The increasing number of branch stores in the suburbs and country centres is already apparent throughout Australia. The influence of the American super-market and drug store is also becoming more evident in the growth of self-service food stores and the enlarged range of products now being handled by chemists. The American super-market is virtually a large self-service store covering primarily all categories of food lines from fresh meat, fruit and vegetables to groceries, confectionery and drinks, supplemented by other personal requisites such as cigarettes, tobacco, books, stationery and cosmetics. Some also handle hardware, clothing and other household goods and are tending to develop more along the lines of small department stores.

All these developments suggest that the modern shopping centre will become a more compact shopping unit of fewer but individually larger stores, each offering a comprehensive range of goods in a more convenient manner. Although there may thus be some overall saving in the land area actually required for shopping space in any future centre, this will be more than offset by the increased area required for car parking and other shopping centre amenities.

FUTURE SHOPPING NEEDS OF MELBOURNE

The principal defects of the present shopping structure of Melbourne are:

(a) The high percentage of large shopping centres located on main highways and at important road junctions.
(b) Inadequate car parking facilities in most leading shopping centres.
(c) Poor distribution of shops in some areas.
(d) Continuous shopping development along main highways.
(e) Surplus of shop sites in old inner suburbs resulting in the intrusion of industrial and other non-commercial uses.
(f) Growing traffic congestion in the central city shopping area.

With a rapidly increasing population and more particularly the ever-increasing use of the private automobile for shopping, many of these existing defects will become even more acute in the future unless effective solutions are found. It is evident then that the future shopping needs of the metropolis will necessitate a sound overall pattern of shopping centres that will relieve the growing congestion in the central business area and provide for more attractive, more efficient and more comprehensive shopping facilities in the suburbs. From this analysis of existing shopping facilities and trends this would appear to involve the following basic requirements:

(1) Improved facilities in the central business area, especially with regard to car parking and public transport, to enable the regional shopping centre to function efficiently.

(2) An overall pattern of large attractive and easily accessible suburban centres that will offer comprehensive shopping facilities, more comparable with those in the city centre.

(3) It will be necessary to provide for a proper distribution of subsidiary shopping centres in locations best suited to serve the community.

It has been shown that the bulk of suburban shopping at present is for food, personal requisites and the cheaper household requirements, while most of the more expensive items, including clothing and household equipment, are purchased in the city centre. A high proportion of these latter goods are sold by the large department stores carrying

A small planned suburban shopping centre at Sandringham

a wide range of goods, and providing credit and delivery facilities and shopping amenities, generally beyond the capacity of the small suburban shop. For any large suburban centre to be able to make any appreciable effect on the proportion of shopping done in the regional centre, it would need to attract large department stores offering facilities somewhat similar to those in the central business area. It follows that to enable such stores to function economically, a major suburban centre would need to have a very large catchment area. It would also need to be not too close to the city centre and easily accessible from a wide surrounding area. At the present time the major suburban centres, other than Chapel Street, Prahran, have catchment areas of about 100,000 persons, but have relatively few really large stores. Only in the older inner suburbs such as Collingwood, Brunswick and Prahran are there any sizeable department stores and these centres are now too close to the central business area and too distant from the growing outer suburbs to enable them to attract much trade from the regional centre. From discussions with leading retailers it would seem that a catchment of at least 200,000 people is necessary to maintain a really first-class suburban department store in Melbourne capable of competing with the stores in the central business area. Such a centre would attract an increased volume of other commercial activities such as banks, theatres, professional and administrative offices and would be a logical branch centre for many service industries. The greatest scope for such centres would appear to be in those directions where residential development is most active and where the degree of car ownership is highest. Car ownership and parking facilities will obviously be of increasing importance in developing any major suburban centre with a larger catchment than the existing normal size of about 100,000.

To avoid the problems created by there being too many shops in some areas and too few in others, it will be necessary to rationalise the number and distribution of shops throughout the suburbs, and to ensure that adequate space is available to provide for the development of attractive shopping facilities.

The standards indicated from this analysis can be summarised as follows:

Total number of suburban shops required	10 shops per 1,000 people.
Distribution of Shops	
Major and Secondary Centres	1½ to 2 shops per 1,000 people plus allowance of 50 to 60 shops for local shopping.
Minor Centres	5½ to 7 shops per 1,000 people.
Local Shops	1½ to 3½ shops per 1,000 people.
Car Parking Space (minimum)	
Major and Secondary Centres	4 cars per 20 feet shop frontage.
Minor Centres	3 cars per 20 feet shop frontage.
Total Area Required (assuming average of 20 ft. frontage per shop)	
Major and Secondary Centres	15 acres per 100 shops.
Minor Centres	12 acres per 100 shops.

Stonestown, San Francisco, U.S.A.—a large modern American suburban centre