



SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER,  
THE HON. E.G. WHITLAM, Q.C., M.P.,  
AT THE OPENING OF THE FIRST SUBDIVISION  
OF THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LAND COMMISSION,  
HAPPY VALLEY, SOUTH AUSTRALIA,  
11 APRIL 1975

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I HOPE THIS WILL BE THE FIRST OF MANY SUCH OPENINGS I SHALL ATTEND THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA. IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT THE FIRST SUBDIVISION OF LAND PURCHASED AND PREPARED FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT BY A STATE LAND COMMISSION SHOULD BE HERE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA. ADELAIDE WAS AUSTRALIA'S FIRST PLANNED CITY. COLONEL LIGHT, THAT FAR-SIGHTED SURVEYOR-GENERAL, WAS AUSTRALIA'S FIRST TOWN PLANNER. SOUTH AUSTRALIA HAS BEEN ONE STATE WHERE COOPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS IN THE INTERESTS OF OUR PEOPLE HAS ALWAYS BEEN PROMPT AND FRUITFUL. IT IS NOW ACCEPTED THAT GOVERNMENTS EVERYWHERE SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN URBAN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - NOT BECAUSE IT MAY BE SOMEONE'S PARTICULAR HOBBY HORSE, NOT BECAUSE IT'S FASHIONABLE OR TRENDY, BUT BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY WAY TO IMPROVE OUR CITIES AND MAKE THEM BETTER PLACES FOR PEOPLE TO LIVE IN.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS SUBDIVISION HAS BEEN A GOOD EXAMPLE OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT. PLANNERS, BUILDERS, LOCAL RESIDENTS, LOCAL BODIES, HAVE HAD A PART TO PLAY. PEOPLE HAVE BEEN CONSULTED; PEOPLE HAVE SAID WHAT THEY WANT FOR THEIR NEW COMMUNITY.

WE ARE GETTING AWAY FROM THE OLD IDEA OF CITIES BEING BUILT AND PEOPLE BEING MOULDED TO FIT THEM ACCORDING TO CONCEPTS IMPOSED FROM ABOVE OR FROM FAR AWAY. PEOPLE, LOCAL PEOPLE, LOCAL NEEDS, ARE CENTRAL TO OUR THINKING.

I FIRST PROPOSED THE IDEA OF LAND COMMISSIONS IN OUR ELECTION POLICY IN 1972. WE SEE THEM AS THE ONLY PRACTICAL WAY TO BEAT THE SPIRALLING COST OF BUILDING LAND. THE PRICE OF LAND IS THE SINGLE LARGEST COMPONENT IN THE COST OF A HOME. THE LAND COMMISSION PROGRAM OPERATES ON A VERY SIMPLE AND FUNDAMENTAL PLANNING PRINCIPLE - ADEQUATE LAND SUPPLY IS NECESSARY TO PREVENT LAND PRICE INCREASES AT TIMES OF HIGH DEMAND. THIS IS BECAUSE THE NATURE OF URBAN LAND AS A COMMODITY MAKES IT PARTICULARLY LIABLE TO MARKET MANIPULATION. PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS IGNORED THIS PROBLEM. SOUTH AUSTRALIA HAS COOPERATED IN OUR SCHEME FROM THE START. OTHER STATES - WHERE LAND PRICES ARE HIGHER THAN HERE - ARE STILL DRAGGING THE CHAIN. YET IN THIS SUBDIVISION WE CAN ALREADY SEE THE BENEFITS OF OUR SCHEME. I BELIEVE THE BLOCKS OF LAND FOR SALE HERE ARE ABOUT \$1,000 CHEAPER THAN COMPARABLE BLOCKS IN OTHER PARTS OF ADELAIDE.

PLANNED COMMUNITIES SUCH AS THIS WILL HAVE OTHER ADVANTAGES APART FROM PRICE. THERE WILL BE NO UNSIGHTLY ELECTRICITY POLES. HERE, AS IN ALL OTHER LAND COMMISSION SUBDIVISIONS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA, THE VISUAL POLLUTION OF UNSIGHTLY POLES WILL BE ELIMINATED AS THE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY WILL BE UNDERGROUND.

PROVISIONS WILL BE MADE FOR PARKS, RECREATION AREAS AND PLAYGROUNDS SUCH AS THE ONE THIS PLAQUE WILL COMMEMORATE.

I DON'T THINK ANYONE WOULD ARGUE THAT RAPID URBANISATION HAS BROUGHT MANY SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ILLS TO OUR CITIES. TRANSPORT, SEWERAGE, LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES HAVE BEEN MADE MORE COSTLY AND DIFFICULT. INDUSTRIES HAVE MET WITH HIGHER COSTS. THE ENVIRONMENT HAS SUFFERED. FOR ALL THESE REASONS DON DUNSTAN'S GOVERNMENT AND MY GOVERNMENT HAVE INITIATED A SERIES OF POLICIES RELATING TO LAND USE AND LAND PRICES. THE OBJECTIVE HAS BEEN TO REDUCE THE UNFORTUNATE CONSEQUENCES OF TOO RAPID URBANISATION.

