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and mobile and prepared to travel for major shopping and entertainment.

In the upper Blue Mountains the population is older, many retired. To them the trip to Penrith, at the foot of the mountains, or to Sydney, is a major and quite costly business. Most of those who do work, work locally and often in the tourist industry or industries serving it.

If the lower Blue Mountains' population increases greatly the area would become what it is to some extent now, an extension of Sydney suburbia, and who is going to drive through another 50 kilometres of Sydney suburbia to look to a view?

*The Blue Mountains to the west of Sydney as everyone thinks they are. In fact, they are changing rapidly and their future as natural asset is uncertain*

## ENVIRONMENT

### Floundering in the mountains

By PATRICIA ROLFE

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS strategic plan seems a very successful exercise, at least from the point of view of Tom Uren's Department of Urban and Regional Development. After the rigidities of the NSW State Planning Authority, soon to disappear but to surface again, renamed but probably unchanged, as the Planning and Environment Commission, the hand of central government seems light indeed, scarcely more than waving a magic wand.

When the council for the noted scenic area to the west of Sydney found itself floundering with a plan, prepared by the State Planning Authority, to which nearly 3000 objections had been lodged, it called on the Federal department for help. Uren's department gave the council \$50,000 at the beginning of the year as part of the \$5 million the department has been spreading through the general Sydney western area (with a counterbalancing \$3 million in Melbourne's same area).

George Clarke's Urban Systems Corporation was called in. The people of the Blue Mountains now have no fewer than five plans to choose from. The money was siphoned through the NSW Government but the Blue Mountains City Council and Urban Systems seem to have had minimum interference and instruction from DURD (the acronym for Uren's department).

Not only have Urban Systems given the people of the Blue Mountains several choices, the Blue Mountains City Council

with the planners is devising ways of making that choice more effective than the usual displaying of a plan in the council's office and allowing a set period to lodge objections.

The council believes that the Blue Mountains are a national asset and what happens concerns people outside the area. It is thinking of taking newspaper advertisements to call for comment on the five strategies. It may devise questionnaires and have planning workshops at which people can mark on transparent overlays over maps what they think should happen in a certain area. The council will also try to get comment from the 13,000 absentee landlords and the 25 government departments, State and Federal, which have a say in the area.

Broadly, the five alternatives range from extreme conservation to extreme development. The first plan would provide for a population of 47,000, about 7000 more than the present one. It would even involve buying back land for which services have already been provided. This gesture would cost \$96 million.

The fifth plan provides for a population of more than 275,000. It would involve the destruction of natural park areas and the gross pollution of the Hawkesbury basin; to a large extent it provides for the extinction of the Blue Mountains.

The final choice will probably be some sort of middle course but it cannot be simply that. The Urban Systems report makes it clear that, although the Blue Mountains is a geographic whole, socially there is almost total cleavage between the upper and lower areas. The lower Blue Mountains are classic dormitory suburbs: 96 percent of males in the 15-65 age group work and 75 percent of workers living there commute to Sydney or Penrith. Most of the population is young

## ON THE INSIDE

### The long arm of the law

By DAVID MARR

IT LOOKED as though 1974 was going to be Jim McNeil's year: his plays *Chocolate Frog* and *The Old Familiar Juice* were finishing up in Hobart after professional productions in every State, his reputation was confirmed by an overseas critic (Martin Esslin, head of BBC drama and international drama expert said, "... a playwright of the first rank, not only in Australia, but probably internationally as well"), the Council For the Arts came up with a \$7000 grant and his new play was set down for production by John Bell at the Nimrod in November.

But for McNeil, a prisoner in NSW, 1974 meant that he would be eligible for parole, and it seemed a foregone conclusion that after seven years he would be out of NSW prisons in October. But then he found himself at the centre of a legal and political labyrinth that threatened to hold him there indefinitely.

The trouble started when he was arrested years ago in NSW because he was "wanted in two States." He was tried and convicted in NSW and in Victoria charges against him were put into deep freeze. He goes back to Victoria to face them in what he calls "the time machine" as soon as he is free. If it had all happened in one State it would all have been cleaned up seven years ago.

When it comes to crime the States of the Commonwealth are as sovereign as the States of Africa. There is no way at the moment that the criminal and court systems can co-operate to avoid this problem.

