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Title:

Speech by the Local Government Minister Prospect Centenary

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1924

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MR. MAYOR, ALDERMEN, COUNCILLORS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

THE STORY OF THE GROWTH OF PROSPECT OVER THE PAST HUNDRED YEARS AND DURING THE FORMATIVE PERIOD BEFORE THE PROCLAMATION OF THE COUNCIL - IS, IN MANY WAYS, THE STORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

AUSTRALIANS GENERALLY, AND AUSTRALIAN INTELLECTUALS IN PARTICULAR, STILL SEEM TO THINK IT FASHIONABLE TO BE DISMISSIVE OR EVEN CONTEMPTUOUS OF OUR SOCIAL HISTORY.

BECAUSE WE HAVE A TRADITION OF RELATIVE COHESIVENESS, BECAUSE WE'VE BEEN MERCIFULLY FREER THAN MOST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES OF CIVIL STRIFE AND UPHEAVAL, IT'S SOMEHOW ASSUMED THAT THIS MAKES US INFERIOR.

2.

WHICH IS NONSENSE. CONSIDER WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE IN LITTLE MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS. WE HAVE DEVELOPED FROM VIRGIN BUSH TO A HIGHLY ORGANISED AND COMPLEX URBAN SOCIETY.

ONE COMMENTATOR HAS GONE SO FAR AS TO SAY THAT PERHAPS AUSTRALIA'S GREATEST SIGNIFICANCE HAS BEEN AS A PIONEER OF SUBURBIA.

THAT MAY BE OVERSTATING THE CASE THE OTHER WAY. BUT IT DOES GIVE, I THINK, A BETTER PERSPECTIVE TO THE QUIET REVOLUTION THAT HAS BEEN OUR SOCIAL HISTORY.

IT WOULD BE IDIOTIC TO ASSUME FROM THERE THAT EVERYTHING IS ALL RIGHT AND IS GOING TO CONTINUE THAT WAY.

WE ARE GOING TO NEED AT LEAST THE SAME QUALITIES OF WILLINGNESS TO INNOVATE, CAPACITY FOR IMAGINATIVE EXPERIMENT AND DETERMINATION TO SUCCEED IN THE LAST QUARTER OF THIS CENTURY AS EVER WE DID IN THE NINETEENTH.

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3.
WE SHALL HAVE TO DO SOME VERY HARD-HEADED AND SCIENTIFICALLY
BASED PLANNING FOR OUR CITIES IF WE ARE TO AVOID GRAVE SOCIAL
PROBLEMS.

LET ME GIVE ONE EXAMPLE WHICH I THINK BOTH ILLUSTRATES WHAT HAS
BEEN ACCOMPLISHED AND WHAT LOOMS ANEW AS A PRESENT PROBLEM.

ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THINGS ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
PROSPECT AREA HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH BRICKS AND BLUESTONE, GOOD
ROADS, OR ADEQUATE STREET LIGHTING.

THERE IS IN THIS AREA, AND I'VE NOTICED ON MANY OCCASIONS WHEN
I'VE BEEN HERE, A VERY STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY FEELING. PEOPLE
WHO LIVE HERE FEEL THEY BELONG HERE. IT'S A PRODUCT OF MANY THINGS;
NUMBERS OF FAMILIES HAVE LONG ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE AREA; IT HAS
A DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER, COMMUNITY FACILITIES SUCH AS RECREATION
AREAS ARE EXCELLENT AND PROMOTE CLOSER CONTACT BETWEEN INHABITANTS.

4.
THE WORK OF THE CITY COUNCIL OVER A VERY LONG PERIOD HAS DONE
MUCH TO ENCOURAGE THIS.

UNFORTUNATELY, WITH THE VERY RAPID GROWTH OF THE METROPOLITAN AREA
IN RECENT YEARS, THIS IS NOT GENERALLY TRUE.

PEOPLE LIVING IN THE NEWER SUBURBS OFTEN DON'T IDENTIFY WITH THEM.
THEY COMMUTE TO THE CITY OR TO AN INDUSTRIAL SITE THAT COULD BE
MILES AWAY RETURNING HOME TO SLEEP. THEIR WIVES MAY WORK TOO, OR
IF NOT, MAY NOT BE ABLE TO GET AROUND FREELY TO MEET OTHER PEOPLE.
LACK OF RECREATION SPACE IN MANY AREAS ACTS AS A FURTHER DISCOURAGE-
MENT. THE EFFECT IS - TO EXAGGERATE ONLY SLIGHTLY - OFTEN ISOLATED
PEOPLE LIVING ANONYMOUS LIVES IN A SPREAD-EAGLED "COULD-BE-ANYWHERE".
NOW THAT'S FINE IF PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE PRIVATELY. BUT I THINK
THEY SHOULD AT LEAST HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO FEEL THEY BELONG
TO A LIVING COMMUNITY AND TO PARTICIPATE IN IT IF THEY WISH.

