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Wogs In The Bush



Littering The Landscape

In an ironic twist of fate, a significant number of my contemporaries/peers from my youth now reside in the contemporary houses that litter the landscape on the edge of the suburb where we grew up. That bush is now an inexorable sea of housing estates.

To be frank, I can't recall having been 'touched' by any beauty which the landscape possessed. Then again, a teenager going through his rites of passage blazing around on a motor bike wouldn't have been sensitive to nature.

Ostentatious McMansions

However I am most certainly sensitive to the ostentatious McMansions which prevail there now. Then again, I shouldn't be surprised that blokes who got their kicks shooting ducks aspire to live in them.

by **Fabrizio Marsani**,
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I WAS belatedly introduced to the joys of Bush Walking. It took a German national to open my eyes to the splendor Mother Nature offers in the wilds of this vast continent of ours.

Western Suburbs Appreciation

Growing up in Melbourne's western suburbs, young men weren't encouraged by their peers to appreciate nature. The Bush was something you blazed through on motor bikes or went into to shoot wildlife.

If you had joined the Scouts you may have had an early insight into what was on offer 'out there' but our suburb was populated by a large Eastern and Southern European migrant community and the scouting movement didn't have enormous recruiting success in amongst the non Anglo kids.

Protective Mothers

Our mothers weren't too keen for their boys to spend weekends away from their sights, sleeping in tents, eating food prepared by 'strangers' and possibly catching a cold.

This was still an innocent period prior to the press having exposed the misdeeds of paedophile priests and scout leaders.

The integrity of these authority figures wouldn't have been questioned by our parents. It was most probably that a significant number of the post war migrants in our area would have spent years in refugee camps in ravaged post-war Europe, sleeping in tents out of necessity and desperation.

In their eyes they couldn't see the point or sense of their boys experiencing this sort of discomfort for fun.

What Decades Will Do

Several decades later, I can't imagine many activities more invigorating and liberating than camping and trekking/walking in the bush.

A recent getaway saw me take along a biography on Ghandi as my reading matter. Austerity measures, deprivation and self denial were very much on the agenda. Mind you, abstinence isn't too hard to adhere to when stretches of three to four days without washing are common.

Old Technology is Often Best

WE OFTEN highlight some of the world's newest and most bizarre technologies but one of the society's older ones is probably more of a necessity today than when it was invented.



Ingrained Obsolescence

With regard to some of our modern marvels, there are some lifespans that have been ingrained into our psyche without us probably even realising it.

Some examples: 10 year lifespan for one's car as running and repair costs become excessive; three - four years to replace a computer as it starts to slow down or not function at all when running the constantly evolving add-ons; a two year lifespan for mobile phones is a good run with the massive changes as to what modern phones look like and can do.

It seems absurd now doesn't it. However not all old types of technology are bad and in the

case of one in particular even if we were using the technology of 20 years ago, it should still be heavily expanded and invested in today.

Public Transport

Think how you would get to work tomorrow if your car broke down or was stolen. Yes I am talking about Public Transport which these days seems like a dirty word for Governments of all persuasions - those wonderful trains, trams and buses.

Major Overhaul Required

With the populations of Melbourne and Sydney tipped to top five million in the coming decades and long travel times already a major issue, moving people around our cities and greater areas will be a nightmare if our current system doesn't undergo a major overhaul.

It is not so much the technology that needs changing. The trains, trams, etc themselves are fine as vehicles now but there is an inability to link many parts of the city that have no access to transport but large amounts of people.

Sydney has made a start by constructing new lines, inter line links, airport service, etc but Melbourne is very much dragging its feet with not even a train link to the airport! However both cities have a lot more to do unless they want one major traffic jam in the years to come.

Population Growth Centres

Melbourne's population centres and also growth areas in recent times have been the south east corridor, past Glen Waverley, down to the

Rowville area, etc. There is no train service there either which is even more bizarre considering over two million people live there and its similar in size to Brisbane and bigger than all other cities in the country bar Sydney.

Frustrated Foreigners

The thing many foreigners find strange and frustrating is that lack of inter line links. Whereas a car trip from Brighton to Bentleigh would take barely five minutes a train trip via South Yarra may take 40 minutes not including waiting at stations.

Fossil fuels like oil are a scarce resource and are rapidly running out yet the only infrastructure successive State Governments have invested in has been roads. Some like the Western Ring Road and City Link were necessary but powerful lobby groups representing car transport industries see any push by Government backing public transport a threat to them.

Commonwealth Games Quagmire?

With the Commonwealth Games looming, how will our city cope with people being ferried all around the city, suburbs and to and from the airport. We are not an old traditional European city or Manhattan with vast amounts of people in relatively small areas, but consider these benefits with an increasing population - shorter travel times, fewer traffic jams, less pollution, cleaner air, fewer cars, accidents, fatalities, more visitors to the CBD, less travel fatigue and more sleep time, etc. Outcomes worth investing in!

Chris Jacob is a director of **Computer Troubleshooters Bayside**
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