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Title:
Speech at the opening of Foxfield Estate, Athelstone

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER (MR. DUNSTAN) AT THE OPENING OF FOXFIELD ESTATE, ATHELSTONE. APRIL 2, 1971.

ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL TRENDS OF RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN THE MOUNTING PUBLIC ANXIETY OVER DETERIORATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT. INDEED, THIS CONCERN HAS GROWN AT A RATE ALMOST AS EXPLOSIVE AS THE TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS WHICH ARE ONE OF ITS CAUSES AND WHICH ALSO, PROPERLY HARNESSSED, OFFER A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEMS WHICH PROMPT IT. SOUTH AUSTRALIANS, JUST AS MUCH AS THE CITIZENS OF LOS ANGELES, LONDON AND TOKYO, HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT THEY ARE NO LONGER PREPARED TO TENDER A BLANK CHEQUE TO PAY THE PRICE OF URBAN GROWTH. THE NEEDS OF AN EXPANDING POPULATION IN HOUSING AND SERVICES MUST BE MET BUT NOT IN A WAY WHICH CARRIES IN ITS TRAIN A DEBASEMENT OF COMMUNITY VALUES AND NATURAL BEAUTY. GOVERNMENTS EVERYWHERE MUST TAKE ACCOUNT OF THIS ANXIETY AND ACCEPT THAT THEY HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO TRANSLATE IT INTO EFFECTIVE AND PRACTICAL PLANNING PROCEDURES AND CONTROLS.

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IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA I BELIEVE WE HAVE BEEN IN THE VANGUARD IN GIVING OFFICIAL RECOGNITION TO THE RIGHT OF OUR CITIZENS TO A HEALTHY COMMUNITY LIFE AND THAT WE HAVE GIVEN, AND ARE GIVING, A LEAD TO THE REST OF AUSTRALIA. THE FOXFIELD ESTATE DEVELOPMENT, AS WE CAN SEE TODAY, IS EVIDENCE THAT YOU TOO, MR. HICKINBOTHAM, ARE AWARE OF THE NEED FOR PARTICIPATION BY PRIVATE DEVELOPERS AND THAT YOU ARE PREPARED TO MEET THESE NEW DEMANDS. SUCCESSFUL PLANNING OF ANY NEW MAJOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT MUST REST ON TWO BASES: ACCEPTANCE THAT WE MUST PREVENT FURTHER EROSION OF NATURAL ASSETS AND ACCEPTANCE THAT PLANNING IS FOR A COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE WHOSE MEMBERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO PLAY AN EFFECTIVE AND MEANINGFUL PART IN ITS ACTIVITIES.

TOO OFTEN WE HAVE SEEN HOUSES JUST SET DOWN IN AN AREA WHICH HAS BEEN SELECTED FOR SUBDIVISION MERELY BECAUSE THE LAND IS CHEAP, REGARDLESS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS AND THE OVERALL COMMUNITY COSTS INCURRED IN PROVIDING THE NECESSARY SCHOOLS, TRANSPORT, WATER AND SEWERAGE SERVICES AND SO ON. TOO FREQUENTLY FACILITIES ARE NOT PROVIDED FOR CHILDREN TO PLAY SAFELY, HOUSEWIVES MUST TRAVEL MILES TO THE NEAREST SHOPPING CENTRE AND, WORSE STILL, THE EVOLVEMENT OF ANY SENSE OF COMMUNITY COMES ABOUT DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF DEVELOPERS RATHER THAN BECAUSE OF THEM. THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE BECOME MAROONED IN A DUSTY, TREELESS EXPANSE ISOLATED FROM ANY FOCUS FOR A NEW COMMUNITY WITH CONSEQUENCES THAT ARE DISTURBING AND DAMAGING. COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING, THEREFORE, IS ESSENTIAL BY PRIVATE AND PUBLIC DEVELOPERS IF NEW PROJECTS ARE TO PROVIDE A MORE EFFICIENT AND ACCEPTABLE PATTERN OF LIVING.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT, AS A RESULT OF OUR RAPIDLY EXPANDED KNOWLEDGE OF WAYS OF OVERCOMING URBAN AND SUBURBAN BLIGHT, THAT WE CAN DO IT. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT WE MUST DO IT. INTELLIGENT FORWARD PLANNING -- AND IT'S NECESSARY ON A NATIONAL AS WELL AS A STATE AND LOCAL LEVEL WITH COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION -- CAN BE A GREAT LIBERATING INFLUENCE ON THE PATTERN OF AUSTRALIAN DEVELOPMENT AND HALTING URBAN DECAY. THERE'S NO REASON WHY WE CANNOT PROVIDE THE MACHINERY THROUGH WHICH A NEW GENERATION OF LANDSCAPE PLANNERS WITH THE VISION OF A CAPABILITY BROWN OR INIGO JONES CAN FLOURISH. PLANNING OF THIS NATURE PROVIDES THE NECESSARY OVERVIEW REQUIRED BY MODERN SOCIETIES.