It is an anomaly that the NSW Minister for Justice, John Maddison, has asked the standing committee of Attorneys-General to deal with. "It seems

# Gentlemen, may we now brief you on the Jaguar XJ12.

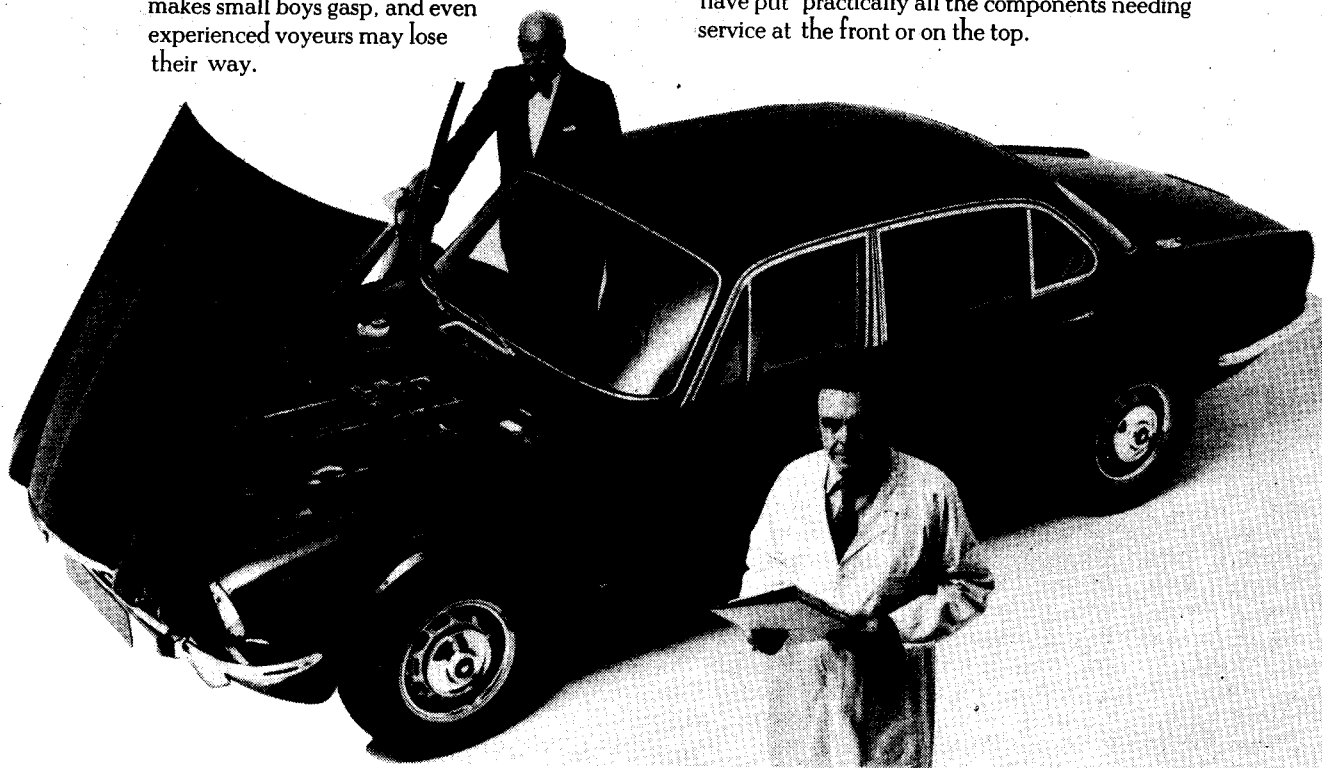
The sport of tyre kicking is a well-respected test of any marque to hold the public's imagination. Kicking the tyres of our new V12 cylinder Jaguar, however, is unlikely to reveal much of its appeal.

For it is rather intriguing: two banks of 6 cylinders in a 60° V; each bank with a single overhead camshaft and two carburettors. Capacity is 5343cc, bore 90mm, stroke 70mm. Maximum gross bhp is 314 @ 6200rpm. And there is, for instance, an electric fan which solely cools the battery. And electronic ignition. The very size of the V12 within the engine well makes small boys gasp, and even experienced voyeurs may lose their way.

smaller capacity each, mean better fuel utilisation, giving you more power, less pollution, lower petrol consumption — indeed, the XJ12 drinks less than most large American style V8s.

Is a complex engine going to be either unreliable or difficult to service? No. Sir Henry Royce, when challenged on the first point in connection with the Merlin V12 aero-engine, said that as long as the components were right, the number was irrelevant. The Spitfire bore him out.

To answer the second point, the designers have put practically all the components needing service at the front or on the top.



As the experts, we would like to introduce you to it, and possibly answer some questions.

No, it is not an adaption of the famous XK engine — which will continue. For instance, it has one cam per bank, and flat heads.

Why a V12? From an engineering standpoint a V12 is in perfect balance; providing the ultimate in smooth running, high power and torque throughout the range. Thus, although its top speed is not a lot higher than the XJ6, its acceleration is another story: you have 230 ft/lb of torque at 2500rpm.

