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Title:

Speech at the opening of "House of the Seventies" Exhibition

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1514
34

SPEECH BY THE PREMIER (MR. DUNSTAN) AT THE OPENING OF "HOUSE OF THE SEVENTIES" EXHIBITION.

13/7/71.

MR. BONYTHON, MR. MACKLIN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I was particularly pleased to have been invited to open this exhibition today. In sponsoring the "House of the Seventies" competition, "The Advertiser" and the South Australian Gas Company have undertaken a very useful community service and provided a valuable stimulus to the fostering of better design standards in South Australia - as can be seen in the quality of the entries on display here. Special mention should be made of the contribution of Mr. - that is Councillor - Chappel whose original suggestion led to the inception of this competition and that of Sir John Overall and Mr. McConnell who joined him on the judging panel.

The seventies seem to be designed to be the decade of the environment. To the general acceptance that we all, to some extent, create the world around us has been added concern and uneasiness about the kind of environment we are creating and an awareness that we need to do something positive if we are to avoid a still uglier Australian ugliness. Concern does not mean merely the avoidance of pollution - essential though it is - it means, too, the promotion of good design and aesthetic values in those areas where the choices we make can influence what is produced. Nowhere is this more important than in the field of domestic architecture.

We are a nation of home owners and yet too often in the past we have allowed ugliness to spread like a cancerous growth and have created a sprawl of suburbs that look for all the world like so many grey or red mushrooms linked by strings of unlandscaped roads lined with inappropriate service stations and desecrating advertising.

All of us must share responsibility for the mistakes which have blighted our cities. Buyers have been too ready to accept, builders to construct, and local and governmental authorities to permit shoddy, look-alike boxes of tacky-tacky fed by necessary but unnecessarily expensive services such as water, power and schools.

This acceptance of the second-rate need not happen, as this exhibition demonstrates, and those of us who are fortunate enough to be in a position to do something about it must ensure that it doesn't happen any longer. Here the State Government has a most important role as a result of its legislative and regulative function and, more important, as an initiator and as the State's largest single provider of residential housing through the South Australian Housing Trust.

I understand the Trust is currently investigating plans which will revitalise its approach to home construction and which will ensure that at least as much emphasis is given to aesthetic and social factors as to economic ones. I hope it will be possible shortly to make public a detailed announcement of these plans.

It is absolutely vital that our future development should be preceded by effective, co-ordinated planning and that the planning should involve to the maximum possible extent builders, architects, town planners and engineers able to draw on the latest technological - and sociological - advances.

This, of course, implies a large governmental commitment and here, if I may interpose a political note, it requires a far larger governmental commitment than the present Federal Govt. appears to appreciate. The Commonwealth must assume its proper share of responsibility for urban development and redevelopment. The States have been pleading for such assistance for a long time now - and so far they have been conspicuously unsuccessful. But it's not up to Governments alone. Private business and investment, too, has a crucial part to play. This means the avoidance of minimally acceptable design standards and provision of a suitable and visually pleasing social environment in which both a community and individual spirit can flourish. An illustration of how this can be done is now taking shape at the West Lakes scheme which promises to be one of the most imaginative new community projects undertaken in this State and so it's most appropriate that this exhibition today is to be followed next

January by an opportunity to see the award winning design in situ at West Lakes.

Looking at the prize winners I'm impressed with the manner in which Mr. Neill and Mr. Hodgkinson have been sensitive to the surroundings of their living units and the way in which they've taken particular care to meet Australian conditions. For in planning future development we must find our own solutions to specifically Australian problems.

I'm told this competition and home building exhibition may become annual events. If this proves possible, I believe it will be of benefit to the cause of quality architecture in South Australia and to all South Australians who care about the surroundings in which they live.

It's now my pleasure to present formally the House of the Seventies awards to the prize winners.