THERE IS ONE OTHER AREA OF BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION IN WHICH IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED THAT GOVERNMENT ACTION IS NECESSARY TO PROTECT THE INDUSTRY ITSELF AND ITS CUSTOMERS. THIS IS THE NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVE, WELL REGULATED SYSTEM OF BUILDERS' LICENSING. THE NEED FOR THIS HAS BEEN GENERALLY ACCEPTED BY THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRY BEFORE AND SINCE THE PASSAGE OF THE 1967 ACT. A LICENSING SYSTEM WILL PROVIDE HOME BUYERS WITH INCREASED SAFEGUARDS AGAINST FINANCIAL FAILURE BY SMALL SPECULATIVE BUILDERS WHICH HAVE, IN THE PAST, RESULTED IN THE BUYER BEING WITHOUT EFFECTIVE REDRESS, WITHOUT SAVINGS AND WITHOUT A HOME. IT WILL PROVIDE PROTECTION AGAINST JERRY-BUILT HOUSES IN WHICH CRACKS APPEAR BEFORE THE REPAYMENT IS MADE AND IT WILL GIVE THE VAST MAJORITY OF CONSCIENTIOUS BUILDERS OF REPUTE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE HIGH STANDARDS.

AMENDMENTS TO THE ACT NOW BEFORE PARLIAMENT AND CHANGES TO THE PROPOSED REGULATIONS HAVE DEALT WITH THE OBJECTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN RAISED TO SOME OF THE PARTICULARS IN THE DRAFT SCHEME. IN PARTICULAR, IT WILL BE POSSIBLE FOR A DIRECTOR OF A COMPANY EITHER TO TAKE A FULL BUILDER'S LICENCE IN HIS OWN NAME IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE COMPANY OR TO TAKE A MANAGER'S LICENCE WHICH HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO USE APART FROM THE COMPANY. IN RETURN THE BUILDERS LICENSING BOARD WILL NOT SEEK FINANCIAL DETAILS FROM HIM IN RELATION TO HIS PERSONAL ASSETS. MUCH NONSENSE HAS BEEN TALKED ABOUT THE INCREASED COSTS IT IS CLAIMED WILL RESULT FROM A LICENSING SYSTEM.

THERE MAY - AND I STRESS "MAY" - BE A VERY SLIGHT INCREASE IN PRICES BECAUSE OF THE ELIMINATION OF THE WORST TYPES OF SPECULATIVE BUILDERS AND SUB-CONTRACTORS. BUT THIS WILL BE MORE THAN OFFSET BY THE OBSERVANCE OF HIGHER STANDARDS OF CONSTRUCTION. MR. HICKINBOTHAM, THE FOXFIELD ESTATE IS PROOF OF THE WORTH OF MAINTAINING HIGH STANDARDS AND I HAVE PLEASURE IN OFFICIALLY DECLARING IT OPEN.