It is well known that more cylinders, of

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to me," he said, "to make a mockery of the whole rehabilitation idea to have a person serving a sentence in place A knowing full well, no matter how impeccably he changes or reforms, he still has something hanging over his head that he has to front up to at the end in another place."

That was all in the past, but McNeil — and this goes for everyone caught in the same muddle — found that the prospect of his trial in Victoria complicates things in another way: it makes release from NSW enormously difficult. It is not the practice of the Parole Board to give parole to a man who is going to be extradited immediately to another State.

It looks like a particularly cruel Catch 22: denying a man early release because, rather than in spite of, the prospect of further punishment in another State.

But the general problem this raises has been worrying the NSW Minister of Justice. He agrees that parole itself in these cases is not possible and there is a kind of logic in what he says: the NSW Parole Board can't supervise a man on parole in another State and should he be convicted at his second trial then that conviction (as any conviction does) would end the parole. But if a man is fit for parole Mr Maddison can't see why a licence for release can't be designed to allow him to be transferred to the other State for trial.

For Jim McNeil this means that there should be a way out of the maze. If the board decides in a couple of months that he is fit for parole — it would be surprising if it doesn't — he has a clean record in prison and his writing has put a new life in his grasp — the Minister can have a licence drawn up to get him to Victoria and on to the next stage of his journey.

Meanwhile he waits in the shell of Bathurst Prison. He is down to about nine stone now, not very well, smoking too much and finding life tedious in the empty prison. They let him live in the hospital — it wasn't damaged in the riot — and are generous with letters and visits, but the Department of Corrective Services won't transfer him to a prison where he can get on with his university work and, on work release, supervise the Nimrod production of "How Does Your Garden Grow," his new play.

And the extradition to Victoria is, again, the reason. Though the Minister agrees that a transfer is "highly to be desired" the department feels that they owe it to Victoria to keep him under maximum surveillance. Whether they trust him is not, apparently, the question. He will have to sit it out where he is.

He doesn't expect favors because he is an artist, but McNeil knows that without a bit of humanity and commonsense he could be in prison until the 1980s — caught in an interstate legal maze.



*Jim McNeil: writing from the labyrinth*



*Justice Minister Maddison: seeking to improve the system*

## Danger in the plastic garbage

By TIMOTHY HALL

AS A POLLUTER of the environment polyvinyl chloride, or PVC as it is usually known, has had its fair share of vilification.

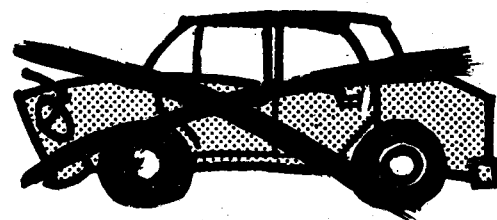
Incapable of either decaying or decomposing, PVC, like the whole range of oil-based plastics, is extruded and moulded into an array of products, many of which look like being around in the form of garbage for the next 1000 years. In particular it is being increasingly used for the throw-away package and container. But, whatever it might be doing to the landscape, PVC has never been seriously thought to be directly harmful to man. Now that, too, is changing.

Following the deaths of 13 American workers who had been exposed to vinyl chloride, the gas from which PVC is made, a completely new evaluation of the risks entailed in its production and use was ordered. These men died from angiosarcoma, a rare cancer of the blood vessels; but, rare as it is, it has exposed for the first time a weakness in the manufacturers' unvarying claim that they have a product which has no inherent danger other than the risk of fire. Now two cases of the cancer have been uncovered of people who, unlike the 13 workers, had been exposed to only low levels of vinyl chlorides. One was a woman who lived four blocks from a vinyl chloride plant for 30 years. If vinyl chloride is implicated in these cases, manufacturers fear they will be unable to guarantee the safety of their workers

which could threaten closure of the plants.

The plastics industry is enormous and is growing, in spite of the oil restrictions, by almost 20 percent a year. Even in Australia it is worth \$700 million a year and, on a worldwide basis, more than \$10 billion. Only two companies produce raw PVC in Australia. ICI, with plant at Botany, controls about 60 percent of the market; and B. F. Goodrich (the largest producers of PVC in the world) have the remainder, operating from the Altona petrochemical complex near Melbourne.

PVC has always been the plastic favored for longer lasting products such as piping and furniture; but a great deal of it is used in shorter-life items. Ninety-three thousand tonnes was produced in 1973 and went into such varied end-products as flooring, cables, conduits, the coated fabric in motor vehicles and an enormous range of moulded products such as gramophone records, toys and



*The family car: many have interior fabric coated with PVC*