 miles from the city where they work—and play.

As Mr. George Clarke, Sydney architect and town planner, says:

"It can now be seen that a scattered collection of small houses does not of itself make a healthy or happy community."

"Infrequent bus services that cease at 7 p.m. and do not run at all on Sundays... no paved roads, sewerage or proper drainage... no convenient shops, work places, meeting halls, nearby schools or sports and entertainment facilities."

"It is not surprising that the incidence of hepatitis, rape packs, teenage crime, vandalism, neurosis and worse seems to be increasing on Sydney's outermost fringes and decreasing in almost all other suburbs."

But the State Planning

Authority faces a bigger problem than the social disadvantages of our housing patterns.

The problem is that it is physically impossible to fit Sydney's population increase into the space available as that space is being used now.

The Blue Mountains bar Sydney from going west.

And no more cuts can be made into Green Belt lands.

So the only way for Sydney to go is up, along the coast to the north and south, or—with new-style development—to the foothills of the Blue Mountains.

In 30 years Sydney will extend from Port Stephens in the north to the Shoalhaven River in the south.

But this does not mean an awful vista of red tile roofs on a 200-mile wide front.

The Sydney of the year 2000 is planned as a multi-city—a complex of 11 or 15 small, self-contained and inter-dependent clusters, a network of satellites planned inside areas of rural land with inter-connecting transport corridors running straight and swift through the greenery.

The chairman of the State Planning Authority (Mr. Nigel Ashton) says these mini-cities won't be blown-up country towns.

"They will have a real city atmosphere and their residents will use the Sydney city area more than country people do now, but less than the

present suburbanites," he says.

"They will have a population of from 250,000 to 500,000 each and will make full use of medium density living — as against the wasteful low-density approach of today."

Some of these mini-cities will be started from scratch on present rural land up to 60 and 100 miles from the G.P.O., with completely new town centre developments and housing schemes on the pattern of the British satellite towns.

But most mini-cities will come from already established areas such as Parramatta, Newcastle, Wollongong, Chatswood, Bondi Junction, Banks-town, Sutherland, Penrith and Gosford.

With good shopping, improving transport, heavy suburban populations and ample scope for the introduction of some industry and commerce, these areas are ripe for further development.

SIGNS

First signs of things to come can already be seen in the establishment of major department stores in these areas and the construction of insurance and other commercial offices, particularly in Bankstown and Parramatta.

The changes in the Local Government Act Schedule 7, which State Cabinet is about to consider, will

affect the growth of these centres towards becoming mini-cities.

Changes in the Act will allow mixed development of high density sites, allowing for shops and offices on lower levels of skyscrapers, and residential flats above.

Local councils, by adoption, can accept these changes to allow flats in the main streets of Banks-town, Parramatta, Newcastle, or any other major area considered by the State Planning Authority to be suitable for development as a mini-city.

With people living in the heart of Sydney city and the mini-cities, with the growth of licensed restaurants and the planned liberalisation of the drinking laws to allow cocktail bars, Sydney in 10 years could win a reputation of being one of the gayest and brightest towns for night life in the world.

The planners hope that such a development will further allow the mini-cities to become self-dependent and inter-dependent, taking the present strain off the Sydney city area.

While this change to city centre living and gayer night life will be gradual, the changes in suburban housing will be rapid.

Sydney's flat-building rate is now at a record level; half the buildings under construction in Sydney are flats.

Plans the State Planning Authority will consider for new city flats envisage groups of 10 or 12 apartment buildings

By FRANK
MARGAN

most successful when planned in clusters of 40 or 50, set in an area of park or bush land.

But this kind of housing development can only come about when a complete area is taken over, and all development within it made the subject of a co-ordinated plan.

The State Planning Authority is the only body with the means to plan and develop on such a large scale.

It has yet to work out the details of how it can co-operate with private developers to develop the mini-cities in the best possible way.

Whatever way it chooses, radical changes in the present system of land subdivision and sale and home ownership seem likely.

Federal vice-president of the Australian Planning Institute (Mr. H. J. S. Wardlaw) agrees with the majority of planners when he says:

"The new pattern of living will require more Government enterprises than at present in the matter of layout and amenities."

"The Government authority must not have sole control or there will be too much monotony and standardisation."

"But the authority should set down the conditions under which development should take place."

RURAL

Mr. Clarke says the Government authority should also get back the public money it spends in administration and planning of new development:

"Land should be acquired now for these mini-cities at the current ruling rate," he says.

"This would be mostly rural land at rural land prices."

"The land could then be sold back to private developers, or to the public, at developed values."

Under such a scheme Mr. Clarke can see development corporations of bondholders forming to organise the development of new areas, presenting plans to the central authority for approval.

Mr. Clarke said such corporations would develop individual character and civic pride in groups of houses within each development to replace the haphazard and often ugly "individualism" of single home ownership of the present day.

So the shape of things to come for the Sydney of six million people in 10 years' time is patio houses, row houses, bigger, brighter flats, more parks, gardens and swimming pools and more decentralisation within the city.

As one N.S.W. Government official said: "Nothing has been done in Sydney in the past 50 years to equal the foresight of the planners of the 1830s who gave us

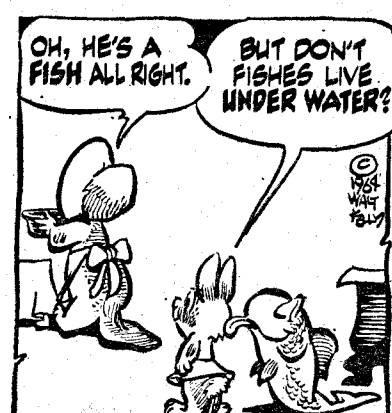
Kuringal Chase, the National Park at Sutherland, planted pine trees at Manly and Terrigal.

"These things are the products of men of vision and today we are enjoying the fruits of their forethought."

Now we have to make similar provisions for the future.

"We must never allow the ugly, wasteful, unplanned developments of Blacktown and Surfers Paradise to occur again."

POGO—



—By Walt Kelly