THIS YEAR THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS ALLOCATED APPROXIMATELY \$26 MILLION TO THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LAND COMMISSION. BETWEEN ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN NOVEMBER 1973 AND JUNE 1974, IT HAS PURCHASED 1226 HECTARES OF LAND WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THE ADEALIDE METROPOLITAN AREA. THIS YEAR IT IS IMPLEMENTING A FURTHER PROGRAM TO ACQUIRE OR PURCHASE 2432 HECTARES FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND 1473 HECTARES FOR MAJOR METROPOLITAN OPEN SPACES. IN ADDITION THE COMMISSION HAS ENGAGED THE SERVICES OF PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANTS IN THE FIELDS OF PLANNING, ENGINEERING, SURVEYING AND VALUING. IN THIS WAY IT HAS HELPED SUSTAIN DEMAND FOR THESE SERVICES THROUGH THE RECENT PERIOD OF DECLINE IN BUILDING ACTIVITY.

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT IS A FINANCIER TO THE LAND COMMISSION BUT IT HAS A MUCH WIDER ROLE THAN THAT. MANY AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES AND PROGRAMS HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON THE PROVISION OF CAPITAL WORKS IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT - THE P.M.G., DEFENCE INSTALLATIONS, EMPLOYMENT, OFFICES, ROADS, UNIVERSITIES, HOSPITALS, SEWERAGE PROGRAMS. PART OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY IS THE EFFICIENT COORDINATION OF ALL SERVICES PROVIDED BY STATE AND AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS. THE LAND COMMISSION IS A STATE ORGANISATION, STATE-RUN AND STATE-MANAGED; BUT EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN THAT THERE IS A PLACE FOR JOINT EFFORT BY THE AUSTRALIAN AND SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS IN SHAPING THE BROAD STRATEGIC POLICIES WITHIN WHICH THE COMMISSION FUNCTIONS.

THE LAND SUPPLY SHORTAGE IS LIKELY TO BECOME CRITICAL, PARTICULARLY IN SYDNEY AND MELBOURNE. THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS THE WILL TO ACT BUT THE STATES MUST ALSO PARTICIPATE. NEW SOUTH WALES HAS SIGNED A FINANCIAL AGREEMENT, AND THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT IS LOOKING TO THAT STATE TO ACT FIRMLY ON A LARGE SCALE TO PREVENT FURTHER LAND PRICE INCREASES IN SYDNEY. IN VICTORIA THE GOVERNMENT HAS AGREED TO SET UP AN URBAN LAND COUNCIL BY 30 JUNE THIS YEAR AND ACTION ON THAT PROMISE IS URGENTLY NEEDED.

DON'T IMAGINE THAT LAND COMMISSIONS ARE ALL THAT CONCERN US IN THIS FIELD. IN MAKING AUSTRALIA A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE IN WE ARE JUST AS CONCERNED WITH RURAL AREAS AS WITH CITIES. OUR NEW DEPARTMENT OF URBAN AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT DEALS AS MUCH WITH THE WELFARE OF REGIONS AS IT DOES WITH CITIES. WE HAVE REACHED AGREEMENT WITH THE STATES ON THE BOUNDARIES OF 76 REGIONS WHICH THE GOVERNMENT WILL USE AS THE BASIS OF ITS PROGRAMS. LAST YEAR WE APPROVED THE FIRST DIRECT GRANTS EVER MADE BY AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO LOCAL COUNCILS - GRANTS TOTALLING \$56 MILLION THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA. WE ARE PUSHING AHEAD WITH GROWTH CENTRES, INCLUDING MONARTO IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA. WE HAVE SAFEGUARDED THE NATIONAL ESTATE, THE UNIQUE AND BEAUTIFUL THINGS, NATURAL AND MAN-MADE WORTH KEEPING IN OUR COUNTRY. LAST FINANCIAL YEAR 101 NATIONAL ESTATE PROJECTS WERE APPROVED AT A TOTAL COST OF \$2.5 MILLION. WE ARE PROVIDING ASSISTANCE FOR ADELAIDE'S WATER TREATMENT SCHEME. WE ARE CATCHING UP FURTHER WITH THE SEWERAGE BACKLOG IN THE MAJOR CITIES. IN THE LAST FINANCIAL YEAR \$38 MILLION WORTH OF APPROVED WORKS WERE CARRIED OUT. A TOTAL OF \$110 MILLION IS BEING MADE AVAILABLE FOR WORKS STARTED THIS FINANCIAL YEAR. OUR URBAN LOCAL ROADS PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF RESIDENTIAL STREETS AND WILL INCLUDE A NUMBER OF INNOVATIONS TO LIFT THE ENVIRONMENT STANDARDS OF ROADS IN URBAN AND PROVINCIAL CENTRES.

I CONGRATULATE THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LAND COMMISSION AND THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ON COMPLETING THIS FIRST SUBDIVISION. WITH GOVERNMENTS WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WE CAN ACHIEVE FAIRER LAND PRICES FOR THE HOMEBUILDER AND A MORE CONGENIAL AND EFFICIENT ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL AUSTRALIANS.